

Nada (“Nothing”) is the first feature film by Juan Carlos Cremata Malberti. Made in 2001, it was supposed to be the first in a trilogy, followed by *Nadie* (“Nobody”) and *Nunca* (“Never”), but Cremata failed to get the funding for the second two. However, his second film *Viva Cuba* brought him considerable recognition and garnered over 30 national and international awards, and was the first Cuban film to be awarded the Cannes Film Festival's Grand Prize for children's cinema. Both *Viva Cuba* and Cremata's next film, *El Premio Flaco* (“The Booby Prize”), were shown here in 2010 at the Cuban Film Festival and the Minneapolis/St. Paul International film Festival, which included a visit by Cremata and his mother, Iraida Malberti Cabrera, also a film director.



Cremata is a graduate, in 1990, of the world-famous film Cuban film school *La Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión (EICTV)* which is the source of many of the short features screened in the Cuban Film Festival. Cremata's own thesis film, *Oscuros Rinocerontes Enjaulados*, (“Dark Caged Rhinos”) was an experimental work that earned awards in several film festivals.

There is another, more somber link between the work of Juan Carlos Cremata and this year's Cuban Film Festival. His father, and Iraida Malberti Cabrera's husband, was an airline navigator who was a victim of the 1976 bombing of Cubana Airlines over Barbados that killed 73 people including the entire Cuban Olympic fencing team. The bombing has been widely attributed to Cuban exile Luis Posada Carrilles, who sought asylum in the US in 2005 and is in fact still living in Miami. Although Posada Carrilles denied involvement in the bombing, he has admitted to being involved in the spate of hotel bombings that took place in Havana in 1997. It was those attacks, as well as the US government's failure to act against terrorist exile groups in southern Florida, that prompted the Cuban government to send undercover agents to the US to monitor those groups. Five of the agents are now known as the Cuban Five, and this year's Cuban Film Festival is dedicated to them.

The film *Nada* resonates with references to other films, both Cuban and French. Watch for hints of *Amelie*, *Death of a Bureaucrat* and the French actress Jean Seberg. The film skewers bureaucratic lunacy with cartoonish characters, but also takes a serious look at an issue that casts a shadow on many Cuban films—whether to leave or to stay.

It's also filmed in black and white with unexpected touches of color; Juan Carlos Cremata is color blind.

Join us after the film for a discussion led by Giselle Garcia Castro, a Cuban film student spending a year in residence at St. Thomas University. Giselle has a wide knowledge of Cuban film and her perspective offers us a rare opportunity to hear what young Cubans are saying about the current state of film in Cuba and elsewhere. We will gather at Pracna on Main adjacent to the theater (take a left at the bottom of the stairs). You can purchase food and drink, but there's no obligation to do so.

Upcoming films and other events

Coming up next Thursday in honor of International Women's Day is the classic 1979 film, *Retrato de Teresa* (“Portrait of Teresa”), which takes up feminist issues that were – and still are – the subject of discussion and societal change, both in Cuba and worldwide.

A month-long exhibit of the prison paintings of Antonio Guerrero at Regla De Oro Art Gallery and Fair Trade Gifts ends Friday with a celebration of the release of Fernando González, one of the Cuban Five, sentenced to long US prison sentences on charges of conspiracy to commit espionage. Pick up a flyer outside for more details.

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