



Sueñan los androides

Androids Dream

Ion de Sosa

Producer Ion de Sosa, Luis López Carrasco, Luis Ferrón, Karsten Matern. **Production company** Ion de Sosa Filmproduktion (Berlin, Germany). **Director** Ion de Sosa. **Screenplay** Ion de Sosa, Jorge Gil Munarriz, Chema García Ibarra. **Director of photography** Ion de Sosa. **Sound** Jorge Alarcón, María José Molanes. **Sound design** Manolo Marín. **Editor** Sergio Jiménez. **Cast** Manolo Marín, Moisés Richart, Marta Bassols, Coque Sánchez, Margot Sánchez, Óscar de la Hueriga, César Velasco, Begoña Alarcón, Eva Swoboda, Begoña Jiménez.

DCP, colour. 61 min. Spanish.

Premiere 8 November 2014, Sevilla European Film Festival

World sales Luis Ferrón

The year may be 2052, yet this is a future with one foot in the past. Between the strangely artificial skyscrapers along the coastline and the neon-lined broadwalk, there's nothing here to suggest it isn't still 1975, 1995 or 2015. But there are fewer people around nowadays and many apartments lie empty, a tranquil wasteland of exposed wires, unfinished plasterwork and endless dust. Those that remain are at least house-proud, eager to show off their knickknacks and traditional costumes, when not meeting up for the occasional dance. Hardly the most obvious place for a bounty hunter, but the robots still need to be exterminated, particularly as they already look so much like you and me.

Ion de Sosa's spare, enigmatic adaptation of Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is at once a minimalist genre piece, an oblique treatise on difference and an essayistic almost-documentary on the unreal status quo of contemporary Spain. And as the title suggests, these androids do indeed dream: of far-off places and new opportunities; of the songs of past summers; of a shared embrace, a sheep on a leash, as the towers and mountains open out beyond.

James Lattimer

A future without a future

Earth 2052. A beach with no sea. A map of the future without a future.

Choosing Benidorm as the setting for a depiction of Earth in 2052 is no arbitrary decision. This city in the province of Alicante is the poster child for the type of growth that Spain saw in the second half of the twentieth century. It is a model of the fun-in-the-sun tourism that has transformed Benidorm from a quaint fishing village into a city of skyscrapers whose population reaches half a million during the summer. These vacation cities, which experienced huge growth in a very short period of time, are enclaves designed in the late 1950s to sell an idyllic image of Spain as a service industry-based society and a place of leisure and fun.

A Benidorm of cheap skyscrapers and glitzy hotels, a native replica of Dubai and Hong Kong, appears in the film as the future of Earth, an oasis for senior citizens. It is a paradise dying in slow motion, a Las Vegas-style Mediterranean tourist enclave with few economic resources.

Thus, the detective who is the main character walks through a city that is difficult to locate, a non-place designed for retirees. We could be anywhere in the world, yet we are nowhere. Seeing as how the sea is never shown, the resort town acquires a delirious and claustrophobic quality. Similarly, having filmed the summer vacation resort during autumn, the city appears desolate and gloomy, its skies overcast, its shops closed. The dance halls and nightclubs, the streets crowded with signs and neon lights promising alcohol and partying only work at half-speed, tinting the Earth's future with an atmosphere of decadence and obsolescence.

The presence of tourists and locals works as a folksy and endearing counterpoint to the main character's bloody and merciless investigation. All the contented elderly people who roam the streets and cafes in motorised wheelchairs appear to not be aware of anything; they in no way react to the main character's slayings. The city emerges as an increasingly surreal and strange place.

Like a 16 mm B-movie from the 1970s

The film sticks to the conventions of a B-movie filmed in 16 mm, similar to a dated science fiction movie that would have been filmed in the 1970s. It is a film that imagines a future all too similar to the ruins (in this case touristic) of our present day. The fictional film only breaks away at very specific moments: every time an android is killed and we 'see' their implanted fake memories. And in those implanted memories, we get a sense of my memories: my house in Spain, my family, and my friends. The documentary footage reappears or cuts in, although it has always been beneath the futuristic plot. And below the documentary footage we find the evasion, the plot of science fiction, in a game of alternating sets of associations and correspondences. The film functions as a mirror reflecting everyday life and escapism, one's personal experience and imagination in the same gesture.

Sueñan los androides is a tempered and realistic science fiction movie. The science fiction reveals itself here as a promise that does not reach its culmination. It is a leap of faith, because nothing in the film truly transports us into the future. The futuristic plot feeds on truth and the commonplace, yet at the same time the spaces portrayed take on another life, sometimes comic, sometimes eerie. Working with the actors on improvising the dialogue and the portrayal of their jobs at their workplaces and in their day-to-day lives is unusual for a fantasy film – although in the end, the characters

and locations end up being inundated by the strangeness of the story being told.

Ion de Sosa



Ion de Sosa was born in San Sebastián, Spain, in 1981. From 2001 to 2004, he studied Cinematography at the Escuela de Cinematografía y del Audiovisual de la Comunidad de Madrid (ECAM). Since graduating, he has worked as a cinematographer, producer and director. Following *True Love* (2011, 70 min.), *Sueñan los androides* is his second feature-length film.