

Fri Oct 29 | 8:30 PM

Jack H. Skirball Series

In-theater and virtual screening

Theater tickets \$12/9 members; virtual: \$10/8 members

Series pass \$24

To get tickets, visit: [Perfume de Gardenias](#)

Macha Colón

Perfume de Gardenias

Perfume de Gardenias, the debut feature by Queer Afro-Puerto Rican multidisciplinary artist Macha Colón comes to REDCAT after its World Premiere at the 2021 Tribeca Film Festival. Colón knits a whimsical tale of motherly love and sorority tinted with black humor and sparkled with lavish doses of Caribbean flavors. Isabel is a loving and witty elderly widow with plenty of caring left to give. Soon after she decorates an exuberant and very personal funeral for her late husband, Toña—a power player in the neighborly gossip milieu—enlists her services into producing custom-made and one-of-a-kind funerals for the local parishioners of a middle-class *barrio* in Puerto Rico. *Perfume de Gardenias* puts caregiving at the center of the frame while picturing a candid take on the cycle of life and death, the relevance of mourning rituals, and the importance of companionship.

In person: Macha Colón

“Part of a broader body of work that includes productions across the disciplines of music, performance art, and political activism, *Perfume de Gardenias* brings the daring, cheerful, and radically ‘cuir’ style that characterizes Macha Colón’s artistic output to the silver screen.”
- *Movie/Network*

“Colón’s gaze is as authentic as it is original as she dares to poke fun at the sacred and profound in a deeply Catholic culture; humor that, in the end, helps to broaden our understanding of death, mourning, and the meaning of life itself.” - *Blackfilm.com*

The Program

Perfume de Gardenias is a Caribbean story about the universal theme of death that pays homage to all caregiving mothers in Puerto Rico.

The stellar performances by Luz María Rondón, as *Isabel*, and Sharon Riley, as *Toña*, build a compelling and entertaining picture of the Puerto Rican middle class from a refreshing perspective.

After years of caring for her bedridden husband, Isabel becomes widowed. This leads to her accepting her neighbor Toña’s invitation to decorate funerals for their community, a path that

will bring Isabel's heartfelt creativity in touch with a more complex and rich understanding of the moment of passing.

Perfume de Gardenias was conceived as an inter-multidisciplinary artistic project following the line of work of its writer and director, Macha Colón. The film features the unconventional creations of a team of artists, assembled from different disciplines, that bring about a fortified sense of community on and across the screen.

The Filmmaker

Gisela Rosario Ramos is an un-disciplined artist living and working in Puerto Rico and NYC. She studied Black and Puerto Rican Studies and Film and Media Studies at Hunter College, NYC, where she also worked as a documentary editor and was part of Eduardo Alegria's performance shows in PS 122. Upon returning to Puerto Rico, she worked as Artistic and Programming Director at Casa de Cultura Ruth Hernández, organizing cultural events while continuing to edit and direct films. Her award-winning short documentary *El Hijo de Ruby* has been shown in international festivals. Her artistic persona, **Macha Colón**, performs rock/pop music with her band Macha Colón y Los Okapi in alternative venues since 2008. They released their first album *Tanquecito de amor (Little Tank of Love)* in 2016 and performed in NYC at the Loisaida Festival, La Marqueta Retoña in El Barrio, and the New New Museum. She won an international documentary competition to film *Love Letters to an Iconess*, a documentary about a Puerto Rican queer diva who's now in her seventies. She's an Art Matters Foundation and NALAC grantee and received the first Resiliency Award through the Arts from the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture in Chicago. In 2020, she received the inaugural William Greaves Fund for mid-career filmmakers from Firelight Media.

The Jack H. Skirball Series is organized by Bérénice Reynaud and Eduardo Thomas and funded in part by the Ostrovsky Family Fund.