

 **PRAGDA** | SPANISH FILM CLUB

# DISCUSSION GUIDE



## SUBLIME

A film by MARIANO BIASIN

Argentina / 2022 / 100 min  
Spanish with English subtitles

## BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM:

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before watching a film, it is important to know the current events and history of the country that film comes from. Learning about the filmmaker is also a relevant way to gain insight on the context in which the film was produced. You can learn more about Mariano Biasin at <https://pragda.com/film/sublime/>.

### INTRODUCING THE FILM

A **film synopsis** is a piece of text designed to summarize the film's narrative, genre, style, and key participants in a way that appeals to a wide audience. The synopsis is part of the film's marketing process and tends to follow a traditional format. Read this synopsis for *Sublime*:

Mariano Biasin's acclaimed and tenderly observed coming-of-age film follows sixteen-year-old Manuel as he navigates adolescence in a small coastal town, hanging out with his girlfriend and playing in a rock band with Felipe, his best friend since childhood. But he also struggles with conflicted emotions as the realization dawns that his feelings for Felipe are becoming something more than friendship. Sensitive and cautious, Manuel must reconcile his desire to discover if his impulse is mutual, with the fear of risking his lifelong bond with Felipe.

Softly lit cinematography, Emilio Cervini's evocative soundtrack, and sweet, loving performances enrich this beautiful and candid story of acceptance.

- > From the film synopsis, can you imagine the genre and tone of the film?  
From this same text, try to identify the main events of the film's plot and the socio-political context of the film.
- > Do you think that the film will have a political message?  
Cite specific language from the synopsis to support your answer.
- > How do the trailer, poster, and still images encourage you to watch the film?
- > Viewing the marketing materials alone (i.e., trailer, poster, and still images available at <https://pragda.com/film/sublime/>) without the aid of the synopsis, can you make any assumptions regarding what the film is about?



## AFTER WATCHING THE FILM:

### NARRATIVE

- Consider the first introduction of Manuel through the camcorder footage. What does this footage teach us about Manuel? What does it tell us about the friendship he shares with Felipe?
- Analyze the relationship between Manuel and Azul. How does it evolve throughout the film? How does she help him as he struggles to discover his sexuality?
- Describe the living situation of Manuel's family. How do they interact amongst each other? Does Manuel feel as if he can confide in his family?
- As Manuel comes to terms with his sexual orientation, he first reveals his love for Felipe to Lara. Why do you think he was able to open to her?
- The van shared between Felipe and Manuel serves as the setting for various important scenes. How does Manuel feel about the van? What does it represent? How does the van act as a catalyst for the conflict between the two friends?
- After Manuel confesses his love to Felipe, their friendship is ruptured. How does he manage to fix their friendship? Who are the various people in his life who comfort and guide him back to Felipe?
- Although Manuel resolves the conflict within his friend group, he seemingly joins a new band. What do you make of this? Why do you think he made this decision?
- As the film comes to its conclusion, Manuel and Felipe share a tender conversation reminiscent of those from the start of the film. In what ways has their friendship stayed the same? In what ways has it changed? What do you think the future has in store for the two friends?



### CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES

- The film begins by showing camcorder footage from one of Manuel's childhood birthday parties. How does this technique differ from the rest of the cinematography in the film? Why do you believe that the filmmakers chose to use home video footage during this scene?
- *Sublime* can be described as a standard coming of age film. What formal and narrative elements are commonplace in this genre of film? How does it stylistically compare to other coming of age films that you have seen?
- Analyze the way in which the camera captures Manuel. How does the camera follow him? How does the camera's positioning help to influence the way in which we perceive Manuel?
- When is it first revealed that Manuel is romantically attracted to Felipe? What visual cues address this? How does the editing reflect Manuel's feelings regarding his desires?
- In *Sublime*, music and sound play an integral role in not only the life of Manuel, but also the telling of his story. How do the filmmakers blend both diegetic and non-diegetic sound to portray Manuel's feelings?



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## CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES *continued*

- Describe the color palette of this film. Is it dull or vibrant? Does it compliment the mood of uncertainty that Manuel feels as he passes through this volatile time?
- *Sublime* is a film that tonally depends on the complex emotions and relationships shared between the various characters. How does the camera frame these emotions? How does the camera generate a certain level of intimacy?
- Describe the pacing of *Sublime*. Does it feel fast or slow? Are there periods in the film in which the pacing feels inconsistent? What editing techniques were used to achieve this pacing?
- As the film reaches its end, Manuel decides to join his band and enjoy the party. How does this scene stylistically differ from the rest of the film? Consider topics such as lighting, sound, and pacing. How does this scene employ cinematic techniques to signify a change in Manuel's life?

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## THEMES

- In *Sublime*, Manuel lives through a time in his life where he must undergo change. Explore the themes of personal growth and transformation. How does Manuel navigate his way through this journey of self-discovery?
- Manuel deals with many conflicting emotions. Often, he can't find the words to express how he truly feels. How does Manuel use music to express himself? Speak on the value of art as a form of communication.
- On various occasions, societal expectations force Manuel into uncomfortable situations, especially related to sexuality. What are some strategies to resist negative peer pressure and make independent choices?
- Whether through the lyrics of Manuel's song or his visits to the beach, there are plenty of moments that reference the sea. What does the sea symbolize? How does it relate to the period of change that the teenagers are experiencing?
- Manuel deals with many insecurities. How does he manage to overcome them? Discuss the importance of having a positive support system amongst your peers.
- Early in the film, it is made clear that Manuel has strong romantic feelings towards Felipe. What are the various reasons for why he is afraid to confess his feelings? How can we work to build an LGBTQ+ friendly environment?
- Throughout the film, there are various instances of romantic relationships collapsing. What kind of impact can the falling through of a relationship have on those not directly involved? Although a romantic relationship may end, how can it transform into something completely different?
- While Manuel navigates his complicated feelings, his father also passes through a time of uncertainty. How do the two actively support each other? Speak on the importance of a strong bond between father and son.

