

# Tears in the Rain

This autumn, two years before the dystopian era it was set in, *Blade Runner* gets a much awaited sequel. **Ana de Armas** joins Ryan Gosling as the next gen depicting a fractured future for mankind.

"I'm trying to find a way of saying something without saying anything!" Actor Ana de Armas is trying not to give anything away about the much anticipated *Blade Runner 2049*. Armas plays Joi, a newcomer to the original's universe of humans and androids sloping around a dystopian Los Angeles of the future.

She can be forgiven for being cautious. *Blade Runner* is a cultural touchstone, preserved by the US Library of Congress as a key part of America's film heritage, lauded as one of the best sci-fi films of all time. Its sequel, set for release 6 October, comes freighted with serious expectation.

Run a quick Google search on *2049* and you'll find endless attempts to break the trailer down frame-by-frame by journalists and fans alike, all trawling for tidbits. But — non-disclosure agreements and a rabid fanbase wanting answers aside — Cuban-born Armas proceeds to chat for a good half an hour about the film. She promises "the same toxic atmosphere" of the original, and that she plays "a very complex character [...] we could talk about Joi for days." There a lot of speculation about whether Joi is human, an android "replicant", or neither. Whoever she is, Armas says that she shares plenty of screen time with Ryan Gosling's Agent K, who's on the hunt for Harrison Ford's iconic Rick Deckard.

Armas spent five months in Budapest making the film with the two actors, and anyone hoping for a surprise about what it's like to hang out with these men is going to be disappointed. Regarding Mr Gosling: apparently the "hey girl" memes are true, all true. He really is the Canadian boyfriend of your dreams. "He is so, so good to be around," she gushes. "He's an amazing human being and a hard worker and so professional, and at the same time he's so laid back and funny and so smart. Seriously." Another non-spoiler: Harrison Ford is "the coolest person in the world." "An amazing sense of humour," she enthuses, "and also the first one on set, the last one leaving, ready for anything. It was really inspiring to see."

Armas seems ready for anything, too; used to jumping feet-first into new worlds. Born in Havana, she studied at the National Theatre School of Cuba before leaving the country a few months shy of graduation to move to Spain. Now 29, four years ago she abandoned the successful career she'd made for herself in Spanish TV to try a new life in Hollywood. She didn't speak a word of English. "Yeah, when I moved to the US I started working on that," she laughs. She became fluent, and fast. "As the Cubans say, when your rice and beans depend on that, your brain goes into survival mode."

And anyway, she says, "I like challenges in general. Some people get annoyed in having to learn an accent or a language but I just took it as I was learning a new superpower." English-speaking roles started trickling in, and she's based in LA now. Not that she doesn't miss home. "To be honest, Cuba is always in my heart. This year I've been back four times already, because I have my family there and my friends and I miss it terribly. Every day."

After *Blade*, she'll be seen next in *Three Seconds*, a New York-based thriller alongside Rosamund Pike and Clive Owen. It's still fresh in her mind — she just finished shooting a few days before we spoke — and she says her character Sophia, is a meaty role. "Sophia, she's a very strong woman. She's a business owner, and a mother, and a wife, and she's one of those characters [where] her actions speak louder than her words."

You don't rise swiftly from obscurity to this kind of Hollywood role without some kind of plan, but for anyone wondering where she'll pop up next, Armas says she isn't trying to engineer her acting career in any particular direction. It's because of her Cuban roots, she says. "I personally don't like to have expectations about anything. Where I was born and raised, I'm kind of used to living day by day, and letting life surprise [me]. I think I like to improvise, you know? I'm not a person that makes big plans too ahead in the future, I just don't. Because life always proves you wrong."

Words  
OLIVIA GAGAN



Dress: VERSACE; mesh dress: PREEN by THORNTON BREGAZZI; top: JILL STUART; and shoes: GIVENCHY



Opposite page: Jacket and skirt MOSCHINO and mesh dress PREEN by THORNTON BREGAZZI. This page: Coat PROENZA SCHOULER





Coat JILL STUART and mesh dress PREEN by THORNTON BREGAZZI. Hair SHINYA NAKAGAWA using L'INCROYABLE CREME by KERASTASE. Makeup AI YOKOMIZO using CHANEL LES BEIGES. Thanks to BEYOND STUDIO NYC.

