



AlbaSotorra

Cinema Productions

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A story about our right to breathe clean air.

A film by Meri Collazos Solà and Joan Lopez Lloret

AlbaSotorra
Cinema Productions

 **Lovexair**
Foundation
care for your lungs



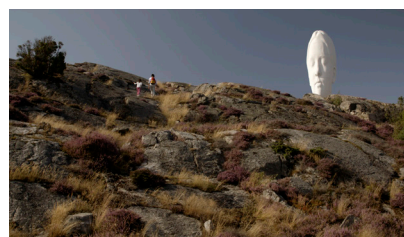
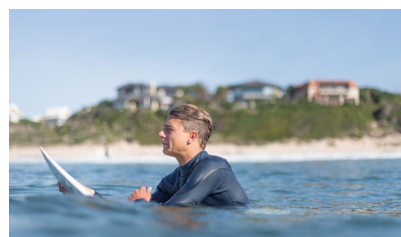
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TEASER

Teaser: <https://vimeo.com/574008436>

passwords: alpha1



TAG LINE

A story about our right to breathe clean air.

SYNOPSIS

In 2013, Meri, a young mother has a daughter born with Alpha- 1 Antitrypsin deficiency, a rare genetic condition which can lead to serious lung or liver disease , amongst other health issues. Meaning that she is vulnerable to the invisible threat of pollution which dominates our global environment in cities, such as Barcelona, her home.

In her search for solutions, Meri begins a journey that leads her to meet experts across different fields alongside other mothers who are also fighting for their children's right to breathe clean air.

What she discovers surprise her and reveal how there exist brutal contradictions in our everyday life. Recent events give her wings to dream that there will be a change for the better. Will this happen?

ARTISTIC DETAILS

Director: Meri Collazos Solà

Screenwriter: Meri Collazos Solà / Joan Lopez Lloret

Executive Producer: Alba Sotorra

Director of Photography: David Arasa / Joan Lopez Lloret

Editing: Anna Oriol / Meri Collazos Solà

Live sound: Verònica Font

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Title: Breath. Mom

Production Company: Alba Sotorra Cinema Productions

Genre: Documentary

Length: 52' / 70'

Country: Spain

Language: English/ Catalan

Versions: English/ Catalan

Shooting format: 4K

Sound: Dolby digital

LOCATIONS

Barcelona, London, Madrid, Spain, Sweden, Portugal and the United States

DIRECTORS' NOTES

My daughter caught me crying one day, sitting in my office. I had just received news of a friend's death from lung cancer. At just over four years old, she wiped away my tears and comforted me with a sweet plea: "Breathe, Mom". From then on, this phrase has stayed with me. Stop and breathe, nothing else.

Albert Einstein used to say that if he had an hour to solve the world's problems, he would spend 55 minutes analyzing the problems to arrive at an accurate diagnosis, and once the causes were discovered, he would spend the remaining 5 minutes finding a solution.

This documentary undertakes this task from my own personal experience. Having begun accidentally, with the signs of an illness and the search for its causes, I discovered the need and the right we all have to breathe healthy air.

Breathe, Mom is narrated from a mother's perspective, starting with pregnancy, given that the first environment we encounter as human beings, is our mother's body.

I would like to dedicate it to my daughters' generations who will have to confront the contradictions of progress and the great ethical challenges this imposes on us as humans.

This documentary is intended to contribute to the awareness needed in our society for us to change things for the better.

Meri Collazos Solà (Director and scriptwriter)



Meri agreed to work on my film "Sinaia, Beyond the Ocean," and she came to Mexico City for a few months. She only had one condition for staying with me in Mexico City: every weekend, we should go to the nearest natural area because the city's polluted air asphyxiated her.

I was born and raised in the city of Barcelona, while Meri grew up breathing the clean air of the Costa Brava, and continued to do so in her new American life in the East Coast. Thus, in 2010, running away from the pollution of Mexico City, we started our romance, and we have worked together on other five documentary films.

The shock we received in 2013, when our daughter was diagnosed with Alpha-1 Antitrypsin deficiency. (Alpha-1) a genetic disorder hidden in ourselves, once again confronted us, now, as a family, with the search for a solution to improve our living conditions. Living in the center of Barcelona, we were spectators to the thousands of cars rushing past us daily. Deeply concerned, we wondered how all this pollution would affect our little girl's health.

The right to breathe clean air must be part of any effort to overcome the fears of a seemingly hopeless future. This has always been very clear to Meri. However, for myself, air pollution was a ghost, it was invisible. Then little by little, I understood the dangers of that invisibility. As a filmmaker I have always tried to create an awareness of the world using audiovisual language as a tool. Now, more than ever, as a father, as a husband and as a citizen I want to make visible that "invisibility" in this film where we see that every citizen's lung health is being put at risk, including my daughter's.

Joan Lopez Lloret (Co-scriptwriter)

CHARACTERS



MERI

The main narrative voice, director of the documentary. Meri is a carrier of the Alpha-1 gene, and her daughter was born with a condition that can affect her in different ways particularly her future respiratory health. The mother's voice, Meri, narrates these dangers and reflects on the activities of daily life in Barcelona, a city with high air pollution. The girl, who was born with a neonatal cholestasis that affected her liver, seems now finally to have overcome the risk of a liver transplantation. Meri and her partner Joan inform themselves and seek expert opinions. The answer is clear: the level of pollution in the air we breathe is a threat to her daughter's health and every child living in the city. They want to find a safe place for living. Alpha-1 -Antitrypsin deficiency was discovered in the 1960s in Sweden. It made clear that a sector of the population was at much greater risk of disease if exposed to toxic air. Sweden, a pioneer country in environmental awareness, now also has laboratories that are developing CRISPR genetic edition to correct the Alpha-1 mutation in DNA. Meri and Joan will travel with their daughter to Sweden to learn more about these research. They will also learn how the country is working to become smoke-free in 2025. After all, the discovery of being an "Alpha" is only the tip of an iceberg, in a society that must also become aware of the dangers of being forced to breathe air that can be harmful to everyone's health. (Locations: Barcelona, Madrid, Portugal, NYC, Mexico City, Sweden)



SHANE

Originally from the United Kingdom, 20 years ago Shane's last child was born with Alpha-1. Her son's diagnosis drove Shane to work in patient advocacy and go on to establish Lovexair, a foundation that helps respiratory patients through prevention, care and health education. Currently, she lives in Ericeira, Portugal, a surfing paradise, where her son **Arran Strong** has become a professional surfer as well as an ambassador for Lovexair, promoting a healthy and happy life on social networks. Shane will introduce us to people who have developed chronic respiratory diseases. Among others, she shares the story about Consuelo Perez, sadly passed away in February 2020, an Alpha affected by pulmonary emphysema, who publicly confronted the president of the community of Madrid for disregarding the level of pollution in the capital of Spain. Or **Richard Lovrich**, a photographer, lung-affected patient and active member of the U.S. Alpha-1 Foundation support group New England who is a close friend of Shane's son, with whom he shares his passion for surfing. Richard was unable to take up the sport because of his undiagnosed illness early in life, but has been a supporter through his life. With his photographs, he portrays the activity of the Alpha-1 Foundation, giving the disorder the image of a "life challenge" rather than a problem. (Locations: Mexico City, Portugal)



SUSANA

lives in Barcelona, is an activist and works as an environmentalist. During her pregnancy she participated in a scientific study on the effect of city air quality on the fetus. She is President of the Platform for Public Transport in Catalonia. Joined by medical and scientific experts, she will raise our awareness about how the closer someone is, to the source of pollution, the worse the effect is on respiratory health. Paradoxes that riddle today's world will thus be revealed, such as the fact that theoretically healthy activities such as walking, cycling or playing sports in the city, can have dire consequences. (Locations: Barcelona)



NADIA

left her native Madrid to live with her Chilean partner in Barcelona, where her two daughters have been born. With other parents of their daughters' school, she has formed the group "Respira Glòries" (Breathe, Glòries) to campaign against the damage inflicted by the massive road works on the school, on one of the main highways entering Barcelona. The family has decided to move from the city to an isolated house in the mountains, driving the 30 km that separate their new home from the school every day. During the documentary we follow their change in awareness and their desire to school their daughters in a rural, less polluted air environment and on a trip to meet their parents in Madrid. (Locations: Barcelona, Madrid)



RICHARD LOVRICH

"I would like to begin with a quote from The Martian by Andy Weir. *the stranded visitor must utilize his wits and spirit to find a way to survive on the hostile planet.* I am one such stranded visitor, let's say from Alpha-1 and my hostile planet is planet earth. Before venturing outside the safety of my enclosure I must gauge the temperature, humidity and the day's air quality. If there is one overarching philosophy for survival, it can be gleaned from the words of Broadway's iconic musical West Side Story: *Just play it cool, - Real cool.*" (Locations: NYC)



ARRAN STRONG

"I love the ocean. It is the only place where I don't really think about my disease and where all my worries disappear. It's my getaway. It is the freshest air, it's good for your respiration, it's calming and it is curing for me to be surrounded by water - it is a place where I can forget about all my problems." When Arran was just seven years old his mum brought him to a surf school for the first time. And that's when the ocean became his home and his safe place. (Locations: Portugal)

LOCATIONS

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BARCELONA



MADRID



NEW YORK



MEXICO CITY



SWEDEN



PORTUGAL



SPAIN

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STORY

PLAY-LIST



BREATHING

Introduction to the story through beautiful images of nature and a reflection on the act of breathing...

MERI AND THE CITY

In Barcelona, 2013, Meri becomes the mother of a girl with an Alpha-1, which increases her concern about air pollution and makes her confront city life.

SUSANA

A pregnant environmentalist agrees to carry a backpack in a study measuring the effects of pollution on the fetus in the city. Air pollution during pregnancy can have

SHANE

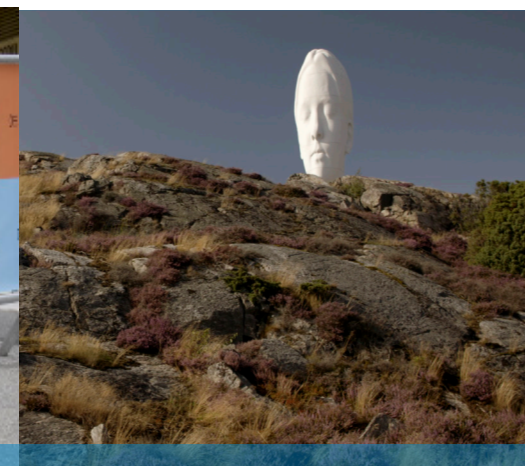
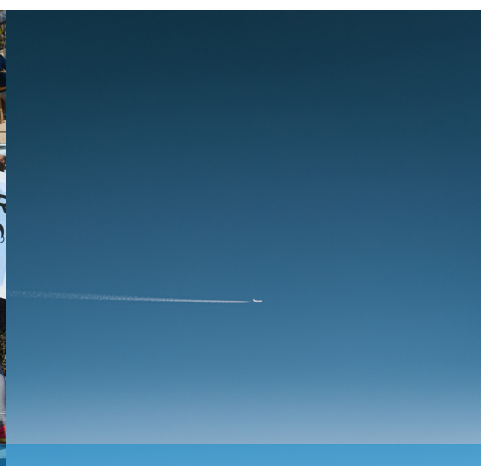
Another mother over time has founded Lovexair, to help respiratory patients. Her son, who was born with Alpha1, is now a professional surfer. She also introduce Richard Lovrich a Alpha1 in NYC.

SCIENCE

Meri continues to search for answers from the experts. The need to listen to scientists and take action is crucial.

STRENGTH

Clean air movements are emerging in cities globally. With Greta Thunberg, and Fridays for Future, the voice for change is growing stronger.



INVISIBILITY

Meri examines her situation and seeks answers and solutions to the city's poor air quality. She travels to Mexico City with Shane to reveal efforts to reduce air pollution in a city that has been ranked as the most polluted in recent decades.

NADIA

Nadia is a mother who denounces air pollution at her children's school. She decides to emigrate outside of the city, to a house on the outskirts, where she would continue her advocacy after years of struggle. A new revolution has started to claim for clean air in schools, la Revolta Escolar.

ALPHA TRIP

The family travels to Sweden, where the Alpha-1 Antitrypsin deficiency was discovered in the 1960s. Research is now being carried out in Swedish Research Labs (Astrazeneca) to find improvements in genetics. Meri also visits New York, where she meets Richard Lovright, who tells her about his life as an Alpha1

UNEXPECTED HOPE

Meri imagines a future with cleaner air, while her 5-year-old daughter successfully overcomes the first symptoms of the disease. Events such as the containment due to the COVID19 pandemic, make visible the improvement of air quality in a world with fewer cars running. It is the beginning of the big realisation after 2020 pandemic.

THE ANSWER

Each of the mothers continues in their own way to improve their children's lives. Also the Alpha-1, do their best to carry on with that. A reflection on each character' consciousness/awareness and hopes about our environment and its impact on our health.

NARRATIVE TREATMENT



The mothers' voice-overs, and especially Meri's, that weave the thread through the story and move it forward. We start with the autobiography and tell the story of meeting the other characters.

The interviews with the experts will give us real data and information, that will serve as a counterpoint and support the mother's reflections in the main argument. The interviews will be located in their natural contexts, as for example during the Air Congress. Meri, as an interviewer, is also part of this backdrop.

The main characters will help to advance the story by introducing other narrative elements. Shane will introduce herself and her son Arran, and the two together will introduce Richard, another Alpha. Susana will introduce the IS Global study and the Friday for Future demonstrations and so on. All these people are for Meri a play of mirrors where past, present and future reflect her dilemmas and concerns.



Questions will be posed, such as: Could she have prevented the possible urban pollution of her daughter during her pregnancy? How does living in the city affect peoples' lives? How will her daughter's life be conditioned by this genetic deficiency?

Another narrative element is the archival images that refer to media events, which may or may not be connected to the personal stories of the protagonists. For example, the report on "whether or not pollution kills" on TV Channel Six or the appearance in the media of some of the main characters, for example "Susana as an activist of the Platform for Public Transport in debates on Televisió de Catalunya". The graphics will be used in a narrative way when there is data that needs to be visualized, and done so in keeping with the tone and rhythm of the documentary.



The goal of all these narrative elements will be to help viewers become aware and discover that the problem of pollution in cities is real and also affects them.

AUDIOVISUAL TREATMENT

We will start the documentary with spectacular generic images with positive features such as extensive forests and their tributaries that will remind us of the image of a lung, macro images of bees pollinating a flower or very close-up shots of a naked human body breathing. The montage will contrast with other shots with negative connotations such as bird's eye views of cities full of cars, smoke, fires, and landscapes made barren due to fires.

In the visual treatment in each block of presentation of characters and situations, we will use our own materials: in homes, in the street, in nature, in congresses, in laboratories or hospitals. We are shooting in 4K, with posterior treatment of color correction, to give a visually genuine tone to all this material and to homogenize the story.

We will create a type of image with fluid and organic movement as if it were a soft breath. We will use a shallow depth of field and a soft, dim light to emulate the feeling of caring motherhood, as "Breathe, Mom" is basically narrated from the perspective of mothers.

The presentation of the biographies of Meri and Shane's children who are affected by Alpha-1 will be done with archive images of the families. For example, the images that Joan and Meri have collected since birth will be used to narrate their daughter's diagnosis (baby pictures, doctor's visits, at school, the kindergarten years, or at the house in the country). As an archive we will also use images recorded by Nadia, one of the protagonists, who has been collecting images since the beginning of the conflict of the construction work in front of the Glòries school to create awareness campaigns on social networks (Youtube, Facebook). Likewise, we will also use spectacular images of Arran (Shane's son) filmed in surfing championships recorded by his teammate and that are part of his sports promotion campaign.

As for the sound treatment, it is important to highlight the role of extra-diegetic music to drive the emotionality of the narrative. For this purpose, we will use a type of music with appropriate rhythms and melodies. Some effects will also be created in the sound treatment to heighten the emotions of the viewer. Such as, the sound of the city, of car engines, in contrast to the sound of a breath.



INTERVIEWS ALREADY CARRIED OUT WITH EXPERTS

DR. ROEL VERMEULEN

Professor Vermeulen works for the Environmental Epidemiology group at the Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences, Utrecht University, The Netherlands. His research focuses on environmental risk factors for cancer, asthma and neurological diseases. In his research, he has been able to link the designs of classical epidemiological studies with biotechnological advances in the study of the genome.



ANNA OUDINN

Anna Oudin is an epidemiologist and statistician. Her research is mainly on the effects of air pollution on the brain. She studies how stress and air pollution together can affect the physical and mental health of children, and the cognitive effects of air pollution on the elderly.



EBBA MALMQVISTE

Ebba Malmqviste is a researcher at Lund University. Her studies focus primarily on the effects of air pollution on fetuses. She is studying the exposure of pregnant women to traffic and the impact of air quality in different European cities.



LEONARDO SANTIAGO

CTO and co-founder of Bettair Cities. The Bettair's primary goal is to provide cities with high quality and high spatial and temporal resolution maps of urban air quality. The company is based in Barcelona. It has carried out studies on air quality in other Catalan cities such as Girona, and offers the implementation of sensors. A digital platform that is based on portable or fixed nodes that incorporate low-cost gas sensors that are scalable, flexible and adaptable to any city.



DR. JORDI SUNYER

He is the coordinator of ISGlobal's Childhood and Environment Research Programme in Barcelona. He is also a professor of preventive medicine and public health at Pompeu Fabra University. He is the founder and president of the INMA and Bisco birth cohorts in Spain and principal investigator of several international studies, including the ERC Advanced Grants Breathe "Brain development and Air Pollution ultrafine particles in School children" and AIR-NB "pre-natal exposure to urban AIR pollution and prenatal and postnatal Brain development".



PROFESSOR MARTIN WILLIAMS

Professor Martin Williams has established a Science Policy Unit in the Environmental Research Group at King's College London. His interests lie in the application of atmospheric science to air quality policy, the relationship between air quality and health, and the links between air quality and climate change. He has a particular interest in the effectiveness of air quality policies on urban and regional air quality, as demonstrated by measurements.



DR. MARIA NEIRA

Director, Public Health, Environment and Social Determinants of Health Department (PHE) World Health Organisation .
Dr Neira is since 2005, Director of the Department of Public Health and Environment at the World Health Organization (WHO). Between 2002 and 2005, she was Vice Minister of Health and Consumer Affairs in Spain and President of the Spanish Food Safety and Nutrition Agency. She has been working for WHO since 1993, with her first assignment being Coordinator of the Global Task Force on Cholera Control and then being appointed in 1999 as Director of the Department of Control, Prevention and Eradication.



BIOGRAPHIES

DIRECTOR/ CO-SCRIPTWRITER

Meri Collazos i Solà (Vic, 1979) has a degree in Audiovisual Communication from the Pompeu Fabra University, 2002. Between 2002-2004 she began her professional career as part of the Canal Nord renovation team. She directed the cultural magazine for young people **CoolTV**. Between 2004 and 2007, she was responsible for the programming of Girona arts and culture with spaces such as **En escena**, **Arquitectura**, **Escaparates de Arte** and the film-mag **Ull de peix**. She also created and edited the new format programs for the Local Television Network **Sense Nord**, **Diccionari de l'Art** and **Diccionario del Medio Ambiente**.

Later on, she collaborated with Catalan entities such as the Vila Casas Foundation, the Caixa Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation, Casa de Cultura de Girona, the Museo Reina Sofía, making and editing audiovisual pieces to support exhibitions and artists. She also collaborated as editor and assistant director in several video clips and short films of the production companies Visual13, The Jump and Bankrobber. From 2008 to 2009 she worked at the Citilab in l'Hospitalet de Llobregat with the Society for the Promotion of Knowledge in the postproduction of the Àctic episodes.

Between 2009 and 2012 she was a **Fulbright scholarship** holder pursuing a **Master's Degree in Intercultural Communication & Filmmaking** at the **University of Maryland, Baltimore County**. She worked at the New Media Studio as a digital storytelling workshop facilitator and video editor for educational campaigns. She carried out the trans-media project **Culture Shock Story** about new media and self-representations. She also directed and edited the short documentary films **Patterson Park Duckpin Bowling Center for Maryland Traditions** and **Handle for the Axe for the Washington D.C. Art Center gallery**.

In 2011 she collaborated with director Joan López Lloret as editor of the feature-length documentaries

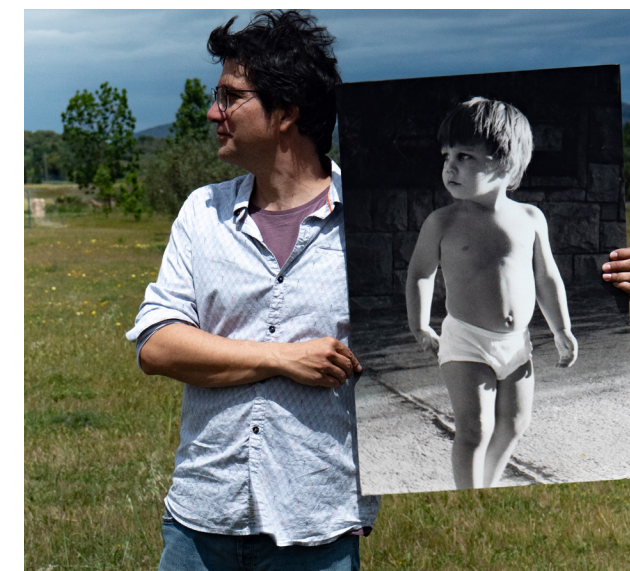


La Cigüeña Metálica and **Sinaia, más allá del Océano**. The following year she continued to work with the director doing research in the United States for the documentary **138 segundos**, which she would later also edit. Since 2012, when she returned to Barcelona, she has collaborated with the production company Frame Zero in multiple productions as a filmmaker, highlighting projects for the Fundación Arte y Mecenazgo, realizing pieces with artists such as Carlos León, Soledad Sevilla and Miralda. Recently, she has collaborated as a writer and editor in other Lopez Lloret's films **Familia No Nucler** and **Simfonia d'una ciutat**.

CO-SCRIPTWRITER

Joan Lopez Lloret (1969) first made a name for himself with the feature-length documentary, **Hermanos Oligor** (2004), a film that portrays the secret world of two artists in search of other realities. The film won the **Audience Award** at the **Málaga Film Festival** and **Best Documentary** at **Docúpolis Barcelona**; it premiered in Spanish cinemas. He returned to the big screen with his second feature film, **Utopia 79** (2006), which deconstructs the dream of the Nicaraguan revolution through a tale of subordinate voices. The following year, he directed **Sunday at five** (2007), a Catalan, Basque and Irish co-production that tells the story of two ex-convicts in the peace process in Northern Ireland. Lopez Lloret is notable for his capacity to bring to light captivating stories that give voice to figures who have often been forgotten. Thus, the documentary **Sinaia, mas allá del océano** (2010) recovers the stories of the exiles of the Spanish republic seventy years after their transatlantic voyage to Mexico. The next co-production with Mexico, **138 segundos** (2011), recounts the tale of the flight of a Catalan boxing champion in the 1930s, knocked out in his last fight for the world championship. The subject of fate reappears in his next feature film, **La Cigüeña Metálica** (2012), about missing children during the war of El Salvador, a coproduction with TVE. He has also directed documentary films for television: **Encants, historia de un trasllat** (2014) and **Temps de caritat** (2015), both focused on the transformation of his native Barcelona.

Recently, he has directed **Phenoms, Spain** (2018) for the documentary series produced by FOX SPORTS and most recently, **Maria del Mar** (2019), about the life of the singer Maria del Mar Bonet, and **Familia No Nuclear** (2019) exploring communal experiences.



Joan López Lloret is notable for carrying out the cinematography of his own documentaries. He began experimenting at a very young age with short, Super-8 films. He studied cinematography at the Centro Calassanç (now ESCAC) and film direction at the CEEC (1988-90). He has worked in television, film and advertising. His films have been chosen to participate in numerous international film festivals, where he has also given workshops on documentary filmmaking.

THE PRODUCER ALBA SOTORRA

Alba Sotorra Cinema Productions is a production company based in Barcelona, specialized in the production of fiction and documentary feature films for cinema, television and VOD platforms internationally. With a team exclusively formed by women, we tell stories from a gender-conscious perspective, with a social and political commitment to present-time topics that move us because of their genuine and risky essence.

Motivated by the lack of diversity of points of view in the cinema industry, we seek to give voice to a wide range of stories told by women who have a strong personal connection to the subject of their films.

We have produced documentary feature films such as: “The Return: Life After ISIS” (2021), which had its world premiere at SXSW, its Canadian premiere at HotDocs, its UK premiere at Sheffield IFF and its national premiere at DocsBarcelona; and “Comandante Arian” (2018), which premiered at HotDocs, Shanghai, Karlovy Vary and Sheffield among many others. We have produced the fiction feature film “The End Will Be Spectacular” (2020), which premiered in Rotterdam, Kolkata IFF and has been distributed in cinemas in Spain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Korea, Japan and LatAm. We have generated international impact through the presence of our films at Class A film festivals such as HotDocs, Karlovy Vary and other internationally renowned film festivals. We have extensive experience in international coproductions, as we have worked with Germany, France, Qatar, China, Syria's Kurdistan, Iraq, and most recently with Afghanistan. We have a solid relationship with Spanish and EU film funds—we have been beneficiaries of ICEC, ICAA, MEDIA Creative Europe Slate and Single projects and Eurimages—and local, national and international TV broadcasters.



2021. **The Return: Life after ISIS**

Documentary feature film directed by Alba Sotorra. With the support of ICEC and Creative Media Europe for development. Co-produced with Sky TV, TVC. World premiere at SXSW, selected for HotDocs, Cleveland IFF, Seattle IFF and DOCS Barcelona 2021.

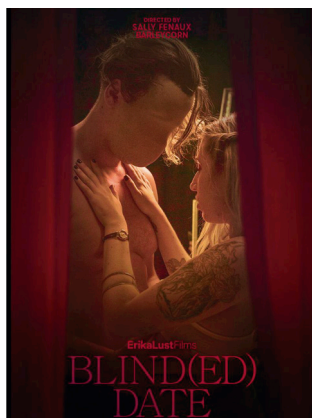


2021. **Dona sota la pluja.** Documentary short film, with the support of ICEC and ICAA.





2021. **Les altres coses que ens separen.**
Short film directed by Elena Ballvé and Alexandra Gantzer.
With the support of ICEC and Creative MEDIA Europe for development.



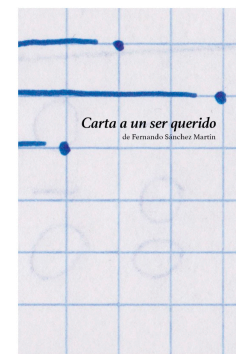
2020. **Blind(ed) Date.**
Erotic short film directed b Sally Fenaux, for Erika Lust Films.



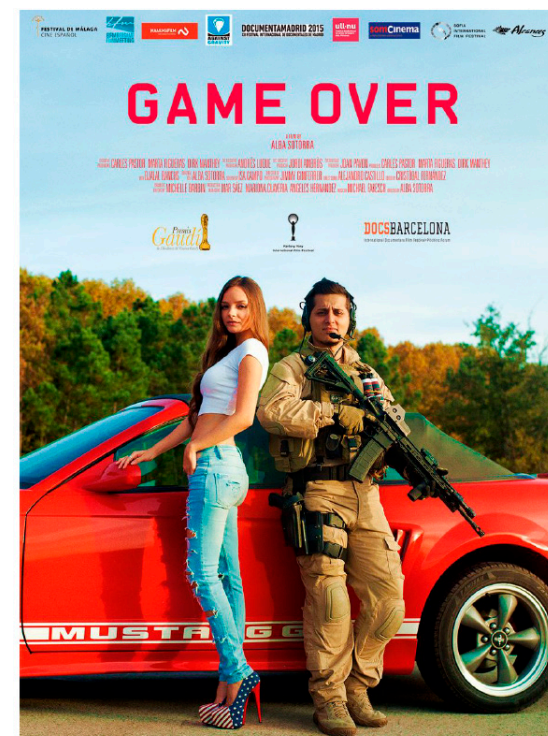
2020. **La vella lluita.**
Fiction short film directed by Carol and Marina Rodríguez Colás. With the support of ICEC, ICAA and Dones Visuals.



2020. **For Freedom.**
Fiction feature film directed by Ersin Çelik. International co-production with Síria and Iraq. Premiered at the Rotterdam Festival, winner of a list of honours at the Valencia Film Festival. Distributed in cinemas in Spain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Korea, Japan



2020. **Carta a un ser querido.**
Short film made during confinement by Covid-19, directed by Fernando Sánchez Martín. Selected Alternativa FF and FICMA.



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Sheffield Doc Fest



CAMDEN
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FILM FESTIVAL

ONE
WORLD
INTERNATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS
DOCUMENTARY
FILM FESTIVAL



Jeonju
Intl. Film
Festival



Internationales Filmfestival
Mannheim-Heidelberg



2015. **Game over.**
Documentary feature film directed by Alba Sotorra. Prize Gaudí for the Best Documentary in 2016.
Also, winner of the Best Documentary at the DOCS Barcelona International Festival, with an honours mention at the City of Barcelona awards.

2018. **Commander Arian, a story of Women, War and Freedom.**
World premiere on HotDocs, European premiere in Sheffield and in Asia in Shanghai. Selected for Camden IFF, Sao Paulo IFF, Mannheim Heidelberg IFF, NYC Docs, Jeonju IFF, among others. Nominated for a Gaudí Award, Tim Hetherington Award and John Marshall Award. Distributed in cinemas in Spain by 39ESCALONES and with Dogwoof of international sales agents. Co-production with Germany, TVC and TVE, Movistar +. With the support of ICEC, Berlin Medienboard.

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