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Seattle International
Film Festival
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TEMPO
OFFICIAL SELECTION
TEMPO DOCUMENTARY
AWARD

PRÅMFILM PRESENTS A FILM BY

CELINA ESCHER

FLY SO FAR

WHEN MISCARRIAGE IS A CRIME

WITH TEODORA DEL CARMEN VÁSQUEZ PRODUCED BY MÓNICA HERNÁNDEZ REJÓN CO-PRODUCED BY MARIA ÅKESSON & SAÚL CALLEJAS CINEMATOGRAPHY GUILLERMO ARGUETA, AUDUN FJELDHEIM, CELINA ESCHER, CHRISTIAN RIVERA, FABRICO SIBRIÁN, CAMILO HENRÍQUEZ, NILS BUCHER, KALLE JANSSON & MARIA ÅKESSON DIRECT SOUND ENRIQUE POCASANGRE, ÁNGEL CORTEZ & JAIME PERLA ANIMATION LOUISA WALLSTRÖM & ROLAND SEER EDITING MATTEO FACCENDA ORIGINAL MUSIC MAHAN MOBASHERY & NILS BUCHER COLOR GRADING PETER MAGNUSSON/HELION FILM SOUND DESIGN ANDERS LINDAHL/LJUBBANG GRAPHIC DESIGN SPEKTRA EDITING CONSULTANCY ROUGH CUT SERVICE WITH THE SUPPORT OF SWEDISH FILM INSTITUTE, FILM COMMISSIONER JUAN PABLO LIBOSSART, IDFA BERTHA FUND, THE SWEDISH ARTS GRANTS COMMITTEE, FILMBASEN/REGION STOCKHOLM & FILM I DALARNA INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION CAT&DOCS



SYNOPSIS

Imagine that you are pregnant. You are in your ninth month. You feel an intense pain. You faint. When you wake up you are at the hospital, surrounded by police officers. They accuse you of having killed your own baby. This is the story of Teodora Vásquez, the spokesperson of The Seventeen, the women accused of aggravated homicide in El Salvador because of having a miscarriage or a stillbirth.

Fly So Far follows Teodora and The Seventeen in their struggle to regain their freedom. Due to the criminalization of abortion, they have been sentenced up to 30 years in prison for having an obstetric emergency. Their testimonies and cases are evidence of the State's violence against women, but also of collective resilience, solidarity and sisterhood.



TEODORA VÁSQUEZ & THE 17+

TEODORA VÁSQUEZ was in the ninth month of her second pregnancy in 2007 when she fainted and had a stillbirth while working. When she woke up at the hospital, she was accused of murder and sentenced to 30 years of prison. Teodora became the spokesperson of the women facing the same charges as her.

THE SEVENTEEN is the group of women imprisoned at the Ilopango prison who have been accused of aggravated homicide after having a miscarriage. All of them belong to the Salvadorean rural and urban working class. Many of the women became pregnant after being sexually abused. Some of them have spent more than 15 years in prison.



BACKGROUND

EL SALVADOR HAS ONE of the most restrictive abortion laws in the world. It is one of five countries where abortion is not permitted under any circumstance. In 1998, two major changes in the Penal Code and the Constitution were made by the Legislative Assembly. The first was Article 133 in the Penal Code, which prohibited abortion under any circumstance and is punishable with two to eight years in prison, applicable both to the woman and the doctor or other healthcare personnel who assist the abortion. The second change was the addition of the term "conception" to the Salvadorean Constitution which states, "life begins at conception". Together these changes led to a total ban of abortion denying Salvadorean women the right to choose. Since 1998, more than 181 women

have been criminalized for abortion, but convicted for aggravated homicide which carries a sentence of up to 30 years in prison. The change in crime occurs during trial where the judge may determine a miscarriage or stillbirth as aggravated homicide. These changes in the Penal Code and Constitution have had serious consequences for the Salvadorean women, such as high maternal mortality, suicide among young girls victims of rape, and the unjust incarceration of approximately 181 women. The violence young girls and women face daily in their homes and in public spaces is further increased by the State's total ban on abortion. In short, the State's current law on abortion criminalizes women for being women and denies them their right to life and health.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I AM A SALVADOREAN WOMAN and the law against abortion goes through my body. To be a woman in El Salvador means to be potentially accused of murder and deprived of freedom if you have an obstetric labor complication, such as a miscarriage or a stillbirth. Under the Salvadorean Constitution, the criminalization of abortion impedes us from deciding over our bodies, life and health. The State forces young girls and women to continue unwanted pregnancies even if their life is in danger or when it's a product of rape. I couldn't accept the institutional violence against women and girls in my country. Therefore

I decided to go to the women's prison of Ilopango and meet Teodora and the other women of The Seventeen. From the start, I felt connected to Teodora, I admired her resilience and her strength after a decade of having been unjustly imprisoned. The way she gave strength to the other women, as well as the sisterhood they have woven during these years and how they support each other in such a hostile place, inspired me to do this film. This is my way to contribute to their struggle for freedom, so their voices resonate beyond the prison walls and to reclaim autonomy over our bodies.



PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

FLY SO FAR IS AN URGENT FILM. Its relevance goes beyond denouncing and searching for justice in the case of Teodora Vázquez and her fellow inmates in El Salvador. It is a film that follows some of the fundamental values of the documentary filmmaking: giving voice to the underrepresented, discussing the human condition and producing new perspectives and realities. As a producer it is a privilege for me to be part of this project. In the first place, for

having the opportunity to create a space for discussion of urgent issues such as abortion and gender violence among a public that goes beyond El Salvador and Sweden. Second, for being included in a feminist project that discusses gender norms and gives voice to women who have literally been deprived of their freedom and uprooted from their contexts and life projects. I have total confidence in the director's artistic and political sensibility.



DIRECTOR'S BIO

CELINA ESCHER is a Swiss-Salvadorean filmmaker. She studied documentary film at the International Film and Television School in San Antonio de los Baños (EICTV) in Cuba. In 2016 her short film *Motriz* was part of the student selection at IDFA and at Poitiers Film Festival 2017. Her film *Verde Olivo* was shown at the Film des Femmes Créteil in France and also in festivals in San Francisco, England and

Germany. In 2018 Celina's short film *Luz para Ellas* was screened at the International Festival of New Latin American Cinema in La Habana and the Vancouver Latin American Film Festival. In March 2019 Celina was selected as one of the 50 new Latin American filmmakers at Talent Campus of Guadalajara International Film Festival in Mexico. *Fly So Far* is Celina's first documentary feature film.

PRODUCERS

MÓNICA HERNÁNDEZ REJÓN is a Mexican film producer, director and programmer based in Sweden. In 2019 she debuted as director with the short documentary *The Love Immigrants*, co-directed with Debhora Vega. Her most recent productions are the feature documentaries *All We Own* (2019) by Emily Norling, and *Fly So Far* (2021) by Celina Escher. Currently she is producing the documentaries *To the North* by Jasmijn Kooijman and *Reflexion* by MyNa Do and Farah Yusuf, among others.

MARIA ÅKESSON is a Swedish producer and cinematographer, with a background in Fine Arts and Documentary filmmaking, she has been working in the film industry for twelve years. In 2013 she created Sugar Rush Productions, the company which she runs with the focus on mixing film, art and culture with feminism, anti-racism and environmental issues. Maria is currently producing *Weak Women* by My Sandström, *Way Home (Hemväg)* by Jessica Laurén, and *Farewell (Avsked)* directed by herself.

IMPACT PRODUCER

LOURDES GIL ALVARADEJO is a Mexican film programmer and project manager with a demonstrated history in the entertainment industry. Skilled in community outreach, development of new creative endeavours, and leading projects. Experienced professional with a Bachelor of Arts with a focus on Communication and Media Studies. Lourdes has worked as program coordinator at relevant documentary film festivals and since 2018 she is the director of CinemaQueer Mexico.

EDITOR

MATTEO FACCENDA is an Italian editor based in La Havana, Cuba. Graduated from the La Sapienza University of Rome, and the EICTV, Cuba. He has worked as editor for fiction and documentary films which have been selected at film festivals such as Venice Film Festival, Locarno, IDFA, among others. He has directed the documentaries *Genius Loci* and *Reflex on the Screen*, both released in 2020. *Fly So Far* is Matteo's third collaboration with Celina Escher.

CINEMATOGRAPHERS

GUILLERMO ARGUETA is a Salvadorean cinematographer. He graduated from Casa Comal Film and Television School in Guatemala and the International Film and Television School (EICTV) in Cuba. He has worked as Director of Photography in fiction short films such as *Apuntes a la orilla* official selection at Jihlava International Documentary Film Fest 2017.

ANIMATORS

LOUISA WALLSTRÖM is a Swedish graphic designer and animator who has been working in the field since 2011, with a background in games development. Her strength is her technical skills in combination with an artistic eye. Louisa is currently the head animator for fully funded short film *Farewell*, directed by Maria Åkesson.

MUSIC COMPOSERS

MAHAN MOBASHERY is a German-Iranian music composer and sound designer for both documentary and fiction films. His most recent work for *Whatever Happens Next* by award winning director Julian Pörksen had its premiere at the Berlinale in 2018. Among his works is the 2013 documentary film *The Machine that Makes Everything Disappear* by Tinatin Gurchiani, which won the World Cinema Documentary Award at Sundance Film Festival.

KALLE JANSSON is a Swedish film editor, cinematographer and director. He created the film production company Pråmfilm in which he has mainly worked as an editor and photographer for educational and promotional films. Currently Kalle works on his first feature documentary film as a director, *A Blues for Fatumeh*, together with María José Iglesias Peralta.

ROLAND SEER grew up in the wilderness of southern Estonia. Studied character animation in Animation Workshop Denmark. Proud father of two. Mostly working as a freelancer and partially Teacher at the Tartu Art School. But first and foremost an excellent animator recognized by Venice Film Festival and the European Film Academy.

NILS BUCHER is a Swedish-German music composer, photographer and editor. He has collaborated in various documentary and fiction films both in Sweden and in Germany. Since 2011 he has worked as editor and composer for the production company Pråmfilm, where he has collaborated in projects as *The Love Immigrants*, *To the North* and *Fly So Far*. Currently he is working as a producer at Munck Studios Stockholm.



PRODUCTION COMPANY

PRÅMFILM IS A YOUNG production company with an international scope. We produce documentaries that raise social questions and aim to challenge current norms. We want to create space for new promising film directors and highlight stories that explore the world from new perspectives. Our productions include *The Antifascists* (2017) by Patrik Öberg, which was shown in

over 50 countries; and *All We Own* (2019) by Emily Norling, which won the Swedish Academy Award for Newcomer of the Year and competed for the Nordic:Dox Award at CPH:DOX in 2019. Our most recent productions are *Hackitat* (2020) by Alex Veitch and Kristoffer Kronander and *Fly So Far* (2021) by Celina Escher. Currently we are producing nine documentaries.

FACT SHEET

ORIGINAL TITLE:

Nuestra Libertad

INTERNATIONAL TITLE:

Fly So Far

DIRECTOR:

Celina Escher

STARRING:

Teodora Vásquez & The 17+

PRODUCER:

Mónica Hernández Rejón

EDITOR:

Matteo Faccenda

CINEMATOGRAPHERS:

Guillermo Argueta, Audun Fjeldheim,
Celina Escher, Christian Rivera,
Fabricio Sibrián, Camilo Henríquez,
Nils Bucher, Kalle Jansson & Maria Åkesson

ANIMATION:

Louisa Wallström & Roland Seer

ORIGINAL MUSIC:

Mahan Mobashery & Nils Bucher

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Spektra Design

GRADING:

Peter Magnusson/Helion Film

SOUND DESIGN:

Anders Lindahl/Ljudbang

MASTERING:

Thomas Ahlén/Terrassen

IMPACT PRODUCER:

Lourdes Gil Alvaradejo

TRAILER:

Kalle Jansson

GENRE:

Documentary

CAPTURE AND FINAL FORMAT:

HD & 2K

ASPECT RATIO:

16:9

DURATION:

89/58 minutes

YEAR OF RELEASE:

2021

LANGUAGE:

Spanish

SUBTITLES:

English

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION:

Sweden & El Salvador

PRODUCTION COMPANY:

Pråmfilm AB

IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH:

Sugar Rush Productions/Maria Åkesson,
Chimbolo Films/Saúl Callejas & Film
in Dalarna/Mattias Ehrenberg.

With support of the Swedish Film Institute,
film commissioner Juan Pablo Libossart,
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Grants Committee & Filmbasen/Region
Stockholm. In collaboration with Rough
Cut Service/Jordana Berg & Joëlle Alexis.



DOWNLOADS

www.flysofarfilm.com/press/



CONTACT

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INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

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