



GIRL *with* CHILD

Image: "Leidi", dir. Simón Mesa Soto

In a small town in Ecuador, teenager Diana escapes from an institution for troubled girls with her toddler. The goal: to pick up her younger sister from their abusive childhood home and start a new life.

STORY

Mitad del Mundo, Ecuador. Small, dusty, and isolated. 15-year-old Diana decides to run away from the frigid group home for troubled girls where she's been living. Prompted by a letter from her 13-year-old sister, Lisi, saying that their mother's depraved, abusive boyfriend has left, Diana burns to get to her hometown ten hours away. But not to stay there. With money stolen from the purse of a social worker, Diana takes off and grudgingly brings her toddler Edi, a product of rape, hoping to pick up her sister and start a new life together somewhere.

When Diana and Edi arrive in the city of Machala - the end of the line for their bus - they have one more bus ride left to get to Diana's hometown of Puerto Bolivar. But anxiety about being so close to home and memories of years of abuse paralyze Diana. Diana calls Lisi and implores her to come to Machala instead. Lisi responds that she is afraid to leave home and their mother, whom Diana hates for not protecting her and her sister. Soon after, Diana is caught stealing diapers for Edi and a corrupt policeman takes the little money she has left. With no resources,

Diana must figure out how to survive in Machala and take care of Edi, even as she's not sure she wants him, hoping that eventually she'll be able to reunite with her sister.

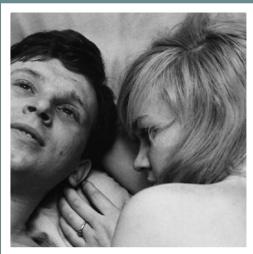
Relief arrives in the form of a job at a laundry working for a stern, solitary older woman named Sra. Barillas. Diana also meets Javi, a sweet, smitten high school student. The stigma of Diana's past makes it difficult to nurture new relationships, but eventually, between Sra. Barillas and Javi, Diana and Edi have the beginnings of a home. Diana grows closer with Edi, too, seeing herself in him for the first time. However, Diana continues to be challenged by incredible instability around her: Sra. Barillas is in ill health. The patriarch of Javi's household - Javi's uncle - is a volatile and violent abuser, and the subjugation of the rest of the family is all too familiar for Diana. And it remains to be seen if Diana will be able to get her sister away from their narcissistic mother. The only certainty for Diana becomes her relationship with Edi as she contemplates anew where they will settle.

ARTISTIC STATEMENT

The disruption of childhood and loss of home is a central experience for me and I am always looking for that place of comfort and rest. The same is true for a group of teenage girls I became close with in Ecuador. Over years, I spent time in Ecuador at a safehouse for teenage girls who had survived sex trafficking, which almost always began as abuse at home and escalated. The girls had been sold by their family members or family friends, or kidnapped by a trafficker posing as a boyfriend. Some had been forced into drug addictions to keep them docile and dependent. And many of the girls had a baby that was, inevitably, a continuing reminder of rape and a heavy responsibility for a teenager with no resources. Each of the girls was in the position of starting over at the age of 14 or 15 and, since most could not return to her childhood home, of finding a new place to settle. *Girl with Child* is an homage to these girls and to anyone uprooted from their home.

Girl with Child is a Spanish-language film that takes an uncommon look into the life of a teenage abuse survivor. Instead of framing the period of abuse or the escape or rescue, the story focuses on the hereafter and lets viewers piece together the main character's history through her present. Wide, painterly visuals and detailed sound design present the main character in the context of the big world she must explore in her search for a new home. Additionally, tight frames and quiet moments bring us close to her, even to the point of abstraction at times, and signify that she doesn't feel whole. Long takes allow us to get to know her and her toddler in tender intimacy and convey the wandering nature of their journey. Drawing inspiration from neorealism and transcendental cinema, the film follows the two main characters through striking landscapes in Ecuador, between the Pacific coast and the Andes mountains, where many towns are still recovering from the 2016 earthquake.

The film draws influences from *Loves of a Blonde*, *The 400 Blows*, *Moonlight*, and *A Fantastic Woman*. Musical references to the *Eden Ahbez/Nat King Cole song "Nature Boy"*, the score from *The 400 Blows*, and haunting re-imaginings of vintage Latin standards like *"Flor de Azalea" by artist Frankie Reyes* carry the soundtrack.



Loves of a Blonde



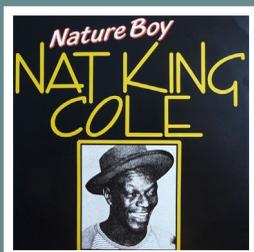
The 400 Blows



Moonlight



A Fantastic Woman



TEAM



MARIA ABRAHAM (writer/ director) is from Las Vegas, Nevada. She has an MFA in Film & Video Writing and Directing from Columbia College Chicago and a BA in European Studies from UCLA. Maria received a Fulbright Grant to live in Ecuador and complete research for her feature script *Girl with Child*, about a teenage girl searching for a new home with her toddler. Maria's short film of the same name won Best Short Short at Aspen Shortsfest and the Chicago Award at the Chicago International Film Festival. Maria was a 2018 Tribeca TFI Network fellow with *Girl with Child*, as well as a 2018 Film Independent Directing Lab fellow and 2016 Film Independent Screenwriting Lab fellow with the project. Maria has worked as a director and producer on documentaries, commercials, music & fashion videos, artist development labs at Sundance, and the Webby-winning NBC/Snapchat digital series *Face Forward*.



LUZ AGUDELO GIPSON (producer), a Colombia native, attended Columbia College Chicago where she received a BA in Film and Video. Her works include several award winning short films and countless cross-platform commercials for a multitude of brands, most notably the "Obama for America" 2008 presidential campaign, which received the Titanium and Integrated Lions Grand Prix award at Cannes. Luz was the Executive Producer at nationally acclaimed music and audio house, Comma. She led the establishment of its Hispanic division and spearheaded the rebranding of its music catalog. Currently, she is a Producer at the U.S.'s leading DRTV agency, Eicoff, a division of Ogilvy & Mather. Luz was a 2016 Film Independent Producing Lab fellow with *Girl with Child* and recently participated in Tribeca's TFI Network with the project.



LUCÍA MOSCOSO T. (associate producer) has worked in film in Ecuador since 2003 as a producer, assistant director, actor, and festival coordinator. Her projects include the short film "En Espera", about an indigenous girl who works as a housekeeper to support her family, the documentary *Labranza Oculta*, about workers restoring a 17th-century building, the narrative feature *Sin Otoño, Sin Primavera*, about Guayaquil's disenfranchised youth, and the short film "Girl with Child", about a lonely teenage girl traveling by bus with her toddler. Lucía has been a coordinator for the film festival Encuentros Del Otro Cine (EDOC) and the youth film festival Chulpicine. Lucía is also a member of the Corporación Juego en Escena theater company that creates interactive theater pieces to discuss topics such as machismo, domestic violence, and teen sexuality with audiences throughout Ecuador.



OFF-HOLLYWOOD FILMS (co-producer) Off-Hollywood Films is a Mexico City and LA based production company that provides production services, equipment rentals, and tailored post. Off-Hollywood's mission is to create stories with diverse voices that remind us that the world deserves better - better people, better thinking, and better content. General operations are overseen by producer Georgina Gonzalez, who is also the Head of Development at Cinépolis.

SELECTED AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, & GRANTS

2019 Women In Film Financing & Strategy Intensive

2018 Tribeca's TFI Network

2018 Film Independent Directing Lab

2017 Winner of The Pitch at Industry Days, through IFP
Chicago & Chicago International Film Festival

2016 Film Independent Producing Lab

2016 Film Independent Screenwriting Lab

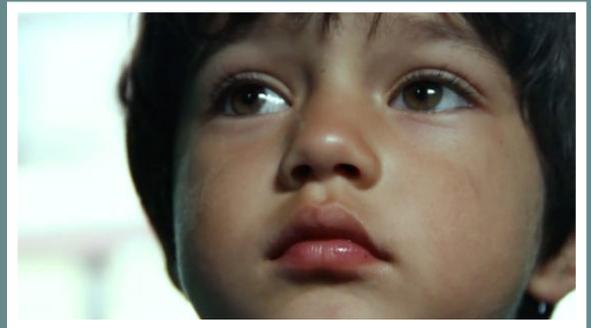
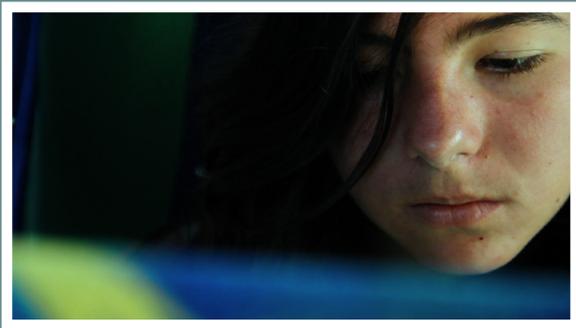
2013 Best Short Short, Aspen Shortsfest
*For short film **"Girl with Child"***

2013 Chicago Award, Chicago International Film Festival
*For short film **"Girl with Child"***

2010-2011 Fulbright Grant
*For short film **"Girl with Child"** and research for
Girl with Child feature film script*

"Girl with Child"

AWARD-WINNING SHORT FILM



TIMELINE

JULY–SEPTEMBER 2019: Pre-production

OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 2019: Principal photography

DECEMBER 2019–FEBRUARY 2020: Post-production, sound mix, color correction, visual effects, music

FINANCIALS

PRODUCTION BUDGET: \$300,000

BUDGET TOTAL: \$650,000

All rights are available.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

PRODUCTION: \$300,000

POST PRODUCTION: \$250,000

**OTHER (INCLUDING UNIT PUBLICITY,
DIGITAL MARKETING, AND GENERAL
AND INDIRECT EXPENSES):** \$70,000

PROMOTION AND DISTRIBUTION: \$30,000

A Social Business

Research for this film has been completed thanks to the generosity of survivors of human trafficking who have shared their stories with us over the past years. Their time and openness enables us to create an authentic and respectful portrait of our main character and her world. We are so grateful and we want to make sure to reciprocate. Fully-paid apprentice positions in each production department will be available to these young women. Our goal is for the production to provide jobs and mentorship, and hopefully a supportive community that continues long after wrap. In this way, a portion of the *Girl with Child* production will operate as a social business.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Our core audience will be viewers who love independent, original, artful, impactful, and character-driven cinema. Our viewers are also drawn to dramas, coming-of-age stories, teen romance, and journey films. In addition, our film speaks to viewers who are interested in social justice issues and particularly care about the issues of child abuse and teen motherhood.

In the U.S., our viewers love foreign films and/or are Spanish speakers who feel a connection to our Spanish-language film set in Ecuador. Outside of the U.S., the reach of our film is wide across Spanish-speaking countries and other multi-cultural and cosmopolitan territories. Our

viewers live in areas including Ecuador and the rest of South America, Central America, Europe, Canada, and Israel. Within these areas, our project appeals to a wide age range: 20s-60s.

Films with audiences that overlap with ours include *A Fantastic Woman* (2017, Chile/Germany/Spain/USA), *The Florida Project* (2017, USA), *A Ciambra*, (2017, Italy/Germany/France/USA), *Moonlight* (2016, USA), *Mustang* (2015, France/Turkey), *Ixcanul* (2015, Guatemala/France), *Neon Bull* (2015, Brazil/Uruguay/Netherlands), *Viva* (2015, Ireland/Cuba), *Girlhood* (2014, France), *Short Term 12* (2013, USA), *Ida* (2013, Poland), and *Fish Tank* (2009, UK/Netherlands).

DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

The landscape of international distribution has shifted significantly, especially since digital streaming has become a key player. Having a step-by-step plan of what life we want this film to have and partnering with the right experts is essential. Below is an outline of how we see distribution progressing.

PREMIERE

We plan to screen *Girl with Child* at festivals with strong international sections, such as Cannes, Toronto, Berlin, Venice, and Sundance, and yield sales opportunities through that exhibition.

PUBLICITY

We'll partner with a boutique PR firm that specializes in independent international cinema while making sure our social media presence and website are active and ready for inquiries. The film's trailer will be on all digital platforms connected to the film.

AGENTS AND REPS

We'll bring on an international sales agent early on. We're open to splitting the rights among different distribution partners to cover different regions for theatrical, television, streaming, and VOD deals. We're particularly interested in Central and South American markets, Europe, the U.S. and Canada.

EDUCATIONAL AND SEMI-THEATRICAL RIGHTS

Educational and semi-theatrical rights are essential parts of our customized distribution strategy. We plan to partner with NGOs, universities, community outreach centers, and local theaters to hold special screenings of the film.

Casting

We are approaching casting for *Girl with Child* in two styles - “street casting” and traditional casting.

We are excited to cast unknown actors for the roles of teenagers Diana and Javi, 3-year-old Edi, as well as other roles. Having lived and made films in Ecuador, we are working with our team in Ecuador on street casting. We will use geotagging through Instagram, visit local high schools, scour malls and hang out locations. And we plan to collaborate with TED Talk fellow Christian Rodríguez, a photographer who composes portraits of teen mothers in Latin America.

Through a traditional casting process, we are interested in pursuing casting a known actress (European, Latin American, or American) for the role of Sra. Barillas. We are also interested in pursuing casting a known Latin American actor for the role of Javi’s Uncle. Both are substantial roles.



Images: Christian Rodríguez

Setting



Diana & Edi



Sra. Barillas



Diana & Javi



PRODUCTION COMPANY

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