

Women At War

BETRAYING YOUR PRINCIPLES LEADS TO DECAY.

**STAYING FIRM IN YOUR BELIEFS LEADS TO
PERSONAL FREEDOM.**

LOOKBOOK INDEX

STORY

WHY MAKE THIS FILM

(Aside from the fact that no one else is making it) P1

LOGLINE

3 women fight with their claws P3

SYNOPSIS

Longer, juicier version of the logline P5

5

UNIVERSAL VS. UNIQUE

We are all the same, we are all different..... P7

UNIVERSAL

10

THEME

Freedom. What would you be willing to do to fight for it? .. P11

TOPE

To cry or to laugh? That is the question P13

CHARACTERS

Who are these people? Your mother, your sister, your best friend P13

UNIQUE WORLD

CIRCUMSTANCES

Vive la différence P21

LOCATIONS

Listings! Find your ideal home at a very affordable price P23

20

SYMBOLS

What not to name your pet or your dolls P25

5 SENSES

Memories attached to strong sensations last longer P27

TOOLS

THE LOOKS OF IT

References and sources of inspiration P31

29

COLOR PALETTE

Each country has a flavor, a color P33

CINEMATOGRAPHY

How we'll make the magic happen P35

MUSIC & SOUND

Music, rhythm, classical sounds P37

WHO? WHAT?

WHO? A BIOGRAPHY

The artist, as described by her mother P40

39

Women At War



WHY MAKE THIS FILM?



At first glance, I don't even know how to start a conversation with the woman behind the burka, sitting beside me at the cafe in Palestine. Before I have time to offer her the sugar, she's moved her chair closer to mine and we start a conversation. After a few dinners in her home, I laugh when one of her daughters tells me they would only ever agree to their father marrying a second wife if he chose me. I tell them I'd rather be their older sister.

In the streets of Venezuela, I kept my eyes glued to my shoes as a fierce older woman scanned me with skepticism. What common ground could we share? Soon enough, the war stories started pouring out of her. One was about that time when she needed to pee and couldn't find a place to go. We have all been there, right? Except, her story has a slightly different ending: "We were on our feet all day, protesting. Reminding them of our right to drinking water. And I needed to pee." Carolina smiles in anticipation and then continues: "I asked the military if I could use their bathroom. Those sons of bitches took out their weapons and held them in my face, urging me to back up. My bladder was about to explode, so I lowered my pants and peed on them. You should've seen their faces!" She laughs. Sixty-seven, short and feisty, Carolina leads the way through the flooded streets of her hometown.

So yes. We have all been there, needing to urinate so bad you think you might explode. Carolina told me about how she "fished for the love of her life" and got her heart broken, and a hundred other stories. We had so much in common, it felt as if we were life long friends. And then we got to her home. Carolina stopped in front of a flooded house. She opened the door and guided me. Jumping on bricks so we would not touch the water, she said: "Welcome home!" For the last ten years, due to lack of planning on the government's side, Lake Valencia, in Venezuela, has been overflowing and destroying fourteen neighboring towns. This lake is where all the sewage and much of the country's toxic waste ends up, so the water impregnates the homes with a putrid smell. "We shower with this water! One time, snails came out of my showerhead! We are drowning in our own shit." Again, Carolina laughs. What else is she going to do?

During the three hour drive back to Caracas, I got my period. I finally arrived at my friend's house. Bleeding and smelling like sewage, I ran passed Andrea, heading to the shower. She laughed at me. The water had been cut off. I laughed too. The entire week, the city of Caracas survived without water. Even at the airport, not a drop. Days later, I was back in Los Angeles,

attending a movie premiere. Clean, nice clothes, a couple of A list actors so close I could smell their hair. And Andrea still had no water. She couldn't laugh it off anymore.

Andrea, Carolina, and thousands of people went to the street to protest and demand human rights. It was a peaceful demonstration, yet around them, people were dying at the hands of the police.

This is a story that repeats itself in many countries around the world. I chose three countries, in three continents, that have been struggling for so long that people have become desensitized. "Another fifty thousand people died in Congo? Oh, well, its Africa..." I've heard this response on multiple occasions. My goal is not to lecture or educate the audience, but to find stories we all share around the world. To give a name and a face to those statistics in a way that allows us to see other, focusing on the things we have in common as women, as humans. Approaching it, not from guilt or pity, but from empathy.

Let's face it. Most of the time, we don't give a shit about anyone unless it affects us directly. unless the person harmed is someone who could be related to us. Unless the one lying dead on the floor could actually be you. Or me. And the truth is, the more people I meet, the more I realize everyone falls under that category.

These are stories that need to be told. About women around the world fighting for their rights. Not portrayed as victims, or drowning in drama, but strong and capable of finding humor when they have lost everything else.

The main characters in this film are strong women, fighters, who also go through embarrassing moments and maintain the spirit of dreamers. This film focuses on those bonding moments humans manage to find in the middle of chaos.

Why make this film?

Because the best way to deal with tragedy is through humor. Because we need to hear these women's stories. Because we are bombarded through the internet and media and we are losing sensitivity.

Why should I tell it?

Because I can be the translator between their cultures and ours.

Women At War



Title:
WOMEN AT WAR

Writer/Director:
M. LUNA

Genre:
DARK COMEDY/DRAMA

Running Time:
APROX. 110MIN

Time Period:
PRESENT DAY

Locations:
**REPLICATING LANDSCAPES
FROM CENTRAL AFRICA,
MIDDLE EAST, AND SOUTH
AMERICA.**



LOGLINE

YOU NEED TO BREAK A FEW EGGS TO MAKE AN OMELETTE

As their lives crumble around them, three women from different parts of the world set out to wrest control of their lives from a dominant social order designed to keep them mired in hopelessness and complacency.

An engaged, repressed Middle Eastern woman; a young, pregnant, and desperate African wife; and a fearless Latin American university student embark on three parallel journeys, attempting to migrate from their respective countries while fighting against self-proclaimed enforcers of the law.



A
WORLD
ON
THE
MOVE

SYNOPSIS

**XXI CENTURY MOST IMPORTANT DISCOVERY:
OVARIES ARE MORE RESILIENT THAN BALLS!**

3

Three women from different parts of the world endeavor to challenge their established social orders in order to pursue the hope of a better life and discover what it means to be a woman trapped a man's world.

With the hopes of securing an international job far away from the social and economic poverty of her nation, a young Latina, ELENA, takes up her friend AMELIE'S video camera in order to document the current political revolution in her country.

She soon discovers, through her former lover's grandmother - a throwback, anti-establishment radical herself - that her ex has joined the military and is responsible for the jailing and beatings of many of the current protestors. Elena then sets out to document the brutal reality of life behind the bars of an authoritarian regime.

Her filming completed, Elena attempts to escape with the footage to her new life awaiting her in France when she is confronted by her ex, who brutally murders her in the street during a bloody day of protests.

In Central Africa, MAMA NALAKETTE slaves away producing men's garments in an African sweatshop for her masked, black-clad, and highly sadistic BOSS.

During her work hours, she procures some "extra" fabric, crafting it into suits in order to buy herself a one-way ticket out of town.

When her husband, JONATHAN, enters a "gentlemen's" pageant, he steals her savings for a pair of shoes in the hopes of winning the grand prize: "dinner for two in Paris." Now unable to leave, Mama, who is late in her pregnancy, helps Jonathan to win with the hopes of leaving for Paris herself.

Unbeknownst to her, Jonathan is indebted to The Boss and promises to pay him back when he wins by selling his tickets to Paris.

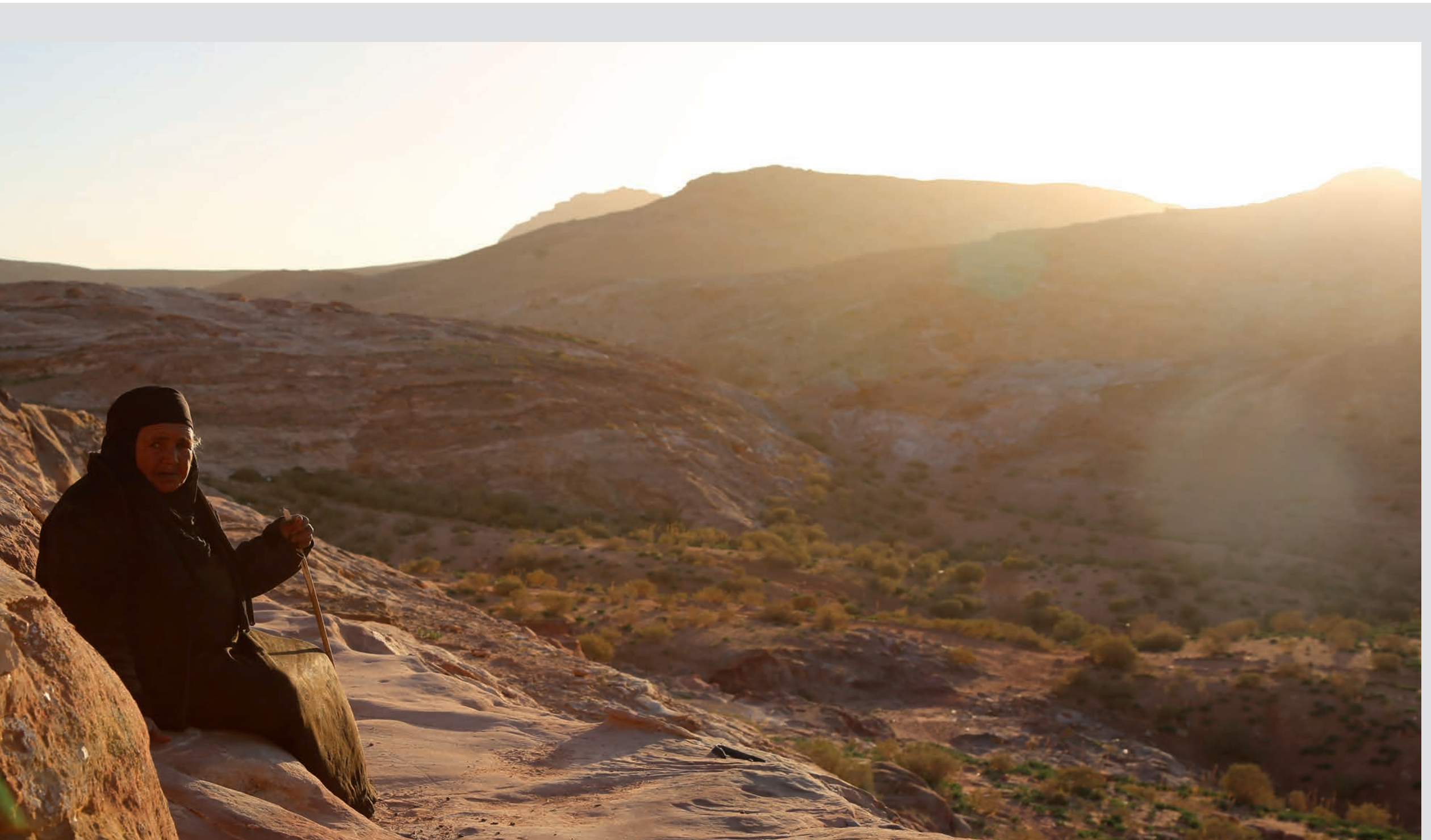
When Jonathan wins the competition, the grand prize is revealed to be a sham and The Boss, eager for repayment, exacts his revenge by attempting to torture Mama who, in a desperate attempt, kills The Boss with a pair of scissors and escapes to France alone by disguising herself in The Boss' mask and clothing.

In the Middle East, ZAHY must lead the life of a typical young Muslim woman in order to care for her sickly Aunt. When she makes a deal with a local Imam, MUSTAFA, to carry out a terrorist attack on some government soldiers, she is recognized and forced to flee into the desert with her aunt and Amelie, the French journalist friend of Elena's.



**IN BETWEEN
JOKES,
THAT'S WHERE
THE TRUTH
LIVES.**

Women At War



Pursued by Mustafa, who has double-crossed them to save the life of his own son, the women make their way to a small village where Zahi's rebel uncle, MOHAMMED, lives with his wife and daughters. Mohammed agrees to take them in and harbor them until it blows over.

When Mustafa arrives, he is captured by Mohammed until some local soldiers arrive looking for Zahi and Amelie. With Mohammed's entire house now condemned, Zahi uses a phone bomb in her purse to kill Mustafa and the soldiers before escaping to a refugee center where Amelie is whisked away back to France and Mo-

ammed's family and Zahi are admitted as refugees to await a new home.

The storylines converge in a hospital in Paris where Mama, now recovering from delivering her baby, is watching a news program showing Elena's footage just as Amelie walks by her room. Recognizing her friend's voice, Amelie enters Mama's room and joins her.



D. R. CONGO: A COUNTRY WHERE ONLY FLIES GET A MEAL PER DAY.

Conflict zones need help. Fast. They need resources by... well, yesterday. And the easiest way to get to us is to evoke guilt and pity so that donations fly in. Tragedy sells. We get it. And here we are, sinking into our sofa while browsing the delivery app, Thai or pizza? It's been a rough day. We switch the channel to a light comedy and disconnect from a tragedy that might as well be taking place on another planet.

But, how else could their stories get to us?

EMPATHY. Telling their complete stories. Who are the people behind the heartbreaking images infested with flies? What do we have in common as human beings?

We only get to see the leftovers of their community. The history, tradition, and beauty are lost along the way.

UNIVERSAL V

UNIVERSAL:

Things we all have in common: emotions, experiences, goals. Those "I've been there!" moments portrayed by the characters:

- **When everything goes wrong and all you can do now is laugh.**
- **Using alcohol as liquid courage and bonding over a glass of rum.**
- **Getting their hearts broken.**
- **Needing to pee to the point that your bladder is about to explode. So either you pull down your pants or pee on yourself.**
- **Wanting to get out of your home country and see the world.**
- **The bonds you have with family and friends.**

VENEZUELA, A FLOURISHING MARKET IN BANANAS AND

“VOTE FOR ME, FOR LOVE.” PRESIDENT MADURO’S CAMPAIGN SLOGAN.

These people are victims of their circumstances, yes. This does not make them victims. Quite the contrary. For every victim I have met, I have also met ten fighters. Survivors that are not ready to give up and fall at the hands of war or a corrupt government. Yes, they need help, not out of guilt, but out of feeling connected to them. I want to see mothers, children, sisters, our best friends on the screen.

THIS FILM HAS TWO LAYERS: UNIVERSAL AND UNIQUE.

S. U N I Q U E

UNIQUE:

The places and circumstances the characters were born into. Things that (hopefully) we have trouble relating to as a privileged society:

- Bombs. Both being a victim of one or... having to activate one!
- We have all used scissors, maybe even to attack someone, but not as a lethal weapon (again, hopefully).
- Revenge taken way, WAY too far.
- Family members turning you in to the corrupt authorities.
- Not being able to say what you think under penalty of prison or worse, torture and death.
- No food or water... anywhere.
- AND, on a lighter note, the beauty of the different countries: the traditions, culture, fabrics, nature... their world.

POTATOES. GET YOURS NOW. THERE'S NOTHING ELSE!



Contact the director for more:

marialgw@hotmail.com