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by

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Ex-Votos

Reality and Fiction in a Mexican Short Film

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Ex-Votos

Reality and Fiction in a Mexican Short Film

by

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Report

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of the University of Texas at Austin

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Dedication

For my mother and father,

Ivete Maria Lucas Guerra and Oscar Guerra Moreno

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Abstract

Ex-Votos

Reality and Fiction in a Mexican Short Film

Ivete Raquel Guerra Lucas, MFA

The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

Supervisor: PJ Raval

This report will summarize the process of developing, producing and finishing the short film Ex-Votos. Shot on HD video in Real de Catorce, Mexico during the fall of 2012, the film was produced as my Graduate Thesis Film in the Department of Radio-TV-Film at the University of Texas at Austin in partial fulfillment of my Master of Fine Arts in Film Production degree.

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Introduction

Reading was my first passion. As a child in Brazil, the walls of my house were lined with books, from nonfiction and instructional literature to fairytales and poetry. My favorites were Aesop's fables, fairytales and books about animals. When my family moved to Mexico, I learned Spanish and English, and suddenly I could read all kinds of books. I found myself learning about other cultures through their stories. I had never been to Colombia, but after reading *100 Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez, I saw Macondo as my summer home, where my Colombian friends lived.

I wasn't influenced by Magical Realism. Magical Realism provided me with a language to understand the world around me. Alejo Carpentier, the first Latin American magical realist, once wrote that the "marvelous real is encountered in its raw state, latent and omnipresent, in all that is Latin American. Here the strange is commonplace, and always was commonplace."¹ I grew up amid that strangeness and it became my identity. I find myself looking for it wherever I go. It marvels me as much as it feels like home.

Filmmaking was something I discovered later. The older I got, the more I felt like an outsider. In Brazil, I was Mexican. In Mexico, I was Brazilian. When I traveled abroad, I was something indescribable. In each country I had to learn and relearn the codes of conduct, the slang, the music and cultural references. I became an observer. My observations soon produced ideas and after a while, pen and paper was not enough.

¹ Bowers, Maggie Ann. *Magic(al) Realism*. London: Routledge, 2012. Print.

Taking pictures made it easier to express my complex thoughts, by pointing my lens and clicking the shutter. The photos I took needed no words. I no longer had to translate the poetry I wrote in Spanish to my Brazilian grandmother. All I had to do was show her a picture. These pictures became amateur video, which then became video art, short fiction films and documentaries. Ultimately, I intended to make a film, in which I could weave real and imaginary worlds. I didn't intend to make a magical realism film, but I couldn't have made anything else.

Conception

“We accept reality so easily, maybe because we sense that nothing is real.”
Jorge Luis Borges, *El Aleph*

The initial idea was to make a film in which fiction and documentary elements were combined in a way that would lead to a reinterpretation of reality. My purpose was not to differentiate the real and the non-real, as other filmmakers have attempted. Rather, I wanted to show that the real and the imaginary are parts of a whole. I decided to write a story of my creation that would take place during a real event.

Martin Scorsese, when interviewed by Raffaele Donatto, stated that he sees no difference between fiction and non-fiction films. “They are all just films.”² He further explains that films can only do two things: stage or capture. My goal was to make a film in which I would have to both stage and capture to create the final story.

Growing up in Latin America, I witnessed extraordinary things. The stories that captivated me the most were the ones about healing. Every once in a while, mystical healers emerge from places of extreme poverty. El Niño Fidencio was one of the most famous healers in Mexico. He came from Espinazo, Nuevo León, a small town only 2 hours away from my hometown of Monterrey. At first, I wanted to make my film during his festivities in Espinazo. My plans changed in 2010, when the drug war in Mexico reached its peak and Espinazo became too dangerous to film.

² Scorsese, Martin and Raffaele Donatto. “Docufictions: An Interview with Martin Scorsese on Documentary Film.” *Film History*. 19. 2 (2007): 199-207

Although Real de Catorce, San Luis Potosí, was my second choice, it should have been my first. This little town, located in Mexico's mountainous desert, is a sacred place to Catholics and Native Mexicans alike. A prosperous mining town in the 1800s, Real (as they call it) retains most of its old structures: the church, cemetery, plaza, *zócalo* and *palenque*, all made of natural stone from the region.

As the mines dried up, the town was abandoned and the people who remained were struck with poverty. It was around this time that the St. Francis statue in their church started to perform miracles. Ever so often, St. Francis would heal the sick or save someone from a terrible accident. The most famous story was about a young boy who was lost for days in the mountains and suddenly showed up. When his mother took him to church, he pointed at St. Francis and said, "Mom, that's the nice man who helped me find my way."

Long before the mining days, Real de Catorce was just a village in an area that the Huichol indigenous people called Wirikuta. The Huichol are Native Mexicans famous for their ritual pilgrimages from the mountains of Jalisco to San Luis Potosi and for using the psychedelic cactus named peyote in their rituals. Wirikuta is their sacred land, the place where their Gods live and where their ancestors originated. This is where Real de Catorce is located. Hence, the Huichol are an important presence in the fabric of the town.

Real de Catorce provided me with a natural allegory for the Mexican condition -- the duel between the Spanish and the indigenous -- in one sacred place. I decided to set my story there. It would happen on October 4th, St. Francis Day. The day, in which

thousands of pilgrims walk to Real de Catorce to ask St. Francis for miracles or fulfill their promises to him.

The film would be named Ex-Votos, a term derived from the Latin *ex voto suscepto*, meaning “from the vow made.” Ex-votos are votive offerings (or sometimes sacrifices) made for a saint or divine being in exchange for a miracle or blessing. The walls of St. Francis’s church are covered in them.

Development

“May Heaven exist, even if my place is in Hell”
-Jorge Luis Borges

I wrote this story when Mexico entered its most violent years. As thousands of severed bodies were found in pits, people in casinos and night clubs were burned alive and mutilated body parts were spread across the streets of border towns, I found myself yearning for hope. The story that came out was about a birth, a symbol for Mexico’s future.

The process to make this film did not involve any proven formulas. I didn’t want to come into the town with a locked script, a rigid shooting plan and a storyboard. I wanted to be open to my surroundings so I could learn from what I experienced as I filmed. My cast and crew were to do the same.

It was apparent that the process would be fairly experimental, and new to me. I decided to make several tests before the actual film shoot. The first test was a short film I directed for Professor Andrew Shea’s Advanced Directing class. It involved two actors, a young woman and a young man who were to meet and have a supernatural evening on Halloween night at 6th Street. It had the same basic elements: a chaotic environment, two actors and a made up story. We shot it handheld with two different cameras.

The most important lesson I learned from this test was that scripted dialogues didn’t quite work because they limited the actor’s abilities to interact with their environment in a natural way. Dialogue scenes were not the strongest part of the film

either, and should only be used when necessary. Another important lesson was that the story needed to have a strong ending before we started to shoot. I had tried to resolve the film with the actors, but this did not work.

Because of what I learned in the test shoot, I was reluctant to write a script. I started with a treatment. The story would be about a pregnant teenager, whose mother takes her to Real de Catorce to thank St. Francis for saving her from a shootout in Monterrey. Through this spiritual journey, the mother and daughter would find the courage to go back to their violence stricken hometown. The birth was to happen in the town and they would leave with the baby in their arms.

The beginning and the ending were set, but I left everything in between open because I knew I had to know more before I could fill in the blanks. My biggest challenge was to integrate the Huichol into the story, as I knew very little about their culture. The Huichol are usually quiet and reserved. They don't like to have their picture taken and they don't trust strangers. To write their parts in the story I had to make many trips to Monterrey and Real de Catorce.

On my first research trip I intended to find common people to play the roles of the main characters. I also wanted to work with them on their character's identities and how this experience would affect them. The timing and logistical limitations of this project, however, made this almost impossible. Working with non-actors requires commitment and time from the participants and the director. It proved extremely difficult to find a working class teenager and a woman in her thirties who would be able to take the first

week of October off of school and work. I found it challenging to make too many trips to Mexico for I was bound to Austin due to my teaching assistant and student responsibilities. It was apparent that I would not have enough time to find two participants, persuade them to play the role, train them on the filmmaking process and prepare them emotionally for the film by October.

My final decision was to cast two actresses to play the leading roles. The rest of the characters would be non-actors. This distinction seemed fitting, as the mother and daughter were meant to be from Monterrey. Therefore, they were meant to look and act different from the townspeople.

I didn't find my leading actresses in this initial trip, but I was able to get to know the people in Real de Catorce better. Patrick Bresnan, my husband and executive producer, knew a couple in the town who owned the house that we would later rent to accommodate the cast and crew. We stayed in that house and formed a friendship with the owners and the caretakers of the place. We scouted the town extensively. Caretaker Vicky Frías introduced me to everyone, including the priest. Vicky later participated as one of the secondary characters in the film. Daniela Pérez, one of my producers, introduced me to four Huichol brothers, who were friends of her aunt. Two of them ended up acting in the film. These relationships were extremely important in every stage of this film.

Preproduction

Test Shoot #2

I made a total of five trips to Real de Catorce and Monterrey so I could prepare for the shoot. One of those trips was my second test shoot, in which I took a reduced crew to the town during Holy Week. Every year, the church puts on a reenactment of the seven stages of the cross and people from all over Mexico travel to witness it. My two associate producers, assistant director, a cinematographer and I stayed in the town for three nights.

Vicky Frías' niece posed as a stand in for the main character in the film. We shot video of her all over the town and following the reenactment. We tried out different camera techniques, but mainly I wanted to see how well we worked together, how many crew members I would need and what to potentially prepare for. Through this trip, my producer and I were able to create a realistic budget for the future shoot. I also realized that I needed a mostly Mexican crew and, most importantly, that I needed a Mexican cinematographer, who could look past the exoticism of the people and the culture to draw out the essence of what was happening around us.

An Expensive Film

We gradually built a crew of 13 people who would need to be present in the Real de Catorce shoot. This consisted of a production team, a second unit camera team, the camera crew, sound recordist, wardrobe, production designer, assistant director, catering

and myself. We would also bring the two actresses, making it 15 people to transport, accommodate, feed and take care of for a full week. This would be an expensive film.

As I prepared to shoot, I came across the University of Texas's restrictions on travel to Mexico. Monterrey, my hometown and the city my crew was based out of, was a number one restricted region. Real de Catorce was number two. This meant that we had to request special permission to film in Real de Catorce. It also meant that any University of Texas students involved with the film had to fly to Mexico, including myself. These restrictions made shooting in Mexico more difficult and expensive. It took us about six months to acquire permission from the university. It was a long and grueling process.

Equipment was also an issue. I was not allowed to drive across the border, so I couldn't bring C-stands, sandbags or any heavy items. I could only bring what I could travel by plane with. The department did not allow me to bring any of their expensive cameras to Mexico because they feared something could happen to them. If I wanted to shoot with a high quality camera, I had to raise the money to rent it myself. I ended up taking very few equipment items from the Radio, Television and Film department.

The costs for making this film were going through the roof. The small budget I had saved from the fellowship I had through the Mexican Fund for Culture and the Arts would not be enough. I applied for the E.D. Farmer Fellowship offered by the Lozano Long Institute for Latin American Studies at the University of Texas. My project was awarded the fellowship. These funds brought me very close to the final budget. The rest of the funds would be raised through Kickstarter, an internet crowd funding platform.

Story Developments

I worked on the story all the way through production. My biggest concern was integrating the Huichol. The young men I met in Real de Catorce were interested in acting in the film. However, I also needed someone who could advise me on the story. After months of searching, I received a phone call from a friend who said she found a Huichol man that could help me. Fortunately, I was in Monterrey doing my first round of casting. I rushed to the headquarters of *Árbol de Todas las Raíces*, an indigenous advocacy group, to meet Francisco Bautista. Francisco is a Huichol political leader and respected artisan. I explained the story to Francisco and he immediately liked it. I said I wanted the Huichol to help the young girl when she was having pregnancy issues. He advised me to speak to a Marakame (Huichol shaman). The next day, he took me to visit Don Jesús, an 86 year old Marakame who happened to be in Monterrey. After listening to the story, Don Jesus agreed to participate.

Don Jesús was about to go back to his village in the mountains of Nayarit. He had no phone reception there, but he told me that he would arrive one day before the shoot. I gave him my number and money for a bus. Francisco told me he would meet Don Jesús in Guadalajara and they would take the bus to Matehuala together. Because Francisco had a cell phone, I was able to keep in touch with him. Don Jesús wanted to help the girl in the story, but he didn't want to tell me how he would do it. He had to see her and feel the situation first. I decided to leave that part of the story open for Don Jesús to improvise.

My biggest limitation in writing this story was the fact that I have never had a child or witnessed a birth. I didn't want to make unrealistic choices in my story, so I arranged meetings with my family doctor, Dr. José Luis Morales. Dr. Morales had volunteered in poverty stricken towns for many years. He was able to advise me on the physical symptoms of late pregnancy and child birth, as well as on the common practices of child bearing in rural Mexican towns.

I later found out that Brigit Alexander, the owner of the complex we stayed at in Real, was the midwife of the town. Vicky Frías was her helper. Vicky showed me a room in the house in which many women had their babies. I met with Brigit to hear her stories. The birth scene in the film was based on the stories she told me over several afternoons of coffee and pastries.

Casting

Casting the two main characters took several months. I put out the first casting call in May. It was announced on local television and we had around 30 teenage girls trying out for the part of Anayansi (the pregnant girl). The girls were either so trained that they couldn't emote or completely untrained and barely able to read their sides. Daniela Flores, the girl I chose for Anayansi, was the only girl that believed in the imaginary circumstances I gave her. I could see real emotions coming through in her improvisation.

Although I had a good amount of women try out for the part of the mother, I still wasn't convinced. I called on casting director Roberto Niebla to help me find the right

actress. I held callbacks in August for the part of Anayansi and further casting sessions for the part of the mother. When Paty Blanco improvised on video, I knew she was the person I was looking for. She had the high energy and drive necessary to literally push her daughter up a mountain. Her acting skills are superb. What is even better, Paty and Daniela look alike.

On my last preproduction trip to Real de Catorce, I invited Vicky Frías to play the role of the midwife. I wrote a part for the Huichol brothers, Marcelino and José. Griselda, a young Huichol woman, also wanted to act, so I wrote a part for her. When I saw Griselda's friend Maria, who is a musician and her daughters, I decided to write a part for a little girl. I also wanted to find a way to integrate Maria's music into the film, but I still didn't know how. For the part of the baby, we asked around for the youngest baby. His name is Ósmar. His mother Lucy was excited to be a part of the project.

The Crew

I chose my crew as carefully as the cast. I wanted talented people who were hard working and had a relaxed and positive attitude. The last two traits were especially important in this film, as we would be spending 24 hours a day together in the same house. The schedule would be intense and there would be much physical effort required to go up and down hills hauling equipment and covering shots. Adrián Gutiérrez, my assistant director, referred me to several crew members, including my producer Laura Verduzco. I interviewed each individual crew member for their positions.

The search for Director of Photography took about three months. I interviewed five candidates in Monterrey and abroad. The most important requirements for me were that the Director of Photography had to be Mexican, talented and adventurous. I finally chose Joaquín del Paso, a friend who was finishing his degree at the National Film Academy in Poland. Bringing him from Poland was a bold choice, but it was worthwhile.

As the crew prepared for the upcoming shoot, it was evident that we needed a script. I spent the last two weeks of preproduction typing up a preliminary script that was open enough for improvisation, but detailed enough for all 22 members of the cast and crew to be on the same page, literally.

Production

“Why would you shoot on this date?” Vicky asked me. “This is our busiest time of the year!” “I want to shoot on this date exactly because of that.” I replied.

Last Preparations

The date was set for the week of September 29 through October 6. I flew to Monterrey on Saturday, September 23. The DP, Joaquín del Paso, arrived the next day. We closed preproduction in Monterrey with one last meeting for the cast and crew. On Thursday the 27, I drove to Real de Catorce with Joaquín, producer Laura Verduzco, actress Daniela Flores and her mother. The rest of the crew arrived the 28 and 29 (Friday and Saturday). Patrick Bresnan, aka OTIS IKE, and John Carrithers (second unit) traveled to Real from Houston, TX to serve as a second unit.

On these last days before the shoot, I scouted with Joaquín, prepared with Laura and rehearsed with Daniela every day. When Paty arrived, I took both Paty and Daniela to the town, where I had them improvise in public. Joaquín and the camera crew practiced recording the pilgrims. Since we were using small DSLR cameras, people didn't seem to be bothered by us.

The town became more crowded every day. However, it wasn't a steady stream of people. The crowds would form and suddenly it was impossible to walk. Two hours later,

it would be empty. The non-actors were also a wild card. It took at least an hour of persuading them every night to show up for the next shoot. This proved to be a challenge for our assistant director. He had to learn very quickly that his shooting plan had to be flexible.

First Day

The shoot started on Sunday with the scene in which the main characters first enter the town. This was fitting because the town was crowded and the actresses were still getting a feel for the environment. It took all morning to shoot it, much more time than we anticipated.

The next scheduled scene was supposed to be outside of the church, amidst a big crowd. However, by 2pm, the town was dead. The townspeople explained that it was a Sunday and people had to go back to work. Monday would be just as bare, but starting on Tuesday, people would begin to show up again. This is the type of information we had to work with. The mayor would say one thing, the tourism director something else, and the caretaker of the tunnel something completely different. Our only hope was to be flexible, come up with creative solutions and move fast.

After panicking for a few minutes, we decided to shoot the scene in the tunnel, in which we would only need the actors. This was a stressful day for most of the cast and crew members because they realized that there were no concrete schedules; they had to be prepared for every scene, every day.

Don Jesús, the Marakame, arrived on that day. Our production coordinator drove to Matehuala to pick him up. After a long shooting day, I sat down with Don Jesús and discussed the two scenes we would shoot the next day. One of the scenes would be set on the top of Cerro Quemado, the Huichol sacred mountain. This was a delicate subject. We would be stepping on sacred land. He told us what we had to do to be respectful. Each crew member had to bring an offering to Our Grandfather the Fire.

Second Day

On Monday we shot the scene outside of the church, in which Anayansi almost faints and meets the Huichol for the second time. We also shot a scene in which all of them carry Anayansi up a hill.

After lunch break, a reduced crew, the actresses and Don Jesus got on horseback and rode for two hours to the top of Cerro Quemado. This shoot was completely improvised. This wasn't in the script. It was an idea I had after arriving to Real de Catorce for the shoot. It turned out to be one of the most visually striking scene of the entire film.

Third Day

We woke up at 4am on Tuesday morning to shoot the opening scene, which was on the road to Real de Catorce. This was one of the longest scenes in the movie and it took place in the back of a pickup truck. We spent all morning under the burning sun.

This shoot was scheduled to last four hours, but it lasted eight. When we finished, we were sunburned, hungry and tired. It took another hour to drive back to our headquarters.

The next shoot was the birth scene. I was worried about my actors. We had returned from Cerro Quemado at around 8pm the previous night. It was about four hours of horseback riding and hiking up and down the mountain. Our bodies were in pain. I wasn't sure I would have the energy to do it. We decided that we should all take a one hour nap and reassess the situation.

An hour later I was informed that the crew was ready to go and that my actresses were very excited. This was the perfect situation for them to perform the birth scene. They were naturally exhausted and on edge. We walked to the location, set up and blocked the scene. It was shot handheld with two cameras all the way from beginning to end; no cuts. The actresses were preparing outside. Suddenly, I heard them screaming at each other and that's when I yelled, "Action!"

What followed were spectacular performances. Vicky knew exactly what to do from her years as a midwife's assistant. I hadn't told the actresses that there would be a real baby in the scene. Nor did I tell Daniela that she was having the baby standing up. Vicky guided them through it. Right as Daniela was pushing, I asked makeup artist Karla Torres to bring the baby. When the actresses heard the baby crying, looked down and saw him, tears rolled down their eyes. At this point, most of the crew was in tears.

Fourth Day

On Wednesday we shot the scene outside the tunnel as they entered the town. It was mostly an easy morning, so we could recover from the previous day.

We shot the last scene of the film on that afternoon. I had seen Griselda's musician friend Maria, playing in town with her band. I thought they were perfect for this scene. So I sent my assistant director out to find them. When I showed up to our shooting location, they were already waiting for me. I asked them to play a farewell song. They played different songs and I chose one on the spot. They started playing and we ran the scene. Pilgrims and tourists gathered around us. I suddenly noticed we were surrounded by hundreds of people. Before the people left, we set up a shot from inside the cart that would leave with the main characters. I yelled out to the crowd, "When the cart leaves you will all wave goodbye." We ran the scene. The cart started to move. Everybody waved. A group of kids ran after us. We got this in one shot.

Fifth Day

Thursday was October 4, St. Francis Day. The town was packed by 4am. We allocated this day to shoot everything related to the church, interiors and exteriors, because this was the day that most of the pilgrims were present. In preparing for the interior church scene, in which Anayansi's water breaks, I knew we had to be quick. I had asked the priest's permission to film inside the church. But he didn't know the content of the scene.

There were masses every hour and we had no choice, but to interrupt them. I knew we would have one or two shots at getting this scene. We were able to shoot it twice before we were blocked entrance to the church by the security guards. The performances were good. We didn't have to bother them again.

We shot the scene in the back of the church after lunch. It was an easy dialogue scene. By that time, most pilgrims were gone.

Sixth Day

This day was allocated for pickup shots in the morning and one last emotional scene in the afternoon. The last scene of the shoot was a scene in which the townspeople approach Anayansi and congratulate her on her baby. As we set up, my assistant director, the producer and I asked everybody around us to participate in the scene. Most of them agreed. They all congregated by a fountain to wait for our queue. When we ran the scene, people who didn't know what we were doing approached the actresses out of curiosity. They joined in the scene without knowing they were being filmed. It was a magical scene with which to end production.

Production was over. We packed that night, rested and left for Monterrey the next day.

Postproduction

It took me a week to close production in Monterrey. After that, I flew to Austin to transcode the video footage. My Kickstarter campaign was online and nearing its end. I had to take a few days off of postproduction to finish it. The campaign went well. We raised all the funding needed to complete postproduction.

The next few weeks were spent synching, watching the footage and, finally, assembling the film. I edited the film on my own. I had four weeks from the day I started watching footage to the day I had to be picture locked. Since the film was mostly improvisational and there was a second unit documenting the town, my first assembly was 48 minutes long. I gradually reduced it to a 25 minute cut. I showed the cut to my committee members, but I also showed it to people who were unrelated to the film or film school. I wanted to obtain a variety of reactions. I got my final notes on the day I was to picture lock. I decided to postpone sound design for a day so I could finalize the film. I got the film down to 17 minutes and suddenly it worked much better.

Hadn't I written this report after I finished the film, I wouldn't have had the same outlook on the postproduction process. We finished sound design, music composing, the sound mix and color correcting in six days. The process was similar to production in that we held constant meetings, put in great amount of efforts and I had very little sleep. The final film finally took form. Postproduction injected it with a new kind of magic. All my worries faded away and I was finally able to enjoy watching my own film.

Conclusion

I could have chosen to make a safe movie, following the rules of screenwriting and narrative filmmaking. However, I chose a difficult route. Many times, I was told that my project was too ambitious and maybe too risky. When experimenting, one has to be open to make mistakes. On a risky project, mistakes are heartbreaking, but successes are extremely gratifying. There were many periods of crisis in making this film, for me, my cast and my crew. Nevertheless, we made it out of every one of them alive. Through solving these situations, we acquired new skills and the bravery to tackle new challenges.

My goal when entering film school was precisely to make this film. There were many things I could have done better. However, every one of my mistakes were things I could solve with ingenuity and hard work. In the process of writing the story, I was told many times that my characters had to show certain behaviors and that their journey had to hit certain story beats. I wrote all of that into the movie, but when I was editing it, none of those things made the movie better. Through this project, I learned to trust my instincts much more. After years plotting out the real and imaginary and about two years of actively working on this film, I can finally say that it is done and I am happy with the results. This film will not be my last film. It is only the beginning of a style I will keep exploring.

Appendix A: Kickstarter Campaign

12/6/12

ExVotos by Ivete Lucas — Kickstarter

 [kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)

<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/ivetelucas/exvotos>

ExVotos by Ivete Lucas — Kickstarter

Her pregnancy at risk, a young girl and her mother set out on a pilgrimage to ask a statue of St. Francis for divine protection.

We made it!!!

Now everything that goes over our goal will be used as Distribution Funds.

A HUGE thank you to everyone who has supported us along the way!

Great News!

If you hadn't seen us the past two weeks, it's because we were out shooting the film! October 4th is Saint Francis Day so we had no time to lose.

Our crew and cast were relentless. They made this film possible working long days with most of our scenes taking place in the midst of thousands of devoted, parading St. Francis pilgrims. It was truly inspiring to direct traditional Huichol people, as well as actresses Paty Blanco and Daniela Flores. This was truly an amazing shoot!

We still need your support.

Some of the major expenses were placed on a credit card and the owner of the hotel we stayed in was kind enough to give us an extension until our fund raising campaign is successful. We also have post-production costs coming up as we are on a deadline to finish by December.

Here's a preview of what we shot in Mexico:

Join us as we race to meet our goal!

Expect lots of updates from us and don't forget to share with your friends.



Don Jesus (Huichol Marakame), Daniela Flores (actress), Paty Blanco (actress), Mario Rodriguez (sound), OTIS IKE (executive producer), Ivete Lucas (director)



Coco Gonzalez (Asistant Camera), Mario Rodriguez (sound), Joaquin del Paso (Director of Photography), John Carrithers (2nd Unit Cinematographer)

****Wanna know what we're up to?**

- Follow our Blog <http://exvotosfilm.blogspot.mx/>
- Like our Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ExVotosfilm>

What is ExVotos?

ExVotos is a short film by writer/director Ivete Lucas that will be shot during the Saint Francis festivities in Real de Catorce, Mexico.

How you can help:

Your support through Kickstarter will ensure that the project can be completed at the highest possible quality. What makes ExVotos so special is also what makes it expensive: we are an international co-production that spans several countries. We need all the help we can get to provide for production costs such as travel expenses, lodging, equipment rentals, and meals for the cast/crew.

Additionally, funds raised will allow us to complete post production. After spending so much time and effort shooting in Real de Catorce, we want to make sure the film is polished and looks as amazing as we know it can. This will require funds for sound design, color correction, graphic design, and post-production equipment.

What is Kickstarter?

Kickstarter is a crowd-source funding platform that allows you to make donations towards independent projects, like this film. To donate to our movie, choose one of the awesome rewards on the right of this page, then click on the "Back this Project" button on the top right.

Kickstarter is an "all-or-nothing" platform, which means we'll only be funded if we reach the \$5,000 goal. If we don't reach the goal, we'll get nothing and this wonderful project that we've all worked so hard on will not be completed. The cast and crew would be left stranded in Mexico with no food or water and chaos would arise.

More about the film:

The Story

15 year old Anayansi is 7 months pregnant. Her mother Dorotea is stricken with anxiety for her daughter and the child that she bears. The gunfire from a neighborhood shootout between waring drug cartels caused her to fall as she rushed for safety. This has put her pregnancy at risk.

Dorotea prays to St. Francis every day and believes he was the one who saved her daughter. The doctors have told Anayansi to rest, but they are not women who sit and wait. Moved by their devotion to St. Francis, they pack their belongings and embark on a pilgrimage to visit his holy chapel in the mountains of Real de Catorce.

The trip is grueling. They travel in the back of a pickup truck surrounded by thousands of pilgrims. On the passage into town they encounter a group of Huichol pilgrims who have lost their way and are out of food. Dorotea shares the little food and water she has. Once in the town the women are lost in a sea of people trying to get into the church. Anayansi's wheelchair is useless over the cobble stone streets. Realizing she must abandon the chair or her quest, Anayansi attempts to walk into the procession to St. Francis. The Huichol community, seeing she is very weak, congregates around her and forces a passage into the church.

Once inside the church, Anayansi feels inconceivable pain and begins to bleed from her womb. A hysterical Dorotea charges to the shire of St. Francis begging for him to intervene. Being so far from a hospital, the only person that can intervene is Don Jesús, a Huichol shaman. Dorotea believes that shaman rituals are witchcraft and unholy. Anayansi must decide if she'll listen to her mother and wait for divine intervention or participate in a shamanic ritual with no certain outcome.

ExVoto?

A physical and permanent offering placed in a church to request or give thanks for an act of divine intervention.

Retablos are a form of ExVotos

Día de San Francisco de Asís

Saint Francis is the Catholic Church's patron saint of animals and the environment. He is also believed to have performed countless miracles, which is why pilgrimages are performed in his honor. On the day of his festivity, the effigy of Saint Francis is taken from its altar and placed at the bottom of the parish of the Immaculate Conception. Patrons give their votive offerings (exvotos) at his feet. By touching the statue it is believed that a person's prayers will be



© Adrián Gutiérrez

The Huichol are an ethnic group native to central Mexico whose population number approximately 26,000. Real de Catorce is located in Wirikuta, a mountainous range that is sacred to them. Every year they make a pilgrimage to bring offerings and to perform rituals at Cerro Quemado, a mountain that they believe is the origin of their ancestors. Their pilgrimage is around the same time as the festivities of Saint Francis.

You can make this happen.

ExVotos has been in the works for years, and now that we are in the final stages, we would love your support in completing the film. Donations of any amount are deeply appreciated and will help us make the best film possible.

Donating is not the only way to help. We welcome you to visit our blog, where you can follow us through production, and to share this page with your friends. Thanks again for trusting in our project! We will strive to make a movie that you're proud to be a part of.

.....

Special thanks to OTIS IKE, Russell Bush and Adrián Gutiérrez (Cinematography), Carlos Mundalah Díaz/ Epifanía (Music), Chris Sullivan (Text Advising)

Appendix B: Blog Post - Location

12/6/12

ExVotos: Location – Real de Catorce, SLP

EXVOTOS

Behind the scenes of a new short film by Ivete Lucas

HOME FILM INFO CREW CAST BEHIND THE SCENES KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN

KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2012



ExVotos

by Ivete Lucas

Her pregnancy at risk, a young girl and her mother set out on a pilgrimage to ask a statue of St. Francis for divine protection.

Houston, TX

SUCCESSFUL!

120% FUNDED	\$6,022 PLEDGED	FUNDED OCT 25, 2012
-------------	-----------------	---------------------

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TRANSLATE

Select Language Powered by G+

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



Ivete Lucas (b. 1983 Sao Paulo, Brazil) A filmmaker and visual artist based in Houston, Texas, Lucas launched her filmmaking career in Monterrey, Mexico. Her short film *Asthma* (2009) was released nationally in select movie theaters, screened at festivals in South America and Europe, and was short-listed for the Mexican Academy Awards.

LOCATION - REAL DE CATORCE, SLP



©Otis Ike, 2012

The town of Real de Catorce is located in the heart of the Catorce mountain range, in the state of San Luis Potosi, on the north of Mexico. It is 2,750 meters above sea level.

Director Ivete Lucas on the road to Real de Catorce.



exvotosfilm.blogspot.com/2012/08/location-real-de-catorce-slp.html

1/13

12/6/12

Lucas' documentary and narrative works have screened at festivals including SXSW, the Boston Latino Film Festival and HBO's New York Latino Film Festival. She is the recipient of grants from the Mexican Film Institute, the Texas Filmmakers Production Fund and the Mexican Fund for Culture and the Arts (FONCA).

ExVotos: Location – Real de Catorce, SLP



©Otis Ike, 2012

CAST AND CREW

Adrián Gutiérrez
Ivete Lucas
Irene Georghiades
Joaquín del Paso
Isabella Cook
Fernanda Paredes
Alonso Tapia
Lou

The main access to the town is through a tunnel 2,300 meters long, which fits one row of cars at a time.

BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ 2012 (16)

► September (7)

▼ August (7)

Brad Pitt Was Here

Retablos Muy Buenos

Location - Real de Catorce, SLP

Joaquín del Paso - Director of
Photography

Intro - Adrián Gutiérrez

Intro - Irene Georghiades

The type of movie I DON'T want to
make

► July (2)

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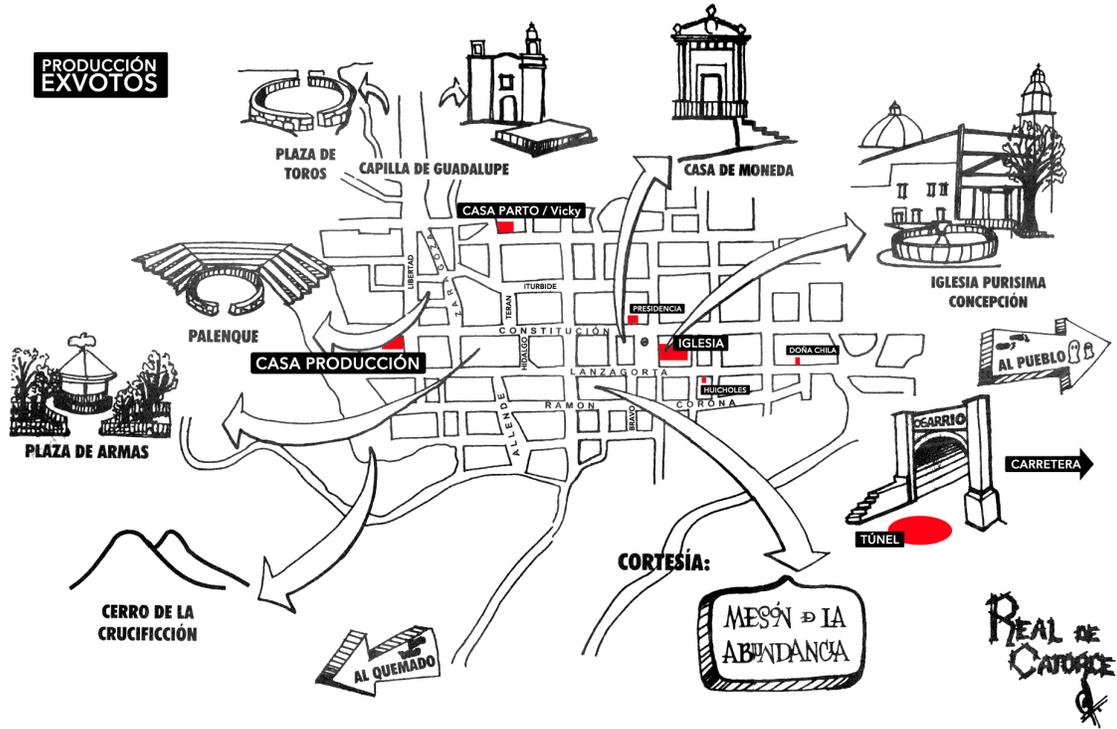
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LABELS

Anayansi (1) Pictures (1) Synopsis (1)
Welcome (1)

Or horses...

Appendix C: Real de Catorce Production Map



Appendix D: Shooting Plan

PLAN DE RODAJE "EXVOTOS"

Directora: Ivete Lucas
 Productora.: Laura Verduzco
 Asistente de Dirección: Adrián Gutiérrez
 Director de Foto: Joaquín del Paso

Cast	Días
A Anayansi (Daniela) - 1 embarazada, 2 aliviada	Todos
D Dorotea (Paty)	Todos
V Vicky	no 4
DJ Don Jesús (Marakame)	1 al 4
AG Ángel (nuevo huichol)	
Ma Marcelino	no 3 al 5
J José Carrillo	
G Griselda (trabaja fin de semana)	(no fin de semana)
N Niña huichol (por definir)	(no fin de semana)
B1 Bebé 1 (Ósmar, hijo de Lucy)	(no 4)
B2 Bebé 2 (por definir)	
My Mayté (hermana de Lucy)	
E Enfermera (Lucy)	(no 4)
S Señora mayor (por definir)	
MV Mamá de Vicky	
AV Amigo de Vicky (por definir)	

HORA	ESCENAS	NOTAS	CAST
Día 1: SÁBADO 29			
ENSAYOS			
Día 2: DOMINGO 30			
	Escena 4	EXT. TÚNEL EN REAL DE CATORCE - DÍA	
7:30	Dorotea y Anayansi se adentran en el pueblo		D A1
	Escena 5	EXT. SUBIDA - DÍA	
9:00	Anayansi empieza a escuchar voces, se le cae celular		D A1
13:00	COMIDA		
	Escena 3	INT. TÚNEL - DÍA	
16:30	Trayecto con diálogos en el túnel		D A1 V Ma G N
Día 3: LUNES 1			
NO HAY CARRETAS			
RECOGER A DON JESÚS			
	Escena 11	EXT. CALLE - TARDE	
8:00	Todos llevan a Anayansi cuesta arriba, la gente los sigue		D A1 J Ma V G AG
	Escena 5		
10:00	RETAKES ANAYANSI CELULAR		
	VIÑETAS / PREPARACIÓN ESCENAS 12 Y 18		
13:00	COMIDA		
	OPCIÓN A		
	Escena 7B (fuente de la Iglesia)	EXT. CALLE DE LA PLAZA (FUENTE) - DÍA	
15:00	Anayansi y Dorotea se sientan junto a huicholes, Don Jesús	ENTRA ÁNGEL SUSTITUYENDO A MARCELINO	D A1 DJ J Ma AG
	Escena 13	EXT. CERRO QUEMADO - ATARDECER	
16:00	Don Jesús, Dorotea y Anayansi en escena paralela de parto	Crew reducido (Ivete+Joaquín+actrices+Jesús)	D A1 DJ
	Viñetas escenas 14 a 17 (gente reaccionando a grito)		
	OPCIÓN B		
	Escenas 12 y 18	EXT. JARDÍN DE VICKY - TARDE	
15:30	El parto se lleva a cabo con ayuda de Don Jesús y enfermera		Ma G V MV DJ B J E AG
	Escena 17	EXT. CALLES DE REAL - TARDE	
18:30	Enfermera y amigo de Vicky van en camino y escuchan grito	Segunda unidad	E AV
20:30	CENA		
Día 4: MARTES 2			

Escena 1	EXT. CARRETERA EMPEDRADA - DÍA	
6:30 Establishing carretera camioneta (01A)	A dos unidades	D A1 V My S
8:00 Viñetas para presentar personajes (01B)		D A1 V My S
9:00 Primeros diálogos y acción camioneta (01B)		D A1 V My S
10:00 Escenas con huicholes (01C)		D A1 V My S Ma G N
12:00 Diálogos finales (01C)		D A1 V My S Ma G N
14:00 COMIDA		
OPCIÓN A		
POSIBLEMENTE Escena 13	EXT. CERRO QUEMADO - ATARDECER	
15:30 Don Jesús, Dorotea y Anayansi en escena paralela de parto	Crew reducido (Ivete+Joaquín+actrices+Jesús)	D A1 DJ
Viñetas escenas 14 a 17 (gente reaccionando a grito)		
OPCIÓN B		
Escena 22	EXT./INT. TÚNEL - ANOCHECER	
16:00 Trayecto en el interior del túnel (22B)		D A2 B
18:15 Gente despidiéndose de ellas en la entrada del túnel (22A)		D A2 B J Ma AG G V

Día 5: MIÉRCOLES 3

POSIBLEMENTE ESCENA 1 (SI NO SE GRABA EL MARTES)		
Escena 2	EXT. TÚNEL - DÍA	
Bajan de la camioneta, suben a carreta	Segunda unidad viñetas vendedores y gente	D A1 V My S Ma G N
14:00 COMIDA		
Escena 22	EXT./INT. TÚNEL - ANOCHECER	
16:00 Trayecto en el interior del túnel (22B)		D A2 B
18:15 Gente despidiéndose de ellas en la entrada del túnel (22A)		D A2 B J AG G V
20:30 CENA		

Día 6: JUEVES 4

Escena 6	Segunda unidad viñetas procesión e iglesia *Llevar a D. Jesús y Francisco a Matehuala EXT. VARIAS CALLES - DÍA	
Escena 1	EXT. CARRETERA EMPEDRADA - DÍA	
6:30 Establishing carretera camioneta (01A)	A dos unidades	D A1 V My S
8:00 Viñetas para presentar personajes (01B)		D A1 V My S
9:00 Primeros diálogos y acción camioneta (01B)		D A1 V My S
10:00 Escenas con huicholes (01C)		D A1 V My S Ma G N
12:00 Diálogos finales (01C)		D A1 V My S Ma G N
14:00 COMIDA		
OPCIÓN A		
POSIBLEMENTE Escena 13	EXT. CERRO QUEMADO - ATARDECER	
15:30 Don Jesús, Dorotea y Anayansi en escena paralela de parto	Crew reducido (Ivete+Joaquín+actrices+Jesús)	D A1 DJ
Viñetas escenas 14 a 17 (gente reaccionando a grito)		
OPCIÓN B		
Escena 22	EXT./INT. TÚNEL - ANOCHECER	
16:00 Trayecto en el interior del túnel (22B)		D A2 B
18:15 Gente despidiéndose de ellas en la entrada del túnel (22A)		D A2 B J Ma AG G V

Día 5: MIÉRCOLES 3

POSIBLEMENTE ESCENA 1 (SI NO SE GRABA EL MARTES)		
Escena 2	EXT. TÚNEL - DÍA	
Bajan de la camioneta, suben a carreta	Segunda unidad viñetas vendedores y gente	D A1 V My S Ma G N
14:00 COMIDA		
Escena 22	EXT./INT. TÚNEL - ANOCHECER	
16:00 Trayecto en el interior del túnel (22B)		D A2 B
18:15 Gente despidiéndose de ellas en la entrada del túnel (22A)		D A2 B J AG G V
20:30 CENA		

Día 6: JUEVES 4

Escena 6	Segunda unidad viñetas procesión e iglesia *Llevar a D. Jesús y Francisco a Matehuala EXT. VARIAS CALLES - DÍA	
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Appendix E: Crew List

Director/Writer/ Editor	Ivete Lucas
Executive Producer	OTIS IKE
Producers	Laura Verduzco Irene Georghiades
Co-Producer	Daniela Pérez
Production Coordinator	Pedro Conrado
Production Assistant	Isabella Cook
Director of Photography	Joaquín del Paso
Second Unit Director	OTIS IKE
Second Unit Camera	John Carrithers
Assistant Director	Adrián Gutiérrez
Production Designer / Wardrobe	Alexiz Sylvania
Casting Director	Roberto Niebla
Production Design/FX	Karla Torres
Acting Coach	Oliver Cantú
Assistant Camera/ Gaffer	Jorge González

2nd AC/ Data Wrangler	Fernanda Paredes
Composer	Marín del Paso
Sound recordist	Mario Rodríguez
Graphic Designer	Sebastian Forray
Catering	Roberto Alanís
Treasurer	Eric Guerra
Huichol advisor	Francisco Bautista
Medical advisor	Dr. José Luis Morales Sánchez
Midwife advisor	Brigit Alexander
Sound designer	Matt Crawford
Colorist	Anand Modi
Re-recording Mixer	Steve Degenaro

Appendix F: Kickstarter Update - The Crew

12/6/12

ExVotos by Ivete Lucas » Introducing - our Cast and Crew — Kickstarter

 [kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)

<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/ivetelucas/exvotos/posts/330381>

ExVotos by Ivete Lucas

ExVotos is very lucky to have a group of hard working, creative and very resourceful people making this happen. We have spent about a year preparing for this shoot and we will spend many more months editing and postproducing the film.

Principal photography took one full week of shooting in Real de Catorce, Mexico. We put in long days of hard work in the sunny days and cold nights of the mountainous desert, which included a two hour horseback ride up the Huichol sacred mountain and dealing with crowds of pilgrims swarming all around us during the most important days of the St. Francis celebration. We climbed up and down hills, carrying heavy equipment, wheelchairs and even people. We went to bed late and woke up before the sun came out, all of this, to get the perfect shots and the best performances.

Today, I want to introduce you to my cast and crew, a team of real filmmaking heroes.



www.kickstarter.com/projects/ivetelucas/exvotos/posts/330381

1/6

12/6/12

ExVotos by Ivete Lucas » Introducing - our Cast and Crew — Kickstarter

John Carrithers (2nd unit cinematographer), Fernanda Frías (2nd assistant camera), Marcelino Bautista (cast), Laura Verduzco (producer), Adrián Gutiérrez (assistant director), José Carrillo Bautista (cast), Karla Torres (art/makeup/special fx), Alejandra (cast) and Alexiz Sylvania (art/wardrobe)



Silvia Pérez de Flores (Daniela's mom), Daniela Flore, Karla Torres, Roberto Alanís (catering), Paty Blanco, Coco González (assistant camera) and Mario Rodríguez



Ivete Lucas (director), Daniela Flores (cast), Mario Rodríguez (sound), Paty Blanco (cast), Don Jesús (cast), Joaquín del Paso (director of photography)

Not pictured here, but still a big part of the team:

Irene Georghiades (co-producer), Pedro Conrado (production coordinator), Daniela Pérez (associate producer), Roberto Niebla (casting director), Isabella Cook (production assistant), Alonso Tapia (social media), Carlos Mundalah Díaz (music composer) and Antonio Rodriguez (publicist).

THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH!

Appendix G: Kickstarter Update - Working with the Huichol

12/6/12

ExVotos by Ivete Lucas » Working with the Huichol — Kickstarter

 [kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)

<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/ivetelucas/exvotos/posts/334206>

ExVotos by Ivete Lucas



Real de Catorce is situated in Wirikuta, the Huichol sacred mountain range. Every time I visited Real, I felt like we were merely borrowing this place from the Huichol, an ancient culture of craftsmen who have made pilgrimages to Wirikuta for centuries. Every year, they walk from the mountains of Jalisco to the mountains of Catorce to visit the place where their ancestors came from. The Huichol are also noted for using a psychedelic cactus named peyote on their rituals.

I couldn't write a story in Real de Catorce without the presence of the Huichol. However, I knew very little about their culture and I didn't want to portray them as a stereotype. As a Latin American living in the US, I am very sensitive to the misguided portrayal of foreign cultures. Therefore, I sought a Huichol guide, who could help me with the story. I was finally introduced to Francisco Bautista, the amazing artist and craftsman behind the *Vochol*. Francisco was excited about the film. We sat down and talked about the story and he suggested I had Don Jesus, a Huichol shaman or *Marakame*, participate in it.



Francisco Bautista with the Vochol.

Don Jesus agreed to do it. He was to show up in Real de Catorce for the shoot and help Anayansi when she felt sick. He never told me how he was going to help her or what he would do, and I liked it that way. After all, he is a real shaman, who helps people every day. If I planned something with him, he would be acting and if he just tried to save her, it would be a genuine action. Don Jesus lived in the mountains of Nayarit, with no cel phone reception. He told me he was going to show up at Real de Catorce on Sunday before the shoot, and he did.



Don Jesús at Cerro Quemado.

Don Jesús was not the only Huichol in the film, nor the only non-actor. We had a group of young Huichol men and women who were very excited to participate, and a beautiful little girl, Alejandra. Vicky Frías and her mother, both Real de Catorce locals who are not Huichol, also played big roles in the film.



José Carrillo Bautista, Griselda Sandoval González, Vicky Frías and Marcelino Carrillo Bautista

It was an interesting mix: actors, non-actors and people who didn't know what we were doing. It was a fertile environment for storytelling. Working with non-actors was not hard at all. Everyone has the ability to act. We all did it when we were children playing make believe. This experience was not that much different to them.

Appendix G: Script

EXT. CARRETERA EMPEDRADA - AMANECER

Una pickup sube las montañas en el desierto de San Luis Potosí. El sol apenas empieza a salir. La gente viene amontonada en la caja de la pickup.

Una SEÑORA MAYOR va rezando el rosario. Otra señora con bolsas de mercancía, VICKY, va platicando con una muchacha, MAYTÉ y DOROTEA. Dorotea va abrazando a su hija, ANAYANSI de 15 años, que viene dormida entre sus brazos.

DIÁLOGO: Las señoras y Mayté hablan de tonterías: que si la señora que hace gorditas muy ricas, que si el tinte de cabello que se compró y no jaló, entre la plática sale que Dorotea es de Monterrey y que Monterrey ahorita está muy feo.

De lejos se avistan unos Huicholes que hacen señal para que se paren. La pickup se para. Anayansi abre los ojos y ve que se suben UN HOMBRE HUICHOL, UNA MUJER y UNA NIÑA. Los Huicholes se ven despeinados, enpolvados y hambrientos.

Las señoras les sacan plástica. Dorotea les comparte de su comida y su agua. Dorotea le dice a Anayansi que se mueva, pero ella se hace la dormida. La empuja y saca unos panecitos de su bolsa. Anayansi se tapa la cabeza con su sudadera, revelando su embarazo avanzado.

Entre los pliegues de su sudadera, se asoma a ver a los Huicholes. El hombre, Marcelino, se da cuenta y le regresa la mirada.

Las señoras siguen platicando. Dorotea les explica la historia de Anayansi sin pena, pues cree que está dormida.

DOROTEA

¡Nombre! Es que esta niña... No sabes los sustos que me ha sacado. Pero éste sí fue el peor. Ya ves que en Monterrey sí está bien fea la situación. Y pues que le va tocando una balacera ahí en el cerro, cerquita de mi casa. ¡En pleno jueves! Y esta que se supone que estaba en la escuela.

MAYTÉ

¡Ay que feo! ¿Y no le pasó nada?

DOROTEA

Pues de veras que gracias a San Francisco de Asís, que yo a él siempre le rezo para que nos cuide a mi y a mi hija, que porque como estamos solitas... Pero sí, salió bien. Nada más que con el susto ahí anda apurada con que se le quiere venir el bebé y pues yo nomás le digo que no esté pensando esas cosas, que mejor tenga fé. Yo le digo, tranquilita, y vamos a ver a Panchito, le vamos a dar las gracias y todo va estar bien.

La niña Huichol se acerca a Anayansi y le quiere tocar la panza. Griselda, su mamá, la detiene.

EXT. TÚNEL - DÍA

El grupo de peregrinos se baja de la pickup y se pone en fila para cruzar el túnel. Dorotea saca una silla de ruedas para que se siente Anayansi. Los vendedores ambulantes se acercan como hormigas por todas partes.

VENEDORES

¿Quiere milagritos, rosarios, la imagen de Panchito? ¿Quiere fruta, gorditas? Ándele, ¡cómpreme una flor!

Anayansi no les pone atención. Tan pronto se sienta en la silla, saca un espejito, se empieza acomodar el cabello y a ponerse lipstick. Le llega un mensajito de texto y se pone a contestar.

DOROTEA

Ay, ¿a poco tienes señal?

Anayansi asienta con la cabeza. Dorotea le compra un rosario a Vicky mientras la fila avanza.

3.

La niña Huichol se acerca a Anayansi y le toca la panza.

GRISELDA
Chhh! Déjala en paz.

El grupo llega al tope de la fila, dónde los esperan unos caballos con carretas. Todos se suben a la carreta. La niña se sienta al lado de Anayansi.

INT. TÚNEL - DÍA

Todo oscurece al entrar al túnel. La gente deja de platicar. Todos van brinque y brinque en la carreta.

Dorotea reza el rosario en silencio. Anayansi se sostiene el vientre, mientras su mamá recita el Ave María en voz baja. Anayansi respira hondo. Griselda la mira. Anayansi cierra los ojos. Los abre y mira a Griselda, a Marcelino, a la niña. Todo se oscurece y vuelve a iluminar, cada vez más lento. Las voces y el ruido del túnel se escuchan cada vez más distantes. Unos cantos se escuchan a lo lejos. Anayansi transpira, batalla para mantenerse sentada.

GRISELDA
(a Dorotea)
¡Señora!

Dorotea sale de su trance y ve a su hija a punto de desmayar. Alguien le da agua. Dorotea le da palmaditas en el rostro. Ya se ve el fin del túnel.

DOROTEA
Respira, mijita, ya vamos a llegar.

Anayansi sostiene fuerte la mano de Griselda. La carreta sale del túnel.

EXT. TÚNEL EN REAL DE CATORCE - DÍA

Dorotea empuja a Anayansi en la silla de ruedas sobre los caminos de piedra. Anayansi intenta tomarse una coca cola.

DOROTEA
¿Ya estás mejor?

ANAYANSI

Sí.

La silla de ruedas se atora. Dorotea la empuja con fuerza. Las dos mujeres desaparecen en el mar de gente.

EXT. SUBIDA - DÍA

Anayansi va mensajando en su celular mientras que su mamá sigue empujando.

ANAYANSI

Esta mugre no jala.

DOROTEA

Esta tampoco.

Dorotea se para un momento. Frente a ellas pasa un grupo de mujeres que van platicando de trivialidades. Anayansi y una señora se miran por un momento.

SEÑORA

(sin mover los labios)

...por favor Diosito, líbralo del vicio...

ANAYANSI

(a Dorotea)

Escuchaste?

DOROTEA

Que las enchiladas buenas están por allá.

Dorotea la empuja otra vez, entre la gente, las tienditas, los grupos de peregrinos que hacen su procesión. Anayansi ve los rosarios, las imágenes de Panchito y la virgen. Los susurros se hacen cada vez más fuertes; se convierten en plegarias, en cantos desentonados, en lamentos. Anayansi se sostiene el vientre.

De pronto, la silla se atora en una piedra y Anayansi casi se cae. Una señora las ayuda. Anayansi toma su celular del piso, le acomoda la batería y lo trata de prender.

DOROTEA (CONT'D)
¿Pues con quién tanto hablas?

ANAYANSI
¡¿Ay, que te importa?!

DOROTEA
No me hables así.

Anayansi guarda su celular, saca el espejito y se arregla el cabello, sin mirar a su mamá.

DOROTEA (CONT'D)
Ya vamos a llegar mijita.

Anayansi ya no se quiere subir a la silla de ruedas. Las mujeres discuten por un momento.

DOROTEA (CONT'D)
¿Entonces cómo le vas a hacer?

Una familia con un hombre anciano en muletas pasa frente a ellas. Anayansi los escucha.

PENSAMIENTO DE LA HIJA
Señor, ayuda a mi papá. Señor,
ayuda a mi papá.

EXT. VARIAS CALLES - DÍA

Anayansi y Dorotea caminan. Anayansi se sostiene el vientre. Gente pasa alrededor. Ella los mira, ellos la miran.

Las dos mujeres llegan al pie de la iglesia y ven la subidota y luego la fila de peregrinos, que abarca varias cuadras. Unos niños tratan de tocarle la panza. Dorotea los ayenta.

EXT. CALLE DE LA PLAZA - DÍA

Dorotea y Anayansi se integran a la fila. Anayansi ya va despeinada y con el maquillaje corrido.

DOROTEA
Ya casi llegamos, mijita.

Anayansi asienta y sigue caminando. La gente la empuja. Los murmullos y plegarias se hacen más intensos. La fila avanza. La gente trae sus rosarios, sus milagritos y sus novenas en la mano. Anayansi ve los rostros de la gente, rostros de tristeza, de desesperación, de cansancio. La gente reza, suplica, canta. Un par de personas la miran fijamente, con preocupación.

DOROTEA (CONT'D)

¿Anayansi?

Los cantos y plegarias se disipan. Anayansi ve al grupo de Huicholes al otro lado de la multitud.

DOROTEA (CONT'D)

(le toca la frente)

Mijita, ¿estás bien?

Dorotea la toma del brazo y abre camino entre la gente. Los dos se sientan en la banqueta, al lado del puesto de artesanías de los Huicholes.

Los Huicholes se acercan a ver qué pasó. Dorotea finge estar bien, pero en realidad le tiemblan las manos.

Un Huichol anciano, DON JESÚS, le toca la tez a Anayansi. Luego le toca el vientre. Anayansi respira hondo y su piel vuelve a agarrar color.

DOROTEA (CONT'D)

Mijita, no tenemos que ir hasta allá. Ya con el esfuerzo que hiciste está bien.

El señor le habla en Wirrarika. Anayansi sonríe. Luego le toma la mano a su mamá y se la pone sobre el vientre.

ANAYANSI

Siente.

Dorotea toca su panza por un momento. El bebé se mueve.

ANAYANSI (CONT'D)

Voy a ofrecer el sacrificio.

DOROTEA

Pero no estás bien.

Anayansi se levanta. Los Huicholes la ayudan. Don Jesús le dice algo en Wirrarika a Marcelino.

MARCELINO

Nosotros las acompañamos.

EXT. FILA A LA IGLESIA - DÍA

Marcelino, y JOSÉ CARRILLO, otro joven Huichol, abren paso entre la gente para que pasen Anayansi y su mamá.

JOSÉ CARRILLO

Disculpe, señor. ¿Nos da permiso?

Pasan al lado de una congregación de personas que van de rodillas. Entre más se acercan a la iglesia, la gente se resiste más. Sin embargo, cuando ven a Anayansi embarazada y despeinada, la dejan pasar.

Dorotea reconoce a Vicky entre los vendedores y la saluda de lejos.

El grupo llega a la puerta de la iglesia. La gente se da codazos. Ya no los quieren dejar pasar. Los Huicholes tratan de explicar. Dorotea mira a Anayansi que ya se anda agarrando el vientre. La gente se hace bola. Los Huicholes intentan abrir espacio. De pronto entran a la iglesia.

INT. IGLESIA - DÍA

Los cantos de las señoras ancianas retumban en las paredes de la iglesia. Los miles de peregrinos se dirigen lentamente al altar a tocar a Panchito y fotografiarlo con sus celulares.

Anayansi siente una punzada fuerte en su vientre. Se detiene, respira. Camina otra vez.

Imágenes macabras de santos, angelitos y la virgen decoran las paredes de la iglesia. La gente cuelga milagritos en una bata. Una imagen de Cristo sangrando. Anayansi siente una punzada más fuerte. Se agacha del dolor.

Se acercan al altar. Anayansi muy apenas puede caminar. Se detiene.

ANAYANSI

Mamá, creo que me oriné.

DOROTEA

A ver.

(le toca el pantalón)

Esto no es pipí.

Dorotea y los Huicholes la toman como pueden y la sientan en una banca. Dorotea corre hacia la imagen de San Panchito, haciendo todos a un lado. Lo toca y le reclama bajito, con prisa.

Regresa corriendo a su hija. Anayansi no está bien. Su pantalón tiene manchas de sangre.

EXT. IGLESIA - DÍA

Los tres Huicholes guían a Anayansi y a Dorotea hacia afuera de la iglesia. La niña se retuerce del dolor, ya no puede caminar. Dorotea camina sin rumbo.

MARCELINO

(a José Carrillo)

Ve por Don Jesús.

El Huichol corre. Pasa frente a Vicky. Vicky mira hacia atrás. Empieza a escuchar un tumulto. Sigue el ruido y se encuentra con la niña.

VICKY

(se agacha)

A ver, ¿qué pasó?

DOROTEA

Hay que hablarle a una ambulancia.

Y yo no tengo saldo.

VICKY

No señora. Una ambulancia no va a llegar. El túnel está cerrado. Hay que buscar a una enfermera.

Dorotea se acerca a Anayansi, quien se tapa la sangre con un manto Huichol.

MARCELINO

Señora, mi papá es Marakame. Él la puede ayudar.

DOROTEA

Muchacho, no te quiero ofender, pero no podemos hacer eso.

ANAYANSI

¡Mamá!

DOROTEA

¡Anayansi! Ya escuchaste al padrecito que estas cosas son brujerías. Yo que tanto le recé a Panchito y tu que te quieres ir con un chamán.

La gente se congrega alrededor. Algunos tratan de interferir.

VICKY

Hay que llevarla a mi casa.

Vicky le pide cobijas a la gente. Marcelino y Vicky atan unas cobijas y ponen a Anayansi en cima. La levantan entre los tres y se la llevan hacia la calle. Algunas personas los siguen.

EXT. CALLE - TARDE

Saliendo de la iglesia, se encuentran con José Carrillo, Griselda y Don Jesús. José ayuda a cargar a Anayansi, quien va gimiendo del dolor. Más gente los empieza a seguir.

VICKY

(a uno de sus compañeros)
Oye, necesito que vayas al puesto de salud. A ver si hay una enfermera.

Los Huicholes se llevan a Anayansi montaña arriba como en una procesión. Todos van callados. Anayansi gime con cada contracción. La gente se va congregando y los van siguiendo.

EXT. JARDÍN DE VICKY - TARDE

La MAMÁ DE VICKY abre la puerta. Vicky entra y, detrás de ella, los Huicholes con la niña.

VICKY

Está muy mala.

La mamá de Vicky trae unos cojines y colchas. Ahí ponen a Anayansi. Don Jesús acomoda sus cosas. Griselda y Marcelino prenden cirios.

DOROTEA

Mijita...

ANAYANSI

(apretándose el vientre)

Shhh! Déjalo, que me ayude.

Vicky y Griselda le quitan el pantalón a Anayansi y le ponen una bata. La mamá de Vicky trae una vasija con agua tibia. Le limpia las piernas. Anayansi gime todo el tiempo. Dorotea permanece a su lado.

Don Jesús comienza a cantar... el ritual se lleva a cabo.

Anayansi sufre como un animal, grita, berrea. Don Jesús la hace confezar sus mentiras. Anayansi termina diciendo que la balacera fue su culpa. Dorotea la abraza y le dice que no. Lloran. El bebé se deja venir.

Vicky y Griselda ayudan con el parto. Anayansi echa un grito espeluznante.

EXT. IGLESIA - TARDE

Un grupo de devotos escuchan el grito.

EXT. CASITA - TARDE

Unos niños que corren en la calle la escuchan.

EXT. CEMENTERIO - TARDE

El señor que cuida el cementerio la escucha.

EXT. CALLES DE REAL - TARDE

La ENFERMERA y el amigo de Vicky, que van en camino, la escuchan.

EXT. JARDÍN DE VICKY - TARDE

El bebé llora y se mueve. Don Jesús lo inspecciona. Está perfecto, ni parece prematuro.

La enfermera llega a casa de Vicky y se percata del milagro. Ayuda a limpiar al bebé y a Anayansi.

Anayansi agradece a Don Jesús. Le dice que como le puede agradecer. Don Jesús dice que le lleve una ofrenda a San Francisco.

EXT. CALLES DE REAL - TARDE

Los Huicholes cargan a Anayansi en la silla de ruedas hasta llegar a la iglesia. Al llegar a la iglesia, la ponen en el piso, le dan a su bebé y la empujan hacia adentro.

Anayansi le pone ofrendas Huicholes a San Francisco de Asis.

EXT. IGLESIA - TARDE

El grupo sale de la iglesia. La gente se les empieza a acercar.

Anayansi le comenta a su mamá que a lo mejor y se quiere quedar en el pueblo. Que le da miedo regresar a la ciudad.

DEVOTA

Oye, ¿puedo tocar a tu niño?

Más gente se hace a su alrededor. Una persona le dice a que viene, cómo si ella los pudiera ayudar. Muchísima gente se empieza a congregarse. De pronto el sacerdote abre camino entre ellos y llega a bendecirla. Más gente se empieza a congregarse.

ANAYANSI

(a Dorotea)

Creo que mejor nos vamos.

EXT. TÚNEL - ANOCHECER

Anayansi y su mamá se suben a una carreta. La gente se despide y le ruegan que regrese. La carreta empieza avanzar.

DOROTEA

Llegando a Monterrey vamos a empacar y nos vamos al pueblo, con mi mamá. ¿Cómo la ves?

ANAYANSI

Está bien.

La carreta entra al túnel. El bebé llora. Anayansi lo calma y mira hacia la salida. Una lucecita blanca, al final del túnel.

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Vita

Ivete Lucas (b. 1983 Sao Paulo, Brazil) A filmmaker and visual artist, Lucas launched her filmmaking career in Monterrey, Mexico. Her short film *Asthma* (2009) was released nationally in select movie theaters, screened at festivals in South America and Europe, and was short-listed for the Mexican Academy Awards. Lucas' documentary and narrative works have screened at festivals including SXSW, the Boston Latino Film Festival and HBO's New York Latino Film Festival. She is the recipient of grants from the Mexican National Film Institute (IMCINE), the Texas Filmmakers Production Fund and the Mexican Fund for Culture and the Arts (FONCA).

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This report was typed by the author.