



EL AGUA

A film by Elena López Riera



cinéfondation
LA RÉSIDENCE

Elena López Riera

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Since 2000, the Festival Residence has provided each year accommodation and support to twelve selected young directors in order to help them prepare their first or second feature film. A jury presided by a film director sits twice a year, selecting these young filmmakers on the basis of their short films, or

even first feature film, and the merits of their feature film project. During their 4-and-a-half-month stay in Paris, they work on the writing of their feature film project, have meetings with professionals and try, with the support of the Cannes Film Festival, to bring their project to co-production status.



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Technical Information

Working Title: El Agua
Director: Elena López Riera
Screenplay: Elena López Riera
Nationality: Swiss / Spanish
Genre: Fiction
Format: HD
Length: 90 min
Shooting location: Orihuela (Alicante, Spain)

Production Company: Alina film
Address: CP 1073, 1211 Genève 1
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Email: info@alinafilm.com

Director's Information

Elena López Riera was born in 1982 in Spain. She is based in Geneva. Her first short film *Pueblo* premiered at the Directors' Fortnight in 2015. In 2016 her film *Las vísceras* is selected at Locarno and won the silver Mikeldi prize at Zinebi film festival. Her latest short film *Los que desean* has been nominated for the European Film Awards and won the Pardino d'Oro at Locarno Film Festival in 2018. Her films have been shown at numerous international film festivals. She is also co-founder of the audiovisual artists' collective *Jacasi negra*. Elena worked as a programmer for several film festivals including Entrevues Belfort, Sevilla European Film Festival and Visions du réel, where she has been a member of the selection committee since 2017. She has also participated in the first international film seminar at the Tabakalera Art Centre, the Berlinale Talent Campus, the Ikusmira Berriak residency program at Tabakalera and the Arché Lab at the Doc Lisboa Festival. Variety magazine pointed her as one of the 10 Spanish raising stars in 2015. She is currently developing her first feature film *El agua*.

Synopsis

It's summer in a small village in southeastern Spain and a storm threatens to flood the river that runs through the village, which is the most polluted in Europe. Throughout the village this old popular belief, which ensures some women are destined to disappear with each new flood, is repeated like a litany, because they were born with the fate of "water in them". And here, water is still linked to death. Young people try to survive the summer lassitude in the village, by taking drugs, dancing the reggeatton, craving with desire for each other. In this charged atmosphere that precedes the storm, 17 year-old Ana, who dreams of leaving this village that smells of death and 20 year-old José have a carnal love story, until the storm hits and Ana disappears without a trace.

Her metallic voice, in a message recorded on *whatsapp*, resonates over the flooded land like the voice of a ghost. "I am my mother, I am my grandmother, I am this woman from 1850, 1925 and 1978. I too am the water".

Statement of Intent

I was born and raised in this small village in southern Spain, lulled by its ancient stories of ghosts and tortured souls to announce the arrival of each new storm. Because there, in one of the country's most arid regions, weather forecasting is mythical. This oral literature transmitted mainly by women in the inner circle taught me there is no difference between poetry and history, and that's what led me to make films.

El Agua recounts, like my previous films, how new generations return to the cultural heritage that has been conveyed to them in their personal research and try to understand how to articulate the ancestral and contemporary in their daily lives.

Synopsis

C'est l'été dans un petit village du sud-est espagnol et une tempête menace de faire déborder à nouveau la rivière qui le traverse, la plus polluée d'Europe. Partout dans le village, se répète comme une litanie cette ancienne croyance populaire qui assure que certaines femmes sont prédestinées à disparaître à chaque nouvelle inondation, car elle sont nées avec le sort de «l'eau en elles». Et dans ces terres, l'eau est toujours liée à la mort. Les jeunes quant à eux essaient de survivre à la lassitude d'un été au village, prennent des drogues, dansent le reggeatton, et se désirent désespérément. Dans cette atmosphère électrique qui précède la tempête, Ana (17 ans) qui rêve de fuir ce village qui pue la mort, et José (20 ans) vivront une histoire d'amour charnelle, jusqu'à ce que la tempête éclate et que Ana disparaisse sans laisser de trace.

Sa voix métallique, enregistrée dans un message audio de *whatsapp*, résonne sur les terres inondées comme la voix d'un fantôme: « Je suis ma mère, je suis ma grand-mère, je suis cette femme de 1850, de 1925, 1978. Moi aussi, je suis l'eau ».

Note d'intention

Je suis née et j'ai grandi dans ce petit village du sud de l'Espagne, bercée par ses récits anciens de fantômes et d'âmes en peine pour annoncer l'arrivée de chaque nouvel orage. Car là-bas, dans une des régions les plus sèches du pays, la météorologie est d'ordre mythologique. Cette littérature orale transmise principalement par des femmes dans le cercle intime m'a appris qu'entre la poésie et l'histoire il n'y a pas de différence, et c'est ce qui m'a amenée à faire des films.

El Agua raconte, à l'instar de mes films précédents, comment les nouvelles générations réinscrivent l'héritage culturel qui leur a été transmis dans leurs recherches personnelles et essaient de comprendre comment articuler l'ancestral et le contemporain dans leur quotidien.

