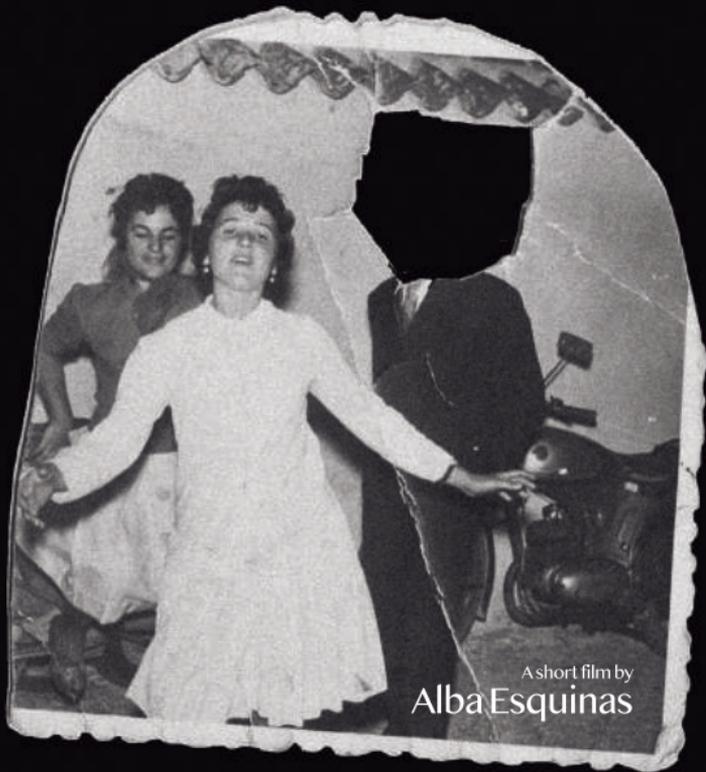


Smells

“Olores”



A short film by
Alba Esquinas



Synopsis:

"Smells" are the sounds and images of the childhood of someone who feels closer to blood-stained knives and rags than to the purity with which childhood is usually conceived when imagining children playing with each other. However, to speak of her childhood is not just to speak of blood, but of her mother and the smells of her flesh.



Data Sheet:

Documentary / 2022 / 10 min / Stereo

Title: Smells

Screenplay and direction: Alba Esquinas

Edition: Alba Esquinas and Laura Gantes

Sound design: Laura Gantes

Production: Mubox Studio

Distribution: Mubox Studio



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Director's notes:

A couple of summers ago I found an image in my late grandmother's photo album that inspired me. The picture shows three people: two women and a man. It's a picture from the 1940s or 1950s, but it's difficult to know the exact period because no one in my family, not even my grandfather, knows who the people in the picture are. But the striking thing was not that, but that the man was "decapitated".

Someone at some point cut off his head in the image and it was that detail that completely captivated and inspired me. In 2020, during the first few months of my confinement, I decided to write a fictional voice based on this image. That is, to tell a story involving the three people in the picture to satisfy my curiosity in some way, even though I knew I would not discover anything.

During the initial writing process, I let myself go. I put myself in the shoes of someone from that time but speaking from the present time. Little by little, the words of someone who remembers her mother appeared in the text. One of the women in that photo. There was no initial intention to get anywhere in the first version of the story. As the days went by, I rewrote it and the text changed quite a lot, especially in terms of structure, but there was a determination to preserve the poetic and dark tone that what I saw was asking for and provoking me.

As for the working method, the selection and search for archive material (in particular, still images) that worked with the text was just as essential as the design of the sound world. As the title of the short film itself suggests, "Olores" [Smells], there is an ambition to generate sensations that will only be possible if image and sound are directed in the same direction.

This short film aims to be a poetic representation of the lights and shadows of a person who lived through the Spanish post-war period during his childhood. However, the choice of the short film format as a mockumentary stems from my interest in observing how in this genre the true and the false are the same thing, which makes it an attractive and current genre, considering today's social trends where the credibility of images is questioned from all angles.

Even though "Olores" [Smells] takes place in a place and time that I didn't live in, I notice that there has been a part of me that has undergone its catharsis by having made this short film. It is not entirely my own catharsis, but also that of my grandmother without intending it at any time, as strange as it may sound. In the end, when I had all the elements on the table, I realised that I was talking about her childhood, although at first, I didn't know or didn't know how to see it. This is one of the big surprises I had during the development of the short film.

These small coincidences make me rethink the power of the subconscious when it comes to writing stories that we consider alien, but that deep down are part of us, even if we are not the heroes of the protagonists.



Alba Esquinas

Director, screenwriter and editor

Spanish director and screenwriter who was born in Murcia in 1999, and who spends every summer and winter of her life in Almería, her family's hometown. This place is where her inspirations as a filmmaker come from.

In 2017 she moved to Madrid at the age of eighteen to study cinema. From the beginning, it was clear to her that she wanted to write and give shape to the images that appears in her head. For this reason, she decided to specialize in screenwriting in the Degree in Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts at the TAI School of Arts.

And although she is still training in writing in the Master's Degree in Film and TV Screenplay at the Carlos III University and the Writers' Union - ALMA in Madrid, she is beginning to explore the path of directing in the field of stories that are in the borders between fiction and reality. That drive came when, while still in college, she co-directed a documentary short film in 2019, "Canción triste de alubias" [Sad bean's song], with her classmate from film school. This short received great recognition at the International Short Film Festival "Notodofilmfest", having opted for the award for Best Film, Best Documentary, Spanish Talent and, finally, the Fundación Repsol Award: "Breaking Barriers", which was the one they finally won.

Her most personal projects, such as her first solo short film as a director and screenwriter, "Olores" [Smells], are focused on memory and pass of the time, and also the emotions and scars that one inherits from its family. It will have its world premiere in the official section of Visions du Réel 2022 (Nyon) at the beginning of April.



Laura Gantes

Sound designer and editor

(Murcia, 2000). Laura Gantes has a degree in Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts from Escuela TAI, specializing in Sound and Music. While combining her postgraduate studies in Film and Television at the Carlos III University, she works as an assistant and sound designer at Mubox Studio.

In the field of direct sound, she has experience in both advertising and fiction. However, she is much more passionate about the post-production department, where she conceives the sound montage as another phase of rewriting and added value to the project. Among her latest works are the feature films "A mil kilómetros de la Navidad" [A thousand kilometers from Christmas] produced by Netflix, "Dos vacas y una burra" [Two cows and a monkey] by ATM Producciones, the sound design for the podcast "Desafío 11-M" for Audible.

However, she has also developed roles within other departments. Her career as a director has been supported by the TAI School Talent Scholarship, for two consecutive years, and by TUBECA2020 of the Coordinator of the Third Sector of the Community of Madrid, with which she has been able to develop the project "Esa no soy yo" [That's not me], selected in the creation laboratories LesGaiCineMad 2021 and Zingoak ProWIP 2022.

Laura's objective is to continue training to obtain creative excellence and good analytical skills, from the point of view of audiovisual culture and the creativity that the current market demands. One of her great motivations is to do a doctorate in film sound in order to explore her narrative and vindicate her role as a sound engineer and as a female sound engineer in the industry.

Mubox Studio

Producer and distributor

It's an audiovisual company run by Daniel Peña, a sound designer with more than 20 years of experience in the sector who has worked with directors such as Fernando León de Aranoa, Paco Plaza, Gracia Querejeta, Arantxa Echevarría and Víctor Erice.

Mubox Studio offers comprehensive sound services for all types of audiovisual projects, specializing in fiction and documentary short films and feature films. In 2021 it expands its powers by becoming an independent producer and distributor for the promotion and promotion of new talents.

"El cuento del limonero" [The story of the lemon tree] by Luis (Soto) Muñoz, "Cuando se hundieron las formas puras" [When the pure forms sank] by Alfredo Picazo and "Olores" [Smells] by Alba Esquinas are their first works as producers and distributors.

