

TXINTXUA FILMS & HIRUKI FILMAK (Erburu Irigoyen Garazi y Lameiro Garayoa Ione Atenea y Marina) presents

ARANTZA SANTESTEBAN MIRARI ECHAVARRI MERCÉ SALOM MANON PRALINÉ MARYANN PEONY

Zuzendari laguntzailea. Assistant director. IRATI GOROSTIDI Argazki zuzendaria. Cinematographer. MADDI BARBER Muntaiia. Edition. MARIONA SOLÉ Zuzeneko soinua. Sound. ALAZNE AMEZTOY

Soinu diseinua eta edizioa. Sound design and editing. XANTI SALVADOR Arte zuzendaria. Art director. IKER ÁLVAREZ Kolorea. Colour. LARA VILANOVA

Ekoizleak. Producers. MARIAN FERNANDEZ PASCAL eta. &. MARINA LAMEIRO Gidoilaria eta zuzendaria. Scriptwriter and director. ARANTZA SANTESTEBAN

A film by ARANTZA SANTESTEBANen film bat

918 GAU

(918 NIGHTS)



EXPERIMENTAL, 65 MIN, O.V. BASQUE

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On October 4th, 2007 Arantza, the director of the film, was detained and taken to prison. She remembers a few things about those days: endlessly walking around the prison exercise yard, swimming competitions, Rasha's prison journey... After 918 nights locked up, Arantza is set free. From then onwards, she recorded her memories and doubts, which are heard throughout the documentary as a kind of fragmented memoir.

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ARANTZA SANTESTEBAN
MIRARI ECHAVARRI
MERCÉ SALOM
MANON PRALINÉ
MARYANN PEONY

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TECHNICAL SHEET

Director and screenwriter:	ARANTZA SANTESTEBAN
Assistant director:	IRATI GOROSTIDI
Production:	TXINTXUA FILMS and HIRUKI FILMAK
Producers:	MARIAN FERNANDEZ PASCAL and MARINA LAMEIRO
Director of photography:	MADDI BARBER
Editing:	MARIONA SOLÉ
Sound:	ALAZNE AMEZTOY
Art director:	IKER ÁLVAREZ

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TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Feature Film / Experimental / 65" / Colour / 2K - 1'78:1 / O.V. Basque

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The letters I received during my time in prison were kept in a cardboard box at my parents' house. When I went going to visit them, I used to walk past it. I would look at it, but I didn't want to open it. But one day, six years after I got out of prison, I sat down and started taking the letters and photographs out. And there, in front of me, thousands of different handwritings, photos and messages of support. That's when I realized how valuable my archive was, and not only because of its emotional worth, also because of its visual meaning.

I had already started film studies a few years before, and it was at that moment that I decided to make a film using all of that. I started re-reading the letters and had conflicting emotions. On the one hand, I felt deep gratitude for all those messages of encouragement. I was moved when I thought about all the affection in them: they had given me a lot of support during all the years I was locked away. However, there was something that surprised me a lot. I had been out of prison for years when I read them, and felt that I had changed a lot during that time. I found things which were part of my past but no longer meant much to me.

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The prison experience is complex. It is undoubtedly a hostile situation for anyone who undergoes it, a framework where relationships of inequality determine everyday life. The power relations between the institution itself and the prisoners, between local and foreign prisoners, between white and black, between political and ordinary prisoners. There is no single narrative about prison: it is the stereotypes that prevent other ways of living in our worlds from being revealed. I have learned that diversity and difference between people, the uniqueness of each person, is not something that can be easily erased. That is why this film speaks of a collectivity and a common time from a subjective vision. →

There are two issues that were a great challenge for me when it came to taking on this film: for one thing, talking about my experience in prison using a limited archive of photographs and letters. As a filmmaker, I am obsessed about the scarcity of resources to describe a world as invisible as prison is: prisoners do not have cameras or mobile phones, nor an internet connection. How can I explain that period without using any images? Which is why I used the photographs that my relatives sent from the outside, contrasting them with the few pictures that I was able to get from the inside. These photographs talk about the two worlds, and call for special attention: they are loaded with very revealing visual details which show the tense relationship between the world outside and the world inside.

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Another big challenge in this film was merging two tempos. The past, linked to the prison experience, and the present, the period after prison. To do this, I used two types of images: those of the past, photographs and some filmed letters, which were revealing in terms of the development of my experience. I also used images filmed in the present. The dissociation between archive and current images was a way of weaving together memories of the past with reflections on the present, giving rise to a film in which those two times come together.

Chris Marker used to say that, contrary to what many people may think, using the first person in a film can be a sign of humanity: all you can offer is yourself. That's what I've tried to do in this film.



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Why have you decided to tell this story, your story, after so many years?

Even today, many people ask me if this film is a therapeutic exercise. For me its meaning is something different. I have tried to answer the question of what cinema is for: can it help us to free ourselves from stereotypes? Or, on the contrary, does it just frame us again and again within those same stereotypes? The desire to answer these questions has guided me in making this film.

The film goes through scenes that hint at a fragmented story; why did you build the film in that way?

This fragmented narrative evokes the loss of any sense of collectivity and the attempt to build a new life. In my opinion, that wandering feeling becomes organic over the course of the film. The first person, so present in some moments, gets diluted in alter egos that contribute to embody my own story. The characters always appear in silhouette, and that is no coincidence. It is not a face-on examination, something more like a broken look, a side-ways look which brings together a travelling narrative with multiple layers.

There is obvious discomfort when it comes to telling your own political experience. Is it an attempt to explore new forms of representing political matters?

Mine has been an erratic life process, brought about by not belonging, and by having no place from which to express myself politically. So the film that does not advance in a straight line but, rather, zigzags from one scene to another. For me it was important to question the romanticized stories that tend to colour stories about political activism. The story I wanted to tell, beyond encouraging any heroic side to it, tries to escape from usual representation of a politicized subject. So 918 GAU seeks to explore whether being hesitant and vulnerable, too, is a political setting.

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Historian, filmmaker and independent researcher, Arantza studied Creative Documentary Making, and has directed films such as *Passatgeres* (2012) and *Euritan* (2017). She has carried out various research projects about the Basque political conflict from the perspective of feminism and representation in film.

Arantza graduated in History at the University of the Basque Country. She completed her training in audiovisual arts with a diploma in Creative Documentary Making at Francesca Bonnemaison Centre (Barcelona). She has also worked on training for Documentary Film Screenwriting with Carmen Ovalos (Barcelona), and has received specific training from Victor Erice and Patricio Guzman (Madrid).

In 2012 she began to work as a filmmaker, directing several pieces including the short film *EURITAN* (2017), selected for the 2017 KIMUAK catalogue. She has been featured at festivals such as Zinebi, Punto de Vista, Miradas Doc and Malaga Film Festival.

In 2017 she was chosen by Huarte Centre for Contemporary Art for a curatorial research residence. As part of that she attended the international seminar “Images seen through: reflections on images from conflicts” in June, 2018.

In 2018 she was selected for Ikusmira Berriak, an international residency programme organized by San Sebastian Film Festival, Tabakalera International Centre for Contemporary Culture, and Elias Querejeta Film School. There she worked on the development of her current film, *918 Gau*.

Since 2019 she has been writing her PhD at Lisbon Fine Arts University with Susana De Sousa Dias and Ana Longoni, researching issues connecting cinema representation, feminism and Basque political conflict.

She has worked as coordinator at the Hiriarte Centre for Contemporary Culture (Pamplona, Navarre) and as coordinator of the Master’s Degree in Artistic Practices and Cultural Studies at the Huarte Center for Contemporary Art (Huarte, Navarre).

FEATURED FILMOGRAPHY:

PASSATGERES (23´)

Girona (Spain), 2012. No subtitles. Documentary.
Co-directed by Arantza Santesteban, Dina Jiménez,
Daniella De Souza and Laura Gómez.

GORPUTZ_GRAFIK (18´)

Basque Country (Spain), 2015. No subtitles.
Documentary. Co-directed by Arantza Santesteban
and Maddi Barber.

EURITAN (21´)

Donostia-San Sebastián (Spain), 2017. O.V.
Basque, subtitles in Spanish. Documentary.
Co-directed by Arantza Santesteban and Irati
Gorostidi.

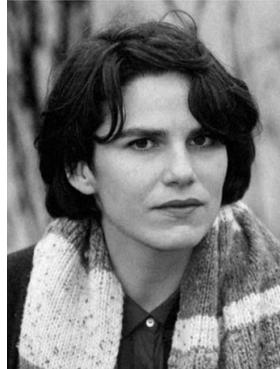
LILULAREN KONTRA (18´)

Basque Country (Spain), 2021. Documentary,
O.V. Basque, subtitles in Spanish. Directed by
Arantza Santesteban.

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FILMOGRAPHY AS
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:

918 GAU (65´)
Arantza Santesteban, 2021.

PARAISO (22´)
Maddi Barber y Marina Lameiro, 2021.

JO TA KE (50´)
Aitziber Olaskoaga, 2020.

GORRIA (22´)
Maddi Barber, 2020.

URPEAN LURRA (50´)
Maddi Barber, 2019.

592 METROZ GOITI (24´)
Maddi Barber, 2018.

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Maddi Barber has a degree in Audiovisual Communication and a Master's Degree in Visual Anthropology from the University of Manchester. Her work has been shown at festivals such as Visions du Réel, Donostia (Zabaltegi), Curtocircuito, Zinebi, Alcances, Ji.hlava, Porto Post Doc and Las Palmas. She has been the director of photography of all the short films she has directed, and of films by other filmmakers such as Aitziber Olaskoaga (*Jo Ta Ke*) and Arantza Santesteban (*918 Gau*). At the moment she is working on the development of her first feature film, *Claros de bosque*, within NOKA filmmakers' support programme (Tabakalera).

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Editor. Degree in Journalism (UAB, 2006), postgraduate in Digital Video (UPF, 2010) and Master in Documentary Making (UPF-IDEC 2016-2017).

She began to work in film editing in 2013 as assistant Carlos Marqués Marcet's team on *10,000KM* (Goya prize for new director), *Tierra Firme* and *Els dies que vindran*, and with Neus Ballús on *Staff Only*.

In 2017 she edited the documentary series *Pa'lante* by Aldemar Matias for TV Brasil, *El Rastro Firme* by Fernando Gómez Luna in 2018, and *Ineffable* by Gerard Oms in 2020, among others. In 2021 she is part of the editing team for the second season of *Lo de Évole*.

Since 2018 she has also taught documentary editing courses at Francesca Bonnemaison Dones arts centre and at the Bande à part film school.

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MARIAN FERNANDEZ PASCAL
Pamplona, 1974.

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BIO-FILMOGRAPHY OF THE PRODUCERS



MARINA LAMEIRO
Pamplona, 1986.



Founder of Txintxua Films and executive producer of all its works, she graduated in audiovisual communication from the University of Navarra and Film Certificate at New York University. Between 2000 and 2005 she was part of the SOGECINE production team. From Txintxua Films she has produced 2 series, 7 feature films and several short films.

Marina Lameiro is a filmmaker and producer. In 2017 she founded Hiruki Filmak together with Ione Atenea and Garazi Erburu. She has a degree in audiovisual communication from Rey Juan Carlos University; a master's degree in Creation Documentary from IDEC-Pompeu Fabra, and Postgraduate in Audiovisual Editing from the same university; she was an artist in residence for a year at the Collaborative Studio (CoLab) of the UnionDocs documentary arts centre in New York.

Marina produces, writes and directs several documentaries such as the feature film *Young & Beautiful* (2018), a feature film that, among other recognitions, won the Special Audience Award at the Punto de Vista Festival in 2018; the feature film *Dardara* (2021) and the short film *Paraíso* (2021), co-directed together with Maddi Barber.

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The film is a co-production between Txintxua Films and Hiruki Filmak (Erburu Irigoyen Garaziand Lameiro Garayoa Ione Atenea and Marina). It has obtained grants from the ICAA, Basque government, the government of Navarre, and the provincial council of Gipuzkoa. It has been shown at the prestigious Ikusmira Berriak program at Tabakalera arts centre and at SSIFF, at the WIP (Work In Progress Europe 2020) at SSIFF, and at the Abycine forum, where it won the MAFIZ award. Eitb has taken part in the film.

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The filming of the film has had several phases. An essential task has been finding a way to film and represent the filmmaker's archive. This film research has been carried out in different places, in domestic environments linked with the director.

Another fundamental facet has been revisiting important places in the director's life such as the place where she was arrested, and Berlin, which was her place of refuge when she left prison.

Spaces have been recreated for the film, for instance the techno party and the lovers' bedroom, and completely unknown places such as Berlin Zoo and the landscapes at Gamiz, where the zebra Jambo lived.

The filming process lasted for several months in 2019 and 2020, until all the necessary resources were ready to construct the film.

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TXINTXUA FILMS

Founded in 2008 by producer Marian Fernández and director Asier Altuna, Txintxua Films has produced seven feature films, two series, and numerous shorts:

SERIES

2021 - 2022

INTIMIDAD

8 episodes of 45 minutes, produced by Txintxua Films for Netflix. Created by Veronica Fernández and Laura Sarmiento.

2020

HONDAR AHOAK

Series of four chapters of 50 min, produced for ETB. Marian Fernandez Pascal and Koldo Almandoz, creators of the series. Written and directed by Koldo Almandoz.

Premiere ETB1 November, 2020.

Premiere Filmin March, 2021.

FEATURE FILMS

2021

HONDALEA ABISMO MARINO

Written and directed by Asier Altuna. Premiered at the Basque Film Gala of the San Sebastian International Film Festival.

2018

OREINA

Written and directed by Koldo Almandoz. Premiered in the New Directors section of the San Sebastian International Film Festival, where it received the award for best Basque film. Distributor in Spain, GOLEM. He has taken part in numerous international festivals: Edinburgh International Film Festival, Cartagena de Indias International Film Festival (FICCI)...

Commercial premiere in France.

2018

DANTZA

Written and directed by Telmo Esnal. Glocal in Progress Award of the San Sebastian Festival. Premiered in the official section of the San Sebastian International Film Festival, non-competition. Distributor in Spain, BTEAM PICTURES. Commercial premiere in France.

2011

BERTSOLARI

Documentary, written and directed by Asier Altuna. It was premiered the official, non-competition section of the San Sebastian Film Festival in 2011. Distributed in Spain by GOLEM. He has taken part in numerous international festivals. Commercial premiere in France.

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2016

SIPO PHANTASMA

Written and directed by Koldo Almandoz. Premiered at the Rotterdam Festival, it has been screened among other festivals at Montevideo, BAFICI in Buenos Aires, Dei Popoli Florencia, ZINEBI, and competed in the Zabaltegi-Tabakalera section of the San Sebastian Festival.

-> FEATURE FILMS IN PRODUCTION

A LOS LIBROS

Y A LAS MUJERES CANTO
A documentary written and directed by Maria Elorza. In filming. Premiere planned for 2022.

2015

AMAMA

Written and directed by Asier Altuna. Premiered in the official section of the San Sebastian International Film Festival, where it received the award for the best Basque film. Distributor in Spain, GOLEM; premiered in more than 140 theatres. He got a Goya nomination for best new actress for Iraia Elias. He has taken part in more than 70 international festivals and received more than 25 awards. Commercial premiere in France.

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Asier Altuna has twice won the EZAE Award (given by the Basque cinema association) for his contribution to the Basque film industry, his success at the box office, his career, and the quality and originality of his work, for AMAMA in 2016 and DANTZA in 2019.



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HIRUKI FILMAK

(Erburu Irigoyen Garazi y Lameiro Garayoa Ione Atenea y Marina)

Hiruki Filmak was founded in 2017 to be an area in which its members and other women could work in a collaborative way. Garazi Erburu, Marina Lameiro and Ione Atenea joined forces after having worked together on Lameiro *Young & Beautiful's* first feature film; their aim was to deal with an industry, and society, in which the work of women tends to be less valued and seen, joining forces with other professionals in the sector in order to carry out projects of great artistic quality and social relevance.

The different experience of each of the members within the audiovisual sector means that they complement each other on development and production of the projects, from the script and design of projects to their direction, production and editing. The roles they carry on on each project vary in rotation, creating specific working methods for each project in which the three of them take part and grow together, thus forming an increasingly powerful team.

In 2019, Ione Atenea's *Enero* was premiered at the Gijon International Film Festival, where it won the prize for the best European debut film. The documentary has since been shown several festivals such as Miradas-Doc, Alcances and Novos Cinemas, was a finalist for the Rizoma de Cine Award, 2020, and was nominated as best documentary at the Feroz Awards, 2020.

In addition to '918 Gau', two new films will be released over the coming months: *Los Caballos Mueren al Amanecer*, by Ione Athena, and *Paraíso*, co-directed by Marina Lameiro and Maddi Barber.

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PRODUCTION COMPANIES →

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