



A LOS LIBROS Y A LAS MUJERES CANTO

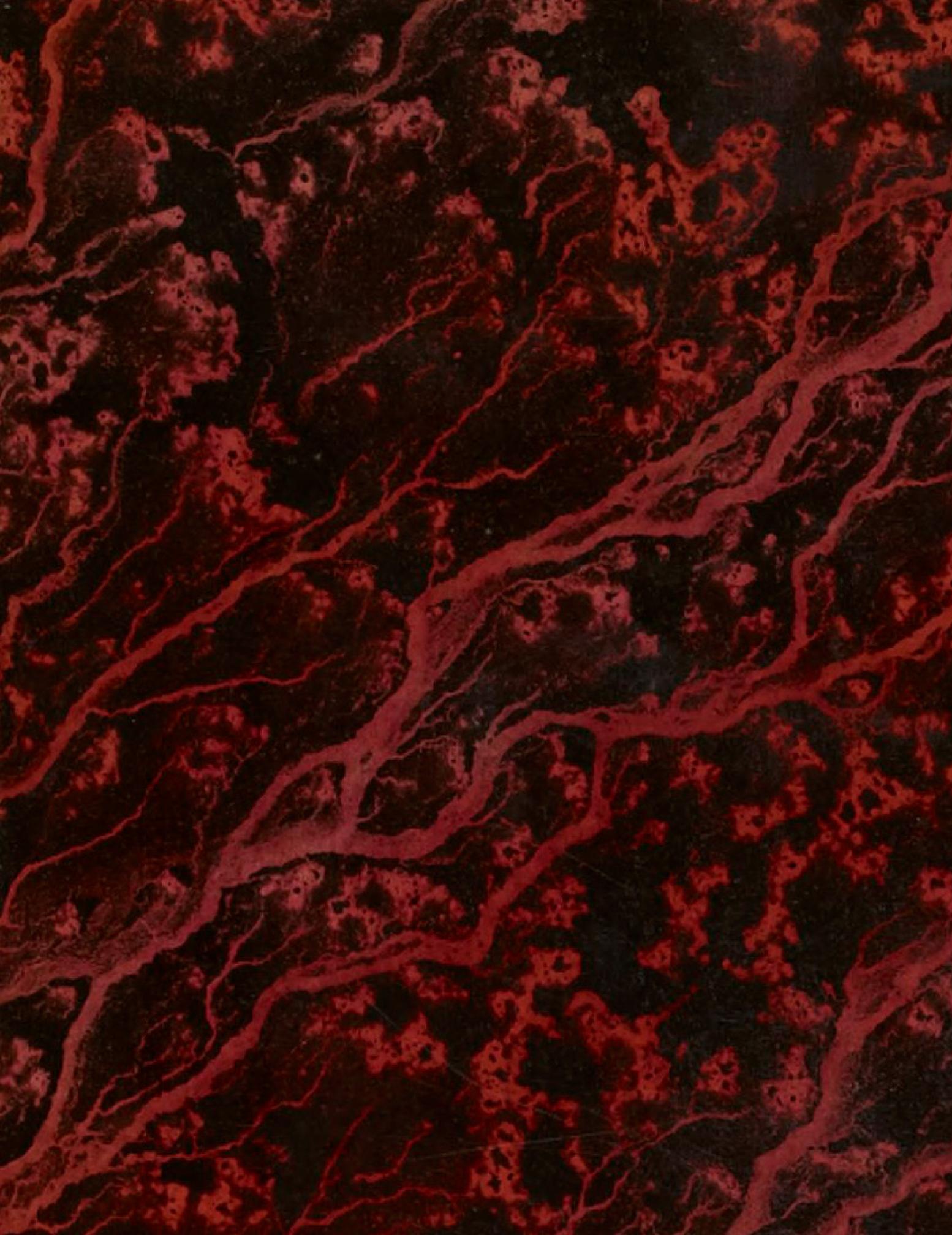
a film by MARIA ELORZA

TXINTXUA
films



BASQUE.
AUDIOVISUAL.





INDEX

SYNOPSIS	3
CREDITS	4
DIRECTOR'S NOTES	5
WHY THIS MOVIE IS A GARDEN AT THE SAME TIME	6
CHARACTERS	8
DIRECTOR	10
THE PRODUCTION COMPANY. TXINTXUA FILMS	11
CONTACT INFORMATION	12

SYNOPSIS

A woman was almost called 'Avioneta' (Small Airplane) at birth. Another had a library in the back seat of her car. Yet another fractures her finger with the rebel shelves of her bookshop. Lectors read to cigar makers while they work. Women remember poems while they iron. And to them all I sing.

Standing against fire, water, moths, dust, ignorance and fanaticism, an anonymous female army looks after books. An intimate resistance, lacking epic events, revolution or weapons.





ARTISTIC SHEET

TONINA DEIAS
LORETO CASADO
WALTRAUD KIRSTE
VIKI CLARAMUNT
ANNE ELORZA

TECHNICAL SHEET

Direction and screenplay : MARIA ELORZA
Cinematography and Edition: MARIA ELORZA
Sound: MARIA ELORZA and ANNE ELORZA
Producers: MARIAN FERNÁNDEZ PASCAL and KOLDO ALMANDOZ

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

72 min / Feature film / Documentary / Colour /
O.V. Spanish and Italian / 1.78:1

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Can books kill?

Should some books be torched?

Why are libraries gardens?

Who are the guardians of libraries?

What does singing to women and books mean?

Virgil, the quintessential Latin poet, began the Aeneid by stating “Of arms and the man I sing...”. And we wanted the film’s title to hint at that verse, because even if our intentions are almost the opposite, we also want to engage in dialogue with past tradition.

This film is the portrait of four characters and their books. Women who have spent their lives reading and studying and so, safeguarding a precious heritage. They are Tonina, survivor of her own library’s collapse, and collector of Dante figurines; Wal, who, as a child, only had two books at home -a recipe book and a bible- and who is now a Goethe specialist and talks about him as if he were an old friend; Loreto, who dresses up as the authors and characters she reads about, and recites her favourite passages; and lastly Viki, who, for a while, kept the literature belonging to the Labour Party of Spain in the trunk of her car and travelled around the province lending books to workers. All of them exemplify different conceptions of literature, of reading, but at the same time are brought together by literature, very present and intertwined with their lives.

Portraying these women also involves inquiring into the nature of images. And asking ourselves what a literary image is, what a cinematography image is, and how to switch from one to another. And I think this is where the film’s real cinematography or authorship lies.

In the search through different passages, some of which may be interviews, others more in the style of an essay, others even in a more lyrical tone, seeking to delve into the images filling the protagonists’ lives.

Some with an imaginary character, while others have a very real existence, in the form of the figures standing on their shelves by the books, the pictures hanging on the walls of their homes, ...

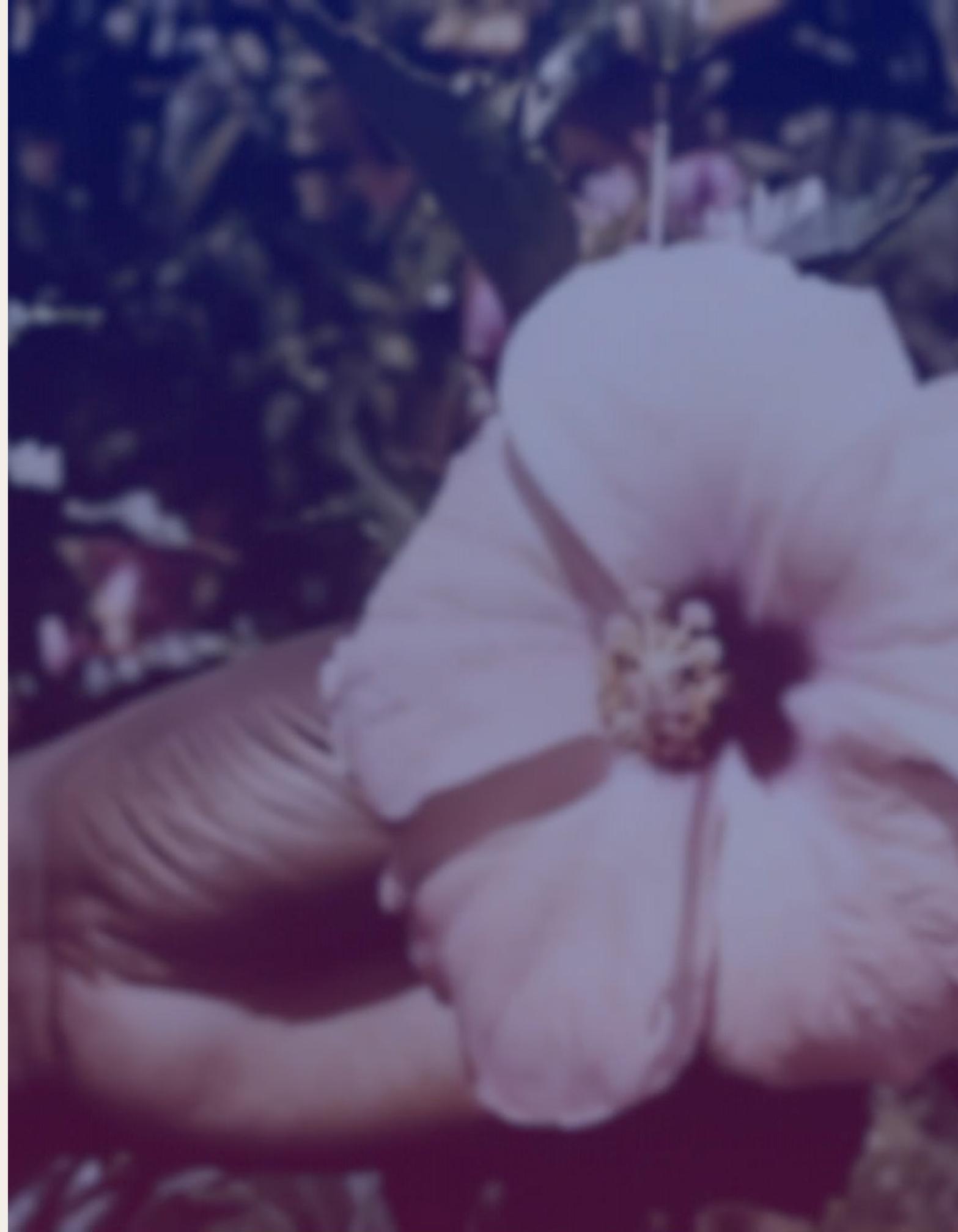
This process has been undertaken through experimentation and with a light-hearted, fresh and humorous tone, one that is in no way academic. A fundamental role has been reserved for the editing work, which combines found footage, helping us delve a little deeper into the history of cinema and into memory; and film shot specifically for the project: Super 8 film, film of trips to places important to them or that are somehow related to their literary background; and digitally recorded film as well.

So, this film asks questions about how literature, cinema or images can help us live; how they can give us more freedom; and to reflect on the importance of imagination in everyday life, on how high culture can be passed on in a non-elitist way. The film is also a vindication. A vindication of literature and also a tribute to these women who preserve them and who, in certain way, act as a form of resistance.

WHY THIS MOVIE IS A GARDEN AT THE SAME TIME

Why libraries are gardens:

- 1/ You think you make them grow, but in fact they grow without your help.
- 2/ Time passes in its own way in both places.
- 3/ There is always a gentle breeze.
- 4/ We walk through them and stroke the leaves.
- 5/ Both of them are full of legends and mysterious names.
- 6/ The French use a beautiful word from the world of gardening to talk about tidying libraries up. *Deshérber*: weeding. It is a green word, very different from *expurgo*, which is a reddish, dark word used in Spanish and Italian to say the same thing. Because libraries can be tidied up with love or, to the contrary, destroyed in fury.





When people went up to the door of philosopher Epicurus' school, they saw a polite sign inviting them to go in: "Guest, you will feel well here; well-being is the supreme pleasure here." The school, intended for a life of communal reflection among friends, was surrounded by a huge orchard, from which it took its name: "The Garden".

The only library that has survived from antiquity to this day is at the Herculaneum Villa of the Papyri, and it houses Epicurean texts. It is believed that the villa itself, with its huge garden, was designed in Roman times to replicate the Greek philosopher's school. The eruption of Vesuvius buried the city, but the papyri remained intact under the ash and mud, and were preserved over the centuries.

The Villa of the Papyri has been an essential location in the film, bringing together two of its main themes: fire and gardens. Fire has annihilated countless libraries, burned the beloved books of Petrarch and Don Quixote, it was a powerful instrument of destruction in the hands of the Nazis, but, on one occasion, it also saved an old library. And the gardens: a place for philosophical discussion, the home of poets and libraries in themselves.

The main characters in the film sometimes wonder about the meaning of holding onto books, or are tempted to get rid of some of them, and they also prune them and take care of them in the way that gardeners do. They do not put them on show on cold altars, but, rather, use literature in the Epicurean way to meet up with friends and seek daily happiness.

CHARACTERS

The main characters are a group of mature women, all of them passionate about literature, who know each other, and who have a close relationship with the director's family. They have been chosen because of the strength of their personal stories, their link with books throughout life, and also the different ways in which they have dealt with life and literature.





TONINA

Sardinia, 1955. Mother of the director, Italian, specialist in Italian literature. Her first contact with literature was while folding her aunt's tablecloths, a woman who had barely been able to receive an education. Her aunt ironed and, at the same time, with tears in her eyes, recited the four poems she had been able to learn at elementary school.

Many years later, Tonina lives surrounded by books and collects figures of Dante. She has recently survived her bookshelves collapsing on top of her, which has left her with a crooked finger. She is the link between all the characters and was at the interviews, occasionally coming out from behind the camera as a kind of second narrator.



LORETO

Valladolid, 1952. A retired French literature teacher with a comedian's touch. Her father, who had loved aviation and had wanted a son, tried to call her Avioneta, but as that was not allowed, he named her as the patron saint of aviators. So Loreto has spent much of his life among the clouds.

She says that "one day poetry falls onto you... like a protective shield". Loreto also wears literature: she has a Sade skirt, a Beckett coat, a Marlene Dietrich trench coat, and a skirt which is a sonata.



WAL

Wroclaw, 1938. During childhood she did not have many opportunities to read. In her house there were only two books: a recipe book, and a bible that she had bought herself, much to her mother's displeasure as she had noticed the two francs it had cost were missing.

In the mid-1960s she met Patxi, a Basque political exile, in Paris. She spent the first years of her marriage hiding or in exile. With the return of democracy, they settled in the Basque Country. A specialist in Goethe and his idea of weltliteratur, "world literature", Wal believes profoundly in the power of literature to build bridges between cultures, and to bring peace.



VIKI

Barcelona, 1954. She keeps dried flowers in her books and always says what she thinks. She was given her name in homage to the book *Combat del somni* which Catalan poet Josep Janés dedicated to his girlfriend Maria Victòria; she had died of appendicitis due to lack of medical care during the Civil War. Perhaps influenced by that, Viki became a doctor and has always stood up for her beliefs.

During her early days in Gipuzkoa she lived in her car, which was also the Labour Party's traveling library. She travelled throughout the province giving talks about Lenin and printing leaflets in working people's kitchens.



DIRECTION

Maria Elorza (Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, 1988). She holds a degree in Audiovisual Communication from Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona and a Master's in Artistic Creation and Research from the University of the Basque Country. She has worked as an audiovisual expert since 2013 and has filmed several short films. Her works have been selected and awarded at film festivals such as San Sebastian, Málaga, Sevilla, Punto de Vista, Documenta Madrid or Zinebi. *A los libros y a las mujeres canto* (To books and women I sing) is her first feature film. WIP awards for best project at ZINEBI and MAFIZ.

FILMOGRAPHY - SHORT FILMS

- 2020, *Quebrantos* (written and directed with Koldo Almandoz)
- 2018, *Ancora lucciole*
- 2016, *Gure Hormek* (Las chicas de Pasaik)
- 2016, *La chica de la luz* (Las chicas de Pasaik)
- 2015, *Agosto sin ti* (Las chicas de Pasaik)
- 2013, *Irudi mintzatuen hiztegi poetikoa* (Las chicas de Pasaik and Aitor Gametxo)

THE PRODUCTION COMPANY. TXINTXUA FILMS

Founded in 2008 by producer Marian Fernández and director Asier Altuna. Txintxua films has produced 8 feature films, two TV Shows and 13 short films.

TV SHOWS

2022 *Intimidad* (INTIMACY). Produced for NETFLIX

2020 *Hondar Ahoak* (MOUTHS OF SAND). Produced for ETB
(Basque public television)

FEATURE FILMS

2021 *918 Gau* (918 Nights)

2021 *Hondalea Marine Abyss*

2018 *Oreina* (The Deer)

2018 *Dantza*

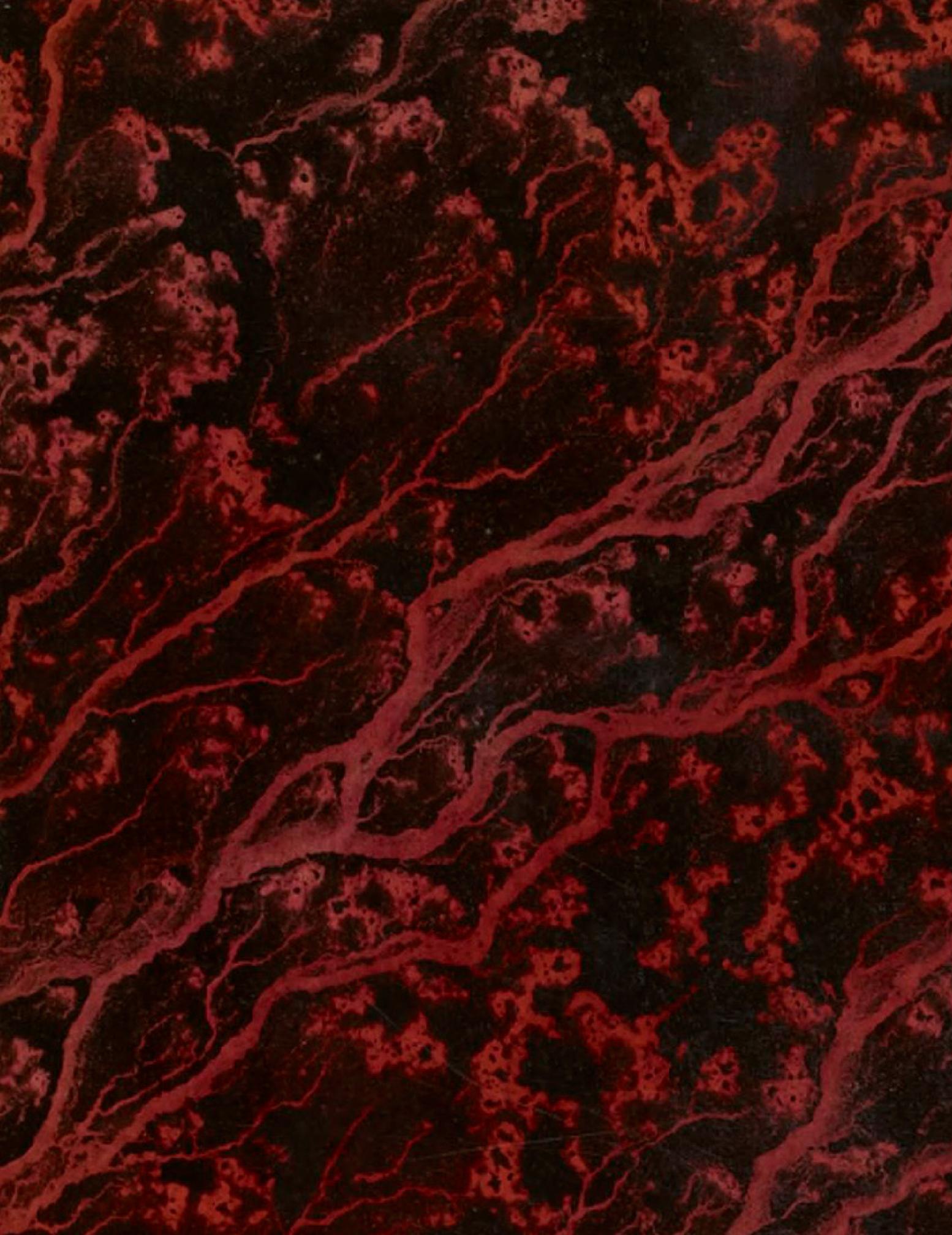
2016 *Sipo Phantasma*

2015 *Amama*

2011 *Bertsolari*

Txintxua Films 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; “Amama” in 2016, and “Dantza” in 2019.





CONTACT INFORMATION

THE PRODUCTION COMPANY

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