

SUMMER 1993

(Estiu 1993)

A film by

Carla Simón



96 mins / Spain 2017 / in Catalan with English subtitles / cert tbc

Best First Feature, Berlin 2017

Release July 13th 2018

FOR ALL PRESS ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT

Sue Porter/Lizzie Frith – Porter Frith Ltd

Tel. 07940 584066 / 07825 603705 / porterfrith@hotmail.com

FOR ALL OTHER ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT

Robert Beeson – robert@newwavefilms.co.uk

or

Dena Blakeman – dena@newwavefilms.co.uk



79-80 Margaret Street

London W1W 8TA

Tel: 020 7299 3685

info@newwavefilms.co.uk

www.newwavefilms.co.uk

SYNOPSIS

In Carla Simón's autobiographical film, six-year-old Frida looks on as the last objects from her recently deceased mother's apartment in Barcelona are placed in boxes.

With both her parents now dead from AIDS, she is taken to the Catalan countryside. There are fears that she may have inherited the disease from her mother, but it transpires she is free of the virus. Although her aunt, uncle, and her 4 year old cousin Anna welcome her, it's only very slowly that Frida begins to get used to her new home in the countryside, and the idea that her mother is not coming back, and that her new family is permanent.

Besides the Berlin Best First Feature award, the film has received many prizes. Spanish and Catalan ones listed below:

Goya Awards 2018 – Winner: Best New Director, Best New Actress (Bruna Cusí), Best Supporting Actor (David Verdaguer)

Feroz Awards 2018 – Winner: Best Drama Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Actor in a Supporting Role (David Verdaguer).

Gaudí Awards 2018 – Winner: Best Film in Catalan Language, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Film Editing, Best Actress in a Supporting Role.

It was also Spain's entry for the 2018 Oscars.

Further information and downloads [here](#)

Photo set can be downloaded [here](#)



CAST

Frida	Laia Artigas
Anna	Paula Robles
Marga	Bruna Cusí
Esteve	David Verdaguer
Avi	Fermí Reixach
Lola	Montse Sanz
Ávia	Isabel Rocatti
Ángela	Berta Pipó
Irene	Etna Campillo
Cesca	Paula Blanco
Gabriel	Quimet Pla

CREW

Director	Carla Simón
Screenplay	Carla Simón
Cinematography	Santiago Racaj
Editing	Ana Pfaff and Didac Palou
Art Director	Mónica Bernuy
Production Director	Mireia Graell
Sound Design	Roger Blasco
Production Company	Inicia Films
Producer	Valérie Delpierre
Co-production Company	Avalon P.C.
Co-producers	Maria Zamora and Stefan Schmitz
Executive producers	Valérie Delpierre and Maria Zamora
With support of	TVE, TVC, iCEC, iCaa, and mEDia

CARLA SIMÓN



Carla Simón studied at the University of California and the Audiovisual Communication Department of Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona. After that, she directed TV series and programmes for TV Catalan. After being awarded the prestigious scholarship of Obra Social “la Caixa,” Simón moved to the UK to study at the London Film School, where she wrote and directed the documentary BORN POSITIVE and the fictional LIPSTICK, both short films programmed in numerous international film festivals. SUMMER 1993, her feature film debut produced by Inicia Films and co-produced by Avalon, was developed at Berlinale Script Station, Ekran program in Poland, and Sources 2 in Barcelona, and won the SGAE screenwriting fund. It was also presented at the Low Budget Film Forum in Les Arcs, Premiers Plans Atelier, and Berlinale Co-Production Market, and won First Prize in Holland Film Meetings in 2015. The film also received support from the MEDIA Development funding and the ICAA fund for production. In 2013, Simón created Young For Film!, an association which taught cinema to children and teenagers. Since moving back to Barcelona, she has been collaborating with “Cinema en Curs.”

FILMOGRAPHY

2017 Summer 1993 (Estiu 1993)

Shorts:

2015 Little Things

2013 Lipstick

2012 Born Positive (doc)

2010 Lovers (Co-dir)

INTERVIEW WITH CARLA SIMÓN

The story is inspired by your own experiences as a child. Did it make it easier or more difficult to write and direct?

I have told my story so many times, and because of that it kind of turned into a legend, into something that happened to me but at the same time feels like a tale. Memories, family stories, imagination... everything got mixed in my mind when I started writing the script. I guess that's why it was quite easy to put together a first draft, because I wrote from images that I had inside. However, it was a bit harder to give some structure to all these images. That's why I decided to preserve this feeling of "little moments," picturing something similar to my first summer with my new family. Sometimes I wondered why I had the need to explain something that personal and it wasn't until I finished the script that I realized how much I had learned about my own family, because the writing process made me look at the story from every character's point of view.

It was only while directing the film that I felt the need to take some distance from my own experience. If I wanted realistic performances, I couldn't portray the elements exactly as they were in my memories or in my imagined images. In shooting, reality prevails, and I believe it's always more interesting than anything I could possibly imagine myself. So, the compromise between the reality of the shooting and my own images was a hard thing to deal with. Also, when you direct, you constantly have to prioritize specific elements of your story. Every little element had a meaning related to my childhood and that's why the actors took a very important role. I learned to listen to them in order to see when I was forcing something just because I had an emotional relationship with it.

What was the biggest challenge when working with children?

Working with children is certainly a big challenge, but it was also one of the best parts of making this film. Children are true; if you give them enough freedom, you can see straight away when something is working or when it's not. Laia (Frida) and Paula (Anna) have boundless creativity. We could have thrown the script away and shot another film with them that would have been very interesting. But they also had a great ability to understand the basic premise of each scene. Laia acts from her intuition; she feels the tempo, the mood, and she can really react to the other actors' performances. Paula is very clever and has a great memory, so she can just be in the scene being herself and do exactly what I asked her in the exact moment. Also, we were very lucky to have generous adult actors like David (Esteve) and Bruna (Marga) who agreed to spend a lot of time with the girls before shooting. We did very long improvisations where they played a family for days, which I'm sure helped make the performances feel more real in the film.

The biggest challenge for me was to find a visual style for the film that could adapt to the girls and give them as much freedom as we could in their acting. We decided to put the camera in one place and shoot very simple sequence shots that allowed them to act the whole scene—or almost the whole scene—without noticing the camera too much. This was great when it worked because they could let themselves go into the scene and feel it in its entirety. However, it added certain complexity because when, at times, something went wrong, we didn't have many cutting points. In the end, the film is not radical in this way, and we edited some of these sequence shots, but I believe this style helps to make viewers feel the moment and to be with Frida (and her family) in a more intimate way, as if you were watching a photo album or a home video, which somehow reminds me of my family photos that inspired the film.

Another huge challenge about working with children is following their legal schedule. We could only

work six hours per day with Paula who was four years old and eight hours per day with Laia who was seven years old, including their breaks. So, we had to shoot the film with these constraints which created a lot of pressure, particularly because we had a six-week shoot and the girls were in every single scene.

How did you cast Frida and Anna?

Casting Frida and Anna was a very long process. I was looking for girls that could resemble the characters I had written or could have experienced something similar. This way, they wouldn't have to pretend to be someone else but they could be playing themselves.

For Frida, we looked for an urban girl who was not used to living in the countryside. We didn't find a girl who had lost her parents, but we paid special attention to the girl's family stories in order to find someone with a non-conventional family structure. Laia doesn't have an easy background and I think this is something that the audience can read in her eyes. Also, even if I could more easily relate to a girl that physically looked like me, I was especially interested in finding someone with an ambiguous look, and Laia has many different faces. It took us a long time to find Frida...Laia was actually the next-to-last girl we saw after auditioning close to 1,000 children.



For Anna, we looked for a four-year-old girl with a baby look, it was very important for me that she transmitted a feeling of innocence. At such a young age, it's also important to find a girl with no fear, a girl who will not freeze up when she's asked to do something. Paula was able to adapt to everything; she was always positive and ready to try whatever I suggested. Paula barely spoke to us in the auditions, we didn't know how good her language skills were but we could see that she was very daring.

On the last round of auditions, we put pairs of girls together. When Paula and Laia met, I had a very strange feeling: on one hand I saw they could develop the exact same relationship I had written in the script, but on the other hand I also realized how little they were, and what kind of trip we were getting into.

How important is the fact that the film is set in Catalonia and in the 90's?

To me it was very important to return to the real places where I moved when I was six. It's as though this story couldn't be filmed in any other place. The landscape in La Garrotxa is very particular. It's surrounded by mountains; you barely see a sunrise or a sunset, and in summer the range of greens is

huge. It was a beautiful process to look for the images of the film in places that I know so well. As a kid, I used to play in the house where we shot the film; as a teenager I spent long hours with my friends in the village squares where some scenes take place; and my new parents used to work in the swimming pool we used as a location.

Also, the characters of the film are inspired by my family who were born and raised in Catalonia. Frida's grandparents represent the generation who lived through the Spanish Civil War as part of the upper class and have preserved their right-wing ideals even today. Neus, Lola, Angie, Marga, and Esteve represent the generation who rebelled against all these traditional values, including Catholicism. Marga and Esteve also portray a group of people known as neo-rural, for whom the village is a way of life. In the 80s, a growing number of urbanites, for economic, philosophical, or personal beliefs, went to live in rural areas as Marga and Esteve did.

Also, the 90s were when I lived my childhood and recovering the toys, the games and the costumes to recreate this period had a big emotional value for me and most members of the crew.



Frida's parents die of AIDS. Was this a wide problem in Spain at that time?

It was. Nowadays almost everyone in Spain knows someone who died of AIDS over this period. The Spanish Transition was a happy time of sudden freedom, of maximum aperture in Spain. However, this sudden freedom also led to a big consumption of drugs. In the mid-80s media started reporting what they called the "Heroin Crisis," which came along with the raise of HIV infections. The anti-retroviral meds didn't arrive until 1994, which was too late for most people from this generation, including my parents. At the beginning of the 90s, around 21,000 people died of AIDS in Spain, the country with the highest incidence of AIDS in Europe. Moreover, in 1986, the year I was born, 30% of the mothers passed the virus to their children. Fortunately, I was from the 70% that were not infected.

So, this context shows this is not only my story but also the story of my parents' generation, who lived the transition, and my own generation, who lived the consequences of it.

Tell us more about the carnival that happens at the end of the film.

Capgrossos and Gegants are very typical Catalan festivities. Almost every village or town in Catalonia has its own Gegants and Capgrossos that perform traditional dances during the festivities. The ones performing in the film are from my village.

National folklore always attracts my attention because of its great cinematic value. We think of our own folklore as something that is normal because we know it so well, but when it's seen through outsiders' eyes it takes on another meaning. I've always thought that Capgrossos are quite grotesque. They should frighten children, but children in my village love them and they can't wait to grow up and participate in the carnival. In the film, Frida becomes one of them carrying the big flag, and you can see how happy she is to be part of this strangely beautiful tradition.

Frida deals with the death of her mother in her very own way. Can you tell us more about her feelings?

Losing her parents is probably the worst thing that could happen to Frida, but from my personal experience, I believe that children have an amazing ability to understand and adapt to complex situations.

Frida just lost her mother but she's still a child, so she has good and bad moments. When Frida gets to her new home, she goes into a kind of "survival mode." At first, she observes and behaves but little by little she starts challenging her new family, pushing the limits to see how far she can go. She's emotionally frozen, she needs to learn to deal with her own feelings and gain trust with this new family in order to love and be loved again.

Frida also has to accept that there's no magic in the world that will make her mother return. She still has some hope but throughout the film she stops believing in her grandma's religion and in her own beliefs, accepting what death really means.

The film makes the audience reflect about family relationships, would you agree with that?

Yes. A family is a family. A father is a father, a mother is a mother, a son is a son, a daughter is a daughter and a sibling is a sibling. We hardly question the roots of these relationships, they basically are like that, as we all understand them, as we all live them. However, for Frida and her new family this obviousness is not so obvious... SUMMER 1993 reflects on the evidence of family relationship through observing how a family has to be reconstructed. Suddenly, an uncle, an aunt, and a cousin have to turn into a father, a mother, and a sister. They become a family overnight, and they have to create, or transform, their already existing relationships. Frida has to find her own place in the family, while Marga and Esteve have to learn to love her as their own child and Anna has to accept a new and older sister. I hope the film will help the audience remember the importance of these basic relationships and value them a bit more.

