



LAS ALMAS SOULS

a documentary film by Laura Basombrío

Souls follows Estela, a woman who tries to recover her spirit and communicate with her dead mother through dreams. Estela's voice narrates her vision of the world, exploring the memory of the absent, the wounds of the past, life in community and daily work.



produced by Fuega Cine y Arde Cine
director Laura Basombrío
producers Anahí Farfán, Guido Deniro, Lucas Page
script Laura Basombrío
cast Estela Quispe
cinematography Marcos Rostagno
editing Laura Basombrío
sound design and music Lucas Page

TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/872589874>

LOGLINE

Estela feels the presence of her mother. In dreams, she receives her messages. In the hostile desert of the Argentinian highlands she lives with the living and the dead, while attempting to heal her own soul.

SYNOPSIS

Inhabiting the border that separates the mystical and the earthly, Souls proposes a dream. Over the half-Martian, half-Lunar landscapes of the Argentine Northwest, Estela tells her story. Since her mother died, the wounds press upon her ailing spirit. Her mother returns in dreams with messages, violence exerts pressure from the past, distances feeds on secrets.

Souls is Estela's inner journey in search of healing amidst memories of the past, the diffuse time of dreams and the present where the living and the dead coexist on All Soul's day.



Artistic Statement

The narration of the film was built from spontaneous recordings of our conversations over the course of five years. Through this long process, the tone we were looking for emerged naturally—an intimate, conspiratorial tone, like a confession shared in trust.

The narrative structure is rooted in the idea that the living and the dead coexist. Each chapter explores a relationship and its emotional trace: the dreams Estela has of her mother, the violence she experienced with her father, the silences in her relationship with her husband.

Visually, we chose the scope format (2.39:1) to capture not only the vastness of the landscape but also the inner abysses of the protagonist. The goal was not to portray a “beautiful landscape,” but rather its rawness and its magic: the harsh daylight that reveals labor and hostility, and the soft light of dawn and night that opens the door to the world of souls and dreams.

We sought a distinctive aesthetic to portray ghosts: flat images that turn into silhouettes; the stuttering motion of stars through sequences of photographs, creating a surreal atmosphere to speak of miracles. To evoke the presence of souls, we experimented with floating camera movements and diffuse focus, suggesting a sensory nearness.

Estela’s journey is a spiritual one. We created soundscapes that reflect her emotional states—landscapes inhabited by souls and ghosts, presences that appear and vanish, blending with other narrative elements such as the wind, the train, or the puma. These elements are transformed into memories or dreamlike signals. Her story contains conflicts born from silence, from what is left unsaid—worked into the sound design as pauses and sonic voids.

Another central idea we explored, both in the sound design and in the music, was that of intermittence—pulses, alarms—a recurring sense of warning, as if something is about to happen. In Souls, sound gives shape to Estela’s inner world. It turns machinery into silence, the desert into water.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

All Souls' Day in the Heart of the Highlands. Tolar Grande: A Door Between Worlds

I began traveling to Tolar Grande, a small Indigenous community nestled in the highlands of northwestern Argentina, while researching a fiction script set around All Souls’ Day. Unlike my hometown— 400 kilometers away—Tolar Grande is known for its profound and heartfelt celebration of the day.

The village is home to about 100 inhabitants, and in just a few days I had met most of them. They generously shared with me how they honor their dead. What struck me most was the deep sense of connection between the living and the departed. On November 2nd, families leave the doors of their homes open to welcome their loved ones back. They set out tables with the deceased’s favorite foods, and they watch as the drinks bubble—signs, they believe, that the spirits are drinking. After a day of remembrance and joy, the dead are lovingly sent off again until the following year. It is a peaceful and tender coexistence that keeps memory alive.

Of all the people I met, there was one I hadn’t: Estela, the protagonist of this documentary. She was the one who approached me, asking if she could join me on a scouting trip. During that journey, while I was filming the desert, she—whom I had assumed to be reserved—began to speak. And in that moment, the film was born. There was something magical about the way she spoke. Her voice felt musical and poetic, but more than that, her worldview captivated me. It was non-anthropocentric, blending spiritual beliefs with striking honesty and quiet resilience. Estela was grieving the recent death of her mother and told me she spoke with her in dreams. I wanted to capture those dreams.





LAURA BASOMBRÍO
director and editor

Laura Basombrío is an Argentine filmmaker and editor, born in Salta in 1986. She graduated as a cellist at the Conservatory and as an Image and Sound Designer at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), where she taught documentary screenwriting. She works as a film editor. In 2023 she premiered her debut feature *Las almas*, filmed with the support of the IDFA Bertha Fund, at the Mar del Plata International Film Festival, winning the awards for Best Director and Best Editing in the International Competition. *Las almas* was also distinguished as Best Feature Film at the festivals of Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Rizoma (Spain) and Viña del Mar (Chile).



LUCAS PAGE
sound designer and musician

Lucas Page is an argentinian composer, producer and sound designer. He has worked as Sound Designer and Editor in more than 80 feature films released in cinema. Besides his extensive Sound Designer career, he is very interested in musical research. He is the founding member of many musical projects like *moji moji*, *ExX* and *GUAZÚ*, his on-going Project that looks to integrate folkloric organic sounds with new electronic sonorities. Page has also worked together with filmmakers and visual artists in theatre and films. Standing out his collaboration with Brazilian director Esmir Filho. *Kollwitzstrasse 52* (2010), *Sete anos depois* (2014).

ANAHÍ FARFÁN
producer

Anahí Farfán is a producer and director. In 2016 she founded the production company *ARDE CINE* in Argentina, and in 2021 she founded *FUEGA CINE* in Colombia, with which she produced the films *Putas como nosotras* by Agustina Comedi, *Al impenetrable* and *Amplificadas* by Sonia Bertotti, *Las almas* by Laura Basombrío, *Volver* by Nicolás Macario Alonso and *Transfarianna* by Joris Lachaise. For two years she was a member of *DOC:CO*, an agency for the promotion and distribution of Latin American films.



MARCOS ROSTAGNO
Cinematographer

Marcos Rostagno works in film as a cinematographer. His most outstanding works are the short film *La ciudad de los hombres lactantes* which received the award for Best Cinematography at the Kodak International Filmschool Competition 2004 and the feature documentary *Las almas* de Laura Basombrío for which he won Best Cinematography at both the Mar Del Plata Film Festival (2023) and the Guadalajara International Film Festival (2024).





FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

Mar del Plata International Film Festival, Argentina/ Astor Piazzolla Award for Best Direction in the International Competition, Best Editing (EDA), Best Cinematography (ADF) in the International Competition, First Mention for Best Sound (ASA).

Guadalajara International Film Festival, Mexico/ Best Cinematography

Mostra Internacional de Cinema de Belo Horizonte, Brazil/ Best Feature Film, Critics Award (Abraccine)

Rizoma, Festival Internacional de Cine y Cultura Entrelazada, Spain/ Best Film Award in the Iberoamerican Official Selection

Viña del Mar International Film Festival, Chile/ Best Documentary Feature Film

Cinéma de Femmes d'Amérique du Sud, Francia/ Best Film

PRESS

‘The inner voice is louder than the outer voice traditionally recorded by unimaginative documentary filmmaking.

This is the aim of Laura Basombrío's ambitious direction in her first feature film, supported by a magnificent image in dialogue between the vast landscapes of the countryside, where ancestral gestures follow one after another, and an intimate interior where Estela secretly lives her problems and the many questions they raise (...) The result is a spellbinding narrative as close as possible to Estela's life, in which, although she is fully integrated into society, she is deeply rooted in a solitude in which she communicates with beings who are physically absent and in which magical thinking has complete freedom to impose itself.

Laura Basombrío's cinematic vision is as ingenious in its elaboration of the anthropological reality of its protagonists as it is profound in its questioning of social constructs.’ **Cédric Lépine**

‘Estela doesn't believe that she believes, she just believes. A cosmovision inhabits her and in dreams she reads her belief system better. By the way: it is not easy to film a belief. It forces the filmmaker to modulate his sensitivity. Basombrío finds the form and accompanies. The framing replenishes the space from which Estela's beliefs are born; the sound bursts in at times to disrupt the silence and the cadence of a voice that leads. These are good decisions, enough to sustain the film in spirit. Nothing is fairer to cinema than trying to get to know an ethos. Estela is the gloss of a way of life’.

Roger Koza

‘Las almas is one of the most expressive films of a new generation of Argentinean female directors. Unlike the urban narratives, which deal with middle-class characters determined to be Argentinian for the rest of the world, its images are of an arid territory and its protagonist is a woman from another social world and another time.’ **Cleber Eduardo**





