

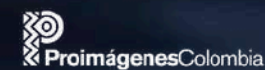
Muchachita Chilapa



Direction: Juana Lotero Production: Fuego Cine Co-production: Daniel Sánchez - Noctámbulos Cine
Featuring Yulieth Castañeda, Yessica Cadavía Camera: Daniel Sánchez e Isaac Fabricio
Sound: HISA, Eloisa Arcila y Juana Lotero Editing: Paloma Rincón



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Title: Muchachita Chilapa / Chilapa Girl
Director: Juana Lotero López
Producers: Anahí Farfán / Daniel Sánchez/Juana Lotero López
Genre: Documentary – Essay
Estimated Running Time: 90 minutes
Country: Colombia / Argentina

SYNOPSIS

In the rugged landscapes of Darien Gap, where breathtaking natural beauty clashes with a hostile culture of machismo, thirteen-year-old Yulieth finds herself at a crossroads: she is a mother before she has even finished being a child. Collapsing time and blending cinematic forms, Chilapa Girl follows Yulieth from ages 11 to 16, observing her journey through a world where waters hold the weight of secrets. Rather than succumbing to the inherited fate of the women before her, Yulieth embarks on a quest to uncover her family's hidden truths. In doing so, she begins to mend the fractured matrilineal bonds of her past, turning her struggle into a path toward healing.

TEASER

SHOWCASE CANNES MARKET

KEY: ChilapaGirlCannesMarket

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I chose to accompany Yulieth's story (10–15) after being struck by the strength with which she grows up in San Pacho, a territory of striking natural beauty shaped by isolation, structural abandonment, and state neglect. From the beginning, my interest was not to portray her reality from a distance, but to engage in a shared process of observation, attentive to the power relations implied in filming a community different from my own.

As we spent time together, I became increasingly interested in the way Yulieth constructs her own universe: her spontaneity, her curiosity, and the rhythm of her daily life in the tropics. Over time, she moves within—and sometimes against—a context where teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence are socially normalized, shaping women's lives from an early age. My approach seeks to resist any exoticizing or condescending gaze, and instead build from care, listening, and affection.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Time is a fundamental cinematic and ethical dimension of the film. Accompanying Yulieth means observing her growth, the transformation of her body, her desires, and her gaze, while also acknowledging how my own perspective shifts throughout the process. The camera engages with the relationship between the characters and their natural environment, creating sensory atmospheres that echo emotional states. Visual metaphors and allegories emerge as ways of approaching Yulieth's inner experience without attempting to define or close it.

The film is grounded in a feminist gaze that observes female strength without romanticizing it. It pays particular attention to the women in Yulieth's family, exploring how care, knowledge, affection, and machismo are transmitted across generations through everyday gestures and rituals. Within a patriarchal context sustained by both visible and invisible forms of violence, the film reflects on how women's lives are shaped, limited, and continuously renegotiated.

Through the coexistence of multiple materialities— analog and digital images, self-filmed videos, and travel notes—Muchachita Chilapa creates space-time fissures that deepen our understanding of the characters. The film ultimately reveals not only Yulieth's transformation, but also an ongoing reconfiguration of my own gaze as a filmmaker, committed to an ethical, feminist, and dialogical approach to reality

Muchachita Chilapa is conceived as a documentary film essay that weaves together observational cinema, moments of staging, and the rawness of encounters between the characters and the filmmaking process itself. This approach is hybridized with home videos and self-produced TikTok content made by Yulieth, as well as a travel log composed of heterogeneous materials gathered throughout the research. These forms of self-representation are central to the film, allowing Yulieth to actively shape her image and voice within the narrative.

DIRECTOR'S VISUAL CONCEPT

The visual approach of the film emerges from a six-year process of research and proximity with Yulieth and her family. Over this period, we have developed a close relationship that allows the camera to become a familiar and unobtrusive presence, enabling access to moments of intimacy. This proximity shapes an observational approach focused on gestures, silences, faces, and bodies understood as territories marked by emotional, social, and historical forces.

The film brings into dialogue two cinematic devices. On one hand, an observational approach rooted in careful and intimate mise-en-scène, following Yulieth's daily life and her relationships within her family and surroundings. On the other, a freer and more fragmentary body of materials collected intuitively over time: travel logs, remnants of observational footage, still photography, personal archives, research videos, and self-recorded images made by Yulieth and her family using mobile phones, handy cams, and social media platforms. These materials extend Yulieth's point of view and introduce a subjective texture that reflects her evolving relationship with her body, her desire, and the act of being filmed.

DIRECTOR'S VISUAL CONCEPT

The visual structure and editing weave these heterogeneous materials, allowing transitions between devices to reveal both Yulieth's world and our own gaze. Rather than concealing its construction, the film embraces the essay form as a way to question representation, authorship, and proximity.

Visual decisions are guided by emotional states rather than chronology, reinforcing a sensorial approach in which time is perceived as circular and accumulative, shaped by repetition, memory, and transformation.

The territory plays an active role in the film's visual construction. The jungle, the rivers, and the sea shape rhythm, texture, and atmosphere. Water recurs as a visual and sonic element, mirroring Yulieth's inner transitions. The camera moves with subtle fluidity, reinforcing a sensorial relationship between body, landscape, and time.

Throughout the film, the visual language remains anchored in Yulieth's perspective. Sound design privileges bodily sounds and the ambient textures of the territory over explanatory dialogue, allowing emotional states to emerge organically.

PRODUCER'S NOTE

Muchachita Chilapa is a feature-length documentary developed through a long-term observational process since 2019, combining research, different shooting periods, and successive editing stages that have progressively shaped its narrative and aesthetic structure.

Set in San Francisco, Acandí, Chocó — a remote settlement between the Caribbean Sea and the Darién jungle — the film follows Yulieth's coming-of-age and the transformations within her family, exploring intergenerational knowledge among women, early motherhood, structural machismo, and everyday forms of resilience within a territory marked by isolation, migration routes, and informal economies.

By mid-2026, the project has accumulated approximately 50–60% of the final footage, allowing the filmmakers to build a deep relationship of trust with the protagonist, her family, and the community. This long-term proximity has been essential to access the intimate spaces where the film unfolds.

The project is produced by Fuega Cine, Noctámbulos Cine, and Daniel Sánchez through an equitable co-production agreement. Developed with a small technical crew, the film has maintained a discreet and close presence within the community. The project has received support through grants for development, production, promotion, and distribution, while the remaining financing is expected through international co-production partnerships and international funds.

The remaining principal photography is scheduled for September and October 2026, focusing on the moment when Yulieth, El Nene, and Brayan begin living together as an independent family. Editing continues in parallel with production as a central creative tool guiding the film's narrative decisions.

The film is expected to be completed in August 2027.

DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

The international distribution strategy for Muchachita Chilapa aims to position the film within the global circuit of contemporary documentary cinema, prioritizing festivals that engage with its aesthetic and thematic approach. The project aims for a world premiere at a major international festival, such as the Berlinale (Generation section) or the International Film Festival Rotterdam, both spaces known for presenting films that explore youth experiences, social transformations, and innovative documentary forms.

Following its premiere, the film aims to consolidate its international trajectory through a curated festival circuit that may include Sundance, San Sebastián, Sheffield Doc/Fest, DOK Leipzig, and DOC NYC, among other important platforms for auteur documentary cinema.

Alongside the festival circuit, the project will pursue agreements with international sales agents and specialized platforms for independent cinema, including potential collaborations with broadcasters and platforms such as ARTE, MUBI, or FILMIN, which have consistently supported socially engaged and author-driven documentaries.

AUDIENCE BUILDING STRATEGY

Beyond the festival circuit, the project envisions a broader circulation strategy designed to connect the film with diverse audiences.

The film addresses themes that resonate with feminist movements, human rights organizations, rural communities, and younger audiences, opening possibilities for screenings in cultural centers, universities, cinematheques, and community spaces across Latin America and Europe.

The project also plans to develop a social impact campaign combining film screenings with spaces for dialogue and reflection in rural communities and social organizations. This strategy seeks to foster conversations around the structural violence faced by many women in rural territories, while also highlighting forms of resilience, solidarity, and collective care within these communities.



Anahí Farfan

Fuega Cine (Colombia)

Fuega Cine is an independent audiovisual production company based in Colombia, founded in 2021 by producer Anahí Farfán. Its editorial line focuses on auteur cinema, creative documentary, and narratives committed to memory, territory, and social justice.

Among its most notable productions is *Transfariana* (2023), directed by Joris Lachaise, a minority co-production with Mujo Films (France), which premiered in the Panorama Dokumente section of the Berlinale 2023. The company has also produced *Las almas* (2023), directed by Laura Basombrío, which received awards for Best Director and Best Editing at the Mar del Plata International Film Festival.

Fuega Cine also produced the short documentary *Geografía espectral* by Manuel Mateo Gómez, which had its world premiere at Visions du Réel 2026. The company is currently developing and producing several documentary projects in Colombia, including the international co-production of Agustina Comedi's second feature documentary, *Mujeres públicas*.



Juana Lotero

Noctámbulos Cine (Colombia)

Noctámbulos Cine is a Colombian production company led by filmmaker Juana Lotero, dedicated to the development and production of independent and documentary cinema. Its projects are characterized by long-term research processes and an intimate approach to the stories and territories they explore.

Specialized in filmmaking with a gender perspective. We seek projects that give voice to women, especially in directing roles, in order to share female perspectives and sensibilities. We embrace this mission as a political act toward decentralizing filmmaking practices and as a necessity to tell our own stories, helping to build a vision of the world that moves away from heteropatriarchal viewpoints.



Daniel Sánchez (Colombia)

Daniel Sánchez is a Colombian cinematographer and producer whose work focuses on long-term documentary projects combining social research and cinematic exploration.

Together with Juana Lotero, he developed the short film *Niña Chilapa*, an initial narrative exploration of the universe later expanded in the feature documentary *Muchachita Chilapa*. The short film premiered at FICCI and MIDBO, where it received the Best Short Film Award, and was later selected at international festivals such as Durban International Film Festival, DOC NYC, Winterthur, and Oberhausen.