

DUBLIN FILMS presents



# OUR BODIES ARE YOUR BATTLEFIELDS NUESTROS CUERPOS SON SUS CAMPOS DE BATALLA

A film by  
ISABELLE SOLAS



DIRECTOR & PHOTOGRAPHY ISABELLE SOLAS SOUND VICTORIA FRANZAN MAXIME BERLAND VICTORIA MARÉCHAL ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ANNA FEILLOU EDITING ANNA RICHE  
SOUND EDITING MARTIN DELZESCAUX MIXING THOMAS ROUVILLAIN COLOR FRANÇOIS ENGRAND GRAPHIC DESIGN CHARLOTTE BERGEU PRODUCED BY DAVID HURST  
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# NUESTROS CUERPOS SON SUS CAMPOS DE BATALLA

OUR BODIES ARE YOUR BATTLEFIELDS

Documentary / 100 min / Argentina-France / 2021  
Language: Spanish / Subtitles: English, French

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**ISABELLE SOLAS**

## INTERNATIONAL SALES & FESTIVALS

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## SYNOPSIS

**In an Argentina divided between a deep conservatism and an unprecedented momentum in feminism, the film delves into the political journey and intimate lives of Claudia and Violeta. Trans women who identify as transvestites, the fight they lead with their comrades against the patriarchal violence is visceral and embodied.**

**Convinced of their roles at the center of an ongoing revolution that intersects with so many struggles, in defiance of the old world they redouble their energy to invent a new present, to love and stay alive.**

## A few words from Nicolas Milesi

Cinéma Jean Eustache, Pessac (Gironde)

■

**Our Bodies Are Your Battlefields** is a crossed portrait of two trans women who claim to be transvestites. One is Claudia, a resident of La Plata for 20 years, humorously nicknamed by her friends the Peruvian Barbie. She stands up against all forms of victimization and her knowledge of the harshness of the street sublimates her militant verve with a beautiful authenticity. The other is Violeta, an academic skilled in deconstructing the most subtle phallogocratic representations and committed to sex workers who are at the forefront of the feminicides and transvesticides that plague Argentine society.

Shot as close as possible to these two strong committed personalities, Isabelle Solas' beautiful documentary claims a formalism marked by great respect: the bodies are present everywhere but never reduced to spectacular filming. It is their simple and inevitable presence, without any « coming out » possible, that most accurately translates the struggle they embody. «- The rights must be snatched!» declares Claudia to her family, with a lively hand gesture. The director's camera intrudes into these demonstrations where standing together to make one's voice heard can seem brutal, where older feminist activism is not so inclusive in the face of these «dissident corporalities» that agglomerate other struggles - against heteronormativity or capitalism.

«Include us, stop exposing us» Violeta advocates in a solemn speech that hints at a place for trans and *travesti* culture. This is exactly what this film, full of moving encounters, is all about. **Our Bodies Are Your Battlefields** achieves the feat of this «public intimacy» dreamed up in the course of a speech, focusing on faces and discussions in small groups. With always the ambition to rethink the bonds.

## INTERVIEW WITH ISABELLE SOLAS

By Esther C

### What is the genesis of your film, why Argentina?

At the beginning of 2013, while in France there was almost a civil war over gay marriage, in Argentina the law on «Gender Identity» was being passed. This fed the idea that old Europe was gathering dust and that we had to go elsewhere to find some revolutionary energy.

### What is the intention of your film?

The subject of the film is how the intimate and the political are articulated. I wanted to dissect how desire can be political, this individual and collective resource that makes it possible to think the world differently. These bodies that move in this troubled and violent territory that is Argentina today are in themselves an act of resistance. I wanted to film their inalienable will to take their place, to reinvent the present, and to have confidence in the future.

### How did you meet your characters?

I did a sociological research and very soon I met Claudia in the neighborhood of La Plata. She was already identified in the leftist Kirchnerist movements. After returning to France, a strong mobilization broke out in Argentina, to denounce a resurgence of murders of trans women. I felt an urgency to return. They are on borrowed time. If documentary film can help to bear witness, it must be done!

Violetta, it is after having read a very beautiful article of her that I asked to meet her.

What I saw in them was a strange way of linking opposites: being even more alive, in a perpetual present, while coming close to death at every moment.

### They seem to complement each other in their respective commitments?

We have the revolutionary and the reformist, these are positions that can be seen in any social movement.

Beyond the reality of the Argentine trans-transves-

tite, the film dissects a recurring dynamic in any social movement, and seeks to defend the idea of the convergence of struggles.

### How did the shooting go? How to portray the real?

We worked in a small team, I directed and shot. I took Anna Feillou as my assistant because she knows Argentina very well. We talked about the sequences in advance with the characters, and then I let them arrange things as they wanted, in a sort of collective staging.

It was obvious that I would not appear on the screen. I like it when you let people live, without adding any commentary, when it looks like a fiction film.

### The film was also written during editing?

At the beginning, I wanted to make a choral film, the portrait of a community. To deal with class issues, migration issues, new generations claiming to be non-binary, etc., but that may be another film.

In the editing process, we cut out a lot and refocused on two characters, so that the audience could relate to them and identify with them.

### Where did you get the idea for the title?

The title of the film comes from the poster of the artist Barbara Kruger «Your body is a battleground»

(1989) realized in support of the fight for the abortion. It seemed interesting to me to divert this term, there is also in the trans question a question of corporality which is striking.

### What global issues are raised by trans claims?

The trans question puts everything on the table, capitalism, patriarchy, binarity. These activists bring a complexity that nourished me a lot, on the theoretical level but also in their instinct of life, their way of demanding very ambitious things from reality.

Throughout the film, they propose other paths than the norm: other corporalities, other ways of living a love story, other ways of thinking about collective action.

One wonders why people who are self-determined generate so much violence for others? Why are they rejected by some feminists? What is it about this that is so foundational to society?

I have the impression that they have a total fight, it is liberating for the men too.

### What does the term «travesti» mean in Argentina?

They claim to be *travestis*, to say «we are the descendants of the non-binary people who existed in the pre-Columbian populations» wiped off the map by the colonists. It is also a derogatory term - «trava»





like the insult «trav!» - which they have reappropriated to claim non-binarity.

### **How are they doing today? How has the situation evolved?**

The covid has isolated many of them, but on the rights side, things have not stopped moving forward. Abortion has been legalized, and since the law on gender identities, you can choose your gender on your identification papers, there is a system of positive discrimination in community recruitment. I am convinced that sooner or later it will happen in our country.

« **Isabelle Solas' documentary is a social cinema at the level of such conflicts, disputes and violence.** »



## **THE CHARACTERS**

### **A few words from the director**

We find in Violeta and Claudia all the contradictory elements that form a coherent political unity.

Violeta is a middle-class intellectual, she is influenced by the writings of Queer philosophers, and believes in the «micro politics» as Foucault said. Claudia, on the other hand, has built and saved herself through political struggle. She comes from Peru and fled that country to study for free in Argentina. She believes in infiltrating institutions to change them from the inside, she climbs the ladder of political power and leads in parallel a very concrete field work, in an association of defense of the rights of immigrant trans women in Argentina. I wanted to film their journeys in resonance, because they complement each other. They defend the same ideas without ever being in the same place. The slightly off-center revolutionary and the deeply rooted reformist turn their backs on each other, but they fight for the same cause.

### **A few words from Karine Espineira and Maud Yeuse-Thomas, pioneers of trans-feminism in France**

Claudia and Violeta, in their turn, like everywhere else on the globe, lead a feminist counter-politics. Their strength lies in this crossroads of struggles: trans, feminist, anti-colonial, anti-patriarchal, anti-globalist. It leads them to a harsh socio-political autonomy, forcing their resources.

Isabelle Solas' documentary is a social cinema at the level of these conflicts, disputes, violence. A cinema of the real, close to the individuals fighting for this other fight which starts with survival and goes towards life. Far from the academic and forensic debates, it follows the rough edges of the individuals in these struggles. It also follows their bodies and faces, fiery expressions and appeasements after the struggle. It takes the courage of oneself and the courage to be oneself in public to confront what appears to be the last taboo in human history. They are the voice of the epistemological and ontological revolution of today and tomorrow demanding autonomy of self-determination for all and not just «trans» people.

## THE BIRTH OF THE PROJECT

### DAVID HURST

#### Producer

Isabelle Solas came to meet me in 2013, when the debate on gay marriage was raging in France. She had discovered that at the same time, on the other side of the world, in Argentina, the state had just passed a revolutionary law, called the «Gender Identity Law». Any citizen could now change their gender on their identity papers, regardless of their biological sex; in other words, no need to change your sex to change your gender!

Although Argentina is also a very conservative country - at that time abortion was still forbidden - the outpouring of hatred from the opponents of gay marriage in France, both in the National Assembly and in the streets, had deeply offended me. So I was also very curious to go and see what was happening in Argentina, and I immediately agreed to follow Isabelle.

In 2015, following a first support from the Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, Isabelle did a first scouting in Buenos Aires. Upon her return, we began writing the film, which was to trace the journey of a trans collective, at the origin of the famous law. In the years that followed, as we travelled and met people in Argentina, wrote the film, and went through several funding commissions, the project became more focused on Claudia and Violeta, the articulation of their intimate and political journeys and the struggle for their visibility and survival.

In parallel to the financial support we eventually obtained for this project, which has always shaken the certainties of all those who were aware of it, three events were decisive in advancing the production of the film. First, my participation in the Eurodoc training program, in 2016, where I was able to present the project to colleagues, experts and broadcasters, for the first time. Then, in 2017, at the



Rencontres d'Août de Lussas, where Isabelle and I were able to benefit from many feedbacks from professionals there too. Finally, in December 2018, the launch of a crowdfunding campaign on Ulule, which allowed us to talk about the project to the media and to meet new partners, such as the company Les Alchimistes, which co-produced the film. In 2019, we were finally able to start two big shooting sessions, with a team that accompanied Isabelle to Argentina. In early 2020 we began post-production of the film, despite the Covid pandemic, which then considerably delayed the release of the film. Today, almost eight

« **She had discovered that on the other side of the world, a state had just passed a revolutionary law** »

years after my first meeting with Isabelle, the film had its World Premiere in a beautiful festival in Mexico (FICG), before its French Premiere at the Bordeaux Festival (FI-FIB). We are now working hard to ensure the widest possible circulation of the film, especially in French cinemas. We are leading this new battle with great pleasure, the meeting with the public being, for a director as for a producer, the essence of our commitment!



ISABELLE SOLAS BIOGRAPHY



After studying anthropology and oriental languages, she joined the Ecole du Doc de Lussas in 2005. Her first three medium-length documentaries explore the themes of disappearance and belonging to a real or fantasized territory (Inventaire / Adalios Production, Pas de Nostalgie Camarades / Sister Productions, Avoir 15 ans sur le Plateau / Z'azimut Films).

She has worked as a DP with authors and directors on their documentary films. She has also explored dance videos with the dancer Buto Anne Laure Lamarque and the composer Florent Ghys. She also directed several clips for the group Chocolat Billy. She collaborates with the Random collective, which works in the public space around dance and theater, by integrating her documentary practice.

The desire to film the body as a field of political and poetic invention has become central to her work in recent years. She collaborates with Mael le Mée and Benjamin Charles, in the company BAM, on a project mixing arts and science, entitled 16 Place Vendôme, where electro-stimulation becomes a vector of muscular musical listening. It is in this spirit that she has been developing a feature film project for the cinema since 2015, Nos corps sont vos champs de bataille, with Dublin Films, a journey into the claims of two Argentinean trans women.

Fiche technique

Feature-length documentary	
Lenght	100'
Support	DCP VOSTFR
Written and directed by	Isabelle Solas
Assistant director	Anna Feillou
Director of photography	Isabelle Solas
Sound	Victoria Franzan
	Maxime Berland
	Victoria Maréchal
	Anna Riche
Editing	Martin Delzescaux
Sound editing	Thomas Rouvillain
Sound mixing	Loïs Rocque
Coproduction	David Hurst
Production	
	Dublin Films
	Les Alchimistes
	Pictanovo
	Le Fresnoy
With the support of	
Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine (writing, development and production), the CNC (FSA), Procirep-Angoa (development and production) and TV7 Bordeaux.	
Shot in 2018-2019 in Argentina.	

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