

HAF 08 The Siren Song



REGION: Mexico

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:

Documentary | Digital Format | Spanish | 80mins

DIRECTOR:

Eden BERNAL

PRODUCER:

Polly YEUNG

Julio LOPEZ

Eden BERNAL

HAF GOALS:

Funds, Sales agents, Pre-sales

BUDGET: US\$ 148,288

SECURED BUDGET: US\$ 110,317

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

First Feature Director

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

The sirens, three generations of Mexican fisherwomen, look for a way back to the only place where they find the freedom that, as women, they never had before: the sea.

SYNOPSIS

It is rumoured that three sirens live around a forgotten village in northwestern Mexico. The truth is that a woman called Mercedes escaped from her husband's violence after 40 years by staying on the seashore. Despite the harshness of the land and her job, she established a strong relationship with nature, performing stereotypically masculine work and becoming an independent fisherwoman. However, her way of life becomes a pretext for the old villagers to stigmatize her as a "siren". Nevertheless she endures the loneliness and passes on her vision and skills, as well as the difficulties of her life, to Maria and Nora, her daughter and granddaughter. After years of resistance, their growing poverty drives them back to their village and makes them give up their adopted way of life. Mercedes takes care of her grandsons, questioning her own value, while the younger ones find stable but poorly paid jobs at small factories. With the arrival of a new great granddaughter, the fourth generation of girls, they decide to take their last attempt to return to their self-determined way of life and to recover the freedom that they only find at the sea.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The film talks about the possibility of inhabiting the world, with all its high costs and contradictions, in opposition to a set of values related to gender, moral norms and "ideal" modern comfort. In that sense, the self-imposed exile of the three protagonists has not simply been a geographical movement or an escape, but offers the construction of a new identity: an emotional displacement that opens a new territory for them and a way to establish their own femininity, strongly identified by their deep relationship with the sea. Yet, all their actions make the inhabitants of their home village believe that they are sirens—archetypal beings whose knowledge and skills are incomprehensible to men—especially when these women appear to overcome all difficulties. Therefore, I want to emphasize the characteristics of sirens found in these women in order to take their struggle from a limited context into a wider symbolic level. I am looking at going beyond their natural aspect and approaching the land of magic to show the audience something that is incarnated by these three women but also inherent and necessary for all humans: the search of a greater freedom.

DIRECTOR

Eden BERNAL

His debut documentary short, *Portrait in Absence* (2009), featuring the cases of missing girls in the Mexico City, broke the silence of the government on this current issue. In 2013, he made *The Navel*, documenting street dwellers. In 2017, he completed the documentary short, *The Exile*, and expanded it into a photobook which was shortlisted for the First Photobook Award from the Aperture Foundation in 2018, exhibited in Paris Photo (France), the Aperture Foundation Gallery NY (USA) and collected by Guggenheim Museum and Harvard University.

PRODUCER

Polly YEUNG

Polly Yeung's recent works as producer include the comedy *Hotel Soul Good* (2018, Udine Far East Film Festival) and *The Lady Improper* (2019): closing film of the CinemAsia Film Festival, competition in the Osaka Asian Film Festival, nomination for Best Actress in the Hong Kong Film Awards. She produced and wrote the animation short *Another World* (2019; Grand Prize of the DigiCon6 Asia Award, Gold Award of Hong Kong Animation Support Program (Advanced Level) & Montreal International Animation Film Award 2019). She wrote the live action film *Rest on Your Shoulder* (2011), selected for the Shanghai International Film Festival.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Sinapsis

Sinapsis is a Mexico-based production company specializing in documentary film and trans-media projects. It started in 2009 with the documentary short *Absence Portrait*, which participated in several international festivals. Since then, Sinapsis has produced five documentary movies, including *The Navel* (2013) and has collaborated in more than fifteen award-winning projects for film and television.

The Lady Improper

This original content creator for international audiences produced the documentary *The Cloud Learner*, shot in Mexico and Japan (in postproduction) and co-produced the Mexican documentary *The Siren Song* (in principal shooting). It also patronized the French web series *Grandmas Project* Season 2.