



Proyecto documental de **Liliana Hurtado**

# IN TRANSIT EN TRÁNSITO

## SYNOPSIS

At 34 I was taken to a hospital, in Cali (Colombia). I had a vaginal hemorrhage and my tongue was so swollen I could not close my mouth, I could not eat and I could not even think of shouting out the pain that had got boxed into my ribs. A week later I was diagnosed with Acute Promyelocytic Leukemia (APL).

I received four cycles of chemotherapy and started my exploration of complementary medicines: food, acupuncture, neural therapy, biologic medicine and osteopathy. But also the indigenous rituals of different American ethnic groups and the encounter with people who were going through health situations similar to mine.

I wanted answers for all the questions that my body sheltered together with the leukemia and its treatment: Am I in danger of developing a new cancer with the chemotherapy? Am I going to become sterile? But, why now? At the peak of my productive and reproductive age? What are the limits of this medicine? Will I get healed with only alternative medicines that do not have adverse effects? Has anybody got healed of cancer? What if I just have to solve the disease in my mind? Am I guilty? And what if I am?

Up to which point are we responsible for the thoughts, attitudes and actions that define our lives? Can we control all the aspects of our lives? What's the point of living avoiding death? Which meaning do I attach to my disease?

I experienced it as a transit: living it obliged me to construct my own point of view about the meaning of life, death, health, disease, medicine, God. I lived it as a mystic trance: every transformation and crisis of my body got translated into dreams and visions that reminded me of my experiences with the ayahuasca<sup>1</sup>

As an illustrator, drawing has allowed to me collect the visual memory of those moments.

As a film maker I have constructed the story of my transit through disease and thus, I have been able to attach meaning to it and to weave knowledge in a dialogue with others who face a serious disease such as the patient, the relative, the care-taker or the physician.



1. American Sacred Plant, present in different Amazon and Andean cultures from Perú up to the North of Chile, antique inca territory. The word "Ayahuasca" is of Quichua origin and means "rope that unites the world of the dead with the world of the alive". Mixed with other plants, it is used as medicine for physical and spiritual healing. Translated from: <http://marcialcandioti.wordpress.com/2008/08/01/medicina-mensajes-de-reflexion-ayahuasca-o-santo-daime/>

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE OR MOTIVATION

The points of departure for this documentary proposal are: my own experience with the disease and my quest for medical alternatives as well as the necessity to build a personal story about the meaning of this experience in my life.

When I finished receiving the four cycles of chemotherapy, the order was that during two years I should continue taking two other cytotoxics as oral chemotherapy. I decided to stop taking them and explore other options. When I told the hematologist so, his reaction puzzled me:

- Excellent! If I were you, I would have done the same.
- How come, doc? Two months ago you said the opposite...

He looked at me over his glasses and said in a confidential tone:

- Liliana, we both know that the origin of the disease is in our minds. When my patients have not solved it there, I follow the protocol. But if you already solved it there, then don't take them. It's true that they can cause serious side effects. I wonder how much it helps. What we do, I mean. What's the limit? I know this medicine has to change. We cannot go on like this for long.

His answer encouraged me to investigate the relationships that different medical approaches establish among physiology, psychology and mysticism in the diagnosis and treatment of serious diseases. I also wanted to explore the limits they have in the healing of this kind of disease.

The dialogue I have established with representatives of different medicines –allopath, homeopathy, Chinese medicine, ayurvedic medicine, indigenous medicine- has allowed me to know different views of the world and to explore the complexity of notions such as body, health, disease, medicine, death, life, God.

I consider that the convergence of such diversity of medical approaches in cities like mine responds to the current mutation of social paradigms in relation to the idea of evil, catastrophe, darkness and death. In that sense, I believe that this proposal can become a document of the time of social and cultural transit we are living.

On the other hand, this proposal also responds to the necessity I had during my healing process of listening to the stories of people who had lived or were living with a serious disease. I needed to know the medical treatments they chose, the meanings they attached to that experience, the most common fears as well as the thoughts and attitudes they assumed before disease, life, death and mystery once they learned the diagnosis.

This, perhaps, because I have felt that sharing your own experience and listening to others in an exercise of compassion can be a good remedy “to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, to have the courage to change the things which should be changed, and to develop the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.” Listening to that diversity of experiences about the same topic allowed me to experience with greater clarity my own identity and to develop a personal point of view. In that sense, drawing and writing the story have become fundamental tools to organize my experience, elaborate its sense and get rid of the fears of cancer and of death which we have inherited from our culture.



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## TREATMENT

IN TRANSIT is a documentary narrated out of frame (VO) and in first person by its director Liliana Hurtado, who reconstructs her story with cancer and the treatment she went through. Drawings done by herself during the hospital stay and the recreation of dreams she had during her experience with the illness are the two main narrative tools.

The main feature of the dreams' staging, is that they are portrayed in a daily environment which becomes rarefied with the insertion of elements that do not belong there. For example, in order to introduce the moment in which the illness appears, Liliana is shown jogging in a park accompanied by her dog; suddenly, she stops in front of a water puddle in which flip flops of different sizes and styles float; the dog begins to mourn nervously while the protagonist, absorbed, looks into the water puddle; bubbles emerge from it.

The dreams' staging is a key strategy in the structure of the story for it allows us to jump in time and diegetic space and thus gives place to the juxtaposition that associates the director's personal experience with those of the characters in the documentary: women that had also suffered or suffer any kind of cancer and relatives and friends that have been with Liliana through her recovery. All those stories are staged as spontaneous dialogues among the director and the characters. To investigate the physicians' stances that accompanied the treatment of different cases and to auscultate the tendencies and world views in different health approaches, traditional interviews (talking-heads) were used. The staging of the drawings is carried out by fragmenting each drawing into smaller close-ups to invite the spectator to make an associative assembly of the different parts.

The documentary soundtrack is compound by the typical sounds in a hospital (oxygen, electrocardiograms, liquid alarms) mixed with tribal, ancestral percussion sounds which are the ones that introduce the subjective experience of the illness.



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## STORY OUTLINE

The main character is portrayed through a drawing in which she appears as a thin, bald woman sailing in a boat against the current heading for mainland, driven by birds, fish and clouds. Afterwards, there are images of Liliana sleeping in a couch at the hospital.

To introduce the illness' appearance, a dream the protagonist had just before getting ill is represented. Here, she appears jogging in a park, accompanied by her dog; suddenly, she stops in front of a water puddle in which flip-flops of different sizes and styles float; the dog begins to mourn nervously while the protagonist looks absorbed into the water puddle; bubbles emerge from it.

Carlos López, the bioenergetic physician who attended Liliana one month before her stay in the hospital, talks about the first symptoms Liliana presented and the evolution of the case until her hospitalization.

Pictures of family albums and school yearbooks, book details and notebook notes, drawings made by the director in different moments of her life, illustrate her world and the muddle of images, questions and emotions that resounded in her head once she was told about the disease. Martha Lucía López' testimony, the psychoanalyst who accompanied Liliana for a year, is also included as well as a reconstruction of Liliana's child fantasy of wearing multiple surgical appliances (glasses, crutches, external braces, plasters, cervical collar...).





## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### DEVELOPMENT

#### **The importance of naming the illness**

The dream continues: Liliana, wearing surgical appliances and flippers instead of shoes, standing in front of a water puddle, flip-flops floating on it, jumps inside the puddle. Underwater pictures of her in a bathing suit watching a pair of seal women. One is pregnant and loses consciousness. Liliana tries to call the attention of the other with signals. The dog looks at the bubbles in the puddle.

Through the testimonies of Liliana, her relatives and those of the hematologists Joaquín Rosales and Carlos López, two issues are recreated: the illness evolution during the first two weeks of her hospitalization and the difficulty of the physicians to make a diagnosis. The way in which the relatives received the news is also developed. The visions of allopathic and Chinese medicine about the importance of naming the illness in order to decide its treatment, are contrasted. Claudia, a Chinese medicine practitioner talks about the name she has given to her disease.

#### **A sweet, accompanied solitude**

The most critical moment of the disease is approached, and so is the vision Liliana had when she decided to accept her state and make her journey to the afterlife: animals surrounding her in the room while singing in ancient languages.

The feeling of physical frailty Liliana is experiencing is approached. So are the routines and objects that turned her hospital room into a home. Among them, the images of their pet animals that Morris -her husband- had brought her video-taped.

#### **Complementary medicines**

The immunosuppression secondary effects generated by the chemotherapy as well as the isolation measures, hygiene and asepsis that were taken are presented.

Liliana's decision of complementing the conventional treatment is also introduced. Biological medicine and raw food prescribed by her bioenergetic physician were entered into the hospital in a clandestine way (having her husband as accomplice). The bioenergetic physician explains the characteristics and indications of the treatment.

#### **Surviving the illness and its conventional treatment**

Through the stage of a dream, in which a woman is chased by a bat's flock, with a voice-over that speaks about fear, Maritza Segura is introduced: a young woman with an anal carcinoma who has gone through several surgeries and has received the maximum amount of radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

She talks about the blue scorpion poison provided in Cuba which she has drunk as complementary medicine, and the secondary effects caused by the last chemotherapy she received and about her decision of abandoning it.

Liliana introduces Maritza to Claudia, the specialist in Chinese medicine. During the encounter's development, we realize Claudia's illness is a colon cancer.

Claudia gives her testimony about the premonitory dreams she had before getting to know the news, her reaction to diagnosis, and the decisions she made about how to name the disease, how to treat it and who to tell it about.



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### DEVELOPMENT

#### Recovering the underlying body's memory

The third moment of the protagonist's dream is presented. In it, the pregnant seal woman that has fainted is taken by the other to the surface. Liliana follows them.

Liliana's first exit from the hospital and the sensory pleasure that new contact with the outside meant to her is recreated. So are the impact of seeing her body, after having lost 26 pounds, reflected in the mirrors of her house; the difficulties to digest food, to stand up with a straight back and to walk more than a meter without having to sit down. Liliana shaves herself as a rebirth ritual and keeps her hair in a chest.

#### Discerning to decide

Liliana speaks about the premature menopause state in which she was after receiving chemotherapy and how she feared that oral chemotherapy, which she had to keep taking for another two years, would worsen it. Her medical searches are shown. The allopath- with Mónica Acosta, the gynecologist of her Healthcare Program-, biological medicine- with Andrés Julián Hoyos, gynecologist-, and Chinese medicine with Claudia Guzmán. Her anguish about the secondary effects caused by the allopathic treatments against premature menopause and to avoid a cancer relapse is recreated. So are the possible consequences of not having this medicine.

Liliana decides to abandon the conventional protocol for leukemia treatment and hormone therapy and continues with Vesanoid (an advanced medicine prescribed by her hematologist) and alternative therapies: meditation, diet, exercise and Chinese medicine.

Her anguish to face up the possible negative reaction from the hematologist about her decision is narrated. However, to her dismay, he celebrates her resolution and confess her his own questions about the limits and achievements of allopathic medicine.

#### Paradigms in transit

The physicians Claudia Guzmán, Andrés Julián Hoyos, Carlos López y Joaquín Rosales present how their medical practice has transformed their notions of illness, medicine, physician, patient, life and death. Each of them talks about conventional medicine limits in the treatment of serious diseases. Dr. Rosales speaks about the Vesanoid that he prescribed to Liliana and his relation with the new advances in allopathic medicine.

#### Follicular and fertile

The fear of cancer relapse is tackled: the time in which Liliana's control exams showed a very low percentage of leukocytes and her hematologist ordered her a bone marrow biopsy is recreated. A dream in which Liliana faces – frightened at the beginning, but with joy then- death, personified as a mountain-woman, is also recreated. Through this staging, we arrive to the point in which her menstruation comes back, one night. The new hormone tests confirm her, she has hormonally regulated. Mónica Acosta, the Healthcare Program's gynecologist wonders how it could happen, without having gone through a hormone replacement therapy.

Liliana sows her period with Yami, and during the ritual, her friend tells her about the prays she made for her life in an Ayahuasca ceremony, during her hospitalization.



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### DEVELOPMENT

#### **Mystic Trance**

Liliana associates the vision she had at the hospital with the Ayahuasca experiences. She introduces Paola Méndez, her friend, a young physician from the Universidad del Valle. Liliana met Paola years before as an indigenous physicians' assistant, in a yagé ceremony.

Paola speaks about the relationships she establishes between allopathic and indigenous medicine. Liliana and Paola visit a woman, an indigenous physician who tells them how Ayahuasca works into people and how it reacts with the other alternative medicines such as Biological Medicine.

Carlos López speaks about the relation he establishes between Ayahuasca and indigenous medicine.

Paola speaks about the holistic approach in family medicine in which she will get a diploma.

Carlos López defines integral medicine, which recognizes the need of a transdisciplinary team to treat patients with a personalized approach and according to their believes.

#### **CLIMAX**

##### **The illness: a family constellation**

The people who took care of Liliana speak about the meaning they gave to that experience: Morris, her husband, speaks about how having witnessed his mother's illness years before prepared him for this new experience; Mari-sol speaks about how her friend remind her of her own mother's illness; Carolina speaks about the motherhood feeling that arose in her when taking care of her friend, Liliana.

The protagonist tells that the illness experience allowed her to give every member of her family the place that corresponded to each of them.

Martha Lucía López, the psychologist, expresses her opinion about this and explains the meaning of disease from the theory of family constellations.

#### **RESOLUTION**

##### **The story as medicine**

A new dream is introduced. A girl hands a baby coffin to Liliana in the psychologist office. Dr. Rosales speaks about his responsibility principles facing up the great mystery of life.

Liliana talks about that dream's meaning, the disease in her life, and her belief in the therapeutic value of transforming her experience into a story as a legacy.

DIRECTOR'S  
BIOFILMOGRAPHY

## LILIANA HURTADO SCARPETTA

She was born in Cali on April 26th 1974. She studied Plastic Arts in the Instituto Popular de Cultura (Popular Institute of Culture) since the age of 16 until the age of 21. She got graduated in 2001 from the school of Social Communication at the Universidad del Valle with the design and development of the interactive game for young people: "Uroboru: The History of the Eternal Return". This work received a special recognition. She has produced several documentaries with environmental, social and cultural topics for the programs of the Ministerio de Cultura and Señal Colombia as En tres dimensiones y Vidas cruzadas. She has participated in other productions as researcher and screenwriter with recognized Colombian directors and filmmakers such as Oscar Campo and Mauricio Vergara. The documentary Tiempos de Miedo (Times of fear) by the director Oscar Campo in which she participated as screenwriter, was selected within the first 10 most important Colombian documentary films in the first decade of the 21 century by the Fondo para el Desarrollo Cinematográfico (National Fund for Cinematographic Development)

For the past two years, she has been conducting the workshop "Empelícula", addressed to teenagers between the ages of 11 and 16, and she is also a teacher in the seminar "Sistematización de Proyectos en Medios de Comunicación" at the Universidad Javeriana.

**Tiempo de Miedo** (Times of Fear) (Documentary)

Directed by: Oscar Campo. Produced by: Tele pacífico y Universidad del Valle Televisión. 2000

**El Crimen Creado** (Crime Created) (Documentary Portrait) Produced by: Universidad del Valle Televisión. 2001.

**Los Pasos Perdidos** (Lost Steps) (Documentary Portrait) Produced by: Universidad del Valle Televisión. 2001

**Casa Matriz** (Womb House) (Documentary Portrait) Produced by: Universidad del Valle Televisión . 2002.

**Caballito de Batalla** (Little Battle Horse) (Documentary) Produced by: Universidad del Valle Televisión. 2003.

**Cucaracha Postal** (Post Cockroach) (Short film) Produced by: Imago Taller Audiovisual . 2008.

**El Nombre de la Justicia** (In the Name of Justice) (Short film) Produced by: Imago Taller Audiovisual . 2010.

DIRECTOR'S  
BIOFILMOGRAPHY

## MAURICIO VERGARA HURTADO

He was born in Cali on November 27th 1973. He studied music since the age of 5 until the age of 14. In 1998, he got graduated from the Social Communication school at the Universidad del Valle. He started his degree as filmmaker and documentary and report's director in local and national channels of cultural television, in TV shows as Generación Eco, Pégate al parche, En tres dimensiones, Vidas cruzadas and Dilemas.

Some of his works have been awarded in Colombia and Spain, with the ALFONSO BONILLA ARAGÓN award to best documentary, and the DOCÚPOLIS to the best urban documentary. He has worked with prestigious Colombian directors such as Oscar Campo, Antonio Dorado and Jorge Enrique Botero, as film editor of fiction and non-fiction movies; he has also worked with the artists Rosemberg Sandoval and Carlos Andrade.

Since 2004, he works as a teacher in the Communication Degree Programs at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, and in the Communication and Digital Cine at the Universidad Autónoma de Occidente.



**Recuérdame** (Remember me) (Feature film). Directed by: Carlos Fernández de Soto. Produced by: Imagen Latina Foundation. 2011

**Maikuchiga: historia de micos** (Maikuchiga: a story of monkeys) (Short film). Directed by: Antonio Dorado Z. Produced by: Imagen Latina Foundation. 2010

**Nuestra Señora de los Remedios** (Our Virgin of Remedies) (Documentary). 2010

**Apaporis** (Documentary). Directed by: Antonio Dorado Z. Produced by: Imagen Latina Foundation. 2007 – 2009

**Servicio Comunitario** (Communitary Service) (Experimental video). Artist: Carlos Andrade. 2008

**Acciones políticas** (Political Actions) (Video installation). Artist: Rosemberg Sandoval. 2007

**Yo soy otro** (I am another) (Feature film). Directed by: Oscar Campo. Produced by: ENIC. 2007

**La Marcha del Ladrillo** (The March of the Brick) (Documentary). Produced by: Universidad del Valle Televisión. 2001.

**Informe sobre un mundo ciego** (Report about a Blind World) (Experimental Documentary). Co-Directed by: Oscar Campo. Produced by: Universidad del Valle Televisión. 2001.

**Como voy a olvidarte** (How am I going to forget you?) (Documentary). Directed by: Jorge Enrique Botero. 2001

**La María: relato de un secuestro** (La María: the story of a kidnapping) (Documentary). Produced by: ProCívica televisión. 2000.

**El Proyecto del Diablo** (The Evil's Project) (Documentary). Directed by: Oscar Campo. Produced by: Ministerio de Cultura and Univalle Televisión. 1999.

## Budget for Production and Post-Production

ITEMS	AMOUNT IN EURO
<b>Development / Pre-production</b>	
Writer	5 000
Producer	2 560
Director	5 000
Travel/Subsistence	4 725
<b>Subtotal Development / Pre-production</b>	<b>€ 17 285</b>
<b>Production</b>	
Archival Rights & reproduction	4 725
Hotels, Travel & Food	2 536
Production travel & expenses	2 560
Production personnel	7 673
Director	2 363
Technical Staff: (DOP/Light/Sound)	6 300
Equipment	13 540
Stock Material	3 258
Broadcast requirements (Insurance etc)	178
Art director	1 890
Actors	296
<b>Subtotal Production</b>	<b>€ 45 319</b>
<b>Post-Production</b>	
Editor / Editing System	9 417
Sound design and mix	3 740
Titles and animation	2 362
Music	9 372
Translation	1 102
Subtitles	949
Master	197
<b>Subtotal Post-Production</b>	<b>€ 27 139</b>
<b>Outreach and Distribution</b>	
Mail sends	1 811
Posters	3 543
POP	3 347
EPK design and production	3 347
<b>Subtotal Outreach and Distribution</b>	<b>€ 12 048</b>
<b>Overhead</b>	
Overhead ... 5%	5 089.5
Contingency 5%	5 089.5
<b>Subtotal Overhead</b>	<b>€ 10 178</b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>€ 111 970</b>

## Financial Plan

FINANCIERS	AMOUNT IN EURO	
Jan Vrijman Fund	49 706	in process
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana – Cali	6 770	secured
MAKINGDOCS	6 770	secured
FDC Colombia - Fondo para el desarrollo cinematográfico	23 622	in process
Finance Gap:	25 102	
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>€ 111 970</b>	

Fondo para el desarrollo  
cinematográfico Colombia



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