



# Mar de silencio y soledad

*una película de*  
**Iván Guarnizo**

Making  
**DOCS**

Producida por **Diana Kuellar** para **MakingDocs**  
Cra. 59 A No.11b-52 | Barrio Santa Anita | Cali, Colombia  
T. +57 2 39 06610 | [dianakuellar@makingdocs.org](mailto:dianakuellar@makingdocs.org)

Once in a dawn, after taking a shower and putting on the jeans and that blue sweater I never liked, I went to my mother's bedroom because I heard her weep. I didn't remember her awakened at such an early hour so I approached her room feeling a bit strange (my father was away, in one of those countless business trips I never quite understood). Sitting on the bed, with the bedside light on, my mother changed the weeping for an irrepressible crying when she saw my older brother and I enter the room. In tears she told us that she had spent the whole night trying to speak to my sister over the phone with no success; my sister who was with her husband down at our house in the village. She told us that a few minutes back a pilot from a crop dusting plane had been connected live through the radio show she was listening to and he had said that Armero, the village, my village, our village, had disappeared under a sea of mud and lava. His exact words were: "Armero is a immense sea of silence and solitude". I left my little book bag by the side of my parents enormous bed and lied there facing the sealing, I could hear my mother crying but not see her, I kept watching the dark brown colour of the sealing, almost black because of the lack of light, I watched and watched and watched but I didn't cry.

That is how, with 6 years old, on November the 13th 1985, I found out the disappearance of my sister, my house and my village.

*“When you are a kid you don’t use words (and words aren’t used).  
Back in that time I was far away from the adjectives, the substantives.  
I wasn’t able to say, not even think, admirable, immense, potent.  
But I was able to feel them.”*

*J.M.G. Le Clézio: “The African”*

I lost my sister CAROLINA in the “Nevado del Ruiz” volcano eruption that swept the village of Armero, Colombia, in November 1985. Almost 25,000 people died there in a single night. She was 24 years old and, I thought, happily married. I was 6. For a long time, we believed she was just missing, but her body was never found. Since then, she became the huge myth of my childhood.. Her husband died with her in Armero.

Back then she was a filmmaker, and 25 years later I’m a filmmaker myself. I decided to follow her footsteps trying to recover the film she was shooting at that time in locations close to Armero a few days before the eruption. She had finished shooting and was taking some vacations with her husband that flew from London just a few days before the eruption. Perhaps I am doing this to start a dialectical endeavour from this same passion that bonds us. During the process of family archaeology, through conversations with my own family, and findings of letters and pictures, I began to suspect that one of my sister’s film crew – of that same film she was doing – an English man named IAN, was more for my sister than just a team mate. He could be a secret lover.

After a persistent search, I found him in the United States. Meeting him made a crucial change to the path of this film. He showed me images, within the takes of the film they were doing, full of intimate moments (they shoot themselves at the end of each roll) he shared with me the memories that unveil a very different woman from the solid and happily married heroine I kept in my mind. Meeting him would confirm all my suspicions; they were in love.

Reconstructing all these events will disarticulate my own memories in a certain way. Child memories confronting the complexity of adult reality.

## Statement of the director

I always wanted to do this film. It has taken many shapes through the years, but CAROLINA has always been there. It became an obsession for me to know whom she was, to really get to know her. The story of her death is unavoidable bound to the Armero tragedy. To my family that's what she represents: Tragedy.

The original purpose to do the film was to unbind her from tragedy (or at least expand what she represents), but during the process it becomes necessary to tell the story of Armero's tragedy to get to know her. However while I'm finding and telling these stories I realize that they are a mechanism to access my own life, it's not just a subject outside me, it's a part of my life story I'm telling. And just because of that, the film will reflect my own fears, obsessions and questions.

Is it maybe to emulate my sister that I became a filmmaker as well? Can I change the meaning that the whole thing has for me just because I deepen into the story?

One of the topics that I'm more interested approaching with the film is something I call: **Clashes of my childhood's fiction-memory with the adult's memories** (meaning the "real recollections" of those adults).

With 'fiction-memory' I mean those recollections that blurry in my mind, that I've transformed and varied into something more elaborate or just to the contrary simpler. They're those that, when confronted with other people's memories, surprise me because of the discrepancies between them. These are a couple of examples:

**1. Collective memory:** The first person that saw what had happened to Armero in the dawn of the 14th of November was a dust cropping airplane pilot. A radio show contacted him live while he was flying above what was left and asked him about what he was seeing. I've never heard him, but my mom said what she heard in a number of occasions (as well as other people did in TV and radio shows). These words were to me: "Armero is a sea of silence and solitude". When I first began to do the research for the film I found out what he really said; he said: "Armero doesn't exist, it is now a sea of mud, nothing else". So, the one I had in my mind was a "poetic transformation" of my childhood memory.

A sequence I've always wanted to do since the beginning of the research is a re-enactment, starting from my fiction-memory all the way through the original radio transmission. It would start with a clean, thorough voice – a radio host voice – saying: "Armero is a sea of silence and solitude" and then, very slowly reshaping it to what the pilot really said, with the plane noise as background and all the clumsiness of someone amazed and yet scared, stuttering, rephrasing...

The reality is far more complex than the fiction-memory.

**2. Family memory:** Carolina's figure. When I was a kid I thought that my sister was an accomplished filmmaker that came back to Colombia to do a film about the "Nevado del Ruiz" volcano. That she was in love and happily married. That she was in Armero with her husband David having some vacations.

The extended true is that she was just a film student and was doing a film not about the volcano but about a completely different subject: the pollution of the rivers and the effects to the fishermen (but in my childhood mind she was all about that: Armero and the volcano. It was something like CAROLINA = Armero's tragedy = "Nevado del Ruiz" volcano). As a student, she didn't shoot the film in the industry standard at that time (16 mm) but in the student and amateur one (8 mm).

Her marriage was going through trouble. It seems she was still in love with David (her husband) but with Ian as well (one of the two people in her film crew, in fact co-director of it, and school mate of hers). David discovered the relationship that Carolina and Ian had, not once, but twice. And the second one was days before Carolina and Ian parted to Colombia to shoot the film. This event caused tensions in the couple that lead them to decide spend some time together in Armero at the end of the two months shooting. It was kind of a reconciliation travel, but during the shooting Carolina fell in love more deeply with Ian.

The film has turn into a path to know, a tool to discover Carolina's life that has taken me from just a few pictu-

res, a silent video tape and some small but powerful memories to hundreds of pictures and slides, a complete silent video tape (and some other motion pictures) and a gather of conjunct memories that make a portrait of whom she was. Every single object and memory changed it's meaning during the process. The confrontation of my fiction memories with the adult reality makes a new and powerful meaning that only a film, particularly this film can reach.

The film is a constant search, a factual investigation as well as an intimate one. My contemplations and investigations (told by myself in first person narration) will give its wholeness to the film and stand as a narrative line.

The film will also carry different visual elements.

As this film is an investigation and a search, the very travelling itself is an important factor. It is a constant movement, not only mental but also factual, and this will be imprinted in the film.

The camera will play a dual role during the trips, meetings and contemplations that I'll make; and will function in accordance with the first person documentary style that I'm doing. Sometimes active and handheld, it will act as an investigator, for example when meeting someone or finding a place or an object for the first time, matching what I am actually living in those moments. Elsewhere, it will be quiet and contemplative, when the places, people or objects are more familiar to me.

The interviews to different characters will represent another anchor point. These will be basically to my immediate family. but to some experts as well. And, from a precise moment of the timeline, IAN HELLEN will become the focus of a main interview, as he is the living person who got to know best CAROLINA.

The archive material will bring a visual support; it will be, in the beginning, treated as an archaeological material, but I will be starting soon a dialectic exercise, a visual dialogue with it. The main and most important of these archives are the rushes of the documentary that CAROLINA and IAN were shooting days before she died. Those rushes contain not only the takes made for the unfinished documentary. IAN and CAROLINA used to film each other on the tails of each Super 8 roll. They did this to keep a kind of intimate diary of themselves during the shooting (that was their longest time spent together). This found footage will bring to me and to the movie, for the first time, motion pictures of CAROLINA.

A large part of my contemplations and new questions about the story will be induced from the dialectic exercise with that kind of material, and will be built with editing and it is in the space between the shots where the narrative is created, just as Eisenstein said, it is the confrontation of images that creates ideas. This will generate rhythms and intensities with new dramatic potentialities non-existent within the original material, just like Alan Berliner did in "The Family Album" or Jay Rosenblatt in "Phantom Limb".

The investigation will be completed with additional archive material such as family stills, aerial pictures of Armero (before and after the disaster) and TV and amateur videos showing the aftermath of the eruption.

The oneiric sequences, working as recurrent dreams, will be Super 8 film stock that I will shoot where Armero was. They'll have a clear link with the archive material. Sometimes I'll jump between the two of them to confuse the perception of which ones belong to the past and which ones don't.

At the end, the film will be constructed with a variety of formats such as:

- HDV video as basic tool to shot the present.
- Super 8 video (as found footage) found in a VHS copy [CAROLINA's rough material for her documentary].
- Analogue video materials (amateur betamax video made by family and TV images from that time).
- 16 mm archives from afterwards the eruption made for a documentary that was never finished.

- Stills and slides.
- Super 8 shots in the present.

The voice over will always be first person; I'll record it very close, very quietly, almost whispering as suitable complement to that feeling of innermost intimacy and discovery I'm experiencing. The voice over will give the cling to every revelation, conversation, images and remembrances that I'll be doing and finding during the film.

In addition to these constant considerations of my mind, the sound will have a certain liberty of mixture and sometimes will be more expressive than narrative (different kinds of ambient sounds and music; and distortions and manipulations of specific sounds).

There will be as well some sound archive material; audio records given to me by IAN of chats and conversations between CAROLINA and him for a short film project made by the two of them, but also some audio takes for the documentary they were doing. I'll use in a specific way CAROLINA's voice: as a dramatic or reflexive evocation in precise moments in which it will appear as a phantom, unexpected and spectral, sometimes letting us feel just the tone or laughter and not being able to understand exactly what she's saying.

Also, there will be radio excerpts of the time speaking about the catastrophe. One in particular: the one that gives the movie its title and that I always thought it was sealed in my mind, although the investigation will lead me to distrust my own memory.

### » IVÁN GUARNIZO

Born in Bogotá, Colombia in 1979. Director and Cinematographer. Studied cinematography in Bogotá (Colombia) – with the famous Cuban cinematographer Raul Perez Ureta (DP of “Suite Habana”), in San Antonio de los Baños (Cuba) at the EICTV (Escuela Internacional de Cine y TV) and in Barcelona with Tomas Pladevall (DP of Jose Luis Guerin’s “Tren de Sombras” (aka Train of Shadows). Then did studies of direction in New York (USA) at the NYFA (New York Film Academy) and in Barcelona at CECC (Centre d’Estudis Cinematogràfics de Catalunya). Previous to that, he studied Anthropology at Andes University in Bogotá (Colombia). He has worked mostly as a cinematographer for documentaries traveling to Mali, Morocco, Bolivia, Canada, Norway and all around Colombia and Spain, but also for fiction both in TV and films. As a director, he has done video clips and short and experimental films. He has worked as an editor or editor consultant for a few films.

### » Cinematographer and camera assistant:

“**Marímbula**” (camera assistant) Director: Diana Kuellar. Production stage. Colombia 2010/11 (Making Docs production)

“**Ines: recuerdos de una vida**” (camera assistant) Director: Luissa Sosa. Post-production stage. Colombia 2010. (Making Docs production)

“**Cornissa**” (DP) Director: Felipe Ruiz. Documentary. 50’. Morocco. 2009

“**Gestiones Afectivas**”: (DP) Directors: Gonzalo Díaz and Luis R. Álvarez.

TV fiction series (pilot). 25’. Barcelona. 2009

“**Café con Shandy**” (DP) Director: Patricio Suarez.

Documentary for the book: “Vilamatas Portátil” 30’. Barcelona 2007. Ed. Candaya.

“**Al gusto de las mujeres**” (DP) Director: Nuria Polo 30’. Mali. 2006

“**Lo obvio y lo obtuso**” (DP) Director: Nuria Polo. Documentary Short (35 mm). 15’. Barcelona. 2006 SEMINCI - 51 Semana Internacional de Cine de Valladolid. Sección Oficial, Baumann Terrasa: Best Documentary Short, 5th International Short Film Festival In The Palace, Balchik, Bulgaria.

“**Algo en común**” (DP) Director: Nuria Polo. 35’. Mali/Bolivia. 2005

### » Director:

“**Epistolar inacabado**” Join project of 4 filmed experimental letters with Gonzalo Díaz. Colombia/España. 2010

“**Sol en mi**” Short/ experimental dance with the dancer Gilmarí Gerena. 12’. Barcelona 2008.

“**Victor vuelve**” Short/fiction. 12’. Barcelona. 2003

### » Editing:

“**Mina pan de azúcar**” Director: Hermes Paralluelo. 28’. Barcelona. 2008

Documentamadrid 08

15º Festival de Cine de Valdivia.

## Budget And Financial Plan

### » BUDGET

BUDGET OUTLINE 'MAR DE SILENCIO Y SOLEDAD'					
COUNT	Item	Units		Unit value	Total
1	CREW				
1.1	Scriptwriter and director	1	Estimated	6.000 €	6.000 €
1.2	Producer	1	Estimated	5.500 €	5.500 €
1.3	Director of photography	37	days	150 €	5.550 €
1.3	Direct sound	37	days	120 €	4.440 €
1.4	Editor	1	Estimated	3.500 €	3.750 €
1.6	Stills	1	Estimated	2.000 €	2.500 €
	SUBTOTAL				27.740 €
2	EQUIPMENT				
2.2	Camera and HD card	37	days	150 €	5.550 €
2.3	Sound	37	days	120 €	4.440 €
	SUBTOTAL				9.990 €
3	MATERIAL				
3.1	Betacam cassette	2	cassettes	40 €	80 €
	SUBTOTAL				80 €
4	PRODUCTION				
4.1	SHOOTING IN COLOMBIA (3 people)				
4.1.1	Transportation	27	days	150 €	4.050 €
4.1.2	Meals	27	days	150 €	4.050 €
4.1.3	Lodging	27	days	210 €	5.670 €
	SUBTOTAL				13.770 €
4.2	SHOOTING IN EUROPE (2 people)				
4.2.1	Ground transportation	16	Estimated	100 €	1.600 €
4.2.2	Flight tickets		Estimated	3.600 €	3.600 €
4.2.3	Lodging	16	Estimated	200 €	3.200 €
4.2.4	Meals	16	Estimated	120 €	1.920 €
4.3	Equipment insurance		Estimated	1.700 €	1.700 €
	SUBTOTAL				12.020 €
5	POST-PRODUCTION				
5.1	Non linear editing	1	Estimated	3.500 €	3.500 €
5.2	Sound design	1	Estimated	2.400 €	2.400 €
5.3	Graphic design	1	Estimated	2.000 €	2.000 €
5.4	Archival digitalization	1	Estimated	3.200 €	3.200 €
	SUBTOTAL				11.100 €
6	PROMOTION				
6.1	Duplicates / Shipments	1	Estimated	2.000 €	2.000 €
6.2	Press kit, postcards and posters printing	1	Estimated	3 500 €	3 500 €
	SUBTOTAL				5.500 €
7	SUMMARY				
	Subtotal 1				27.740 €
	Subtotal 2				9.990 €

## Budget And Financial Plan (Cont.)

	Subtotal 3				80 €
	Subtotal 4.1				13.770 €
	Subtotal 4.2				12.020 €
	Subtotal 5				11.100 €
	Subtotal 6				5.500 €
	GENERAL SUBTOTAL				80.200 €
8	ADMINISTRATION AND TAXES				
8.1	Administrative	1	Estimated	1.500 €	1.500 €
8.2	Taxes	1	Estimated	2.000 €	2.000 €
8.3	Contingency		3%	2.406 €	2.406 €
	SUBTOTAL				5.906 €
	TOTAL				86.106 €

### » FINANCIAL PLAN

	STATE	ITEM	VALUE
MAKING DOCS	SECURE	Crew and technical equipment	25.500 €
IVAN GUARNIZO	SECURE	Shooting in Colombia	11.250 €
TALA TALA	SECURE	Shooting in Europe	11.500 €
SUBTOTAL SECURED			48.250 €
TELEVISIÓ DE CATALUNYA (SPAIN)	PENDING	Presale	12.000 €
JAN VRIJMAN FUND (NETHERLAND)	PENDING	Development support	5.000 €
FONDO DESARROLLO CINEMA (COLOMBIA)	TO APPLY	Production and postproduction	10.856 €
OTHERS	TO APPLY		10.000 €
SUBTOTAL PENDENT			37.856 €
TOTAL			86.106 €

**Fondo para el desarrollo  
cinematográfico Colombia**



[ivanguarnizo@gmail.com](mailto:ivanguarnizo@gmail.com)  
[dianakuellar@makingdocs.org](mailto:dianakuellar@makingdocs.org)

[www.makingdocs.org](http://www.makingdocs.org)