

MAQUILÁPOLIS [city of factories]

A feature documentary

by Vicky Funari and Sergio De La Torre

LOGLINE

A piercing look at globalization through the eyes of women workers in Tijuana's assembly factories, the *maquiladoras*.

SYNOPSIS

Carmen and Lourdes work in Tijuana's *maquiladoras*, the foreign-owned factories which came to Mexico for its cheap labor. Every day, these workers confront labor violations, environmental devastation and urban chaos. In *MAQUILÁPOLIS*, they reach beyond the daily struggle for survival to organize for change. They also use video cameras to document how globalization has transformed their city and to share their hopes for the future.



PRESS QUOTES

"Making explicit the slogan 'knowledge equals power,' *MAQUILÁPOLIS* is the rare activist documentary that really does empower the individual women at the heart of its story." —Jay Weissberg, *Variety*

"A portrait of the perils of globalization that admirably seeks new forms of expression... a stirring work that'll provoke genuine outrage." —*The New York Times*

CAST AND CREW

Producer / Directors: Vicky Funari and Sergio De La Torre

Executive Producer: Vivian Kleiman

Co-producers: Darcy McKinnon, Annelise Wunderlich

Participating factory workers (scripting, camera, staging, sound, engagement):

The women of the Chilpancingo Collective and Women's Rights Advocates, Tijuana
Organizational Partners: Grupo Factor X; Women's Rights Advocates; Chilpancingo Collective for Environmental Justice, Tijuana; Environmental Health Coalition, San Diego; Global Exchange, San Francisco

Cinematography: Daniel Gorrell, Sophia Constantinou

Editor: Vicky Funari

Original music: Pauline Oliveros, with the Nortec Collective and John Blue

Community Development Coordinator: Jesikah Maria Ross

Sound design: Philip Perkins, CAS

Produced in association with the Independent Television Service

A project of Creative Capital

Supported by a grant from the Sundance Institute Documentary Fund

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

This project brings together filmmakers, factory workers and community organizations in Mexico and the U.S. to create a film that depicts globalization through the eyes of the women who live on its leading edge. The factory workers who appear in the film have been involved in every stage of production, from planning to shooting, from scripting to outreach. Our collaborative process breaks with the traditional documentary practice of dropping into a location, shooting and leaving with the "goods," which would only repeat the pattern of the *maquiladora* itself. We embrace subjectivity as a value and a goal. We seek to merge artmaking with community development and to ensure that the film's voice will be truly that of its subjects.

AWARDS

- LASA Award of Merit in Film, 2007 Latin American Studies Association Film Festival
- Special Mention, Outstanding Achievement in Documentary, Tribeca Film Festival
- Audience Award for Best Documentary, Barcelona Women's Film Festival
- Jury Special Mention, Green Film Festival of Seoul
- Best Film About Borders and Migration, Contra el Silencio Latin American Documentary Encounter
- Special Mention, Amnesty Jury, CPH:DOX/Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival
- Cine Golden Eagle

SELECTED SCREENINGS

MAQUILÁPOLIS has screened at over 50 festivals worldwide, been broadcast on PBS's *POV* series, and had many community-based and educational screenings as part of our Binational Community Engagement Campaign. A few highlights:

2006

- *World Premiere*, International Film Festival Rotterdam
- *Latin American Premiere*, Guadalajara International Film Festival
- *U.S. Premiere*, Tribeca Film Festival, Documentary Competition, New York
- Contra el Silencio Latin American Documentary Encounter, Mexico City
- Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival, Toronto
- Chicago Latino Film Festival
- INSITE / Centro Cultural Tijuana, Tijuana, Mexico
- Los Angeles Film Festival
- Barcelona International Women's Film Festival
- Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic
- Vancouver International Film Festival
- MadCat Women's International Film Festival, San Francisco Bay Area
- Morelia Film Festival, Morelia, Mexico, October 2006
- California Biennial, Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA
- National broadcast on the PBS series *P.O.V.*

2007

- Ambulante Travelling Documentary Festival, Mexico
- Museum of Modern Art, Documentary Fortnight, New York
- Street Cinema Border Tour, 18 community screenings along the U.S.-Mexico border
- Washington DC Environmental Film Festival
- Cine Las Americas International Film Festival, Austin
- Thessaloniki International Documentary Film Festival

- Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts

2008

- Yilan Green International Film Festival, Taipei, Taiwan
- Filmmor Women's Film Festival, Istanbul, Turkey
- "Women, Power, & Politics," International Museum of Women, San Francisco
- Human Rights Film Festival Aotearoa, New Zealand

2009

- Latin American Film Festival, Utrecht, The Netherlands
- Women Labour Moves! Women's Film Festival, Vienna, Austria
- "Status Report," BRIC Gallery, Brooklyn
- Transito_mx, International Electronic and Video Arts Festival. Mexico City

2010

- Cable broadcast on the PBS series *Global Voices*
- MoMA / Museum of Modern Art, New York
- MassMOCA exhibition, *The Workers*, North Adams, MA

2016

- Hammer Museum, Los Angeles
- Gender Matters: Feminist Ecologies and Materialities Symposium, Dartmouth College



CAST AND CREW BIOGRAPHIES

Vicky Funari, Producer/Director/Editor: Vicky Funari is a documentary filmmaker, editor, and teacher. She is currently a Visiting Senior Lecturer in Visual Studies at Haverford College, where she teaches, designs interdisciplinary media projects, and programs documentary film series for the college. Funari produced, directed, and edited the feature documentaries *MAQUILÁPOLIS* (2006) and *Paulina* (1998); and she directed and edited *Live Nude Girls Unite!* (2000). These critically acclaimed films have screened in preeminent film festivals, including Sundance, Locarno, Havana, Rotterdam, SXSW, and Tribeca. They have won numerous awards, including Grand Jury Prize and Audience Awards at the San Francisco International Film Festival; Vision Award at the Hamptons Film Festival; and Audience Award for Best Documentary at the Women's International Film Festival of Barcelona. Her films have aired on PBS, HBO, and the Sundance Channel. From 2006-2009, Funari directed the *MAQUILÁPOLIS* binational Community Campaign, using that film in conjunction with activist organizations and factory workers to promote public dialogue and social change. Funari's earlier films include *skin•es•the•si•a* and *Alternative Conceptions*. She began her film career in 1984, assistant directing Lizzie Borden's classic indie feature *Working Girls*. Funari is a Guggenheim Fellow and a MacDowell Colony Fellow.

Sergio De La Torre, Producer/Director: Sergio De La Torre is a photographer, performance artist and installation artist. De La Torre grew up in the Tijuana/San Diego border area and migrated to San Francisco. His photographic, performance and installation works have focused on issues regarding diaspora/tourism and identity politics. In 1995, De La Torre co-founded the performance/installation group Los Tricksters. De La Torre's works, among them *Access Denied*, *Disappearing* and *Mexiclone*, have appeared in the Bienal Barro de America at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Caracas, Venezuela; in the Cleveland Performance Art Festival, in Cleveland, Ohio; at the Centro Cultural Casa Lamm in Mexico City; and in San Francisco at the DeYoung Museum and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. De La Torre's film and video work has included photography for *La Raza*, directed by Alfonso Dávila, and assistant to the art director on *Garden of Eden*, directed by Maria Novaro.

Carmen Durán, Principal Cast and Collaborator: Carmen Durán is a factory worker and single mother of three living in Tijuana, Mexico. She became an activist when a major TV manufacturer laid her and her co-workers off without the legally required severance pay. They filed a labor claim and through sheer persistence won one of the largest settlements in recent years. Carmen is now on her tenth factory job, working in a concrete paver factory. She is also a volunteer educator/outreach worker at CITTAC, the Worker's Information Center in Tijuana.

Lourdes Luján, Principal Cast and Collaborator: Lourdes Luján is an ex-factory worker and resident of Colonia Chilpancingo, a working class neighborhood that borders a huge industrial park. When she found out that the chronic health problems she and her neighbors were suffering might be the result of toxic wastes leaching from the factories, she co-founded the Chilpancingo Collective, a community group dedicated to organizing for environmental justice.

Vivian Kleiman, Executive Producer: Vivian Kleiman's career spans 25 years of independent production, media education and advocacy. Her work has been screened at major international film festivals including Sundance, Toronto, Berlin, Jerusalem, San Francisco, and Moscow, and awarded top honors including The George Foster Peabody Award, the Eric Barnouw Award of the Organization of American Historians, the Outstanding Achievement Award of the International Documentary Association, as well as a National Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Individual Achievement in Research. A longtime collaborator with the late Marlon Riggs, her credits include the critically acclaimed *Tongues Untied* (Cinematographer), *Color Adjustment* (Producer, Research Director), and *Black Is...Black Ain't* (Executive Director of Rigg's production company, Signifyin' Works). She executive produced Deann Borshay Liem's *First Person Plural*, and co-produced *Roam Sweet Home* with Ellen Spiro and *Forgotten Fires* with Michael Chandler.

MORE CRITICAL COMMENT

"Encourages an extension of our imaginations across boundaries of space or time through a visceral, bodily engagement with people on the screen... It is in a profound way the embodiment of a collaboration, and as such perhaps a model for an alternative and more just world, one based on a different notion of time, commitment, and care than that which drives late stage capitalism." –Irina Leimbacher, *Camerawork*

"Se muestra la compleja problemática en la que se contraponen los intereses económicos de los inversionistas a los intereses de bienestar de los trabajadores." –Patricia Blake, *Frontera*

"Smartly relying on subjective diary footage taken by two untutored female organizers, the film bristles with anger, despair, hope, and a healthy dollop of self-conscious humor." –Paul Arthur, *Film Comment*

"Industrial-strength desolation... reminds us that for all its glories, globalism can leave very dirty footprints." –Dave Shiflett, *Bloomberg.com*

"All who care about social justice, the environment, womens rights and labor rights, should view this film. *Maquilápolis* should be screened in theaters, union halls, college campuses, and at the annual meeting of the World Social Forum. Many consider the U.S.-Mexico border to be

‘the laboratory of the future.’ In *Maquilápolis* the border is also the site where global capitalism is facing profound resistance. *Maquilápolis* is one of the most authoritative documentaries on cross-border organizing.” –*Rosa-Linda Fregoso, Latin American and Latino Studies, University of California Santa Cruz*

“*Maquilápolis* is a compelling look at the high, hidden costs of the global economy. It puts human beings front and center. This film is a must see!” –*Harley Shaiken, Professor, University of California, Berkeley*

“*Maquilápolis* is a wonderful fusion of expose and imagination, delivering an unprecedented look into the realities of life in the border communities where the maquiladoras reign. Made in collaboration with the women whose lives center on these secretive factories, *Maquilápolis* succeeds in crossing borders and peering around corners to capture how the women caught in the contradictions of global capital understand their own positions. A key case study for anyone interested in transnational realities -- and subjectivities.” –*B. Ruby Rich, Social Documentation Program and Film + Digital Media Department, University of California Santa Cruz*

LONGER SYNOPSIS

125-WORD SYNOPSIS

Carmen and Lourdes work in Tijuana’s *maquiladoras*, the multinationally-owned factories which came to Mexico for its cheap labor. Each day these factory workers confront labor violations, environmental devastation and urban chaos -- life on the frontier of the global economy. In *MAQUILAPOLIS*, Carmen and Lourdes reach beyond the daily struggle for survival to organize for change: Carmen takes a major television manufacturer to task for violating her labor rights. Lourdes pressures the government to clean up a toxic waste dump left behind by a departing factory. As they work for change, the world changes too: a global economic crisis and the availability of cheaper labor in China begin to pull the factories away from Tijuana, leaving Carmen, Lourdes and their colleagues with an uncertain future.

250-WORD SYNOPSIS

Carmen works the graveyard shift in one of Tijuana’s 800 *maquiladoras*, the multinationally-owned factories that came to Mexico for its cheap labor. After making television components all night, Carmen comes home to a shack she built out of recycled garage doors, in a neighborhood with no sewage lines or electricity. She suffers from kidney damage and lead poisoning from her years of exposure to toxic chemicals. She earns six dollars a day. But Carmen is not a victim. She is a dynamic young woman, busy making a life for herself and her children.

As Carmen and a million other maquiladora workers produce televisions, electrical cables, toys, clothes, computer keyboards, batteries and IV tubes, they weave the very fabric of life for consumer nations. They also confront labor violations, environmental devastation and urban chaos -- life on the frontier of the global economy.

In *MAQUILAPOLIS*, Carmen and her friend Lourdes reach beyond the daily struggle for survival to organize for change: Carmen takes a major television manufacturer to task for violating her labor rights. Lourdes pressures the government to clean up a toxic waste dump left behind by a departing factory. The women also use video cameras to document their lives, their city and their hopes for the future.

As they work for change, the world changes too: a global economic crisis and the availability of cheaper labor in China begin to pull the factories away from Tijuana, leaving Carmen, Lourdes and their colleagues with an uncertain future.