

CINE  
MIEN

presenteert / présente:

# SUMMER 1993



release: 19/07/2017

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# Synopsis

## • NL •

Spanje, zomer 1993. Na het overlijden van haar ouders verhuist de zesjarige Frida naar haar oom en tante op het platteland.

Zij proberen Frida op te nemen in hun gezin. Dit gaat niet zonder slag of stoot en met name hun eigen dochtertje Anna moet het ontgelden. Frida wil het liefst weer naar de stad en bedenkt manieren om terug te keren.

## • FR •

Pendant l'été 1993, suite à la mort de ses parents, Frida doit se déplacer de Barcelone à la province catalane, pour y vivre avec sa tante et son oncle, qui sont maintenant ses nouveaux gardiens. La vie de campagne est un défi pour Frida – le temps passe différemment et la nature qui l'entoure est mystérieuse et éloquente. Elle a d'un coup une petite sœur de laquelle elle doit s'occuper et elle doit faire face à de nouveaux sentiments, comme la jalousie. Souvent, Frida est convaincue que fuir serait la meilleure solution à ses problèmes. Pourtant, la famille fait ce qu'elle peut pour parvenir à un nouvel équilibre fragile et à apporter un peu de normalité à leur vie. Les sorties familiales occasionnelles à une fête locale ou à une piscine, faire la cuisine ensemble ou écouter du jazz dans le jardin leur apportent des moments de bonheur. Lentement, Frida se rend compte qu'elle est là pour rester et qu'elle doit s'adapter au nouvel environnement. Avant que la saison soit terminée, elle doit faire face à ses émotions et ses parents doivent apprendre à l'aimer comme leur propre fille.

# Specificaties / Spécifications

**duur / durée:** 96 min.

**productie / production:** Spaans / Espagne

**ondertiteling:** Nederlands & Frans, dialogen in het Catalaans

**sous-titrage:** néerlandais & français, dialogues en catalonian

**formaat / format:** 1.85 : 1

**geluid / son:** DOLBY



# Cast

Laia Artigas	Frida
Paula Robles	Anna
Brusa Cusí	Marga
David Verdaguer	Esteve
Fermi Reixacha	Avi
Paula Blanco	Cesca



# Crew

**regie / réalisation:** Carla Simón  
**scenario / scénario:** Carla Simón  
**production design:** Mireia Graell  
**cinematografie / photographie:** Santiago Racaj  
**montage:** Didac Palou, Ana Pfaff  
**producer / producteur:** Valérie Delpierre  
**productie / production:** Inicia Films  
**co-productie / co-production:** Avalon P.C.  
**geluid / son:** Roger Blasco  
**casting:** Mireia Juárez  
**kostuums / costumes:** Anna Aguilà

# Carla Simón

Carla Simón (1983) studied at the University of California and the Audiovisual Communication Department of Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona. After that she directed TV series and programmes for TV Catalan. After being awarded the prestigious scholarship of Obra Social “la Caixa”, Carla moved to the UK to study at the London Film School, where she wrote and directed the documentary Born Positive and the fiction Lipstick, both short films selected in numerous international film festivals.

Summer 1993 is her feature film debut produced by Inicia Films and co-produced by Avalon. The project was developed at Berlinale Script Station, Ekran program in Poland, Sources 2 in Barcelona and won the SGAE screenwriting fund. It was also presented at the Low Budget Film Forum in Les Arcs, Premiers Plans Atelier, Berlinale Co-Production Market and won the first prize in Holland Film Meetings in 2015. The film also received the MEDIA Development funding and the ICAA fund for production. In 2013 Carla created Young For Film!, an association which taught cinema to children and teenagers. Since moving back to Barcelona, she has been collaborating with “Cinema en Curs”.

## Filmography

2017 Estiu 1993/Summer 1993  
2015 Las pequeñas cosas (Short)  
2013 Lipstick (Short)  
2012 Born Positive  
(Documentary short)  
2010 Lovers (Short)



## Awards - Summer 1993

Winner Berlin film festival 2017: Best film feature film award, Carla Simón  
Winner Berlin film festival 2017: Grandprix of the generation, best feature film  
Winner Festival de Cannes 2017: Prix écrans juniors coup de coeur des étudiants  
Winner Málaga Spanish film festival 2017: Dunia Ayaso award, Carla Simón  
Winner Istanbul Int. film festival 2017: Special prize Int. competition, Carla Simón



## Director's comment, interview with director Carla Simón

The story is inspired by your own experiences as a child. Did it make it easier or more difficult to write and direct?

I have told my story so many times and because of that it kind of turned into a legend, into something that happened to me but at the same time it feels like a tale. Memories, family stories, imagination... Everything got mixed in my mind when I started writing the script. I guess that's why it was quite easy to put together a first draft, because I wrote images that I had inside. However, it was a bit harder to give some kind of structure to all these images. That's why I decided to preserve this feeling of "little moments", that one after the other could picture something similar to what it was my first summer with my new family. Sometimes I wondered why I had the need to explain something that personal and it wasn't until I finished the script that I realized how much I had learnt about my own family, because the writing process made me look at the story from every character's point of view.

It was directing the film when I felt the need to take some distance with my own experience. If I wanted realistic performances I couldn't put the elements in the exact way as they were in my memories or in my imagined images. In a shooting, reality prevails and I believe it's always more interesting than anything I could possibly imagine myself. So the compromise between the reality of the shooting and my own images was a hard thing to deal with. Also, when you direct you constantly have to prioritize specific elements of your story. Every little element had a meaning related to my childhood and that's why the actors took a very important role. I learnt to listen to them in order to see when I was forcing something just because I had an emotional relationship with it.

What was the biggest challenge when working with children?

Working with children is certainly a big challenge, but it was also one of the best parts of making this film. Children are true; if you give them enough freedom, you can see straight away when something is working or it's not. Laia (Frida) and Paula (Anna) have boundless creativity. We could have thrown the script away and shot another film with them that would have been very interesting. But they also have a great ability to understand the basic premise of each scene. Laia acts from her intuition, she feels the tempo, the mood, she can really react to the other actors' performances. Paula is very clever and has a great memory, so she can just be in the scene being herself and do exactly what I asked her in the exact moment. Also, we were very lucky to have generous adult actors like David (Esteve) and Bruna (Marga) who agreed on spending a lot of time with the girls before the shooting. We did very long improvisations where they played to be a family for days, which I'm sure it helped making the performances feel more real in the film.

The biggest challenge for me was to find a visual style for the film that could adapt to the girls and give them as much freedom as we could in their acting. We decided to put the camera in one place and shoot very simple sequence shots that could let them act the whole scene – or almost the whole scene – without noticing the camera too much. This was great when it worked because they could let themselves go into the scene and feel it in its entirety. However, it added certain complexity because when, at times, something went wrong, we didn't have many cutting points. At the end the film is not radical on this idea and we edited some of these sequence shots but I believe this style helped to feel the moment and to be with Frida (and her family) in a more intimate way, as if you were watching a photo album or a domestic video, which somehow reminds me to my family photos that inspired the film.

Another huge challenge about working with children is to follow their legal schedule. We could only work 6 hours per day with the four-year-old girl and 8 hours per day with the seven-years-old girl, including their breaks. So we had to shoot the film under strong time pressure since we had a six-weeks shooting and the girls were in every single scene.

### How did you cast Frida and Anna?

Casting Frida and Anna was a very long process. I was looking for girls that could resemble to the characters I had written or could have lived something similar to them. This way, they wouldn't have to pretend to be someone else but they could be themselves playing.

For Frida, we looked for an urban girl that was not used to go to the countryside. We didn't find a girl who had lost her parents but we paid special attention to the girl's family stories to find someone with a non-conventional family structure. Laia doesn't have an easy background and I think this is something that the audience can read in her eyes. Also, even if I could easily relate to girls that physically look liked me, I was especially interested in finding someone with an ambiguous look, and Laia has many different faces. It took us a long time to find Frida... Actually, Laia was the next-to-last girl we saw after casting close to 1.000 children. For Anna, we looked for a four years old girl with a baby look, it was very important for me that she transmitted a feeling of innocence. In such a young age it's also important to find a girl with no fear, a girl that will not get frozen when she's asked to do something. Paula adapts to everything, she was always positive and ready to try wherever I suggested. Paula barely spoke to us in the auditions, we couldn't know how good her language was but we could see that she was very daring. On the last round of auditions we put some pairs of girls together. When Paula and Laia met, I had a very strange feeling, on one hand I saw they could develop the exact same relationship I had written in the script, but on the other hand I also realized how little they were, and in what kind of trip we were getting on.

### How important is the fact that the film is set in Catalonia and in the 90's?

To me it was very important to come back to the real places where I moved when I was six. It's like this story couldn't be filmed in any other place. The landscape in la Garrotxa is very particular. It's surrounded by mountains, you barely see a sunrise or a sunset and in summer the range of greens is huge. It was a beautiful process to look for the images of the film in places that I know so well. As a kid I used to play in the house where we shot the film, as a teenager I spent long hours with my friends in the village squares where some scenes take place, and my new parents used to work in the swimming pool we used as a location.

Also, the characters of the film are inspired by my family who are born and grown in Catalonia. Frida's Grandparents represent those of their generation who lived the Spanish Civil War being upper class and preserved their right-wing ideals until today. Neus, Lola, Angie, Marga and Esteve represent those of their generation who revealed against all these old values, including Catholicism and old traditions. Marga and Esteve also portray a group of people known as neo-rural, for which the village is a way of life. In the 80s, a growing number of urban citizens, for economic, philosophical or personal beliefs, went to live in rural lands as Marga and Esteve did.

Also, the nineties is the time when I lived my childhood and recovering the toys, the games and the costumes to recreate this period had a big emotional value for me and most members of the crew.

Frida's parents die of AIDS. Was this a wide problem in Spain at that time?

It was. Nowadays almost everyone in Spain knows someone who died of AIDS over this period. The Spanish Transition was a happy time of sudden freedom, of maximum aperture in Spain. However, this sudden freedom also led to a big consumption of drugs. In mid 80s media started reporting what they called the "Heroin Crisis", which came along with the raise of HIV infections. The anti-retroviral meds didn't arrive until 1994, which was too late for most people from this generation including my parents. At the beginning of the nineties, around 21.000 people died of AIDS in Spain, the country with the highest incidence of AIDS in Europe. Moreover, in 1986, the year I was born, 30% of the mothers passed the virus to their children. Fortunately I was from the 70% that were not infected.

So this particular context shows this is not only my story but also the story of my parents' generation, who lived the transition, and my own generation, who lived the consequences of it.

Tell us more about the carnival that happens at the end of the film.

Capgrossos and Gegants are very typical from Catalan festivities. Almost every village or town in Catalonia has its own Gegants and Capgrossos that perform traditional dances during the festivities. The ones acting in the film are from my village.

National folklore always attracts my attention because of its great cinematic value. We think of our own folklore as something that is normal because we know it so well, but when it's seen through outsiders' eyes it gets another meaning. I've always thought that Capgrossos are quite grotesque. They should frighten children but children in my village love them and they can't wait to grow up and participate in the carnival. In the film, Frida becomes one of them carrying the big flag, and you can see how happy she is being part of this strangely beautiful tradition.

Frida deals with the death of her mother in her very own way. Can you tell us more about her feelings?

Losing her parents is probably the worst thing that can happen to Frida, but from my personal experience, I defend that children have an amazing ability to understand and adapt into complex situations.

Frida just lost her mother but she's still a child so she has good and bad moments. When Frida gets to her new home, she gets into a kind of "survival mode". At first, she observes and behaves but little by little she starts challenging her new family, pushing the limits to see how far she can go. She's actually emotionally frozen, she needs to learn to deal with her own feelings and gain trust with this new family in order to love and be loved again. Frida also has to accept that there's no magic in the world that will make her mum return. She still has some hope but throughout the film she stops believing in her grandma's religion and in her own beliefs, accepting what death really means.



The film makes the audience reflect about family relationships, would you agree with that?

Yes. A family is a family. A father is a father, a mother is a mother, a son is a son, a daughter is a daughter and a sibling is a sibling. We hardly question the roots of these relationships, they basically are like that, as we all understand them, as we all live them. However, for Frida and her new family this obviousness is not so obvious... Summer 1993 is a reflection about the evidence of family relationship through observing how a family has to be reconstructed. Suddenly, an uncle, an aunt and a cousin have to turn into a father, a mother and a sister. They become a family overnight, and they have to create, or transform, their already existing relationships. Frida has to find her own place in the family, while Marga and Esteve have to learn to love her as their own child and Anna has to accept a new and older sister. I hope the film will help the audience remind the importance of these basic relationships and value them a bit more.







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