

(DIS)AGREEMENTS

**WHEN FIRE RISES UP FROM
THE SOLES OF YOUR FEET:
CREATIVE EXPERIENCES OF THE
ACTRESS IN SPANISH CINEMA**

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| introduction

GONZALO DE LUCAS

An actress works on the basis of physical qualities through which she constructs her character so that before a word is spoken, the spectator can see or intuit them in her physical expressions. In *Sunday's Illness* (La enfermedad del domingo, Ramón Salazar, 2018), we can discern that Chiara (Bárbara Lennie) was a heroine addict before it is actually mentioned; it is expressed without the use of any kind of descriptive, verbal or explicit psychology, or any exaggeration of gestures, but through a kind of internal embodiment. In *Magical Girl* (Carlos Vermut, 2014), Lennie moves as if she were recovering from a concussion, with an unsettlingly steady tension that could be interpreted as psychotic, alienated, menacing and unpredictable, a wounded character who has been miraculously stitched up and restrained, long before her scars are uncovered. In *Vania*

(Carla Simón, 2020), Irene Escolar's pensive expression as she listens silently and attentively in the first group conversation reveals the secret intensity of her infatuation and her suffering, merely by showing how her gaze is turned inward, while conveying her sensitivity to others with eyes whose emotion is neither active nor hopeful, but mournful. Actresses would probably have to connect with experiences—not necessarily experienced in the first person, but at least observed or imagined—to be able to convey this form of autobiography through their own bodies, which should not be confused with the external elements—make-up, costume, hairstyle, repeated gestures—of a characterisation or portrayal. This embodiment involves elements that create experiences and feelings that the storyline itself will not need to spell out, which are integrated into

the actress's way of moving and speaking or in her facial expressions.

This corporeal construction can sometimes occur without movement, in a silence, or in the slightest gesture. The camera, of course, is a vision enhancer that amplifies the tiniest blink or eye movement. The film actress thus tends to prove more creative when she determines that bodily expression within her—a thought, an emotion—through containment, restraint, on the threshold of the visible, although there are moments when her expressiveness rises to more anxious and unstable registers, even to the point of breakdown. In *An Autumn Without Berlin* (Un otoño sin Berlín, Lara Izagirre, 2015), Irene Escolar holds in her screams and silences her desperation, trying to understand and console her boyfriend with dewy eyes that reveal something of the darkness within. In his memoirs, Josef von Sternberg wrote that «[t]o know what to reveal and what to conceal [...] is all there is to art» (Sternberg, 1987: 312).

The expression of the invisible also seems to be one of the main tasks of the actress: the manifestation of what cannot be seen, the inner image of the Other or of alterity, presence in pensive form.

This creative work of performers cannot be dissociated from their ways of reciting or speaking their lines. In an episode of *Escenario 0* [Stage 0], the series of film recordings of contemporary plays recently produced for HBO, Irene Escolar and Bárbara Lennie star in the Pascal Rambert play *Hermanas* [Sisters] (Diego Postigo, 2020), where they use poeticised language that never seems artificial or forced, but instead is embodied, lived and felt. It is a tricky combination of poetic and philosophical abstraction and physical reality. This type of register sometimes appears in cinema, but it tends to be limited to very specific, distinctive films. Indeed, one of the challenges in cinema, a medium in which the word tends to be more naturalistic than it is in theatre, is the difficulty often involved in saying the simplest things:

Hermanas (Diego Postigo, 2020)



how to make a simple greeting believable and authentic. In *Hermanas*, words glitter like daggers that wound the actress's bodies. It is a highly representative piece by two young actresses whose work has matured through a restless exploration of the difficult turns of performing, the surgical precision with which an emotion can be triggered, the quest for approaches that are neither neat nor showy.

The history of gestures contains hidden layers and repressed forms, and ideas of figurative transformation, as cinema shows how characters are portrayed on the outside as well, by the way they look, behave, or present—and represent—themselves to others. A study of actresses can reveal the potential of changes of image—in the sense described by Godard in *Changer d'image* (1982): «We need to show resistance of an image to change» / «you can change between images, and what we must show is that “in-between”»—through the appearance of gestural forms that can subvert the iconic and ideological patterns of their era.

In Irene Escolar's portrayal of Queen Joanna the Mad in *The Broken Crown* (La corona partida, Jordi Frades, 2016), despite the extremely conservative approach of the production, the image conveyed is very different from the stereotypical depictions of the character as a symbol of the hysterical woman. Escolar offers an alternative reading that portrays her above all as an intelligent woman struggling with a profound inner turmoil, the victim of a situation that has left her totally isolated and oppressed by the powerful men around her. The power of gestures often remains concealed, neither visible to censors nor assimilated into the ideological hegemony of their era. Aurora Bautista began her career with a histrionic performance of Queen Joanna in *Madness for Love* (Locura de amor, Juan de Orduña, 1948), a role that made her a star. But when we see her many years later in *Aunt Tula* (La tía Tula, Miguel Picazo, 1964) she is a different woman, in complete control of her self-representation. In *Aunt*

Tula, where she portrays an apparently frigid, puritanical woman (that is, in accordance with the standards of her day), a divergence or resistance is generated through her body that is perhaps much easier to read today. Rather than deprivation, her restraint hints at a form of control over her own desire and of a refusal to acquiesce, while her entire social context presses her to submit and give herself to her rapist brother-in-law, Ramiro. Great actresses generally take control of their self-representation rather than limiting themselves to being subjected to a psychological depiction and moulded by a desire imposed by others. Such actresses break stereotypes, often in subtle ways, in performances with creative repercussions that are often not fully recognised at the time, but only appreciated years later when their repertoires of gestures have been assimilated even to the point of becoming commonplace. ■

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discussion

I. Does Spanish cinema limit actresses too much to certain stereotypes? What other types of representations could be explored and how could they be developed? Is there a recognisable contrast between the models of other eras and contemporary models?

Bárbara Lennie

Since I always work on the basis of a kind of truth, or an unconstructed or transparent performance, I think what I've been offered most are roles within strictly realist or everyday styles, films that portray reality. Now I'd like to do things different from that. Not for diversion, but to keep growing: I'd like to move away from there and be able to play women a little more distant from me and from the realities I know. If I get offered a film more like what I've done up to now I'd love it, but I would try to change my way of tackling it. In fact, in theatre, actresses have more room to play around, which allows you to jump right

into another reality. I see that in Irene's career, for example. In my case, it hasn't really been like that and I'd really like it to be. Lately what has been interesting me most is flexibility: not to lose my commitment to what I do, but to change the place I work from and find a slightly different approach. I wish we could do what Aurora Bautista did, or Victoria Abril, who had some amazing years like that, the way she took possession of her characters and reinvented them.

For example, I'd like to make a film that is profoundly sexual, but well done, something like *Body Heat* (Lawrence Kasdan, 1981). There was something in that film which, looking at it now, is

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really suggestive, especially because she [Kathleen Turner] is a passionate woman. Female desire hasn't been portrayed very often in Spanish cinema, even in films by female filmmakers like Isabel Coixet or legendary films like Julio Medem's work. We still have a long way to go. But now there are series with young women acting, writing and directing their own stories, like Leticia Dolera. I'm also thinking of foreign productions like *Fleabag* (Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Two Brothers Pictures: 2016-2019), *I May Destroy You* (Michaela Coel, BBC: 2020-), *Pure* (Aneil Karia & Alicia MacDonald, Channel 4: 2019), where I do think you find a different depiction of female sexuality. I've just finished *The Mess You Leave Behind* (El desorden que dejas, Carlos Montero, 2020), a miniseries for Netflix that has a lot to say about desire. Bearing in mind that it's an adaptation of a novel and that there were scripts that were already set, I've tried to make a woman who feels desire, rather than one who is the object of a story of desire. I think the erotic genre is great because I love to watch it and I love to read it, but it's hard to do it well.

They say that once actresses turn forty they stop getting interesting film roles, and that's surprising to me, especially because the forties are really a prime mature age for women. That's why you can never let your guard down at all, because an actress's situation is really very precarious. I admit that I only became aware of this quite recently, and I've been arrogant enough to think that actresses didn't need to do anything apart from defending our characters or taking a particular stance with a director or a script. It's important to be aware that you form part of a very big group and that we really need to support one another, with kind of a sense of community.

Irene Escolar

In my case, I've found a variety of depictions of women's conflicts in theatre, as that's where I've had more opportunities to express myself and to work, find or look for things, and also on many

different levels. In life we all have a lot of registers, which are revealed when you take off your mask. The acting profession allows you to take off all your masks and go deeper into yourself. It offers you keys to open up things you have inside, but buried, hidden. Theatre makes it possible to do this, to attain more extreme and varied sides of yourself. Cinema tends to delve much more inside a kind of realism, and that's something that Bárbara has done much more of than I have. In fact, *Tell Me Who I Am* (Dime quién soy, Eduard Cortés, Movistar+: 2020), the series I've just finished, which I've been working on for a whole year, is the first time I've felt that I've dealt with conflicts that have nothing to do with young woman issues.

In that quest for alternative or more varied depictions, for me there is an element of personal research that is very important for constructing a character. For example, when I got the first scripts for my role as Queen Joanna of Castile, I felt she was portrayed the same way as always, so I did some research and I read a lot, and I even went to Toledo to meet with a professor who had written a book about her, and who was the only one who saw her with dignity and he explained some extraordinary things about her life. I took this book to the screenwriter, to see whether we could change certain details and at least include some untold things that were documented and had really happened to her. It was very interesting what happened to this woman, but her story has always been told from a very biased point of view. So some of the real facts of her life could be recovered in the film. She had a very hard life and it's very sad that she's always been seen as a hysterical woman or as sexually out of control, when in reality she was a woman who was mistreated by all the men who were close to her. I imagine all the pain she must have felt and the kind of life she must have had. With that in mind, the way I played her was my way of giving her back a little of her dignity.

All of this ultimately has to do with who tells the stories, what stories are shown, and what kinds of women we're used to seeing. I remember that when *The Handmaid's Tale* (Bruce Miller, MGM: 2017-) came out, not long ago, I thought: «Wow, great choice, Elisabeth Moss has a very different look». I surprised myself when I thought: «She's a special woman, really beautiful, but different; she has a different nose...» It was a different kind of look. But after that, and thanks to her, and to other actresses who were also different, we've started seeing other kinds of women. It's something that is gaining ground little by little, so that now we can see an actress like Phoebe Waller-Bridge, who is on *Fleabag* (Two Brothers Pictures/Amazon Studios, 2016-2019), that extraordinary series where she is the protagonist and where she tells the story. And again, it's about a woman with extraordinary personality and charisma. But the truth is that a few years ago I would have thought it very strange to see a woman like that starring in a series or a film.

Albert Elduque

I think it's hazardous to talk about stereotypes, but in Bárbara's and Irene's work you can identify a recurring character: the young woman who is trying to redefine her life and who goes back to her family for a meeting of confrontation or rediscovery. It's the idea of the daughter who is trying to understand and assert who she is, what she wants and what she can offer the world. In Bárbara's case, the paradigmatic example would be *María (and Everybody Else)* (María (y los demás), Nely Reguera, 2016), whose protagonist lives with her father, who is recovering from cancer, and at the same time she wants to become a writer and is suffering from an existential crisis that moves between her profession, her roots, and deciding where she wants to be. The figure of the daughter is also central, although with variations, in *The Damned* (Los condenados, Isaki Lacuesta, 2009) and *Petra* (Jaime Rosales, 2018). In Irene's case,

her character in *An Autumn Without Berlin* returns home to the little Basque town of Amorebieta after living in Canada and tries to rebuild her relationship with her former boyfriend, her father, and an old friend. And there are other examples with actresses of the same generation, like Nausicaa Bonnín in *Three Days with the Family* (Tres días amb la família, Mar Coll, 2009) or Núria Gago in *Family Tour* (Liliana Torres, 2013). All of these examples, except for *Petra* and *The Damned*, are the first films by female directors and all of them star actresses of a similar age, which leads me to believe that this kind of role reflects certain generational concerns like family conflicts and the need for freedom. I don't think it's something as simplistic as a stereotype; it is more of a character type that reflects the feelings of an era and the social issues that are being debated.

In the history of Spanish cinema we can find films that deal with the same theme. For example, *Life Goes On* (El mundo sigue, Fernando Fernán Gómez, 1965) is about the confrontation between two sisters who want to rise out of poverty: one sister, played by Lina Canalejas, tries to do it through family sacrifice and moral integrity; the other, portrayed by Gemma Cuervo, by using sex unscrupulously for the purpose of social climbing. It is a struggle that will have a tragic ending. We might venture the hypothesis that in the past these films represented two poles of female identity in a more dichotomous form and with highly charged dramatic dimensions, while in contemporary cinema the conflict is depicted as a process that is more complex and sometimes painful, although not always devastating, that everyone can (and should) get through.

Gonzalo de Lucas

It is common in Spanish cinema, because of the industrial aspect of the medium and the conservative system that tends to control film production, that many actresses get stereotyped, trapped in ideological moulds and recurring tropes.



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Nevertheless, an actress embodies subjectivities that offer alternatives to the forms serving as the standards for their age; for example, these days it is very important to show women taking ownership and control of their desire, rather than being passive objects of the desire of the other (whether that «other» is the filmmaker, another character, or the spectators), or to show a person who has been raised with certain sexual codes discovering or revealing other sexual possibilities within herself, also through contradictions. The physical, bodily, visible manifestation of this work is very important, because actresses are referential images,

and their bodies can represent new standards—through gestures, movements, and gazes—and become models for change. I think Irene Escolar and Bárbara Lennie's work is a great example of this, for the way they foreground intelligence and a bold, unique very human sensibility in their openness and in their vulnerability. They are both actresses capable of preserving their inscrutability and mystery; I think artistic activity tends to be closely associated with the capacity to give up or eschew rhetorical and exhibitionist frills, what Buñuel referred to as the aesthetically irreproachable.

2. What types of experiences and transformations emerge when we look at cinema through the trajectory of an actress over the course of her career? Is the entry of more women into the Spanish film industry changing the way it operates?

Bárbara Lennie

When I went on the TV show *Versión española* to present *Petra* with [director] Jaime Rosales, they surprised me with a video compiling images from my career, from *No Pain, No Gain* (*Más pena que Gloria*, Víctor García León, 2001), my first film, through to the present. I was totally stunned. It was pretty exciting, especially because I don't tend to re-watch my own films. Suddenly you see how you've changed in front of the camera and how your life and your identity have been recorded there in a way. In the end, whether you want it or not, there is something that happens, I mean, that captures you. There is something of your momentum, your soul, your limitations, things you like and things you don't, which cinema, if its gaze has been attentive, has been able to tell. Every woman I've portrayed takes me to a specific moment and a specific experience. In fact, an actor's career often depends on their growth as a person, which is something you can't control. I've often had to ask myself: Why is this not coming to me now, why can't I get it? Well, because I can't. I mean, because in your core, inside you, in your growth, you're not there; you're much more self-conscious than you think, or you're much less expressive than you think. As much as you may sometimes try to go faster, and try to make certain things happen, there is something in this job that doesn't allow you to skip stages. And sometimes it's when you're most relaxed that things start to flow. On the other hand, when I think about some of the films I did years ago, like *Magical Girl*, I don't know how I would do them now, because I'm a different person; the same, but different. That character was very specific and yet abstract. And at the time, because Carlos Vermut didn't share much about how he wanted it to be done, or what was happening to the cha-

racter, I had to follow my intuition, an act of faith, an image, I'd almost say.

While doing *Escenario 0* we've noticed a big difference between the generation of professionals who are around fifty and the younger directors, both in cinema and in theatre. There is a significant change that has begun, at least in terms of how we connect with each other and the question of status. The structures are changing, the whole operation is becoming more cross-sectional and horizontal, and I like that. But it has been a hard-fought battle. Now a lot of female directors, screenwriters, producers and distributors are bursting onto the scene. I've only worked with one female director, Nely Reguera in *María (and Everybody Else)*, and I found it pretty clear that working with a woman is nothing like working with a man. But I can't generalise either, because I'm sure it's not the same working with Nely as working with Gracia Querejeta or Angélica Lidell, for example. They're all very different. Also, in *María (and Everyone Else)*, a lot of things that I see in myself are depicted. And not just me, but also a lot of my female friends, who identified with it in one way or another. We're seeing the development of a way of thinking about women that was really missing before. It's not clear any more what standards we should follow or what life decisions we should be making, and that's going to change the stories we see in films.

Irene Escolar

After doing so much theatre, whenever I work on a film I find it really enjoyable. One of the reasons is because in cinema you can express things much more subtly than you can in theatre and make them visible. The camera is a very powerful tool, and I really like the nuances you can work with and bring out. In theatre I think it's wonderful

that it's happening for people who are right there and experience it in that moment, although at the same time that can be a kind of limitation. That's why when I look back on my career, there's a lot of performances that perhaps have lasted in the memories of the people who saw them, and in my personal growth and my development as an actress, but they're not preserved for posterity. In cinema, if I'm honest, I haven't done anything that I could say «I'm so proud of that!» Apart from *An Autumn Without Berlin*, but that was years ago now. There aren't many times that I've been able to take risks with what I was doing, except in terms of the opportunities I've been given to do films; where I've been able to move away from naturalism or from dialogue with meaning. Our work also involves imagining parallel worlds, different people, imagining things far beyond your own reality. That's why these days when I see a character like Queen Joanna, so different from me, it surprises me that in such a restrictive production context I could take risks and do some things that I would describe as daring, in the middle of those fits of angst and madness. It's a performance that I feel proud of for having been able to take risks under those conditions.

I feel that there's a very subjective kind of heart to this profession, which every actor has to make their mark on. It's really brave what Bárbara said, about being aware of what you want to do and what you've done up to now, and then deciding on how you'd like to tackle what that lies ahead or what comes next. That means she is an artist in constant evolution and that she is always reconsidering and rethinking things. It's really brave because the usual approach is to take the comfortable option. But I personally like to feel that after doing one thing for a while, I can tackle it from a different angle, to get a different result. That's what it means to be in constant creation, creativity, and self-observation. Acting can be a pretty addictive vocation. In his theory of *Duende*, Lorca talked about a kind of fire that rises up from the soles of

your feet. If you reach a point where you feel something like that, you know that you can't let go of it. It's something I feel on every opening night.

Throughout this process, in the possible changes that we can make or that can occur, the person you work with is also very important, because there are even older directors who are much more modern than some young people you might come across... So it has a lot to do with the individual, where they're from, their background, their influences, in relation to yours as well, and in human terms, what implications these have, if any, on the project and how it is conveyed to you.

In my case, I've worked with very few female directors. In theatre, I've worked with Carlota Ferrer, in film with Lara Izagirre, and now a little with Carla Simón. That's not many, really. Although the work dynamics are changing, there's still a long way to go. Because even the men who want to change, and who think about these changes, when they have to be expressed in actions, or in things that would mean a loss for them, or in things where there's a risk involved, it's not so clear that they want to change, unfortunately. This is something we've been able to confirm from experience.

Albert Elduque

Exploring film history through the careers of performers is extremely thought-provoking because it allows you to rethink the categories we normally work with, such as aesthetic movements, filmmakers or producers. In the specific case of actresses, this also entails a gender perspective that is very necessary. The results of such studies are always surprising, because they lead us to films that in other circumstances we would overlook but that acquire a special meaning when considered in light of an acting career. For example, I recently watched the film *Searching for Monica* (*El secreto de Mónica*, 1962), a Spanish-Argentine co-production directed by José María Forqué and starring Carmen Sevilla. The film tells the story

of a man (Jardel Filho) who arrives by chance in a rural town in Argentina where he discovers his wife's past, reconstructed through the testimonies of various characters. I don't think anyone would identify this film as an important milestone in Forqué's filmography, but it is very interesting to consider it critically in relation to other films starring Carmen Sevilla, because her role as the wife has a mournful quality, something you don't find in either her early films as a young girl who invariably ends up getting married or the erotic comedies she made in the late 1960s. Moreover, in one of the most memorable scenes in the film she dances an absolutely wild mambo, with much more of a high-voltage erotic frenzy than the flamenco performances that had made her famous in the 1950s, in which the seduction has a much more ritualistic flavour. In terms of both the story and the performance, *Searching for Monica*, which from other perspectives would be merely a footnote, emerges as a key moment in Carmen Sevilla's acting career.

Gonzalo de Lucas

You can discover a lot by watching actress retrospectives. To begin with, you can see roles that are very different from the image associated with her, parts that have been forgotten and that may make you more open in terms of the way you normally look at her, focusing on the style of the director. We have a very strong analytical tradition and critical framework for interpreting a film based on its *mise-en-scène*, but tracking an actress's career brings out contrasts and differences that we might never notice without taking this particular point of view. A lot of criticism involves knowing how to choose a potential focalisation, and the more detailed it is the more unpredictable and unbiased it may seem to you. Over the cour-

se of her career, an actress can undergo a lot of transformations and image changes, pointing to possibilities, disruptions or iconic transgressions; following her through her films can also provide a better view or understanding of the way she expresses herself, through her body or gestures, and the indirect way she does it (often in a way that could slip the notice of the censors).

Watching an actress retrospective also brings out all kinds of time associations. When I watch *Every Song Is About Me* (*Todas las canciones hablan de mí*, Jonás Trueba, 2010) now, I remember when I saw it ten years ago, but I also consider it comparatively against subsequent images of Bárbara Lennie. Thanks to the underlying documentary nature of cinema, the relationship between Bárbara and Jonás Trueba at that time, when they were a couple, is inscribed there; the interaction between the man filming and the woman who is filmed. In this sense, it is similar to looking at a family album, to re-viewing the past. But it also becomes clear that Bárbara was a different person at that time, with other experiences, and that is evident in her look or in her way of talking; and at the same time, looking at it comparatively now, you can see her potential for transformation, which in part is inherent to art or poetry, according to the definition of its function offered by Elias Canetti: the guardian of metamorphoses. The work of the actress has this potential, which sometimes is totally dormant in the spectator, and encapsulates or concentrates it in a synthesis of time and a dimension of play that holds an extraordinary power for the audience. This hints at a different history of cinema, involving the transformations of the actors' bodies and the associative memory of their images, the multiple nature of the self.

3. What work methods are there to combine technique with emotion, so that the former doesn't freeze the latter? How can we posit a defence of the poetic word, as recited in *Hermanas*, also in relation to the difficulties that people have today expressing their experiences verbally?

Bárbara Lennie

For that to happen (or we like to think it happens) in *Hermanas*, it's a two-sided job: on the one hand, to be a profoundly technical actor, and have the ability to hold up the script in the mouth alone and to convey it; and on the other, to push all that beyond something merely discursive, excessively rational or excessively poetic, which in the end it doesn't transport you. That's why I think that for a playwright and director like Pascal Rambert, casting is very important. After he directed me in *La clausura del amor* (2015-2017), when he suggested I work on another play with any actress I wanted to, I chose Irene because she has that mix: she comes from a tradition that loves and cares about scripts, about the word, about the almost ri-

tual, sacred space of the theatre; and at the same time she is a very grounded woman and very connected to the contemporary reality. I can't think of many people who are open in these two ways intersecting so organically.

When I say «he or she is a very technical actor», the problem is not that the actor looks technical to me, but that he or she looks bad, and that's why I look at the script. Technique is what allows you to make a script like *Hermanas* work. There are a lot of people who wouldn't even be able to deliver the first line, because here, contrary to what happens in the UK or Germany, we don't have that tradition or that education in our drama schools. But there are a lot of other things that have to do with being a technical actor, especially on a film

Hermanas (Diego Postigo, 2020)



set: knowing how it works, what lighting is for, how to move... All this also has to do with a work technique that can't be taught in schools. In fact, I don't know whether it can be learned at all except on the job, but it could at least be pointed out. When I finished studying in a school after four years, a lot of hours a day, I found that there were a lot of things that hadn't even been mentioned to me. I find it surprising, and I know that in that respect schools haven't changed.

There are a lot of jobs and professions where the importance of technique is obvious. I compare acting to mountaineering, or sports in general, or even performing surgery. In those cases there are things you need to know and you have to keep fine-tuning to get to a particular point: the peak of the mountain, cutting three seconds off your running time... In the acting profession everything is more abstract and it's not so clear where you need to get to or how you should do it. The techniques are many and varied, and fine-tuning the instrument involves sharpening your instinct and your creativity. That obviously involves reading, watching or writing, but also other activities like going for a walk, dancing, cooking... There's a heap of things. Ultimately, actors are like dabblers in everything who go here and there until finally we place ourselves at the service of a director to tell their stories the best way possible. To do that, you need to have as many tools and options as you can, but it's not always easy to know which ones they are and how they should be handled.

In every episode of *Escenario 0* there has been a commitment to the script in one way or another. In the end it has been what has made us stand out most in terms of selecting the plays, always keeping in mind that you're working for a content platform and that they also have to play their cards. In this sense, I admit that I find Pascal Rambert's continued defence of the word amazing. In contemporary theatre and scriptwriting it's almost a last bastion. There are many who feel that silence, or an image, or a body, or even an animal

in the scene is more powerful and more stimulating than the word. But Pascal still defends the word and believes in the revolutionary, transformative capacity of discourse. The work process with him is always similar: spending a lot of time alone, at home, working and studying, and then rehearsing for eight to ten days. That's where he begins to intuit the nature of the piece, which is transformed and in reality never ends. Even after a year and a half of touring with *Hermanas*, I don't feel I have the show under control and I still feel giddy before each performance.

Irene Escolar

In the case of *Hermanas*, the biggest challenge is being able to mix the technical and emotional sides. We needed to be very clear that it's a script that you need to breathe in, and obviously you need some technical ability at the level of diction and especially of knowing what you're saying and what you're saying it for. That, you could say, would be one side. And then there's the question of bringing the script alive, in the present, which is always a huge challenge, but even greater in a play of this kind, where you're not speaking in colloquial or realistic language, and the text is highly philosophical and poetic, and every word has weight and can be biting. When we filmed *Hermanas*, all of this had to be done even more in the present, if possible, and even more specific, because we had the camera up very close. We also did it as theatre, but obviously the languages are different. We filmed *Hermanas* one year after we had learned the script, rehearsed, presented the play and taken it on tour. Although we had to review it, rethink it and re-study it, it was already inside us in a very particular way. The script wasn't in our heads anymore; it had really taken root in our bodies. And that enabled us to reach that level in just three days of filming, eight hours a day, and to give it the life, the thoughts and nuances that we wanted. And with a camera up so close that's how it had to be.

The play maintains an emotional charge, a brutal energy at every moment, even when the debate takes a breath there is a load of tension. You need to work with a positively military approach to bring to life a script of this kind, where you never stop changing the line of thought, especially because there were fifteen- or twenty-minute shots, like in the two monologues at the end, where each of us had a camera and we filmed it in one go. We were soldiers of the word, soldiers of our work, even though filming *Hermanas* was profoundly enjoyable on an artistic level, as a life experience and in many other ways. It's hard for an actress to get a script like this one. I see musicians or conductors in an orchestra, who have a score and work for hours and hours to get those notes right. And in a way (and this doesn't always happen), we had to work on a very deep level too, to take strange positions and work with really fierce discipline. Pascal pushes you to the limit so that you leave your rational self behind

and whatever resonates is the emotional and physical instrument; you put reason on hold and sustain yourself in the visceral. It's exhausting, but afterwards you feel so proud! I feel they're projects that can go off track if you don't know how to use those tools or you don't have them.

With Bárbara, in relation to *Escenario 0*, we wanted these plays, which were intended for theatre audiences, and which perhaps for that reason exist in a bubble, to be accessible to a different range of people who probably aren't in the habit of seeing productions like these in our language, or these forms of expression and of using language. Because if you don't go to the theatre it's unlikely you'll have access to this kind of verbal register, and I'm thinking here of young people. In our world, the word has been trivialised, and not much value is given to study and critical thinking. That's why the really surprising reception it has had is so valuable to us, because a lot of people have seen it and I don't think I would have

Hermanas (Diego Postigo, 2020)



imagined that there would have been so much interest in this defence of the word. As soon as you enter, the word takes you somewhere else, or affects or excites you and puts you in a different place to what you're used to seeing. It's very hard to find scripts with dialogues that are so intelligent and well-constructed, where the conflicts have several layers beneath them, and not just one superficial dimension.

Albert Elduque

As a spectator, the first time I saw *Hermanas* I felt overwhelmed by the intensity of the dispute between the two protagonists, but when I came back to it I was able to appreciate the dynamics of the confrontation and the quality that each line takes, and even each word, when it is spoken. I think that the words and the communication in the play are constantly transformed, and a key strategy for achieving this are the moments when the protagonists adopt the roles of other people, imitating them, almost embodying them: mixing memories and criticisms, quoting their father, their mother, their friends, and also each other. The monologues almost turn into dialogues where a single voice takes on several characters, to the point where, in some of the final speeches, you can get lost and not know whether Irene is talking as Irene or whether she is still quoting her mother.

Indeed, *Hermanas* is a play that speaks constantly of language, explicitly, often alluding to the power of certain words, like «cliché», which Bárbara uses to describe Irene's feelings, and offering reflections on the appropriateness of a particular expression. In Pascal Rambert's script the protagonists interrogate each other about how they have communicated and how they communicate, or how one communicates in the press and the other communicates in social justice activism. It is the clash between private and public, personal and professional communication: despite their success with articles or campaigns, they aren't

able to establish contact with each other when their mother is dying. At a moment when the tempers cool and there seem to be signs of a truce, Irene tells Bárbara that maybe throughout their lives they should have kept quiet now and then and looked at one another more often. I think this constant reflection on forms of communication, the leap between what is said directly and what is analysed, between what is felt and what is articulated, creates some dramatic turns that transform the emotion in each dialogue in *Hermanas*.

Gonzalo de Lucas

Diction and an instrumental mastery of the word—of its rhythms and musicalities—is something that can be found in a lot of Spanish actresses in the first decades of sound films. Merely by listening to them you can see their body, their image. However, in our era, partly due to the use of language in the media, for some time now the specific, embodied power of the word has been homogenised and it has lost its uniqueness (this is something that Pasolini warned about back in the 1960s in relation to common language). In fact, these days a lot of casting calls are made based on Instagram or without even hearing the actress's voice or way of speaking. In contrast with that approach, I remember that Bresson, before seeing a potential casting choice, would call the actress on the phone to talk to her. He needed to hear the voice first, the voice as an image.

The interesting aspect of this situation is that the impoverishment of the technique for performing the word has given rise to a creative way of opening up new forms of diction for actresses. Jean Renoir pointed out that Queen Mathilde's Bayeux Tapestry was more beautiful than the modern «gobelin tapestries because Queen Mathilde had to solve problems of this type: "Oh! I have no red, I'll use ochre; I have no blue, I'll use a colour similar to blue". Thus, «forced to use direct contrasts, violent oppositions, she was pressured into constantly struggling against imperfection

and this helped her to become a great artist» (Bazin, 1958: 163). Following this idea, which I think is very important, the artistic value of technique is usually stimulated by limitations, not when it is refined to the utmost, as then it tends to turn into an academic, inert and predictable form.

In *Hermanas*, the actresses draw the emotions out of language in its most abstract potential; words serve their characters as introspective and analytical reflections, but at the same time they expose them and reveal them to be vulnerable, without anything sounding antiquated or belonging to the past. This language is very physical, striking, unsettling or moving the spectators. These days people find it increasingly difficult to articulate their experiences and their emotional conflicts with words. Conversely, in *Hermanas* the use of the poetic word as a musical instrument allows each character to construct multiple and even internally contradictory personalities,

and to be overrun with thoughts or emotions. The characters gradually reveal themselves through words, which are sometimes controlled and pointed, but other times they simply flow out, as if they were released involuntarily and the characters themselves were surprised to discover what they just said. In this way, rather than a memorised and recited text, the actresses make the script sound as if they were just saying whatever came to their minds at that moment. In this way the sisters release passions they can't control, and also offer glimpses of the unconscious dynamics of their relationship since childhood. Through this use of the word, they remind us of the centrality of language in the act of acquiring knowledge or, in the words of the Spanish poet José María Valverde, the fact that «language is the organ of the inner being; it is that same being when it manages, step by step, to recognise itself internally and to externalise itself» (Llovet, 2000: 159).

4. What kind of training in acting does this experience suggest is needed? What problems and what goals would you highlight in the filmmaking process for actresses, for example, in rehearsals?

Bárbara Lennie

You can come into acting from a lot of places and have very different journeys. Cinema has something really magical and sometimes inexplicable about it, in that someone who never thought of being an actress has something in her personality, in her soul or whatever, that she manages to draw out and transcend, and that makes her able to tell a story better than a trained actress. There are heaps of examples of this in film history. And it's also interesting to see what they do with what they've got, how they transform it, or don't. In any case, there is a general lack of understanding about what it means to be an actor or actress. That's why we don't talk about actors as the centre of a film, because in the end we don't really know what they

do, apart from the fact that you see them on the screen and they tell the story. As for my formal training, what has surprised me most and what I've learned the most from is actually dealing with directors. Suddenly you realise that you have to use what you've been studying for years in order to understand the person in front of you who is trying to tell you, very clumsily in general, what you have to do and why. Sometimes they put us in situations that seem to contradict what would be necessary to get something artistically interesting to happen. I've come across very few people who have the necessary patience or listening ability, or who know how to communicate with an actress or actor. And that's necessary to establish a pact: the director likes me to tell their story, but I also like



La enfermedad del domingo (Ramón Salazar, 2018)

them because through their story I can express myself in a way that I couldn't do in life in general. I think that has been the big lesson of all the years I've been working.

You need to think about what kind of rehearsing is best for each film or project. There are a lot of actors or directors who prefer not to rehearse, so as not to start off with a very closed idea about what has to happen. There's this idea in film-making that what happens between «action» and «cut» has to be something newly discovered right there, although I think sometimes the decision not to rehearse has to do with the insecurities of actors and directors. In fact, we often miss things because we're too insecure; sometimes in the good take I'm still wound up, and I think if you're more relaxed you can reach different heights. In some cases, rather than rehearsing what helps me is getting to know the director well. For example, for *Sunday's Illness*, Ramón Salazar said to me: «We only have a month to rehearse». And I replied: «Are we really going to rehearse for a who-

le month, as if we were doing Shakespeare?» Susi Sánchez and I saw pretty intuitively what path to take, but he already had the whole plan worked out and talked to us in terms that instead of helping us ended up blocking us, because he wanted to theorise too much about the script. On the second day of rehearsals, he himself told us that what we were doing made no sense at all. We realised that what would be useful for us would be to find each other, to be able to talk, to share images. It was more about sharing the creative process of the script, and what he had used in order to write it, than working with sequences or text.

Irene Escolar

Perhaps the main thing I've learned over all these years as an actress is patience and above all being calm, not getting too anxious to get anywhere. And also not comparing yourself with other people, but simply trying to set some criteria for your own technique and dedicating time to it. There are a lot of things that I would have been happy not to have

done. Now I think about them and I say: «But they didn't even interest me artistically!» Well, you do them sometimes because you have to eat, obviously, but otherwise I would have invested more time in music, for example, or in all the real training that would have been able to take me in other directions. To be honest, I wouldn't want to be a young actress starting out right now. It looks really hard. What do you invest your time and training in? Do you look for role models? Or do you spend hours working on your Instagram profile and your abs? It's all very confusing. Over time you see things more clearly, but when you're twenty, what do you do? Do you really make an effort? Is that effort valued and encouraged? I think it is much more in other countries in Europe than here, actually. Training is more respected, the pathways are clearer, as is having role models from a young age, and the level is so high that you can only get there if you have or train in some very specific skills. It's very important to be aware of what acting work entails, the capacity for empathy that you need to develop in your professional and personal life.

I get the impression that there is very little rehearsing going on in cinema, because of that idea of not undermining the situations or the actors. But acting work is not generally understood because every actor is also a world of their own. I work better by trying out things that don't work and being aware of that, to get more comfortable with what actually is working, or at least to feel that what I've tried is no good and to let it go. Letting go of your mistakes, because you have to try things and you can do it in so many ways... But it's a whole lot better if you have the chance to rehearse it. In the case of *An Autumn Without Berlin*, for example, we had a rehearsal process because the script was only half-finished. Also, Lara was a new director, very young. Everybody was really excited, but there was also a lot of work to do, so there we were, living in the town. We worked a lot on the dialogues and rethought everything in detail. We weren't rehearsing the sequences

so much as carefully choosing the words used to communicate that would allow you to get a good sense of a scene, which is one of the most complicated things to find. So in this case, we needed to build the foundation. Every project has a particular set of needs, above all for the person in charge. When I shot *Vania* with Carla Simón, on the other hand, she had worked a lot on the looks or the ideas for my character, because she had spent a lot of time on that piece and had gone over those thoughts a lot, all the possibilities. In that case, it was as if the performances themselves had been rehearsals, a lot of rehearsals, and through trial and error and getting to know that character with those internal conflicts, the play could come together there, when we filmed it.

Albert Elduque

One of cinema's virtues is that it is possible for actors to come to it from different places, not necessarily from formal training. I'm not referring just to non-professionals, but also to people who have had experience in other media and who for one reason or another end up in front of a movie camera: people who have worked in plays, or musicals, or the circus, or even in television... Everyone brings a certain tradition that connects with the film itself, even clashing with the story being told and challenging the plausibility of the whole. This doesn't necessarily have to be a bad thing. I'm thinking of the example of actresses from folk traditions; I recall an article by Diego Galán in 1970 lamenting the fact that with the supposed economic development of Spain, the flamenco dancers of the past want to be more sophisticated and become actresses, filing down their rough edges in the process. I think that veterans of the stage, like Estrellita Castro or Lola Flores, brought to their roles an emphasis on gestures and intentions that a textbook film star would never adopt. This may destabilise the credibility of the situations depicted, but at the same time it facilitates a clash of art forms, of different languages, techniques and tra-

ditions that ultimately enriches the whole. I don't mean that anything goes, but I think that taking an essentialist approach to what a film actor or actress is or should be can end up undermining the appearance of certain gestures, gazes, or movements... which the contamination between languages makes possible.

Gonzalo de Lucas

I would like to start my answer with reference to the course project that we've been offering for years now at Universitat Pompeu Fabra for the completion of the degree, which requires students to make their own films. From the outset, we wanted to prioritise meeting with the actress and the collaborative work with her (on this point I would like to stress that, as I see it, in film schools a lot of emphasis is placed on the script and the director's storyboarding, but then the actresses tend to be used more as practically interchangeable figures at the service of the storyboard, and films are rarely constructed with or by them). In a creative project, there is usually a consensus to make the most room possible for construction through trial and error; ways of rehearsing and learning to manage and see the body, voice, gestures, and working on the story and the experience of the film through that. Based on these bodily qualities or powers, the actress can express a lot of things—about her past or story—through gestures, movements or gazes, or her way of listening or saying something, without the script needing to add any psychological verbal or explanatory element. All of this is generally seen clearly in the editing, when the actresses are malleable images that can be composed and transformed according to the cuts, the order, the structure and the associations, to the point of being able to construct totally different characters and performances, within the range of possibilities offered by the actress, often in an uncontrolled way.

In the films resulting from this project at the university, since the students have to write and

film a part of the project during a single school year, they tend to look for actresses and start working with them well before they have their scripts completed, and so the usual approach is they construct the characters based on the casting rather than the other way round. In this respect, I think not much importance is given—either in schools or in the industry—to the ways a casting call is carried out, as they are usually organised in quite a mechanical way, as a cold test, which almost never involves any kind of experience really connected to the project. And taking a trip in a car with someone is not the same thing as doing a driving test. For this reason, and especially because they are collaborative group films with very small budgets, I usually propose that instead of running auditions they should meet with the potential actress for coffee and see the type of personal relationship—the energy, the connection, the understanding—that arises with her, and also if they have a real desire to film her, to make plans with her. I think that the first thing that a filmmaker needs to check in order to determine whether to shoot a scene or not is whether they have a genuine desire to do it, and that same desire should be triggered in the actress. Otherwise, I'd say it's not worth it. I like to think about cinema based on what happens between filmmakers and actresses, perhaps because my favourite definition of cinema is one of Godard's: «The predisposition for a meeting: that is cinema».

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| conclusion

ALBERT ELDUQUE

One of the most enlightening sequences in *Aunt Tula* (Miguel Picazo, 1964) is the bridal shower for Jovita, who is about to get married and move to Venezuela. A dozen friends get together to celebrate the bride with punch and music, and between jokes and jibes they tell secrets, share memories of their own wedding days and, above all, sing and dance together. The sequence plays in part with the stereotype of the gossipy woman, but it goes much further than that, because when they start singing and dancing, sometimes individually and other times in chorus, a strong sense of community emerges, where the individual contributions fit perfectly into the collective partying and dancing.

This discussion for *(Dis)Agreements* was inspired by the idea of thinking about the work of the actress in Spanish cinema based on the careers of Bárbara Lennie and Irene Escolar, and also in relation to theatrical and cinematic traditions. Since they first appeared on the big screen in the first decade of this century, their characters, performances and gestures have been inscribed with generational changes that clash or converse with those of actresses who came before them, like Aurora Bautista. In this way, Spanish cinema's recent history can be reinterpreted through these actresses to draw out new ideas and connections. Comparing them with the icons of the Franco era is particularly thought-provoking. In her book *En cuerpo y alma: Ser mujer en tiempos de Franco* (2015), Aurora Morcillo analyses the identification between the body of the nation and the body of

the woman during the dictatorship to consider how on the one hand, the country was conceptualised in female terms, while on the other, patriotic duties were used to exploit women's bodies. Her analysis suggests that actress's bodies can be conceived of as spaces for the inscription of an era: in different characters, performances and gestures, it is possible to read the evolution of a society. This is what can be done with the films of the Franco era, but also with films being made today.

However, this discussion has shown that there are hazards associated with thinking in terms of these inscriptions. At the least, it is dangerous to do it with the present. Neither Bárbara Lennie nor Irene Escolar feel that they are representatives of a collective movement or an archetype that defines contemporary women. Their work is not merely a series of messages about the society in which they live, as this would be to limit their potential as actresses and, especially, the capacity of their bodies to transform and be transformed. Significantly, a paradigm that both actresses identify in contemporary Spanish cinema is a kind of realism, an anchoring in the world that can sometimes suffocate acting versatility, creative experimentation and continuous learning. Ultimately, this obsession with a realist model can tend towards adherence to a certain pre-existing world of perspectives, actions and situations that are already familiar to us. Theatre, on the other hand, for these actresses is a space open to experimenting, trial and error, for exploration both within and without.

Bárbara Lennie remarks that she would like to play a role in an erotic film. The change these actresses stand for may, in effect, entail the desire of the actress, or even be derived from that desire. The desire can be sexual, but also professional, for knowledge, for learning, for adventure, for movement, for a leap forward. Desire is what makes women's bodies resistant to metaphorical paralysis, to their cloistering as an embodiment of an era. It is what facilitates an opportunity for change, to blow up the existing moulds, to break the rules so that new realities can come to life. The desire at the heart, like a central generator, interconnected, of course, with technique, writing, learning, hard work, rehearsal, and tradition: all of these have been recognised and valued in this conversation, not as constrictive or restraining, but as a trampoline, trapeze or launching pad to jump off from. Like orchestra musicians or conductors with a score, as Irene Escolar suggests, they can become «soldiers of the word».

The personal, desiring spirit is a force for change, but it understands the need of the Other. Emerging over the course of this discussion has been the key idea of incorporating the encounter, dialogue and sharing into the work processes between filmmakers and actresses. This can bring about a break with the vertical models that have traditionally subjugated actresses to the gaze of a male director, which still mark ways of working in the industry and critical approaches to film history. Particularly enlightening in this respect is Bárbara Lennie's self-critical reflection that she has only recently realised that trying out different roles for women is a collective struggle, and that the spirit of community among actresses in the industry is essential for the transformation of traditionally individualist and masculine structures. *Hermanas*, in this sense, could be interpreted as a reflection of this discussion, because it depicts a confrontation between the individualities of two women who have sacrificed everything for their careers, but who have not been able to share

their desires with their loved ones: their father, mother, sister. Throughout the play they criticise each other for the emptiness of their individual dreams, and at the same time they acknowledge the need to look at each other.

Actresses have been able to recognise that the transformative spirit of desire is intertwined with the spirit of a generation and with the desires of others, and they probably have seen this much more clearly than male actors have. In the bridal shower scene in *Aunt Tula*, we end up forgetting who is getting married, who is leaving, and without losing sight of the unique qualities of each of the women, we focus on how they talk, have fun, learn, converse and share with each other. It is on this basis that we can view the actress's work as a desire that creates a change, but that is in constant dialogue. And in this way we can reconsider how to analyse their work, but also to ponder our preconceived notions about male actors, filmmakers, and filmmaking, to think of it instead as a site for sharing, as a dialogue in which one sister needs the other to go on living. ■

NOTES

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WHEN FIRE RISES UP FROM THE SOLES OF YOUR FEET: CREATIVE EXPERIENCES OF THE ACTRESS IN SPANISH CINEMA

Abstract

This discussion brings together two actresses (Bárbara Lennie and Irene Escolar) and two researchers (Albert Elduque and Gonzalo de Lucas) to reflect on the work of the actress in contemporary Spanish cinema. Among other topics, they discuss depictions of women in society, ways of working in the film industry, actress-based approaches to film history, aesthetic analysis of acting work, the technique/emotion binary in creation on stage and on screen, and the need for reflection on actor training. The *Escenario O* series, produced by Lennie and Escolar, and especially the episode *Hermanas*, starring both actresses, constitutes a focal point for the dialogue, and the link between the careers of the two actresses and the traditions of Spanish cinema.

Key words

Bárbara Lennie; Irene Escolar; Female Archetypes; Spanish Cinema; Acting Technique; Actor Training; Gesture; Depictions of Women in Society.

Authors

Bárbara Lennie is an actress from Madrid. Her most notable work includes the films *Every Song Is About Me* (Jonás Trueba, 2010), *Magical Girl* (Carlos Vermut, 2014, for which she won the Goya Award for Best Leading Actress), *María (and Everyone Else)* (Nely Reguera, 2016), *Sunday's Illness* (Ramón Salazar, 2018) and *Petra* (Jaime Rosales, 2018), the television series *Amar en tiempos revueltos* (Josep Maria Benet i Jornet, Antonio Onetti, Rodolf Sirera, TVE, 2005-2012) and the plays *Veraneantes* (Miguel del Arco, 2011-2012), *Las criadas* (Pablo Messiez, 2012-2013) and *La clausura del amor* (Pascal Rambert, 2015-2017). Together with Irene Escolar, she is the co-creator and co-producer of *Escenario O* (2020).

Irene Escolar is a Madrid-born actress. Her most outstanding work includes roles in the plays *Oleanna* (Manuel de Benito, 2011), *El público* (Àlex Rigola, 2015-2017), *Vania* (Àlex Rigola, 2017-2018), *Un enemigo del pueblo* (Àlex Rigola, 2018) and *Mammón* (Nao Albert, Marcel Borrás, 2018-2020), and as director of *Leyendo Lorca* (2016-2017). She has also starred in the films *El idioma imposible* (Rodrigo Rodero, 2010) and *An Autumn Without Berlin* (Lara Izagirre, 2015, receiving the Goya Award for Best New Actress), and the television series *Isabel* (Javier Olivares, TVE, 2012-2014) and *Tell Me Who I Am* (José Manuel Lorenzo, Eduard Cortés, 2020-2021). Together with Bárbara Lennie, she is the co-creator and co-producer of *Escenario O* (2020).

CUANDO SUBE UNA OLEADA DE FUEGO POR LOS PIES: EXPERIENCIAS CREATIVAS DE LA ACTRIZ EN EL CINE ESPAÑOL

Resumen

Esta discusión reúne a dos actrices (Bárbara Lennie e Irene Escolar) y a dos investigadores (Albert Elduque y Gonzalo de Lucas) para reflexionar sobre el trabajo de la actriz dentro del cine español contemporáneo. Entre otros temas, se abordan las representaciones sociales de la mujer, las formas de trabajo en la industria, los abordajes de la historia del cine a partir de las actrices, el análisis estético del trabajo interpretativo, el binomio técnica y emoción en la creación en el escenario y frente a la cámara, y la necesidad de reflexionar sobre la formación actuarial. El proyecto *Escenario O*, producido por Lennie y Escolar, y muy especialmente el capítulo *Hermanas*, protagonizado por ambas, constituyen puntos centrales del diálogo, así como el vínculo entre las trayectorias de estas actrices y las tradiciones del cine español.

Palabras clave

Bárbara Lennie; Irene Escolar; arquetipos femeninos; cine español; técnica actuarial; formación del intérprete; gestualidad; representaciones sociales de la mujer.

Autores

Bárbara Lennie (Madrid, 1984) es actriz. Entre sus trabajos destacan las películas *Todas las canciones hablan de mí* (Jonás Trueba, 2010), *Magical Girl* (Carlos Vermut, 2014, Goya a la Mejor actriz protagonista), *María (y los demás)* (Nely Reguera, 2016), *La enfermedad del domingo* (Ramón Salazar, 2018) y *Petra* (Jaime Rosales, 2018), la serie de televisión *Amar en tiempos revueltos* (Josep Maria Benet i Jornet, Antonio Onetti, Rodolf Sirera, TVE, 2005-2012) y las obras de teatro *Veraneantes* (Miguel del Arco, 2011-2012), *Las criadas* (Pablo Messiez, 2012-2013) y *La clausura del amor* (Pascal Rambert, 2015-2017). Es creadora y productora, junto a Irene Escolar, de *Escenario O* (2020).

Irene Escolar (Madrid, 1988) es actriz. Entre sus trabajos destacan los montajes teatrales *Oleanna* (Manuel de Benito, 2011), *El público* (Àlex Rigola, 2015-2017), *Vania* (Àlex Rigola, 2017-2018), *Un enemigo del pueblo* (Àlex Rigola, 2018) y *Mammón* (Nao Albert, Marcel Borrás, 2018-2020), así como la dirección de *Leyendo Lorca* (2016-2017); las películas *El idioma imposible* (Rodrigo Rodero, 2010) y *Un otoño sin Berlín* (Lara Izagirre, 2015, Goya a Mejor actriz revelación), y las series televisivas *Isabel* (Javier Olivares, TVE, 2012-2014) y *Dime quién soy* (José Manuel Lorenzo, Eduard Cortés, 2020-2021). Es creadora y productora, junto a Bárbara Lennie, de *Escenario O* (2020).

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