



SUNÚ

A FILM BY TERESA CAMOU

85 mins / Color / 2015 / Spanish, English Subtitles / Mexico



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FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

2015

Sheffield International DOC/FEST, Official Selection in Competition for the Sheffield Environmental Award, World Premiere
DUHOK International Film Festival, Asian Premiere
Take One Action Film Festival, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Roots Film Festival, Azores Portugal
BIFED – Bozcaada International Festival of Ecological Documentary, Bozcaada, Turkey
DocsDF 2015, 10th International Documentary Film Festival of Mexico City, Mexican Premiere
UK Food Sovereignty Movement, Cultural Festival
Madre Tierra Indigenous- Slow Food, Indigenous Film Festival, Shillong India
La Semana de Cine Mexicano en tu Ciudad de CONACULTA a través IMCINE, Culiacán, Sinaloa Mexico
El Maíz el Otro Oro de América, Presentación Cultural, Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico
Festival de Cine Documental Mexicano Zanate, Colima, Mexico, Special Honorable Mention
El Festival del Huerto Roma Verde, Mexico City, Mexico
Unslaved Corn Festival, Hong Kong China
el Festival de Cine de la Heroica Ciudad Juárez, Juárez Chihuahua, Mexico
The 37th Festival Internacional Del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano, Havana, Cuba
Centro de Agricultura, Paraná, Argentina

2016

Maison de Mexique, Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris, Paris France
2016 Portland EcoFilm Festival, Oregon, US
VIII Women's Film Festival, Milán Italy
Premiere in the Sierra Tarahumara, Festival of the Maize, Bacajípare Chihuahua, Mexico
Premiere de SUNÚ en la Cd de Chihuahua (Febrero 2016) presentación cultural
Screening, Green on the Screen Film, London, United Kingdom
The Guadalajara International Film Festival (FICG31), Guadalajara, Mexico
Films des 28e Rencontres, Discover Documentary Section, Toulouse, France
Ambulante Documentary Film Festival Mexico
Festival of the Corn, Ixtenco, Tlaxcala, Mexico
Cinema Planeta, Festival Internacional del Medio Ambiente, In Competition, Morelos México
Contra el Silencio Todas las Voces, México
San Francisco Green Film Festival, San Francisco, CA
5th Muestra Ecofalante de Cine Ambiental, Sao Pablo Brasil
FICMY, Festival Internacional de Cine de Mérida y Yucatán, Yucatán, Mexico
Ecozine International Film Festival, Zaragoza, Spain
Festival Internacional de Cine de Derechos Humanos, Buenos Aires, Argentina
5th Iran International Green Festival, Tehran, Iran
Latin American Studies Association International Film Festival, New York, NY

SYNOPSIS

A documentary film about one of the world's greatest treasures

Seen through the eyes of small, midsize and large Mexican maize producers, **SUNÚ** knits together different stories from a threatened rural world. The documentary journeys deep into the heart of a country where people are determined to stay free, to work the land and cultivate their seeds, to be true to their cultures and forms of spirituality, all in a modern world that both needs them and despises them. SUNÚ reveals how maize and everything it gives life to could be lost forever. The film shares a generous tapestry of simple, heartfelt messages for the farmers of the world and the city dwellers who could lose the capability to make important choices unless they act soon.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

SUNÚ or “maize” in rarámuri, is the fourth most important grain for human consumption feeding. It is this basis of food that is being threatened in its center of origin: Mexico. Today most people have forgotten its importance, origin and the work that necessary for maize to prosper. It is now in danger to disappearing. I have reached this conclusion that the field is forgotten, left like an orphan who nobody wants to recognize. It worries to me that we longer understand what we eat, where it comes from and which are the conditions the food is produced. In many cases we preferred that they come from questionable sources without thinking about which that implies. The distance between the field (producing) and the city (consumption) is growing. It has opened a bottomless abyss that puts in serious risk the customs that we no longer honor and have defined us as a nation.

My years of work with social justice organizations in the indigenous communities of Sierra Tarahumara compelled me to make a film that catches the simple beauty of the world of maize and to transmit to others with the hope to change the way we think, we feed ourselves to inspire us to act.

While sharing life with an indigenous family, I observed the relationship that they have with their environment, and I noticed the care that that they give to the land, the little of water which they use to live, their constant hope to that it rains a little more and their love of the plants that drinks the water, by their rising tides and by the seeds that they give them to eat.

I watched the relationship they have with their environment and I saw the care the famers give to the land, in the little water that they use to live in the constant hope that it rains a little more to give the crops the water which will provide them with the grains and seeds that provide them with food.

I am impressed of the faith inexhaustible that a farmer has in his work, in their animals that help them work and cultivate their land with so much effort to get food –not to sell but to feed their family and animals and to water the seeds that they will eat.

It made me understand the beauty of people living in harmony with their environment their attention to the climate, the insects, animals, the wind, the cold and the issues that appear year after year, so they are able to continue living and planting on their land. I see the great obstacles they face. They see as in order to survive and continue planting, they must be guardians of the maize and seeds. The inexhaustible faith that farmers have in their work is impressive to me.

Understanding the status of maize growers in the industrial zones and the of peasants and indigenous people must be determined. They suffer from a lack of support for their work and marketing and plagued by the belief that they cannot be produce. They are also in a precarious situation.

For me the threat they face is not with the problems of climate, or a lack of motivation to continue

planting, but in the lack of recognition on the part of the Government and of the citizens of urban areas for the need for economic support and projects to stimulate their culture and land and to understand the tremendous threat from our society with the imposition of technologies to work the land, toxic agrochemicals, and genetically modified seeds.

When I came to understand some of the profound importance of maize, I discovered a thread that links my identity with other ways of being. Like the majority of Mexicans, I am not a peasant, nor live in the countryside, nor crop land, but I see myself in the colors and smells of the popular cuisine, in the enjoyment of the taste and good nutrition of Mexican food. I want my documentary to communicate this experience to others and to give the public a deeper understanding of what it means to plant corn, the recognition of the importance of the work from the hands of the planters. With this documentary, I want to contribute to greater understanding of justice and equity between the countryside and the city. I would like to recognize the heritages that distinguish us and bring us to the closer to each other.

I wanted to create a documentary that speaks about the state of the growers of maize by the indigenous, the peasant temporalero and the industrial producer. We tell their story of their work through the agricultural cycle, through their stories and the variety of food prepared by women. What is happening to the the producers of maize in the Mexican countryside? Why have they not been seen as people who know how to feed the world? If the people who live in the city understand the process of growing our own food, we would see very differently all the persons engaged in working the field to feed our communities.

Teresa Camou Guerrero



DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

Born and raised in México, Teresa has always first considered herself to be a puppeteer. From 1996 to 2011, she joined the Bread and Puppet Theatre in Vermont, and continues to collaborate with them to this day. After earning a BA in Visual Arts and Social Science from Bennington College, in 2004, she returned to Mexico and founded El Indígena de la Sierra Tarmaura Theatre, an indigenous Mexican puppet theater company based in northern Mexico's Sierra Madre. In 2009, she won a grant from the Chihuahuan Institute of Culture to publish a collection of scripts and stories from the theater named "Andares, Cantares." It was the winner of the Publicaciones del Gobierno del Estado Award.

Teresa is also a critically acclaimed filmmaker. She directed and produced two short documentaries about issues related to Tarahumara communities and two short animated films "El Entierro" (2008) and "Tewe Chiva Nesero" (2007) which received honorable mention at the Chihuahua International Film Festival. SUNÚ (2015) is her first feature film.

Teresa is passionate about teaching art at the Center for Education for the Blind (CEIAC). She recently collaborated with blind artists and installed two art exhibitions, one of which strives to communicate to people what it's like to be blind in Chihuahua.





TEREA CAMOU (SUNÚ)

Camera, interview and editing: Sofía Ochoa Rodríguez

The Chihuahuan Teresa Camou worked as a puppeteer with young Rarámuris students that had to leave school. They made with recycled material; they wrote stories about their history and communities. In all cases, maíz was a constant. Maíz was and is the center of their dreams, their concerns, their identity and their world view. It was then that Camou decided to make a documentary about this plant that together with rice and wheat provide 50% of the food energy to the world.

Camou was looking to deliver in Sunú (Rarámuri word for corn), her directorial debut, a complete panoramic story. She traveled throughout the whole nation – to the south, the center, the north, east and west – to show the difficult circumstances of growing corn. Prevalent among small farmers is the more than a decade long struggle against genetically modified crops (Monsanto and company). Their passion and attachment to the land has prevented these large corporations from dominating the field; thus prevented the Mexican countryside from the poisonous chemicals. Yet, the indigenous farmers find themselves abandoned by the government and cities, surviving day to day without support or recognition, providing the fundamental work of feeding the population in addition to preserving this symbol of national identity.

Teresa Camou's film competed in Cinema Planet's Official Selection and won the Best Documentary Award. I spoke with her during the festival about the reality of the countryside, the lack of recognition to agriculture producers, the solitude in which the farmers live, and how people from the cities could support local farmers by doing something as simple as eating healthier.

TEREA CAMOU (SUNÚ) – ESPAÑOL

Cámara, entrevista y edición: Sofía Ochoa Rodríguez

La chihuahuense **Teresa Camou** trabajaba como titiritera con jóvenes rarámuris que habían tenido que abandonar la escuela. Hacían los títeres con material reciclado; ellos escribían las historias y las representaban. En todos los casos, el maíz era una constante. El maíz se encontraba –se encuentra– al centro de sus sueños, sus preocupaciones, su identidad, su cosmovisión. Fue entonces que Camou decidió hacer un documental sobre esta planta que, junto con el arroz y el trigo, provee del 50% de la energía alimentaria a todo el mundo.

El retrato que buscaba ofrecer en *Sunú* (la palabra rarámuri para 'maíz'), su ópera prima, era panorámico. Viajó entonces por toda la República —al sur, al centro, al norte, este y oeste— para complejizar las condiciones del cultivo del maíz. Como situación generalizada entre los pequeños campesinos, encontró una lucha de más de una década contra la entrada de los transgénicos (Monsanto y *cía*). Su pasión y arraigo a la tierra ha evitado que esas grandes corporaciones dominen el campo; ha evitado, pues, que el campo mexicano se envenene de químicos, y aún así, la mayoría indígenas, se encuentran en abandono del gobierno, de las ciudades, sobreviviendo día a día sin apoyo ni reconocimiento, cuando realizan una labor de base: la de alimentar a la población, además de preservar ese símbolo de identidad nacional.

El filme de Teresa Camou concursó dentro de la Selección Oficial de Cinema Planeta y ganó el Premio a Mejor Documental. Platicué con ella durante el festival sobre la realidad del campo, la falta del reconocimiento al productor agrario, sobre la soledad en la que viven los campesinos, y sobre cómo con algo tan simple y obvio como comer más sano, los consumidores ciudadanos podemos apoyar a los productores locales.



PRODUCTION CREDITS

Director and Producer – Teresa Camou Guerrero

Director of Photography – Aldo Hernández

Editing – Juan Manuel Figueroa Mondragón

Music – Raúl Vizzi

Sound Designer – Daniel Sánchez Caballero

Color Correction – Juan Carlos Rayón Delgado

Sound – Ariana Rico Bustillos

Still Photography – David Lauer

Assistant Editor – Consuelo Tirado

English Translation – David Lauer Read

Spanish Translation from Rarámuri – Mikéli Qarzabi Wetosáchi Parra

Transcript – Margarita Caudillo, Rosy Ontiveros

FOPROCINE Delegate Producer – Inti Cordera

Co-Production – FOPROCINE

Locations – In the states of: Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Hidalgo, Veracruz, Oaxaca, Tlaxcala and the Federal District

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