



Finding Shelter
Documentary
28:00

Produced by CalArts Center for New Performance

Finding Shelter shares the stories of several unaccompanied minors seeking refuge in the United States and how their stories were made in to a play. The documentary focuses on the experiences these young people had making their journey, the two yearlong involvement with the play, as well as how the lives of the creative team were changed. Shelter received national attention and was performed in Lincoln Park, several conferences and community centers, and the Kennedy Center. It is narrated by one of the girls who was interviewed for the play, and who is now going to college to be an engineer.

Finding Shelter has screened at the San Diego Latino Film Festival, The Segal Center International Film Festival (NYC), with upcoming screenings in Atlanta, Miami, and Chicago.

Directors Bio – Marissa Chibas

Marissa Chibas is a writer, performer, filmmaker and recipient of the TCG Fox Fellowship in Distinguished Achievement. Her solo show Daughter of a Cuban Revolutionary, which premiered at REDCAT, has toured the U.S., Europe, and Mexico. Marissa has acted in over 50 productions on and off Broadway. Her silent film/performance piece, Clara's Los Angeles, was presented at REDCAT's NOW festival and the San Diego Latino Film Festival. Marissa is on the Theater School faculty at CalArts where she heads the initiative Duende Calarts, part of CalArts Center for New Performance (CNP) that collaborates with innovative Latinx and Latin American artists to make adventurous theater work. For Duende she conceived and wrote Shelter, which premiered in April 2016 at Lincoln Park and was presented at the Kennedy Center and is now a documentary titled Finding Shelter. Shelter was published by NoPassport Press and her solo play is included in the Routledge Press second edition of Contemporary Plays by Women of Color. In April 2017 she co-created and performed in a video installation at Fabrica de Arte in La Habana, Nostalgia, in collaboration with Cuba based artist Aissa Santiso. Her short film Zohra was presented in various film festivals and was nominated for best

actress and best comedy awards at the Official Latino Film Festival. She is currently collaborating with Octavio Solis on a multi disciplinary theater project titles Scene With Cranes.

Twitter @mchibas
marissachibas.com

Directed by Marissa Chibas

Produced by CalArts Center for New Performance/Duende CalArts

Director of Photography Solomon Turner

Additional footage Mike Stoltz

Editing Solomon Turner, Peter Mark, Luis Gutierrez Arias, John Henry Thiesen

Music composed and performed by Sabina Estrella and the CalArts Jazz Ensemble

Subtitles and translation Natalia Lasalle-Morillo

Interviewees -

The kids of SoHDA, Ruxandra Guidi, Dr. Kate Swanson, Dr. Susan Terrio, Federico Bustamante, Mark Valdez, Ratri Anindyajati, Juan Parada, Emilio Garcia Sanchez, Andres Velez, Jazmen Bleu Gutierrez, Steve Vigil.

The play *Shelter* was devised through workshops with the following team of theater makers – Martin Acosta, Mona Heinze, Fernando Belo, Efred Delgadillo, Jocelyn Dimaya, Jesse Fryery, Sam Sewell, Estey Demarchant, Julianne Figueroa, Mark Valdez, Leslie Tamaribuchi, Ratri Anindyajati, Cynthia Callejas, Peter Mark, Moriah Martel, Jonathan Bangs, Jazmen-Bleu Gutierrez, Emilio Garcia-Sanchez, Andres Velez, Maggie Corona Goldstein, Lucas Cassanova, Julien Moore, Julian Sandoval, Audrey Olmos, Henita Telo.

Trailer –

<https://vimeo.com/306873920>

Director Statement

The situation being played out on our border, and on borders around the world, is complicated with no easy solutions. But while many argue the status of these children and some think that building walls will keep the tragedy away, people are suffering on a monumental scale. Adults and children are choosing to risk their lives and limbs while riding La Bestia, rather than face the daily violence of their home countries. The global economy so many in our country hail and seek also has a dark side. Can we in good conscience turn away from this crisis on our border and in the countries of our neighbors? How will future generations judge our actions of today? How can we move forward in a way that stops this violent history from repeating? Questions such as these are what we seek to provoke through our documentary Finding Shelter.

The more I get to know the journeys these brave new dreamers undertook the more I admire their courage, strength, and deep desire to make something of their lives. Their stories are similar to countless other Americans from different parts of the

world who sacrificed everything to make it to these shores. The resilience and determination I see in these young people no wall can stop, no fear mongering can conquer. A friend recently told me about his grandfather who came to the U.S. by himself as a child of 12 and arrived in the very tough landscape of 1910 New York. The difference is that my friend's grandfather was not sent back to face the pogroms of Russia, but was able to find shelter in this country. This difference is not one readily acknowledged by wall building proponents.

The kids I have met in the process of creating this play and documentary have changed me. I am humbled by their ability to stand in the face of such hardships and still be full of hope. I am amazed by how quickly they have assimilated, how hard they work to move themselves forward. It is my deepest wish that the film offers healing for these new dreamers, food for thought for those torn on the subject, and space for conversations that can lead to positive outcomes for our immigration policies. After our first workshop of Shelter one of the young people I interviewed said, "I feel represented." She said this with joy in her eyes. I hope the new dreamers have a sense of the impact of their heroic stories; and, for all those who have lived something similar, to experience the power of having their journey witnessed, acknowledged, and to feel well represented.