

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

Made in America

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY MARITZA CRUZ

maritza-cruz.com/directing/mia

CREDITS

KEY CREW

Written by Maritza Cruz
Directed by Maritza Cruz
Produced by Care Dorghalli & Elizabeth Uribe

Executive Producer Leticia Cruz, Marcelo Cruz & Gina M. Garcia

Associate Producers Ari Johnson & Eloïse Desclaves

Creative Producer Erynn Mitchell

CAST

Xiomara Jasmine Sunshine Muñoz
Ana Melanie Pascault
Frank Patrick Randolph
Martina Julia Vera
Clarissa Lisandra Tena
Mr. Garcia Frank Vargas
The Neighbor Eduardo Fuenzalida
Young Girl Allyson Juliette

CREW

Director of Photography Elisabetta 'Fox' Piantoni
Editors Aziz Anderson, Rachael Dahl & Lizzie Green
Sound Designer Doris (Yushu) Shen
Production Designer Adeline Wang
Costume Designer Amber Luke
Music by Pablo Langaine

1st Assistant Director Zoe Black & Rachael Dahl

Script Supervisors Amanda Chen, Claire Ernandes & Lizzie Green

1st Assistant Camera Nobutaka Emura & Jenna Miller

2nd Assistant Camera Sky Byun & Bella Zhu

Gaffer Jonathan McCormack & Nobutaka Emura

Camera Operator Yilun Fang

Key Grip Max Huang & Noah Spiece

Grip & Electric Alex Chang, Yilun Fang, Hannah Ignacio, Irwin Ochoa & Madeline Tsai

Hair & Makeup Artist Ashley Francisco

Costume Assistant Andy Garcia

Set Dressers Theo Snow & Yilin Xu

Sound Recordist Sean Condie

Production Sound Mixer Sean Condie

Post-Production Sound Mixer Doris (Yushu) Shen

Music Supervisor Grace Groves

Colorist Enikö Edelsbrunner

Set Photographer Neptune Lee

Title Design by Sela Britton

Faculty Advisors Jeremy Kagan & John Watson

Festivals/Distribution/Licensing Sandrine Faucher Cassidy



LOGLINE

A 16-year-old migrant girl searches for her best friend when she goes missing from a late-night shift at a garment factory.

MARITZA CRUZ
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Title: Made in America
Genre: Drama, Social Change
Country: USA
Production Year: 2023
Completed: 2025
Language: English, Spanish
(English .srt available)
Duration: 10:57
Aspect Ratio: 1.66:1
Frame Rate: 24
Shooting Format: ARRI Amira, 4k
Exhibition Format: 4k DCP
Sound: Stereo

SYNOPSIS

Xiomara and Ana, two Central American migrant teens, work the late-night shift at a garment factory. When Ana goes missing after staying for an extra shift, 'Xo' searches for her friend, only to uncover Ana never made it home. Her search leads her back to the factory, where she's faced with a devastating truth — Ana has been fatally injured on the job.

CAST

Jasmine Sunshine Muñoz as Xiomara
Melanie Pascault as Ana
Patrick Randolph as Frank
Julia Vera as Martina
Lisandra Tena as Clarissa
Frank Vargas as Mr. Garcia
Eduardo Fuenzalida as The Neighbor
Allyson Juliette as Young Girl





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"Made in America" began after I read a series of New York Times articles about unaccompanied Central American migrant children working grueling, often dangerous jobs across the U.S. One story, in particular, haunted me—a 14-year-old boy who lost his hand during an overnight shift at a meatpacking plant. As I dug deeper, I realized his case was not an anomaly but part of a much larger, often-ignored crisis. These children were being maimed, even killed, yet their suffering remained in the shadows.

As a Mexican-American woman who grew up carrying responsibilities beyond her years, I felt a deep, personal urgency to tell this story. I wrote and directed this short film in hopes of shedding light on the labor exploitation of unaccompanied migrant children—children who, like my protagonist, are forced to grow up far too soon. That theme—coming of age under impossible circumstances—is one I continually explore in my work.

Inspired by Andrea Arnold's approach to raw, immersive storytelling, I cast real teens in the lead roles and relied solely on diegetic music to preserve the film's authenticity. Every camera movement was intentional; handheld tracking shots allowed us to stay fluid and intimate, moving seamlessly with our characters.

Making this film was not just a creative endeavor—it was deeply personal. Just days before we began shooting, I lost my grandfather. In many ways, this film became a part of my grieving process—an unspoken tribute to him and the resilience he embodied. He, too, was a child laborer who sacrificed everything to give his family a better life.

Maritza Cruz, Writer / Director



MARITZA CRUZ
WRITER / DIRECTOR

Maritza Cruz is a Mexican-American filmmaker based in Los Angeles whose work explores the crucible of female adolescence — the moment a young woman first feels the world's weight and discovers her own strength. As a girl thrust into maturity at a young age, Maritza found solace and hope in films about ordinary girls overcoming extraordinary challenges. Her films now reflect that journey, often blending truth and fiction to illuminate overlooked truths and the contradictions of youth.

CARE DORGHALLI
PRODUCER

Carin "Care" Dorghalli is a producer and first-generation daughter of immigrants. At USC, she directed a thesis documentary about a father and 6-year-old daughter who shelter people displaced by natural disasters. It won first place awards at multiple film festivals, including the Cleveland International Film Festival.

Most recently, Dorghalli line produced a multi-million dollar virtual production shot at Sony Studios with Oscar-winning VFX team PXO on an LED volume. Today, she works on the legacy soap opera Days of our Lives while pursuing passion projects on the side.

ELIZABETH URIBE
PRODUCER

Elizabeth, born and raised in South East LA, is a first-generation Chicana and multi-disciplinary artist and producer. She has worked with PBS, Crimson Edge Productions, and Fierce by Mitú. Her position at the South Gate Museum & Art Gallery has led her to advocating and coordinating arts and culture programs in her SELA community.

ERYNN MITCHELL
CREATIVE PRODUCER

With a penchant for Old Hollywood, multi-hyphenate Erynn M. is dedicated to recapturing the classic era of cinema in a way that is relevant to her modern lens. Her short, The Death of Socrates featured Paul Eiding (Transformers, Metal Gear Solid) and won the Women in Film Achievement award from the Colorado Independent Film Society.

Most recently, she produced and was the lead actress in the upcoming E is for Expiation, directed and adapted from Stephen King's Luckey Quarter by Colorado filmmaker Rob Bowen for the final year of the Dollar Baby Project.

CAST BIOS



JASMINE SUNSHINE MUÑOZ (XIOMARA)

Jasmine Sunshine Muñoz is an emerging actor based in Los Angeles, CA. She trains and assistant coaches at Be Acting Studio.

She has starred in another short film, *From Venus* (2023), and has appeared in several commercials.



JULIA VERA (MARTINA)

Julia started her acting career after her children were grown and had left the nest. Her first movie was "Speed" with Keanu Reeves and Sandra Bullock.

Since then, she has appeared most notably as Abuelita in the Hulu's comedy "This Fool," Grandmother Luisa in Disney's "Elena of Avalor" series, and Esmeralda in Adam Sander's first debut film, "The Ridiculous Six."

Most recently, she starred in the horror film "The Old Ways."



LISANDRA TENA (CLARISSA)

Lisandra Tena graduated magna cum laude with her BFA in Acting from DePaul University.

In 2013, she was honored when Chris Jones of the Chicago Tribune named her one of the Top 10 upcoming talents in Chicago Theater. Her original one-woman show, GUERA, premiered at the YoSolo Festival in Chicago. She later became a Fellow at the Women's International Study Center as she prepared for GUERA's New Mexico and Arizona tour.

She has appeared in numerous films, television shows, commercials, and voiceovers, and is best known for her role as Lola Guerrero on the AMC horror drama series *Fear the Walking Dead*.

HOD BIOS

ELISABETTA (FOX) PIANTONI

Elisabetta Fox Piantoni is an Italian cinematographer based in L.A. After working as an outdoor freelance photographer for two years and travelling to almost 50 countries while showcasing her work in exhibitions around the world that earned her international awards, she decided to focus on filmmaking. She strives to make a visual and social impact with her images, narrating stories about underrepresented communities that can not only entertain but ignite discussions.

DORIS (YUSHU) SHEN

Doris (Yushu) Shen is a Los Angeles-based sound designer & mixer who recently graduated with an MFA in Film Production from USC's School of Cinematic Arts. With a background in Beijing Philharmonic Choir and Classical singing, she discovered her passion for motion picture sound design during her undergraduate studies, inspired by the intricate layers of sound in film.

The film 'The Things We Keep', where she worked on the Sound Design & Mixing was selected for the Sundance Film Festival 2025. In 2024, she received the Student Recognition Award from the Cinema Audio Society (CAS).

PABLO LANGAINE

Pablo Langaïne is a Mexican-American composer blending Latin American folklore with contemporary orchestration and virtuoso guitar". His most relevant music department credits for film, TV, and games include *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* (André Øvredal, Guillermo del Toro) and *Red Dead Redemption 2* (Rockstar Games). His latest project, "The Cleaning Lady Documentary," premieres April 28, 2025, on PBS.





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SHORTS FEST

2025



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