

A woman with dark hair is looking down at something in her hands, possibly a pair of scissors, inside a rustic kitchen. The kitchen is viewed through a wooden window frame. Several metal pots and pans are hanging from the ceiling inside the room. The background outside the window shows some green foliage.

QUINZAINÉ  
DES RÉALISATEURS  
Société des réalisateurs de films  
CANNES 2012

# LA SIRGA

A film by WILLIAM VEGA

# Sirga

1. *f. Mar.* Juggling action to throw fishing nets, to tug boats from land, principally in river navigation.

A la ~.

1. *loc. adv. Lake.* Sailing term. Pulling a fishing net from the shore.

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## You aren't from here either?

- The Story

### SYNOPSIS

Alice is helpless. War memories invade her mind like threatening thunder. Uprooted by the armed conflict, she tries to reshape her life in La Sirga, a decadent hostel on the shores of a great lake in the highlands of the Andes. The house belongs to Oscar, her only family member alive, and an old solitary hermit. There, on a swampy and murky beach, she will try to settle down until her fears and the threat of war resurface again.



# Destiny moves the pieces

– Specifications

**TITLE:** LA SIRGA

**GENRE:** Drama

**LANGUAGE:** Spanish

**DURATION:** 89 minutes

**FOOTAGE FORMAT:** 35 mm

**PROJECTION FORMAT:** 35 mm Dolby 5.1

**COUNTRY:** Colombia

Francia

México

**DIRECTOR:** William Vega

**YEAR:** 2012

**SCRIPT:** William Vega

**PHOTOGRAPHY DIRECTOR:** Sofia Oggioni Hatty

**ART DIRECTOR:** Marcela Gómez Montoya

**SOUND:** César Salazar, Miguel Hernández

**EDITOR:** Miguel Schvenfingher

**LINE-UP:** Joghis Arias (Alicia), Julio César Roble (Óscar), David Guacas (Gabriel), Floralba Achicanoy (Flora), Heraldo Romero (Fredy)

**PRODUCERS:** Oscar Ruiz Navia, Contravia Films  
Diana Bustamante, Burning Blue

**COPRODUCERS :** Thierry Lenouvel, Ciné-Sud Promotion  
Edgar San Juan, Film Tank

Issa Guerra – Sebastián Sanchez, Puntuacionpunto

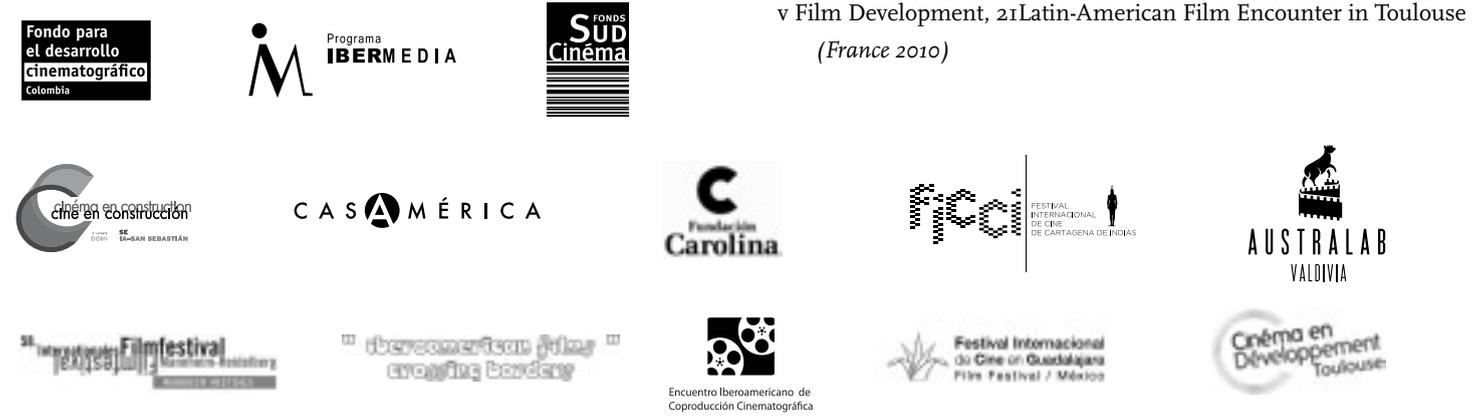
# When the mist takes shape

## WINNER PROJECT

Colombia Cinematographic Development Fund  
*(Development-2008, Production- 2010)*  
 Program Ibermedia *(Development-2009, Coproduction 2011)*  
 Sud Cinema Funds *(Production-2011)*  
 Film Construction 21 Award *(Toulouse- San Sebastian 2012)*  
 Fundación Carolina Scholarship– Casa América,  
 Ibero-american Project Development Course *(Spain 2009)*

## PARTICIPANT PROJECT

iv International Producers Encounter, 49 International Film Festival  
 in Cartagena *(Colombia, 2009)*  
 Australab - 17 International Film Festival in Valdivia *(Chile, 2009)*  
 Mannheim Meetings, 58 Mannheim International Film Festival  
 Heidelberg *(Germany, 2009)*  
 Iberoamerican Films Crossing Borders, 31 New Latin-American Film  
 Festival, Havana *(Cuba, 2009)*  
 vi Iberoamerican Film Coproduction Encounter, International Film  
 Festival in Guadalajara *(Mexico, 2010)*  
 v Film Development, 21 Latin-American Film Encounter in Toulouse  
*(France 2010)*



# The speed of Fog

*We are never totally miserable, just as we're never totally happy*

-WILLIAM VEGA

Between June 2005 and March 2006, I traveled half the country as producer of “Juan Mochila”, an agro, environmental and nature Nature fringe program of the Señal Colombia Channel. Due to that program, I made my own reading of the country where I live, my take, my own version, no one else’s. It was August 2005 when I arrived in the midst of the fog to the enchanted La Cocha, a lake rising among the Andes Mountains. The name itself has a history and, naturally, one story brings on other stories. Amongst the fog, I met great, and at the same time simple people. The fog itself allows you to see little by little the majesty of this place. Slowly and without rushing. Over the lake, suddenly winds blow to clear the mountains that surround it, and

in this way, its stories also surface. This is the sacred place where the tale of Alicia is born, a small vulnerable girl that loses everything and is left abandoned in the cold.

Alicia escapes the disaster and after the trip in the highlands of Quisinmayaco she is captured by the reflecting water of the Lake. There, just as a fisherman would, she throws the fishing net, to see what she traps. That is the Sirga, the story of Alicia. The story of a girl that becomes a woman and in this painful process understands that the cycles consist of trial and error. Therefore, THE SIRGA is a story of a woman seeking to reconstruct and lift herself out of the ashes. Through her learning about inner self as well as the exterior world, she

understands that we are never totally miserable, as we are never totally happy. Alicia’s missing mother would always say, there are always five cents missing to the dollar, and yes, go see, it’s true.

The story of this maneuver, of this net, takes place around La Cocha, its myths, its people, their beliefs and idiosyncrasies. This is the reason the unfolding story is like the speed of fog when it is lowering; like spiraling turns and then the fog is cleared away by gusts of wind that reveal it all, for a moment.



## UNVEILING WILLIAM VEGA

The August winds were blowing the first time William Vega visited La Cocha. The reflecting water and the welcoming energy captivated him. It was as if the lake was a call to him, invoking his dreams, beckoning something; *LA SIRGA*, rises from that clamor. The first full length film for this Cali born, graduate of Social Communications from the Universidad del Valle and specializing in Film and Television Script Writing from the Superior School of Performance Arts of Madrid, *TAL*.

His professional experience is noted for the creative content of the scripts written for television, with acclaimed projects such as *EDUCATV* (script and producer, 2004) for the Colombian Ministry of Education, *Ecopetrol* and *Fundación Carvajal*, and produced for the *Telepacífico* channel, receiving First Prize for best program in the First Audiovisual Festival 2004 for Young Video *ATEI* (Spain) for cultural and educational television and video programs; and *JUAN MOCHILAS* (Director, 2005) for the Agro, Environmental, Nature fringe program of the Señal Colombia Channel. This last project permitted him to travel his country and identify a situation that greatly affected him. This brought on the urgency to film his point of view of the conflict through sound image.

Having stumbled upon La Cocha was a turning point played by destiny in his favor. The short film *SIMIENTE* (2011) emerges from that experience, which one could say preambles *LA SIRGA*. His most significant work before directing his opera prima was the collaboration with Oscar Ruiz Navia in *EL VUELCO DEL CANGREJO*, as assistant director. He has also worked on films such as *AMNESIA* (2001): Official Selection of the New Latin-American Film Festival in Havana, International Short film, (Cuba, 2002); *SUNRISE* (Direction and Co-script writer, 2003): participated in the Film Festival Encounters of Latin America in Toulouse “Sección Ecran Libre” (France 2006); *TRICOLOR SOCCER CLUB* (Director 2005); produced by Antorcha Films and Cine Colombia, projected in over 250 multiplex theaters around the country. Presently, William occupies a teaching position in the School for Digital and Audiovisual Film Arts in Cali, where he teaches script writing.

# Diary of a Trip

- By William Vega

I took on writing and directing this story, because of the need I had of recovering the narrative tradition to which I belong. My first mission as creative director beckons the question of which stories do I owe myself, which are able to captivate and invade me. This is how, with much pleasure, I remember the myths and legends that speak of villages, gods, semi gods, heroes and indigenous martyrs that perform around the great lakes. These places tucked in the Andes range have for centuries been the epicenter of wisdom, which thanks to our oral tradition permit the preservation of the tales that that occurred there, and also those that have been invented. This fascination for the enchanted lakes of Latin America is the starting point for inventing my own story.

Writing *LA SIRGA* originated from my being seduced by the thought of a peripheral geographic location unknown to Colombians and the world. The manifestation of wonderment from the people of that area goes way beyond the space itself. Farmers, with an Indian legacy are today ideologically resistant to maintain their traditions, for a clean and transparent relationship with the land and their brothers, so that it may extend throughout time and beyond space. Families and neighbors construct admirable lives amidst a country suffering conflict, hunger, inequality and war. This is a community with a proposal to transform thinking and relationships, which other brothers are unaware of, brothers who hurt and bleed the earth dry.

Leaders tired of the desolating destiny determined by the environmental imbalance created by coal mining and indiscriminate fishing in the lake. Men and women who understand that the land is not a parental inheritance but rather a loan from their children, and it is this responsibility that leads them to love every action day after day, with themselves, their children, the plants, the animals and the great lake.

It is this spell that inspired me to write the fable about Alicia, the story of a foreigner who becomes the focus of men and women's attention, who assumes the responsibility of rising above the disaster.

A story that distances itself from the paternal vision of the victims of an armed conflict to live alongside the qualities and defects

of a human being. A story constructed on the voids of life itself, leaving a mark on the unfinished hostel that after much effort, time and work nonetheless will continue unfinished. This is how we are, incomplete like Alicia, who seems condemned to not find herself. Always waiting for something to get resolved that later turns into one thing or another and another. This is a story written about the impotence of changing the characters, their actions or their destiny. Written from the inability to judge such a complex person, since Alicia is my mother and my daughter; she is my sister and my wife. She is the survivor of her own mistakes and of the evil in men; beautiful and turbid; generous and destructive.

I try to write with coherent images and sounds that have a likeness to this place.

Fixed and descriptive ample shots contribute to create a sensation of quietness while reinforcing the concept of a claustrophobic solitude. Visually, **LA SIRGA** must be told with shots that frame the protagonist but at the same time her surroundings, since it is not possible to think about this community without considering the context of the highlands, including her relation with the great lake, and the cattails. The relationship with space is also transmitted by time. Time, in which something or apparently nothing happens in the shots, creating an association with fiction and reality, which assures a sincere film realized with truly poetic moments.

**LA SIRGA** is not a neorealist film. The symbolism and metaphors separate it from this movement, but in the same way it has moments where the camera waits and

observes its characters, as they define their existence. In other moments, it will be the camera that integrates the more realistic scenes with dreamlike elements traveling between images apparently disconnected.

In dramaturgical terms, this strives to express the inexpressible, towards the expression contained within. I am interested in showing turbid characters that, like most, have something to hide. I want to explore the human being as an actor, not as an interpreter but showing how he acts in the environment. Thus, the control I want to have of the scene, but also the possibility of relinquishing it. Leaving the film the capability to exceed my storytelling dynamic. It's not about telling the actors how to smile or how they should be sad, because this is not real. By lengthening the duration of

the shots, I want the actor to forget if we are still shooting or not. This is when their own expressions should appear, when true authenticity surfaces, not manipulated and closest to reality.

In order to complement the narration of **LA SIRGA** a similar understanding must be applied to the form in which the sound is used. **LA SIRGA** is fiction and the bellicose content occurs outside the frame and never in a direct manner. The war reaches us through sound associations. It reaches us with the roar that echoes from the other side of the highlands and rumbles in the character's ears like a threatening thunder. It is a "sound" film where the dialogues, the ambient, the noise and the quiet inform in a way independent of the visual. It is not possible to understand the reality of the place

and of the characters without the presence of the sound. For this reason, the music will always be diegetic.

This is both a film and production proposal that seeks to construct a tragic poem about humanity represented through Alicia, who travels between the beauty of this place, of a race, and the imminent horror of the human condition.

## Abstractions in the Fog

Just as the clouds release water to form storms, *LA SIRGA* is a poetic and sublime waiting for that cathartic moment where the characters plummet. It is a waiting marked by desperation of the solitude of a place where so much happens and at the same time nothing happens, similar to the fog, a gaseous formation that the wind moves without direction.

The fog hides but also reveals undefined figures that slowly start taking shape. This is the way the fog interacts in *LA SIRGA*, like the metaphor of characters with apparently confused motivations, transformed in their path, in an encounter with the interior world, one that is clouded, confused and marked by fear, the dread of that which is hidden in that vaporous veil.



# The Call of the Lake

## - Exteriors

In *Quéchua* tongue, Cocha means lake. Since ancestral times, the Cocha Lake has been considered a special and magical place. Those who have lived by her shores and visited her, affirm the feeling of a particular energetic charge, a vibration due to the connection with the harmonious balance that only nature has. The immensity of this great lake nurtured by the Rio Guamez, reminds us of the power of nature, the mother earth that offers us all we need to live in peace.

The Lake, being one of the seven energized points on the earth, is one of the principal characters of **LA SIRGA**. It is the only one always present; she will always be there, like an accomplice, a witness, a provider. Her mirror reflects the characters' inner universe, that which is tacitly drawn on their faces.

For William Vega *“the writing of **LA SIRGA**, originates from being seduced by the thought of a marginal geographic location unknown to Colombians and the world. The manifestation of wonderment of the people from that area goes beyond the cosmology of the space itself. Farmers, with their indigenous*

*legacy are ideologically resistant to maintain their traditions, and have a clear and transparent relationship with the land and their brothers, so it might continue throughout time and beyond space. Families and neighbors construct admirable lives amidst a country suffering conflict, hunger, inequality and war. A community, changing the long mistaken ways of thinking and believing, thanks to the work of toughened women leading this change of mistaken thinking that for so long has hurt and bled the earth dry.*

*Leaders tired of the desolating destiny determined by the environmental imbalance caused by coal mining and the indiscriminate fishing in the lake. Women who saw their husbands off to war while not having another choice for making a living. Women who understand that the land is not a parental inheritance, but rather on loan from their children, and it is this responsibility that leads them to love every action of the day, amongst themselves, their children, the plants, the animals and the great lake.”*

# A house built on a void

- Interiors

The humidity and passing of time wear down material objects. The withering of things reflects the deterioration of the characters. It marks a before and an after. La Sirga of a solitary and embittered man who hasn't yet recovered from the abandonment of his loved ones. And Alicia's Sirga, who arrives to the hostel in her search for a refugee, desperately grasping for a new beginning, is marked by her arrival to this new house, which slowly transforms into a house full of light, color and warmth.

*"With LA SIRGA, my intention is to register the unfinished hostel that after so much effort, time and work, will never be completed. That house that apparently is ready to be turned into a hostel, still doesn't have the tourists it needs to become a hostel. I think this is the way we are. Incomplete like Alicia, who seems condemned to never find herself. Always waiting for something to be resolved that evolves into one thing or another. This film is a vehicle that transports that idea and thus the narrative can never abandon that purpose: to be constructed over this void."*

WILLIAM VEGA - DIRECTOR

# Looking through the fog

## - Photography

Looking through the fog is like looking through unfocused lenses. The figures get lost in blurred colors. Looking across the fog is like cautiously observing those undefined contours that are slowly revealed through it. The mist and the cold are the weather constraints on the lake and, therefore, set the climate of the film. For Soffia Oggioni, photography director, *“the mist is the regulator of the information that is seen. She is selective and only shows us what she wants us to see.”*

But it is not only the mist that commands what is composed by the image. In all outdoor shots the light is natural light, always soft but contrasting the outdoor cold colors with the warmth generated by the indoor candlelight. The candles and the fire are important elements in the story, as not only do they register the isolation of the location where electricity is not available, but are also the lighting scheme for the interior of the hostel.

For Soffia Oggioni, the lighting within the house, aside from reflecting a lifestyle, determines the description of the relationships between the characters, provided by candle lit closed frames with unfocused elements. The fire is a diegetic source of light for the outdoor night scenes, *“like the fog in the day time, the darkness swallows the landscape that becomes an abstraction”.*

### SOFÍA OGGIONI HATTY

Social Communicator – Journalist from Universidad del Valle (Colombia), she has worked in documentary photography and advertisement for over eight years.

As filmmaker, she has worked **LA SIRGA** (2012) and **EL VUELCO DEL CANGREJO** (2009). She was also camera woman for the feature fiction film **RECUERDAME** (2011), and Assistant Director of the feature film **YO SOY OTRO** (2008).



# From immensity to detail

## - Art

Although the immensity of the lake appears to obscure the details, these take on their value in the representation of a daily routine. The idea of Marcela Gómez Montoya, Art Director of **LA SIRGA**, was to capture temporality, a technological anachronism that signifies how the war reaches the rural areas of Colombia before progress ever does”. She depends on those “*objects that are part of the location that carry that aura of use and time that other new objects do not have.*” This way, the props not only serve the narrative aspect but also take on a descriptive role speaking of the place, of its owner.

The lake generates a straight horizontal line, one that represents the harmonious equilibrium of nature. Man’s construction, **LA SIRGA**, forms a vertical axis, a more symbolic one that marks the fundamental moments of the story; the hostel before Alicia’s arrival, and the hostel after her arrival. The vertical line starts out crooked, almost diagonal, and ends up straight and firm, representing the stability that the character recovers after the welcoming she receives in this place, reflected in the evolution of the space. This is what Marcela Gomez, Art Director of the film, wants to show, “*Oscar’s Sirga, the solitary man, and Alice’s Sirga, the girl that desperately looks for something to hold on to*”.

Visual compositions formed through window frames, holes, cracks in the wood and openings, highlight small details of the location, and also contribute to generate tension and paranoia. Like the fog, these reveal drip like information.

### MARCELA GÓMEZ MONTOYA

Social Communications - Journalist from the Universidad del Valle. (Colombia). Completed a specialization course in production at the International Film School in San Antonio de los Baños (Cuba). Since 2006, she is partner and artistic director of the film production company Contravía Films.

As Art Director, she worked on **LA SIRGA** (2012) and **EL VUELCO DEL CANGREJO** (2009). She was production manager of feature films; **PERRO COME PERRO** (2008) and **yo soy otro** (2008). Also, Art Director for the short films **ESCONDITE** (2006), **MIGRACIÓN** (2008) and **FLORES** (2012).



# The sound of daily routine

- Sound

Sound is a crucial element in the film. It sets the pace of the day to day, marked by isolation, where water is a constant. The crashing waves and the sound of the wind blowing the fog weigh heavy on the environment, reinforcing the pressure exerted by the altitude. The sound is humid, boggy. The passing of days in the countryside is evidenced by the noise produced by elements that conjure the simplicity of rural life: fire for light, wood for the stove.

Nature's sounds are crude, harsh and often conspirators. Thunders overshadow the heavy sound of lead, masking that which should not be mentioned, not even acknowledged. Thus, César Salazar, Sound Designer of **LA SIRGA**, uses outdoor and indoor scenarios for a masterful combination of sound tracks, where the sound of nature is always present, becoming almost unperceived.

For William Vega, the intention of the sound was to build silence, working hand in hand with César Salazar to generate an apparent silence for the deaf, for those ears for which the sounds of nature are imperceptible, as stated by Vega when referring to Bresson, *“able to understand whispering, to translate the invisible wind through the water it carves on its way.”*

## CÉSAR SALAZAR

Social Communicator - Journalist - Journalism graduate from Universidad del Valle. Born in Cali on 2 March 1965, he is one of the most recognized sound designers in the country's movie industry, with over 20 feature films.

Between 1993 and 1996, he attended the Sound School at *Institut National Supérieur des Arts du Spectacle -INSAS-* in Brussels (Belgium). Later, in October 1998, he was a trainee in sound montage and digital mixing at CIPAF Montreuil (France). Some of his feature films are **LA VIRGEN DE LOS SICARIOS** of Barbet Schroeder, **SATANÁS** of Andi Baez, and **LA SOCIEDAD DEL SEMÁFORO** of Rubén Mendoza.

## Joghis Arias takes ownership of her grief

Acting was never present in Joghis Arias plans. When she was eight years old, she and her mother were forced to run away from their hometown in Florida (Valle) to her maternal grandma's home in Florencia (Caquetá). Her father and her grandfather died amidst the conflict, which strongly marked her life. When she graduated from school, it was very clear to her that she did not want to be like most of the girls in her town, pregnant at an early age, and she knew that she should find her future in the city where she wanted to study Social Communication.

When she was 16, she tried to enter the Universidad del Valle, but the career she wanted was not offered. Based on recommendations, she enrolled in the Scenic Arts program hoping that would ensure her acceptance to the University, so she would then be able to transfer to Social Communication. When audition time arrived, she did not know what a monologue was and she had never seen a theatre performance, but Joghis was one of the five selected among 50 candidates.

During her first semesters she questioned the usefulness of acting, but an assignment on autobiographic stories changed her perspective and

her professional title was not Social Communicator but Scenic Arts Graduate. Taking ownership of her own grief to transmit her life experience to others helped Joghis Arias to see acting as something more than a mimetic exercise, but rather a perfect communion of the actor with space and the audience. This is the reason for her being reluctant to try out for castings, but because of her classmate's insistence, she decided to audition for **LA SIRGA**.

She never had the script in her hands and wonders what the director would have thought if he knew that the second time they met, at her home, she had asked the doorman to keep an eye on the stranger who was about to arrive. The memories of that day make her smile, because after working with William, she is very fond of him, as he used to talk to her about the vicissitudes of a young country-girl running away from the armed conflict, seeking to cling to her only lifeline. The dynamic was similar to that of Scheherezada, day after day the young girl's story was enriched, but you could never tell how it would end.



Joghis became Alicia, in an inward search for a girl who, as she says, *“unfortunately exists in every town, every neighborhood, and every corner”*. She is one of them; she was forced to leave behind her homeland and her dearest relatives.

Alicia’s blurry image unveils through the fog; her face becomes visible only when she falls down. She rises up from lightness, but her journey is determined by the magnitude of her breakdown. The armed conflict forced her separation from her family, which she will never see again; this sorrow motivated her departure, a journey where she comes along with the fog, and like when water gets released from the clouds, there is an intense expectation for the moment when the inevitable will break out.

Alicia is stunned, suspended in time. She moves like the fog, softly pushed by the wind and the last drop of inward energy: finding her uncle Oscar, the only relative who is still alive. She moves so as not to die, but not necessarily to live. Interpreting this character encouraged Joghis to talk about the conflict. It is Alicia’s life, a simple life that people can identify as an organic character who takes ownership of a problem in which *“one cannot tell who are the good guys and who are the bad guys; one is simply there, in the middle...It means finding courage and strength at all times. Alicia is the metaphor of the beginning, of starting over again”*.

In the diegesis of **LA SIRGA**, Alicia is an evolving character: from her breakdown, represented by her fall, to that moment of

peace and stability reached at the hostel after being so badly wounded. Her end is a new beginning, an encounter with her inner self that fills her with strength.

For both, Joghis and Alicia, the Lake is a special place. She recalls being quite stressed at the beginning of the filming, until she realized that she could not go against the pace of nature, as the Lake means stability and equilibrium. That is why Alicia sleep walks towards the lake, *“the lake is the call to forget our ties. It means finding a liberating energy”*. As much as **LA SIRGA** was an inner self-encounter for her through Alicia, it meant being in communion with nature, much as art is for her.



## Julio César Roble had a mission to accomplish

Although he had never acted before, interpreting the role of Uncle Oscar was not difficult for Julio César Roble. From the onset he understood the role of his character in **LA SIRGA**, as in many ways Oscar represented his inner self, in his leadership spirit, in his commitment to society. He strongly believes in the call from the Lake; it is not by chance that he came in touch with **LA SIRGA**, or of a casting he randomly attended; it is more a stroke of fate, a life he has committed to others. He was born in Popayan and defines himself as an *empirical sociologist and humanist*; he has worked with indigenous and afro communities and currently is the president of an NGO aimed at protecting the wellbeing of miners.

In Julio Cesar's opinion, Oscar is a lonely man who combines kindness, protection and bitterness. The sorrow caused by the abandonment of his wife and child make him introverted, only moved by routine. He is aware that it all ended and that it makes no sense trying to avoid it. However, Oscar harbors parental warmth inside so he

struggles to improve the life quality of neighboring peasants by leading common benefit projects. The old man is a protector, a community guardian and slowly becomes Alicia's guardian, bringing back some life to the household.

While the production team took rests, Julio César spent time with the Lake natives, sharing his knowledge with them and, in turn, nourishing from theirs. He even submitted a proposal to the Interior Ministry to create a university in the rural district of El Encano; the State welcomed the project, which is currently underway and he now proudly states *"more than acting, my mission was to help the communities"*.

Uncle Oscar is not only the protector, in his laconic manner, who watches over everyone's well-being. Oscar, the oldest character in **LA SIRGA**, reveals rural traditional customs as well as the wisdom gained with experience.





## Between Flora and Floralba

Even though acting is important in her life, it is an activity that Floralba Achicanoy has not been able to develop entirely. After years of being away from the theatre, she learned about the auditions for **LA SIRGA** through a local TV channel. Her respect for William, the director, and for the location of the film motivated her to accept the casting. La Cocha lake is an Indian reservation, just like the one she belongs to, and that is why she firmly believes in the special energy that emerges from this great lake.

Flora's character is not entirely alien to Floralba, who develops her character based on her mother's life, a hard-working peasant, and on the testimonials of women with whom she works as a mediator. Although she is more joyful and extroverted than Flora, she reminds her of her mother's strength, which led her to discover the world of farming women, those matriarchies where the female image suggests

protection and care. However, affection seems to be the most hidden part of Flora, caused by an intimate life so marked by loneliness. This gives rise to a particular closeness with her neighbor Oscar, whom she feels she must protect for having been abandoned, as he does not take care of himself. That causes her to mistrust Alicia, because she is afraid she could lose the ground she has already gained with him.

The conflict is evidenced in the day to day. *"Displacement, people who are foreign to the land are arriving. There is social commotion, cultural friction. The worst part of the conflict is that its daily routine has made us so insensitive that we perceive it as the normal way of things."* This is how Flora and Floralba Achicanoy see a scourge blanketing the entire country. *"Flora, as many of us do, prefers not to talk about the conflict. We accommodate in a bubble and the conflict only hurts us when we have to deal with it directly. It's a kind of numbing."*

## Heraldo Romero's Enigma

The return of Freddy to La Sirga, without an apparent reason, is a trigger. Both his stay and his departure are as strange as his personality. Even though he is apparently calm, Freddy seems to talk between the lines. His voice, his serenity and inexpressive face, conceal his mysterious activities. In spite of his rough, hardened hands, he manipulates everything with subtlety, as the forceful peasant he is, perhaps the only person in the region who is not afraid of talking about the conflict, whose position is clear and radical, and he dares to talk about it. He knows that sooner or later, as from the clouds, the storm will break in La Cocha and that is why he urges Alicia to leave and to take Oscar, his father, with her.

Despite the mystery around the character, it is evident that Freddy, as well as his father, is a cooperator, a leader. He helps the community apparently without expecting anything in return, as it is not quite clear if he is motivated by his social sensibility or, on the contrary, by political interests.





## Mirichis, el compañero de viaje

At present, David Fernando Guacas is about to finish his Master degree in Visual Arts at Universidad de Nariño. By chance, his profession allowed him to learn about the film world. He joined the Aleph Teatro foundation, where he started as a light technician and stage designer for national and international performances, and very soon he got the opportunity to act in the play “Los Clavijos” (winner of the Bicentenary Scenes Scholarship offered by the Ministry of Culture). It was in this building where he saw the invitation for the casting for **LA SIRGA**. He also met William Vega by chance, and he realized that he was the film director when he invited him to the casting.

Mirichis is the lake messenger, a joyful, sociable individual liked by everyone in La Sirga. Mirichis’ character unveils gradually. Initially he is a rascal trying to get Alicia’s attention. While rescuing her from her own fall, a second tier starts to unravel when he becomes the companion of the lonely girl; thus, once he gains her trust, he is willing to help her overcome her pain and invites her to live again, to get to know the magic of La Cocha and to trust again. However, in this journey a mysterious character, who knows how to keep a secret, emerges.

Mirichis buffers everyone’s timid perspective of the conflict. He is unafraid, and because of that he becomes an enigmatic character, suspect of something turbid in his life that deems him fearless to the threat, and although this is not evident in the images, it is insinuated in the dialogues and the sound. Mirichis goes to those places that others do not even dare to mention. He is the character who has clarity and defined motivations and to achieve his goal, to move away from the conflict, he must venture in his boat across the lake, through the fog, where one does not know what is hidden.

After filming **LA SIRGA**, David Guacas is proud of his work. He is now more confident in his abilities. Initially he was afraid because the world of movies was unknown to him, but Mirichis opened the door to the audiovisual world, discovering movies as an art form. He is currently working on a number of regional documentaries for Señal Colombia: “Cochaguaira between the pagan and the divine”.

## Contravía Films

CONTRAVÍA FILMS was created in 2006 by a group of Communicators and Visual Artists with the purpose of building a firm platform for independent movies in Colombia, with a strong interest in co-producing with Latin America and Europe. To date, it has played a key role in consolidating Colombian films internationalization process. His first movie **EL VUELCO DEL CANGREJO** directed by Oscar Ruiz Navia, obtained the FIPRESCI International Critics Award at the 60th BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL following its world premiere in the “Discovery” section of the 2009 TORONTO FILM FESTIVAL. It has received 15 awards and has been nominated in over 60 International Festivals. Co-producing with the French company

Arizona Films and Colombian Burning Blue, M films, Efe-x, Laboratorios Blackvelvet, RCN and Innova, it received post-production incentives from the Colombian Fund for Cinematographic Development, Fonds Sud Cinema de Francia and The Global Film Initiative of the United States. Moreover, it was one of the 12 projects chosen for the OPEN DOORS of the 2008 Locarno Film Festival.

Its initial short movies were nominated and recognized in several national and international competitions as in the case of **MIGRACION** (Selección Visions Du Réel-Nyon, Tres Continentes Nantes, Doc Buenos Aires, Latin Union Award in Trieste and Best Documentary of New Creators in Cartagena)

and **ESCONDITE** (Best fiction in MUDA Colombia) both directed by Marcela Gómez Montoya. **EN LA BARRA HAY UN CEREBRO** (Selection in Locarno Open Doors Screenings) and **AL VACIO 1,2,3** (Best Experimental Short Movie VIART Venezuela, both directed by Oscar Ruiz Navia.

Their most recent production is **SIMIENTO** (2012) William Vega’s short film, shot on La Cocha lake, in southern Colombia as part of the **LA SIRGA** development process, co-produced with Burning Blue (Colombia), Ciné-Sud Promotion (France), Film Tank (Mexico), Puntoguiónpunto (Mexico) in association with RCN e ENNOVA and Laboratorios Black Velvet.

He is currently preparing the premiere of the short film **FLORES** by Marcela Gómez Montoya, winner of the Fund for Cinematographic Development and developing the feature film **LOS HONGOS** by Oscar Ruiz Navia, nominated for the Torino Film Lab, Buenos Aires Lab and the Cannes Festival Writing Residence of Cinefondation.



## Burning Blue

**BURNING BLUE** Production Company was created in Bogota, Colombia in the year 2010, under the initiative of Diana Bustamante and Jorge Forero, who, after ten years of working together, decided to form a company to strengthen the creation of independent audiovisual forms.

### DIANA BUSTAMANTE

Graduate of the Film and TV School of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Diana Bustamante has worked with audiovisuals as producer and advisor in short-films, feature films and documentaries, as well as on several institutional campaigns for NGOs and State agencies. She has also performed as cultural and international cooperation manager with organizations such as UNICEF, OAS, Netherlands Cooperation and AECI. Founding partner of Ciudad Lunar Producciones, with which she produced the feature film **LOS VIAJES DEL VIENTO** by Ciro Guerra, which was in the official selection of A Certain Look of the 2009 Cannes Film Festival, Latin Horizons of the 2009 San Sebastian Film Festival, Toronto 2009, The Havana Film Festival, among others. At the same time, she is co-producer with Séptima Films of the feature film **LA PLAYA** of Juan Andrés Arango, winner of the 2008 Colombian Fund for Cinematographic Development and the 2010 Ibermedia program. With **CONTRAVÍA FILMS**, she co-produced the feature film **EL VUELCO DEL CANGREJO** by Oscar Ruiz Navia, nominated for the Berlin and Toronto festivals and **LA SIRGA** by William Vega.

*Burning  
Blue*

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