

FIRST FIRE

A FILM BY
BLANCA CAMELL GALÍ



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Locarno Film Festival

PARDI DI DOMANI
OFFICIAL SELECTION



FIRST FIRE

Blanca Camell Galí | 19' | 2026

Barberousse Films (France) & Materia Cinema (Spain)

Languages : french, catalan | Subtitles : English | Colour / 1.85 / 5.1 | DCP



Synopsis

Clara gives birth to her first child. In the chaos of postpartum, she tries to get her life back on track.

Direction



BLANCA CAMELL GALÍ

Blanca Camell Galí is a Catalan director who lives and works in Paris. She graduated from the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, the University of Paris 8 and the Fresnoy - National Studio of Contemporary Arts. After having directed short films at school, she directed her first produced short film, *Castells*, in 2022. *Castells* has been screened in festivals such as Locarno, Premiers Plans Angers, FIFIB, Zinebi or Black Canvas. *First fire* is her new film, a co-production between Barberousse Films and Materia Cinema.

FILMOGRAPHY

L'Oreig - 2014 - Las Palmas de Gran Canaria - *Panorama Spain* (2017)

Ídols - 2016 - Côté court Pantin - *Best Actress Award* (2017)

Tombent les heures - 2018 - D'A Festival Cinema Barcelona - competition (2018) | Indie Lisboa - *compétition* (2019)

Pol·len - 2019 - Premiers Plans Angers - Diagonales, competition (2020) | D'A Festival Cinema Barcelona - *Un Impulso Colectivo* (2020)

Castells - 2022 - Locarno - *Pardi di Domani* (2022) | Gijon FF - *competition* (2022) | FIFIB - *compétition* (2022) | Black Canvas - *Best direction award* (2022) | Filmfest Sundsvall - *competition* (2022) | Reykjavik IFF - *competition* (2022) | Premiers Plans Angers - *competition* (2023) | Vilnius Kino Pavasaris - *competition* (2023) | Aspen Shortfest - *competition* (2023) | Official Selection – César Awards 2024

A French-Spanish co-production in competition at Locarno

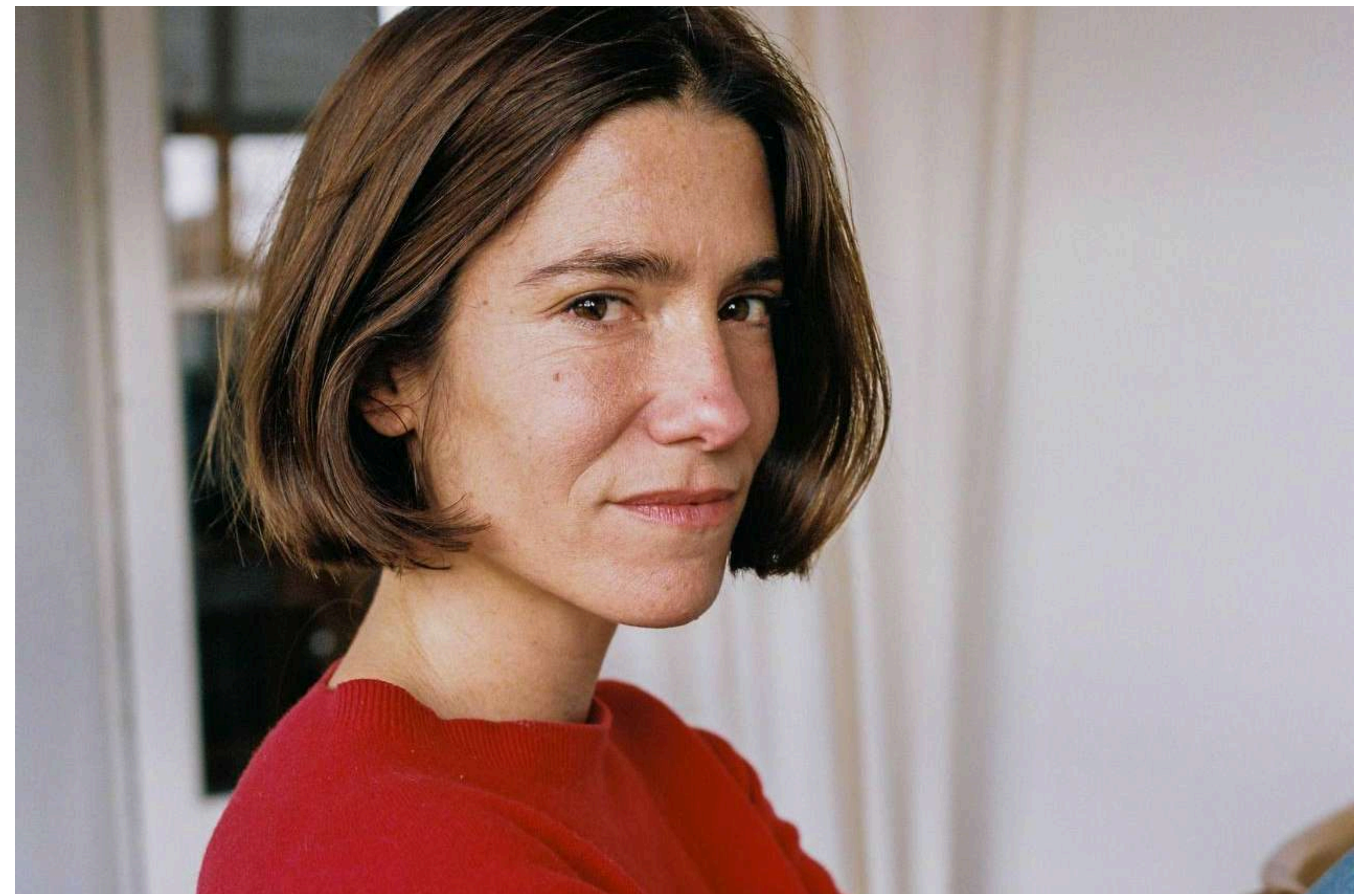
Premier feu, by Blanca Camell Galí, will have its world premiere at the Locarno Film Festival. The film will be presented in the Pardi di Domani – Concorso Internazionale section of the prestigious Swiss festival.

Premier feu is a French-Spanish co-production between Barberousse Films and Materia Cinema. It marks the second collaboration between the director and the producers to be selected for Locarno, following *Castells* in 2022. The film received the Movistar Plus+ Award at Cinema Jove 2024 and is supported by Movistar Plus+ and Menos 12DB in Spain. In France, it has received support from Canal+, the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region, the Gironde Department, and the CNC.

The selection of *Premier feu* at the Locarno Film Festival represents a new milestone in the international recognition of Blanca Camell Galí, one of the most distinctive emerging voices in contemporary Spanish cinema. It also confirms the commitment of Barberousse Films and Materia Cinema to a demanding and independent auteur cinema, driven by a resolutely international ambition.

Bruna Cusí in her first French-language role

The film stars actress Bruna Cusí, best known for her role in *Summer 1993* (*Estiu 1993*) by Carla Simón (2017), for which she won the Goya Award for Best New Actress and the Gaudí Award for Best Supporting Actress in 2018. In *Premier feu*, she takes on a French-language role for the first time.



Challenging idealized representations of motherhood

Inspired by an experience lived by the director herself, *Premier feu* explores the gap between the idealization of motherhood and the physical and emotional reality of the postpartum period.

The film examines the silence that still surrounds certain female experiences, as well as the need to find words for the pain, vulnerability, and profound transformations women can go through during this deeply singular experience.

Through a sensitive aesthetic approach, characteristic of Blanca Camell Galí's work, *Premier feu* follows its protagonist as she confronts the gap between her expectations of motherhood and the reality of a traumatic birth experience.



Interview with Blanca Camell Galí

Your film approaches motherhood from an angle rarely seen in cinema, far from idealized depictions. What did you want to express through this perspective?

The moment you become a mother is incredibly intense. It brings overwhelming emotions that are often deeply contradictory. When childbirth does not go as planned, as it does in the film, you can feel shocked and numb, experiencing immense joy intertwined with a profound sense of fear.

When I gave birth to my first son, I was unable to care for him because I had suffered a severe perineal tear and a hemorrhage that left me bedridden. My partner took care of everything and was able to bond with our son more quickly than I was. I felt very alone. I was afraid my body would never fully recover, and I experienced feelings of jealousy as well as guilt. It was then that I realized the gap between the idealized image I had imagined of that moment and its far more ordinary reality.

This is one of the reasons I wanted to make this film: to open up a conversation about the postpartum experience, so that we can

become more aware of these realities and develop greater empathy for those who go through them.

How did you approach the question of the body in your film?

The body has always been at the heart of this film. It is the story of both a physical wound and a psychological one. I therefore placed the body at the center of the mise-en-scène to shape the film and reflect Clara's journey: first she is lying down, then she is sitting, and finally she is able to stand. Her gestures, postures, and movements were essential to telling this story, and I wanted them to occupy a central place within the frame.

I have always been drawn to a cinema in which the body plays a central role in the mise-en-scène. The films of Chantal Akerman, Angela Schanelec, Maren Ade, Lucrecia Martel, and Albert Serra inspired the way I chose to depict Clara's journey.

Clara's mother holds an important place in the film. Was this a way for you to address family taboos?

Clara's mother marks a turning point in the film, prompting Clara to finally speak out and express the pain and trauma she has carried within her since the birth of her daughter.

She turns to her mother in search of answers to the new fears she has about her body and her sexuality. But her mother avoids the conversation, making it clear that it is better not to complain. It is almost as if she has forgotten her own experience and chosen denial as a form of protection. Clara, however, refuses to remain silent or perpetuate these taboos; she wants to break the silence.

I did not want to judge a generation of women who were not encouraged to speak about the suffering associated with the postpartum period. Many of them simply did not have the space or the opportunity to share their experiences.

Today, I feel that society has evolved in the importance it gives to women's voices. It was important for me to explore the gap between generations, the communication difficulties these subjects

can create within a family, and the possibility of moving beyond them while preserving the deep bond of love between a mother and her daughter.

Clara goes through a very solitary ordeal. What role do the other characters play in her recovery?

First of all, Clara's loneliness stems from the fact that the hospital fails to care for either her physical or her psychological condition. No one explains what happened during the birth, or when and how she might recover. A surgical swab is left inside her vagina, and she is neglected. The medical staff do what they can ; a midwife, in particular, offers her support, but they are all overwhelmed by an overstretched healthcare system, and Clara comes to realize that she will have to rely on herself to rebuild her life.

Her loneliness is also shaped by the growing distance she feels from her partner, Nico, who is fully immersed in his new role as a father and is experiencing a completely different reality. Nico is deeply moved by fatherhood, enthusiastic, and constantly focused on taking action. Unconsciously, he fails to fully grasp the extent of Clara's trauma and does not know how to support her

through it. For me, the taxi scene was a way of allowing the people closest to Clara – her partner and her mother – to truly listen to her and see her for the first time. Their willingness to listen not only breaks the silence but also eases her loneliness: it is the moment when she is finally able to reconnect with others.

Lola, Clara's daughter, also plays a crucial role in this solitary journey. Clara loves her deeply and longs to care for her, but she is not yet capable of doing so. Lola remains off-screen; we hear her crying and laughing, yet Clara cannot bring her into her field of vision, or into her life. Only at the very end is she able to hold her in her arms and finally share the frame with her.

How did the collaboration with Bruna Cusí, the film's lead actress, go?

Bruna Cusí is an extraordinarily talented, sensitive, and deeply insightful actress. I was amazed by her ability to bring such depth, strength, and nuance to the character of Clara. Working with her was an incredible privilege.

Clara is not an easy character to portray. At the beginning of the film, she is largely passive because of the trauma she has endured: she barely speaks, hardly moves, and is emotionally dissociated.

Yet Bruna immediately embodied this wounded and vulnerable character in a way that felt vivid, moving, and profoundly powerful.

We spent a great deal of time discussing Clara as someone who maintains a certain distance and sense of humor, someone who observes herself with irony as a way of protecting herself from pain. Together, we worked carefully on the different tonalities of her performance, moving between moments of comedy or subtle absurdity and scenes of raw, direct drama.

The film owes a great deal to Bruna for bringing to life such a strong and complex female character, one whose vulnerability is itself a source of strength. Beyond her remarkable talent, she is also an extraordinary person: intelligent, generous, and a joy to work with.

The question of desire is central to your previous films. Is the final scene of *First fire* a way for Clara to reconnect with that desire, in the sense of a life force?

Indeed, desire is a question that has always haunted me and that runs through all of my films. My characters are always driven by a powerful desire, whether it is romantic, emotional, or familial.

A particular connection with others, with life itself, filled with both wonder and turmoil. In this film, I wanted to explore a character who feels disconnected from her body, from those around her, from the world, and also from her own desire.

I became interested in the legacy of the *housewife* – the figure of the oppressed mother whose desire gradually fades away, an inheritance that we, as women, still carry on our shoulders. By becoming a mother and being forced to remain bedridden at home, Clara fears becoming trapped in her new life: physically within the walls of the house, but also metaphorically, through the loss of freedom that can accompany motherhood.

From a cinematic perspective, I found it particularly compelling to explore the confined atmosphere of the postpartum period, that suspended moment when one's perception of time becomes distorted. We adapt to the baby's sleeping patterns; we sleep during the day in a house immersed in darkness, with the curtains drawn, then wake up at night surrounded by the colored lights of children's night lamps. I wanted to convey this floating, hazy state of drowsiness, in which one can easily become disoriented. The final scene expresses this first opening up and reconnection with the

world, allowing Clara to rediscover her vital energy. This is why the tension between interior and exterior is so important in the film: Clara's desire is reawakened through her participation in collective life, through the experience of the popular celebration.

Choosing to set this moment during the traditional Catalan festival of the *correfocs* - a medieval celebration that has become a pagan ritual where people dress up as devils and dance with fire - allowed us to approach this renewed life impulse in a more symbolic way: motherhood as an experience that is absolutely intense, chaotic, and uncertain, but also filled with beauty, fear, and overwhelming emotions. This moment allows Clara and Lola, for the first time, to truly be mother and daughter together.

Blanca Camell Galí

Festivals



Locarno Film Festival

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WORLD PREMIERE

Locarno

Pardi di Domani - Concorso Internazionale

Suisse | 2026



About Barberousse Films

Founded in 2015, Barberousse Films brings together three producers: Mathilde Delaunay, Enguerrand Déterville, and François Martin Saint Léon. The company has produced around fifty films, regularly selected by major festivals such as Cannes, Locarno, Tribeca, Rotterdam, and FIDMarseille.

Its slate reflects a wide diversity of genres and formats, including short and feature films, international co-productions, animation and immersive works, web series, and music videos. Barberousse Films supports its filmmakers from their first short films through to feature-length projects, with a commitment to producing bold, eclectic works that engage with audiences.



About de Materia Cinema

Founded in 2023 by Inés Massa and Nadine Rothschild, Materia Cinema was created with the aim of developing, financing, and producing bold independent films with international reach. Drawing on extensive experience in production and international sales, the founders share a commitment to supporting Spanish filmmakers through long-term collaborations.

Materia Cinema develops co-productions with established international auteurs, providing strong financial structures while reflecting a global positioning strategy.



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