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# THE ILLUSION OF ABUNDANCE

A FILM BY MATTHIEU LIETAERT AND ERIKA GONZALEZ RAMIREZ

## PRESS KIT

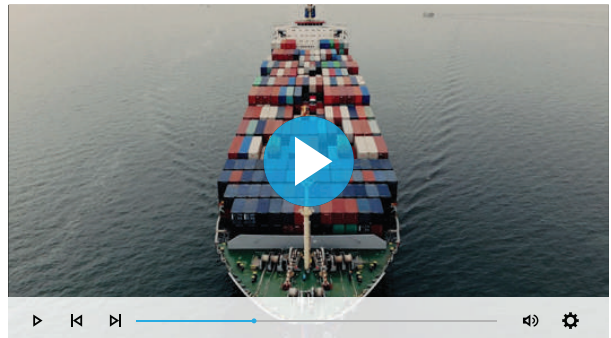
[WWW.THEILLUSIONOFABUNDANCE.EARTH](http://WWW.THEILLUSIONOFABUNDANCE.EARTH)





## LOGLINE

**Bertha, Carolina** and **Maxima's** stories are those of tireless environmental resistance, their firm belief in hunting down transnational corporations wherever they hide, and their constant struggle to protect nature even when their life is at risk.



[WATCH THE TRAILER](#)

## SYNOPSIS

Despite a deeply unbalanced game, Bertha, Carolina and Maxima share a common goal: they are leading today's fight against modern corporate conquistadors.

Whereas governments and corporations are trapped in a global race to get the cheapest raw materials, these three women land defenders narrate a story of tireless courage: How to continue fighting to protect nature when their life is at risk? When police repression, corporate harassment, injuries or even death threats are part of their daily life?

THE ILLUSION OF ABUNDANCE is not only a film about those who pay the high price of 'development', it is above all a film about the globalization of their environmental resistance and their drive to hunt down transnational corporations wherever they hide. Risking their life to protect our planet.



## DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

We wanted to make a road-movie into today's Latin American landscapes of extractivism. Erika as the co-director is the narrative voice of this journey, going back to her continent, twenty years after starting her career in Europe.

As the coordinator of an NGO network - her previous job - she witnessed the dreadful impact of globalization on women land defenders. Last year, two hundred and twenty land defenders were killed worldwide. More than two thousand have been killed in the last twenty years and two out of three of these have been killed in Latin America.

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### ““ THREE WOMEN RISKING THEIR LIVES TO PROTECT OUR PLANET. ””

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This film was made to honour the memory of these environmental land defenders who lost their lives to protect nature.

We were inspired by two key books, both of which are celebrating their 50th Anniversary. The first one is Eduardo Galeano's "Open Veins of Latin America" (1971), a book which has sold several million copies and has been translated into over twenty languages. In it, Galeano explains how Latin America got stuck with the role of provider of raw materials for the rest of the world. The second one is "The Limits to Growth" (1972) by the Club of Rome. This book was first to highlight that unlimited growth is simply not possible on a finite planet.

To illustrate today's reality, we decided to focus on the resistance of three women, Bertha (Honduras), Carolina (Brazil) and Maxima (Peru). All showing the consequences of globalization and what "development" means in their region. No matter what the industry slogans are - a so-called "green hydroelectric dam" or "the most environmental gold mine" - the consequences for nature and for communities at the local level are disastrous.

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### ““ WHO ARE THE NEW CONQUISTADORS? HOW FAR ARE THEY WILLING TO GO? WHO IS RESISTING? ””

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It is a film about their tireless courage facing these giant corporations, as well as their creative resistance to fight back.

We started the film's official production in January 2020. Three months later we had to interrupt it due to COVID-19. Yet thanks to the amazing support of our partners and our protagonists, we managed to keep going and make this film happen. Today, the film is supported by twenty international NGOs from eleven countries in the EU and the USA.

Together with our partners, we want to use this film to evidence how far corporations are willing to go and how badly legislation is needed.

On the 23rd of February 2022, the European Commission released its proposal for a directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence. This directive could represent a landmark step forward in the direction of minimising the negative impacts of businesses on workers, communities and the environment worldwide, and advancing corporate accountability and justice.

Although people are suffering, fighting back, and resisting, some corporations stop at nothing. Some harass, divide and threaten. When necessary they will send armies of well-paid lawyers to the courtroom. When resistance gets too strong, some don't hesitate to brutally eliminate anyone who stands in their way.

The film's world sales agent is [First Hand Films](#), an award-winning international sales company with over twenty-five years of experience in the field of documentary distribution. The film was also officially selected at the prestigious FIPADOC Impact Lab and FIFDH Impact Days 2022 in order to develop the impact campaign, which is going to unfold all through 2022 and 2023.

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# COLONIALISM IS NOT OVER

IS THE HAUNTING CONCLUSION OF THIS GALVANIZING DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THE PILLAGING OF RESOURCES IN LATIN AMERICA. THE FILMMAKERS TALK ABOUT "THE NEW CONQUISTADORS", AND WITH THE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE LIES, THEFT AND MURDER REACHING DEEP INTO EUROPE AND GERMANY, IT'S HARD TO ARGUE WITH THAT TERMINOLOGY. WITH BREATHTAKING IMAGES, THIS DOC IS BOTH A TRIBUTE TO THE SELFLESS ACTIVISTS IN PLACES LIKE PERU, HONDURAS AND BRAZIL AND A WAKE-UP CALL FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD

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WORLD PREMIERE 2022

## DIRECTORS' BIOGRAPHY



### ERIKA GONZALEZ RAMIREZ

Before starting the co-direction of 'The Illusion of Abundance', Erika González was the managing director of a European Network of NGOs, Grupo Sur, from 2013 to 2017. She led the advocacy activities within the EU institutions, especially in the field of human rights with a focus on violence against women and femicide. Grupo Sur, together with CIFCA, went on to become the EU-LAT Network.

A feminist deeply committed to women's rights, Erika is a senior journalist. For more than fifteen years, she worked as correspondent for different EU and Latin America media covering EU affairs. The Illusion of Abundance is Erika's first movie.

### MATTHIEU LIETAERT

Matthieu received a PhD on corporate lobbying from the European University Institute, the university funded by the European Commission and EU member states. He then turned his PhD into his first documentary film, with co-director Friedrich Moser. Matthieu won the Best Belgian TV Journalist Award 2014. Winner of Sunny Side of The Doc, Cross Media 2010.

He teaches interactive storytelling at the IE Business school and wrote the very first book on interactive documentary in 2011: Webdocs - A Survival Guide for Online Filmmakers

Co-Director of THE BRUSSELS BUSINESS (ARTE/ZDF, RTBF, ORF, VAF, CBADOCS 2012) + interactive online live project for ARTE during two full months.

Author of NOS CHERS PARADIS (ARTE France 2016) a participative film made by 800 EU citizens premiering at the official COP21 negotiations building in Paris.



**WE MADE THIS FILM IN MEMORY OF MORE THAN 2000 ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS KILLED IN THE PAST 20 YEARS.**



# MAIN PROTAGONISTS



## MÁXIMA

Máxima is a Peruvian indigenous peasant who lived peacefully in a tiny house in an inhabited remote area, four thousand meters above sea level. Now, the land where she lives is surrounded by Latin America's largest gold mine.

One day, Newmont Mining Corporation, wanted to expand their activities, very close to Maxima's house, precisely where Newmont's local joint-venture Yanacocha wanted to dig. Her refusal

to sell has resulted in constant harassment, surveillance and repeated legal prosecution against her.

Maxima has been trying to sue Newmont in the USA since 2017. Until now, no court has let her do so. One day the mining company sent her an offer...

Maxima Acuña was the Goldman Environmental Prize winner for South and Central America for 2016.

## CAROLINA

Carolina is a journalist and an environmentalist. In 2018 she warned Vale's directors and shareholders about the inadequacy of the company's policy of safety for its tailings dams. On the 25th of January 2019, when Dam I at the Córrego do Feijão iron ore mine, suffered a catastrophic failure in Carolina's neighbourhood, two hundred seventy-two people died.

After the crime of Vale and Tüv Süd in Brumadinho, Carolina decided to keep denouncing what she had already been exposing for a decade, even louder! In her fight for truth and justice, she has suffered persecution and smear campaigns.



Carolina lives in the heart of the Brazilian historical mining region of Minas Gerais. She is part of local associations working hard to protect the remaining water sources, forests and ecosystems that have not yet been destroyed by mining projects. As a human rights and an environmental activist, she is acutely aware of what is happening in her community, the greed of corporations, and a State that works for corporations rather than for the people.

In her quest, Carolina goes to Europe to advocate for new rules. By moving outside of her country, the young local activist jumps de facto into the global field of lobbying, traditionally reserved to corporate actors. She is now raising her voice in the corridors of power, in coordination with a large international movement for corporate accountability, climate justice and integral ecology.

## BERTHA

Bertha, in Honduras, is the daughter of Berta Isabel Cáceres, who was brutally murdered in her home in 2016. The 45-year-old was killed after spending years opposing the construction of a hydroelectric dam in an area of western Honduras deemed sacred to the Lenca indigenous people.

Her daughter Bertha was suddenly forced to become a national land defender. Bertita knows she has big shoes to fill. She has dropped her graduate studies and instead is focused on finding the truth about her mother's murder.



Bertha became the coordinator of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras [COPINH].

In the Netherlands, COPINH, along with the Cáceres family, is currently suing the Dutch development bank FMO, one of the backers of the Agua Zarca dam on the Gualcarque River.

In 2022, Honduran lawmakers proclaimed Cáceres a National Heroine. They also approved the creation of a Berta Cáceres Prize and the inclusion of her image with the message "Wake up humanity, there is no more time" on the two hundred Lempiras bill.





## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Length: 58 minutes + credits (cuts available)

Format: ProRes, H264, DCP

Audio: 5.1 & Stereo

Original version: Spanish, Portuguese and English

Voiceover: English & Spanish

Subtitles: English, Spanish, French & Dutch  
(more to come)

## FILM CREW

**ERIKA GONZALEZ RAMIREZ & MATTHIEU LIETAERT**  
directors, producers, writers, impact producers

**MATTHIEU LIETAERT** : Photography

**ERIKA GONZALEZ RAMIREZ**: Sound recording

**JAN DE COSTER**: Editor

**JESPER OSMUND** : Narrative film angel

**NORBERT PFLANZER** : Music composition

**CHARO CALVO**: Sound design and sound editing

**SELIA ÇAKIR** : Sound editing

**ALINE GAVROY** : Sound mixing

**DAVID FORERO MONTANA** : Color grading

**DANIELA PINTO** : Graphic animator

## PRODUCERS

The film producer is Not So Crazy! Productions - Belgium - run by Matthieu Lietaert & Erika Gonzalez Ramirez. The film was made with the financial support of the following partners:

**Switzerland:** Heks Eper - ISHR - Fastenaktion // **Belgium:** Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) - Oxfam Belgium - Protection International - 11.11.11 - European Environmental Bureau (network) - CIDSE (network) - EU LAT (network) // **The Netherlands:** Both Ends - IUCN Netherlands (International Union for Conservation of Nature) - Vastenactie // **Luxembourg:** ASTM - Klima Bündnis Lëtzebuer // **Spain:** Intermón OXFAM // **France:** CCFD Terre solidaire // **Germany:** Misereor - Bread for the World // **Austria:** DKA // **Norway:** CARE // **Denmark:** Oxfam IBIS // **Sweden:** We Effect // **USA:** The Swift Foundation // International Land Coalition (ILC)

Website: [www.theillusionofabundance.earth](http://www.theillusionofabundance.earth)

Facebook: [@illusionofabundance](https://www.facebook.com/illusionofabundance)

Instagram: [@illusionofabundance](https://www.instagram.com/illusionofabundance)

Twitter: [@TheIllusionDoc](https://twitter.com/TheIllusionDoc)

[Official Film Trailer](#)

[Link to pictures \(High Res & Low Res\)](#)





## FESTIVALS AND SCREENINGS



### DURING PRODUCTION - OFFICIAL SELECTIONS

- FIPADOC Impact lab 2022 - Biarritz, France
- FIFDH Impact days 2022 - Geneva, Switzerland
- The Global Pitch 2022 - Sunny Side of the Doc - La Rochelle, France

### AFTER PRODUCTION - OFFICIAL SELECTIONS

(This list is increasing constantly)

- 32nd Film Festival Cologne (October 2022)
- Human Rights Film Festival Zürich (December 2022)

### PRIVATE IMPACT SCREENINGS

- European Parliament - In order to influence the Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence
- United Nations - In order to influence the Binding Treaty on Business & Human Rights



## CONTACT

### PRODUCTION

#### NOT SO CRAZY! PRODUCTIONS

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