

## INTRO

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**Jess Brough:** Welcome to Before the Applause - an audio programme for hybrid arts festival Fringe of Colour Films. We are going to be hearing from the filmmakers and artists who are behind the films in this year's festival programme. Some of these films will make you laugh, many will challenge you, and others will be thoroughly dismantling in their ability to find their way straight to your heart. Please enjoy hearing from the people behind these remarkable films and this continuation of their stories.

## DIALOGUE

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**Mourad Kourbaj:** I'm Mourad and I'm the creator of Una Muerte y Un Nacimiento//A Death and A Birth. So we're introduced to a sky and a voice. Gradually, the sky reveals an upside down boat and we hear the voice which turns out to be my uncle. And he is describing the sensation of being on a boat that has just left Argentina and is heading towards Spain. And those sensations of confusion and leaving behind something and going towards the unknown. As a child, my family left behind like a whole life. Like my grandparents, my grandfather, [inaudible] in the film, his friend is killed by the Argentinian authorities. But for my grandparents, they're leaving behind their whole life. Like they're in their 40s. They've had a whole life and they're going towards another life. For my mum and her siblings, who are all under the age of eleven, they're kind of just at the beginning of their life. And so they've just started and there's this boat journey represents a transition to a whole new world, a whole new continent. So for them, everything is in a state of flux. They're leaving behind everything that they've ever known, which is such a small proportion of their life. And then they're going to somewhere where the only common factor is that they speak the same language, but a whole way of thinking, a whole way of living is yet to be discovered for them. And I think that this opening scene really encapsulates that sense of uncertainty and confusion that they all must be feeling at this point. So this is a story that I have known about for a long time, but only in, like, passing. It's a story that my mom had mentioned to me, my grandfather had mentioned to me. It's a story that brought my family to Europe. But when this project came up while I was at Uni, the project was to tell a story, a family story, using only still images, either through a comic book or through a film. And I immediately knew that I wanted to tell this story because I had immediately in my mind the idea of speaking to my family directly and hearing what they had to say about this story because I felt like it was such a pivotal story in all of our lives. And it's a story that is one of many. It's not a unique story of leaving one country and entering a new one. It felt like it had, like a personal element to it that I wanted to explore further. And this way of telling a story through them, almost. My family narrating this story. I found it incredibly insightful, it was incredibly emotional. Obviously, it's a very intense story. So that process of interviewing them was really, really interesting. And then the visual element, because of the restrictions of the project, I had to tell a story using still images. The archive footage was a way of doing that because it kind of took the viewer back to that period of time. I asked my family for photographs so that the audience could see who was speaking. And the use of collage and the cutting out of figures and imagery had like, two roles. Because of the restriction of still images, I wanted to create movement I felt like taking away and then adding was a way of creating movement by only using still imagery, kind of like animation, but using photographs, which I found really

interesting. And then the second one was linked to memory because of so much time had passed that these memories are, uh, kind of fragmented in a way. And I felt like the use of fragmenting archived footage linked very well with that fragmentation of memory. Now, looking back at events, we only remember certain things. So much is lost due to the passing of time. I felt like visually exploring that through collage worked pretty well. My mum is the connecting factor for me. She was the youngest out of the four children. In a way, she must have been the one that was most confused in the whole situation. She was six years old. I wanted to hear how this story or this journey that the whole family took affected her. At the time that I recorded this, which was end of 2020, my mom had Motineurone disease, which is a disease that affects a lot of the person's body and speech and way of living. It affects every aspect of being. Essentially, at this point, she was still able to speak. So I'm so glad that I was able to record some of her thoughts and feelings towards this event that, uh, obviously had a profound impact on her new home.

### **[FILM CLIP]**

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And even in the, in the few words that she speaks, there's a real feeling of how much this story affected her and like, had caused an immense amount of trauma that I don't think she ever lost or she was ever able to totally deal with. I think it kind of stuck with her whole life. So I'm so glad I was able to record it at the time. And I recorded over 3 hours worth of footage that I had to cut down for a nine minute film. There's still audio that I have that hasn't been used, I haven't been able to listen back to yet. My mUm passed away in September of last year, so it's still difficult to hear her voice. It's nice to connect with her in the way that I can when I watch the film and to tell her story or part of her story. In a way, I'm really happy I was able to do that. And I remember finishing the film and showing it to her. It was very emotional for her, but she was sending it to all of our family in Argentina, all of her friends in Spain, and it was really nice to feel her support at that point. So I'm really glad that she was able to see it as well. Every single member of the family spoke about the effect that Astor Piazzola had on them, who was, uh, an accordion player, tango musician from Argentina. He's a very famous Argentinian musician whose music is incredibly emotional and really takes the listener on a journey. And he was making music at the time of the dictatorship, before the dictatorship, and I felt like his music had this depth and really represented some of the struggle that people were going through at the time, through the movement of the sound. It was interesting that every member of family had the same kind of response. Pairing it with the visuals and the audio footage of my family's recordings, it felt like it worked very well with linking the pain of what was happening with emotion. So his music was incredibly pivotal in taking the viewer on that journey. I mentioned right at the end that every single member of the family has gone back to Argentina since, other than my grandfather, whose friend was killed and had to flee almost immediately. And he was 45 when that happened. And now he's in his 90s. He's had to almost equal lives into different places. There's so much more that there is just like to say, like, it's so difficult to represent such a story in in such a short amount of time. I just wanted, um, listeners to think about not just this story in particular, but other people's stories that, uh, have similar feelings of displacement and how we relate to those people and their memories that, uh, are so intertwined in the way they look back and the way they live their lives beyond after making such a journey,

## OUTRO

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**Jess Brough:** Fringe of Colour Films 2023 takes place from the 23rd to the 29th June, but this audio programme will be available in perpetuity. If you are listening to this before the festival, we hope you can join us either online or in-person in Edinburgh, and if you are listening after the festival, you can stay up-to-date with our work at [fringeofcolour.co.uk](https://fringeofcolour.co.uk). This podcast was brought to you by Fringe of Colour Films, a hybrid arts festival for Black people and People of Colour. This series is presented by me Jess Brough, produced by Halina Rifai and Fringe of Colour, theme music by Xavier LaCroix and is supported by Creative Scotland. Thank you for listening.