

A Grasshopper Film Release

FORASTERA

A film by Lucía Aleñar Iglesias



2025 / 97 minutes / Spain / In Spanish and Catalan w/ English subtitles

Winner: FIPRESCI Prize, Toronto International Film Festival 2025 (World Premiere)

Booking

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Press

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Synopsis

On a summer vacation at her grandparents' house in Mallorca, teenage Cata spends her days playing tricks on her little sister Eva, annoying her grandmother, conspiring with her grandfather, and flirting with boys. This lazy holiday routine comes to a halt one night when she discovers her Grandma's dead body. The girls' mom arrives to help, but the role of caretaker she assumes is unwelcome. Time stops in this house that, strangely, already felt stuck in time. Unable to process her grief, Cata turns to her grandmother's belongings. Suddenly, objects and clothes she'd never seen now mean something to her, giving her purpose. She begins playing dress-up with her grandfather, who is unable and unwilling to move on from this shocking loss. Cata takes on a new role at home, or rather, this new role takes over Cata.

Director Bio

Born and raised in Madrid, Spain, **Lucía Aleñar Iglesias** is a writer/director based in Los Angeles. She holds a BFA in Film from NYU and an MFA in Screenwriting from Columbia University. Lucía's short film "Forastera" (19 min., 2020) screened at numerous major international festivals, including Cannes Critics' Week, Curtas Vila do Conde, Les Arcs, Oberhausen, and was nominated for a Gaudí Award. Lucía developed her feature debut FORASTERA (2025) with the Critics' Week Next Step programme. She took part in La Résidence through Cannes Cinéfondation and received the ArteKino award during MIA Market. Lucía has worked in the casting department for the Safdie Brothers' GOOD TIME and line-produced for Academy Award-winning Peggy Stern.

Interview with Lucía Aleñar Iglesias

By Alex Vicente

What led you to tell this story? Is there anything autobiographical about FORASTERA?

The story comes from a feeling that has stayed with me for a long time: that unsettling sensation when someone mistakes you for another person —especially if that person is dead. I was interested in exploring how that perception—that “seeing the other in oneself”—can affect someone, particularly in the context of grief and adolescence. It’s not an autobiographical story, but it does come from a shared emotion. FORASTERA is also an exploration of the search for identity at an age when everything is still being defined, through Cata, a teenager who finds in her deceased grandmother a role model, an energy that begins to inhabit her. Through her, I wanted to talk about play, imagination, and how these tools can help us cope with loss, connect with others, and transform ourselves.

What was the process like going from short to feature film?

It was a great challenge. We were able to establish a universe in the short, but I knew the feature had to go further. I wanted to delve deeper into Cata’s story, empower her more and broaden the focus to include the rest of her family. The grandfather, for example, takes on a much more aware and emotionally engaged role. I also introduced Cata’s mother, whose presence creates a disruption but ultimately allows for a reconnection with her daughter. Visually, the short had a nostalgic, Mediterranean feel that we’ve preserved, though now the world of FORASTERA becomes almost a bubble—a more stylized Mallorca, perhaps, the Mallorca of a forastera. The long takes feel like idyllic postcards, but they also carry that slightly artificial quality that postcards often have. I wanted Cata’s journey—this game of pretending—to be reflected in the world she inhabits.

The figure of the ghost appears in the film, but stripped of the classic codes of the genre.

What were you aiming for with this presence?

I was interested in the idea of the ghost as an emotional creation, not as a figure meant to frighten. Just as we project absent loved ones onto objects or places, here Cata and her grandfather construct that presence. If you want to see her, you do. The film doesn’t emphasize her existence through music or genre conventions, but rather integrates her into the character’s emotional reality.

It’s more of a poetic tool than a narrative one—something that allows us to talk

about grief, the longing for connection, and Cata's transformation. Visually, we drew inspiration from elements like Lladró figurines, which are so common in Mallorcan grandmothers' homes, to create an atmosphere that feels both familiar and uncanny, with a carefully crafted color palette.

Why did you choose to have Catalan and Spanish coexist in the film?

Because it felt natural. I've spent every summer since I was a kid in Mallorca hearing both languages at home. I also think there is a great deal of code-switching when it comes to languages in general—whether it's due to our fluency or who we are speaking to, we're not exactly the same person when we speak different languages. That variation felt interesting when developing Cata's character: she starts off speaking Spanish, but gradually begins to shift into Catalan, which is also part of the process of shedding her former identity. In that sense, language becomes another tool for transformation.

What works or filmmakers inspired you during the writing, filming, and editing process?

One of my main references was *THREE WOMEN* by Robert Altman—a film that fascinates me for how it deals with identity and its ambiguous atmosphere. *CRÍA CUERVOS*, of course, was another key influence, as well as *A GHOST STORY* by David Lowery, which presents that ghost figure in such a minimalist and emotional way.

In visual terms, we looked at David Lynch and *TWIN PEAKS*, especially for his ability to blend the everyday with the unsettling, the natural with the strange. I'm drawn to that kind of cinema that doesn't spoon-feed everything to the viewer—films that leave space for the audience to enter the story through their own experience.

Credits

Director & Scriptwriter	Lucía Aleñar Iglesias
Producers	Ariadna Dot, Tono Folguera, Cesc Mulet, Bàrbara Ferrer, Marta Cruañas Compés, Giovanni Pompili, Olivier Guerpillon, Marta Reguera
Executive Producer	Marta Cruañas Compés, Ariadna Dot, Bàrbara Ferrer, Lara Costa Calzado, Montse Rodríguez
Cast	Zoe Stein (as Cata), Lluís Homar (as Tomeu), Núria Prims (as Pepa), Nonni Ardal (as Max), Martina García (as Eva)
Director of Photography	Agnès Piqué Corbera
Editing	Paola Freddi
Music	Anna Von Hausswolff & Filip Leyman
Casting	Irene Roqué
Production Design	Gala Seguí
Costume Design	Pau Aulí
Sound Designer	Ulrika Akander, Therese Gylfe, Tove Lidman
Sound Mixer	Nora Haddad
Make-Up	Andrea Trenado
Hairdresser	Xavi Valverde
Assistant Director	Daniel Torrejón
Line Producer	Bàrbara Ferrer
Post-Production Supervisor	Giorgia Chiara Luna Sciabbica
Music Supervisor	Anna Baqués