

CARTAVIVAS FUSES LITERATURE, CINEMA AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT BY RECOVERING THE MEMORY OF PIONEERING WOMEN OF OUR 20TH CENTURY

Fundación Banco Santander, University of Exeter and University of Barcelona present an audio-visual-testimonial, educational and informative project on the intimate history of women who played an important role in the 20th century in Spanish.

www.Cartasvivas.org is an original idea of filmmaker Paula Ortiz, professor at the University of Barcelona, and Nuria Capdevila-Argüelles, professor at the University of Exeter and writer, which brings together film, literature, social commitment and historical research, as well as support for women. Well-known actresses will bring to life the authors recovered in film capsules directed by Paula Ortiz with a group of students from the Universities of Barcelona and Exeter. In these first three living letters, Sandra Escacena will be the sociologist and pioneer of sexual education in Spain, Hildegart Rodríguez; Consuelo Trujillo will get into the shoes of Pilar Primo de Rivera, and Marian Álvarez will give life to Carmen Laforet. The project will have continuity and will grow in the coming years. Mercedes Pinto, Chilean Teresa Wilms Montt, Gloria Fuertes, Elisabeth Mulder and filmmaker Pepita Pardel will be some of the next to be revived.

Trailer of the project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrN9Twa60HI&t>

This is a real audiovisual library of testimonies, which is available online for free, to promote knowledge and debate, and which recovers the intimate history of relevant thinkers and authors through their testimonies. These are women who played an important role in the 20th century or who actively lived the social and literary context of Spain and Latin America. The project, which will dedicate three three-minute film pills to each author, many of which "are forerunners and therefore visionary, rebellious and also contradictory, paradoxical," says Nuria Capdevila, a professor at the University of Exeter and one of the initiators of *Cartasvivas*. This is what we wanted to portray - says Capdevila - a struggle to be what they were that was never easy and from which we can learn a lot, "in *Cartasvivas*, you will find very different women, who participated in the tense modernity of the 20th century". The audiovisual pills are created by Paula Ortiz, filmmaker and professor at the University of Barcelona, together with students from the Audiovisual Communication degree at the University of Barcelona, whereas students from Exeter have been in charge of the English dubbing. Ortiz, one of the creators of the project, emphasizes "another of *Cartasvivas'* strong points: it is developed by students and teachers from two faculties, and therefore it will facilitate the training of future professionals and make them an integral part of the community we want to achieve". Ortiz highlights the visual power of the project: "these are intimate and committed testimonies of women who stood out in their time, with their lights and shadows, represented in the body and voice of our best actresses, who now reach the public thanks to a new way of merging cinema and literature".

This is undoubtedly "a project that combines the classic and the innovative, and that attracts any audience because of its audiovisual format, with an enormous potential for dissemination," said Borja Baselga, director of Fundación Banco Santander, who stressed that *Cartasvivas* complements and extends the work we have been undertaking to recover authors in the Obra Fundamental Collection, "one is bewitched by these testimonies that bring these 20th century women who have played such a prominent role, back to life in Spanish". Creativity and a very personal audiovisual language on the part of the director Paula Ortiz have a lot to do with this. "We could not stop being part of this project for the future, of knowledge and debate, which recovers an intimate and diverse memory of our history".

The project

Cartasvivas is born from five major lines:

1. The interest of both directors, their universities, and Fundación Banco Santander in recovering the intimate history of relevant thinkers through their testimonies. This arises from our interest in drawing closer to women who played an important role in the 20th century or who actively experienced the social and literary context in Spain or Latin America. It shows contributions, contradictions, lights and shadows. In *CartasVivas* you will find very different women who participated in the tense modernity of the 20th century.
2. To make this legacy known in an audiovisual format, with an educational aim and through the articulation of an R+D+I project where students and teachers from the Audiovisual Communication Department of the University of Barcelona and Hispanic Studies Department of the University of Exeter put all their skills at the service of the memory of these women.
3. Fundación Banco Santander's commitment to the recovery of pioneering authors, a key element in *Obra Fundamental*.
4. The willingness of great actresses of our cinema and theatre to participate in an audiovisual project and to spread the memory of our modern women.
5. Making the ideas, emotions, life and achievements of pioneering female authors accessible to the general public in a free and informative way, women who broke the limits of their time and helped to make our society more just and egalitarian.

The protagonists

In *Cartasvivas* **Capdevila-Argüelles y Ortiz** create a novel, high-quality audiovisual product to give voice to the words of women who played a key role in the turbulent Spanish modernity of the first half of the 20th century, and which emerges precisely from the book *De corazón y alma*, the letters between Carmen Laforet and Elena Fortún published by Fundación Banco Santander.

There was a need to "portray the paradoxes of the women who preceded us, learning from them, giving light to their contradictions, understanding the difficulty of being or remaining behind the window or escaping the confinement to fight," they both confess. This is how these first three living letters were born with the sexual reformer Hildegart Rodríguez, the creator of the Women's Section of Falange Pilar Primo de Rivera, and the writer Carmen Laforet who triumphed in her youth, "women of great personality who stood out in their time for breaking away from the clichés of their time," assert Capdevila and Ortiz together. Elena Fortún, Isabel

García Lorca, Teresa Wilms Montt, Gloria Fuertes, Carmen Conde or Pepita Pardel will fill the Cartasvivas gallery in the next few years.



Many actresses have enthusiastically joined this project, to give life to these authors. Sandra Escacena has put herself in the shoes of Hildegart Rodríguez with a script written by Capdevila and Ortiz, through the letters of the writer to the father of sexology, the British Havelock Ellis, kept in the British Library and extracted for this project. In these letters, written shortly before Hildegart's violent death, she introduces herself and talks about the educational project of sexual reform for Spain. Consuelo Trujillo gives life to a tough, contradictory and humane Pilar Primo de Rivera with a script based on interviews given by the head of the Women's Section shortly before the end of her life. In them, the SF founder defends her work as an educator of Spanish women and complains about the burial of her work during her lifetime.

Marian Álvarez accepted the challenge of becoming Carmen Laforet, an author who holds a special place in the trio of authors and actresses with whom we launched the project. The script comes from the acclaimed epistolary *De corazón y alma*, from the Cuadernos de Obra Fundamental collection of Fundación Banco Santander.

Profiles of the protagonists

The authors remembered in this project:

Hildegart Rodríguez Carballeira (Madrid, 1914-1933)

Conceived by her mother, Aurora, as the model of the woman of the future. Hildegart, a child prodigy who at the age of fourteen was already collaborating in newspapers, came to write fifteen books on sexual and sociological matters, and was admired by personalities such as

Marañón, Ortega y Gasset and H.G. Wells, among others. In the four living letters that we present from Hildegart she portrays herself, asks Havelock Ellis, the father of British sexuality, for intellectual fatherhood, talks about her work and recounts the development of one of her most important works: the creation of the Spanish League for Sexual Reform, after the example of the World League for Sexual Reform, which Ellis himself had created. "The girl with the ringlets who still lived inside the promising young author and activist that Hildegart had become, was already asking to speak as well, and we have given her space and voice in these living letters," says Capdevila. The script, written based on Hildegart's correspondence with Havelock Ellis shortly before her death and housed at the British Library, focuses on those fragments that shed light on the identity of this child genius. "It was important to approach Hildegart without feeling that her violent inopportune death was not enough for the analysis and reading of the character," confesses Paula Ortiz.

Pilar Primo de Rivera (Madrid, 1907-1991)

Daughter of the dictator and sister of José Antonio, she was the founder of the women's section of the Falange, the only mass organisation of a female nature allowed during Franco's regime, where she remained at the head until Franco's death. In the vote for the Political Reform Law, she did not vote against it like her colleagues, rather she abstained. Ortiz and Capdevila have worked with the speeches, writings and newsletters of Primo de Rivera as well as the interviews she gave at the end of her life to the journalist Antonio Moya, " she has attracted a lot of interest to international Hispanism for being a powerful woman in the years following the civil war and the second world war, in which there is a return to traditional values, contrary to the female emancipation that had gained momentum in Spain and Europe before the war." Pilar Primo de Rivera, "since the retirement of the final period of her life, desperately asks to be understood," confesses Capdevila, and "It wasn't easy, neither for the directors nor for the actress Consuelo Trujillo. Since we were aware of the important role of Pilar Primo de Rivera and her daughters in the Spain of the dictatorship, "we had to access Pilar's speech and give her flashes of memory with these *cartasvivas* revealing the history of women, whom we can know look at up close," says Paula Ortiz. We hope to create debate by delving into the wealth of our memory.

Carmen Laforet (Barcelona, 1921, Majadahonda 2004)

She was the youngest woman ever to win the Nadal Prize, in 1947, for the novel *Nada*, a revolutionary text about the life of a young woman, which changed the language genre and promoted the artist as a brilliant writer. In this case, the text of the script comes from the epistolary *De corazón y alma* (1947-1952), published by Fundación Banco de Santander in 2017. It was precisely this epistolary that inspired the directors to create this new audiovisual format entitled *cartaviva*, an educational and cultural tool which, in the opinion of Nuria coexists with reprints, documentaries, and research itself... For the script of these

cartasvivas was important to isolate the instances in which Carmen Laforet referred to her own process of authorship and the place that writing held in her life. This left a vitalist testimony brimming with self-examination and special sensitivity.

The creators:

Paula Ortiz, Professor of screenwriting at the University of Barcelona, director and screenwriter for film, TV and advertising. Degree in Hispanic Philology and Doctorate in Art History. Trained in Film and TV Direction and Dramatic Writing at the Tisch School of The Arts at New York University and UCLA in Los Angeles. Her filmography is outstanding: *De tu ventana a la mía*, her first feature film, and *La novia*, an free adaptation of *Bodas de sangre*, by Garcia Lorca. Both of these were nominated and awarded prizes at the Goya Awards and numerous national and international festivals.

Nuria Capdevila-Argüelles, Professor of Hispanic and Gender Studies at Exeter University. Her work focuses on the gender perspective, autobiographical writing and the history of Spanish feminist thought. Her publications include the pioneering study *Autoras inciertas*. She co-directs the Biblioteca Elena Fortún collection.

y es autora de abundantes estudios sobre la creadora de Celia, y la edición crítica de *Oculto sendero*, autobiografía inédita de Fortún. En su bibliografía destacan *Artistas y precursoras*, *He de tener libertad* y *El regreso de las modernas*, además de *El camino es nuestro* (Colección Obra Fundamental by Fundación Banco Santander).

The actresses:

Sandra Escacena, A young promise of Spanish cinema, known for her starring role in Paco Plaza's thriller *Verónica*, for which she was nominated for a Goya for Best Newcomer Actress in 2017 and for the Feroz Award for Best Leading Actress. She combines her work in film, theater and television with her studies.

Consuelo Trujillo is an actress, acting teacher and theatre director. She has a long and varied career, and since the beginning of her artistic career she has generated and produced numerous theatre projects, including "*Medea*", directed by José Carlos Plaza, for which she was awarded the Ercilla Theatre Award 2016 and the José Estruch Award 2016, and "*Cuando deje de Llover*" directed by Julián Fuentes Reta, for which she won the Actors' Union Award 2015 for Best Supporting Actress. In the cinema we have seen her in *Verónica* and *La novia*, among other works.

Marian Álvarez is a film, theatre and television actress. She won a Goya award for her work in the film *La herida*, for which she also won the Concha de plata in 2013. With an extensive career and multiple awards (Feroz, Platino, Fotogramas) she has participated in numerous films and television series, as well as in various theatrical projects.

About Fundación Banco Santander

At Fundación Banco Santander we work to contribute to the construction of a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable society.

With this objective, we develop initiatives grouped into three lines of action: the promotion of culture as a tool for understanding the world around us, social action to facilitate the progress of vulnerable groups and care of the environment to protect natural heritage.

In all our programmes we strive to create networks of collaboration with the third sector in order to face the main global challenges together.