

**MOTHERLAND
(BAYAN INA MO)
A FILM BY RAMONA S. DIAZ**



WORLD PREMIERE SUNDANCE 2017 | WORLD DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION

A Co-Production of

CINEDIAZ, INC.,
INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE (ITVS)
and AMERICAN DOCUMENTARY | POV,
with funding provided by CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING (CPB)

94 Minutes | In Tagalog with English Subtitles

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MOTHERLAND

Synopsis

SYNOPSIS:

Taking us into the heart of the planet's busiest maternity hospital, this cinematic experience drops the viewer like an unseen outsider into the hospital's stream of activity. At first, the subjects are strangers. But, as the film continues, it becomes absorbingly intimate, rendering increasingly familiar.

SYNOPSIS:

MOTHERLAND takes us into the heart of the planet's busiest maternity hospital in one of the world's poorest and most populous countries: the Philippines. The film's viewer, like an unseen outsider dropped unobtrusively into the hospital's stream of activity, passes through hallways, enters rooms and listens in on conversations. At first, the surrounding people are strangers. But as the film continues, it's absorbingly intimate, rendering the women at the heart of the story increasingly familiar. Three women—Lea, Aira and Lerma—emerge to share their stories with other mothers, their families, doctors and social workers. While each of them faces daunting odds at home, their optimism, honesty and humor suggest a strength that they will certainly have to summon in the years ahead.

MOTHERLAND

Statistics

- Population of the Philippines is 102,575,650 (as of Sunday, September 18, 2016), based on the latest United Nations estimates.
- 12th most populous country in the world, equivalent to 1.37% of the total world population.
- The landmass of the Philippines is equivalent to the state of Arizona.
- US population is 325,000??
- Growth Rate is 1.72% year in 2015, around 2 million births per year
- Life expectancy is 68.55 years.
- More than 86% of the country's population is Catholic.
- Birth Rate: 24/1000 population 2014
- Maternal Mortality rate: 99/100,000 live births (2010)
- Infant Mortality rate: 18/1000 live births (2014) 1.8%
- Industrialized nations: average of 2/1000 .2%
- Poverty line: 27% live below poverty line 2009
- Unemployment rate: 7% 2013
- Winnie Palmer Hospital in Florida 54 deliveries in one day – 11 stories high

- Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital – 100 in a 24 hour period
- National Maternity Hospital in Dublin averages (busiest and largest in Europe) – around 25 babies day or 9,000/annual

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Director's Statement by Ramona S. Diaz

I started developing a film about reproductive rights and reproductive justice back in 2011. Initially I had wanted to follow the social and political drama swirling around the passage of the Reproductive Health Bill. As originally conceived, the film was going to follow the bill as it went through the legislative process. While researching the film, I visited the Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital, the busiest maternity ward on the planet; it averages 60 births a day—and at its peak, as many as 100 babies within a 24-hour period. Fabella is the final safety net for very poor pregnant women, most of whom cannot afford either contraception or the \$60 delivery fee. The images I saw at the hospital - the nurses who did their best to tame the noisy chaos of Emergency Room arrivals, the crowded corridors, the premature births and cramped recovery rooms with double occupancy of single beds – gripped me and wouldn't let go. It was soon evident that the story I was looking for, a story about reproductive justice and maternal and women's rights, unfolded within the hospital walls.

As I shifted the gaze of my camera, I also decided on an exclusively *cinéma vérité* approach to capture the daily rhythms of the hospital. Day in, day out, the routines at Fabella repeat themselves. Pregnant women arrive, mothers with babies leave. Outside on the street, visitors line up. Inside the ward, pregnant women, fanning themselves because there is no air-conditioning, await the signs of labor that will advance them to the delivery room and eventually the delivery staff's cry: "Baby out!" As in most immersive experiences, once the routine washes over you, the real

story emerges. And the story I found was one of community and humor. The women talk unabashedly with each other about sex. A nurse counsels them on hygiene, speaking into a microphone like a stand-up comic, teasingly instructs them to bathe hidden body parts so their husbands and boyfriends will still want to have sex with them—and not chase after other women. They shared not only stories but also their bodies, literally – breastfeeding other women’s babies is not an uncommon sight. The narrative that emerges is a tableau of not only poverty, but also of warmth, generosity and fortitude. The fleeting but profound relationships forged on those cramped beds are the emotional bedrock of the film.

The story that unfolds in **Motherland**, while taking place in the Philippines, is universal. The wondrous mystery of motherhood is apparent in every frame of the film, in the sweat and screams of a first-time mother in labor, in the peace of her newborn being placed at her swollen breast, in the awkward laughter as she flounders to diaper her squirming baby. The joy in Fabella is no different from the joys experienced by mothers worldwide. However, because this takes place in the Philippines, this film invites audiences to witness analogous situations from the starkly different perspective of a poor, densely populated, Catholic country.

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About the Filmmakers

RAMONA S. DIAZ (Director, Producer, Writer, Co-Editor) is an award-winning Asian-American filmmaker best known for her compelling character-driven documentaries that combine a profound appreciation for cinematic aesthetics and potent storytelling. Her films, which include SPIRITS RISING, IMELDA, THE LEARNING, DON’T STOP BELIEVIN: EVERYMAN’S JOURNEY and MOTHERLAND, have demonstrated her ability to gain intimate access to the people she films—be they rock stars, first ladies, dissidents, teachers, or mothers—resulting in keenly observed moments and nuanced narratives that are unforgettable. While her stories focus on the Filipino and Filipino-American experience, Ramona’s films transcend their specificity and are universal in spirit. Her films have been broadcast on POV and Independent Lens and have screened and won awards at Sundance, Berlin, Tribeca, Silverdocs, IDFA, and many other top film festivals. She has received funding from ITVS, CAAM, Sundance Documentary Fund, MacArthur Foundation, Tribeca Institute, Catapult Film Fund, and Chicken & Egg. Ramona has also served on numerous film festival juries and funding panels. Recently she was awarded the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship and was inducted into the Academy of Motion Picture Arts Sciences. Ramona has been a film envoy for the American Film Showcase, a joint program of the U.S. Department of State and USC

that brings American films to audiences worldwide. She has conducted master classes and production and post-production workshops all over the world, including in Iraq, Laos, Morocco, Qatar, Zimbabwe, Brazil, and throughout the United States.

LEAH MARINO'S (Editor) home is in Austin, TX where she's edited documentaries for 20 years. Recent work includes Deborah Esquenazi's *SOUTHWEST OF SALEM* (premiered Tribeca, 2016) about four young lesbian women who spent 15 years in prison wrongly accused of sex crimes against two little girls. Previously she worked on Robert Byington's *7 CHINESE BROTHERS*, starring Jason Schwartzman, her first venture into fiction film editing (premiered SXSW, 2015). Marino edited *ABOVE ALL ELSE*, about one man's struggle against the Keystone XL pipeline (premiered SXSW 2014). In 2013 she completed Ramona Diaz's *DON'T STOP BELIEVIN: EVERYMAN'S JOURNEY*. Previous editing projects with Diaz include *THE LEARNING* and *IMELDA*. Her work includes projects on race car drivers, super fund sites, revolutions and civil rights movements. She enjoys helping each film to realize it's unique story and purpose in the larger world.

NADIA HALLGREN (Director of Photography) is an award winning filmmaker and cinematographer from the Bronx, New York. She is an alumna of International Center of Photography and was mentored by filmmaker Kirsten Johnson. Her Director of Photography credits include the Academy award Nominated and Sundance grand jury prize winner *TROUBLE THE WATER*, *CITIZEN KOCH*, *TRAPPED*, *TOUGH LOVE*, *WAR DON DON* and *THE NEW BLACK*. Nadia has also contributed photography to feature Documentaries including *FAHRENHEIT 9/11*, *SEARCHING FOR SUGARMAN*, *THE HUNTING GROUND*, *SUITED*, *SOUTHER RITES*, and *HOW TO DANCE IN OHIO*. She has worked closely with top Documentary filmmakers including Michael Moore, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, Morgan Spurlock, Joe Berlinger, Tia Lessin and Carl Deal. Nadia is a Cinereach fellow and recently co-directed a short film with Laura Poitras.

CLARISSA DE LOS REYES (Cinematographer) is a filmmaker born and raised in the Philippines who migrated to New York City where she attended NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Her short films have screened in many film festivals including Palm Springs, Busan, Fribourg, Vancouver International film festivals, American Cinematheque's 8th Annual Focus on Female Directors etc.. She collaborates extensively as a Director of Photography for award-winning narrative and documentary short and feature films and has worked in China, Taiwan, Philippines and the US. Her most recent work *ALMOST SUNRISE* by filmmaker Michael Collins is currently making its festival run and will be aired on PBS in 2017. She is currently developing her first narrative feature script film *JOHNNY LOVES DOLORES* with the New York Women in Film and Television "From Script to Pre-Production" Lab.

A Sony Pictures executive for 22 years, **REY CUERDO** (Producer) began producing feature films as a hobby in 2002. He produced the drama *SMALL VOICES*, which won Best Film in all of The Philippines' film industry awards, was the country's official entry to the Oscar and Golden Globe awards, and became the first Filipino film to be distributed by a major Hollywood studio (Warner Bros). In 2008, Rey executive produced *DIM SUM FUNERAL*, an HBO Films comedy. He was an executive producer of the Filipino horror-comedy hit *REMYNTOON AND THE CURSE OF THE ZOMBADINGS* in 2011, and secured U.S. and international distribution for it, as well as an English-language remake in development. In 2015, Rey produced *TOTO*, a festival award-winning Filipino American comedy. He helped produce *MOTHERLAND*, a Filipino documentary feature film which will premiere at the Sundance Film Festival 2017. At Sony, Rey is spearheading an effort to open local-language film markets in the Philippines and Indonesia.

MOTHERLAND (BAYAND INA MO)

A FILM BY

Ramona S. Diaz

EDITED BY

Leah Marino

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY

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Clarissa De Los Reyes

PRODUCED BY

Ramona S. Diaz

Rey Cuerdo

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH KIDLAT ENTERTAINMENT**

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TO SABINA SHEELA, FOR THE ENCHANTMENT

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