

"With their documentary the filmmakers hold a mirror up to Spanish society. And this at a time when Spanish society is walking through a thunderstorm within the European crisis, at the same time facing at home social cutbacks, a debate about regional separations, the general question of how to live together within the monarchy and the discussion about the legacy of Spain's dramatic historic past. Rarely a movie has been so much in sync with its times. With "Franco's Settlers" Post and Palacios put the finger on the sore spot."

Rafael Poch (La Vanguardia newspaper)

SYNOPSIS

Somewhere on the high plains of La Mancha in Spain resides a village that carries the name of its creator, Francisco Franco. Llanos del Caudillo was one of over 300 settlement villages built during the dictatorship of General Franco between 1939 and 1975. The ideological goal of these communities was to create the new fascist man.

The film portrays this unordinary small town as if we were looking through a magnifying glass, reviewing the Spanish history since Franco took power until the present days, when judge Baltasar Garzón, famous for having prosecuted Augusto Pinochet and currently head of Julian Assange's legal team, has been convicted by the Spanish Supreme Court and banned from office for 11 years because of his attempt to investigate the crimes committed during Franco's dictatorship.

Franco's Settlers is a contemporary evaluation of the figure of the dictator Franco; a discreet and calm attempt to dissect recent Spanish history and to review how some Spaniards deal with the cruel heritage of their past.

Contrary to some other films that deal with Spanish history and which usually speak from the victim's perspective, in *Franco's Settlers* Palacios and Post succeed in delivering a more complete overall picture of the Spanish dictatorship (1936-1977). Especially remarkable are two things: First the film lets protagonists who openly admire the dictator Franco speak. These subjects in power during those years were high in the fascist hierarchy, from which they still massively benefit. Secondly the film paints a precise picture of what it meant to live under the dictatorship. It is those little stories about harassment and abuse which reveal an entire system of a corrupt society. Rightly the film has been compared to the literary work by Rafael Chirbes (*The Long March, The Fall of Madrid*) and the filmic examinations by Claude Lanzmann (*Shoa*) and Eberhard Fechner (*The Trial*). As those works did, *Franco's Settlers* differentiates itself favorably in aesthetic and content from current more sensation ridden and, at times, cheesy films by using a calm rhythm and cadence, which could be described as "discreetly haunting". Therefore the film becomes timeless and simultaneously highly topical.

That there will possibly soon be a trial in Argentina against the last living perpetrators of the crimes committed under the dictatorship cannot be overestimated enough. After the Nuremberg, Eichmann, Auschwitz and Majdanek trials, this would be the first trial, which would once again judge the horrible fascist dictatorships of the 20th century. Few people know that Spain was, after Germany, the second cruelest fascist regime in Europe. To this day 150,000 people are missing. In *Franco's Settlers* some of the people who were in charge talk, probably for the last time.

GLOBAL RELEVANCE AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES ADDRESSED

How can a village still carry the name of its country's former dictator? When we first visited the village Llanos del Caudillo in 1999, this was a forbidden question and we had a hard time convincing residents to speak with us about the history of their own town. The relevance of this film goes far beyond just telling a local story within Spain. It is a painful universal story of how after a long dictatorship the historic remembrance of that cruel period is still controlled by the perpetrators. In the current political landscape, the question of how a country transitions from a dictatorship towards a democracy remains one of the most important political and social issues. The fall of the Berlin Wall meant the extinction of many former communist dictatorships. Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, and Russia, all visited Spain, a country that in the opinion of many experts successfully transformed after Franco's death in 1975 into a stable democracy. Recently though, Spanish historians and foreign Hispanists, such as, Paul Preston and Walther L. Bernecker have questioned the "Spanish Transition" and openly addressed that Spain has never really come to terms with its own painful past.

Recent upheavals in the Arab and African world ensure that more countries will be attempting this transition in the future. Ultimately the huge undertaking of shifting an entire government from one model to another is global as Felipe González, former leader of the opposition to Franco and later elected four times Prime Minister of the new democratic Spain expresses in our film: *"When Franco died there was this excitement, the same I recently saw in Tunisia. Some things are just universal"*.

The global relevance of this story cannot be stressed enough. A small village that carries the name of a dictator seems like a clear indicator that undemocratic values and a lack of historic information still exist in Spain and elsewhere in the world. How can it be that in our film the majority of school children defend the dictator? Why is it that Judge Baltasar Garzón who arrested the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet has been convicted and banned from office for investigating the crimes committed by the Franco regime?

These internationally relevant questions are discussed democratically in our film, which combines with equal weight the commentaries by the villagers of *Llanos del Caudillo* with those of famous politicians and experts, confirmed fascists and old opposition leaders.

THE IMAGE CONCEPT

As in our film *Monks: The Transatlantic Feedback* (Grimme-Award 2008, German TV Oscar) *Franco's Settlers* dialectically interweaves current interviews with rare archival photographs and films to re-create a time and place in history that reflects the current lives of the protagonists and an entire nation. Conceptually, we are inspired by the work of Paul Preston, Errol Morris, Eberhard Fechner or Claude Lanzman who explore the flux created in history by the different viewpoints of many individual experiences. By putting these experiences together into a documentary, we can get closer to what history was truly like.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"My German husband and I were driving south on the highway from Madrid to my hometown in La Mancha. It was him who paid attention to the sign with the name Llanos del Caudillo. I knew of the existence of Llanos but its name never shocked me. After all I grew up in a country where streets still are named after General Franco and other war criminals. Dietmar however found it very surprising that so many years after the dictator's death there were still so many places named after him. That would be unthinkable in Germany. We were intrigued and wanted to know more, so we started our research."

Lucía Palacios

"Having studied, worked and lived for many years in Spain, I am sympathetic to the country and its people. Lucía was born in La Mancha, very close to the village Llanos del Caudillo. Her flat acceptance of the name of the town made me realize that there was a story to be told."

Dietmar Post

As a German-Spanish couple, we have each experienced how it is to grow up with and reconcile our countries' fascist past. Until the mid 1960s Germany also resisted coming to terms with its own horrendous past. Only after the Auschwitz and Eichmann trials was the nation able to fully reject Hitler and his atrocious political views. In Spain, Franco is still not considered a fascist ruler because in recent Spanish history there was never a trial or official condemnation of the dictatorship. Needless to say, there has never been a reparation for the millions of victims.

We as filmmakers have asked simple questions and refrained from judgment. The village Llanos del Caudillo is a reminder of the worldwide phenomenon of how bad education, misinformation, ignorance and also a political system that never broke with the past are responsible for the fact that anti-democratic thinking prevails. Our rough cut screenings in Germany have left viewers shocked at how little they know about the effects of former totalitarian regimes on the current political policies of those countries. As documentary filmmakers we both recognize that this film is only possible because Spain and Germany are now democracies.



THE FILMMAKERS

Critics have called Dietmar Post and Lucía Palacios the German/Spanish counterpart to the American direct cinema directors D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus. Like Pennebaker and Hegedus, Post and Palacios shoot and produce their own films, which are acclaimed worldwide.

In 2008, they received the prestigious Adolf-Grimme Award (the German TV Oscar) for their film “Monks – The Transatlantic Feedback”.

Some of the major film festivals that have screened their films are: Rotterdam, Munich, Goteborg, CPH:DOX Denmark, Belfast, Leeds, Oslo, Gijon, Valladolid, and Buenos Aires. They have also been broadcast on such channels as: ZDF/3sat (Germany), SF1 (Swiss TV), Sundance Film Channel (USA), arte/ZDF, ZDZ culture channel, and Docufilms (Switzerland), among others.

Dietmar Post (director & producer, Germany, 1962) worked as an off set printer before obtaining a master’s degree in Theatre and Film Studies and Spanish Language at Free University in Berlin and at Complutense University in Madrid. Between 1995–2003 he lived and worked in New York. He attended film school at NYU, where he made his first short film, the award-winning *Bowl of Oatmeal*. His second short *Cloven Hoofed* had its premiere at the Rotterdam Film Festival in 1998. Post received the Grimme-Award in 2008 for his film *Monks - The Transatlantic Feedback*. Since 1997, together with Lucia Palacios, he has directed and produced many documentaries, and runs the production company and record label play loud! productions.

Lucía Palacios (director & producer, Spain, 1972) obtained her master’s degree in Cinema Studies at Complutense University in Madrid. Between 1996–2003 she studied (NYU) and worked in New York as a TV producer for Canal+ and TVE. She has collaborated as service producer on many films, such as, *The Nomi Song* (Andrew Horn, Teddy Award, 54. Berlinale). Palacios received the Grimme-Award in 2008 for her film *Monks - The Transatlantic Feedback*.

Filmography (selection)

- 1996 - *Bowl of Oatmeal* (short film, EEUU)
- 1998 - *Cloven Hoofed* (short film, USA, Germany, Spain)
- 2002 - *Reverend Billy & The Church of Stop Shopping* (documentary, USA, Germany)
- 2006 - *Monks: The Transatlantic Feedback* (documentary, USA, Germany, Spain)
- 2009 - *Klangbad: Avant-garde in the Meadows* (documentary, Germany, Spain, USA)
- 2010 - *Faust: Live at Klangbad Festival* (documentary, Germany, Spain, USA)
- 2011- *Gebrueder Teichmann: Live at Maria* (documentary, Germany, Spain)
- 2013 - *Donna Summer: Hot Stuff* (documentary, Germany)
- 2013 - *Franco's Settlers* (documentary, Germany, Spain)
- 2014 - *Felipe, what happened to the dream?* (documentary, Germany, Spain) (in development)

THE NARRATOR

Juan Diego Botto is one of the most popular film and theatre actors in Spain and Argentina. He debuted in film at the early age of 8 with Fausto Canel's *Juego de poder* (1983), and a few years later played Columbus' son in Ridley Scott's *1492: Conquest of Paradise* (1992). His first major success arrived with his part in Montxo Armendáriz' *Historias del Kronen* (1995), thanks to which he landed the first of his three Goya nominations.

Thus began a meteoric career, working under the orders of directors like Mariano Barroso (*Éxtasis*, 1996), Gerardo Vera (*La Celestina*, 1996), Miguel Bardem (*Más que amor, frenesí*, 1996), Manolo Lombardero (*En brazos de la mujer madura*, 1997), Adolfo Aristarain (*Martín Hache*, 1997), and Imanol Uribe (*Plenilunio*, 1999), bringing Juan Diego Botto his second Goya Best Actor nomination. He garnered his third Goya nomination with Víctor García León's *Vete de mí* (2006), having formerly collaborated another twice with Montxo Armendáriz (*Silencio roto*, 2001, and *Obaba*, 2005), John Malkovich (*The Dancer Upstairs*, 2001), Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón (*El caballero Don Quijote*, 2002), Adolfo Aristarain yet again (*Roma*, 2004) and Luis Llosa (*La fiesta del chivo*, 2005). Among his latest films as an actor are Gregory Nava's *Bordertown* (2006) and *La ciudad del silencio* (2007); Joaquín Oristrell's *Va a ser que nadie es perfecto* (2006); Yannis Smaragdis' *El Greco* (2007), for which he won the Best Actor Award at Cairo Festival; Peter Sehr and Marie Noëlle's *The Anarchist's Wife* (2008); Marcelo Piñeyro's *Las viudas de los jueves* (2009); and Achero Mañas' *Todo lo que tú quieras* (2010). He was last year's San Sebastian Film Festival jury president.

Juan Diego Botto is also very active in politics, currently taking part in a support group for Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón.

Juan Diego has been very supportive of *Franco's Settlers*.

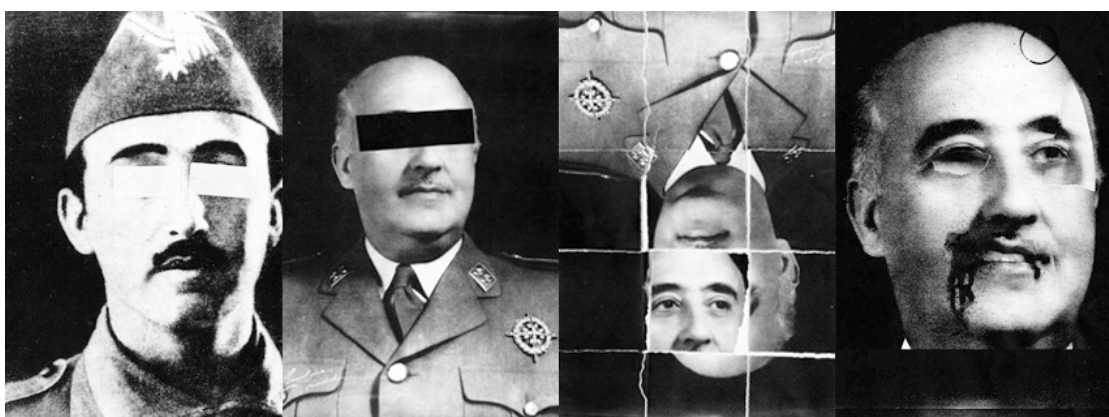
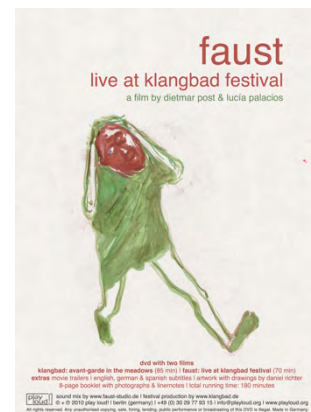
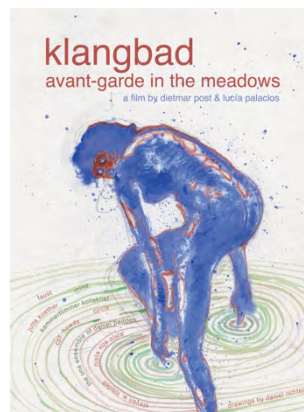
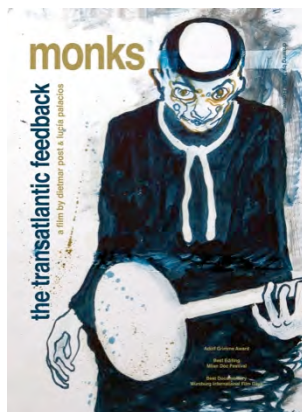


ARTWORK

Daniel Richter has contributed the artwork for the poster, cover art and graphics for *Franco's Settlers*, as he did for our previous films *Monks – The Transatlantic Feedback*, *Klangbad: Avant-garde in the Meadows* and *Faust: Live at Klangbad Festival*.

Richter is one of the most renowned contemporary German painters of today. His work is closely linked to society and shows an extremely high awareness of history and contemporary political events. Richter's paintings have been considered a "rebirth of historical painting".

Daniel Richter specially designed four collages for an online auction as part of a crowd funding campaign to finish the film.



CREDITS

Directed & produced by Lucía Palacios & Dietmar Post

Edited & sound designed by Karl-W. Huelsenbeck

Narrated by Juan Diego Botto

Sound mix by André Bendocchi-Alves

Artwork by Daniel Richter

With

Felipe González Former Prime Minister of Spain (1982-1996)

José Utrera Molina Minister under Franco and member of the fascist organization Falange

Isidro Sánchez and Esther Almarcha Historians

Cristobal Benito Sociologist and expert on the settlement projects

Francisco Goberna Lawyer

Santiago Sánchez (settler's son and current mayor of Llanos del Caudillo), Juan Aranda (first fascist mayor of Llanos del Caudillo), Wenceslao Chamero and Eugenio Bascuñana (settlers), Cleofé Serrano (settler's daughter), Joaquín Romano (settler's son), Ana María Parrilla (first teacher in Llanos del Caudillo), Natalio González (first priest), Antonio Delgado (agronomy engineer from the National Settlement Institute), Ana Romano (settler's daughter and former municipal councilwoman), Antonio Rubio (former director of the village's school), Manuel Romano (settler's brother, emigrated to Germany in the 60's) Karin Romano-Brandt (Manuel's German wife)

www.playloud.org/francossettlers.html

<https://www.facebook.com/loscolonosdelcaudillo>

QUOTES

Emilio Silva (President of the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory)

"An exact x-ray of current Spain."

Felipe González (Spanish prime minister between 1982-1996)

"A documentary that will surprise many people in Spain."

Walter Haubrich (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung)

"Franco's Settlers is an important and highly recommendable film."

Enrique Müller (El País)

The screening provoked a spontaneous ovation to honor a rigorous and humorous film. (...) 'Spain is a country, which hasn't talked about its recent past', says Emilio Silva. The film 'Franco's Settlers' could correct this situation once Spanish movie theaters start showing it.

Andreas Fanizadeh (TAZ – die tageszeitung)

Palacios and Post have closely inspected a huge amount of old photographs and films and included them in their film, interviewed former high-ranking cadres of the fascist Falange and met with the Social Democratic prime minister during the transition years. Their film doesn't comment too much, instead the protagonists and the material get to talk. A convincing method. Franco's Settlers could be an important contribution to how Spaniards deal with their dictatorship.

Walter Haubrich (Foreign correspondent in Spain for Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung)

Franco's Settlers is an important and highly recommendable film.

Sergi Doladé (Director of the MEDIMED DocsMarket)

Last night I watched Franco's Settlers and I have to congratulate you on a rigorous and emotional film, not only because of the story but also because of how this story is told. In Spain this revision of history never has been made and like someone states in the movie "maybe it is already too late". Even if some people might think that, I believe it is never too late to revise history. It is you as filmmakers who do it from the ground up, from life itself, from reality. What happens here is that this place called Spain we as people keep ignoring what really occurred. And that is the best achievement of the film how you unveil this ignorance, an ignorance we Spaniards have fully accepted and take for granted. You unveil the big truth! Spanish public TV has to broadcast this film so that people know about it. And the film should be nominated for a GOYA (Spain's Oscar).

Dominik Wessely (Professor of documentary filmmaking at Cologne Film School)

Franco's Settlers is a fabulous film. I saw it last night and had to watch it until the very end. To me it was an eye opener and a first class history lesson. The little I had learned in school and the little I knew from the media (the military coup in 1981 was on German TV) gave me only a small glimpse of Spanish history. The film brilliantly fills this lack of information. And it is absolutely amazing how the film at the end takes us right to the current political situation in Spain. Very creepy.

Óscar Rodríguez (Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory)

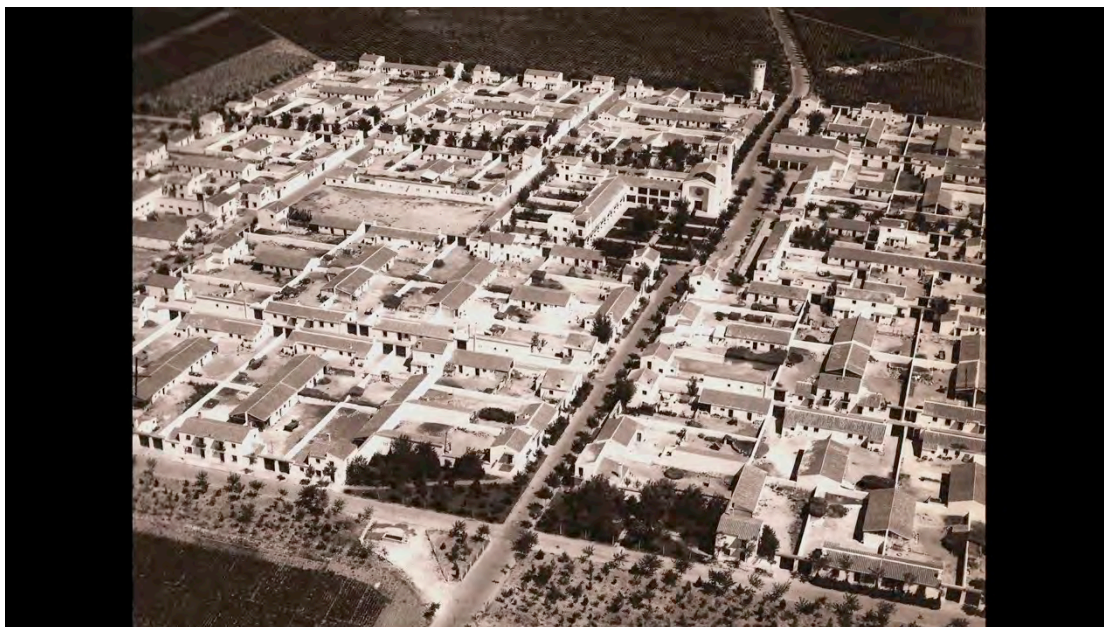
A magnificent work, serious and objective. This is the kind of film which truly democratic citizens need to watch. Thank you for your effort.

APIMED (Association of Independent Mediterranean Producers)

We proudly announce that Franco's Settlers is nominated to the V Ahmed Attia Award for the Dialogue of Cultures given by the to the best documentary pitched at MEDIMED Pitching Forum. Result: A MUST SEE DOCUMENTARY.



Settlers arriving at their new home in 1955



Llanos del Caudillo in 1956



Felipe González – Former Prime Minister of Spain (1982-1996)



José Utrera Molina – Minister under Franco and member of the fascist organization Falange



Protest march in support of Baltasar Garzón in 2010



Rally by the fascist organization Falange in 2010. Their supporters attacking the filmmakers.