

© Anna Fonoll Tassier, 2022. The definitive, peer reviewed and edited version of this article is published in *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, Volume 14, Issue 1, p. 165-166, 2022, [https://doi.org/10.1386/cjcs\\_00064\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1386/cjcs_00064_5).

***INTERVIEWS WITH CREATORS OF CONTEMPORARY SPANISH CINEMA. MILLIONS OF THINGS TO DO*, ANNETTE SCHOLZ, ELENA OROZ, MAR BINIMELIS-ADELL AND MARTA ÁLVAREZ (EDS) (2021)**

Berlin: Peter Lang, 344 pp.,

ISBN 978-3-631-80795-8, h/bk, 60,03€

*Reviewed by Anna Fonoll Tassier, Universitat Rovira i Virgili*

Fieldwork and research usually translate in making the invisible visible, instead of discovering something completely new. With this desire to counteract oblivion and silence, the scholars who participate in *Interviews with creators of contemporary Spanish cinema* use the dialogue to share the professional and personal experiences of up to 19 female filmmakers.

This choral publication raises a series of questions in a multifaceted way, since interviewers and interviewees have a very diverse profile; moreover, not only interviews but also group conversations and encounters are included. Broadly speaking, the storyline of the interviews rests on three pillars: the dynamics that limit or make possible the access of women in the audiovisual sector, the inclusion of the gender perspective in Spanish cinema in the last decade, and the visibility of the contribution done by women behind the scenes. In Film Studies, it is common that researchers focus on the representation of women in cinematic texts –in textual approaches to discourse–, rather than on the articulation of an in-depth mapping of the role of women in the industry narrated first-hand. For that reason, this book is necessary as well as innovative: it responds to the need to provide qualitative methodologies suitable from the social sciences to feminist film studies. Listening to these film workers raises awareness on problems that would never appear on the screens such as the reconciliation of work, family life and care, the difficulties of making a second film, the lack of feminine/feminist references, or collaborative practices. In addition, reading the book is agile due to the way it is written and organized, and it brings the reader to delve into what publishers seek to convey: the female professionals' reality in their own words. Hence, this nearness makes the book

advisable not only for scholars focused on cinema or gender, but also to all types of readers.

Moreover, this work cannot be understood without previous research in the Spanish film context such as that of María Camí-Vela who, in 2005, published the book *Women behind the camera: Interviews with Spanish Women filmmakers 1990-2004*, where some interviewee filmmakers resisted the label of 'feminist cinema'. By contrast, contemporary filmmakers are not afraid to point out themselves and their work as feminist: 'to me, this feminist activism is something fundamental in the profession as well', indicates filmmaker Neus Ballús. On top of that, we note an evolution resulting from the legacy of these film pioneers and the role of Spanish grassroots movements for gender equality. Besides, another difference with previous works is that the present book does not focus exclusively on the profiles of female 'directors', but rather broadens them to other specialties such as sound designers, editors, cinematographers, producers, among others who work in fiction, documentary, animation or short films. This approach offers a picture of a plural sector, while problematizing the notion of authorship, following the same line that feminist film theory does.

The subtitle of the book, *Millions of things to do*, can be understood as a call to collective action for filmmakers and researchers, protecting themselves from epic efforts and unapologetically embracing vulnerabilities. Taking this into account, the publication is a claim to vindicate the 'spaces that belong to us', as the publishers specify, without understanding visibility and parity as a concession. To sum up, this book and other products that give visibility to women's work are an opportunity, according to filmmaker Laura Ferrés, to transform ideas into a 'contagious energy' that shows the girls who are studying cinema, according to scriptwriter Isa Campo, that this 'it is a profession to which they can naturally aspire'.

Even with these opportunities and the slight progress of their presence, some filmmakers put into words in the book that in the next future they wish to discuss their cinema without having to deal with their gender. Roser Aguilar, one of the interviewed filmmakers, puts it that way: 'It is true that I am brave, just like other women who are there fighting, but I already want to be more than brave, I want to be happy. Heroism is very tiring'. Meanwhile, publications as *Interviews with creators of contemporary Spanish cinema* are still highly required to put light on the invisible and to help filmmakers embrace the idea to get rid of the cape.

## **CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS**

Anna Fonoll Tassier is a PhD candidate at the Department of Communication Studies of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili. She takes a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses the fields of visual culture, gender, and anthropology given her training. Her doctoral research is focused on production modes and strategies of representation in Spanish contemporary feminist documentary filmmakers.

E-mail: [anna.fonoll@urv.cat](mailto:anna.fonoll@urv.cat)

iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9254-8230>