

Teta

a nursing mother tells her story

Teta Press Kit

Genre: Documentary Short

Running Time: 25 minutes

Release Year: 2017

Production Company: Sabana Grande Productions

Languages: English and Spanish with English Subtitles

Website: tetadocumentary.com

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a nursing mother tells her story

TETA

a film by Alexandra Hidalgo



Sabana Grande
Productions

SABANA GRANDE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS "TETA" A FILM BY ALEXANDRA HIDALGO
CINEMATOGRAPHER NATHANIEL BOWLER COMPOSER LENA MILES DIRECTOR/PRODUCER EDITOR AND WRITER ALEXANDRA HIDALGO
tetadocumentary.com

Synopsis

In *Teta*, Alexandra Hidalgo tells the story of her journey nursing her youngest son, Santiago, for twenty-two months. *Teta* uses Hidalgo's narration and the footage shot by her husband to portray the ups and downs of nursing a baby as a working mother of two. As the film shows Santiago go from his first nursing session minutes after being born to his last as a walking and talking toddler, *Teta* illustrates the transcendent emotional bond created by nursing, not only between mother and child but between all members of the family.



Crew

Alexandra Hidalgo Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Editor

Venezuelan filmmaker Alexandra Hidalgo's documentaries have screened at film festivals in the United States, Indonesia, India, England, and Canada, and her videos have been featured on *IndieWire*, *NPR*, and *MSU Today*, as well as other publications. She is an assistant professor at Michigan State University, where she teaches film and video production, among other subjects. She is the founder and editor-in-chief of *agnès films*, a website that supports the work of women and feminist filmmakers.



Nathaniel Bowler Cinematographer

Ohio native Nathaniel Bowler is a writer by trade, whose relationship with the camera was born at roughly the same time as his eldest son. The birth of his second son only reinforced the unexpected career move. His cinematography work on his wife Alexandra Hidalgo's documentaries and video essays has been featured in digital academic journals such as *Computers and Composition Digital Press* and *Enculturation* and in film festivals around the world.



Lena Miles Composer

Michigan composer Lena Miles has a Bachelor's of Music Composition and Music Education degrees from Michigan State University. While at MSU, she studied voice and composition. Lena won MSU's Large Ensemble Composition Competition in 2013. Her works have been performed by the MSU Campus Band, the Denali Trio, University Lutheran Church Choir, and other soloists and small ensembles of a variety of instrumentation. She was recently commissioned to write a piece for the MSU Writing Center's MidwestHungerIs Mass Choir project. She is also passionate about teaching music.



Lindsay Spitzley

Second Unit Director of Photography

Sarah earned B.A.s in Arts and Humanities and Media and Information from Michigan State University. While at MSU she worked at WKAR-TV and as a recording engineer with the MSU College of Music, she also interned as a studio assistant at the University's Audio Studios. Recently Sarah worked on a short film, *Reservations*, as the production sound mixer and postproduction mixer. *Reservations* was screened nationally at various film festivals and events, including the Traverse City Film Festival (TCFF). She is continuing her studies in audio engineering at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.



Sarah Shaw

Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Editor

Sarah has B.A.s in Arts and Humanities and Media and Information from Michigan State University. She works at WKAR-TV and as a recording engineer with the MSU College of Music, while also interning as a studio assistant at the University's Audio Studios. Recently Sarah worked on a short film, *Reservations*, as the production sound mixer and postproduction mixer. *Reservations* was screened at the Traverse City Film Festival (TCFF) and will continue onto other film festivals and events. She is currently at the Audio Engineering Practicum at the Banff Center.



Jenna Ange

Colorist and Assistant Editor

Jenna Ange is a graduate of Michigan State University in Media and Information. She works as a colorist, editor, and gaffer. She was one of four crew members for the documentary *From Flint: Voices from a Poisoned City*, which received a bronze award at the Student Academy Awards and has screened at film festivals around the country. She is also a producer Blue Owl Productions and she has worked as assistant producer and editor for *Slide Show MSU*.



Peter Johnston Assistant Editor

Peter is a filmmaker and educator whose short fiction, documentary, and experimental films have been exhibited at film festivals around the country. He serves as Digital Media/Film Production Manager for the Michigan State University's Film Studies program, where he teaches film production. He is also Video Production Manager for the College of Arts & Letters Marketing Department.



Savannah Smith Trailer and Title Design

Savannah graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in Media and Information, minoring in Film Studies and Fiction Film Production. She wrote, directed, and starred in the film *Sitting Here Vibrating*, which was shown at the Broad Art Museum's New in Student Performance series. Her production company Blue Owl Pictures LLC's first short film, *Don't Touch Me*, is being submitted to festivals and screened at #DirectedbyWomen's Short Films by Women of Color event.



Hannah Countryman Film Website and Poster Designer

A student at Michigan State University, Hannah studies Professional Writing and Experience Architecture. She has done work in communications and design, and currently works as a web accessibility specialist at the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and as a web editor for agnès films. She is also interested in photography and digital photo manipulation.



Director's Statement

My first son William was born after a long labor that resulted in a C-section. The whole process is hazy now but I recall how the pro-nursing books I'd read kept going through my head with their warning that babies born through C-sections had a hard time latching and sustaining a nursing practice. As the C-section became the only viable option, I feared that my long-held dream of nursing my children was slipping away. And yet, when they placed William in my arms—all 8.4 pounds of him—I gazed at his face for a few seconds and then instinctively brought him to my breast. The relief I felt when he latched still reverberates through me. It was perhaps because I felt so fortunate to be able to nurse him in spite of what I'd read that I kept asking my husband Nate to film our nursing sessions.

As I edited our home videos, I realized that unlike the footage of us playing with William, which recalled film and TV scenes I'd watched growing up, I'd hardly ever seen nursing represented onscreen either here in the States or in Venezuela, my home country, where I lived until I was 16. The experience of nursing felt absolute to me—vital to who William was as a baby and to the adult he would become, as well as to my own identity, which for me was redefined through the experience. And yet, nursing was absent from most of our cultural representations of what it's like to be a mother and what it's like to be a child. When I became pregnant with my second child, Santiago, I decided to take the story of my experience nursing him beyond our family circle.

I was 13 when my first brother was born and 19 when the second came into the world. Because of the age difference between us, I had the joy of watching my mother nurse both boys and to dream of the days when I, too, would have a baby at my breast. From my mother I learned how profound the experience can be, as well as the intricate dance a woman must constantly perform when balancing nursing and her professional life. Like my mother before me, I took my children



to work with me and nursed them through countless meetings and work-related events. I wanted this film to show that aspect of the nursing experience because if there is little representation of women nursing in mainstream media, images of women nursing at work are so rare that employers may not even imagine the possibility of welcoming babies into work spaces. And yet, a nursing baby—as *Teta* shows—can be an unobtrusive part of a variety of work experiences. From my mother, I also learned to nurse in public with no sense of guilt or compunction. Just as I hope to invite a conversation about nursing in the workplace with this film, I also hope it will join the already vibrant movement toward normalizing nursing in public.

I worked on filming and editing this documentary over 22 months, and as I looked through the footage and shared unfinished drafts with Nate and with friends, family, and colleagues, I realized that the story was more complex than me nursing Santiago. The documentary also captured the ways in which William reacted to the hours I spent with his brother in my arms by turning nursing sessions into moments when he, too, was very close to me and joined in the intimacy. Even from his place behind the camera, Nate’s role in supporting and marveling at the closeness developed by the nursing process became another thread of the documentary. *Teta* is the story of love transmitted through milk from mother to child, but also of family love grown around a nursing practice that has, in our case, spanned generations. Here’s to the generations that will come and to women who, as I type this, are beginning their own nursing journeys and bonding with their babies and family members in this transcendent practice.



Credits

director, producer, writer and editor

ALEXANDRA HIDALGO

To my mother, Antonieta Aagaard de Cardier, and to my mother-in-law, Jean Bowler, each of whom nursed all three of their children and have unflinchingly supported their daughters' nursing journeys.

director of photography

NATHANIEL BOWLER

composer

LENA MILES

with

ANTONIETA AAGAARD DE CARDIER

NATHANIEL BOWLER

ALEXANDRA HIDALGO

SANTIAGO HIDALGO-BOWLER

WILLIAM HIDALGO-BOWLER

and

APRIL BAKER-BELL

ISLA BOWLER TUNICK

KATIE GRIMES

BEN LAUREN

ANNE VON PETERSDORFF

recording engineer and sound editor

colorist

assistant editor

SARAH SHAW

JENNA ANGE

PETER JOHNSTON



second unit director of photography
additional camera

LINDSEY SPITZLEY
ANTONIETA AAGAARD DE CARDIER
JEAN BOWLER
GUSTAVO CARDIER
ALEXANDRA HIDALGO
AIMÉE KNIGHT
KENDALL LEON
DON UNGER
NATHANIEL BOWLER
HANNAH COUNTRYMAN
CAITLAN SPRONK
SAVANNAH SMITH
SAVANNAH SMITH
HANNAH COUNTRYMAN

on-set photographers

title design
trailer
web and poster design

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Bill Hart-Davidson
Karly Mitchell
Diana Shank
Melissa Arthurton



Wanderlust scene courtesy of María Pérez Escalá
and Anne Von Petersdorff.

“LOS POLLITOS DICEN”
Traditional children’s song
Performed by Alexandra Hidalgo

“SANA SANA CULITO DE RANA”
Traditional children’s song
Performed by Alexandra Hidalgo

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