

A man is shown from the chest up, playing a set of wooden drums. He is wearing a dark jacket and has a focused expression. The drums are arranged in a row, and he is using two wooden mallets. The background is a clear blue sky with a single bird flying in the upper left. The text "DREAMS OF CHONTA" is overlaid on the image, with "DREAMS OF" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font and "CHONTA" in a large, bold, dark brown font with a wood-grain texture.

DREAMS OF
CHONTA

SYNOPSIS

***Dreams of Chonta* follows the story of Diego Obregon, an Afro-Colombian musician who came to the United States 16 years ago in search of his dreams. He made the ultimate sacrifice by leaving his family behind and living a solitary life.** 

This is not just another immigrant story focused on terror, inequity and policy; this is a story about the hopes and dreams of an artist, the only ambassador of his music and his culture in NYC. People have never been this close to the life of an undocumented immigrant who's struggles go beyond himself and his family to create a bridge between two worlds. This story honors the wealth and the ripples of change that immigration creates.

The film is driven by Diego's musical talent, the heartbeat of the Pacific coast of Colombia, filled with the *marimba* of *Chonta*, the *Cununo* and the *Bombo* drums, rarely heard outside of his region. Over the course of 10 years, we follow Diego in New York and his family on the other side of the continent giving a unique and intimate view of the immigrant experience. The viewer is transported through extreme contrasts on a journey of a man determined to change his life against all odds.



***"A modern day Odyssey
with an artist at its core"***

HORTENSE GERARDO
Writer and Anthropologist

***"What happens when
dreams become reality,
and reality becomes the
dream?"***

LANGSTON HUGHES
What happens to a dream deferred?

***"Some people should have
a free transit between
borders, like a cultural
ambassador"***

FREDDY CASTIBLANCO
Owner of Terraza 7 in Jackson Heights, NY



DREAMS OF
CHONTA

Documentary

87 min.

2019

Spanish and English

Format DCP – 2K, 16:9, Color

Director / Producer Monica Cohen

Executive producers Meyer Cohen, Fanny Rosenbaum

Principal cast Diego Obregón, Diana Silva, Diego David
Obregón (Francho), Diana Michelle Obregón,
Dani Obregón and Ciara Sofía Medina Obregón

Writer / Editor Cecilia Prestamo

Cinematography Monica Cohen

Music Diego Obregón and Diamante Negro

Sound Mix Alejandro Jaramillo A. - Amniótica

Graphic Juan Esteban Duque - Mottif

AWARDS



Pequena história

Borda-Tierra (2)

(A2)

Trailer



Stop 2nd

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Handwritten musical notation (notes and stems)

Handwritten musical notation (notes and stems)

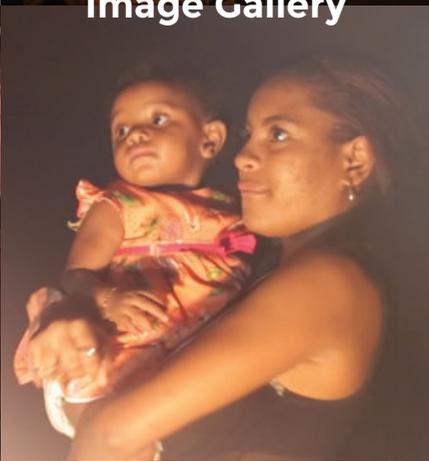


Image Gallery

I met Diego in Terraza 7 in Jackson Heights. He was masterfully playing *marimba* with his band *Grupo Chota* traditional rhythms from the Pacific Coast of Colombia.

I loved his music but in that moment I remember thinking how little I knew from that part of my own country; how little I've heard from their culture, their history and how I've been almost everywhere but in the Pacific region. I went on that night with that thought and came back to Terraza 7 about 5 months later to hear a concert of *Vallenato*, traditional music from the northern part of Colombia. I was surprised to see Diego playing again but this time he was playing electric bass with a mastery and a sensitivity that completely captivated my attention. I then started asking about him, I wanted to know more.

As a Colombian immigrant, a musician and a dreamer, I felt very close to Diego's story. I have felt the hardship of pursuing my own dreams in a strange land that may or may not provide the opportunities needed to succeed. I believe Diego is a tougher version of me though, an extraordinary musician born in poverty with dreams much bigger than himself. Diego is a true example, and like I like to say, a story worth telling.

With the 2016 elections putting Trump's radical opinions and "America First" agenda front and center, immigration issues are as controversial a topic as ever.

There are more than 11 million undocumented immigrants like Diego in the U.S., and at least two thirds (66%) have been here for over a decade. Beyond American borders, the number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly in recent years, reaching 173 million in 2000, 220 million in 2010 and 258 million in 2017 according to the UN International Migration Report in 2017. Immigration is definitely a hot topic nowadays but there's not really a deep understanding of the motives and struggles of immigrants.

I believe documentaries like *Dreams of Chonta* are eye openers to the general public. This film will not only inform the public about afro-descendent culture and immigrants in the US, but it will also make a statement about where we need to stand in this battle for immigration rights and about what immigrants really represent in society. I believe we are woven into the complex social and economical fabric of the countries we arrive to. We are important to the culture, the economy and the future of these countries and Diego is the perfect and approachable evidence of this. Most undocumented immigrants are like Diego, they didn't cross the border illegally, or were kept in an ICE detention center, they over stayed their visas. Diego is the 95% of immigrants, we need to hear their stories and the impact they have in our communities.





MONICA COHEN (Director/Producer)

Passionate Colombian filmmaker and music composer dedicated to social documentaries focusing on art and culture, Monica is the owner and founder of The Boom House Productions, a video and music production house based in Boston, MA. Monica moved to New York City in 2010 and since then has collaborated in a wide variety of video and film projects as a Director, a Producer, a DP and sometimes even as a sound mixer and a music composer. She moved to Boston in 2015 where she recently Directed and Produced a short documentary film, *Boston's Latin Quarter*. She co-produced *My Name is Pedro*, an award winning documentary film that premiered in Woodstock Film Festival in 2016 and continues to create powerful pieces rooted in storytelling sparking important conversations that put culture and art in the center of social transformation and human connection.

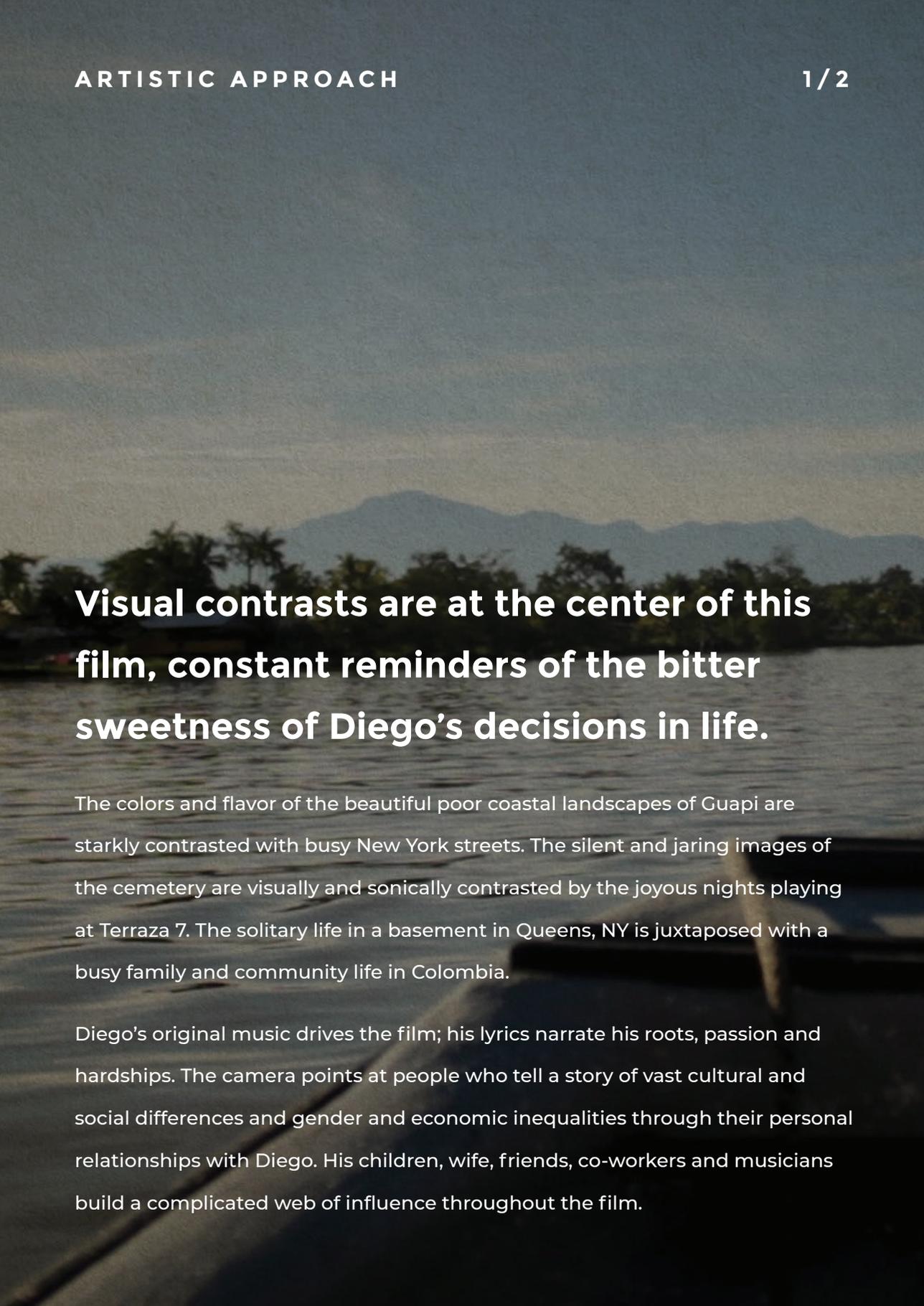




CECILIA PRESTAMO **(Writer/Editor)**

Cecilia Prestamo is a Boston based video editor with more than 20 years of experience in documentary photo-journalism. A first generation Cuban exile, she started her career as a classical pianist. She went on to craft stories as a newspaper photojournalist, photo editor, projects editor, and video editor. This diverse background provides a unique skill set for her work as a video editor in documentary and narrative projects.

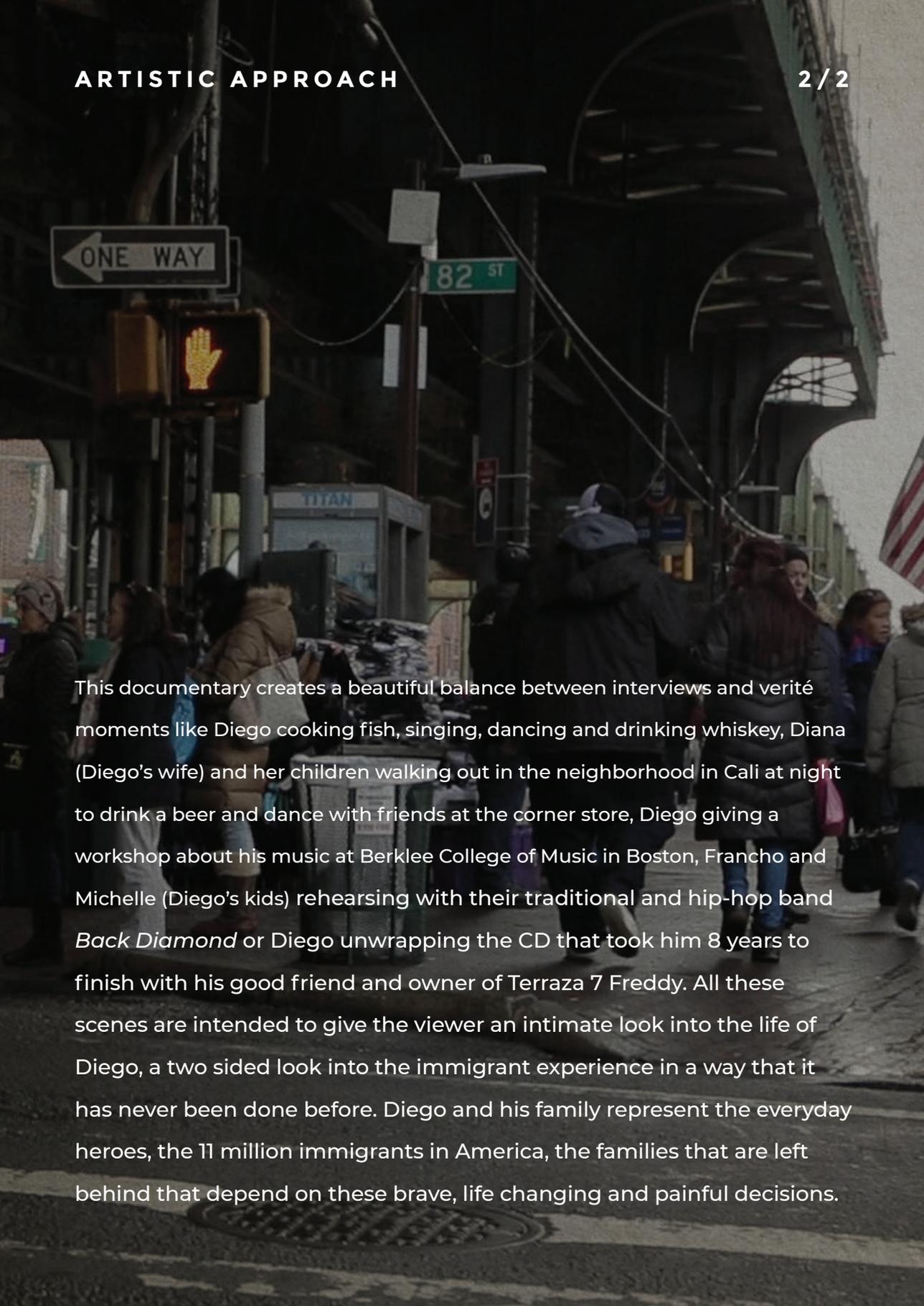


A scenic view of a coastal landscape with mountains in the background and water in the foreground. The sky is a soft, hazy blue, and the water is calm with gentle ripples. The mountains are silhouetted against the sky, and there are some trees in the foreground.

Visual contrasts are at the center of this film, constant reminders of the bitter sweetness of Diego's decisions in life.

The colors and flavor of the beautiful poor coastal landscapes of Guapi are starkly contrasted with busy New York streets. The silent and jarring images of the cemetery are visually and sonically contrasted by the joyous nights playing at Terraza 7. The solitary life in a basement in Queens, NY is juxtaposed with a busy family and community life in Colombia.

Diego's original music drives the film; his lyrics narrate his roots, passion and hardships. The camera points at people who tell a story of vast cultural and social differences and gender and economic inequalities through their personal relationships with Diego. His children, wife, friends, co-workers and musicians build a complicated web of influence throughout the film.

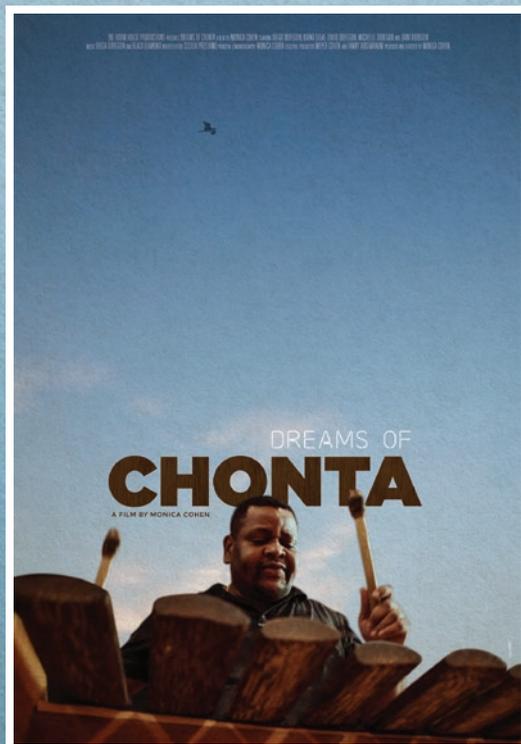


This documentary creates a beautiful balance between interviews and verité moments like Diego cooking fish, singing, dancing and drinking whiskey, Diana (Diego's wife) and her children walking out in the neighborhood in Cali at night to drink a beer and dance with friends at the corner store, Diego giving a workshop about his music at Berklee College of Music in Boston, Francho and Michelle (Diego's kids) rehearsing with their traditional and hip-hop band *Back Diamond* or Diego unwrapping the CD that took him 8 years to finish with his good friend and owner of Terraza 7 Freddy. All these scenes are intended to give the viewer an intimate look into the life of Diego, a two sided look into the immigrant experience in a way that it has never been done before. Diego and his family represent the everyday heroes, the 11 million immigrants in America, the families that are left behind that depend on these brave, life changing and painful decisions.

Assets

Get different assets of the title, fonts and poster

[HERE](#)



Contact

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