Who Are America’s Immigrant Workers? In P.O.V.’s “Made in L.A.,”
Three Immigrant Women Stand up to the California Fashion Industry,
Tuesday, Sept. 4 on PBS

Documentary Reveals New Americans and the Human Cost of Fashion

“... a rousing true story of solidarity, perseverance and triumph ...”
– Ronnie Scheib, Variety

MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET

Summary: The P.O.V. series (a cinema term for “point of view”) celebrates its 20th year on PBS in 2007. It is American television’s longest-running independent documentary series. P.O.V. is broadcast Tuesdays at 10 p.m. (check local listings), June through September on PBS, with primetime specials in the fall and winter.

Airdate: P.O.V.’s Made in L.A., by Almudena Carracedo and Robert Bahar, airs nationally after Labor Day on Tuesday, Sept. 4, 2007 at 10 p.m. on PBS. (Check local listings.)

Description: Los Angeles is now the country’s center for apparel manufacturing, but many of its factories bear an eerie resemblance to New York’s early 20th century sweatshops. Made in L.A. follows the remarkable journey of three Latina immigrants working in L.A.‘s garment factories and their struggle for self-empowerment as they wage a three-year battle to bring a major clothing retailer to the negotiating table. This intimate film offers a rare and poignant glimpse into this “other” California, where immigrants in many industries toil long hours for sub-minimum wages, fighting for an opportunity in a new country.

Lupe Hernandez, a five-foot tall dynamo, has been working in Los Angeles garment factories for over 15 years since she left Mexico City at age 17. Maura Colorado left her three children in the care of relatives in El Salvador 18 years ago while she sought work in L.A. to support them. She found that the low-paid work came with wretched factory conditions and an “undocumented” status that deprived her of seeing her children. Maria Pineda came to southern California from Mexico at age 18 in hopes of a better life. Twenty-three years later, substandard working conditions, a meager salary and domestic abuse have left her struggling for her children’s future and her own dignity.

These three women and other immigrant workers came together in 2001 at L.A.’s Garment Worker Center, an advocacy group run, in many instances, by children of Asian immigrants, to take a stand for their rights. They launched a public challenge to one of the city’s flagship clothiers, calling attention to the dark side of low-wage labor north of the border. The worker-led boycott of fashionable Forever 21 not only harkened to an earlier era of struggle for immigrant rights, but also revealed the social fault lines of the new globalization. For Lupe, Maura and Maria, the long campaign to get the company to pay fair wages and accept responsibility for working conditions in the company’s own backyard became a turning point from victimization to empowerment.
Airing with Made in L.A. Made in L.A. will be presented with two short films by May Lin Au Yong:

**Bullet Proof Vest:** Nine-year old Jyeshria wants a bullet proof vest – and she’s dead serious. Welcome to Richmond, Calif., where children neither walk to school, nor go to the park – not if they want to live past the age of 18.

**Keeping House:** A reflection on a mother’s resolute love as she confronts the fragile promise of life through the eyes of her severely ill, 20-year-old son. The film is a gentle tribute to the self-effacing, oft-invisible caregiver.

**Filmmaker’s Statement:**
“Like many recent immigrants, I came to this country from my native Spain thinking I’d just be here ’for a while.’ Like most immigrants, I ended up staying,” says Almudena Carracedo. “In the five years the film took to complete, it slowly, unexpectedly, became an intimate portrait of an all-American experience: the struggle of recent immigrants to get a foothold, to learn their rights and to assert their voice in our society.

“When we started this film, we did not anticipate that the garment workers’ campaign would take three years and that the story would take a deeper turn,” she continues. “Struggles cause people to change, and we were amazed to observe each woman’s growing sense of self-confidence and self-worth. It became clear to us that this was the story that needed to be told and that the women’s struggle mattered not just for its own sake, but because it served as a catalyst for each of them, in her own way, to stand up, to say, ’I exist. And I have rights.’”

**Bios:**

**Almudena Carracedo, Director/Producer/Cinematographer/Co-editor**
Trained in film production in Madrid and Paris, Carracedo worked as a television director in Spain, directing programs for broadcast on Canal+. In 2000, she came to the U.S. as an international scholar to work on her doctoral dissertation on U.S./Mexico border documentaries at the University of California Los Angeles. Her documentary on Tijuana as a border town, “Welcome, A Docu-Journey of Impressions,” received the Sterling Award for Best Short Documentary at SILVERDOCS and screened in numerous national and international festivals. Five years in the making, Made in L.A. is her first feature documentary. Carracedo is a recent fellow of the National Association of Latino Independent Producers’ Latino Producers Academy. She lives in Los Angeles.

**Robert Bahar, Producer**
Bahar is director and co-founder of Doculink, a grassroots organization for documentary filmmakers, and sits on the Board of Directors of the International Documentary Association. He produced and directed the award-winning documentary “Laid to Waste,” which aired on Philadelphia PBS stations, and has line-produced and associate-produced several independent films including ITVS’s “Diary of a City Priest,” which premiered at Sundance, and “Pittsburgh,” which premiered at Tribeca. He holds an M.F.A. from The Peter Stark Program at the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television. He lives in Los Angeles.

**Featured in Made in L.A.:**
Taiwanese-American activist Joann Lo worked as the lead organizer at the Garment Worker Center, where garment workers in Los Angeles led a boycott campaign against young women’s retailer Forever 21, which resulted in a settlement of their lawsuit against the company and in the retailer’s commitment to work with GWC and workers to try to improve conditions in the garment industry. A graduate of Yale University, she worked as an organizer for SEIU locals 399 and 1877, and now serves as co-executive director of Enlace, a strategic alliance of low-wage workers centers and unions in the U.S. and in Mexico.

**Length:** 70:00 (airing with two short films for a total running time of 86:46)
Festivals: SILVERDOCS Documentary Festival, June 2007, Silver Spring, Md.
Los Angeles Film Festival, June 2007
New York International Latino Film Festival, July 2007

Credits: Director: Almudena Carracedo
Producers: Robert Bahar, Almudena Carracedo
Cinematographer: Almudena Carracedo
Writers: Almudena Carracedo, Robert Bahar, Lisa Leeman
Editors: Lisa Leeman, Kim Roberts, Almudena Carracedo
Original Music: Joseph Julian Gonzalez

Made in L.A. is a co-production of Semilla Verde Productions, Inc., the Independent Television Service (ITVS) and P.O.V.’s Diverse Voices Project (made possible through major funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting). It is a co-presentation with Latino Public Broadcasting.

P.O.V. Web: The Made in L.A. companion Web site (www.pbs.org/pov/madeinla) offers a streaming video trailer of the film, an interview with filmmakers Almudena Carracedo and Robert Bahar (video, podcast and text); a list of related Web sites, organizations and books; a discussion guide and classroom activity; and these special features:

Interactive Quiz: The debates over immigration taking place in Congress, in the media and in communities across the country have generated many myths and misunderstandings. How much do you know about immigrants and the realities of their lives in the United States? Take this interactive quiz (offered in English and Spanish) and separate the facts from fiction.

Watching Made in L.A.: For Lupe, Maura and María, their legal battle for fair working conditions and wages represented a commitment to weekly meetings, public speaking and picket lines. P.O.V. asks four other activists and writers on the front lines of the immigration and sweatshop-reform issues to respond to the themes and characters in the documentary.

Outreach: P.O.V. is working with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in Made in L.A. For a list of upcoming screening and discussion events, go to: http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_news.php

P.O.V. also works with nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow to develop a facilitation guide with discussion questions and background information to help event organizers carry out discussions around the film’s content. Cari Ladd has created the lesson plan. In addition, the American Library Association and P.O.V. have created a multimedia resource list of related fiction and nonfiction books and videos that further explore the issues. The materials are available free of charge at: www.amdoc.org/outreach.


P.O.V.: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and celebrating its 20th season on PBS in 2007, the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. P.O.V. has brought more than 250 documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, P.O.V.’s Borders. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information about P.O.V is available at www.pbs.org/pov.
Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by PBS, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Educational Foundation of America, the Ford Foundation, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York State Council on the Arts, and public television viewers. Funding for P.O.V.’s Diverse Voices Project is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, with additional support from JPMorgan Chase Foundation, the official sponsor of P.O.V.’s 20th Anniversary Campaign. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston, and Thirteen/WNET New York.

TAPE REQUESTS: Please note that broadcast versions of the films are available upon request, as the films may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.