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## In POV's "Ella Es El Matador (She Is the Matador)," Women Challenge Bullfighting's Male Image, Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2009, on PBS

Maripaz Vega and Eva Florencia Are the Latest in a Line of Women Who Have Taken to the Ring to Face Both Bulls and Prejudice

*A co-presentation with Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB)*

*"When Vega stands in front of a bull, covered in blood, sword raised, staring the beast in its eye, it's impossible not to immerse yourself in the action." — Sarah Godfrey, Washington City Paper*

### **MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET**

National Air

Date:

**Ella Es El Matador (She Is the Matador)** has its national broadcast premiere on **Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2009**, at 10 p.m. on PBS during the 22nd season of **POV (Point of View)**. American television's longest-running independent documentary series, POV is the recipient of a Special Emmy for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking. The series continues on Tuesdays through Sept. 22 and returns with two specials in November and December. (Check local listings.)

Summary:

For Spaniards — and for the world — nothing has expressed their country's traditionally rigid gender roles more powerfully than the image of the male matador. So sacred was the bullfighter's masculinity to Spanish identity that a 1908 law barred women from the sport. **Ella Es El Matador** reveals the surprising history of the women who made such a law necessary and offers fascinating profiles of two female matadors currently in the arena: the acclaimed Mari Paz Vega and neophyte Eva Florencia, a runaway from Italy. These women are gender pioneers by necessity. But what emerges as their truest motivation is their sheer passion — for bullfighting and the pursuit of a dream. *A co-presentation with Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB).*

Is bullfighting sport, dance, theater or blood ritual? **Ella Es El Matador** reveals bullfighting to be all of these. Through current interviews and archival footage illustrating the history of women in bullfighting, the film offers a window on the highly choreographed and deadly match between bull and human that remains enormously popular in Spain, even as it is reviled by many in an age of animal rights. (Outside Spain, bullfighting is popular only in Portugal, the south of France and Latin America; interestingly, in those places it is more open to women matadors.)

Filmmakers'

Statement:

Gemma Cubero, Celeste Carrasco, Co-directors/Producers:

"Bullfighting is the quintessential symbol of masculinity and bravery in Spanish culture," say filmmakers Cubero and Carrasco, both born and raised in Spain. "Making this documentary about female matadors means changing this symbol and shifting the gender roles that have been defined for centuries. We want to open a window for viewers to enter into a unique world without judgment, while exploring the universal struggle of our two protagonists."

Filmmakers'  
Bios:

Gemma Cubero, Director, Producer, Executive Producer, Writer

**Ella Es El Matador** marks Spanish filmmaker Gemma Cubero's directorial debut. Previously she worked as associate producer and researcher on Lourdes Portillo's award-winning POV documentary **Señorita Extraviada**, about the killing of women in Juarez. Cubero also produced, with Julio Medem, the feature-length documentaries "What's Under Your Hat?" and "One Percent: Schizophrenia." In 2006 she founded Talcual Films, an independent production company based in the United States and Spain. Now living in San Francisco, Cubero received a bachelor's degree, cum laude, in journalism from Elon University in Elon, N.C.

Celeste Carrasco, Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Editor, Writer

Celeste Carrasco is a native of Barcelona, Spain. Her film credits include first assistant director on Marta Ballebò-Coll's "Honey, I've Sent the Men to the Moon," production manager on Lourdes Portillo's **Señorita Extraviada** and producer on Lisset Barcellos' "Both." Previously, she received sponsorship from the Smithsonian Institution to conduct research at the Film and Media Department of the Exploratorium in San Francisco. Carrasco currently works in the technical department of the Madrid Opera House, combining her film work with theater.

POV Web:

The **Ella Es El Matador** companion website, [www.pbs.org/pov/matador](http://www.pbs.org/pov/matador), offers a streaming video trailer of the film, an interview with the filmmakers, a history of bullfighting and women matadors, a list of related websites, organizations and books, lesson plans, discussion guides and these special features:

- Anatomy of a Bullfight: This flash interactive feature explores all the different stages of a bullfight and sheds light on what goes on inside the ring.
- The Art of Eva Florencia: Since she quit bullfighting, Eva Florencia from **Ella Es El Matador** has embarked on a career as an artist. View some of her work and ask Eva a question.

Outreach:

POV works with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in the film. For a list of upcoming screening and discussion events for **Ella Es El Matador**, go to: [http://www.amdoc.org/outreach\\_news.php](http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_news.php)

POV also works with nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow to develop a discussion guide with background information to help event organizers carry out discussions around the film's content. Cari Ladd has created the lesson plan. Paul A. Bareño of the San Diego Public Library has created a multimedia resource list of related books and videos that further explore the issues. The materials are available free of charge at [www.pbs.org/pov/matador/](http://www.pbs.org/pov/matador/)

Credits:

Co-directors/Producers: Gemma Cubero, Celeste Carrasco

Executive Producers: Sheila C. Johnson, Suzanne LaFetra, Gemma Cubero

Cinematographer: Celeste Carrasco

Editors: Carla Gutiérrez, Vivien Hillgrove, Jennifer Chinlund, Celeste Carrasco

Music: Michael Galasso, Todd Boekelheide, Martirio

Running Time: 56:46

**Ella Es El Matador (She Is the Matador)** is a production of Talcual Films ([www.talcualfilms.com](http://www.talcualfilms.com)) and is distributed in North America by Women Make Movies (WMM) ([www.wmm.com](http://www.wmm.com)).

Awards  
& Festivals:

Tribeca All Access Creative Promise Award for Documentary, 2008  
Independent Film Week Spotlight on Documentaries, 2008

World premiere, 24th Guadalajara International Film Festival, 2009  
U.S. premiere, SILVERDOCS AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival, 2009  
Women Make Movies Film Festival, San Francisco, Opening night, Aug. 28, 2009,  
<http://www.wmm.com/>

Related news: Obituary: "Conchita Cintrón: Matador who led the way for women in the bullring" by Frank Gray, *The Independent*, March 9, 2009: Conchita Cintrón Verrill, who fought a long uphill battle to establish a central role for women as matadors, has died in Lisbon, where she had lived in retirement for many years.

Cintrón was born in Antofagasta, Chile; her father was from Puerto Rico and her mother was born in the United States of Hispanic heritage. The patina of legend began to accrue in 1935 when Cintrón\*made her professional debut at the age of 13 in Peru at the Lima bullring. She chose to fight as a rejoneador, that is, from horseback. She proved herself to be an excellent bullfighter, thanks to her skilful and alert horsemanship. Complete story: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/conchita-cintrn-matador-who-led-the-way-for-women-in-the-bullring-1639291.html>

Associated Press story Feb. 18, 2009: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29261298/>

"Amateur matador set to hang up cape after 41 years," by Tim Sullivan, *San Diego Union Tribune*, Aug. 22, 2009: His knees are not what they were. Peter Rombold can hear them "screaming," can sense how much tougher it will be to train, can tell that it's time to abandon bullfighting. . . .

After 41 years as an *aficionado practico*, and 60-some bullfights, Rombold intends to tangle with his last *toro* this afternoon at Plaza Monumental, Tijuana's Bullring by the Sea. But like any seasoned torero, Rombold has left himself some wiggle room.

Complete story: <http://www3.signonsandiego.com/stories/2009/aug/22/amateur-matador-set-hang-cape-after-41-years/>

Pressroom: Visit POV's pressroom, [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom), for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

LPB: Created in 1998 by Edward James Olmos and Marlene Dermer, Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB) is a nonprofit organization funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. LPB's mission is to support the development, production, post-production, acquisition and distribution of non-commercial educational and cultural television that is representative of or addresses issues of particular interest to U.S. Latinos. These programs are produced for dissemination to public broadcasting stations and other public telecommunications entities. Mr. Olmos is presently LPB's Chairman of the Board of Directors. For more information please visit [www.lpbp.org](http://www.lpbp.org).

POV: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 22nd season on PBS, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 275 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV 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 is available at [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

Major funding for POV is provided by PBS, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, The Educational Foundation of America, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, The September 11th Fund and public television viewers. Funding for POV's *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Special support provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. POV is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston and THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG.