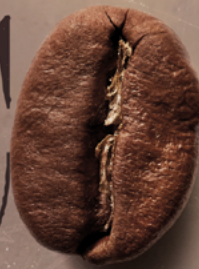


*Memories of*  
**PUERTO  
RICO**



A MOM WORKS PRODUCTION IN COPRODUCTION WITH IB3

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MARTA HIERRO & NÚRIA ABAD

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS NÚRIA ABAD & MARTA HIERRO EXECUTIVE PRODUCER IB3 NACHO TEJEDOR

CINEMATOGRAPHY JUAN CARLOS AZPIROZ GRAPHIC DESIGN & MOTION GRAPHICS LUIS OZONAS ORIGINAL MUSIC XISCO ALBÉNIZ

EDITED BY JAUME CARLOS MORANTA SOUND RECORDING AND AUDIO POSTPRODUCTION MARC FARRÉ COLOR CORRECTION JAUME ALCINA

PRODUCED BY

WITH THE COLLABORATION OF

**MOM**

**B**  
Ems Públics de  
Radiotelevisió de  
les Illes Balears

**IB3**  
G CONSELLERIA  
O FONS EUROPEUS,  
I UNIVERSITAT I CULTURA  
B INSTITUT INDÚSTRIES  
CULTURALS  
ILLES BALEARS

**IB3** Departament de Cultura, Patrimoni  
i Política Lingüística  
Consell de Mallorca

## SYNOPSIS

“Memories of Puerto Rico” tells the story of the Castañer family and delves into the phenomenon of Mallorcan emigration to Puerto Rico from the end of the 19th century. The common thread is its two main characters, Carles Llull and Luis Ozonas, two designers who had never crossed paths despite working in remarkably similar fields. Everything changes the day that, by chance, they meet and discover that they are distant relatives with a long history behind them. They shared relatives who emigrated to Puerto Rico and became wealthy landowners. The family branch of one of them retained its Puerto Rican coffee holdings to this day, La Balear. The other lost all linkage.

Carles and Luis travel to Puerto Rico to discover their origins. Their family history is told through animations, starting from their emigration from Sóller to two hurricanes that ruined their haciendas.

Thus, the main objective of this documentary is to recover the history of overseas emigration at a time when economic expansion and the enormous immigration movement over the last half-century may well erase from the collective memory possibly one of the most important social phenomena in modern history. Between the last third of the 18th century and the 1950s, the lack of economic expectations and

political persecution caused, at different chronological stages, a significant contingent of islanders to emigrate from their homeland to Latin America in search of the job opportunities or political freedoms they did not find at home.

“Memories of Puerto Rico” delves into this reality and recovers, for today’s audience and future generations, this fascinating page of the history of the Balearic Islands written overseas by many of its inhabitants. Such a crucial issue in our modern history, yet so little known.



—  
The Castañer hacienda was the epicentre of one of the most important coffee plantations of its time.

## THE CHARACTERS

Juan Castañer left for Puerto Rico at a very young age in 1861, leaving his family in Sóller (Mallorca). Like many other migrants, he travelled to work with an acquaintance from his hometown but quickly demonstrated leadership.

He soon learnt to grow coffee, bought land and set up a shop, supplying local workers and farmers. He even minted a currency, which he used to pay his workers, who, in turn, spent it in his grocery shop.

Business flourished, and he got his brother, Antonio, to come from Sóller to work with him. They started off as moneylenders, which allowed them to increase their properties until they founded one of the most powerful coffee plantations in Puerto Rico in the 19th and early 20th centuries, made up of several

farms distributed throughout the mountainous areas of Lares and Adjuntas.

Their growth was such that they set up an import-export company in Yauco. Juan focused on the commercial branch and Antonio on farm operations. At the time, coffee prices were soaring on the international market, and they became coffee exporters to the most important places in Europe and including the Vatican.

The war and the arrival of the United States forced the Castañer brothers to return to Mallorca. Despite this, they did not lose their properties and continued to manage the business from a distance, with frequent trips to Puerto Rico.

The situation worsened when, hurricane San Felipe devastated

the island in 1928 and, with it, the Castañer hacienda, now managed by their descendants. The debts were high, the banks demanded payment and demanded Tomeu Ozonas Castañer, Juan's grandson, and Llorenç Castañer, moved back to the island to manage the land in person.

The successors of the Castañer family ended up selling the farms of the hacienda. The US government acquired the main farm and divided it among the former workers, which led to the creation of what is now the Castañer settlement. Tomeu Ozonas kept one property, La Balear and moved to Puerto Rico to rebuild the farm business and grow coffee. Today, the farm is still in family hands and is run by Felipe Ozonas, the last Mallorcan owner of a coffee plantation in Puerto Rico.



Joan and Antoni Castañer.



La Balear. Lares. Puerto Rico.

“

Overseas immigration is one of the most important social phenomena in our modern history and, at the same time, still largely unknown. It is essential to recover it as it is in danger of being erased from the collective memory

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## NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

The common thread of the documentary is Carles Llull and Luis Ozonas, two Mallorcan designers who, despite working in remarkably similar fields, never crossed paths. Everything changed the day that, by chance, they met and discovered that they were distant relatives with a long history behind them. They shared relatives who emigrated to Puerto Rico and became wealthy landowners. The family branch of one of them retained its Puerto Rican coffee holdings to this day; the other lost all linkage.

Carles and Luis travelled to Puerto Rico to discover their origins. Through their experiences, they will recount their family history, which starts with the emigration from Sóller and ends with two hurricanes that ruined the haciendas and even a mysterious relative responsible for the independence of Puerto Rico. A story with the common thread of the Castañer family, which delves into the phenomenon of Mallorcan emigration to Puerto Rico at the end of the 19th century.

“Memories of Puerto Rico” fuses the current image, recorded with high-level technical means, the historical image and the artistic image through animation. The narrative brings the difficulty of combining the voices of current experts in modern history of Mallorca and Puerto Rico with the voices of those who are still alive and can explain the causes and consequences of emigration in Puerto Rico first-hand.

In this sense, the documentary has moments of great lyricism, provided both by the testimony of the characters, who experienced moments of great emotion and personal growth during the research and the journey, and the landscapes they travelled through and the sounds of nature, incorporated into the montage with equal importance, often, to the musical soundtrack.

The script has two distinct parts: the first in Mallorca, with the participant’s beginning of the research, the discovery of some questions and the enigma

of others; and the second in Puerto Rico, where what has been discovered in Mallorca was sometimes confirmed, and others expanded or nuanced, introducing more obscure elements of the story, which the protagonists were unaware of until then.

This part has the most reflective moments and casts doubt over colonisation and its consequences. In this sense, we have removed the traditional romantic side of the emigration to America and instead, we question attitudes and, above all, showcase the viewpoint of the colonised Puerto Rican, always contextualising the actions in their historical time, with no condescension.

The subjective viewpoint comes afloat at various times during the documentary to recall where the family photographs and recordings, which have populated the memories of its protagonists for generations, were taken. This narrative element aims to convey to the viewer the emotion that the protagonists feel when they are in



physical contact with what, until then, was only in their minds and in the family story. This tool connects the past with the present in a particularly emotive way.

The use of family film footage recorded during the 1930s and 1940s, unpublished and recovered by this documentary, became an essential narrative element which, like the subjective images, connects past and present, not only to the spaces but also to the actions. The elderly protagonists of the documentary become playful children before the viewer's eyes, receiving love and care from their parents in the magical land of childhood, which knows no borders or migration. Time comes to a standstill in these moments, confirming that, although decades and generations have passed, there is hardly a difference between the protagonists who colonised the interior of Puerto Rico a hundred years ago and the protagonists, their descendants, who are now travelling as researchers in the ancient lands of their ancestors.

Photography was a problem that the documentary had to overcome due to the few images of Joan and Antoni Castañer. There are only two photographs of Joan and four of Antoni. Other photographs have turned up in family archives, sometimes mislabelled as to the characters' names during the search process. As for other photographs, there were only poor-quality reproductions, which had to be rescued through a graphic treatment process. In this sense, the documentary has used the images redundantly, changing some, to introduce the characters into the animation, changing their physiognomy and costumes, adapting them to the age they were when different specific situations are narrated.

A collage style based on photography, illustration, postcards and newspaper images on textured backgrounds has been used for the animation. This style makes the narrative more agile and allows for comic, dramatic and reflective elements. The documentary protagonists

themselves have voiced the narration accompanying the animation to bring the viewer even closer to their personal experience of the story.

Music is another fundamental element of the documentary. Present from the very first moment, its mission is to convey to the spectator the emotion of the moments of adventure, the sadness and disappointment in the narration of injustice, the drama of war and the evocation in the moments of contemplation of the landscape and the remembrance of family memories.

“

The documentary shows the lights and shadows of the migratory process, the contradictions generated by colonialism and the consequences that the extraction of capital from Puerto Rico has had on its inhabitants

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## MOM WORKS PRODUCTIONS

After a lengthy career, Marta Hierro and Núria Abad joined their professional paths in 2014. The desire to tell in-depth stories had led them to the world of documentary filmmaking, specialising in social, cultural, environmental, scientific and health issues. As a result of their meeting, the production company MOM Works was born, with which they have developed different audio-visual projects:

- **Memories of Puerto Rico** (IB3-Mom Works, 2021). Documentary feature film.

- **El Rey. Juan Carlos I, mitja vida a Marivent** (IB3-Mom Works, 2021). Documentary series of six episodes of 60 minutes.

- **Retorno de Chernóbil** (IB3-Mom Works, 2021). Documentary feature film.

- **Dorothea and the Myotragus** (IB3 - Mom Works, 2020). *Documentary feature film. Best Film Award at the WRPN Women's International Film Festival and the Toronto Feedback Female Film Festival; Best Documentary at the Bristol Independent Film Awards, New York*

*International Film Awards and the Open Window International Film Challenge; and the City of Palma Audio-visual Award 2020 and a special mention at the Evolution Mallorca International Film Festival.*

- **La alcaldesa** (IB3 - Mom Works, 2019). Documentary feature film.

- **Balears Fa Ciència** (IB3 - Mom Works - Cinética, 2018). Popular science television programme.

- **El viaje definitivo** (Sociedad Balear de Cuidados Paliativos, 2016)

The MOM Works team has also collaborated with other production companies as directors, scriptwriters and production managers.

- **Pere Serra. Un hombre clave** (IB3, 2019). Documentary feature film.

- **Arrels** (IB3 - Espiral, 2019). A historical television programme.

- **Europe's most dangerous man, Otto Skorzeny in Spain** (TVE - IB3 - Quindrop Producciones Audiovisuales, 2019). Documentary feature film.

- **Illes en Transició** (IB3 - Quindrop, 2018-2019). Documentary series.

- **Una mirada cap enrere** (IB3 - Quindrop, 2015, 2017). A historical television programme.

- **Destrucción creativa de una ciudad** (IB3 - Carles Bover, 2019). Documentary feature film.

- **La Universidad** (IB3, 2019). Documentary feature film.

- **Spies in the Sand. Objective Spain** (IB3-Quindrop, 2017). Documentary feature film. *Audience Award at the Reus Memorimage International Film Festival. Award for best documentary at the Som Cinema Festival in Lleida and the Festival de Cinema Ciutadà Compromès. Special Mention for Best Historical Memory Documentary at the ExtremaDoc Festival.*

- **Agent Sicre, the American friend** (TVE - TV3 - IB3 - Quindrop, 2013). Documentary feature film.





## ARTISTIC PROFILE

**Written and directed by**  
Marta Hierro & Núria Abad

**Executive Producers**  
MOM Works  
Núria Abad & Marta Hierro

**Cinematography**  
Juan Carlos Azpiroz

**Original Music**  
Xisco Albéniz

**Edited by**  
Jaume Carlos Moranta

**Graphic Design & Motion Graphics**  
Luis Ozonas

**Sound Recording & Audio  
Postproduction**  
Marc Farré

**Color Correction**  
Jaume Alcina

## TECHNICAL DATASHEET

**Title:** Memorias of Puerto Rico  
**Type:** Documentary  
**Duration:** 77 minutes  
**Target audience:** Over 13 years  
**Original languages:** Catalan, Spanish  
**Format:** HD



**Contact:**



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