

# La Batalla del Vino

## DOCUMENTARY

Title: La Batalla del Vino (The Battle of Wine)  
Length: 68' (Rough Cut )  
Color  
Original format: DVCPRO HD 720 25p

### LOGLINE

Once a year, the Spanish village Haro is captured by the allure of a Bacchanalian feast, an amalgam of bodies soaked in wine, music, voices, colours and shapes, transporting everyone into a catharsis

### SYNOPSIS

La Rioja is a Spanish mainly wine producer region since generations. On every 29th of June, the town of Haro celebrates the last days of festivities before the onset of summer. Marching at the early hours, a mass of people gathers at the nearby crags of Bilibio. Following a religious service, an allegoric orgiastic liquid battle begins. An amalgam of bodies soaked in wine, dance to the sound of the brass bands. People free their senses inside the ethylic human ocean, allowing the inner unconscious to come out by dancing, jumping, screaming or playing... After the storm the calm arrives and the soaked mass recomposes itself thanks to a brunch and more of the precious liquid. Turning back to the village, the combatants perform a sinuous startling dancing-walking procession showing themselves and the result of the battle, to the rest of the inhabitants. Arriving at the bull ring, a confrontation on the arena against nervous heifers, place the bravest contestants face to face with the animal beast. Finally the social drinking gatherings continue in the streets at the old part of the city, leading to the last event at night, a metaphorical fire spiting bull that chases the children, marking the end of the summer solstice celebrations.

### STORY

The structure of the documentary is basically chronological in relation to the celebration, sprinkled here and there with non-observational footage. The opening scene is a father and his son, working at the vineyards the day before. After that we see them on the banks of the river accompanied by friends, children and adults, preparing a track for the celebration. The next sequence features Franco's dictatorship news bulletin from the early 50's and the early 70's in relation to the region and the festivity. In contrast to this, the following sequence is a personal video essay piece that captures my point of view regarding the festivity and its socio-cultural context. The documentary follows the celebration and festivity chronologically. During the core of the Battle there is a surrealistic visionary sequence that submerges us inside the maelstrom dancing mass. The documentary ends with a very visual and suggestive sequence of a metaphorical fire bull.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the eighteenth century, a chapel dedicated to San Felices was built in the Bilibio crags located close to the Ebro river in the Haro municipality of La Rioja, Spain. This construction was an institutional and solemn sanctification for the performing of the Century-old Romeria pageant that commemorates the death of San Felices, San Millan's master and mentor during the sixth century. At the end of nineteenth century documented evidence revealed the Romeros (participants of the procession), who threw wine at each other. This annual event of wine throwing jokily arose as a result of a mid-morning wine drinking binge, coupled with the sun, a party spirit, and music played by brass bands; wine is thrown from traditional wine skins, botas de vino, a wine container made of leather.

## VISUAL APPROACH

The main visual style is observational, applying the canons of the visual anthropology; utilising a researched frame composition, a voice over narrative sequence, and surrealistic and vibrant subjective sequences to submerge the audience into the heart of the Battle. It is ultimately a modernised version of Jori Ivens' style, influenced by Chris Marker and Buñuel.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The wine is an economic engine and a social custom generator in the Spanish region of La Rioja. This documentary celebrates the extremely visual and eye-catching cultural festival and introduces it to an international audience. Haro is my mother's hometown. I have been exposed to this festivity and its surrounding circumstances since I was a child. After living in South Africa for few years my perception of this particular event changed completely. I saw it with different eyes and decided to explore my vision through a documentary, shooting and researching it passionately 3 years.



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