

DOSSIER

blues TIME



Author: Miguel Ángel Font Bisier
Contact: mangelfont@gmail.com

- *What is Blues Time?*

Blues Time is a fictional short film rated for general audiences. It was written and directed by Spanish filmmaker Miguel Ángel Font Bisier and produced by When Lights are Low. The main characters are played by José Manuel Casañ, singer of the infamous rock band “Seguridad Social”, and by Aroa Renau, a child actress and model. The film is 14.30 minutes in length and was shot by a professional film crew in Valencia.

- *What is the short film about?*

Blues Time offers a **universal plot**, based on the dialogue between two characters who, apparently, do not have nothing in common: A 50-year-old barman and a little girl who is grieving her dying grandfather. After several different attempts to communicate, some of which humorous and others emotional, **they finally find a common language**: Music.



- *How is the project inclusive?*

This comedy/drama delves into the expression of art and emotion like any traditional film. However, what is more, our beautiful film is also a **never-before-seen exercise of accessibility**, because we want to share it with as many and as diverse audiences as possible. To reach this goal, we have created tools to make the film accessible: An audio description, subtitles for the deaf or hard-of-hearing and a Sign Language version of the film.

However, inclusion is not limited to the act of considering these tools from the start. Hence, twenty percent of the film crew we worked with have disabilities.



- **Who took part in the inclusive team?**

Blues Time's plot is **not related to the theme of disability at all**. Therefore, the inclusive team was helping in different departments behind the cameras.

For example, our community manager is a woman who had two strokes due to a heart tumour. In the camera team, a deaf man assisted the cinematographer. Also, we had a deaf-blind photographer collaborating in the still photography department.

Our production assistant is a person with muscular dystrophy who is very good with computers. Finally, two visually impaired men collaborated with us. One in the accessibility department of the film and the other led the marketing department, together with the Valencian marketing agency Weaddyou.

While *Blues Time* was in postproduction, we created an inclusive Sign Language version of the whole film in which **all the working team was deaf**.

In doing so, we have established an innovative bond between art and disability. Having had this team work together with our professional film crew, **we became a big and diverse family**. Everybody adapted themselves to different communication modes in order to work together.

For this reason, we have released different audio-visual contents in order to share our personal and professional experience.

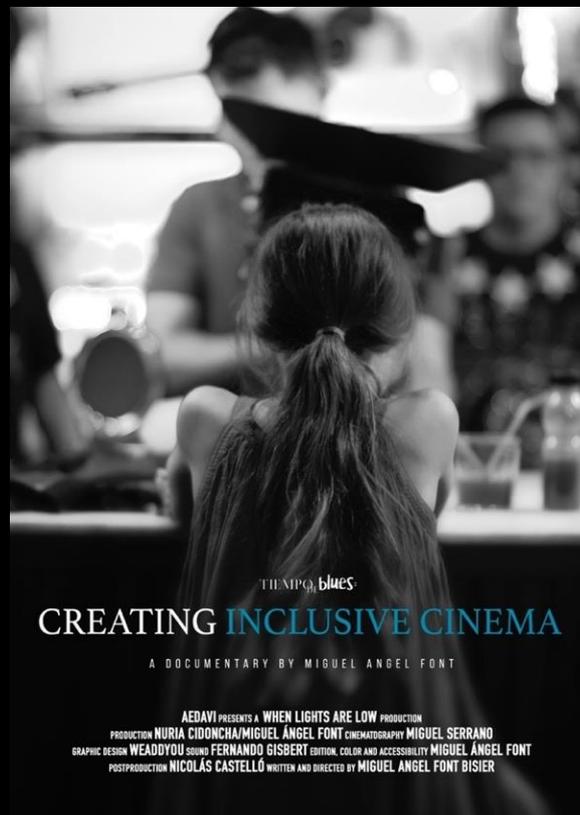
- **What extra content has been created?**

The most important content we have developed is a 21 minute-long-documentary named “*Blues Time: Creating Inclusive Cinema*”. Through different interviews with the cast and crew of *Blues Time*, this short documentary **depicts how we were able to craft an inclusive film.**

In addition to the short film and the documentary, there is *Blues Time*’s official song “A Fire in the Shadows”.

Finally, we crafted both a *teaser* and a *trailer*. Together with different little videos depicting some specific details of the production, **they are part of Youtube’s *Blues Time* official playlist.**

The documentary, the song and the rest of the above-mentioned videos are accessible.



- **In which stage of production is *Blues Time* right now?**

Blues Time and *Creating Inclusive Cinema* have not yet been released, but they are 100% finished, so **our plan is to promptly start their distribution.**

Among the traditional festival tour, we want to organize different events, screenings and workshops **in order to take a deep look into cultural accessibility,** in an effort to contribute towards such an important domain.

What else is special about the project?

There are seven ways to engage with our project.

First, there is the regular version without accessibility.

Then, an externally hired accessibility company crafted an audio description, subtitles for the deaf or hard-of-hearing and a Sign Language version.

They were created in a traditional way: The accessibility company started to work when the production was completely finished and without being in contact with the creative team of the film.

On the other hand, **we have designed an inclusive audio description, subtitles for the deaf and an inclusive Sign Language version.** The fact that we had to create these tools was taken into account from the very start of our production. To optimize this process, we made sure that a big part of the film crew was involved as well.

Any interested viewer will be able to watch *Blues Time* and take part in the different activities we have designed for the screenings.



- What do these activities consist of?

The activities are intended to exercise empathy and to learn about and get to know all the different accessibility tools available.

In one of the activities, we will ask the audience to close their eyes and to only watch the film with the audio description.

In another, we will use the All-Inclusive Sign Language version of *Blues Time* in order for the audience to watch the film as a deaf person would do.

To fulfil this task, **the Sign Language version does not feature the dialogue track of the film**. The only audios the viewers will hear playing are the music and the sound effects, so the audience will access the character's lines via the Sign Language performance.

These are two of the activities we have designed, but there are more surprises regarding the screenings of *Blues Time*, a project that is constantly growing and evolving. Therefore, **there will never be two similar screenings**.



- **Which entities have given their support to the project?**

Obra Social "la Caixa", SGAE Foundation, Whatscine, Vithas Nisa Foundation, Loco Club Concert Hall and other private companies, together with Falla Cuenca Tramoyeres - La Guardia Civil, have actively collaborated towards making *Blues Time* possible.

Also, our previous research regarding accessibility prompted Spanish politicians to incorporate new regulations to properly handle cultural accessibility.

For example, in June 2017, we were invited to give a talk at the Spanish Senate. As a consequence, the Valencian Government announced that, from 2018 onwards, **any audio-visual project funded with Valencian money was obligated to have an audio description and subtitles for the deaf or hard-of-hearing.**

We have played an important role in adding requirements to further accessibility. This has opened an avenue of collaboration with the Valencian Government, through its Department of Inclusion and Equality.

- ***What are the main goals of Blues Time?***

We want to reflect upon the disadvantage people with disabilities face in regards to culture.

We don't want to just entertain or amuse with *Blues Time*, but also to sensitize and share our thoughts about cultural participation and audio-visual education. From the economic point of view, creating a basic audio description, subtitles for the deaf or hard-of-hearing and a Sign Language track for a feature film costs less than 2,000 euros. We are not dealing with high technology at high prices: **Inclusion starts with an inner personal change.**

In order to share these facts with the widest audience possible, we have translated all of *Blues Time's* documents and contents into English.

Our final goal is to keep collaborating with institutions, so accessibility can finally be organically integrated into the DNA of our society.

- ***How do you intend to integrate accessibility into the film industry?***

Culture is a big part of our everyday life: Literature, theatre, exhibitions, tourism or cinema are more relevant than what we give them credit for.

On the one hand, our governments are starting to give serious attention to this issue. Yet, there is still room for improvement.

There is a need for new initiatives and workflows to enhance, **not only the quantity of cultural accessible projects but its quality.**

Regarding the workflow, it is problematic that there is neither a well-defined professional position, nor a university degree that would lead to such a role. The lack of professional education hinders the smooth flow of communication between the creators of art productions and the accessibility companies that make the sensory adaptations for movie-goers with disabilities. Cooperation is compromised.

By implementing their work at the final phase of the production, accessibility companies are left with very little room to be creative. Consequently, both the accessibility company and the creators are working on the same project, almost without communication. That is because the accessibility companies are usually hired by distribution companies and apart from the production. The most important issue we are dealing with right now is **to initiate the process of accessibility from the very start of the filmmaking process.**

Anticipating the team's needs really helps. Accessibility companies need to be included early on in the production process in order to give the best they can. If we keep making accessibility adaptations at the final stage of the movie process rather than earlier on and in collaboration with the creators, we **will continue to risk hampering the disabled person's enjoyment** of the movie experience.



Consequently, we want to use our experience to help any production company to join us in our effort to make inclusive films. To fulfil this task, **we have crafted a new and easy-to-follow blueprint** for creating a workflow – to open the door to fluid collaboration between creators and accessibility companies.

The accessibility of *Blues Time* has been developed and considered right from the beginning of the project. As a consequence, we found ways to include some particular details in the short film that would improve both the overall experience of the people with disabilities and mainstream audiences.

Our work also explores the idea that inclusion in cinema does not necessarily lead to betrayal of a work's artistic merit.

In fact, it enhances it for everybody!

Technical data & specifications of ***BLUES TIME***

English title: Blues Time

Release date: 2019

Runtime: 14:35 minutes

Director, writer and editor: Miguel Ángel Font Bisier

Cast: Aroa Renau, José Manuel Casañ

Production CO: When Lights are Low

Production designer: Nuria Cidoncha

Music: Josué Vergara

Cinematographer: Federico Taus

Original title: Tiempo de Blues

Country: Spain

Language: Spanish

Genres: Comedy, drama

Format: 2k (24 fps)

Ratio: 1:2,39

Color: Color

Sound mix: Dolby Digital 5.1

ICAA file: 47819 (rated for general audiences)

ISAN code: 0000-0005-8064-0000-W-0000-0000-F

Accessible versions: Audio description, subtitles for the deaf or hard-of-hearing in Spanish and English, Sign Language version.

Technical data & specifications of ***CREATING INCLUSIVE CINEMA***

English title: Creating Inclusive Cinema

Release date: 2019

Runtime: 21:32 minutes

Director and writer: Miguel Ángel Font Bisier

Production CO: When Lights are Low

Music: VA

Cinematographer: Miguel Serrano

Original title: Creando Cine Inclusivo

Country: Spain

Language: Spanish

Genres: Documentary

Format: 1920x1080 (25 fps)

Ratio: 1:2,39

Color: Color

Sound mix: Stereo

ICAA file: 49319 (rated for general audiences)

ISAN code: 0000-0005-8067-0000-F-0000-0000-T

Accessible versions:

- Subtitles for the deaf or hard-of-hearing in Spanish and English

Blues Time's official Youtube playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLw1Dp0ysXLI6zHVuItZMreDN76ar1AXK>