

Wednesday 30 October - 5:00pm

Room SG2 - Ground Floor, Alison Richard Building, 7 West Road, CB3 9DT

Film screening / Q&A:

Documentary Film: Bajo Fuego (Under Siege)

Sjoerd van Grootheest & Irene Velez-Torres

Synopsis:

Bajo Fuego depicts the unraveling of peace for a group of coca growing peasants in the southwest of Colombia. The film takes the perspective of the 'cocaleros' and over a period of 3 years shows how they survive in the midst of the most difficult of circumstances; the government delays in fulfilling what it promised in the agreement, economic difficulties arise for families that substituted their coca trees, and armed groups take control over the region. The promised peace in Colombia turns out to be an illusion when armed groups terrorize the region, assassinations occur, and the films' main protagonists are being threatened with their lives and displaced from their homes. Even though a peace agreement was signed in Colombia, Bajo Fuego shows that for many in the southwest of Colombia the war continues



Sjoerd Van Grootheest (Producer / Director)

Sjoerd is a freelance documentary filmmaker from the Netherlands who lived in Colombia for 10 years. His first documentary feature film is called VOCES DE GUERRILLA / GUERRILLA VOICES (2018) for which he immersed himself in a FARC-EP demobilization and re-integration camp. It was screened at international film festivals in Europe and the America's, received several special mentions and won the award for best documentary feature film at the 2018 Bogotá Human Rights Film Festival.

Together with BAJO FUEGO / UNDER SIEGE (2020) and A PLAN FOR LIFE (2022) it makes part of a trilogy that deals with the multiple challenges of rural communities in southwestern Colombia after the signing of the peace accords (2016).

He is currently project leader for TROCHA DE PAZ, a platform that aims to contribute to the de-stigmatization of war-torn territories in Colombia, with positive and constructive messaging.

Irene Velez Torres (Producer / Co-Director)

For over a decade, Irene has led an activist research agenda on environmental conflicts in Colombia and Latin America. She has worked extensively on ethnic-racial, class and gendered discrimination of Afro, Indigenous and mestizo communities and the environmental conflicts emerging from the gold rush in mining geographies and the expansion of the corporate agrarian frontier.

In the aftermath of the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement, she focused on agrarian conflicts and environmental violence that have rooted in the internal armed conflict, as well as the necropolitics of antinarcotics in the Americas. More recently, she investigated the green energy agenda and the growing transnational flows of capital, ecologically unequal exchange, and their intersections with local conflicts.

She was Minister of Mines and Energy between 2022 and 2023, and is currently the Consul General for Colombia in the UK.

