

Rock Bottom

An animated music feature film
by Maria Trenor



AlbaSotorra
Cinema Productions



ORIGINAL TITLE

Rock Bottom

LANGUAGES

Catalan, Spanish, English

DIRECTOR

Maria Trenor

GENRE

Animation, musical, drama

TECHNIQUE

Digital Animation, 2D
Rotoscopy
+ Frame to frame animation

FORMAT

4K - Digital

LENGHT

86 minutes

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

**SALES
AGENT**

LOCO
FILMS

**SPANISH
DISTRIBUTION**



GOES TO CANNES
MARCHÉ DU FILM



SSIFF
Donostia Zinemaldia
Festival de San Sebastián
International Film Festival



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WEIRD
ANIMATION, VIDEO GAMES & NEW MEDIA MARKET

ANNECY

leave

LOGLINE

Based on Robert Wyatt's album, Rock Bottom is a tormented love story between a young artist couple immersed in the creative and groundbreaking whirlwind of the post-hippie culture of the early '70s. Drugs will turn a dream summer into a nightmare through a dreamlike journey set to Wyatt's soundtrack, taking us from desolation to a search for hope.

A universal story about the transformative power of art and music.



SYNOPSIS

In 1973 New York, famous rock musician Bob reunites with his former colleagues at a wild party filled with excesses. Amidst the chaos of alcohol, drugs, sex, and music, Bob, completely stoned, has a romantic encounter with Caroline, an admirer of his music. Meanwhile, Alif, his girlfriend, roams the city streets in search of him. Their paths intersect when Alif discovers Bob just moments before his accidental fall from the seventh-floor party venue.

Miraculously, Bob's fall transports him back in time to a serene summer in Mallorca, months earlier. Accompanied by the enchanting melodies of Robert Wyatt's album, *Rock Bottom*, Bob and Alif enjoy an idyllic time on the beach, indulging in art, flirtation, and recreational drugs. Amidst surreal hallucinations, the boundaries between past and future blur, and the narrative shuttles back and forth between New York and Mallorca.





The story takes a dark turn when Bob survives the fall but is left paralyzed. Alif's despair drives them into a downward spiral of cocaine addiction and isolation. However, a chance encounter with his former bandmates reignites Bob's creative spark and prompts a wild escapade through town. Meanwhile, Alif undergoes the painful process of withdrawal.

As their paths diverge, Alif realizes she must break free from the grip of addiction, which seems impossible while in Bob's company. Selling his demos and leaving the money behind, Bob departs for New York to work on his album, while Alif starts her journey to recovery. Years pass, and through a series of life events, Bob and Alif, now in their seventies, remain steadfastly together, sharing a tranquil home in the English countryside.

Despite the challenges they face, their enduring love and artistic pursuits prevail, offering a glimpse into the power of resilience and the beauty of lifelong companionship.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When I met Robert Wyatt and Alfreda Benge, accompanying some journalist friends to interview them, their approachability surprised me and the idea of making a film inspired by their story began to brew inside me. While Robert told us all about Mallorca, where he discovered his musical vocation, I took out my notebook and drew him a portrait with all the love in the world.

Wyatt's successful career began with **Soft Machine**, which, along with **Pink Floyd**, became one of the most influential bands of the following decade. After a tumultuous tour with Jimmy Hendrix throughout the US and a successful career, Wyatt was expelled from the band he had founded due to his problems with alcohol.

That was a hard blow in his life but, unfortunately, it would not be the last. He participated in other bands but, when he was preparing what was to be his third album, something happened that would change everything forever. In **1973**, at a party to honor Pink Floyd, Robert Wyatt got completely wasted and fell from the fourth floor, breaking his spine and becoming paraplegic. After three months bedridden, he received a wheelchair and discovered an old piano in the visiting room. That's where he finished tinkering with the songs he had composed before the accident, and where *Rock Bottom*, considered to be one of the best records of the 20th century, was composed.

The night of the interview, we ate a lot, sang together and laughed heartily, but Robert did not drink a single drop of alcohol. According to Wyatt himself, the accident that nearly killed him **actually saved his life**, as he had to change his lifestyle and quit drinking forever. That night, I knew what I wanted to do: an animated film to illustrate the music of *Rock Bottom*.



ROBERT WYATT & MARIA TRENOR, THE DIRECTOR.



ROBERT WYATT AND ALFREDA BENGÉ

V.2034

In addition to its unquestionable artistic value, *Rock Bottom* is a life lesson. Great artists such as Julian Schnabel, Bob Wilson or Brian Eno wanted to adapt it, but the technical and argumental difficulty of the work has made it impossible to date. Facing this undertaking is like trying to decipher a hieroglyphic full of unexpected turns, starting with the title: **“to hit rock bottom”** defines the degradation of someone who falls into extreme vices and passions, or who hits a moral low point. It’s also a play on words: since it’s a rock album, it could mean “degraded rock”, and it also refers to the bottom of the sea. The lyrics speak of the creatures that inhabit the deep sea as an expression of hidden feelings. Therefore, much of the film takes place in Mallorca, whose landscape becomes another protagonist.

The film’s script unravels a beautiful and terrible love story articulated from the themes of the album and some pieces of his other works, where the euphoria and anguish of artistic creation, the unconscious fascination with drugs and the disenchantment with routine and physical and mental degradation are discussed.

Rock Bottom can be understood on **three different levels**: through a series of **real artists** who appear in the film, we learn about the untold story of the hippy movement in Europe, which serves to draw a poetic and dreamlike portrait of one of the most **iconic movements of the 20th century** that has most influenced our collective imagination of youth culture.

But it also unravels a **beautiful and terrible love story** articulated through the universal themes of the album, where he speaks of the **euphoria** and **anguish** of artistic creation, the oblivious fascination with drugs, the disenchantment with routine, and physical and mental degradation.

MARIA TRENOR



VISUAL APPROACH

Rock Bottom is set between 1972 and 1973 and it faithfully recreates the style of that time, avoiding the visual stereotypes that exist around the **hippie** movement (flowers, bright colors, rainbows, etc.) which, despite being the basis of all revival parties set in the '70s, do not represent the true **underground** and **surreal aesthetics** that shaped the scene of the early '70s.

Rock Bottom's images are inspired by one of the most influential artists of the era, **Mati Klarwein**. The painter, who spent most of his life in Deià, was one of the precursors of the psychedelic aesthetic. He changed the style of album covers, giving them a surreal, dreamlike touch; he also influenced other artists who were inspired by his way of representing reality. Klarwein made numerous paintings and watercolors that reflected life and the landscapes of Deià in detail, with clear influences of magical realism, which was very popular at that time.



PAINTINGS OF MATI KLARWEIN

SOUND TRACK

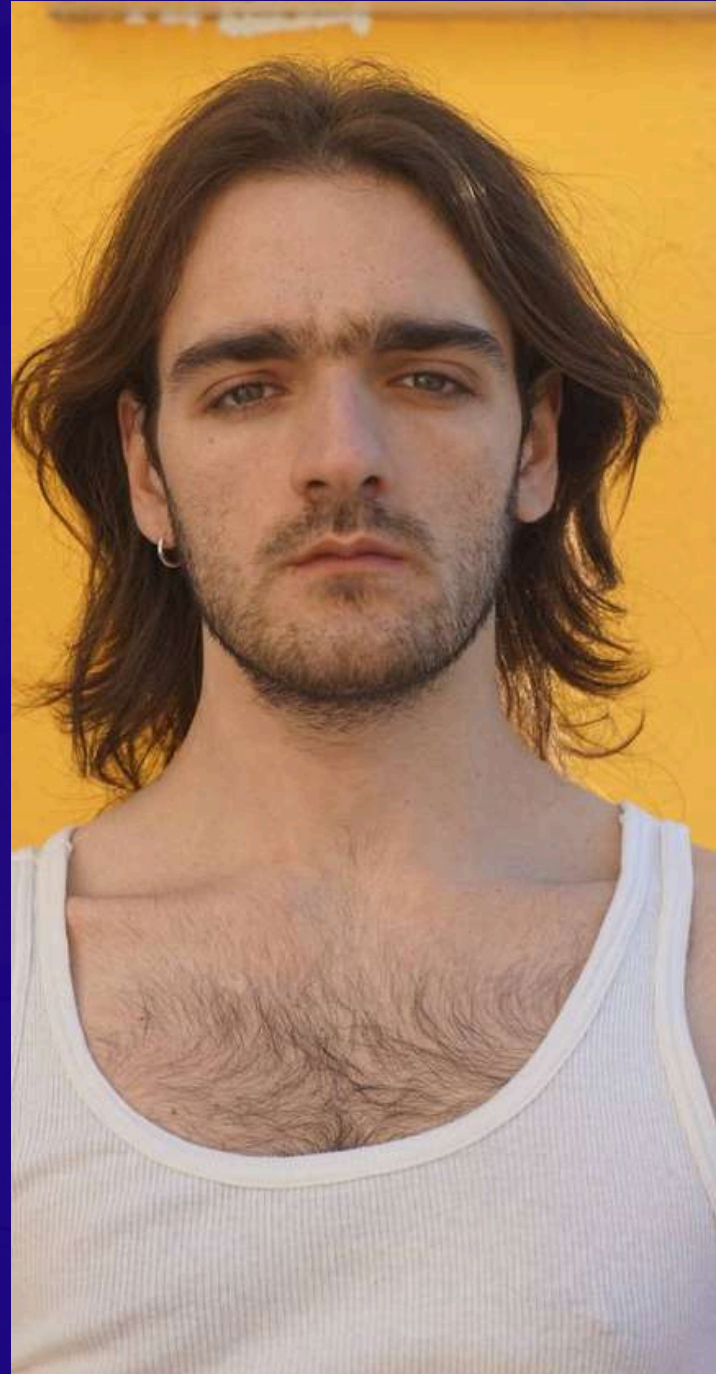
The film's soundtrack includes the six original songs that make up the album of the same title, **Rock Bottom** by Robert Wyatt. Along with them, the film includes other pieces of the same authorship, which were recorded in the early 70's with Wyatt's previous group **Matching Mole**.

The music and lyrics of the album **Rock Bottom** are like an emotional roller coaster, full of contradictions: a nonsense full of meaning, simple and complex, innocent and provocative. It is a sad and depressing album, but in a joyful and triumphant way. It is **fresh, intricate** and well **conceived**. Everything flows.

Robert Wyatt didn't create his album **Rock Bottom** alone. He conceived it with many of his friends, such as **Nick Manson** (popularly known as Pink Floyd's drummer), **Mike Oldfield**, **Fred Frith**, **Richard Sinclair** (of Caravan) and **Hugh Hopper** (former member of Soft Machine). The album cannot be conceived without the figure of **Alfie Benge**, Wyatt's wife, who was also key in his recovery. Alfie participated in most of Wyatt's subsequent works, mostly as a lyricist.



MAIN CHARACTERS



FERMÍ HERRERO IS "BOB"



LAURA CASAÑA IS "ALIF"



A dark blue map of the Atlantic Ocean with white outlines of continents. Three locations are marked with red dots: New York on the US East Coast, Yorkshire in the UK, and Mallorca in the Mediterranean. Dashed yellow lines connect New York to Yorkshire and New York to Mallorca. A curved dashed yellow line also connects Yorkshire to Mallorca.

NEW YORK

YORKSHIRE

MALLORCA

LOCATIONS

The story of *Rock Bottom* takes place in three different locations which are key to the story of Bob and Alif: **New York, USA; Yorkshire, UK, and Deià, Mallorca.**

The director has carried out an extensive research process to soak up the landscapes, the environment, the atmosphere of these three cities in the context in which the story takes place, in order to build a realistic and meticulous portrayal of the details.

Rock Bottom is defined by the contrast between two main landscapes that appear to be opposite to one another, but that actually complement each other on both a visual and an acoustic level. On the one hand, the immensity of the Big City, the skyscrapers, and its busy, urban noises. On the other hand, the wild nature of Deià, where the couple is alone, isolated from the crowds.





NEW YORK IN THE 70s



MALLORCA,
DEIÀ



FRAMES OF THE FILM





MARIA TRENOR

*Director, writer and animator
of Rock Bottom*

With a degree in Fine Arts from the Faculty of Sant Carles of the UPV (Valencia, Spain), she has produced and directed several animated short films shot in 35mm. Among them, **¿Con qué la lavaré?** (2003), which has won several national and international awards, such as the **1st Teddy Bear Award for Best Short Film at the 54th Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale)**, or the **1st Prize for Best Short Film at ANIMADRID** (2004). The short film was also selected in renowned international festivals such as **SUNDANCE** (2005) and **ANNECY** (2004).

Her animated short film shot in 35mm, **Ex-Libris** (2009), has won several awards, and has also been nominated for Best Animated Short Film at the 25th Spanish Film Academy Awards (GOYA AWARDS).

Maria Trenor has just finished her latest short film, **¿Dónde estabas tú?** (2020), which has participated in international film festivals and won the **WIA Diversity Award** at the **SPARK International Animation Festival** (Canada).

María is a professor of Audiovisual Media at the School of Art and Design of Valencia (Spain). Thanks to her extensive experience in the world of animation, she has been invited to participate in conferences and activities organized by universities such as UCLM, UPV, Universitat de Palermo or Universidad Carlos III de Madrid; or by financial institutions such as CajAstur and CAM. She has also collaborated in several publications about cinema and animation, such as “25 años inquietos Cinema Jove, Festival Internacional de Cine, 1986-2010”, by A. Llorens and J. Castillejo, or “Mamá, quiero ser artista: Entrevista a mujeres del cine de animación”, by I. Herguera and B. Vicario.

DIRECTOR'S CV

AlbaSotorra

Cinema Productions

PRODUCTION COMPANY

ALBA SOTORRA IS ONE OF THE MOST INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS IN SPAIN.

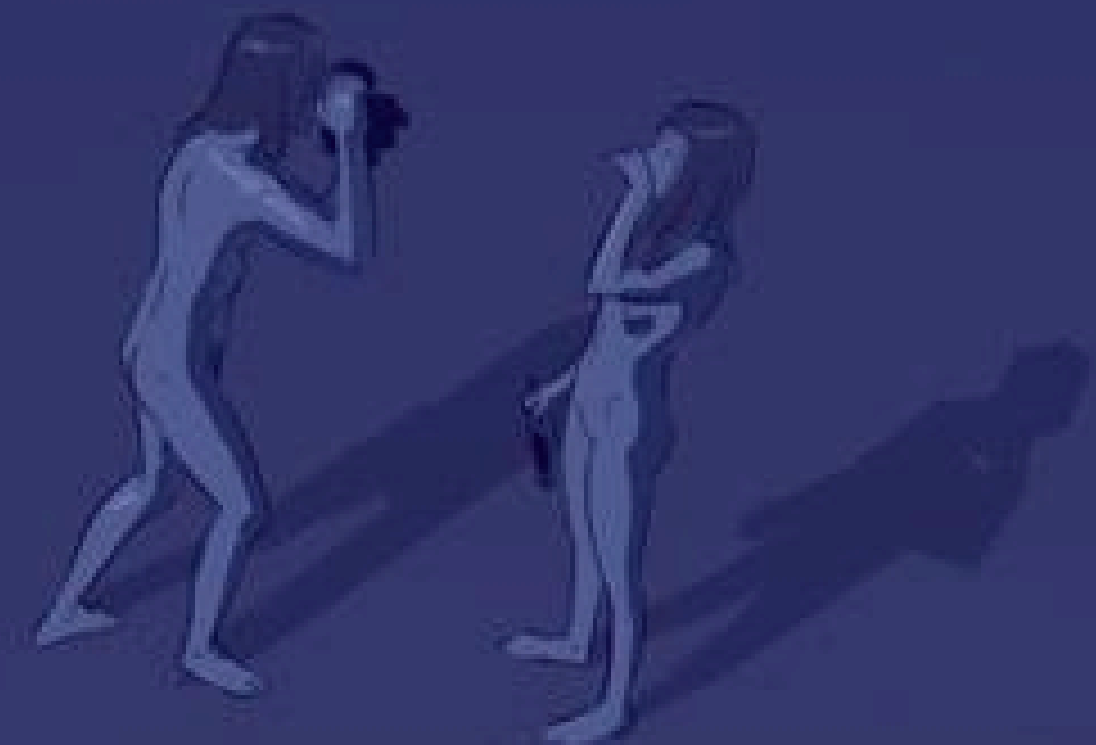
Specializing in the production of **fiction** and **documentary** feature films, it has received multiple international awards, such as a nomination for the **EMMY International Awards**, the **Goya Awards** or **two awards at the Gaudí Awards**, among many others.

Our productions have been screened at renowned festivals such as **SXSW, Rotterdam, HotDocs, Karlovy Vary, Sheffield, San Sebastian, Guadalajara** or **Goa**, and have been distributed in cinemas in territories such as **Germany, France, Switzerland, Korea, Japan and Latin America**.

With multiple successful projects behind us, we have extensive experience in international co-productions (The Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, UK, Qatar, China, Syria and Iraq) and a solid relationship with national and EU film funds (MEDIA Creative Europe Slate and Single projects and Eurimages) and with national (RTVE, Movistar+, TVC) and international TV channels (SkyTV, NPO, CBC, among others) and national VOD platforms such as Filmin.

Motivated by the scarcity of diverse points of view in the film industry, we seek to give voice to a wide spectrum of stories, told from the point of view of women directors and with a gender perspective. With a team formed exclusively by women, we tell stories committed to the social and political reality of today's world that move the viewer because of their genuine essence.

WWW.ALBASOTORRA.COM



HIGHLIGHTED PRODUCTIONS



Rock Bottom
by Maria Trenor



Sica
de Carla Subirana (2023)



Mi Vacío y Yo
de Adrián Silvestre (2022)



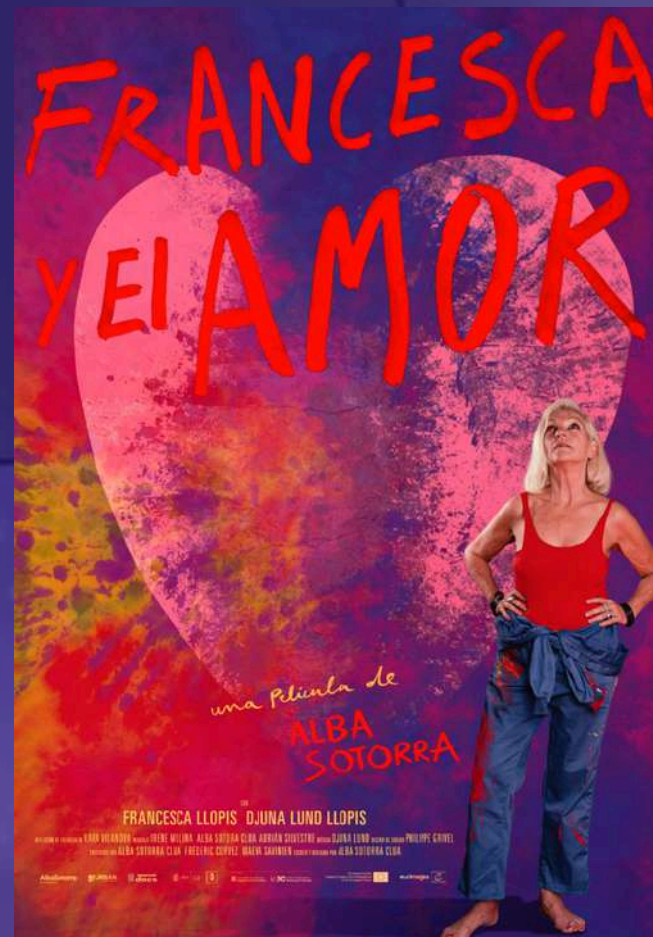
Sima's song
by Roya Sadat



Respira mama
by Meri Collazos



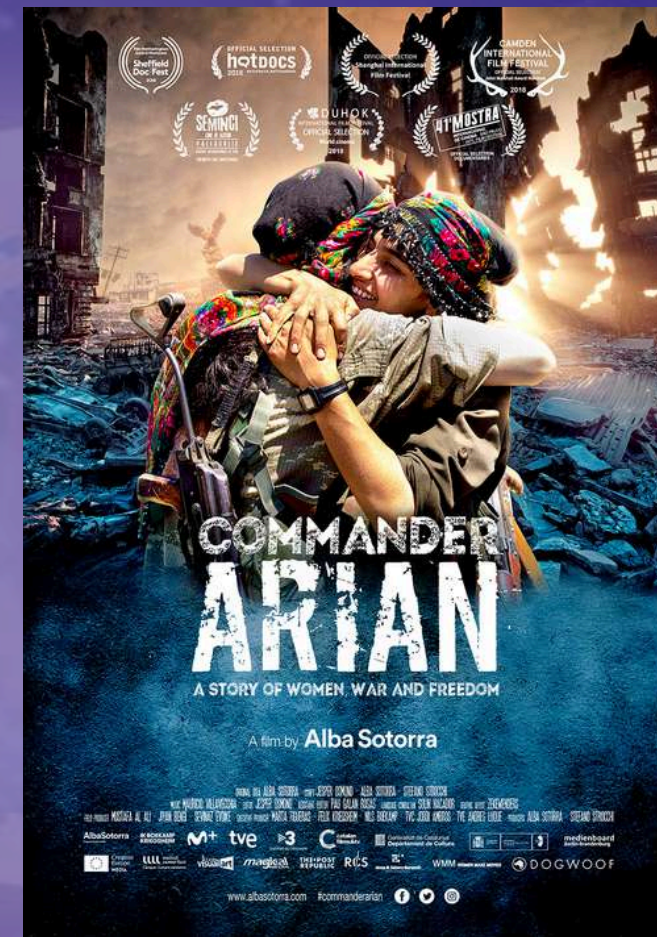
HIGHLIGHTED PRODUCTIONS



Francesca & Love
de Alba Sotorra (2022)



The Return: Life after ISIS
de Alba Sotorra (2021)



Commander Arian
de Alba Sotorra (2018)



Rock BOTTOM

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