

Break Free

Coming Soon May 2023

DIRECTED BY
VANESSA ALZATE

Break Free

Written and Directed by Vanessa Alzate

Starring Graciela Elena

Logline:

Valencia's fears come to life and stalk her around every corner. Will she be able to confront her inner demon?

Story Summary:

Break Free explores Valencia's mental health journey as she struggles to confront her inner demon, the shadow. The shadow is a manifestation of her depression and anxiety. As she goes through her daily routine she finds herself struggling to feel like her usual self. Valencia feels disconnected from those around her and feels trapped.

Break Free



Specs:

United States of America, 2023, HD, Color

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Vanessa Alzate

Director

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Break Free is an experimental short that explores the journey of mental illness through the perspective of a young woman named Valencia. In depth the short explores Valencia's mental health journey as she struggles to confront her inner demon, the shadow. The shadow is a manifestation of her depression and anxiety. As she goes through her daily routine she finds herself struggling to feel like her usual self. Valencia feels disconnected from those around her and feels trapped, as her shadow demon stalks her around every corner.

Director Vanessa Alzate integrates hispanic culture within the film using bilingual actors, including her own parents as supporting roles. Hispanic culture plays a significant role in exploring familial perspectives of mental health and how traditional views can affect younger generations.

Break Free will be premiering at Marymount Manhattan College at the **Fifth Floor Film Festival** on Tuesday, May 16th.

Fifth Floor Film Festival:

<http://mmcfilmfestival.com>

Film Portfolio:

Alzateproductions.com

VANESSA ALZATE

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EDUCATION

Marymount Manhattan College, New York, NY
Bachelor of Arts in Digital Media and Video Production
Minor Concentration in Business Management

Anticipated Spring 2023

WORK EXPERIENCE

Get Shot by a Girl Productions, New York, NY
Production Intern

Winter 2023

- Executed Line Producing Tasks and Location Scouting
- Managing Film Budget
- Negotiated with Talent Agencies and Art Direction Companies for budget estimation

Walking in Place (Student Film), New York, NY
Director of Photography

Spring 2022

- Filmed on Black Magic Design 6k Pro and Panasonic Lumix DC-GH5
- IMDB Credit as Director of Photography

Pret Á Poppy (Student Film), New York, NY
Production Manager

Spring 2022

- Managing schedules of cast and crew
- Assisted in Video Editing and Camera Operation
- Sound Design Coordinator

Break Free (Student Film), New York, NY *Sales Associate*
Director, Director of Photography, Editor

Spring 2023

- Shot on Black Magic Design 6k Pro
- Created Shot list, booked talent and locations
- Managed film crew and cast on days of shooting

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

United Activities Unlimited, Staten Island, NY
Job Readiness Counselor

Summer 2022

- Supervised a series of worksites for the Summer Youth Employment Program
- Scheduled weekly meetings with store managers and Evaluated working conditions
- Interviewing and Mentoring participants in program

Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn, NY
Film Intern

Summer 2017

- Leadership role in film production
- Collaboration on team film projects and video editing multiple film projects

SKILLS

Technical: Adobe Premiere Pro, Davinci Resolve, Canva, Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Powerpoint)

Camera Operation: Canon Rebel T6, Black Magic Design 6k Pro, Canon C200

Photography: Portrait, Studio, Boudoir, Event

Languages: Bilingual Spanish/English

Bio

Vanessa Alzate, was born and raised in New York City. Over the years, she has explored multiple genres of media, such as Documentary, Music Videos, Experimental, and Fictional Narratives. A common theme found in her projects is giving her subjects a voice. Alzate's documentary *Taking Life One Beat at a Time*, profiled a highschool music teacher dedicated to helping artists find their passion. An experimental short, *A Rose*, explores the artistic journey of a young woman who is closed off to the idea of love and one day opens her heart to another woman. As an artist, Alzate has always had a passion for visual storytelling. From a young age, she explored digital and film photography, video editing, screenwriting and then found a passion along the way, cinematography. Spring of 2022, she worked as the Director of Photography on a hybrid live action short *Walking in Place*, exploring dissociative disorder. This film is currently being submitted to the festival circuit. Vanessa Alzate's current project is a Capstone Student Film *Break Free*, a mental health awareness narrative about a young woman troubled by her mind and feels detached from everyone around her including herself. This film is scheduled to premiere at the Fifth Floor Film Festival on May 16, 2023.

Artist Statement

Growing up in a traditional hispanic household, I have been restricted and yet empowered. I came from a family who didn't know how to identify and handle mental health issues present in their children, because in their culture it was seen as a weakness. From a young age I struggled with mental health and for a time it held me back from being who I want to be. There were times I felt alone, living in the traditional stigma that I needed to be normal. Getting older, I realized I didn't have a role model, so I decided to become my own. I looked up to myself and from that moment, I aspired to be the best version of myself. This inspired my ambition for creating art. Art was my escape from my dysfunctional world. I found hope and the strength to overcome my hardships from film and accept who I am. Seeing characters pushed into a corner and forced to overcome their struggles and find happiness inspired me to do the same. Creating art is my passion and I want to be able to show the world. My medium of art is film. Being able to tell a story through my perspective and my lens, and to have the opportunity to give hope, or even give strength to someone else is all I ever wanted. Art is powerful. I want my art to help someone, the same way it helped me. My whole life I felt pushed into a corner. Now is the time to overcome my struggles and be able to create something beautiful.

Project Description

Young Valencia feels confined by her own mind. Her mental health seizes control over how she feels, and behaves and affects her personal relationships. Starting her day in her bedroom, she struggles with getting out of her bed and getting on with her day. Valencia's bedroom is cluttered and filled with personal items such as her clothes, empty water bottles, shoes, makeup etc. This clutter progressively gets more and more chaotic as the film continues. This clutter serves as symbolism for her state of mental exhaustion. Her mental health is represented by a physical entity that appears to her as a shadow figure. The closer it gets, the more control her mental health has over her. Valencia, at first appears defeated and oppressed by this figure. She struggles to find her own strength to overcome this presence. Valencia struggles to confide in her friends and family and fails to open up about her struggles but rather suffer through it alone. Trapped with no one but herself to protect her, Valencia has had enough. As she feels pushed into a corner, she fights back and confronts her inner demon, the shadow. The truth of mental health is that it is not a linear journey towards recovery or a descent into madness. Some days are manageable and some days aren't. We just have to learn as individuals to find what motivates us, find our inner strength and take control before it controls us.

Break Free is a narrative with an experimental look and feel. With shots that represent how it feels in the main character's mind is meant to place the audience in her shoes. The film from beginning to end is very fast paced, the audience can see the mental exhaustion and gradual decline in motivation present in the main character Valencia.

The themes that rose in *Break Free* is Isolation, Resilience, and Acceptance. Dealing with depression and anxiety can lead to a state of mental isolation. This feeling of detachment from oneself, and from those around you is a stage of depression that Valencia experiences. The theme of resilience explores the strength and perseverance that Valencia has when facing these issues. Mental health is not a weakness but a representation of how strong you are. The theme of acceptance, refers to accepting mental illness as a part of you, they shouldn't be seen as flaws but rather different variations/sides of yourself. Accept that this is all part of the journey, to learn better coping skills, and to learn how to manage and control rather than let yourself be controlled by these impulses.

Break Free, centers around mental health awareness and female empowerment. I want to find film festivals that center around possible themes of mental health awareness such as depression and anxiety. This capstone film is also meant to focus on female empowerment and the representation of the Latino community. Apart from the primary themes, I would also like to submit this film to film festivals recognizing cinematography and emerging film makers. Ways I can engage a community of viewers

outside of capstone and the festival circuit, is to promote mental health awareness campaigns. Talking openly about mental health is crucial, in creating a community and helping one another. Break Free not only focuses on depression and anxiety, but places attention to hispanic culture. The audience with the biggest potential to be changed by Break Free can be parents, educators, friends, and family. This film is meant to raise awareness about the warning signs of depression that can be seen in your loved ones.

Credits

Written and Directed By	Vanessa Alzate
Executive Producers	Gildardo and Luz Marina Alzate Sushil and Michaela Kapadia Amanda Smith Christopher A Mann
Producers	Andres Alzate Ivana Pavlica
Special Thanks	Duque Quintero Family Michelle Lozano Self Care Goddess Inc. Yi and Noy Chen
Assistant Director	Liberty Joy
Director of Photography	Vanessa Alzate
Sound Mixer	Clayton Favor
Editing By	Vanessa Alzate Clayton Favor
Music Composition	Tyran Ferone Jr. Olta Llalloshi Joanna Vila
Valencia	Graciela Elena
Shadow	Casey Nepivoda

Alex	Sam Anctil
Gabriella	Elizabeth Bittner
Sophia	Jaclyn Manfredi
Father	Gildardo Alzate
Mother	Luz Marina Alzate
Cecelia	Fionella Mateo
Professor	Sarah Nelson Wright
Students	Liberty Joy Abril Chavez Jordan Ansberry Sam Anctil Elizabeth Bittner Jaclyn Manfredi Leila Hamdan
2nd Assistant Director	Clayton Favor
Production Assistant	Elizabeth Bittner Abril Chavez Yareli Alfaro
Art Direction	Yareli Alfaro Luz Marina Alzate
Assistant Camera	Clayton Favor

Gaffer

Abril Chavez

Boom Operator

Clayton Favor
Abigail Younger

Lighting

Liberty Joy

Still Photographer

Jordan Ansberry
Tyran Ferone Jr.





