

For nearly two decades, Kristy Guevara-Flanagan has been making documentary films that focus on gender, death, and the Latinx community. Guevara-Flanagan remembers seeing a lot of movies with her family as a child. Her stepdad was in the Directors Guild of America, and her mother was a high school English and drama teacher who poured herself into every play production.

“Growing up, seeing those theater projects of my mom’s come together was really magical,” she remembers. “The set designs, rehearsals, behind the scenes work, all of this would create these emotional experiences for audiences who sat in the dark and surrendered to them. At a young age, I came to understand the power of having an audience captivated and how powerful and persuasive it could be.”

In middle school, Guevara-Flanagan picked up her first Super-8 camera, setting herself up for a life of observing and filming. After earning a B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, she went straight into film school, graduating with an M.F.A. from San Francisco State University. Guevara-Flanagan's first film was *El Corrido de Cecilia Rios*, a short-subject documentary chronicling the violent death of 15-year-old Cecilia Rios through the teens that mourned her loss. It was screened at the Sundance Film Festival and licensed by the Sundance Channel. Schools and youth organizations utilized the film to promote dialogue about violence.

“The film focuses on how Cecilia’s peers responded to her death and the way their experience contrasted with how the media was telling the story when she was killed,” said Guevara-Flanagan. “The media was leaning heavily into a ‘gangland’ storyline, but it was a young man from her neighborhood, whom she had known, who killed her. Gang violence had nothing to do with her death, and the film prioritized youth perspectives of this horrifying tragedy in their community.”

Going on 13* and *WONDER WOMEN!

While teaching at Diablo Valley College, Guevara-Flanagan worked on her first feature-length film *Going on 13*, with co-director Dawn Valadez. The documentary, screened on PBS, shows audiences the complex reality of being a pre-teen and urban girl of color. Guevara-Flanagan spent four years shooting *Going on 13* and used a mix of intimate interviews, cinema vérité, and stop-motion animation to tell Isha, Rosie, Esme, and Ariana's stories.