



CULTIVATING BEAUTY

Floret Flower Farm Releases its First Film: “Gardening in a War Zone”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mount Vernon, Washington, December 11, 2023 – Erin Benzakein has had plenty of experience in front of the camera. The Washington-based farmer and entrepreneur runs one of the most recognizable flower farms and seed companies in the world. A big reason for that success is Benzakein’s ability to connect to an audience through social media videos and photographs. Of course, the flowers are important, too.

She was also the central figure on-screen in two seasons of the Emmy-nominated documentary television series, *Growing Floret*, and has written three books including the New York Times Bestseller, *A Year in Flowers*.

Now, in addition to running her seed business, her gardening education company, and releasing an entire new line of flowers she’s worked on breeding for the last six years, she is taking up a new endeavor— making her own films. Behind the camera.

Benzakein says, “I deeply believe in the power of storytelling and how stories can impact people, communities, and the planet for the better. They have the power to create ripples that move out into the world and inspire people to think, take action, and ultimately make a difference.”

Tomorrow, Benzakein is releasing an inspirational and timely film titled, *Gardening in a War Zone*.

It’s a story about a rare plant grower in eastern Ukraine and all she does to care for her family as the harsh winter approaches. It offers a new perspective on the war. It’s simultaneously dramatic and mundane, filled with stunning flowers and the day-to-day realities of a person trying to keep hope alive. It’s a story of how beauty can endure, how people can endure, even in the face of great darkness.

The film is not political. It’s human.

Film Synopsis

“Sometimes I am trying to get to sleep, and I begin to think about the war, about the explosions, about this possibility that any time my dearest persons can be killed. I say to myself, do not think about that. Think about flowers,” says Alla Olkhovska.

Alla is a gardener, an expert in finicky clematis, a photographer, a writer, and a caretaker. She lives in Kharkiv, Ukraine, about 30 kilometers from the eastern border. On the morning the war started, she could

hear the explosions and gunfire. Munitions and debris have landed just yards away from her grandmother's home. Air alerts scream day and night and it's common to lose electricity and gas.

Yet, every day Alla boards a public bus that drops her near her family's garden, which her great-grandfather planted as a small apple orchard after World War II to help her struggling ancestors survive. There are still a few apple trees left, but now the garden is home to a collection of rare and stunning flowers.

And, it remains a means of survival.

While the garden is a refuge for Alla, a sanctuary she maintains despite the war, it's also a critical lifeline for her family. She collects as many seeds as she can from her clematis and other rare flowers. By selling them, Alla cares for her elderly grandmother, her mother-in-law, and her husband, who nearly lost his life to Covid-19 and has not fully regained his health.

Even as the harsh winter creeps ever closer, Alla is undeterred. With relentless optimism and a belief in the power of beauty and goodness, Alla fights for the survival of her family one seed at a time.

Gardening in a War Zone is 33 minutes long and will be released on YouTube on Tuesday, December 12, 2023. To watch the short film, visit <https://www.youtube.com/@floretflowerfarm>.

Director Rob Finch, shares, "I think people need to see there's still hope in this world and Alla embodies that. She continues to find a way to care for her family through the simple and beautiful act of growing flowers and harvesting the seeds. I know this gives me hope and I believe it will do the same for the audience."

More Information

Watch the official trailer: <https://youtu.be/2aFMa4emaoU>

Learn more about this project and why it's so important: <https://youtu.be/vZcTp-dEOPM>

Learn more about Alla by visiting her [website](#) and her [Instagram](#) page.

Please contact support@floretflowers.com if you are interested in learning more about the film or scheduling time to talk with the film's director, Rob Finch, or Erin Benzakein.

Filmmakers

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Erin Benzakein

DIRECTOR: Rob Finch

EDITOR: Sarah Bourscheid

PRODUCER: Rob Finch

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Sarah Bourscheid

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Oleh Halaidych

ADDITIONAL CINEMATOGRAPHY: Alla Olkhovska,
Vitaliy Olkhovskiy

COLOR CORRECTION & SOUND MIX: Sarah
Bourscheid

Facts about Floret

BUSINESS NAME: Floret

LOCATION: Mount Vernon, Washington, United States

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2008

BOOKS: *Floret Farm's Discovering Dahlias: A Guide to Growing and Arranging Magnificent Blooms*

Floret Farm's A Year in Flowers: Designing Gorgeous Arrangements for Every Season

Floret Farm's Cut Flower Garden: Grow, Harvest & Arrange Stunning Seasonal Blooms

TELEVISION SHOW: *Growing Floret*

WEBSITE: floretflowers.com

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YOUTUBE: [@floretflowerfarm](https://www.youtube.com/floretflowerfarm)

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