

From the director of *Hamaca Paraguaya*

MEMORY EXERCISES

A film by Paz Encina



ZABALTEGI-TABAKALERA
FESTIVAL DE SAN SEBASTIÁN
2016

SYNOPSIS

Between 1954 and 1989, Paraguay suffered one of the longest dictatorships in Latin America: it lasted 35 years. Agustín Goiburú, the most important political opponent to the Stroessner regime, disappeared in 1976 in Paraná, Argentina, where he was exiled.

35 years later, Rogelio, Rolando and Jazmin, his three children, come back to the place of exile... A come back to their memory. This is how we begin an intimate memory exercise, telling the story of a whole country for the past decades.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

After *Hamaca Paraguaya*, how was this project born?

It was actually born before *Hamaca Paraguaya*! The first interview I did was in 1998, with Augustin's widow, but I wasn't feeling mature enough for this project. I was born during the dictatorship and lived in it until the age of 18. My father was a victim of political persecution and I was twice exiled from Paraguay. I always felt that this dictatorship story was something I had to tell, especially through the voice of Augustin because it was with him that I first heard the word 'disappeared'.

How did you structure your collaboration with the Goiburú family?

The first thing we did together was to revisit wherever they were exiled. Because of their political persecution, they had to always move to a different city, a different neighborhood, a different country. So we followed their forced journey rescuing testimonies. Over the span of three years, we revisited and managed to record several tough personal interviews. And then, only once I had the interviewees available, I "re-staged" the interviews. First their sound and then their image.

A dialogue between documentary and fiction?

Each time I make a new film, I find it even harder to find boundaries between the two. It is a film about Augustin, but I think more than anything it is a film about memory. I think there is no one single memory, and this became very clear with the soundtrack of the film which is composed by different voices. The voice of the girl, my voice, the voices of the Goiburú family, radios voices...

The first step was what we called a 'sound shooting'. We first went with the Goiburú family in March 2012 to visit the places where they were exiled. We traveled thousands of houses, streets, rivers recording their voices. Later when I searched in the archives for the Defense of Human Rights I also found another story, a betrayal story. I thought it was 'the other voice'. The voice of the repressor and I thought that voice must go in too.

At times, I thought the best way to tell this story into a film was by just recreating a 'mise en scene of armed scenes'; but on the other hand, trying to imagine Augustin's memories... only belongs to the realm of my imagination. So, was it something that I should depict through 'reality', did I need to show this reality? I don't know if I will have the answer one day...

When I was shooting those kids, all I was doing was documenting life itself. These children were giving me themselves, and I think all this mix, this fuzzy memory is the limit of memory. And then, once this image is captured, where is the imagination? It was conceived from the formation of an acoustic band of chaotic sound-like memory. Voices that appear and disappear. And from then on, the image took the same path. The crossover between fiction and documentary. A set of imagined memories, photos of the faces of the oppressed. Continuity is not a given, but at the same time it is assumed.

I tried to portray my memory, or the Memory, which is full of images and sounds, mixed. I tried to portray those who were crossing the horror, but also the beauty and the childhood. Perhaps this last word summarizes the previous two words.



Paz Encina has graduated in Film at the University of Buenos Aires and made several video-installations and shorts in cinema and video. In 2006 she made her first feature film, *Hamaca Paraguaya*, which received the Fipresci Prize at Cannes 2006, among others. She returned working with the short format in the projects *Rio Paraguay* (2010) and *Viento Sur* (2011). *Ejercicios de memoria* is her second feature film.

TESTIMONIES

Elba Elisa Benítez de Goiburú
Rogelio Agustín Goiburú Benítez
Rolando Agustín Goiburú Benítez
Patricia Jazmin Goiburú Benítez



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CREW

With	Hebe Duarte
Director	Paz Encina
Cinematography	Matías Mesa
Sound	Guido Berenblum
Edit	María Astraukas
Producer	Constanza Sanz Palacios (Constanza Sanz Palacios Films)
Co-producers	Paz Encina (Silencio Cine), Marie-Pierre Macia, Claire Gadéa (MPM Film), Paulo Roberto de Carvalho (Autentika Films)

Argentina, Paraguay, France, Germany - 2016 - 70 min - Color - DCP



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