

QUINZAINÉ
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
CANNES 2015

Allende mi abuelo Allende
Beyond my grandfather Allende

DIRIGIDA POR **MARCIA TAMBUTTI ALLENDE**

UNA PRODUCCIÓN DE **ERRANTE** EN ASOCIACIÓN CON **MARTFILMS** Y **FRAGUA CINE**

Dirección **Marcia Tambutti Allende** Producción **Paola Castillo** Producción ejecutiva **Paola Castillo** · Chile - **Martha Orozco** · México
Producción asociada **Bruni Burres** - **Juan Manuel Sepúlveda** Producción general **Soledad Silva** Guión **Paola Castillo** - **Bruni Burres** - **Valeria Vargas**
Marcia Tambutti A. Cámara **David Bravo** - **Eduardo Cruz Coke** Sonido directo **Cristián Larrea** - **Juan Pablo Manríquez**
Montaje **Titi Viera-Callo** - **Coti Donoso** Post producción imagen **Daniel Dávila** · **Kiné Imágenes** Diseño Sonoro **Roberto Espinoza** · **Sonamos SCL**
Música **Leonardo Heiblum** - **Jacobo Lieberman** · **Audioflot** Diseño Gráfico **Marco Avilez** · **KRFT Studio** Ventas Internacionales **Doc&film**



Synopsis



35 years after the coup d'état that overthrew her grandfather, Salvador Allende, Marcia wishes to change the family custom of not speaking about him and their tragic history. She believes it's time to recover the family memories snatched away during the coup and to unveil their intimate past buried under Allende's political transcendence, exile and family pain. She draws a family portrait that addresses the complexities of irreparable losses and the role of memory in three generations of an iconic family. The translucent intimacy brings the viewer so close that we all become grandchildren of Allende.

PRODUCTION: ERRANTE - MARTFILMS
CHILE - MEXICO / 98' / HD / 2015 / SPANISH / DOCUMENTARY

Note of intention

In 1970, my grandfather, Salvador Allende, became the first chosen by free election democratic-socialist president in Latin America. Since then he has been simultaneously reviled and hated, inside of Chile, and venerated and loved by millions both in and outside of the country.

After the violent military coup d'état on September 11, 1973, Salvador Allende and his iconic image - everyman with, thick rimmed black glasses - became a worldwide symbol for genuine democracy and consequence. During the long dictatorship, my family traveled around the world to defend my grandfather's legacy and to call the attention to the lack of human rights in Chile, but paradoxically, never referred to him inside the family in an intimate way. I just grew up with the same iconic image of him all exiles had.

When I began this film, I set out to recover my grandfather's personal images and memoirs; our family photographs and albums that I believed had been stolen or destroyed during the military coup. During my search, I began to realize that beyond the private photographs that I was looking for, the intimate and memories of "Chicho" as he was affectionately known in our family were much more difficult to be recovered. Pain can transform into a powerful silence and create taboos within a family. And, without realizing, new generations develop an unconscious self-censorship, which allows one's personal history to fade away.

I wanted to abandon all preconceived notions of my grandfather Salvador Allende. I hoped that by making this film my family and I would allow ourselves to remember, yearn for and mourn Chicho. During the filmmaking process I realized that we also needed to allow ourselves to reminisce and mourn Beatriz, nicknamed Tati, my aunt and Chicho's nearer daughter who committed suicide four years after the coup.

Although my deep motivation for making this film was personal; I quickly understood that my family's journey may somehow reflect that of Chile over the last 4 decades. I come from a generation that endured trauma and tough experiences, with a childhood in exile, loss of family members and one's personal identity, or under the oppression of the dictatorship. In those hard times, there was not much liberty to inquire into our recent past. The invitation that this documentary offers us is to break the silence, to talk about things that we have been leaving behind, even within our own families, to start a dialogue between generations to better understand our viewpoints and the circumstances that each of us had to endure.

Interview with Marcia Tambutti Allende



Why make something about Allende when there is so much information out there already?

I was looking for something that had not yet appeared in any biography, film or existing investigation, something personal: what my grandfather was like when he was with his family, or when he was on vacations, or with his grandchildren. Most of the existing material - including films - focus on the consequences and his final sacrifice on Sept. 11, 1973, or has a sociopolitical analysis by people that actively participated in the Unidad Popular as seen from their perspective, in a political context, while for me, my interest lies in deciphering the personal side of my grandfather and considering the mark that he left on my family. Coming from a newer generation offers me the advantage of being able to view the facts from different perspectives with this documentary, like for example, feeling the freedom to explore the daily lives (and cost) of the common people that accompanied the leader whose main priority was “the common good of the homeland”, something unseen up to now.

Why would you say that it is important to see this film today?

The film presents the dilemma regarding the role of memory and silence related with certain painful subjects within the family, something that happens in any family anywhere around the world. In my search, I push my family with careful force to recover the ability to talk about our past without all the painful weight that keeping silent brings along. I believe that this can be healing. Sharing pain is also healing. Perhaps the film could help others who identify with the problem, to try this in their own circles. From another perspective, and not having foreseen the current crisis regarding financial aid for political campaigns (in Chile and around the world), the film portrays a way of doing politics based on personal sacrifice and with close associates, by convictions and ideals, a certain mysticism that should be reinstated. My grandfather and his collaborators suffered serious financial losses, worked hard on their eternal visits to the most remote areas of the country, lodging in very humble accommodations, and so obtained extensive knowledge about the country’s social situation.

The film is built on several layers, unveiling the role of women in politics, their participation in decision-making or backing their strong male counterparts, in their own personal way by enduring painful situations in silence. They are side B of politics, in the invisible sacrifices of those that are not leaders but share the firm commitment to the cause. I hope that the film is an inspiration in terms of human resilience.

What does it mean to recover the image of Salvador Allende?

Well, first I headed to friends and close collaborators in search of images like the ones you'd find in family photo albums, anything that hadn't been taken away during the coup. Pictures and incredible anecdotes started to emerge, like photos of Chicho dressed up in clothes belonging to his friend's son, which allowed me to see a playful silly side of him that I would have never imagined so strong! I understood that those who loved him weren't exaggerating when they spoke of his famous sense of humor and of his ability to suddenly let loose.

On the other hand and to my surprise, there are plenty of photographs of my grandfather, and even though exile did manage to create an iconic repetitive image in our collective imaginary, Chicho had an intense social life for decades, well registered in photographs. In spite of the fact that so many records were destroyed during the military coup, it is possible to find, even in Chile, public archives with an incredible value on a more personal level. To recover or unveil these archives feels like a small victory against the dictatorship's intent to erase him from the map. Unfortunately, the purchase of some of these archives is very costly and too much material could have become overwhelming in the film, but there is enough material to rescue and delve into my grandfather's different facets from various angles.

The film's point of view is to "un-archive" the public records, to take possession of them from a perspective that focuses on his personal gestures, on the anecdotes, on sharing personal objects that may have been rescued, on discovering the way that he enjoyed the different corners of the house. The complementarity of these two worlds allowed me to get closer and get to know my grandfather in a more complete way, and it allowed me to reconcile the public man with the family man.

You are a Biologist, how hard was it for you to make this film?

Well, it was a great challenge, especially for not having any professional experience in communications. But film is a collective endeavor and in that sense, I was surrounded by people with special talents and film experience; people that made significant contributions in every stage of this film.

Furthermore, to make a movie about your own family in which one is a part of the dynamics that are being recorded as well as appearing on-screen is probably hard for anyone. But we were all aware of that and there were things that we would analyze as a team. I knew that I wanted to make an honest movie, something transparent, and that had to come before any kind of shyness, but I did feel it on several occasions and we had to struggle with it. Additionally, keeping a team together for a span of eight years is a piece of art. It would never have been a possibility without the foresight and collaboration of Paola Castillo, our producer, or without the confidence and solidarity of the entire crew that firmly believed in the value of telling this story.

The film was also difficult to make due to other reasons, like the fact that during the shooting and the editing stages, several of my family members passed away, as well as the exhumation of Chicho's remains, events for which one can never be quite "prepared" or ready. So since the film is focused on memory and on the intimacy of the family, I not only suffered these events in my personal life, but we had to carefully consider them on a narrative level as well.

What does your family say about this initiative?

The strong feminine presence in the film unveils how from a tragic past from which a serene pain flows, emerging from something that is irreparable, there is something that does not want to be stirred, but

that tries to both find answers and protect itself. When my family saw the film they became aware of that careful force between the family's inertia about the silence that surrounded our every-day memories and my child-like curiosity combined with adult confrontation. It had not been that clear to them before! I believe that it was very generous of them to see themselves in that evasive dynamic, and I am so thankful that they welcomed the opportunity to see things from a new perspective. The film actually moved them and they really liked it; they really approve it, which was a big relief for me. Now that the debut is coming up, I keep thinking about my brother, about how happy he would have been for me.

What does it mean to you to be premiering the film at the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes?

Eight years have passed since we began this tremendous challenge without ever imagining how complex it would turn out to be. It wasn't easy, but we managed to form a crew of great, supportive and warm people that have made a tremendous effort because there is no way that the funding would have covered a project of this time length. We are very happy and proud because this is a way to acknowledge all that hard work, and the time that it took to deepen, mature and digest certain difficult issues, and create a transparent, sensitive and thought-provoking film, making a contribution in its way of playing with certain official images of my grandfather like the numerous campaigns in which he participated, with a progression that pulls you into the intimacy of the scene in which even the spectator feels disrobed. We are also pleased and honored to be selected for the Directors' Fortnight, because this isn't very common for a documentary. I believe that it's a means of demonstrating the impact of the documentary film genre, one that keeps growing in our country and Latin America, because of the way in which it deals with issues and offers new perspectives.



Key characters

CHICHO, as my family warmly referred to my grandfather Allende, who besides of entering to history as the first democratically elected socialist president of Chile (and maybe the world's) for me was an unknown as a grandfather, father and husband.

TENCHA, my grandmother and Chicho's widow, who initially does not want to talk about the past and only answers in monosyllables or silence. As month go by and I continue to film, Tencha comprehends that my curiosity is rooted in my deep love for her and our family.

MY COUSINS, MAYA, who is close to my age and **ALEJANDRO (ALE)**, her younger brother who was born in Cuba at the beginning of exile. Tati, their mother and Chicho's most political and closest daughter, committed suicide in 1977, when Maya was 6-years-old and Alejandro was 4-years-old.

ISABEL, my mother, who on hand realizes it's time to open up and tell me more about our family past, but simultaneously feels vulnerable because I want understand about Chicho and Tencha's relationship, about what happened in September 11, 1973, about her beloved sister Tati.

MY BROTHER GONZALO, the oldest of the grandchildren and the only one who has personal memories of Chicho and Tati before the coup.

CARMEN PAZ, my aunt and the eldest daughter of my grandparents, who suffers when I begin to ask her questions because for her it is very difficult to remember details from the past or put her feelings into words.

CARMEN, my cousin and daughter of Carmen Paz, who thinks Chicho is a taboo issue within our family and feels amazed to see the photos I bring to the family.

Audio excerpts from some of Chicho's closest friends, relatives and former colleagues are used over archival images and become a kind of Greek chorus as they reminisce about Chicho's life, death and work.

Biography Marcia Tambutti Allende, Director

Chilean-Mexican, initially forced by the coup to leave its country and later stayed away by choice. Has lived for long periods in both countries. Studied biology at the UNAM, made a M.Sc. at Imperial College and the Natural History Museum, London; has worked in biodiversity and communication of science issues. She lives in Chile since 2007, where collaborates with the Salvador Allende Foundation (co-producer and curator of the application for Ipad Allende, voices 40 years after the coup d'état) and the Institute of Ecology and Biodiversity. Works in biodiversity issues, communication of science, co-editing an innovative book on Darwin's Chilean trail, and making her first feature documentary *Beyond my grandfather Allende* recently completed.

Biography Paola Castillo, Producer

Paola is a filmmaker and also founder of Chiledoc, organization created to give Chilean documentaries international exposure and promote their commercial development. She is a graduate from the San Antonio de los Baños International Film and TV School, Cuba and from EURODOC. She has produced and directed full-length documentaries and TV series about culture and cinema. Her work has been awarded at local and international film festivals, and selected in Cannes, Berlinale, and Idfa, among others. She is a film professor at Universidad de Chile and Universidad Católica de Chile.



Technical crew and production team

Director

MARCIA TAMBUTTI ALLENDE

Producer

PAOLA CASTILLO VILLAGRÁN

Executive Producer

PAOLA CASTILLO - Chile

MARTHA OROZCO - México

Associate Producer

BRUNI BURRES - JUAN MANUEL SEPÚLVEDA

Line Producer

SOLEDAD SILVA

Script

PAOLA CASTILLO - BRUNI BURRES - VALERIA VARGAS - MARCIA TAMBUTTI

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DAVID BRAVO

EDUARDO CRUZ - COKE

Sound

CRISTIÁN LARREA - JUAN PABLO MANRÍQUEZ

Editing

COTI DONOSO - TITI VIERA GALLO

Music

LEONARDO HEIMBLUM - JACOBO LIEBERMAN

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