



TIGER AWARD

INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM
2022

EAMI

A film by Paz Encina

PARAGUAY'S ENTRY
INTERNATIONAL FEATURE
& DOCUMENTARY
2023



ACADEMY
OF MOTION PICTURE
ARTS AND SCIENCES



EAMI

DOCUMENTARY | AYOREO, GURANÍ | 75' | 2022

PARAGUAY, ARGENTINA, MEXICO, GERMANY, FRANCE, NETHERLANDS, UNITED STATES

Written and directed by Paz Encina

Produced by Silencio Cine

Co-produced by Louverture Films, Splendor Omnia, Black Forest Films, Fortuna Films, Gaman Cine,

Revolver Amsterdam, MPM Film, Eaux Vives Productions, Piano, Barraca Producciones, Grupo LVT,

Sagax Entertainment, Sabaté Films.

Starring Porai Picanerai, Ñacoe Etacore Chiqueno, Esoi Chiquenoi, Picanere Ijao Etacoro Picanere,

Chicode Chiquenoi, Berui Picanerai

DOP Guillermo Saposnik

Editing by Jornada Berg

SYNOPSIS

The Asojá flies, the bird-god-woman who transmutes spirit. She was a tiger, she was a plant, she was a jaguar, and today she is a girl who must heal her pain. EAMI is a story of the displaced. It's the memory of a people that had to leave its original place, that ever-smaller forest, to become "coñone," an Ayoreo word that means insensitive or insensate, and it's the word they use to define us.

FESTIVAL SELECTIONS





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I started working at EAMI, I had the intention to make a film about love. I had just finished a film about exile, oppression, and disappearance (Memory Exercises, my second feature,) and I felt the need to make a film about love. When I spoke with my friend, José Elizeche, an intercultural translator of the native communities of the Paraguayan Chaco, he told me: "I have that story you are looking for." He took me to meet the Totobiegosode, so I went to Chaco. I met people who had been displaced. I met people in deep pain who were defending their lands and who had lost their loved ones. When they told me their stories, I felt, for a second, that I knew those stories already, and deeply. There was an immediate connection. Maybe because my father had to exile, having to leave his country, maybe because since I was little I had to experience -being the daughter of an opposer to a ferocious dictatorship as Alfredo Stroessner's was- the oppression of a people. I left Chiadí, the Totobiegosode community, certain that this was the story I had to tell, but wondering if that was the one I wanted to tell and if it was what I was looking for. For two years, I worked with them, collecting their memories, and they gave me words... words... words... In our third year together, I asked one of their leaders how they expressed love. In the community, in the time we spent together, I saw that they did not touch each other, nor kiss, nor hug... Tagüide, a young leader, replied: we express love through words. For us, everything heals with love in words, he said. Only then could I understand that it was fate... To talk about love, but also, once again, talk about exile, injustice, and oppression, and about how they managed to make a present Nation-State (Paraguay) to give them their lands back, protecting them from deforestation, and guaranteeing protection, so that the Totobiegosode can continue thriving as themselves.

Paz Encina.

Context

The film's background is the forced displacement of the Ayoreo Totobiegosode, who lived in the Northern Paraguayan Chaco (green area on the map), by one of the most rampant deforestations in the world, as companies use the land for stockbreeding, in addition to the business of smuggling wood rolls and subjecting the indigenous population to a kind of cheap labor work.

Currently, more than 25,000 hectares of forest are cut down every month. After 20 years of legal battles, in 2018, the Totobiegosode Ayoreos succeeded in getting the Paraguayan State to give them the title to an 18,000 hectare farm that is part of their natural and cultural heritage, but their struggle does not stop, because if deforestation continues, the exodus will increase and their language, their customs and even their people will be in danger of extinction.





Reviews

"From its very first image, "Eami" demands you immerse yourself in its sensory imagination. With a still shot that runs slightly more than seven minutes, Encina urges us into rapt focus."

"One image alone takes us on a complete journey."

"As a microcosm of the film, this opening prologue for "Eami" immediately establishes how carefully Encina and DP Guillermo Saposnik are approaching the natural environment in Chaco. There's a reverence here for the untainted world of the forest. Eventually, the cuts between eerily still shots of rippling waters or windswept trees will emerge as driven by a desire to capture the immanence of the natural world, to relish in its beauty and to remain awestruck by its resilience. Still, the audiovisual tapestry Encina, Saposnik and editor Jordana Berg weave throughout would be nothing without, on the one hand, the natural soundscapes that surround us every step of the way and, on the other, the many voiceover narratives that layer over them a rich, choral history."

"It's fitting she's created a film that plays with rhythms and sensibilities, equal parts nature doc and choral poem, an experimental memory essay that's also an urgent elegy for a people, a forest, a world."

Manuel Betancourt

VARIETY

Reviews

"A work of respectful ethnography into the culture of a Paraguayan forest-dwelling tribe takes home the Tiger in 2022."

"Writer-director Paz Encina delivers another austere, empathetic dispatch from the South American country with fiction-documentary hybrid EAMI. An earnest, sombre and deliberately disorienting immersion into the culture of the forest-dwelling Ayoreo-Totobiegosode tribe ... this is a work of respectful ethnography which functions more as incantatory cinematic poem than conventional narrative."

"Experienced editor Jordana Berg's rhythms are unhurried, rural, and stately; Javier Umpierrez's soundscape is a symphony of natural noises, while cinematographer Guillermo Saposnik punctuates lush landscape images with eerie close-up portraits of Ayoreo-Totobiegosode tribespeople, their eyes closed in ruminative, visionary communion."

"The universal theme of painfully enforced exile and the haunting mood of grief-numbed elegy are together sufficiently strong to dissolve most cultural divides."

Neil Young
SCREENDAILY

Reviews

"A haunting parable."

"Because of the film's weightless drift, and the cinematography's tendency to focus on off-kilter natural imagery (like the aforementioned birds' eggs) whilst the abstruse yet poetic narration carries on about an unseen topic, the viewer is likely to leave the story ... convinced they've seen something deeply felt, and obviously urgent to its subjects. It resists the pedagogy of many films on similar postcolonial subject matter, and lets the significance of what unfolds slowly dawn on the viewer: simply, what it must be like to have both your present circumstances and history erased, and how to still reap hope."

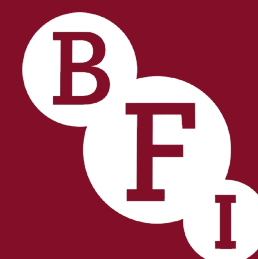
David Katz



"A lyrical tribute."

"It's a powerful indictment of the consumptive nature of the modern world, as colonialism continues to devour indigenous land."

Kambole Campbell



Reviews

"Urgent and haunting yet delicate and measured."

"A sombre, at times grim ethnographic poem about a displaced people who fell victim to greed and zealotry, as so many indigenous people have. Paz Encina's third feature film (after the Cannes FIPRESCI winning Paraguayan Hammock and documentary Memory Exercises) mixes a fleeting fictional narrative with eyewitness accounts of a forced exile to create a haunting image of pain and healing amidst rampant deforestation. A magical realist indictment of the way we treat people less powerful than us and the way we treat nature. There are no boundaries in EAMI, sadly."

"A dreamlike narrative where past and present, fiction and fact flow back and forth and through each other."

"Those willing to immerse themselves in its lush imagery and soundscape start to recognize a pattern in the austere camerawork of Guillermo Saposnik as he documents the devastation of the forest in gorgeous yet saddening static shots."

"It is a film that deserves to be seen both for its message and for the poetic but also harrowing way it communicates it."

Marc van de Klashorst



Reviews

"EAMI abraza el realismo mágico entreverando lo mitológico con lo real, incrustando situaciones y elementos del ideario de esa comunidad en un mundo que hace tiempo dejó de ser tal como lo conocían, y se inclina por un trabajo visual y sonoro de indudable pulido técnico."

"Encina se confirma como una de las voces más coherentes del cine regional, una directora dispuesta a pensar su entorno y las costumbres locales a través del lenguaje del cine."

Ezequiel Boetti



"Siempre recorriendo los territorios de la pérdida y la memoria, la directora entona un sentido y muy sensorial himno a la identidad del pueblo ayoreo-totobiegosode, que resulta desafiada por un exilio forzado tras la destrucción de su poblado."

Emilio Mayorga





DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY AND FILMOGRAPHY

Paz Encina was born in Asuncion, Paraguay. She has a Bachelor's degree in Cinematography from the Universidad del Cine in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her works as Director have been screened at venues such as the Harvard Film Archives, the BAMFA / Berkeley Art Museum and the Pacific Film Archive, and the MOMA in New York. She created Silencio Lab In 2016, a platform through which she gives seminars to train young Paraguayan talents. Paz Encina is the first Paraguayan director to be part of the Hollywood Film Academy.

FEATURES

2021 – Veladores (Doc Buenos Aires.)

2006 – Ejercicios de Memoria (World Premiere Zalbategi section of the San Sebastian Festival. FICCO Award for Best Documentary, Critics' Award at the Brasilia Film Festival.)

2005 – Hamaca Paraguaya (World Premiere Cannes Film Festival (2006) / Opener of the Un Certain Regard section, FIPRESCI Award Winner.)

SHORT FILMS

2011 – Viento Sur.

2010 – Rio Paraguay, Primer, Segundo, Tercer Movimiento.

2000 – Supe que Estabas Triste.

INSTALLATIONS

2018 – Sound and Video installation, organized by Fondation Cartier / Paris, France.

2017 – Paz Encina: Exercises in Memory, Memory and Hope: The Paraguayan Cinema of Paz / Special retrospective series of Paz Encina organized by Pacific Film Archive (Jan 27 – 28,) Harvard Film Archive), Pacific Film Archive (February 1 – 9,) MoMA (February 10 – 12).





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