

Pimienta Films presents

a film by
Tatiana Huezo



TEMPESTAD

Running Time

105 minutes

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TEMPESTAD

a film by

Tatiana Huezo

Production Year

2016

Type of Production

Documentary

Country

México

Director

Tatiana Huezo

Producer

Nicolás Celis, Sebastián Celis

Executive Producer

Jim Stark

Co-producers

Pepe Cohen, Joakim Ziegler

Screenplay

Tatiana Huezo

Cinematography

Ernesto Pardo

Editing

Lucrecia Gutiérrez Maupomé y Tatiana Huezo

Music

Leonardo Heiblum y Jacobo Lieberman

Sound Design

Lena Esquenazi

Sound

Federico González Jordán

Production companies

Pimienta Films, Cactus Films, Terminal

LOGLINE

The emotional journeys of two women victimized by corruption and injustice in Mexico and of the love, dignity and resistance that allowed them to survive.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Two women, their voices echoing over the landscape and highways of Mexico from north to south, as they tell how official corruption and injustice allowed violence to take control of their lives, desires and dreams.

An emotional and evocative journey, steeped not only in loss and pain, but also in love, dignity and resistance.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Through a subjective and emotional journey, this film conveys the paralyzing power of fear: fear as a sickness that prevents you from taking a stand on your life, on the future of your children; which clouds your ability to dream and grow.

A morning on a quite normal day: Miriam is arrested at her workplace and is accused, without proof, of "people trafficking". The violence she suffered and was exposed to during her imprisonment has left a profound gap in her life.

Adela works as a clown in a travelling circus. Ten years ago, her life was irreversibly transformed; every night during the show, she evokes her missing daughter, Monica.

Tempest is the parallel journey of two women. Mirror-like, it reflects the impact of the violence and impunity that afflict Mexico.

Through their voices, we are drawn into the heart of their feelings, steeped in loss and pain, but also love, dignity and resistance.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I have known Miriam, the protagonist of *Tempest*, for twenty years. We have shared all kinds of experiences, joys and sorrows throughout our lives.

She has always struck me as a strong, inquisitive and rebellious woman, possessed of an unusually intense *joie de vivre*.

Miriam was imprisoned in a very violent jail in northern Mexico. She was accused of people trafficking even though there wasn't a single piece of proof to demonstrate her guilt.

When she got out of prison and we met again, I felt that something vital in her had died. Miriam couldn't look me in the eyes. And although, on that occasion, we spoke of simple, everyday things, she had a facial tremor that she could not control.

Shortly after that meeting, a package arrived at my house, posted from Cancún; it was from her. It was a box full of scraps of paper she had written on while in prison: poems in which she vomited out all the fear and sorrow of her experiences. The darkness and sadness in her words struck a chord in both my head and my heart. Never before in the twenty years we had known one another had I seen such a dense shadow cast over her, such a profound, immeasurable wound.

My perception of the damage that had transformed Miriam brought me into violent proximity with my own fragility, my own fear.

I proposed to Miriam that we should work together to make a film using her story, and she agreed to share her testimony with us. She told me that breaking her silence about the violence she had suffered in jail returned to her a sense of her own life.

This film explores what fear means in the life of a human being, and what it is we lose when we are faced with impunity.

Parallel to the process with Miriam, I embarked on an in-depth research project to seek out other stories that could, in some way, be intertwined with Miriam's,

accompanying the testimony of this film with a second voice. That was when I met Adela, a woman from a circus background who was looking for her vanished daughter. Adela conveyed to me, with the same force as Miriam, the irreversible transformation her life had suffered. Ten years before, her daughter Mónica had left home for university and had never returned. The ineptitude of the authorities and their collusion with the criminals have made Adela and her family doubly victims. They have now gone into hiding after receiving threats, and continue to search for Mónica alone, trying to stay sane despite the uncertainty over whether their daughter is alive or not.

When it came to the formal construction of *Tempest*, I decided that the narrative device should be a journey across Mexico from north to south. The story therefore begins in Matamoros, northern Mexico, evoking the day on which Miriam was set free and began her journey home, more than 2,000 km away. I followed the route she took, travelling on buses, stopping at sleazy hotels, bus stations and on the highways of Mexico – these days full of police and military roadblocks.

The fact that we do not see the image of Miriam in the film but only hear her voice was one of the most crucial formal decisions in the construction of *Tempest*. As a result, in this case, her voice is not related directly to a single face but to many faces along the way, creating the sense that what happened to Miriam could happen to anybody living in Mexico today.

I believe that in this country, somebody else has taken control of the course of our lives, of our future, of our desires and our dreams.

The story of Miriam is intended as a mirror in which we can see ourselves reflected not only in her pain and fragility, but also in the dignity displayed by her and the other characters along the way,

all of whom – in different ways and from different standpoints – resist accepting that they must live with the fear created by the violence in Mexico.

Tatiana Huezo