

1976

A film by Manuela Martelli



95 min/Chile/Argentina/Qatar | Colour /I 1.90:1 | 5.1 In Spanish with English subtitles/2022

Cannes Directors' Fortnight (2022)



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SYNOPSIS

Chile, 1976. Carmen heads off to her beach house to supervise its renovation. Her husband, children and grandchildren come back and forth during the winter vacation. When the family priest asks her to take care of a young man he is sheltering in secret, Carmen steps onto unexplored territories, away from the quiet life she is used to.



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Photo set to download [here](#)

CAST

Carmen
Elías
Father Sánchez
Miguel

Aline Kuppenheim
Nicolás Sepúlveda
Hugo Medina
Alejandro Goic

CREW

Director
Cinematographer
Script
Editor
Art Director
Sound
Costumes
Produced by
Production

Manuela Martelli
Yarará Rodríguez, A.D.F.
Manuela Martelli, Alejandra Moffat
Camila Mercadal
Francisca Correa
Jesica Suárez
Pilar Calderón
Omar Zúñiga (Cinestación)
Dominga Sotomayor (Cinestación)
Alejandra García, Andrés Wood
Nathalia Videla Peña (Magma Cine)
Juan Pablo Magma Cine Gugliotta

Coproduction

Chile/Argentina/Qatar 2022
95 mins/1.90:1/5.1
In Spanish



MANUELA MARTELLI BIOGRAPHY



Manuela has participated in more than 15 films as an actress. In 2010, she received a Fulbright to pursue a Masters in Film at Temple University, U.S.A. 'Apnea', her first short film, premiered at FIC Valdivia, 2014. She was also selected by Cannes Directors Fortnight's programme Chile Factory to co-direct a short film with Amirah Tajdin, called 'Land Tides', which premiered at the Fortnight in 2015. Her debut film '1976' was also selected by Cannes Directors Fortnight's programme.

In conversation with Manuela Martelli

Where does the idea of Carmen's character come from?

Being a teenager, I started wondering about my maternal grandmother whom I never met. There was a halo of mystery around her, but I could not really understand what it was. At home we had a series of objects made by her; some ceramics, paintings or drawings and a sculpture of a woman that was in the living room. Apart from what my mother sometimes told me about her, these objects were like hints that made me so curious about her. Talking to my nanny Idolia (who I must say is a true institution at home as in many upper-middle-class families in Chile), I discovered that my grandmother had committed suicide. My mother and some of our family relatives explained it as the outcome of a strong depression, but for me the sense of mystery that I had been feeling all along wasn't about the suicide itself but more about this housewife's curiosity who would not ever settle by being simply and only a housewife. This drew the outline of a character I would want to observe.

Why did you decide to tell the story of this particular moment in Chile’s history from the point of view of a woman belonging to a conservative upper-middle-class family?

Wondering about my grandmother and the whole depression theory that would close the “explaining-her-death” file, I said: “Wait a minute, in what year did it happen?” And the answer was: “1976.” Ok! 1976! One of the most cruel and dark years of dictatorship! Before we even start talking about depression, let’s have a look at the big picture. Then another transversal question was arising to try to understand that period in Chile’s history and not just my family issues: “How could we live thinking that what happens outside the walls of our home won’t infiltrate our domestic space? What is this mechanism of ours where we can keep on carrying out our daily life when people outside are being thrown into the ocean?”

The camera follows the female protagonist very closely throughout the film, almost isolating her from everything around her. Could you tell us a little more about this choice?

After various script versions I understood that the film was a character observation. I think that Dominga Sotomayor, the film producer, helped me a lot during the development phase to interpret this idea. From then on, I understood that I was looking through her eyes, and this became my guideline. This is why the title is so fundamental to me, because it sets up the contradiction: when you put a date as a headline you expect something big; a battle, the conquest of a new territory, the birth of a nation, not just the daily life of an anonymous woman. I think that Yarará Rodríguez, the DP, very well figured that out and we discussed a lot about the issue of “where to look from”. Our rule was to always be with her, sometimes to look at her, and sometimes to look at what she was looking at. This was the way to keep us attached to subjectivity and not try to tell Chile’s history, the one I had read in my schoolbooks.



Could you tell us how was working with Aline Kuppenheim to achieve the strength of Carmen's character?

To be honest, you don't have to do much with Aline. That strength is part of her, and she is so generous with the characters she plays that whatever she has, she shares it with them. I knew this and I wrote the part for her. Then I just let her play. Sometimes we would discuss some particular things, but there was a lot that we didn't have to make explicit, and I think that this space of mystery, of not explaining things would make the whole thing more profound. I think this was something I learnt from her and then followed her up on.

Could you tell us more about the symbolism of giving shoes a special focus in the film?

I was not conscious about this at the beginning, it came as a coincidence. My mom had told that she had once visited a relative that had just died and was still in his mortuary room. She described me how she was impressed when looking at his shoes at his bedside, all polished and ready to be worn. I was very moved by this image: for me, the empty shoes were the pure and simple image of absence. Later on, when I was writing the script, my sister had the idea of the shoe sequence at the beginning of the film. She thought that it would be interesting to have something breaking Carmen's logic. This made so much sense, not just as an anecdote, but as something that I applied to the whole film. How Carmen's idea of the world was falling apart. As you can see, my whole family is part of the film.



The representation of the mid-70s is so precise, full of details. How did you give shape to the set?

I think a clue was moving the set to the beach, that was in the very first script version. But then, for many reasons, I ended up setting it in Santiago. When we were getting close to

pre-production, Alejandra García, one of the producers, remembered this first version of the film, which I reconsidered and went to the coast for some days. I re-wrote, and everything made sense. That's the great thing of having somebody bringing the original back to present. The coastal beach towns where we shot are a bit kept out of time. Of course, they are also very affected by modernity, but they had managed to keep something pure and authentic. Another fundamental piece was Carmen's house, and we were very lucky to find the location we used. It gave us so much. The rest was much work, that we did with Francisca Correa, the Art Director, to shape each of the sets, and the producer Omar Zúñiga to get all the right locations.

Carmen's story exposes issues that remain controversial in Chile. How is this type of story received today by local audience?

Well, I think that, at a certain point, this is what the movie is made for, so I am very curious to see what happen when the film is shown.



Could you give us details about your work on sound? The soundtrack strongly participates to the tense atmosphere of the film. Could you tell us about your collaboration with Francisca Correa and how you worked on the colours and the grain of the image?

The sound is very important in the film because it is also Carmen's mind. The sound has much space to subtly become subjective. I also think that the film deals a lot with the idea of the invisible, and what better than sound can reflect this. In terms of music, I feel there was a moment in contemporary filmmaking where music was not well seen, and I was quite influenced by this. But then, at a certain point, I thought "why am I limiting myself?" I love music and I love what images and music can make you feel. So, I started thinking of the film as one with music and wondering how should its quality be. I thought that it would be interesting to go against the default concept of orchestral music for period piece films. And together with the composer Mariá Portugal we thought of using 1970s' synthesisers. With Francisca Correa, the Art Director, we created a map of colours and textures that was like a parallel film narrative.

Carmen's character watches a lot of films considered today as classics. Could you tell us more about what they mean to her and how they impact her imagination?

I was interested by the idea of fiction inside Carmen's mind. How would she confront what she was going through? And I thought that it was interesting to have a hint of her imaginary world by looking at the movies she keeps watching. I like how this imaginary world infiltrates her mind to do what she does and how all this fiction fractures at the end. It also seemed interesting to me to see the contrast between what was being shown on TV while something horrific was happening outside.

