



THE FILM

SYNOPSIS
NARRATIVE

Archeology of Memory: Villa Grimaldi

Produced & Directed by: Quique Cruz & Marilyn Mulford

Cinematography by Vicente Franco

Editing by Michael Chandler

88 Minute documentary film (2008)



FILM SYNOPSIS

“Archeology of Memory: Villa Grimaldi” is a beautifully crafted, poignant and important story that explores healing through art. The film follows exiled musician Quique Cruz from the San Francisco Bay Area to Chile and back, as he creates a multimedia installation and musical suite to heal his wounds inflicted by state-sponsored torture of the Pinochet regime. We accompany Claudio as he visits former concentration camp sites and ruins, and talks to his mother about his disappearance and incarceration for the first time in thirty years. To help tell his story, he searches for artist friends who were incarcerated with him. In these intimate conversations—with writer Nubia Becker, poet Anita Moreira and painter Guillermo Nuñez—we see these artists, and their art, as they re-tell their experiences as political prisoners and talk of how they use their art for healing.

The film utilizes experimental footage, intimate accounts from Quique and the other protagonists, and art to build dramatic tension. The Musical score is an intricate element of the film. We follow the music’s development as our principal protagonist creates it while re-living his torture, disappearance, and exile. The film spans the years from Salvador Allende’s Chile through the coup led by Augusto Pinochet. It ends at the former torture site in 2006 with the dedication by current Chilean President Michelle Bachelet of a theater where Quique performs his piece in front of thousands of people.

“Archeology of Memory: Villa Grimaldi” opens a window of understanding on the repercussions of state-sponsored torture and disappearing of political prisoners. It talks directly to a specific segment of the “under represented”, both exiles in the U.S. and those living in their native countries, who lived Claudio’s experience. Many try to forget the past in order to live in the present. Because of this need to forget, their stories are often not disclosed—even to their families—or they are told by outsiders. Therefore, the process of healing for the individuals and their communities is often delayed for generations.

Claudio conceived of his performance piece and this film because he wanted to tell his story—a story that is universal and current. He feels that all too often people such as him are not given this opportunity, yet when allowed, they can add an important perspective and understanding.

Using music, poetry, paintings and graphics, his story can bring a wide variety of people inside the experience of being tortured and disappeared—incarcerated with no due process— and give them valuable insight into the long-term effects. It calls attention to the denial of freedoms and human rights by nations out of fear and repression.



FILM NARRATIVE

It is easy to have dreams during the best times in our lives, but what happens in the worst of times? What happens to our dreams if we are ripped away from everything we've taken for granted: family, work, shelter, food, freedom from pain, personal liberty? "*Archeology of Memory: Villa Grimaldi*" follows our major protagonist as he navigates a landscape of state sponsored torture and disappearing political prisoners, forced exile, transformation and healing.

Growing up in a rural town in Chile during the sixties, Claudio is full of dreams. Obsessed with being a musician from an early age, he quits school after 8th grade and leaves his home for the capital, Santiago, during the heady days of "Nueva Cancion", the New Song Movement spearheaded by singers like Victor Jara and Violeta Parra. At seventeen he is playing with world-renowned performers, exploring the indigenous music he loves, relishing artistic freedom and the optimistic social climate created by the election in 1970 of Salvador Allende. Everything seems possible: a better future for Chile's poor, the involvement of artists in supporting a more compassionate regime, and the dreams of a richly talented young musician.

After the CIA backed coup in 1973, the dream becomes a nightmare. Under the regime of General Augusto Pinochet, 17-year old Claudio is incarcerated, brutally tortured and 'disappeared'. After a year in different concentration camps—never charged with a crime—he is forced into exile, ending up in the United States. Scarred physically and psychologically by torture and by the death or disappearance of many friends, Claudio becomes silent and secretive, working menial jobs, alienated from society. He adopts a new name, Quique Cruz, and tries to avoid his own personal traumatic memories by lying about his past, even to doctors who see the damage that torture has done to his face.

But his dreams do not die, as he finds ingenious ways of building instruments to play the music he loves in local cafes, and alone on California's beaches that remind him of his home. Slowly he remakes himself getting a University education, finally getting accepted at Stanford University for a Ph. D. on Modern Thought and Literature. With the arrest of Pinochet in London in 1999, a creative door opens in the artist; after thirty years of secrecy, he finds the strength to tell his story through the passionate creation of a music suite and multi-media performance piece.

In searching for his trouble past, Claudio decides to talk to his mother, for the first time, about his disappearance and incarceration. On a poignant interview, we see mother and son trying to remember the news of his incarceration; the painful search of his mother throughout the country and finally what both felt in those difficult moments. He also revisits the concentration camps and torture centers where he was held, and looks for his friends, artists who were incarcerated with him. The documentary shows Claudio in conversations with writer Nubia Becker, poet Anita María Moreira and painter Guillermo Nuñez as they re-tell their experiences as prisoners and how they have used their art for healing in their own mediums.

Driven by Claudio's search to create meaningful artwork to give him a "voice", the documentary inter-cuts between Northern California and Central Chile; between the creation of the performance piece and the story it is exploring. Claudio's first person narrative, *verité* scenes, and his music along with flashbacks consisting of artwork and re-enactments help illuminate his journey. It is a journey riddled with obstacles: creation of the piece unleashes raw memories of torture and confinement, cracking through the armor of denial and stirring up feelings of such force that without his music, he might have fallen apart. But Claudio discovers once again the power of art to transform even the deepest pain; he finds that new dreams can arise from the imagination as healing begins.

With passionate expressiveness in our film, he reveals that by unpacking all the memories he had locked away, he is able to create in a manner that had eluded him for decades, merging the world of his past and his present exile. Finally, Quique and Claudio are able to speak with a single voice, creating powerful music and poetry about horrific personal experiences; composing a brilliant fusion of indigenous music and jazz.

With the recent election of a new president in Chile, Michelle Bachelet, a woman who also is a survivor of torture, he is finally able to bring this piece to be performed in his native land at the site of the Villa Grimaldi Torture Center where he was incarcerated. Quique takes Claudio's story home.