



AUDIENCE AWARD
BEST SHORT FILM
DOCUMENTAMADRID 2016
XIII INTERNATIONAL MADRID DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL



PRESSKIT

I'M NOT FROM HERE

A FILM BY MAITE ALBERDI & GIEDRE ŽICKYTĖ





I'M NOT FROM HERE

(YO NO SOY DE AQUÍ)

“I’m not from here” is a short-length documentary film, written and directed by Maite Alberdi (“Tea Time”, 2014) and Giedrė Žickytė (“Master and Tatyana”, 2014). It is a co-production between companies Micromundo Producciones (Chile) and Moonmakers (Lithuania). The Project was conceived as a collaboration between both directors, who met at the CPH:LAB initiative, at the CPH:DOX Festival, in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Its caring and respectful narrative has been well received and celebrated by audiences and jurors in various of the main festivals in Europe and North America, being awarded in numerous times and receiving a nomination in the European Film Awards, as Best European Short Film.



LOGLINE

Josebe, a 80 years old Basque woman, lives with other elderly people in a residence in Santiago, Chile. Everyday she thinks it’s her first day staying there and everyday she has to realize it’s not, as well as she is not in her country nor with her family anymore.

SYNOPSIS

Josebe (88) lives in a nursing home in Chile. She’s obsessed with knowing where do the rest of the elder people she lives with, come from. Everyone tell her that they are chilean, not spaniard as she is. Josebe insists on thinking about her youth in the Basque Country. After a full year living in that house, she struggles to remember that she is living in a nursing home. After 70 years in Chile, she still remembers lively her homeland.



MAITE ALBERDI, DIRECTOR

As a director she has developed a highly particular style that achieves an intimate portrayal of the characters she works with, through everyday stories in small-scale worlds. In 2011 she premiered at IDFA her first and noted feature film “The Lifeguard”. Through Micromundo, her production company, she directed her film “Tea Time”, that has received important Films awards as: Best Female-Directed EDA Award-IDFA, Best Documentary Award at: Miami International Film Festival, EIDF-EBS Korea, DocsBarcelona, FICG Guadalajara, among others. And was nominee for the Goya Awards as Best Iberoamerican Film. On 2016, she premiered her shortfilm “I am not from here”, that is nominated for European FilmAwards.

FILMS

Los niños / Grown-ups (80’, 2016)
La Once / Tea Time (72’, 2014)
El Salvavidas / The Lifeguard (70’, 2011)

SHORT FILMS

Las Peluqueras / The Hairdressers (26’, 2007)
Los Trapecistas (24’, 2005)



GIEDRĖ ŽICKYTĖ, DIRECTOR

Giedrė Žickytė (1980) is a Lithuanian director and producer. She has been working in the international documentary film market since 2009. Her films have been screened at many international film festivals, including IDFA, DokLeipzig, Vision du Reel, Hot Docs, Sheffield Doc/Fest, Rotterdam IFF, Goteborg IFF, Warsaw IFF, Krakow IFF and others, winning awards and achieving theatrical releases.

Her latest film, I’M NOT FROM HERE, co-directed with Maite Alberdi, received best short film nomination at European Film Awards in 2016. Her feature documentary MASTER AND TATYANA won Best Director, Best Documentary, Best Camera and Best Editing awards at Lithuanian National Film Awards “Silver Crane” in 2015.

Giedre is a member of European Film Academy, European Documentary Network, Lithuanian Film Academy, alumna of Berlinale Talent Campus and EURODOC.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY:

I’m Not From Here (2016) How We Played
Master and Tatyana (2014) the Revolution (2011)

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Title:	I'm not from here (Yo no soy de aquí)
Year:	2016
Country:	Chile-Lithuania-Denmark
Shooting format:	HDV 2K
Screening format:	2K
Length:	25:45 min
Directors:	Maite Alberdi, Giedrė Žickytė
Producer:	Pato R. Gajardo, Maite Alberdi
Cinematographer:	Pablo Valdés
Sound director:	Boris Herrera
Writers:	Maite Alberdi, Giedrė Žickytė
Editor:	Juan Eduardo Murillo
Sound design:	Roberto Espinoza. Sonamos.
Image Post Production & VFX:	Filmosonido, Chile
Cast:	Josebe Echaveguren, Mario Rosselot, Oscar Sotomayor
Financing institutions:	FFA-Chile, The Danish Film Institute, Lithuanian Film Centre

FESTIVALS

- ⊙ **Visions du Réel 2016**
Festival international de cinéma Nyon, Switzerland: World Premiere, April 2016

Winner of the Sesterce D'or Goblet, for Best International Shortfilm Academy Awards qualification
- ⊙ **DocumentaMadrid 2016**
XIII Madrid International Documentary Film Festival, Spain: April, 2016

Winner of the Audience Award, for the Best Short Film
- ⊙ **Hot Docs**
Canadian International Documentary Festival, Canada. North american Premiere, April, 2016
- ⊙ **Krakow International Film Festival**
Poland: May 2016
EFA nomination for Best European Short Film Award
- ⊙ **Sheffield Doc/Fest**
England: June 2016
Winner, for Best International Short Film Academy Awards qualification
- ⊙ **Huesca International Film Festival**, Spain:
June 2016.
Winner of the José Manuel Porquet Special Award
- ⊙ **SANFIC Santiago International Film Festival**, Chile.
Chilean Premiere, August 2016
- ⊙ **Concerto Film Festival**
Italy: August 2016.
Premio Speciale della Giuria
- ⊙ **Budapest International Documentary Festival**, Hungary: September 2016.
Let us be short: Best Short Film Award
- ⊙ **IFF Message to man Film Festival**, Russia: September 2016. Best documentary Short Film Award
- ⊙ **Festival de Biarritz Amerique Latine**
France: September 2016.
Jury's special mention
- ⊙ **Rukapillan Festival**
Chile: October 2016.
Best Short Film Award

INTERVIEW

**with Maite Alberti and Giedrė Žickytė,
directors of the EFA-nominated short film
“I am not from here”**

By Dimitra Kouzi (kouziproductions.com)

This film is the result of an experiment: the two directors were matched by the CPH:DOX festival to co-direct a film in the course of one year. The two directors were especially interested in capturing the feeling of alienation inherent to immigration – and also, perhaps, to living in a nursing home: the feeling of not truly being at home. They decided to make their film in Chile, a country that saw an influx of immigration in the 20th century, and searched there for immigrants afflicted with Alzheimer’s. The short film is the portrait of Josebe, a woman from the Basque country living in a nursing home in Chile. This is an interview about their short film “I am not from here”, which is multi-awarded and is now nominated for the EFA 2016.

What was your experience of CPH:DOX Lab?

Maite: I did not have so many expectations when I came to the CPH:DOX Lab, but it was a great experience. As it was not a traditional project – that you have been working on for a long time, with co-producers and involving international funds – I felt more free to experiment, a freedom I did not have in my other projects, and I worked on an idea that I was developing for a long time.

We had never met with Giedre before, so it was like a blind date, where we had to work and find common ground. We were both interested in working with memory from an alternative viewpoint: what you remember when all is forgotten.

Giedrė: Quite an experiment on the part of the Danish doc festival to match two different words – the post-Eastern-European socialist camp and post-Pinochet Chile. Both countries with a post-totalitarian trauma, as well as with vibrant cultural spheres. Filming in Chile was a completely different experience from my previous ones, because I do not speak the language. Therefore, I started to follow my intuition more strongly – body language, and other direct and indirect senses.

How did you collaborate? What was it like working together?

Maite: Through research we knew that, in the first stages of Alzheimer, early childhood is remembered. Based on theory, we imagined what would happen to an immigrant with Alzheimer. We hired a journalist who went to all nursing houses in Santiago and sent us a description of some 50 characters. Josebe was one of those. Her memory worked as we imagined, but it was an intense character, with a unique personality, which we would never have written, not even for fiction. She was our guide, which made this co-directing exercise flow with her.

Giedrė: Before coming to Chile I already knew, not only what Josebe looked like but also her likes and dislikes, where she lives, her daily routine, how she reacts, and this extensive research helped me and Maite to predict certain moments and when was a good time to turn the camera on and wait for a miracle to happen. In the beginning, we considered re-creating the character’s past in fiction. When we started filming, we realised that reality gives us more and is far stronger than fiction!

What drew you to this story?

Giedrė: The fragility of passing time constantly concerns me. I come back to this theme in all my films, and it's so sensitive that I can be moved to tears when I look at an old photograph, or listen to memories. Losing memory is something I fear for myself, so I tried to cope with this fear by searching for moments of light and hope in the story. My grandmother briefly suffered from dementia before she passed away. I was a child then and I have intermittent reminiscences, though some distinct moments haunt me, such as how weird I felt when we went to visit her and she didn't recognise me. But my strongest memory is how she felt unhappy and not herself when she had to leave her home. My father's sister took care of my grandmother and after the stroke she needed to go to a sanatorium to recover. We visited her there; it was a sunny day, a garden with lot of trees and a house full of elderly people. I don't remember what we did but I remember the ravishing feeling of absolute loneliness and emptiness there. I was afraid to be there. It was the first time in my life I experienced fear of getting old. Making this film, I missed my grandmother – I imagined her in Josebe's place.

Maite: In 2010, I wrote and directed a theatre play about Alzheimer disease and I made a lot of research for that; I learnt a lot about that. I think Josebe is like one of my play characters, only better, because reality is always better than fiction. In fiction you cannot put too much crazy situations because they are unbelievable; in a documentary, this kind of situations are a gift from reality. All the stories that we can make up already exist – we just have to find them. For me, films are like a factory of experiences for the spectator.

After I wrote my play, I really wanted to find some of these characters in reality, and that was my goal with this story: to find a character with Alzheimer's that really remembered her early stage of life in another place, but not to remember the present. So, at a certain moment you can feel she is completely in her right mind because she can remember everything; yet, little by little you realise that she is lost in the present. So, that is the question: What is reality? Sometimes reality is in your own mind – you can live in your memories, which keep you alive.

Did this experience change you?

Giedrė: If you don't change while making your film, then there is no purpose in doing it – it shapes your life completely. Making this film, I asked myself, what is the most important thing in life? Another interesting thing is that it was for me a new environment, a new country and language, and what helped me to identify I think was Maite, and this was a very nice experience.

How did you manage to achieve a cinematic feeling while filming everyday scenes in a natural environment?

Giedrė: I strongly believe that it is very important, not only what story the film is telling but how it is telling it. Before filming there, we researched the spaces in the house and the residents' daily rituals there. Our task was to find a good position for the camera in each space, to frame a shot and wait for situations to happen, which we could guess about from our research. The film's cinematographer, Pablo Valdes, who is a gifted and intuitive DOP, could instantly feel from our gazes if we wanted to move the frame or change the position. We needed our camera to be stationary, observational, so as not to destroy nor intrude into the fragile beauty and magic of the reality unfolding in front of our eyes.

Maite: I usually work in this style in documentaries. The documentary genre has sought to pursue great historical events as the narrative axis; however, politics and idiosyncratic social portraits can also be displayed based on the microcosm. Small situations from daily life that become exceptional can be more moving than explicit politics. In observational documentaries the question is, how to make extraordinary reality happen in front of the camera? I like to talk about "scheduling chance". I am convinced that reality is cyclical, and those things that I observed during the research that were unique, happen again. For this to happen we need to be constant, patient and wait. For me, documentaries are an exercise in patience – waiting for things to happen in reality, without hurrying or pushing them, trusting that if one chooses the places and situations well, these will provide you with what you need. Each story and each character have their own way of being told and their own language. That is what we search for; the question is, what style does my character need to convey their subject and viewpoint.

How did dealing with the issue of ageing, memory loss, Alzheimer's disease and vulnerability affect you?

Maite: I think it posed a constant question for me, what I am going to remember if I lost my memory, where I am going to live in my mind. In fact, I have already lived the first part of my life, so I will probably not remember anything from here to my old age. That is weird, how we are determined by our childhood and adolescence: for example, during research it was amazing for me to see how people with Alzheimer who got married twice, think that the person that is taking care of them is their first wife/husband. Working with these issues gave rise to questions in my mind that I did not have before; it is not a concern for me – it is more a reflection on what I am going to remember.

What was your biggest challenge (technically and/or emotionally)?

Giedrė: Before, I used to spend a lot of time with my protagonists and establish a relationship before I started shooting. Here, we had a totally different situation: Our protagonist, Josebe, did not recognise us. Every single day, we were like new persons to her. Secondly, I had to shoot a film in another language about a woman who feels she lives in another country. I was also the only one from abroad in that particular space, as was Josebe. I felt how the perception of the situations we were filming was under a totally new light due to not speaking the language.

Maite: I usually carry out extensive research, and I have a close relationship with my characters so as to prepare them for the shooting of the observational documentaries. I spend a long time with them before turning on the camera. In this case, I could not have that relationship, and it was weird for me. Every day was the first day – that was my challenge, in both research and while shooting; every day I had to explain to her who I was and what I was doing. At a certain point, we decided to put on nursery uniforms so that we could be part of her environment.

Let us into your editing room. What decisions did you have to make while editing the film?

Giedrė: The raw material was already very strong, and our greatest challenge was how not to destroy this fragile magic of life by the editing. Everything had to be very simple and accurate. Most decisions were made during editing; regarding the form, that was the moment where we discussed the most, rather than during filming.

Maite: The big decision in the editing room was to make a short film, rather than a feature documentary. Because there is a lot of time that nothing happened in that space, so for me it was not powerful enough material to do a feature-length. I think, with this kind of small stories, you must be prepared to decide during editing what kind of film it is. And it is better to make a good short film than a bad feature-length documentary. The other challenge was how to construct the character, show her not only as someone who does not remember, but also as a character that remembers her past. Because that was the interesting thing about her: to not realise in the very beginning that she has Alzheimer's, because when I met her, I did not realise it during my first approach. So I wanted to replicate that same experience with the audience.

Did you have a lot of contact with the characters (behind the scenes)? If so, what was your experience of that?

Giedrė: It was a very different and challenging experience for both of us, as we couldn't establish a close relationship with our main character as what we were used to in our previous films. Every day, we had to introduce ourselves to our protagonist, Josebe, and she didn't remember that we had met and filmed the day before. We had to be very attentive to her mood changes, and pay attention that our presence did not disturb her. We couldn't control her – where to go, where to sit, even what clothes to wear. For instance, one day she decided to put on a very different jacket, which was contrasting with the ones we had filmed her in before, but she refused to change. However, we could control where to place the camera, as Josebe and other elderly had the same daily routine, the same rituals and we could prepare for that.

What do you think are the most serious problems that elderly people face nowadays?

Giedrė: There is a widespread perception that we live in the era of an elderly world. With a low birth-rate, aging population is a common phenomenon in many countries. Also in Lithuania, my native country. One would think that with the aging population, there would be more elderly people everywhere – public spaces, restaurants, streets. However, that is not the case. I feel that is due to the remains of post-soviet heritage, as in European countries I see elderly people being truly part of the society. On the other hand, in Western Europe I note another tendency: there are less strong family bonds, and the phenomenon of elderly people's houses is much more common than in Eastern Europe.

Maite: I think there are completely different ways to live in our old age now. For example, in my previous film, *Tea Time*, it was completely the opposite of *I'm not from here*, even if the protagonists are in the same age. In *Tea Time*, they were enjoying their lives, in spite of the fact that they were old, too. Today, we can speak about the third and fourth age; we live longer and have more options when we are old. But if you are ill, I think the big problem is that now society is used to the retirement homes. A few years back, at least in Latin America, families lived together with the old people, now everybody decides to send the older people to retirement homes. I think it is not a good solution for all cases.

What is Josebe (the main character) like now?

Maite: Six months after the original shooting, I went by myself to film some new takes, and it was impossible – Josebe was a new person.

What is the message that you want to get across with this documentary?

Maite: We want to explore how the past determines us, even when we are unable to remember what happened yesterday. Alzheimer's erases the present, but often our lives' milestones remain alive in our minds. This is an exploration of how the past coexists with the present, creating a new reality from daily observations, a different, lucid portrait of mental illness, with humour and joy.

What is the biggest cliché about women directors?

Maite: That women directors speak about women's topics.

Would you have any special advice to give to female directors?

Maite: When a man asks, who do you leave your family with when you are working (shooting, or traveling for work), ask him the same question. Nobody asks men this questions. Why can't we have a normal life and work in the cinema business at the same time?

How do you get your film(s) funded? (Is it a studio film, a crowdsourced film, something in between?) Share some insights into how you got the film made.

Maite: The first stage of the film (research, development and shooting) was financed by CPH:DOX. All editing and post-production was financed by the Chilean national film fund and the Lithuanian Film Centre.

Which is your favourite woman-directed film and why?

Maite: The Argentinian director Lucrecia Martel, because she was my inspiration when I was a student. For me, she is the only director that works with fiction and it really seems as if it were reality. I usually feel the fake in fiction, but with her I totally believe in her world.

Giedrė: Sophia Coppola's "Lost in Translation". Because of its intelligence, subtlety and director's trust in the audience. She is a brave director, and, what is most important, she explains by mood, gaze, atmosphere, touches, rather than words. From the avalanche of the current film industry, this movie is distinguished by its non-banal and ambiguous story until the very end, as we never hear what Bob whispers to Charlotte in the end. Indeed, it declines to polish all the details. This film I could watch again and again from whichever part of it. Sometimes, I deliberately start watching it from the middle. But, every time, watching it I feel catharsis, and this word I use very rarely, to be honest.

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