



FOUND MEMORIES

A film by Júlia Murat

"A confident and impressive first fiction feature! Offers a sweetly seductive form of intoxication."

–Neil Young, *The Hollywood Reporter*



**Argentina, Brazil, France / 2011 / Drama / Portuguese w. Eng. Subtitles
98 min / 35mm / Cinemascope / 2011**

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SYNOPSIS

Like every morning, Madalena makes bread for Antonio's old coffee shop. Like every day, she crosses the railways where no trains have passed for years; she cleans up the gate of the locked cemetery, and listens to the priest's sermon before sharing lunch with the other few old villagers left in town. Clinging to the image of her dead husband and living in her memories, Madalena is awakened by the arrival of Rita, a young photographer who is arriving in the ghost village of Jotuomba, where time seems to have stopped. A deep relationship is forged between the two women, which gradually builds to have a profound effect on both of their lives, as well as the rest of the villagers.

FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

Special Mention- San Sebastian Film Int'l Film Festival

Church of Iceland Award- Reykjavik Int'l Film Festival

FIPRESCI Prize- Ljubljana Int'l Film Festival

Best Film in the New Horizon Section- Abu Dhabi Int'l Film Festival

Official Selection

Toronto Int'l Film Festival
Reykjavik Int'l Film festival
Rio Int'l Film Festival

BIOGRAPHIES and FILMOGRAPHIES

JULIA MURAT - Director

Julia Murat was born in Rio de Janeiro in November 1979. She graduated from the de Janeiro University in graphic design and at the Darcy Ribeiro film school as a screenwriter. Julia Murat has made short films, experimental videos, commercials and video-installations. Her feature length documentary "Dia dos Pais" premiered at Cinéma du Reel in 2008. She also has extensive experience working as an editor, assistant director, and camera assistant. FOUND MEMORIES is her first feature length fiction film.

FILMOGRAPHY

2011 – FOUND MEMORIES (Historias Que So Existem Quando Lembradas)
2008 - DIA DOS PAIS (Documentary)
2009 - PENDULAR (Short)
2003 - DESVELAR (Video installation)

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM

The original idea of the film did come from an image, but not a photo. In 1999 I was shooting, as an assistant director, my mother's film "Brave New Land", when I came across a cemetery that had been closed out, in the small village of Forte Coimbra (Mato Grosso do Sul, in Brazil). Its inhabitants, when they died, had to be buried in another city, 7 hours boat-ride away. This image fascinated me, and since then I wanted to write a story about an old woman who wanted to die, but could not since her village's cemetery had been closed down. I located the story in "Vale do Paraíba", a region close to Rio de Janeiro that had been extremely impoverished by the coffee crisis of the turn of the century, as well as the end of the passenger train line that passed through there. I had just finished the Design University, where I would spend days at the developing lab studying all the possibilities of photo or at the Study Group "Foto-poética" investigating the use of static photos in cinema, when I finally started to develop the script. At that time I realized that I needed a character that would be foreign to that region so as to set the story in motion, someone researching the decadence of the villages. Therefore it was quite natural for me to turn her into a photographer so as to assess in the practical sense my theoretic research. I created Rita, a young photographer, who allowed me to develop the story of Madalena, and also added to the film discussions about tradition and the conflict

of different generations. This decision placed photography on a key position, influencing the aesthetics of the film.

THE LIGHTNING

We worked in extreme conditions: exterior day sequences or night sequences that should look lit by a gas lamp. The total lack of artificial light in the scenes was a defining factor on the final aesthetics of the film. One or two vibrant yet weak light spots coming from the open flame. A light that was very contrasted with almost no details in the dark areas. Lucio Bonelli, the film cinematographer who has worked on Lisandro Alonso's films, said that "we started the research for the film with Rembrandt and by the time we were in the post-production we ended up with Caravaggio." The film, as it went along, became more and more contrasted and certainly darker than it was originally conceived.

THE SCRIPT

The script for FOUND MEMORIES was created in two different directions. One of them, the already traditional Latin-American style of magic-realism--as it is the case with Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Juan Rulfo...--, puts us in front of impossible events so as to tell us facts of our daily routines. For this we used a basic structure of language: "What If". What if in a desolate village, no one could die because the cemetery was closed down? What if a woman lived in a dual time, where past and present mingled in front of her eyes? What if someone wanted to die, even though all the inhabitants of the village are needed for the survival of each other? The other direction is a documentary research accomplished in "Vale do Paraíba": during two months I travelled through the region interviewing and accompanying the day-to-day life of villages that in the 19th century were part of the richest region in Brazil, and now are seen in utter decadence. I ended up with 100 hours of source material, as well as 100 pages of transcript dialogues that, after a lot of cleaning, were used to give life to the lines of the old people of Jotuomba. The script of FOUND MEMORIES mixes therefore documentary and magic-realism; its structure is based on films such as "Still Life" by Jia Zhang Ke and "After Life" by Kore-eda.

ACTORS AND CHARACTERS

We had four different methods of acting mingling in the film. Sônia Guedes and Luiz Serra (Madalena and Antônio) are award-winning actors from São Paulo's theater scene, having studied at the EAD (Dramatic Arts School) in the fifties and sixties: a classical style of interpretation. During the rehearsals Sônia would always tell stories about her classes in EAD when her interpretation teacher would demand that each syllable of each word be understood by the person sitting on the last chair of the theater. During the process Sônia and Serra had a lot of doubts on the type of acting we were searching for the film, most of the time they felt as if they were not acting at all, and were surprised when we told them that this was exactly what we were looking for. Lisa Fávero (Rita) is an actress from the contemporary theater from Rio de Janeiro and is therefore used

to a more “distanced” way of acting, the conscious search of the actors for the scene, the research of different improvisational methods. In the rehearsals with Lisa and Sônia, the first wanted to improvise, while the second wanted to work on the lines. Ricardo Merkin (Priest) is an actor of the new Argentinean cinema, who had to deal with a different language and a different culture. The so-called “non-actors” also are not a homogeneous group, but people that live in that region, each one with her or his own life experience, her or his own story, a particular style of acting. Some of them had experienced similarities to film acting: they were musicians, repentistas (Brazilian traditional improvisational singers), prayer ladies... Others were country people, train workers who never imagined to take part in a fictional version of their own habits.

CREDITS

CREW

Director	JULIA MURAT
Producers	FABIENNE VONIER
Co-Production Company	TAIGA FILMES (LUCIA MURAT, JULIA MURAT) BONFILM (CHRISTIAN BOUDIER) JULIA SOLOMONOFF, CEPA AUDIOVISUAL (FELICITAS RAFFO) MPM FILM (JULIETTE LEPOUTRE, MARIE-PIERRE MACIA)
Script	JULIA MURAT, MARIA CLARA ESCOBAR, FELIPE SHOLL
Music	LUCAS MARCIER
Editor	MARINA MELIANDE
Director of Photography	LUCIO BONELLI
Designer	MARINA KOSOVSKI

CAST

MADALENA	SONIA GUEDES
RITA	LISA E. FÁVERO
ANTONIO	LUIZ SERRA
PADRE	JOSIAS RICARDO MERKIN
CARLOS	ANTÔNIO DOS SANTOS