



## **NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT**

**An Icarus Films release**

**Directed by Patricio Guzmán**

Prix Chalais Winner, 2010 Cannes Film Festival  
 Best Documentary Grand Prix, 2010 European Film Awards  
 Centerpiece, 2011 Documentary Fortnight, The Museum of Modern Art  
 Top 10 Best Movies of 2010, Sight & Sound  
 Critic's Pick, The New York Times

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 Username: icarus Password: press (718) 488-8900 [www.icarusfilms.com](http://www.icarusfilms.com)

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Master director Patricio Guzmán travels 10,000 feet above sea level to the driest desert on earth for this remarkable documentary. Here, the sky is so translucent that it allows astronomers to see the boundaries of our universe. Yet the Atacama Desert climate also keeps human remains intact: pre-Columbian mummies; explorers and miners; and the remains of disappeared political prisoners. Women sift the desert soil for the bones of their loved ones, while archaeologists uncover traces of ancient civilizations and astronomers examine the most distant and oldest galaxies. Melding celestial and earthly quests, *NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT* is a gorgeous, moving, and deeply personal odyssey.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

For his new film, master director Patricio Guzmán, famed for his political documentaries capturing the history and politics of Chile (*The Battle of Chile*, *Salvador Allende*, *The Pinochet Case*), travels 10,000 feet above sea level to the driest place on earth. Atop the mountains of the Atacama Desert, astronomers from all over the world gather to observe the stars. The sky is so translucent that it allows them to see right to the boundaries of the universe.

The Atacama Desert is also a place where the harsh heat of the sun keeps human remains intact: those of Pre-Columbian mummies; 19th century explorers and miners; and the remains of political prisoners, "disappeared" by the Chilean army after the military coup of September 11, 1973.

So while astronomers examine the most distant and oldest galaxies, at the foot of the mountains, women, surviving relatives of the disappeared whose bodies were dumped here, search, even after twenty-five years, for the remains of their loved ones, to reclaim their families' histories.

Melding the celestial quest of the astronomers and the earthly one of the Chilean women, *Nostalgia for the Light* is a gorgeous, moving, and deeply personal odyssey.

## SELECTED FILM FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

2011 The Museum of Modern Art,  
**Documentary Fortnight, Centerpiece**  
**2011 Winner Fund for Social Justice**  
**Award and Winner Neuvo Vision Award,**  
**Santa Barbara Film Festival**  
2011 Tromso International Film Festival  
2011 Glasgow International Film Festival  
2011 Dublin International Film Festival  
2011 Vancouver International Film Festival  
2011 Ljubljana Documentary Film Festival  
2011 Planet Doc in Poland  
2011 Victoria Film Festival  
2011 Available Light Film Festival  
2011 Boulder International Film Festival  
2011 Visions/Voices Film Festival  
2011 Miami International Film Festival  
2011 San Diego Latino Film Festival  
2011 Wexner Center for the Arts  
2011 National Gallery of Art  
2011 Harvard Film Archive, Patricio  
Guzmán Retrospective  
2011 Wakefield International Film Festival  
2011 BAMcinémathèque, Patricio Guzmán  
Retrospective  
2011 Northwest Film Forum, Patricio  
Guzmán Retrospective  
2011 San Francisco Int'l Film Festival  
2011 Pacific Film Archive, Patricio  
Guzmán Retrospective  
2011 Gene Siskel Film Center, Patricio  
Guzmán Retrospective  
2011 Cleveland Museum of Art, Patricio  
Guzmán Retrospective  
2011 UCLA Film and Television Archive,  
Patricio Guzmán Retrospective  
2011 Pamplona International Film Festival  
2011 Guadalajara Film Festival  
2011 Istanbul Film Festival  
2011 BAFICI, Buenos Aires  
2011 Documenta International Film  
Festival in Madrid  
2011 Environmental Film Festival in Quito  
2011 La Paz, Bolivia, Cinemateca,  
Patricio Guzmán Retrospective

2010 European Film Awards  
**Winner Best Documentary**  
2010 Age d'Or/CinéDécouvertes  
**Winner Audience Award and Winner**  
**CinéArt Distribution Award**  
2010 Munich International Film Festival  
2010 Moscow International Film Festival  
2010 Jerusalem International Film Festival  
2010 Era New Horizons Film Festival  
2010 Wellington & Auckland  
International Film Festival  
2010 Melbourne International Film  
Festival  
2010 Toronto International Film Festival  
**Winner Second Audience Award,**  
**Best Documentary**  
2010 San Sebastian Film Festival  
2010 Film from South Film Festival  
2010 Oslo International Film Festival  
2010 DocLisboa Film Festival  
2010 Jihava International Documentary  
Film Festival  
2010 Leipzig International Film Festival  
2010 Festival Nouveau Cinema  
2010 Dei Popoli International Film Festival  
2010 Abu Dhabi Film Festival  
**Winner Best Documentary**  
2010 Doc/Fest Sheffield International Film  
Festival  
**Winner Special Jury Mention**  
2010 Festival Biarritz Amérique Latine  
**Prix du Public du meilleur film**  
**documentaire**  
2010 Lens Política  
2010 Ronda International Film Festival  
**Winner Special Jury Mention**  
2010 E-DOX Fiesta  
2010 Bratislava International Film Festival  
2010 International Human Rights Film  
Festival, Vienna  
2010 Festival de Cannes, Official  
Selection: World Premiere  
**Winner of the François Chalais Prize,**  
**2010 Cannes Film Festival**

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

### THE ATACAMA DESERT

The desert is a vast, timeless space that is made up of salt and wind. A fragment of planet Mars on planet Earth. Everything there is motionless. And yet this stretch of land is filled with mysterious traces of the past. There are still ruins of villages, two thousand years old. The trains abandoned in the sand by the 19th century miners have not moved. There are also some gigantic domes that look like fallen space vessels in which the astronomers live. All around there are human remains. When night falls, the Milky Way is so bright that it projects shadows onto the ground.

### THE INVISIBLE PRESENT

For an astronomer, the only real time is that which comes from the past. The light of the stars takes hundreds of thousands of years to reach us. That is why astronomers are always looking back, to the past. It's the same for historians, archaeologists, geologists, paleontologists and the women who search for their disappeared. They all have something in common: they observe the past in order to be able to better understand the present and future. In the face of the uncertain future, only the past can enlighten us.

### INVISIBLE MEMORY

Memory guarantees us life, as does the warmth of sunlight. Human beings would be nothing without memory –objects with no pulse- with no beginning and no future. After 18 years of dictatorship, Chile is once again experiencing democracy. But at what price... Many have lost their friends, relatives, houses, schools and universities. And others have lost their memory, perhaps forever.

## FEATURED FILM CHARACTERS

Victoria and Violeta, the women searching for their loved ones

Pinochet's dictatorship killed their relatives and buried their corpses beneath the desert sand. Since then, only occasionally have human bones have been recovered. Victoria and Violeta have now been the desert earth for 28 years with their shovels: they are determined to continue until they draw their last breaths.

Lautaro, the experienced archaeologist

He knows the desert like the back of his hand. He has found mummies that are a thousand years old, sleeping deep in the earth. Deeply affected by the tragedy of the disappeared, he passes on his knowledge of the earth to the women who look for their loved ones, and taught them to detect clues as to whether, beneath the surface, bones might lie.

Gaspar, the young astronomer

He was born after the Chilean coup. He studied astronomy in college, during the Pinochet's reign. His grandfather taught him to observe the stars. As he studies the galaxies, he also studies his country's recent past. He is a great lover of stars and humankind.

Luís, the amateur astronomer

He learned to converse with the stars in a concentration camp. He is a talented, humble man capable of constructing astronomical instruments with his bare hands. He works silently against forgetting.

Miguel, the architect of memory

He survived five concentration camps. He preserved in his memory the layouts of all the prisons in which he was held prisoner. Upon reaching freedom, he he drew, with astounding precision, the layout of each camp, thus bearing documenting his experiences.

Valentina, the daughter of the stars

The daughter of disappeared parents, she was brought up by her grandparents who taught her to observe the sky. Astronomy has given her some answers that enable her to face up to her parents' disappearance as she plans her life, family, and future.

## **AN INTERVIEW WITH PATRICIO GUZMÁN** BY FREDERICK WISEMAN

March 22, 2010 : Patricio Guzmán interviewed in Paris by his friend and colleague Frederick Wiseman on his career, the nature of documentary filmmaking, and *Nostalgia for the Light*.

FREDERICK WISEMAN: What interests me most is the metaphor and relationship between the astronomers and the women in your film.

PATRICIO GUZMÁN: The essence of the film lies in a series of metaphors and contrasts that existed in the desert long before my arrival. The metaphors were already there ; I merely filmed them. I love this part of Chile ; I was there during Allende's era, and maintained a very vivid memory of the region and and its unusual contrasts.

There are the recent mines as well as 19th-century mines that have long been abandoned, yet whose machinery is still there. In Allende's time, the miners continued using these steam engines that dated from 1924. But what astonished me most were the mummies: Suddenly you would stumble across a fragment of human industry that transported you back to the last century. Just as suddenly you might come across

antique mummies taking you back to the time of Christopher Columbus. The old machines are reminiscent of the era of the industrial revolution; the mummies to a time much further into the past ; and the telescopes further away still, millions of light years away!

WISEMAN: I don't agree: you're the one who recognized the metaphor. It would not have existed if you hadn't translated it into language.

GUZMÁN: Perhaps. But it's the women who inspired me to act on it. When I read in a newspaper that they were digging through the earth with their hands at the foot of the telescopes, I finally resolved to make this film, using simple, direct cinematic techniques and film language.

WISEMAN: And yet you didn't use the most straightforward method, which would have been to make a purely observational film.

GUZMÁN: The truth is that I didn't want to simply document the desert. I wanted to find new elements to speak once again of the past. This is how I came to concentrate on the astronomical observatories. I have been obsessed with astronomy since adolescence. It was my passion back then. Alas, I've always been bad at math, so I never dared take it up seriously. But in the 50's and 60's I devoured all the literature I could find on astronomy. An Argentine journal, *Más Allá*, published a series of classic books about it. One of the most exciting moments of adolescence for me was a visit to the observatory in Santiago. I told the chief astronomer over the telephone that my class wanted to meet him. When I arrived with only two of my classmates, he asked, "What happened to the others?" I lied to him, telling him that we had an exam the following day! That night remains an unforgettable experience. We observed the moon and a dazzling constellation called The Chest of Diamonds. We used the rare telescope shown at the start of the film: the German 'Hayde,' from 1910.

WISEMAN: You also incorporate archaeology into *Nostalgia for the Light*.

GUZMÁN: My first girlfriend was an archaeologist. She was studying at a Natural History Museum, home to the whale skeleton that we also see in the film. She taught me how to classify the fossils and stones collected in the desert. She even went on some digs in the region where we shot the film. What most fascinated me however, was her story about discovering a mummy while working alongside Gustave Le Paige, an elderly Belgian priest and one of the most prominent figures in the fields of ethnology and archaeology in Chile at that time.

These memories are very much alive for me, which may be why the filming felt so simple and natural to me. I was going back to the realms of my youth. The metaphors you spoke of earlier became obvious to me the moment I began filming. And yet, they didn't appear in the script... perhaps that's why we had trouble obtaining financial support !

WISEMAN: I can believe that!

GUZMÁN: For four years, I struggled to make this project happen. There were times when I felt discouraged, but the subject was so powerful that I had to follow it through to the

end. I had a tangle of leads that went in many directions and which echoed questions that were gnawing at me. The film has many different angles: metaphysical, mystical or spiritual, astronomical, ethnographic, and political. How to explain that human bones are the same as certain asteroids? How to explain that the calcium that makes up our skeleton is the same calcium found in stars? How to explain that new stars are formed from our own atoms when we die ? How to explain that Chile is the world's leading astronomical hub, even as 60% of the assassinations committed by the dictatorship remain unsolved? How is it possible that Chilean astronomers observe stars that are millions of light-years away, while children can't even read in their schoolbooks about the events that took place in barely 30 years ago? How to explain why a vast number of bodies buried by the military were unearthed and then thrown into the sea? How to show that the labor of a woman who rummages through the earth with her bare hands resembles that of an astronomer?

WISEMAN: I like the things you've just spoken of because they don't in any way explain the film.

GUZMÁN: I don't want to explain but to question. In fact, I am always questioning. I wanted to open doors with this film, the way that scientists do when they question the origins of life. What's more, I am convinced that science can provide an incredible thematic field for documentary films. But I have the feeling that today, certain ideas, analogies, and concepts are called to question by the documentary film industry. We are discouraged from creating unusual, atypical, innovative work. We labor at the heart of an industry that is increasingly less tolerant, and which pushes us to create stereotypes. It's like we're in a black hole.

WISEMAN: Another metaphor. Chilean society also seems to be sinking into a state of near total darkness, because Chile portrays the image of its wealth, while we know nothing of the problems of ordinary people.

GUZMÁN: Eight years ago, two Chilean observatories proved definitively that there was, at the heart of our galaxy, a black hole. A black hole that travels across the Chilean sky each night.

One of the archaeologists that I met on the shoot wanted to build a cabin in the middle of the desert in order to be closer to his digs. The workers began to excavate, but in the first week they found something strange sticking out of the earth. A mummy was revealed, with jewellery and an axe lying in the middle of its chest. The archaeologist approached the mummy and said to it: "We must come to an agreement. I think that from now on your true home will be in the museum. We are going to take you to in order to study your family, your people and your culture. Then this place will be available for my cabin." Apparently, after one week, the mummy accepted. At the museum it became the principal item of study of a culture until then unknown. As for the archaeologist, he continues his dialogue with the mummy as sometimes, when he is in his cabin, the door opens or closes when there isn't the slightest breeze.

WISEMAN: What an extraordinary story!

GUZMÁN: The desert is full of them.

CRITICAL PRAISE FOR 'NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT'

# The New York Times

## Chile's Past Is Present in the Desert

By STEPHEN HOLDEN

March 17, 2011

Movie Review | 'Nostalgia for the Light'

The Atacama Desert in northern Chile — the setting of Patricio Guzmán's transfixing cinematic essay "Nostalgia for the Light" — is a place where heaven and earth converge. Or some might say heaven and hell.

Situated on the leeward side of the Chilean Coast Range, more than 10,000 feet above sea level, it is one of the highest deserts and driest places on Earth. Viewed from space, it is a brown spot on the planet. No rainfall has ever been recorded in its driest parts, and without moisture, everything is preserved. Pre-Columbian drawings were inscribed in rock some 2,000 years ago.

The thin atmosphere and low humidity have made the desert a magnet for astronomers. Here their telescopes can gaze farther into the universe than from anywhere else in the world. The opening image is the interior of a radio telescope pointed to the stars, which are so bright and clear they seem to flare like miniature high-wattage light bulbs.

Because much of that incandescence emanates from thousands of light years away, the film emphasizes, astronomy is really a study of the past — eons of it — the better to discover who we are, where we came from and where we might be headed.

But the Atacama was also the site of a concentration camp created in the 1970s by the dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet from the workers' barracks in the abandoned 19th-century salt-mining town Chacabuco. Thousands of political prisoners, many of whom later "disappeared," were kept there. Today their surviving relatives, carrying shovels, go to dig for their remains, most of which were very likely dumped into the ocean.

For Mr. Guzmán, who is best known for his monumental documentary trilogy in the 1970s, "The Battle of Chile," and for his sorrowful 2004 screen biography, "Salvador Allende," the parallel searches for cosmic origins and for the disappeared people are interlocking metaphors for the human search for meaning and continuity. Astronomy and archaeology, he believes, are variations of the same quest, with one directed toward the sky and the other into the earth.

Mr. Guzmán's quietly reflective narration (in subtitled Spanish) is a poetic meditation on time and distance. But it is also pointedly political in its focus on remembrance. On a

personal level, "Nostalgia for the Light" is his "À la Recherche du Temps Perdu" in its expression of his longing for a time when Chile was "a haven of peace, isolated from the world," a place where "only the moment existed."

Defining the moment, however, is tricky. We meet Gaspar Galaz, a young astronomer who theorizes that the present doesn't exist because of the time it takes for light to reach a viewer. The only example of cinematic overreaching is its juxtaposition of what looks like digital stardust — or is it a purposeful double exposure of the heavens and the earth? — on earthbound images.

We meet two women in their 70s, Victoria and Violeta, who have spent the better part of three decades combing the landscape for the remains of their loved ones. Victoria found a foot with her husband's shoe on it, and she takes comfort from the discovery. We also meet Miguel, a survivor of five concentration camps, who from memory drew precise layouts of each prison after his release.

The film's passionate insistence on remembrance lends it a moral as well as a metaphysical weight. Mr. Guzmán's belief in eternal memory is an astounding leap of faith.

#### **NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT**

*Opens on Friday in Manhattan.*

Written, directed and narrated by Patricio Guzmán; director of photography, Katell Djian; edited by Mr. Guzmán and Emmanuelle Joly; music by Miranda & Tobar; produced by Renate Sachse; released by Icarus Films. At the IFC Center, 323 Avenue of the Americas, at Third Street, Greenwich Village. In Spanish, with English subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. This film is not rated.

# The New York Times

## **SLIDESHOW : A DOCUMENTARY'S STARS 'NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT'**

MARCH 18, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2011/03/18/movies/nostalgia-for-the-light.html>

# The New York Times

## **SURVEYOR OF A DESERT WHERE THE PAST AND PRESENT COEXIST**

BY LARRY ROHTER  
MARCH 16, 2011

The Atacama Desert of northern Chile is the driest place in the world and surely one of the most desolate. But it has always proved fertile ground for the Chilean documentary filmmaker Patricio Guzmán, who first filmed there 40 years ago and has now returned to make "Nostalgia for the Light," a meditation on astronomy, archeology, geology and human rights.

"The Atacama is where many elements of our past are concentrated and conserved," Mr. Guzman, 69, said in an interview last month in Manhattan. "Not just the past of Chile, but of the Earth and even the galaxy. I'd been wanting for the longest time to make a film that brought all of this together, but the hardest part was that those four worlds are parallel lines."

What finally enabled Mr. Guzmán to make "Nostalgia for the Light," which opens on Friday at the IFC Center in Greenwich Village, was his realization that the subjects he wanted to address did have a point in common: the preservation of memory. The women who comb the desert looking for the remains of loved ones who disappeared under the dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet share that trait with the archaeologists and geologists who work in the shadow of the astronomical observatories that dot the Atacama, drawn by its clear skies.

Remembrance has, of course, also been the main theme of Mr. Guzmán's own body of work, which has been primarily political. But his best-known film, the three-part, four-and-a-half-hour "Battle of Chile," has come to be regarded as something more than just the record of a particular historical moment.

"The way in which Guzmán understands that historical consciousness is elusive and impossible to fix is one of the most vital contributions he has made, and it all begins with 'Battle of Chile,' " said Haden Guest, director of the Harvard Film Archive, which last month organized "History, Memory, Cinema," a retrospective of Mr. Guzmán's work. "Like Claude Lanzmann he is interested not just in the past but the past in the present, how the past continues to live and shapes the present moment in ways we may not be aware of."

Beginning April 1 BAMcinémathèque, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, will also sponsor a retrospective of Mr. Guzmán's work, called "Obstinate Memories: The Documentaries of Patricio Guzman." That weeklong event will include two showings of "Nostalgia for the Light" as well as "Battle of Chile," which Florence Almozini, BAMcinémathèque's program director and chief curator, calls "a masterpiece of documentary film, perfect in a way."

The program will also feature Mr. Guzmán's later films about Salvador Allende and General Pinochet.

"I find his films to be not just informative but extremely hypnotic and mesmerizing, so a retrospective is long overdue," Ms. Almozini said. "He definitely has a strong point of view politically. But he also has an artistic vision and an aesthetic, so you get both beauty and relevance."

In some respects "Nostalgia for the Light" represents a return to Mr. Guzmán's origins. As Mr. Guest noted, "his first steps as an artist were as a writer of science fiction, which gives him a certain visionary quality and an acute understanding of paradox." In the interview Mr. Guzmán himself recalled a childhood in Santiago in which he read Jules Verne and monitored the night sky, memorizing the Southern Hemisphere constellations.

Today, at his home in Paris, he also has a small telescope and a collection of books about astronomy. It was one of those books, a dense text by the French astrophysicist Michel Cassé that Mr. Guzmán described as "full of theorizing, with many equations," that provided the film's evocative title.

"I think that in this film I felt more free," Mr. Guzmán said. "In treating the desert and the cosmos, I found more possibilities for metaphors and for metaphysical, philosophical reflection. I was faced with a horizon that allowed me to develop a kind of poetry that I've always had in me but have never had a chance to show."

At one juncture in "Nostalgia for the Light," for instance, Mr. Guzmán's camera moves between NASA photographs of asteroids in space and shots of bone fragments of victims of Pinochet who remain unidentified. Up close the two are indistinguishable, underlying his notion of the cosmos as a unified whole comprising "the same material."

Mr. Guzmán began making films relatively late: after studying history and philosophy in Chile he graduated from film school in Madrid in 1970, at 29. His return to Chile shortly thereafter coincided with the start of the Allende government's socialist experiment, which immediately became his focus, and remains so.

"We first met during the Allende period, when I would come across him lugging a camera and a very small crew," recalled the Chilean novelist and playwright Ariel Dorfman, who now teaches at Duke University. "He was always popping up wherever there was trouble. He went to the places which were most dangerous, but also to those not on the radar, where you wouldn't expect anyone to show up. He was always willing to take risks in that direction."

The area where Mr. Guzmán shot "Nostalgia for the Light" is barely 50 miles from the site of the mine accident and subsequent rescue of 33 miners that captivated the world's attention last year. He filmed there extensively during the Allende era and incorporated footage of abandoned mining camps into "Nostalgia for the Light," so he was not amused by what he viewed as the grandstanding of President Sebastián Piñera, which he said distracted attention from the real issues.

"Work conditions haven't improved; there's still no protection," he said. "The rescue became a media show, but the real story will only come out in five years or so. Will the miners have been paid an indemnity? Will their quality of life have improved? Will there be a stronger law so that mines cannot be opened without an escape tunnel? Will they have medical care and social security, or will they still be living in poverty?"

Mr. Guzmán's own relationship with his homeland, which he left after being imprisoned during the 1973 American-supported coup that overthrew Allende, remains complicated and ambiguous. As he notes, he has now "lived more time outside Chile than in it." But he also remains profoundly connected by remembrances that he cannot — and does not want to — discard.

"I believe that each of us carries a mental knapsack, in which we store the memory of our parents, our first communion, the first day at school, graduation day, perhaps the death of those parents, the first girlfriend," he said. "That never leaves. It's stuck to us. So it really doesn't matter where you are."

"Nostalgia for the Light" opens on Friday at the IFC Center, 323 Avenue of the Americas, at Third Street, Greenwich Village, (212) 924-7771. "Obstinate Memory," a retrospective of Patricio Guzmán's work, will open on April 1 at BAMcinémathèque, 30 Lafayette Avenue, at Ashland Place, Fort Greene, Brooklyn, (718) 636-4100.

**Correction: March 18, 2011**

Schedule information on Thursday with an article about Patricio Guzmán's film "Nostalgia for the Light," which opens today at the IFC Center in Greenwich Village, misstated the center's phone number. It is (212) 924-7771.

**Correction: March 22, 2011**

An article on Thursday about Patricio Guzmán's film "Nostalgia for the Light" misstated part of the title of a retrospective of Mr. Guzmán's work sponsored by BAMcinémathèque and planned for April at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. It is "Obstinate Memories: The Documentaries of Patricio Guzmán" — not "Obstinate Memory."

# Le Monde

## A MASTERPIECE OF COSMIC SERENITY PATRICIO GUZMÁN BENDS THE DOCUMENTARY GENRE, BRINGING IT TO POETIC HEIGHTS WITH 'NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT'

October 27, 2010

□□□ Excellent

Patricio Guzmán is one of the most important cinematographic chroniclers of contemporary Chilean history. We know at what price this work was made possible. Imprisoned by the Pinochet regime during the 1973 coup d'état, when ultimately released, he chose exile in Paris, like his compatriot Raoul Ruiz (both were born in 1941,) the master of baroque fiction. Yet as far as Guzmán's concerned, he has not stopped returning to his country through political documentary, from *The Battle of Chile* (1979) to *Salvador Allende* (2004).

At 69 years old, he has now made *Nostalgia for the Light*, a totally unexpected film, which bends the genre in order to better bring it to poetic heights. This film is not only Guzmán's masterpiece; it is one of the most beautiful cinematographic efforts we have seen for a long time. Its complex canvas is woven with the greatest simplicity. There are three interweaving levels: considerations on astronomical research, an archeology of Indian foundations and a memoir of the dictatorship.

One place groups together these three palpable levels: the Atacama Desert. *Nostalgia for the Light* transforms this place, reputed to be the most arid and the least conducive to life on our planet, into unbelievably fertile ground. Because there we find at once the greatest astronomical observatory in the world, the remarkably preserved vestiges of native civilizations and the corpses of political prisoners who were assassinated during the dictatorship in the surrounding camps, before being scattered in the sand. Each of these realities prompts a task of particular exploration. The astronomer searches the sky, the archeologist scours the earth, the wives of the disappeared relentlessly dig through the bowels of the ground for twenty-eight years.

The genius of the film, which is inspired by the genius of the place, consists of relating these searches, like the characters that embody them, to one another. Gaspar the astronomer, Lautaro the archeologist, and widows Victoria and Violeta share the same obsession with origins, whether it's the Universe, or civilization, or evil and death. Whether they are gazing at the stars or have their hands in the sand, they experience the same uncertainty, the same feeling of relativity and precariousness, the same persistence in searching for light in the profound darkness that surrounds humanity. This makes them invaluable and deeply moving characters to us.

*Nostalgia for the Light* nevertheless owes its success to formal work which engages more than its characters: an unusual science of montage, a magic of association between things and beings, an art of bringing to light unsuspected connections. Mummies and telescopes, marbles and galaxies, blue skies and darkness, traces of the past and projections of the future, infinite pain and sidereal peace enter here into a dance of the poetic spirit that celebrates them, somewhere between *2001: A Space Odyssey*, by Stanley Kubrick, and *Dream of Light* by Victor Erice.

The film also reveals the objective links that exist between these disparate realities, through other characters. This is the case for Luis, a former prisoner who owes his survival to the passion for astronomy that was instilled in him by the scientists in prison. It is also the case for Valentina, a young astronomer, who in observing the cycle of the Universe draws a sufficient reason for appreciating life after both of her parents were assassinated when she was just a child. We have here, in the trembling image of this young orphan standing with her child, the ultimate beauty of the film: to draw, from a bleak land and an inhuman history, the force to search again, and thus to hope again.

For forty years, Patricio Guzmán has had to struggle every inch of the way, with a vivid memory and intimate suffering to reach this work of cosmic serenity, of luminous intelligence, with a sensitivity that could melt stone. At such a level, the film becomes more than a film.

**An insane accolade to mankind, a stellar song for the dead, a life lesson. Silence and respect.**

# NEW YORK®

## NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT CRITICS' PICK

- **Rating:** No Rating
- **Director:** Patricio Guzmán
- **Running Time:** 90 minutes
- **Reader Rating:** 9 out of 10

Genre: Documentary, Drama  
Distributor: Icarus Films  
Release Date: Mar 18, 2011  
Release Notes: Limited

Patricio Guzmán's deeply affecting documentary explores connections among collective memory, politics, and the cosmos in his portrait of the driest place on Earth, Chile's Atacama Desert, and two groups who work there: astronomers taking advantage of the extremely translucent sky, and women searching for body parts of the friends and family members who were dumped there by Pinochet's regime.

# THE Nation.

February/March 2011

By Stuart Klawans

"Stunningly beautiful. I don't know how you can put more into a film, or make one that's more deeply moving."

From the great documentarian Patricio Guzman (*The Battle of Chile*) comes a stunningly beautiful easy film, *Nostalgia for the Light*, set at once in Chile's utterly barren Atacama desert, in troubled human memory and in the vastness of intergalactic space. As Guzman notes in voiceover, the Atacama has almost no humidity (it is the only brown spot on our planet, as seen from space), and so it's ideal for studying both the stars and prehistory. You see perfectly preserved petroglyphs of ancient Indian peoples ; and you see clusters of astronomical observatories—white-domed scientific mosques under a uniformly blue sky—which record gorgeous tracks of light from a million years ago. You also see corpses. The Atacama is where miners labored and died in the nineteenth century (the little forests of their grave markers are the only vegetation in sight), and where the Pinochet regime dumped many of its victims in the twentieth. There are women who still go into the desert, day after day, looking for fragments of bone of their loved ones. Now grown old in their work but determined to continue, the film's Victoria and Violeta are two more researchers into the past, just like the archaeologists and astronomers.

*Nostalgia for the Light* is dealing, then, with time at three different scales ; with a varied and compelling set of witnesses and explainers ; with the harsh mysteries of one of the most extraordinary places on Earth ; and above all with responsibility—to ourselves, our society, our species. I don't know how you can put more into a film, or make one that's more deeply moving.

# the village VOICE

## NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT: A STARK, RAVISHING PLEA FOR REMEMBRANCE

By Michael Atkinson  
Wednesday, Mar 16 2011

Chile's self-appointed, one-man Truth and Reconciliation Commission, [Patricio Guzmán](#) has devoted the past four decades to chronicling the short-lived Allende administration and the Pinochet dark ages that followed, long after his countrymen wanted him to stop. At first blush, though, his new documentary detours toward astronomy, landing rather Herzog-ishly in the Atacama Desert, the elevation and absolute dryness of which make it one of the globe's optimal observatory locations. Guzmán uses the stars' distance to ruminate on the nature of time—as in, everything, even light, even *this*, is in the past. He eventually winds his way around to how time has treated the ghost-town-turned-concentration-camp of Chacabuco, its ex-prisoners, the dumped bones of disappeared Pinochet victims, and the tough, striking old women who still scour the desert plateau on foot hunting for remains. Guzmán fugue-weaves all over the place, montage-cutting from the lunar surface to giant close-ups of calcified bone, and the film's philosophical musings slowly funnel down into a silent wowl of rage and a desperate plea for remembrance. (If Guzmán is to be believed, Chileans have an even stronger urge to forget than Americans do.) Often stark and ravishing, *Nostalgia for the Light* is most moving as a manifestation of the filmmaker's stubborn righteousness.



### NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT: FOUR STARS

*Dir. Patricio Guzmán. 2010. N/R. 90mins. In Spanish, with subtitles. Documentary.*

As Patricio Guzmán's eloquent documentary attests, Chile's Atacama Desert is a place of both inspiring wonders and unspeakable horrors. At 10,000 feet above sea level, it's the perfect vantage point for astronomers to explore the marvels of the universe. But look

away from the skies, and a harsh reality becomes apparent. Only a short distance from the gleaming white observatories are chilling reminders of Chile's troubled past: remnants of a 19th-century slave mining camp, bone fragments from victims of Augusto Pinochet's murderous regime and groups of people still working to excavate the remains.

*Nostalgia for the Light* weaves these two seemingly disparate subjects into a moving meditation on history, knowledge and mortality. Stunning images of the arid landscapes and the star-filled heavens are married to illuminating interviews with astrophysicists and survivors from the Pinochet years. One scientist speaks of how astronomers only ever deal with the past, since starlight often takes thousands of years to reach Earth. Guzmán parallels this perspective via scenes of elderly women who have combed the desert for nearly three decades, looking for mass graves. All of these subjects are confronting the past in their own way, seeking answers and resolution where there may be none. Their brave ability to continue searching—to attempt to uncover both the sins and the origins of mankind—is immensely humbling. (Opens Fri; IFC.)—*Keith Uhlich*

# The Washington Post

By Mark Jenkins

Saturday, March 12, 2011; 7:09 PM

For 19 years, the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital has demonstrated the breadth of its worldview. Yet moviegoers who haven't been paying close attention may still think the fest is all cuddly cubs and ecological outrages.

In fact, this year's 150-film lineup, which begins Tuesday, encompasses dramas and comedies, studies of the built environment and at least a few documentaries with dispositions that are more sly than angry. These include three of the highlights: "Into Eternity," "Plastic Planet" and "Nostalgia for the Light."

...Set in Chile's remote Atacama Desert, "Nostalgia for the Light" begins by looking at the heavens. Because the region boasts near-pristine darkness, it's a center for observatories. But starlight isn't the region's only ancient attraction: Its dry, salty soil preserves the artifacts of prehistoric inhabitants. Much more recently, Pinochet's government built its largest concentration camp in the desert and buried many of its victims there. Kin of the "disappeared" still dig for remnants of their loved ones. Director Patricio Guzman skillfully knits these three strands, linking the effects of Pinochet's rule to the search for knowledge.

**The Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital runs March 15 through 27 at 60 area venues. Most screenings are free. For more information, visit [www.dcenvironmentalfilmfest.org](http://www.dcenvironmentalfilmfest.org) or call 202-342-2564.**



## **'NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT' A PAINFUL AND BEAUTIFUL MEDITATION**

JANUARY 13, 2011  
BY STEPHEN COLE

There is no escaping the past in the Atacama Desert in Chile, where rain in some areas comes every 400 years. There is no humidity. No insects or plant life. Human remains are mummified, frozen in time. And the air is so thin astronomers can reach back millions of years.

Here, our strongest telescopes turn wheeling galaxies into spectacular light shows that trivialize the fantasies of Lucas and Spielberg. Distant planets seem close as apples on a backyard tree.

Not far from the desert's gleaming white observatories, beautiful against blue sky, Chilean mothers till parched red soil with their arms and feet, looking for a reaching hand, a once useful leg – remains of a son or daughter who "disappeared" during Pinochet's regime.

Patricio Guzmán's documentary, *Nostalgia for the Light*, pays equal attention to the astronomers and searchers, regarding their quest as the same – a search for life.

The film is gorgeous, purposefully slow, almost a meditation. Guzmán tells us life in the Atacama Desert is an eternal book of memories. And he lingers on every page, capturing shots of constellations with the care of a master photographer. Imagine Ansel Adams, working in colour, let loose in the Milky Way.

At the same time, the filmmaker turns memories of desert victims into religious ceremony. An architect, one of 80,000 socialists imprisoned in the mid-1970s after General Augusto Pinochet led a coup d'état, tells how he paced the Chacabuco concentration camp, memorizing room sizes. Afterwards, alone in a cell, he translated the numbers into blueprints that might bear witness to the horror of Pinochet.

Another political prisoner remembers how he and friends would steal out at night, studying the sky with a makeshift telescope. How they felt drawn into heaven.

Just as astronomers' telescopes go beyond our galaxy, filmmaker Guzmán's gaze extends past the 20th century. Pinochet did not have to build Chacabuco. A hundred years earlier, workers were enslaved in desert camps and died mining salt that covered the soil like crusts of snow. The concentration camp where lawyers, doctors and writers were sent once housed Aymara and Mapuche Indians.

Although *Nostalgia for the Light*'s field of vision is deep, it's also curiously narrow. Guzmán specializes in Chile's recent history. His most famous efforts are *The Battle of Chile* and *Salvador Allende*. And he presumes the audience for his new film has seen those works. No effort is made to explain Pinochet's overthrow of Allende's democratically elected government.

Still, what he has done here is amazing to look at and important to consider. Guzmán's message is simple: Vision is a gift that must be honoured with study and practice. He leaves us contemplating the words of a Chilean mother who continues to search for lost children. "I just wish the telescope didn't just look at the sky, but could also see through the earth so that we could find them."



## GUZMÁN REBORN

SEPTEMBER 16, 2010

BY B. RUBY RICH

Patricio Guzmán, the lifelong chronicler of his beloved Chile and its fate at the hands of Pinochet, returned to Toronto for the first time in many years with a new feature, *Nostalgia for the Light*. I've kept it for the end because it was such a surprise, such a moving masterpiece. Who knew that Guzmán was a lifelong lover of astronomy? He journeys to the far reaches of Chile, the dry desert where the most stars can be seen, where the heavens feel closer than anywhere else: the Alacama desert, site of one of the world's most important observatories. As Guzmán begins to link astronomy to history, comparing and contrasting their functions, he slowly begins to expand his circles of inquiry. The dryness of the desert also mummifies bodies. History, horror, the universe, the earth beneath our feet, the galaxies above. Micro and macro. The universal, the particular. Obsession and magic. This is Guzmán's leap into a different sort of cinema: a philosophical treatise that is as stunning to the eye as it is disturbing to the brain.

Sitting in the Bell Lightbox, the screen aglow with the visions of the Atacama, I was enthralled. So was the audience around me. Ah, for such transcendent moments do film festivals exist.



**UNIVERSAL TRUTHS:  
PATRICIO GUZMÁN'S HYBRID DOC IS  
AMBITIOUS AND EXHILARATING,  
NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT MAKES US  
QUESTION HOW WE PERCEIVE TIME**

JANUARY 12, 2011  
BY NORMAN WILNER

It seems appropriate that TIFF Bell Lightbox is screening Patricio Guzmán's magnificent documentary on the heels of its 70mm revival of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and the limited run of Jean-Luc Godard's *Film Socialisme*.

*Nostalgia for the Light* sits squarely between the two. As a meditation on where we've been and where we're going, it's as evocative and ambiguous as Kubrick's masterwork, and as a cogent, coherently organized essay film, it puts Godard's facile polemic to shame.

In an observatory in Chile's remote Atacama desert, 10,000 feet above sea level, scientists use cutting-edge technology to gaze into the distant past of the universe, searching for light from the Big Bang. Not far away, a more terrestrial archaeology is being carried out by women whose husbands, brothers and sons were disappeared during the Pinochet regime. The region's elevation and lack of humidity create the perfect conditions for preservation, which means the desiccated remains of bodies dumped into mass graves are still out there to be found.

As Guzmán knits these two disparate groups together, he slowly widens the scope of his inquiry, examining the way humans perceive time. A scientist explains that the events of our present have already become our past by the time our senses register them; this is contrasted with the remarkable story of a political prisoner who memorized the dimensions of the entire concentration camp in which he was imprisoned. He could recreate the blueprints from memory upon his release.

Just about every choice in *Nostalgia for the Light* is as carefully considered as that juxtaposition. Guzmán is a remarkably gifted filmmaker; his three-part documentary *The Battle of Chile*, recently released on DVD in an excellent special edition, is one of the greatest journalistic accomplishments of the 1970s. His work has grown less urgent in the subsequent decades, but no less vital.

*Nostalgia for the Light* can make you swoon at a glorious high-definition image that seems to be a desert landscape, and turn that awe to horror as you understand what you're really seeing. It can make you feel the haunted sorrow of a 70-year-old woman who's been searching for her vanished husband for half her life. And it can make you wonder at the idea that the mysteries of outer space might be a convenient distraction for a nation terrified, even now, to cast its gaze inward.

An exhilarating, wonderful, invaluable piece of work.



## **AIN'T IT COOL NEWS : COOL NEWS NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT at SBIFF**

FEBRUARY 08, 2011  
BY COPERNICUS

As a professional astronomer, and occasional subject in astronomical documentaries, I'm always interested when I see an astronomy-themed feature or documentary at a film festival. I'm generally already well versed in the subject matter, but I'm just interested in the process -- what do they have footage of, what angle are they taking, who did they talk to, how did they pace it? So when I saw that *NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT* was on the program at TIFF, I really wanted to check it out, but I think it was screening when I wasn't in town. Luckily, I got a second chance -- the film had its US premiere at the Santa Barbara Film Festival.

And as it would happen, my interest has only deepened in the intervening months. Since then, I've been cast as a host in the third season of a show on the National Geographic channel called *KNOWN UNIVERSE*. We've been filming for a few months on that show, and in addition to being in front of the camera, I've been talking to the writers, producers, director, and show runner about different ways to get across different astronomical concepts. My astronomical hero has always been Carl Sagan, and I absolutely love his series *COSMOS*. And one of my favorite books of his is *PALE BLUE DOT*. Harry excerpted a passage of Sagan reading from the audio book of *PALE BLUE DOT* a few weeks ago, one that was blended with modern footage of space and the Earth. To me, that is perfection -- contemplative, intellectual, deep, and moving. And all in the space of a few minutes.

The preference on my show, and most science shows these days, is big action, quick cuts, and short explanations. That isn't my first choice for how to do it, but don't get me wrong, I think we're doing great work. And I presume the network people have done their homework -- after all, they are highly motivated to achieve maximal return on their investment. A fast-paced style of show must attract more viewers than a more in-depth, contemplative one (sadly, one only has to compare the box office receipts of, say, *ARMAGEDDON* and *2001* to realize that this must be true). But as a scientist, I really wish I could just show the observations, put them in context, and explain them in detail. There is a kind of profound wonder and mystery about the cosmos, the key to its allure, for me, is that you just can't cultivate in sound bytes.

All this is a long-winded way of saying that I had all but given up on deep, long-take, in-depth explorations into the universe in today's media environment. But *NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT* brings it back, and shows that this type of astronomical storytelling is just as viable today as it ever was. It is an amazing film -- the astronomical sequences are as good as they get, despite the fact that they probably didn't have a huge budget. In *NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT* there are many scenes of telescopes getting set up and slewing into position. There are time lapse scenes of the night sky rotating into place, and astronomers getting prepared. When combined with the nearly hypnotic narration,

a kind of spell is cast – one of anticipation, promise, and hope. Then when astronomical images of impossible grandeur are shown, and a big idea is revealed, the payoff is enormous. Instead of the over-the-top CG we see in many shows these days, here we just have the images, and the wonder and excitement of the astronomer explaining the secrets of the universe. CG can be great at getting across a concept, but it almost never gives me goosebumps. NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT did so many times, I lost count. And I'm a jaded professional.

But NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT has a dark twist up its sleeve, a counterpoint to the hope and awe that the universe inspires, one that only deepens its message. The film isn't just about the secrets of the universe being revealed in the Atacama desert in Chile, it is also about the secrets buried there. From 1974 to 1990, when Augusto Pinochet was the military dictator of Chile, he interned 80,000 dissidents, tortured tens of thousands, and murdered thousands. While many mass graves have been discovered, the whereabouts of the remains of many of the "disappeared" are unknown to this day. NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT features several heartbroken relatives searching for any bone, any sign of lost family members, as they tell their nearly-forgotten stories. Their confrontations of Chile's dark past are intercut with the astronomical revelation of Chile's bright present -- descriptions of the vastness of space, of the cosmic origin of the calcium in the bones of the uncovered skeletons, and tales of stellar and galactic birth and death on cosmic scales. The juxtaposition of death and the infinite is simultaneously terrifying and life-affirming. The experience is not unlike that of a funeral in a grand cathedral, only without the make-believe.

The weaving together of these two seemingly unrelated strands of Chile's DNA is a revelation. Both involve a deep-seated drive to understand, and kind of archaeology. One involves sifting through desert and the recent past to find tales of both horror and honor. The other involves excavating the most ancient and closely held secrets of the universe. It would be easy to say one uncovers the face of the Devil and the other the face of God, but that is letting us off too easy. Pinochet was a man. Us at our worse, perhaps, but human all the same. Nor do we need to invoke the supernatural to explain the wonders of the universe. In fact, it is its adherence to natural laws that make its explicability all the more profound.

Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg once said, "The effort to understand the universe is one of the very few things which lifts human life a little above the level of farce and gives it some of the grace of tragedy." NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT shows that there is little grace in tragedy, but indeed the effort to understand the universe can be uplifting.

Two scenes near the end of the film are particularly resonant. One is of an astronomer whose own parents will be killed by the Pinochet regime, and was raised by her grandparents. The details of her parents disappearance are horrifying. Yet in their honor she is inspired to dig deep into the history of the universe to reveal something timeless. The other is the story of an older woman who lost a family member, and is still digging in the desert nearly every day looking for him. She is invited to look through a telescope, and her sense of elation and wonder are powerful. It is not just the transcendent, but transcendence seen through the lens of our fragile and fleeting human existence that makes NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT more than just a superb festival documentary -- it is one of the best films I've seen all year.

I am happy to hear that NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT won the Nueva Vision Award for the best Spanish/Latin American film at SBIFF this year. It was written and directed by Patricio Guzmán, known for such films as THE BATTLE OF CHILE and SALVADOR ALLENDE. Until now, I was unfamiliar with his work, but from NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT I can tell he's a master.

# EYEWEEKLY.com

## ON SCREEN: NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT

BY JASON ANDERSON  
January 12, 2011

Reputedly the driest place on the planet, Chile's Atacama Desert boasts a unique set of environmental and atmospheric conditions that attracts two very different sorts of visitors.

The first are the astronomers who come to enjoy stunningly clear views of the heavens above, which can be enjoyed with either a high-powered telescope or the naked eye. The second are relatives of the thousands of Chileans who "disappeared" during the country's 17 years under the rule of General Augusto Pinochet. These women come looking for the bones of their loved ones, the dictatorship having favoured the Atacama as a site for mass graves and as the location for an enormous concentration camp.

Since both groups are looking into the past for answers, they're really not so different. A new documentary by Patricio Guzmán, *Nostalgia for the Light* continually demonstrates this notion to intelligent, elegant and often very moving effect.

Guzmán has devoted much of his career to the task of investigating and recording Chile's recent history. His landmark '70s doc, *The Battle of Chile*, explored the events surrounding the overthrow of Salvador Allende's government by Pinochet's army in 1973. In the director's latest, he creates a fresh and stimulating context for his favourite subject.

It helps that he's discovered a place where, as one subject says, "the past is more accessible than elsewhere." But more powerful is the way in which he compels viewers to contrast our more idealistic attitudes toward the distant pasts of celestial bodies with the feelings of pain, shame and anger caused by historical traumas of our own day. In other words, the ideas in *Nostalgia for the Light* are nearly as big as the Big Bang, but Guzmán's wise and lovely film maintains a careful balance between matters both macro and micro.

## FILM: NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT

BY JESSE CATALDO    March 15, 2011    \*\*\*½ stars

The most arresting image in *Nostalgia for the Light*, a film with more than its share of stunning moments, comes during an interview with a resolute widow. Having lost her husband to the bloody regime of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, 70-year-old Victoria, like other women still searching for their missing loved ones, combs the harsh earth of the Atacama Desert for disposed bodies. "I just want to find him before I die," she says of her murdered husband, which Guzmán follows with a long-shot of the desert, endlessly bleak, unremitting, and fickle with its secrets.

The Atacama, at 10,000 feet above sea level, with its salt deposits and complete lack of vegetation, at times looks like a landscape from outer space. This is fitting, as earth and sky commune perfectly within its wastes, where dozens of high-tech telescopes have been built by foreign developers, to take advantage of the fabulous visibility granted by one of the driest places on earth. It's one of the film's cruel ironies that these people travel from so far away to stare off into infinity, with so many buried secrets lying just below their feet.

While remaining a relatively faithful document of both this astronomical observation and the desert itself, *Nostalgia for the Light* is also an existential meditation on the inherent horrors of existence, finding parity between the cold recesses of space and the more immediate loneliness of human life. The Atacama is an amazing setting for this kind of examination; both its craggy surfaces and the shots of space taken from them are breathtaking.

Guzmán creates an interesting dialectic between the different searchers profiles, uniting them under an umbrella of humanism and cautious hopefulness. The astronomers are dreamers, inspired to look beyond the problems of our world to examine others. Its earthbound truth-seekers, represented most vividly by those desert-combing women, some of whom have been hard at work for as long as 28 years, are realists, intent on uncovering every secret in what has turned out to be one of Pinochet's biggest dumping grounds for political enemies. Both stare into some kind of void, framing their lives around the confrontation of overwhelming realities.

The dark places the film examines can be devastating, a fact Guzmán partially softens by leavening some of the star-gazing scenes with what looks like CGI fairy dust, flurrying down from the heavens, a weird effect that stands out as one of the film's few stylistic missteps. Otherwise, *Nostalgia for the Light* draws hope from its human element, profiling a stable of interesting people who help to offset the grimness of the desert, which seems like the perfect setting for a horror movie.

<http://www.slantmagazine.com/film/print.php?rid=5326>

## **AN ETERNAL MEMORY: PATRICIO GUZMÁN'S "NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT"**

INTERVIEW BY DANIEL LORIA  
MARCH 14, 2011

Chilean documentary filmmaker Patricio Guzmán. His latest film, *Nostalgia for The Light* opens at New York's IFC Center on March 18. Patricio Guzmán came into prominence in the 1970s with "The Battle of Chile," his epic documentary trilogy recounting Pinochet's coup to power. The film established the director as one of the leading voices in a new boom of Latin American Cinema, an independent movement of politically active and socially conscious filmmakers who challenged, questioned and defined the historical moment through the possibilities of cinema.

*Nostalgia for the Light* is perhaps Guzmán's strongest film yet. Introspective as it is universal, Guzmán's lens explores the intersection between memory, history, eternity and the universe in Chile's Atacama Desert. He follows the astronomers who struggle to understand the origins of the universe and the victims of those who survived Pinochet's brutal dictatorship as they search for the anonymous remains of their loved ones. The desert has unparalleled views of the stars. It's also notorious as the site of multiple, unmarked mass graves where the bodies of Pinochet's victims were abandoned.

The answers to Guzmán's questions are either lost in the cosmos or under the sand of the desert. Evidence is fragmentary, partial, and inconclusive. The only tangible truth resides in the nostalgia he explores. Progress for Guzmán isn't a concept that resides in moving beyond the past and focusing on the future, but in coming to terms with the past by confronting the ghosts of Chile's dictatorship.

In this two-part interview, the documentary auteur talks about his most recent film as well as the present moment of Latin American Cinema and the challenges that documentaries face today. Part II of the interview will be released to coincide with an upcoming retrospective of Guzmán's work being held from April 1-7 at New York City's BAMcinematek.

*What attracted you to the Atacama Desert?*

I've wanted to make a movie about the Atacama Desert for a long time. When the chance finally came, I spent four years studying the desert; everything about it I could find, from the mines to the observatories. I had known about the women there for years.

They were well-known in the 80s, when a group of a hundred volunteers joined the original 30 from the search-groups. They would comb the desert in hopes of finding the mass graves. Most of them have died since, they are down to around 15 who continue their search.

*How did you organize these four years of research and actually make the film?*

I began by writing a script. I always write a lot before starting a film because I think it's good to have an extensive understanding of your topic so you can later allow yourself the liberty to do whatever you want with it. The danger there is that sometimes you imagine a reality that doesn't exist. One gets enthusiastic and begins making connections that *could* exist but that you don't know if they do for certain. So the first thing I did was spend two months in the desert to see if these impressions I had were true.

*Your subjects are very candid in this film. Did you do anything in particular to get them to open up to you in that way?*

I don't like to corner the people in my films into giving me a specific answer. I usually interview them for hours and hours without ever revealing where the interview is headed. I don't like it when directors bully their subjects to get the sort of answers they are looking for, I don't think that should ever be done in a documentary.

*What was the hardest thing about shooting a film in a desert? Or were the real difficulties with the project beyond the setting?*

We had two main challenges. The first was finding the money. When I pitched the project to television stations, they did not understand it at all. We were rejected by 18 of them. Programmers today are so used to comfortable topics and if you go in there with a philosophical/ metaphysical/ religious angle they think you've gone insane. All we heard was "No, no, no," until we were able to get money from a small diversity of sources but it still wasn't enough to cover the whole budget. My wife (who served as the producer), our executive producer and I had to make the film without a salary. Otherwise, the film wouldn't have been made.

The second challenge was Valentina, the young lady presented at the end of the film. She told me she liked the project but she wasn't ready to share her story publicly. I told her that was fine but insisted that since it takes a long time to make a film, that she could speak to our cameras and tell me later on in the process if she still felt uncomfortable about it. After we finished the first part of the film I went to show her our footage and she was immediately on board. It was very important to have her in the project, without her the film wouldn't have had an ending.

*Although your film deals with (literally) universal topics, it is essentially another very personal film about Chile. Why did you approach the film through astronomy instead of any other topic relevant in Chile?*

Because astronomy is fascinating! It's a way to compare the existence of the cosmos to our own. It's a way to say that we are not alone, that we belong to the universe. The

same materials we are made of are the same materials stars are made of. In Paris I bought a book on asteroids and began photographing bones, comparing the two to see their similarities. I was struck by how alike they were. So when we were shooting the film in Santiago, we asked for a skeleton and filmed all the small bone fragments. What I didn't know that at Las Campanas we'd find the astronomer George Preston who was already studying a constellation made up of calcium; the same type of calcium found in our spinal column.



## **'NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT' A PUFF OF AIR WOULD DESTROY IT**

**BY CYNTHIA FUCHS**  
**MARCH 18, 2011**

Wheels turn. Mechanical teeth click. The camera passes closely over each moment in the process by which an observatory dome opens. As Patricio Guzmán describes the "old German telescope that I've seen once again after so many years," the scene cuts to a series of items, each appearing briefly on screen. A napkin folded on a plate, an old radio, a chair. "These objects," he says, "which could have come from my childhood home, remind me of that far off moment." That is, the moment when he was a boy and "Chile was a haven of peace, isolated from the world."

This opening sequence in *Nostalgia for the Light* (*Nostalgia de la luz*) sets in motion a number of themes. The Chile of Guzmán's childhood is long gone, of course, a collective history he's explored in other ways in other films. The look at the "objects which could have come" from his personal history suggests the way that memory is at once allusive and illusory. These objects, cast in half-light and half-shadow, are lovely in their simplicity and also weighted with potential meaning, different for each viewer. As such, as plain as they seem, the objects as images—as memories—are also subjective and shifting, alternately recognized and repressed.

The documentary, which opens 18 March at New York's IFC Center and is also screening as part of "Obstinate Memories: The Documentaries of Patricio Guzmán" at BAMcinémathèque, 1-8 April, goes on to explore just this sort of instability. It takes up two searches, both set in Chile's Atacama Desert. One is a pursuit of scientific knowledge, the evidence to support theories of how life began and what might be coming for the

planet earth; it's conducted by astronomers via the world's largest optical telescope (called the European Extremely Large Telescope, or E-ELT) located in Chile. The other, ongoing since 1990, is undertaken by the relatives of victims of August Pinochet's dictatorship. Both searches, the film points out, involve bodies, material and celestial, and both are endless.

As he conducts his search, astronomer Gaspar Galaz lovingly describes the "nature of science" as a perpetual lack of resolution. "You try to answer two questions," he smiles, and "four more arise." He goes on to think through the nature of time, or rather, the impossibility of the present. "Everything we perceive is in the past, even if it's a matter of a millionth of a second," he explains, as the light reflected by a camera lens or an eye can only be perceived late, as "It takes a moment to reach me." Ah, sees Guzmán from off-screen, "The present is a fine line?" Galaz nods, "A puff of air would destroy it."

This line is made both less and more fine if considered in precisely these terms—the present is past and so, the past is ever present. And this is the idea pursued by astronomers (who look for light that has traveled millions of years to reach their telescope) as well as by archeologists, who look into the desert for other sorts of evidence. If Galaz's own past is recent (he was born after the Pinochet regime), the archeologist Lautaro Núñez is older, so his description of the past is more more vividly physical. He says that Atacama, located over 10,000 feet above sea level, is the ideal place for his work. The dryness and salt preserve matter, he says, so "the past is more accessible here than anywhere else." The scene shows such matter—shoes, skulls, tools—as Guzmán notes just some of those individuals lost to the desert: "In the open air lie men who died working, like geological layers of miners and Indians swept by the relentless wind. There are the nomadic families, their belongings, their memories, are nearby."

Over images of drawings yet preserved on rocks amid red desert sands, Núñez points out that Chile (like so many modern nations) represses its past ("We have never acknowledged that we marginalized our Indians, it's practically a state secret"), the film looks also to a more recent past. Former prisoners of the Pinochet regime—the architect Miguel and the amateur astronomer Luís—recall their time inside tiny cells at the abandoned 19th-century saltpeter-mining town of Chacabuco. In these structures refitted with barbed wire and armed guards, Miguel measured his space and time by steps, planning to replicate the place in drawings if he survived. And Luís maintained his freedom by looking at stars, reflected light from a past cosmos. "Luís' dignity lies in his memory," observes Guzmán, "Luís is a transmitter of history."

So too are the women who scavenge the desert in search of their loved ones' remains. Told that the Pinochet military buried bodies, then dug them up again and threw them into the sea, 70-year-old Victoria can't believe it. "What if they threw them out nearby, somewhere in the mountains?" she asks. "I find it hard to believe what I'm told. They taught me not to believe." And so, she will search as long as she can, "even if I have doubts and I ask myself questions which I can't answer." Even as her persistence echoes that voiced by Galaz the astronomer, the film insists too on their existential disparity. Galaz voices it like so: "Their process is similar to ours, with one big difference. We can sleep peacefully."

The search for the past, which is also inevitably the present, is profoundly disturbing. And yet, *Nostalgia for the Light* submits, that search must go on. Even as it begins with this premise, the film also builds toward it, so that your comprehension of its many facets feels like a revelation. The poetic, haunting shots into night skies and star fields, over desert sands and petrified fish, and deep inside skulls' eye sockets all help you to appreciate the many ways that light shapes what you see.

If these images look similarly limitless, they are also differently resonant. Bodies of all kinds exist in cycles, as the astronomer Valentina Rodríguez explains. At the same time, past and present, she is also the daughter of two of the disappeared. "What happened to my parents and their absence takes on another dimension" when she studies the stars, she says. "It takes on another meaning and frees me a little from this great suffering, as I feel nothing really comes to an end."



# ReverseShot

## WE ARE STARDUST NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT

BY MICHAEL KORESKY  
ISSUE 28

Patricio Guzmán's epochal multipart 1978 documentary *The Battle of Chile* concludes with a slow zoom out on a barren desert plain. The image is despairing but not entirely bereft: the U.S.-backed coup d'état against Chile's democratically elected Marxist president Salvador Allende has already taken place, and General Augusto Pinochet, the ultimately genocidal dictator, has assumed the throne, but the miners and other various workers interviewed and followed by Guzmán in this third part of the film remain hopeful of the future. They will reassemble, they vow, and their somewhat defeated promises for the regrowth of the Chilean Communist Party echo over images of the vast Chilean expanse of sand and rock, emptied of signs of life.

This somber ending is fitting not only for the epic political *cri de coeur* itself but also as a starting point of sorts for the rest of Guzmán's career: his engagement, likewise, begins here. From *In the Name of God* (1987) and *Chile, Obstinate Memory* (1997), through *The Pinochet Case* (2001), Guzmán has become the cinematic memory of Chile, exorcizing his nation's demons in a longterm project to ensure that the world never forgets the horrific realities of the regime. With his newest documentary, *Nostalgia for the Light*, Guzmán journeys back to the desert and in so doing proves that he remains one of the most vital, engaged, searching voices in cinema. Like all of his films, it's a work of major excavation, only in some ways more literal: setting the groundwork for the film's many

narrative and philosophical threads is its portrait of the Atacama desert, its past and present, its sky and earth, its technological and historical resonances.

In the arid Atacama, one can find the biggest telescopes in the world, which as Guzmán shows, contrast boldly with the terrain, smooth, perfectly white domes framed against the unforgiving natural, rocky landscape. This is where Chile's astronomers have come for years to gaze at the cosmos, hoping to unlock the mysteries of the universe. Yet another mystery lives here: this is also where it is believed that the bodies of many executed political prisoners were buried (sixty percent of the assassinations committed during the dictatorship are unsolved to this day), and where a handful of tireless women—including Victoria and Valeta, two of the film's subjects—still search for their remains, in a never-ending quest that's spanned almost three decades.

Thus *Nostalgia for the Light* is concerned with bodies both celestial and physical; it's a film whose subjects couldn't be grander, yet which couldn't feel more personal. A metaphysical, ethnographic, and, of course, political cine-essay, Guzmán's film is a work of immense power—of profound ugliness and beauty, of the unthinkable occurring somewhere deep within a universe unknowable. It feels different from several of Guzmán's other films in the way that it locates something nearly mystical surrounding the harsh truths of recent Chilean history. It's a film that Guzmán spent many years preparing and then making—a dream project, then, but also in that it takes the form of a dream, one filled with scattered memories, musings, and philosophies. But finally, as always, we wake up to hard, cold facts. It's a circular film, both in the way it constantly loops back on its own ideas, deepening them with each new added ring, and also in its visuals: it begins with images of the enormous spinning wheels of the German Hayde telescope located in an observatory in Santiago. It is a film of close inspection, but also of introspection.

At times early on, *Nostalgia for the Light* seems a fairly straightforward memoir, narrated commandingly by the director himself, who, after waxing mysteriously about space and time, takes us back to the pre-revolution Chile of his childhood, when Patricio was simply a kid who loved science-fiction stories and astronomy, and when his world was “a haven of peace, isolated from the rest of the world.” But instead of relying on old photographs or home movie footage to take us back, Guzmán lays his voiceover on a series of elegant, Malickian images, close-ups of napkins and tablecloths, stained glass windows and dishes, in rooms drained of people yet filled with floating stardust, glistening like jewels. This is the unattainable past, a lost paradise, a place Guzmán has rarely attempted to show before. As the title implies, this film looks backwards as much as it points ahead, watches the skies as much as it burrows through the ground—the calcium in the stars is the same as that found in our bones.

Despite the moral devastation wreaked by Pinochet's ascension, Guzmán tells us, Chilean astronomers kept working in their outposts, searching for life's origins. Not far into the film, the director introduces the first of many supporting characters, a young astronomer named Gaspar, born after the coup. (There is a talking-heads doc aspect to the film, but they're such disparate people and so ingeniously woven into the whole that the guests seem more like voices from the ether than authorities trotted out to provide theses or evidence.) Gaspar, who under Pinochet's regime studied diffuse galaxies (which often appear as though gas and dust), reminds us, powerfully, that “science is

never resolved." One might say the same of history, of course, and also of Guzmán's career-long endeavor to force his country to confront its past through the cinema. Gaspar further provides *Nostalgia for the Light* with a central theme, that of the past intruding upon an impossible present: if physics tells us that there is no now, and that, thus, we don't actually see things the instant we look at them, then how can a nation, or a person, be freed from the shackles of history?

Guzmán proceeds to dig further back into that history, and he has fertile ground in which to do it. Chile's still thriving mining industry (very much in the news, as recent happier events proved) was in the nineteenth-century an excuse to use the nation's Indian population as slaves. The countless bodies of men, women, and children, buried somewhere in the desert, and the abandoned, rusted machinery of the mines in Atacama, mark the land as a graveyard of sorts. The tortured history of this place extended to the 1970s at least, when Pinochet established a concentration camp for dissidents at the Atacama nitrate town of Chacabuco. Here, despite the starvation and desperation, some prisoners continued to stargaze, fashioning makeshift telescopes in the hopes of witnessing something sublime—anything to transcend the suffocating space of their cells, the measurements of which are recounted by Miguel, who Guzmán calls the "Architect of Memory" for his lasting commitment to never forgetting the conditions under which he, and other prisoners, lived, through drawings and memorization. This man is clearly some form of hero to Guzmán, who was recently quoted as saying, "The absence of memory produces a global suffering."

One subject leads to another, in a teeming free associative structure that nevertheless always philosophically and historically coheres; Guzmán also often uses repetition of images (of moon craters, of floating stardust, of the Solar System, of Atacama, of telescopes) to create a forceful sense of eternal return. The director's accumulation of images and thoughts is powerful; history repeats itself (for instance, the fact that the names of political prisoners were etched on the concentration camp walls may recall an earlier rumination on the mysterious ancient carvings high in the desert rocks, keys to unlocking the secrets of lost civilizations). With its parallels and recollections, *Nostalgia* becomes an increasingly dialectical work. Late in the film, when Guzmán introduces us to Chilean exile Victor's mother, a masseuse, he overlays shots of her putting healing hands on a patient with voiceover explaining the 30,000 recorded instances of torture during the regime. The disjunction between sound and image here creates a poignant moment—there is occasional solace in physical connection, but it perhaps requires a spiritual disassociation between body and spirit.

This expedition to outer space and inner Chile may take as its subject nothing less than the universe, but it's really about the smallest creatures swarming within its incomprehensible boundaries. The most essential here might finally be the women of Calama, Victoria and Valeta, tireless in their quest to find the remains of their lost loved ones, resolute in never giving up the ghost. As one of them says, finding him is all that would give her a sense of finality before death. As with every other being on this planet, the present moment, if it exists at all, is fragile—a mass of contradictions, of particles bouncing off of each other with disregard. The choking knot of the past is what gives Guzmán, and all of us, the irreparable curse of nostalgia.



## **ASTRONOMERS, ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND VICTIMS OF DICTATORSHIP COLLIDE IN THE GORGEOUS "NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT : A SPECTACULAR HEAD-TRIP INTO CHILE'S ATACAMA DESERT**

BY ANDREW O'HEHIR  
MARCH 18, 2011

What connections can be drawn between astronomers who study distant stars and galaxies, archaeologists who study pre-Columbian petroglyphs and mummified human remains, and women searching for loved ones who disappeared during Chile's 1970s military dictatorship? In Patricio Guzmán's almost metaphysical documentary "Nostalgia for the Light," Chile's Atacama Desert -- often described as the driest place on Earth -- is depicted as the site of all these explorations. This film demands patience from the viewer, unfolding its themes and its spectacular images gradually. But it packs a potent intellectual and emotional wallop, combining a post-Augustinian philosophical consideration of time with a passionate desire to uncover Chile's painful recent history.

A veteran Chilean leftist who spent many years in exile after the 1973 military coup that overthrew the democratic socialist government of Salvador Allende, Guzmán became famous throughout the film world for his three-part documentary "The Battle of Chile," which captured all the drama and tragedy of his country's revolution and counterrevolution. It's one of the greatest living-history pictures ever made, as well as a work of ardent political advocacy that influenced a generation of young radical filmmakers all over the world. (I'm confident that Michael Moore, Oliver Stone and Ken Loach, for instance, would agree.)

Almost four decades after Gen. Augusto Pinochet ousted Allende and installed a murderous right-wing junta (warmly embraced, of course, by the United States), Guzmán remains hypnotized by that history. (He has also made films about Pinochet and Allende, as well as a documentary about his own return to Chile in 1997.) Traveling into the Atacama turns out to be at once a way of transcending that fixation and of going into it more deeply. Astronomers come there from all nations because the humidity-free skies render celestial bodies brilliantly clear; archaeologists come there because human remains and artifacts from thousands of years ago are perfectly preserved; and bereaved mothers, wives and sisters come there because Pinochet's regime apparently buried the bodies of hundreds of kidnapped and executed dissidents there in the '70s and '80s.

All these people, Guzmán observes, are concerned with the past, and at least indirectly with the most profound and unanswerable questions about the nature and meaning of human existence. (Remember that the starlight we see from Earth has been traveling through space for many years; astronomers viewing the most distant galaxies are literally looking billions of years back in time.) As one astronomer explains, there is almost no such thing as the present -- a fact observed by St. Augustine 1,600 years ago -- and another observes that the atoms of calcium in the bones of Indians and dissidents interred in the Atacama were forged long ago by the stars, perhaps in the Big Bang itself. Guzmán even finds a young female astronomer whose parents were killed by Pinochet's goons when she was a year old, and who finds in her profession a transcendent understanding that has eased her pain. (If the final scenes of her with her newborn don't leave you weeping, irrespective of your politics, I don't know what to say.) "Nostalgia for the Light" is less a conventional documentary than a work of poetic imagination or a nontheistic spiritual meditation. Enormously moving and wondrous to behold, it looks for a peaceful equilibrium in the universe that its creator's home country may never find in itself.

*"Nostalgia for the Light" is now playing at the IFC Center in New York. It opens March 25 in Seattle; April 1 in Vancouver, Canada; April 22 in Los Angeles and Washington; and May 13 in San Francisco, with more cities to follow.*

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## **NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT : AS PROFOUND AND POETIC AS A FILM CAN BE**

BY STEVE DOLLAR

As profound and poetic as a film can be, this unusual documentary is a visually breathtaking meditation on cosmic mysteries and the tragic facts of history. Chilean director Patricio Guzmán, best-known for the epic political documentary "The Battle of Chile," begins with an astronomical theme: a visit to the Atacama Desert, 10,000 feet above sea level. It's the best seat on the planet for scientists to observe the heavens. The site also is unique as the driest place on earth. Its arid plateaus harbor mummified bodies of the dead, including the bodies of political prisoners "disappeared" after the military coup of 1973. Eternity has a different meaning for the mothers, wives and children of the dead, who gaze not at the skies but the sands. Mr. Guzmán will be present for Q&A sessions on Friday and Saturday.

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## DESERT DOCUMENTARY 'LIGHT' GLOWS

BY JOHN ANDERSON  
MARCH 18, 2011

Viewed from space, the Earth is a big blue watery jewel, with what appears to be a flaw—a distinct, brownish scar where its appendix might have been. This is the Atacama Desert, the huge Chilean tract that was the site of 19th-century mining camps, Pinochet concentration camps and which, despite being devoid of humidity, is the wellspring of Patricio Guzmán's profound and lovely "Nostalgia for the Light." As a work of nonfiction, it deserves its own nomenclature. "Docu-poem" is too inelegant; "masterpiece" works, although it's been used before.

Mr. Guzmán, now 69, has devoted a career to making filmed indictments of the Pinochet regime ("The Battle of Chile," "Salvador Allende," "The Pinochet Case") so the opening moments of "Nostalgia" are surprising, even puzzling. We see the various working parts of the enormous German-made telescope in the observatory at Atacama. We learn that, because of the transparency of its air and its position to the stars, this desert is Earth's natural observatory. We learn of what a gift the place is to archaeologists, with its preserving atmosphere and Mars-like surface, beneath which lie meteors and traces of vanished civilizations.

We learn too that since the 1970s, Chilean women have combed the dust of Atacama for the remains of their loved ones disappeared by Augusto Pinochet, and whose bodies were strewn about its vast, arid, lifeless expanse. They search for any fragment, these women, by which a lost relative can be identified, and thus provide some kind of closure, some end to the story. And it's in this scouring of both space and time that the brilliance of Mr. Guzmán's extended metaphor becomes as vivid as Katell Djian's photography. The past, which astronomers are exploring in the sky over Atacama, is precisely what most modern Chileans have neglected, "as if this history might accuse us," as Mr. Guzmán says. The visual qualities of "Nostalgia for the Light"—from the celestial confetti that floats through it to the abstract expressionism of space and its Kandinsky-like, egg-yolk-colored galaxies—are awe-inspiring. The same can be said about Mr. Guzmán's reflections on memory and its responsibilities.

*Nostalgia for the Light* opens in New York today, followed by a national roll-out; a major Guzmán retrospective will open at the BAMcinématek and Pacific Film Archive in April, and at the Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago, and the UCLA Film and Television Archive this summer.

## PATRICIO GUZMÁN BIOGRAPHY

Patricio Guzmán was born in 1941 in Santiago, Chile. As an adolescent, inspired by the work of Chris Marker, Frederic Rossif and Louis Malle, he was drawn to documentary. He studied filmmaking at the Film Institute at the Catholic University of Chile and at the Official School of Film in Madrid, where he earned his degree in Film Direction in 1970.

Guzmán returned to Chile in 1971, and directed his first documentary, *The First Year*, which covered the first 12 months of Salvador Allende's government. The film was released in commercial theaters that very year. Chris Marker, impressed by the film, offered to help get it seen in France. Two years later, Marker again provided invaluable assistance again when he donated the raw stock necessary to commence filming *The Battle of Chile*, Guzmán's 4 and ½ hour documentary trilogy about Allende's final year. Filming on this project continued until the very day of the coup d'etat.

The day of the coup, Guzmán was imprisoned in Chile's National Stadium, where he remained for 15 days. After regaining his freedom, he left for Europe with his footage. Eventually, the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC) offered to support the editing and post-production. Guzmán flew to Havana and finished the film a few years later.

*The Battle of Chile* won 6 Grand Prizes in Europe and Latin America. It was shown in commercial theaters in 35 countries. The *Cineaste* Magazine declared it as "One of the ten best political films in the world."

Guzmán continues to make documentaries, many focusing on Chilean concerns. In 1987 he made *In God's Name* (Grand Prize, Florence '87) about the Catholic Church's fight for human rights in Chile. From 1990 to 1992 he worked on *The Southern Cross* (Grand Prize, Marseille '92) about the theology of liberation and popular religion in Latin America. In 1995, *Town in Stasis* focused on the historical memory of a Mexican village.

In 1997, *Chile, Obstinate Memory* looked into collective political amnesia in Chile. 1999 brought *Robinson Crusoe Island* about the remote Chilean island of the same name. In 2001, *The Pinochet Case* examined the case brought against General Augusto Pinochet (Grand Prize, Marseille '01). In 2002, he completed *Madrid*, a look at Spain's capital.

Guzmán's acclaimed, award-winning film *Salvador Allende* (2006) tells Allende's story, from his youth in Valparaiso and his early presidential campaigns, to his bold nationalist reforms and his death during the violent rightist coup of September 11, 1973.

The master filmmaker's gorgeous and personal meditation new work, *Nostalgia for the Light* (2010), won the Best Documentary (Prix ARTE) at the European Film Academy Awards. It was named to the Top Ten Best Movies of 2010 by Sight & Sound, and it is be released in the US and Canada in 2011 by Icarus Films.

Patricio Guzmán currently chairs the International Documentary Film Festival (FIDOCs) in Santiago, Chile, which he founded in 1997. He lives in Paris with Renate Sachse, who collaborates on the scripts for his films. His two daughters, Andrea and Camila, are also filmmakers and frequently collaborate on his projects.

## PATRICIO GUZMÁN FILMOGRAPHY

- 2010 **"Nostalgia for the Light" (102').\***  
Director-writer.  
  
--- Official Selection, Cannes Film Festival, France, 2010  
--- Official Selection, Toronto International Film Festival, 2010
- 2005 **"My Jules Verne" (52')**  
Director-author. Biographical documentary about Jules Verne produced by Ex Nihilo for ARTE France. Festivals: Compiègne, France. BAFICI, Buenos Aires. Latin American, Sao Paulo. FIDOCs, Santiago de Chile.
- 2004 **"Salvador Allende" (102').\***  
Director-author and co-producer.  
Documentary portrait of Salvador Allende produced by Jacques Bidou (JBA Productions)  
Co-production with Belgium, Spain, Germany and Mexico  
  
--- Official Selection, Cannes Film Festival, France, 2004  
--- Best European Documentary of Creation, Biennial Spanish Film Festival of Annecy, 2004.  
---Grand Prize, Lima Latin American Film Festival, 2004.  
--- Audience Award, Salzburg Film Festival, 2005  
  
Festivals (2004-2006): Toronto / San Sebastian / Jerusalem / Lussas / Rio / Sao Paulo / Sheffield / Trieste / Gutenberg / Vienna / Lucerne / Minneapolis, MOMA / Lussas / Copenhagen / Mill Valley / Oslo / Bergen / Strasbourg / Cardiff / Gutenberg / Adelaide / Guadalajara / Freiburg / Slovenia / Istanbul / Singapore / Doxa Canada / Flaherty Film Seminar / Nuremberg / Washington National Gallery / Taipei / Etc.  
Cinema distribution: France (120.000 viewers), Chile (60.000), Argentina (10.000), Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Greece, Italy, Austria, Mexico and United States. Sales for TV: RTBF, Sundance Channel.
- 2001 **"The Pinochet Case" (110').\***  
Director-author and co-producer. Documentary about the trial of Augusto Pinochet.  
Produced by Les Films d'Ici (Paris), Pathé (Paris), Les Films de la Passarelle (Brussels), Patricio Guzmán (Madrid), Benece (Barcelona) and Nueva Imagen (Santiago).  
  
--- International Critic's Week, Cannes Film Festival, France, 2001.  
--- First Prize, Marseille Int'l Documentary Film Festival, France, 2001.  
---Golden Gate Award, San Francisco International Film Festival, 2002..  
  
Festivals: Toronto 2001, Montreal 2001, Florence 2001, Sheffield 2001, Rio de Janeiro 2001, Valladolid 2001, Bogotá 2001, Lisbon 2001, Guadalajara 2002. Etc.

Sales for TV: Canal Plus in France, Belgium, Spain, Italy.  
Cinema distribution: France (60.000 viewers), Mexico (80.000), Belgium,

Spain, Chile and USA. Sales for TV: Canal + International, Canal Horizons,

Kino Suisse, SBS Australia, Globosat Brazil.

1999 **"Isla de Robinson Crusoe" (43').\***

Director-author. Documentary about the island of the same name.  
Produced by Jacques Bidou (JBA Productions)  
for La Sept-ARTE.

1997 **"Chile, Obstinate Memory" (58').\***

Director-author. Documentary on Chile's historical memory.  
Produced by Les Films d'Ici and the National Film Board of Canada for La Sept-ARTE.

Première: special screening at the Festival Du Réel, Paris, 1997.

---Grand Prize, Florence International Film Festival, Italy, 1997.

--- Audience Award, Marseille Int'l Documentary Film Festival, 1997.

---Golden Gate Award, San Francisco International Film Festival, USA 1998.

--- Best Canadian Documentary, Hot Docs Festival, Canada, 1998..

---Second Documentary Prize, Havana Film Festival, 1997.

--- Grand-Prix, Yorkton Int'l Documentary Film Festival, Canada, 1998.

---Best Documentary Film, Saint Louis International Film Festival, USA., 1998.

---Grand-Prix, DocAviv Festival, Tel Aviv, Israel, 1999.

---Silver Dove, Leipzig Film Festival, Germany, 1999.

--- Nominated for the Canadian Academy of Film and TV, 1999.

Festivals: Sundance 98, Toronto 97, Bombay 98, Sidney 98, Mar del Plata 98, Montevideo 98, Vancouver 98, Santiago de Chile 97, etc.

Cinema Distribution: New York , Buenos Aires, Santiago de Chile. Sales for

TV: France, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Italy, Finland, Greece, Sweden,

Spain, Portugal, Holland, Switzerland and Sundance Channel.

1995 **"Pueblo en Vilo" (52').**

Director-author. Documentary about the historical memory of a small Mexican village.

Produced by Les Films d'Ici for France-2.

Festivals: Lisbon 1996, Leipzig 1996, Augsburg, 1996.

Sales for TV: France, Belgium, Mexico.

1992 **"The Southern Cross" (80').**

Producer, director-author.

Feature film and documentary series on popular religion in Latin America.

Produced by Quasar Films (Alicia Crespo) for TVE.

---Grand Prize, Marseille International Documentary Film Festival, France, 1992.  
---Grand Prize, Amiens International Film Festival, France, 1992.  
---'Tiempo de Historia' Award, Valladolid International Film Festival, Spain, 1992.  
--- Grand Prize, Jerusalem Film Festival, Israel, 1994.  
--- OCIC Award, Amiens International Film Festival, France, 1992..  
--- Honourable mention, Freiburg International Film Festival, Switzerland, 1993.

Festivals: Venice, 1992. Munich 1992. Toronto 1992. Montreal 1992. San Francisco 1993. Boston 1993. Cartagena 1993. Toulouse 1993. Providence 1993. London 1993. Sundance, 1993. Viña del Mar 1993. Guadalajara, 1993. Philadelphia 1993. Chicago Latino 1993. Bahia 1994. Wellington 1994. Bombay 1994. Sales for TV: Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, Luxemburg, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Mexico, Brazil.

1986-87

**"In the Name of God" (100').**

Co-producer, director-author.

Documentary on liberation theology during Pinochet's dictatorship. Co-produced by TVE.

---Peace Film Award, Berlin International Film Festival, 1988.  
---Ocic Award, Berlin International Film Festival, 1988  
---Grand Prize, Festival dei Popoli, Florence, Italy, 1987.  
---Documentary Award, Havana Film Festival, 1987.  
---Glauber Rocha Award, Figueira da Foz Film Festival, Portugal, 1988.

Festivals: Toronto 1987. San Sebastian 1987. Biarritz 1987. San Francisco 1988. Los Angeles 1988. Cinéma du Réel, Paris 1988. Sales for TV: Spain, England, Germany.

1985

**"Pre-Columbian Mexico" (5 x 30').**

Director-author. Series on the Maya and Aztec culture, produced by TVE.

1973-79

**"The Battle of Chile I, II, III" (270').\***

Producer, director-author. Documentary trilogy about the final period of Allende's government.

With the contribution of Chris Markey and the ICAIC of Cuba.

---Grand Prize, Grenoble International Film Festival, France, 1975.  
---Grand Prize, Grenoble International Film Festival, France, 1976.  
---Grand Prize, Brussels International Film Festival, Belgium, 1977.  
---Grand Prize, Benalmádena Film Festival, Spain, 1976.  
---Grand Prize, Havana Film Festival, Cuba, 1979.  
---Special Jury's Prize, Leipzig Film Festival, Germany, 1977.  
--- Critic's Novas Texeira Award in France, 1977.

Festivals: Cannes, Quinzaine du Réalisateur, 1975, 1976 / Berlin, Filmforum, 1975, 1976, 1979 / Pesaro, 1975, 1976, 1981 / Moscow, 1975. London, 1979 /

San Sebastian, 1979. Melbourne, 1977 / Amsterdam, 1978 / Sao Paulo, 1979 / Etc.

Cinema Distribution: Algeria, Australia, Germany, Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Canada, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, USA, England, Finland, France, Grenada, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Mozambique, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Puerto Rico, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland, Venezuela and former-Yugoslavia.

Sales for TV: Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Spain, former East Germany, Holland, Mexico, Belgium, Cuba.

1971

**"The First Year" (100'), with a prologue by Chris Marker.**

Director-author. Documentary on the first year of Allende's government.

--- Fipresci Prize, Mannheim International Festival, Germany, 1973.

Cinema distribution: Chile, France, Belgium and Switzerland

\* These titles are released in the US and Canada by Icarus Films.

## NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT **FILM CREDITS**

writer and director	Patricio Guzmán
photography and camera	Katell Djian
sound recording	Freddy González
original music	Miranda y Tobar
producer	Renate Sachse
assisted by	Adrien Oumhani
co-produced by	Meike Martens
	Cristóbal Vicente
assistant to the director (production)	Cristóbal Vicente
assistant to the director (pre-production)	Nicolás Lasnibat
assistant sound recording	Rafael Huerta
editing	Patricio Guzmán and Emmanuelle Joly
	Ewa Lenkiewicz
editorial supervisor	Éric Salleron
video editing, online, effects	Marie-jeanne Wijckmans
efectos sala	Damien Defays and J. Jacques Quinet
sound editing and mix	Jean-Jacques Quinet
	Stéphane Guisard
sound mix	Patricio Guzmán and David Bravo
astronomical photography	Cristóbal Vicente
additional images	Vincent Rovannet
	Renate Sachse
still photography	Sonia Moyersoén
credits	Patricio Guzmán
artistic consultant	Verónica Rosselot
collaborator, commentary text	Fernando Osorio and Elba Parra
collaborator, commentary text	Jennifer Walton and Antonino Ballestrazzi
narration (voice)	Marie-France Augin, Andrea Obach
production manager	Fay Lady Vega González
assisted by	Marcela Perdomo and Pablo Rivas
support for developing the project	Flaco Van and Juan Aguilar
	Jutta Krug
administration	
transcription	
transport	
commissioning editor WDR	
Musicians	
Clarinet: Luis Rossi. Cuerdas: Hernán Muñoz, Natalia Cantillano, Julio Zapata, Celso López Marco Álvarez. Harp: María Eugenia Villegas. Guitar and Cuatro: José Miguel Tobar. Piano: José Miguel Miranda. Duduk and Whistle: Randall Ledermann	

Post production facility: Avidia  
Music recording studios: Estudios Miranda & Tobar  
Sound editing facility: Studio 5/5  
Mixing studio: Studio 5/5 y Studio l'Equipe  
Insurance: Rubini & Associes. Bank: Crédit Lyonnais.

Telecine and prints: Eclair Laboratoires Les autres d'eclair: Eclair Laboratoires  
Subtitling: BB Com et LTI

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Institutions: Agrupación de Familiares de Ejecutados y Detenidos Desaparecidos Políticos de Calama, Servicio Médico Legal de Santiago, Museo de Historia Natural, Museo

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