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**Patricio Guzmán:  
The Power of Memory at  
BFI Southbank in July**  
*with Patricio Guzmán on stage, Friday 13 July*



To coincide with the theatrical release of his latest film ***Nostalgia for the Light*** (2011), throughout July **BFI Southbank** will be featuring work by pioneering Chilean documentary filmmaker **Patricio Guzmán**. This will include on **Friday 13 July** a screening of ***Nostalgia for the Light*** followed by a **Q&A** with Patricio Guzmán. Guzmán first garnered international attention in the late 1970s for ***The Battle of Chile*** (1975-1978), a documentary trilogy almost unique in the annals of cinema. The trilogy documents the last year of the Popular Unity government of Chilean President Salvador Allende, leading up to the military coup d'état of 1973. Despite being one of many Chileans forced into exile under Pinochet's regime, Guzmán returned to his core subject of Chile time and again, painting portraits of the two men at the heart of the coup d'état in ***The Pinochet Case*** (2001) and ***Salvador Allende*** (2004) and revisiting his own film *The Battle of Chile* in ***Chile, Obstinate Memory*** (1997).

Two of Guzmán's films of the 1990s represent his exploration of the broader Latin American culture. In ***A Village Fading Away*** (1995), the subject is a

small Mexican town as seen through the eyes of a historian who was born and raised there and in **The Southern Cross** (1992) the subject is the role of religion in the continent's history. Playing alongside **The Southern Cross** is **Robinson Crusoe Island** (1999), a thoughtful video diary of a trip to the island named after Defoe's classic novel.

The remaining films in the season focus on Chile and the recovery of collective memory. Guzmán's belief that 'a country without documentary films is like a family without a photo album' helps explain his preoccupation with his country of birth, and **Chile, Obstinate Memory** (1997) is the perfect example of this. In it Guzmán returns to Chile to screen **The Battle of Chile** to people who had never seen it because it had been banned by the dictatorship some twenty years before. Guzmán uses his own documentary as a means to disclose shocking revelations to a younger generation whose own national history has been hidden from them. After the arrest of dictator Augusto Pinochet in London in 1998, Guzmán began to examine the dictator's time in power. **The Pinochet Case** (2001) was the result of this study, an analytical yet very human account of the regime and the effect it had upon the people of Chile. His next film was a stark contrast to the dissection of Pinochet – **Salvador Allende** (2004) is Guzmán's tribute and personal homage to a politician who was widely regarded as the first democratically elected Marxist in Latin America.

The season is brought up to date with Guzmán's latest film **Nostalgia for the Light** (2011), a highly personal documentary which combines astronomy, geology, history and politics. **Nostalgia for the Light** begins with Guzmán's childhood obsession with the stars - he takes to the Chilean Atacama desert to observe the skies, and there he finds scientists searching for the origins of the universe, historians seeking evidence of ancient man, and women scouring the desert for the remains of loved ones who disappeared during Pinochet's regime. Guzmán manages to implausibly combine these very different stories together to create a beautiful and coherent whole, a moving documentary which again explores the collective memory of Chile to great effect. Also taking place in July will be a **Patricio Guzmán Study Day** which will focus on **The Battle of Chile**, offering participants a critical insight into the production of the film and its historical context.

#### **Films showing in the Patricio Guzmán season in July:**

#### **Patricio Guzmán Study Day: The Battle of Chile – Yesterday and Today**

Guzmán's landmark film is today considered one of the finest examples of documentary filmmaking anywhere, anytime. With minimal support and despite extreme odds this award-winning work captured an exceptional moment in history through a fertile mix of direct cinema, investigative reportage and political analysis. To complement the Guzmán season, this study session will offer critical insight into the production of the work and its context. Michael Chanan and special guests will also consider the heritage of the ousted President Salvador Allende, and the session will include a screening of Michael Chanan's recent film, *Three Short Films About Chile*.

**Sat 14 July 11:00 – 17:00 NFT3**

**The Battle of Chile / La batalla de Chile**

A fertile mixture of direct cinema, investigative reportage, and political analysis, the footage for *The Battle of Chile* was smuggled out immediately after the coup of 11 September 1973, and edited in Cuba at the film institute, ICAIC, the results appearing between 1976 and 1979. An exemplary trilogy of films from every point of view. Instead of a chronological record, the three parts each recount the events from different perspectives. Part One focuses on the growing confrontation between Allende's supporters and the increasingly violent rebellion of the middle classes which gave the military their excuse of 'restoring order'. Part Two tracks the deterioration of Allende's position following the attempted coup of 29 June 1973, while Part Three is a coda which documents the loose coalition of workers and citizens who respond to right-wing initiatives by grassroots self-organisation in defence of Allende's visionary politics.

**Pt 1: The Insurrection of the Bourgeoisie**

1975. 96min

**Sun 15 July 16:00 NFT2**

**Tue 17 July 20:40 NFT2**

**Pt 2: The Coup d'État**

1976. 88min

**Sun 15 July 18:20 NFT2**

**Wed 18 July 18:30 NFT2**

**Pt 3: The Power of the People**

1978. 78min

**Sun 15 July 20:40 NFT2**

**Fri 20 July 18:30 NFT2**

**Joint ticket available £21.20, concs £13.75 (Members pay £1.50 less)**

**The Southern Cross / La cruz del sur**

Venezuela-Spain 1992. 80min

**+ Ile de Robinson Crusoe**

France 1999. 41min

First, a visually rich and reflective exploration of the role of religion in Latin America from pre-Columbian myth to liberation theology. Then one of Guzmán's most personal films, a video diary of his trip to the island 600 miles off the coast of Chile which as a child he assumed to be a fictional creation. But even here his limpid camera and gently ironic narration discovers an allegory of Chile's history.

**Tue 17 July 18:10 NFT2**

**Sat 21 July 20:30 NFT2**

**A Village Fading Away / Les Barrieres de la Solitude/Pueblo en vilo**

Chile-France 1995. Video. 52min

**+ Chile, Obstinate Memory / Chile, la Memoria Obstinada**

Canada-France 1997. Video. 58min

First, the workings of tradition and shared memory in the small Mexican town of San José de Gracia, seen through the eyes of the Mexican historian Luis González y González, who was born and raised there – a micro-history revealing much about the larger historical forces at work. Then, in one of his most moving films, Guzmán returns to his homeland with a copy of *The Battle of Chile*, which has never been seen there, to find some of the characters in the film who survived the dictatorship's violence. A profoundly self-reflexive work of remembrance, filmed with the utmost tact, the experience is nevertheless a painful revisitation of the past for those who remember, and when he screens the film to a student audience,

a shocking revelation to a younger generation presented with a history which has been hidden from them.

**Sun 22 July 15:40 NFT2**

**Wed 25 July 20:40 NFT2**

### **The Pinochet Case / Le cas Pinochet**

*France-Chile-Belgium-Spain. 2001. 109min*

Guzmán's dissection of Pinochet's regime of terror was filmed in the months after his arrest in London in October 1998. The mode of the film is both analytic and testimonial, counterpointing legal explanations and arguments, the chronicle of Pinochet's detention, and deeply moving accounts by victims. Concluding with Pinochet's return to Chile and the new legal battles he will now face there, the real protagonist of this film is the power of solidarity.

**Sun 22 July 18:20 NFT2**

**Thu 26 July 20:40 NFT2**

### **Salvador Allende**

*Belgium-Chile-France-Germany-Spain-Mexico. 2004. 100min*

Guzmán's tribute to Allende is not so much a biography as a personal homage to a man of whom he says that he 'marked my life'. A scrapbook of family photos and archive footage, with contributions from friends, family and followers, the film unfurls a portrait of a complex personality, the idealism of his political ideas, excitement of his electoral campaigns, euphoria of his first months in office, and the tragedy of his demise.

**Mon 23 July 20:40 NFT2**

**Sat 28 July 16:00 NFT2**

### **Nostalgia for the Light / Nostalgia de la luz.**

*Chile-France-Germany-Spain 2010. Dir Patricio Guzmán. 96min. Digital. EST.*

One of the most fully satisfying films of recent years, Patricio Guzmán's highly personal documentary improbably combines astronomy, geology, archaeology, history and politics... but to quite extraordinary effect. It begins with Guzmán's boyhood obsession with the stars, taking us into the rarefied, bone-dry air of Chile's Atacama Desert to observe the skies; there, he finds scientists researching the origins of the universe, historians seeking evidence of ancient peoples and women searching for the bodies of husbands and sons who disappeared under Pinochet. In less able hands such a mix of themes might not cohere, but Guzmán's storytelling skills and adept way with metaphor, his ability to see the larger picture, and his acute sensitivity towards those he interviews make for a brilliantly illuminating, finally very moving meditation on the enduring importance of memory, courage and moral conscience. Visual poetry, philosophical curiosity and a profoundly human compassion make for a film to ravish the eyes, excite the mind and touch the heart. Truly beautiful, and a masterpiece.

**Courtesy of New Wave Films**

**Friday 13 - Thursday 26 July**

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £10.0, concs £6.75 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket. Website [www.bfi.org.uk/southbank](http://www.bfi.org.uk/southbank)

**Tickets for FREE screenings and events must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment**

### BFI Filmstore

The BFI Filmstore is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

### The benugo bar & kitchen

Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

**\*\*\* PICTURE DESK \*\*\***

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