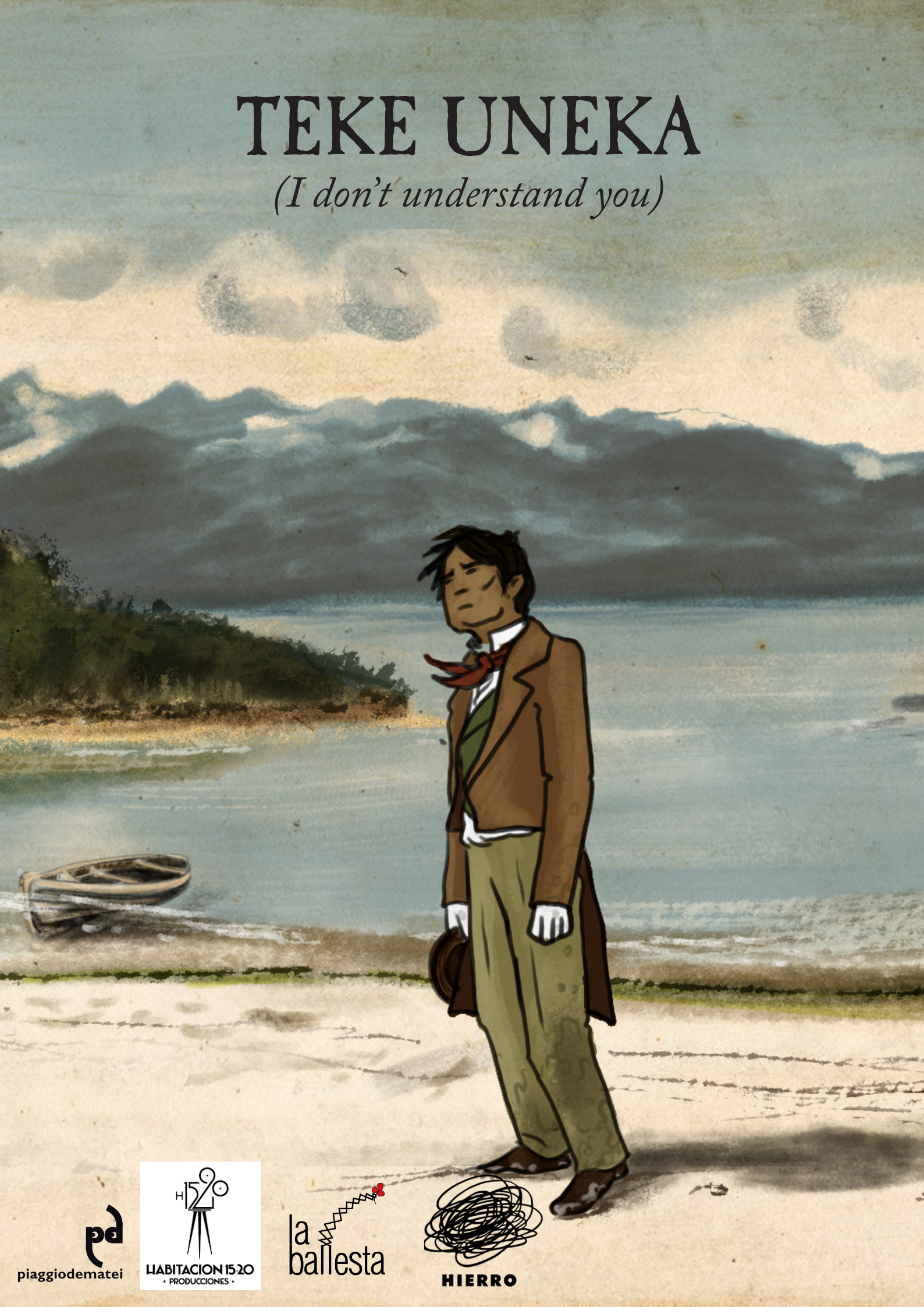


TEKE UNEKA

(I don't understand you)



pd
piaggiodematei

H 15:20

HABITACION 15:20
• PRODUCCIONES •

la 
ballesta


HIERRO

A film project by: María Laura Piaggio and Marcelo Dematei, Directed by:
Marcelo Dematei, Produced by: Carlos Smith Rovira (Colombia), Maximiliano
Dubois (Argentina), Toni Marín Vila (Spain)



Title: Teke Uneka (I don't understand you)

Length: 80 minutes

Format: Fiction

Animation with mixed techniques (rotoscopy + 2D digital)

Film genre: Adventure, Drama

Target: +13

Production company: Piaggiodematei Wapisa Estudio and Habitación 15/20 (Ar-
gentina), HierroAnimación (Colombia), La Ballesta (Spain)

+54 9 2901615884 +34 636432396

piaggiodematei.com

Contact:

Marcelo Dematei - marcelo@piaggiodematei.com

Carlos Smith - animacion@hierro.tv

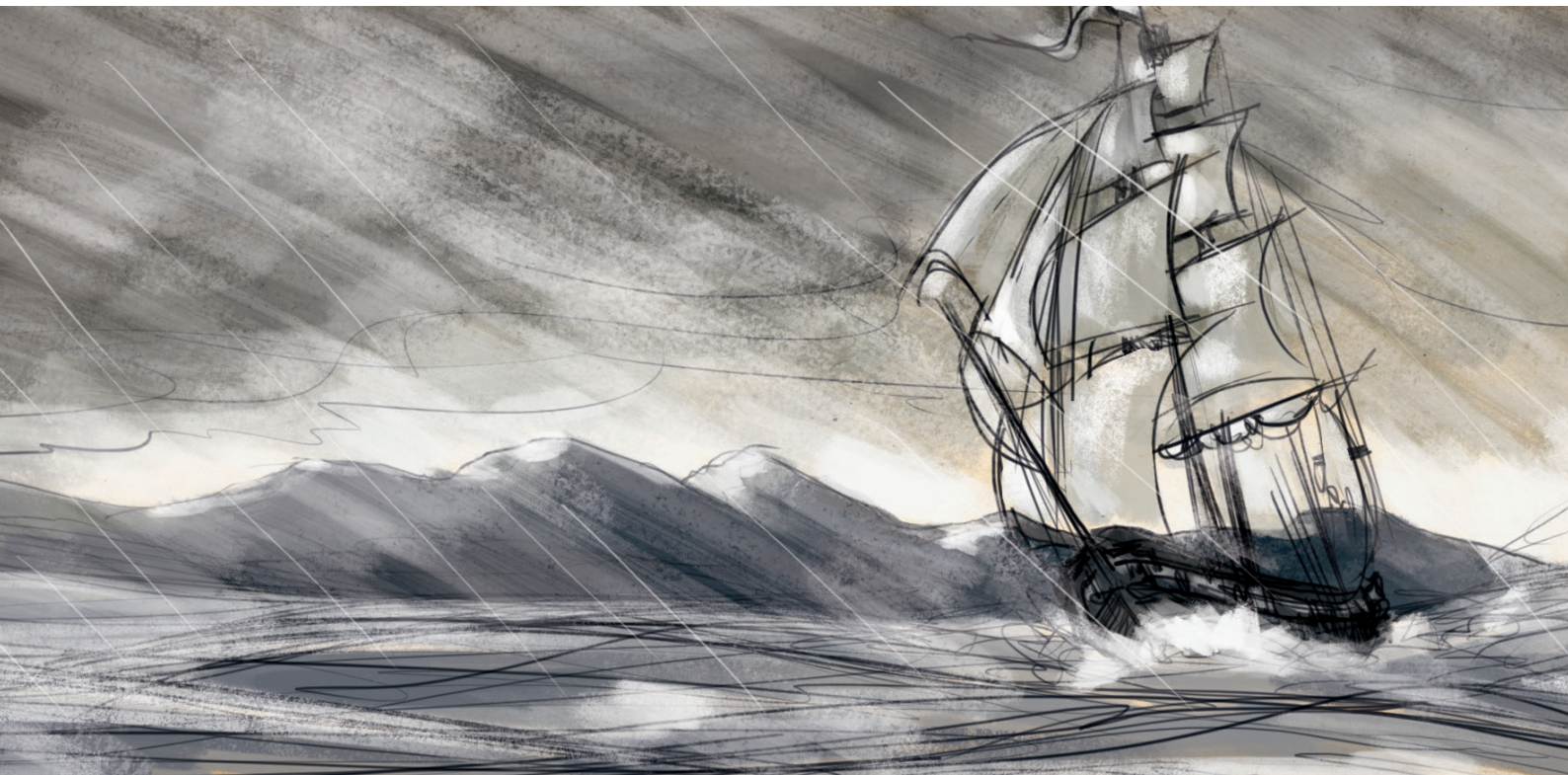
Maximiliano Dubois - maxi@habitacion1520.com

Toni Marín Vila - tmarinvila@laballesta.net

The project

Synopsis

In 1830, a 14 year old Yagan boy from Tierra del Fuego, Orundellico, is abducted by the HMS Beagle of the British Navy under the command of Captain Robert Fitz Roy. He will be taken to London, with the far-fetched purpose of being instructed in Western and Christian values, and to be returned years later to his homeland with the objective of civilizing his people, thus helping British interests in the region. On that return journey, along with Fitz Roy and the renamed Jemmy Button, will come a young English naturalist, Charles Darwin. Teke Uneka, which in the Yagan language literally means "I don't understand what you are saying" is a strange magical adventure from the exuberant and desolate Fuegian wilderness to the biggest, dirtiest and most pompous city in the world at that time. It is also a hero's journey in search of an unwanted light. It is a story about The Other and human tragedy.



About Teke Uneka

Teke Uneka or “tekenika” literally means “I don’t understand what you mean” in the Yaghan language. It was the usual answer to many of the questions that the English asked the Yaghans or Yamanas. Confusing its meaning, the British sailors called Tekenika Bay to a cove of the current Hoste Island (Chile) on the southern margin of the Beagle Channel and to the village of our protagonist located on the western coast of Navarino Island. Nowadays many things bear this name in Tierra del Fuego.

Teke Uneka is a feature film project made with animation techniques. The plot is based on the story of Orundellico/Jemmy Button, the 14-year-old Yaghan boy who was kidnapped in 1930 along with three other Fuegians from the neighboring Kawésqar village by Captain Robert Fitz Roy in command of the HMS Beagle, taken to England to be “civilized” and then returned to their homeland. On the return voyage on the HMS Beagle, in addition to Captain Fitz Roy, the young naturalist Charles Darwin also traveled with them. It is also the starting point of a systematic policy of acculturation applied from then on by Anglican and Jesuit missionary societies in southern Patagonia, with disastrous consequences for the local populations. It also matches with the beginning of studies of non-European races that led the science of the time to justify colonialism in the “inferiority” of these peoples.

Our film is based on the historical facts described and documented, but it is obviously a possible reconstruction. It is fiction because it proposes a la glance at the events from the point of view of the young Orundellico, literally abducted from his everyday world in the isolated Tierra del Fuego and moved to the most populated city in the world at that time. What was the effect on that 14 year old teenager? This is a story about The Other, about fear of the strange, about alienation and rootlessness, about misunderstanding and survival.

The historical context of the events is of particular importance.

On the return voyage of the HMS Beagle two young men, Darwin and Fitz Roy, argue about the captain’s experiment. While for Fitz Roy the Indians are “savages to be civilized”, for Darwin the Fuegians are almost part of the animal kingdom and as such are inferior to European humans. At the same time, the first global “industry”, the whaling/wolves industry, expands, based on the mass extermination of species around the globe.

The story of Jemmy Button has been told before, especially in literature and theater. In the audiovisual field, the point of view of Orundellico, the protagonist, was never explored, probably because the facts were carefully recorded by Fitz Roy and Darwin and except for brief statements by Orundellico mentioned by those authors, there is no record of his experiences. In our film we wish to emphasize the mismatch, and the more than likely misunderstanding in the records.





Project Treatment

act 1

Between the beginning of the forest and the sea we see the old man sitting. He is alone, covered only by a short fur cloak. We hear a repetitive human voice singing in Yaghan. The old man looks down. Two children (9 and 12 years old) are sheltered inside a circular ruca made of sticks, watching old Yekamush and wondering about his sadness.

It is a sunny day, the year is 1829, in summer. The beach seems to be the same as in the previous scene. In the same place and the same position, a boy of about 14 years old plays with a pebble. They call the boy from the group, and he runs off, his name is Orundellico.

Over the sea we see a British flagged ship coming, it is the HMS Beagle. On the deck of the ship are Captain Strokes, Lieutenant Fitz Roy and Pilot Murray. They are trying to see something in the storm. Strokes is upset. He asks Murray what animal is making that cry and the pilot answers that they are Fuegians. Cannibals! they are all the time looking at us, following us and we can't see them. -Beings far from the hand of God-, he says. Strokes walks away and violently locks himself in his cabin. Fitz Roy stares at the fires on the horizon. A shot is heard from the captain's cabin.

Another day of rain and fog, Fitz Roy already seated in the captain's cabin writes in the log about Strokes' suicide.

Orundellico is in the forest looking at an insect. He approaches Chelaé (fox) from behind. The animal stops, looks to the sides. In the distance you can see the Yaghan camp where the boy lives. Chelaé sits

next to him. They talk.

On the ship, Fitz Roy writes in his cabin about the discovery of a new bioceanic channel, which he calls the Beagle Channel.

It's dawn and a huge sperm whale is agonizingly stranded on the beach. Orundellico approaches it curiously, fascinated. Wapisa (the whale) opens one of her eyes, she has several iron harpoons stuck in her side. She calls him waliwa (boy) and tells him she will soon die. She warns him about the white men, advises him to control his fear and not to become one of them. Wapisa has a convulsion and dies.

Orundellico's father and Wálaputēs, the whale cutter, have climbed on the animal and while Wálaputēs cuts the pieces of meat and blubber, the father distributes them. More canoes arrive with other friendly families, Orundellico's family comes to greet them. Several children also arrive, among them Lasswea, who particularly attracts Orundellico's attention, attracted by her beauty. They look at each other shyly. Lasswea goes to the shore and collects shells and with a reed she makes two necklaces and puts them on, she approaches Orundellico and puts hers on.

Orundellico's uncle brings news that the whites are nearby in Onashaga. Lasswea's family and Orundellico's uncles propose to approach the whites' boat with the canoes to trade with them, to bring them otter or seal skins to exchange for shiny objects, metal and glass to make scrapers and points. Seeing Orundellico's enthusiasm, they invite him to go with them. The father agrees, let him go ahead with them, he will go behind with the mother and younger siblings. The father gives Orundellico an otter skin he had been working on so he can trade.

Fitz Roy's account of the capture of Orundellico, is heard in voice-over. The English violently ask about the whaleboat, the Indians smile and do not understand, they show their skins and baskets with seafood. Fitz Roy changes his strategy and holds out his hand for them to board the ship. Orundellico, fascinated, intrigued and afraid, approaches the ladder and holds out his hand with the otter skin that his father gave him. Fitz Roy grabs his arm and pulls him up. The uncle, busy trying to change an otter skin, complains. But Orundellico, already on top, asks Fitz Roy if they are going guanaco hunting. Murray quickly picks up the ladder. Orundellico is aboard HMS Beagle, he looks around in amazement. Fitz Roy a bit ironically, rips a couple of buttons off his jacket and tosses them to the guy as an exchange, who remains in the canoe gesticulating. The HMS Beagle picks up speed, Orundellico goes to the rail and in the distance he sees his parents calling out to him until he can no longer hear them. Fitz Roy's voice is superimposed, he orders them to dress him.

Orundellico is naked on the deck, he takes the necklace of snails that Lasswea gave him. They throw clothes at him. He doesn't know how to dress, looks at his pants, opens them, the English show him by gesturing. He tries to put his head through his trousers. The English and the Kawésqar laugh loudly. Fitz Roy remains serious. It is clear that he wants to do well but he does not know how, they do not help him. Boat comes over and helps him with his pants, the Englishmen roll around laughing.

Fitz Roy asks him the name of his people. He does it again and again, louder and louder. Orundellico says Teke Uneka (I don't understand what you are saying). Finally there is silence, the two look at each other's faces and Fitz Roy concludes that this is the Tekenika people, and shouts it out to the rest of the boat.

The canoes are already far away. Suddenly he remembers Chelaé and his warning.

Murray asks what they'll call the new one and a sailor says: Button! because the captain changed it to a button. Everyone nods jocularly, Peter Button or James Button, Jemmy Button, and laughs. He is slapped hard on the back and a bucket of water is dumped on his head. "Welcome aboard Jemmy Bu-

ton!” Orundellico/Jemmy Button smiles, he understands that they changed his name like the others, although he still doesn't understand what they mean.

Jemmy is forced into a wooden tub full of dirty water, where he must bathe. He does not understand this and resists, the sailor must force him. He closes his eyes, as if to wake up from a dream. A brush and a bar of soap are thrown at her and hit her head. He just watches them float away.

Jemmy is in the medical cabin. Dr. Bynoes and his assistant have Jemmy in a “T” position with his arms outstretched. They take his measurements and talk to each other. They ignore the Fuegian and comment on the measurements and some features of the shape and size of the skull. Fitz Roy corroborates with Bynoes Jemmy's good health and his belonging to a primitive race. Fitz Roy approaches him and puts his hand on his back, he makes the sign of the cross and tries to teach Jemmy. Jemmy does it awkwardly and Fitz Roy can't help but try to grab his hand and join him in the movement. Fitz Roy explains that he is taking him to England, to see London, the most important city in the world and the capital of the empire. He shows him a portrait of His Majesty the King, hanging on the wall. They speak at the same time. Fitz Roy tells him that they will educate him and make him a civilized man.

act 2

In the Beagle's meeting room, the Fuegians are seated to one side while the crew in groups do different things. Some play cards, one plays a violin, others chat. The Fuegians say nothing, they just watch. An officer asks them to approach the group where Fitz Roy, Bynoes and Murray are talking. Fitz Roy asks them about their cannibalistic habits. They more or less manage to understand each other, the English want to know more and induce them to tell what they do with the old women. Jemmy and Boat begin to narrate how they devour them. They start talking shyly, but when they see the interest they start to loosen up, they gesticulate, stand up and mime. Fitz Roy and the others comment in horror, for Murray he demonstrates his irredeemable savagery. He concludes that his stay in England will serve to change that habit, but not everyone agrees.

Jemmy is left alone in a corner of the boat. He lies down on the floorboards and looks up at the stars, sees Chelaé's eyes shining. Her soft tail tickles him, she appears and sits beside him, she tells him that his parents and Lasswea are waiting for him, that this journey has just begun, that he has to be brave, to survive and never forget where he came from.

Fitz Roy welcomes them to London, the capital of the world, and tells them they will see wonderful things. York looks at everything with obvious fear, panic. He holds Fuegia's hand who has a more curious expression. Fitz Roy approaches the group, tells Murray to arrange to put the Fuegians in a hotel. In an aside he asks him to look after the Fuegians, and hands him a newspaper. There is a note announcing the arrival of the Beagle with wild cannibals on board. Murray gives them blankets and instructs them to cover up to their heads to get out of the harbor without attracting attention. Dawn breaks.

It is nighttime. They all are in a room that is completely dark. The beds unused and in a corner on the floor are York and Fuegia. A little further on, Boat coughs incessantly. At the other end of the room is Jemmy. He clutches his legs in his hands, they are silent with wide eyes. Jemmy remembers his father, his mother, Lasswea, the fox who told him about a journey, this journey and he didn't understand. He searches his pockets for the necklace. It is all undone, there are still some healthy snails left. He cries slowly, without sound or movement. Jemmy feels a giant paw on his shoulder until he hugs him, he knows it is Chelaé, the gray fox, who sings him a soft lullaby from his homeland, which speaks of wind and snow.



Outside the Royal Hospital in Plymouth, the horse-drawn carriage bringing Murray and the Fuegians arrives. In a very cold room with high windows, he is vaccinated. Jemmy struggles, but does not make it out of the room. Jemmy and York watch from their room as Boat's lifeless body is moved.

It is night in the hospital, lightning flashes through the glass, thunder rumbles. Jemmy is naked, he sits under one of the pine trees. With mud he paints his face in the traditional way as the Yaghans do in mourning, so that Boat's spirit will find its way. York from the window watches as guards run out from the gallery and take Jemmy inside. Jemmy does not resist, shouts his father's name and his mother's name and Lasswea's name, no one responds. Jemmy sees his father in the darkness, only a beam of light on his side reveals him. He speaks to him in despair. The father figure morphs into Fitz Roy and the language warps into English. The voice tells him you are in England, "You have a lot to learn, son. You have to survive." While everything is dark, we hear Fitz Roy's voice thanking Reverend Wilson for housing and educating the Fuegians during their stay in England at his farm in Walthamstow.

A galley pulled by two horses moving through the countryside on the outskirts of London. We also see the beautiful calligraphy of Fitz Roy's letter running nimbly on the paper as the galley pulled by the horses along the wet road. Murray introduces Reverend Wilson and the Jenkins couple who are the teachers.

Wilson and Jemmy sitting in long chapel pews. Wilson explains the place of God and the creation of the world and men. Jemmy says it reminds him of Watawuinea and that the Yaghans and their world were not created by anyone. Wilson is not happy with the comparison to God and orders him, as penance, to stay in the chapel praying.

In the courtyard there is a line of boys and girls in uniform. They are the students of the school, low-income children from the neighborhood between 5 and 10 years old. Among them stand out Jemmy, 14, and above all Elleparu/York, 27. A little boy looks at Elleparu uneasily and he frightens him with a horrible grimace. Then he bursts out laughing.

At the classroom door, Jemmy fiddles with the coin, sees that it has an image of the King on it. Unintentionally, the coin falls to the floor and rolls, he does nothing to pick it up, he is comfortable in the sun. One of the children sees it, and picks it up. Two others, seeing him pick up a coin, rush to get it from him. They fight over the coin and a few more join in. Jemmy watches them closely and laughs.

That night in the kitchen, York is alone eating something. Jemmy comes in with an oil lamp and carefully lights the lamp and fascinated looks inside the lampshade. He tells him that it is a fire, but only the light, without all the heat and that it is made with whale oil, like the one that brought the ship they saw in the harbor. York tells him that in Onashaga it is best to make a big fire, as usual. He tells him that his advances in arithmetic, religion and English are of no use in Onashaga either. Jemmy tries to defend himself, but can't find words.

Smiling Jemmy walks cross-country alone. He sees a fox approaching from the nearby bush. It's a red fox, his name is Fox. Jemmy looks at it and keeps walking. In the distance he sees the figure of a man. Then he recognizes his father, calls out to him and runs. He happily tells him all the things he has learned: arithmetic, English and about a god called Christ, but suddenly, his father raises his hand as when he last saw him following the Beagle. A ray of sunlight blinds his eyes. When he opens his eyes again, his father is gone.

Fitz Roy and Murray arrive, Jemmy takes care to look well dressed and show acquired manners. The Jenkins and Wilson's greet Fitz Roy. Fitz Roy greets each Fuegian, condescending and Jemmy with a smile. In the room by the fire, Fitz Roy explains the importance of tea in British culture and the various steps including the etiquette for tea time, Jemmy says, over and over again, that he likes tea.

They arrive at the palace and pass through thousands of corridors, guided by men in livery and powdered wigs, the walls have paintings and tapestries. They are left in a small room waiting for the entrance to the hall where they will be received.

The king asks some questions. He has a globe brought in and asks Fitz Roy to point out Tierra del Fuego. They have to turn the globe upside down in order to do so. The solid wooden globe is enormously overgrown and it takes several servants and Fitz Roy himself to try to turn it upside down. Jemmy and Fuegia look on in amazement at the scene. The king approaches with his monocle and says something to the effect that he is "the ass of the world", everyone laughs and later so do Jemmy and Fuegia.

The king asks Jemmy about his king and Jemmy tells him he doesn't have one and tells him about his father. The king laughs, and doesn't let him finish. The queen asks how they dress. Fuegia calmly tells her that "we walk around naked" to which the queen says they should have proper clothing and everyone nods seriously. The parade of gifts begins and they are quickly dismissed.

Outside, Fitz Roy exultantly comments that now they will be able to make the return voyage. The Fuegians will be able to fulfill their civilizing mission. York smiles, Jemmy looks at them in obfuscation. Jemmy runs off and gets lost in the streets of London. He climbs a hill in the park and, tired, sits down on a bench next to a still unlit lamp post. From between some bushes, Fox comes out. He sits peacefully next to him. Jemmy doesn't even look at him, he is angry and lost in thought. Fox tells him that he had already warned him that he was not from here. Jemmy tells Fox that he doesn't want to go back, he feels that he has already been forgotten, that he no longer belongs in Onashaga. Night is falling. Fitz Roy's hand from behind clasps his shoulder and sits next to him on the bench, Fox is still sitting on the other side. Fitz Roy talks to him about the importance of his civilizing mission, Jemmy babbles that he doesn't really want to leave, that he likes the farm and the school, Fitz Roy doesn't seem to hear him, he looks off into the horizon with a blank stare and somewhat euphoric, he tells him that Britain has a mission in store for him.

Already on deck, Fitz Roy introduces them to Darwin. Darwin does not even look at them, he is worried about the load of his scientific instruments. Fitz Roy also introduces them to Father Matthews, explaining why he is on his mission.

Darwin and Fitz Roy play chess and discuss Fitz Roy's civilizing plan. Darwin is skeptical. They end up arguing about science and religion. The argument escalates and they both get angry.

In the dark of winter, Jemmy is alone under the snow. He is sitting on a log. The figure of his father appears in front of him, but he cannot see his face or touch him, it is a silhouette with the pink light of the snowfall illuminating him from behind. The father speaks to him, tells him that he must not forget the teachings, that now he will be able to do the kina, that he must choose a woman. Jemmy tells him what he learned and does so in English. The father speaks upstairs in Yaghan, tells him that he does not understand, that he should not forget the teachings and walks away under the light of the snow. Chelaé runs without seeing Jemmy and follows his father until they both disappear in the snow. Jemmy is left in the dark.

HMS Beagle is anchored. It is hot and they are waiting for Darwin. Jemmy approaches to Fitz Roy and in good humor he tells him he will soon be back, Jemmy tells him that his father just died and walks away.

HMS Beagle sails the waters of Patagonia, the Fuegians recognize the air, the birds. They see whales in the distance, though only they see them. The Beagle anchors at Wulaia. York and Fuegia, who is carrying a suitcase, prepare to go down to the launches. Fitz Roy watches the action from the bridge in silence and gives orders about the landing. Faced with Jemmy's obvious nervousness, Fitz Roy encourages him by saying that the time has come to accomplish the mission and demonstrate all that he has learned. Several armed men are also arranged on Fitz Roy's orders.

Jemmy in the first of the boats stands anxiously, looking at the coast. The rising wind ruffles his hair, he holds his hat with his hand on his head. Before making land he steps off and puts his legs in the water, wetting his pants.

It is near noon. Jemmy looks anxiously toward the forest. He looks for a sign of his family. The wet pants are stuck to his legs and dirty with sand and bother him. The soaked leather boots, full of gravel, sink into the puddles. Behind, the English shout orders coordinating the mooring and pulling the boats ashore. Time passes and Jemmy remains standing on the beach. The wind blows Jemmy's hat, which he tries to grab and holds on his head with his right hand. Jemmy looks at the forest. Then he smiles.

From among the trees, some yaghan people can be seen beginning to come down to the beach. Jemmy watches them without moving, fixing his collar. His hair blows in the wind and he tries to put it back again and again.

A naked man and woman approach him, behind them more appear from the woods. They stop about three feet away from Jemmy, curious but serious. Jemmy smiles and holds up his hat, which is giving him trouble. The Indians look oddly at this attempt by Jemmy to keep his hat on his head. After a moment they all smile. Jemmy tries to speak to them but his Yaghan language doesn't come out, he speaks to them in English. They don't understand him and react by laughing. Jemmy becomes very nervous. He isolates himself, looks at the sky, the birds, they can see Fitz Roy watching with his spyglass.

The English guards separate Jemmy from the rest of the Indians who begin to approach. This causes a situation of confusion and some anger. Jemmy stays on the English side and shouts at his people, his speech is confusing mixing English, Yaghan and Spanish, nobody understands him. He abruptly tries to explain how good it is for them, the Yamanas, what he brings from England. Darwin comments with Fitz Roy on the difficulty in being understood that Jemmy is experiencing.

On the other side of the beach some canoes arrive. They come from the central islet. In the one that arrives first are two adolescent boys, but they look strong and well-built. An older woman with a long paddle also comes along.

Jemmy approaches the canoe and the screaming boys. He recognizes in them his older brother and his other brother, the younger one. The older woman carrying the paddle is his mother. Jemmy picks up the pace and shouts towards the Englishmen and points to the Yaghan canoe. He explains that it is his family approaching.

Then we see Jemmy and his mother looking at each other. The brothers touch her gloved hands and while she looks at him strangely she recognizes her son and welcomes him. Then the woman proposes to set up a ruca to camp there. She tells Jemmy to come by later to greet the family.

Jemmy and the English distribute the gifts brought from England with a line of guards separating Jemmy and the English from the Yaghan.

Fitz Roy orders his people where each farm will be set up and organizes the work, knowing that they will stay a few days to also give Jemmy time to establish contact with his people. The English and the Yaghans set up camp on the beach and other surrounding areas of the bay.

One morning Fitz Roy returns to the beach and calls Jemmy. He explains that it is now his turn to gain the trust of his family and his people. The HMS Beagle will return in a few months and they can be reunited. Jemmy shows some distress. He knows that HMS Beagle will leave and he will be left alone. He would now like to return to England.

Jemmy waves on the beach. He looks toward the forest and sees Chelaé passing by. He yells at her, but the gray fox doesn't stop, rushes through the trees, loses its shape and becomes a gray blob that disappears deep into the forest. Jemmy tries to follow it, but with his shoes he trips on a ledge and falls heavily. He hurts his hands. He looks back to where the fox was lost and can't find it.

One morning Matthews rings the bell of his hut calling the service, only Jemmy is standing next to him, York and Fuegia remain locked in their hut. A group of Yaghan surround them. The missionary explains the work of the farm, with its schedules and rules. Jemmy's translation is not very good.



Some Yaghan children chase the chickens imitating their funny gait and clucking. Jemmy and the Yamanas laugh, Matthews retreats to his hut in anger. Matthews complains bitterly to Jemmy about the Yaghan's inconsistency and the fact that they come and go from camp. He suggests to Jemmy that he bring his mother and siblings to live in his cabin and dress them decently.

Matthews has a group of Yaghan children lined up. The children are dressed and he has them repeat a fragment of the Bible, a psalm. Later, the Yaghan gathered on the beach to watch as the clothed children repeat the psalm phonetically and hold up their hands in prayer. A group of adults joins them. They look angry, remove the children's clothes and gather and head for Matthews' hut.

It is night, Jemmy is alone in his cabin, he is sad. Sitting by his lighted lamp in the window. He sees Chelaé passing by. Outside, under the moonlight, Jemmy and Chelaé meet. They walk together to Jemmy's mother's ruca, from which the glow of the lit campfire rises, and sparks fly up into the sky in the cold night. Jemmy greets the fox, takes off his shoes and enters the ruca smiling.

Matthews is outside and orders him to follow him. York and Fuegia have fled and stolen everything. Jemmy runs to the Kaweskar's hut. He enters and it is completely empty. Matthews repeats over and over again that word: sinners. He goes to their hut and finds that everything has been removed, and their things are gone. His books, slates, tea set and clothes are gone. Only on the floor he finds the lamp with the broken glass shade.

He goes to the table and struggles to turn on the lamp, he is able to do so and when he succeeds he smiles, but after a while the lamp flickers and goes out. He is unable to light it again. He looks for more oil and matches, but there is nothing left. Jemmy screams loudly. His scream is heard throughout the camp, the bay, and the whole of Onashaga.

Chelaé runs through the forest. Jemmy is crying, he sees Elleparu with her smirk in the glass and Fuegia behind waving her skirt flirtatiously. York tells him mockingly, that none of that will do him any good in Onashaga and mockingly calls him Mr. Button, Mr. Button in Captain Fitz Roy's jacket.

Jemmy is on the beach sitting on a rock, observing the arrival of a canoe. Among the new group he discovers Lasswea. He is fascinated, she is now a beautiful woman, she is naked and he, Orundellico, dressed as an Englishman. He looks at her with his eyes. They look at each other, it takes a while, but they recognize each other. She smiles in surprise at Jemmy's appearance. He stands up and approaches her.

Jemmy awakens startled in the night by Matthews' screams for help from his next cabin. There is a shouting of voices in Yaghan and English and the sound of things breaking and loud banging. He gets up hastily and frightened and goes out the door of his cabin.

act 3

Fog covers the shores of Onashaga. After its voyage through the South Pacific, the Beagle returns to sail the Onashaga to the west. Fitz Roy is on deck talking with Darwin. Fitz Roy exposes his fears about his social experiment to the naturalist. As they pass through various coves, there is no sign of any Yaghan. They approach the beach where they were left. The sight they find is desolate. Nothing remains of the huts and farms.

A canoe with yaghans on board approaches the big ship. The ladders are pulled up and a man begins to climb it. On the deck Darwin and Fitz Roy watch in amazement as a hirsute Jemmy Button, with long hair, smoky skin, bloodshot eyes and totally naked, smilingly climbs aboard the ship. Before

they can say anything, the Yaghan is standing on the deck in front of them and greets them in perfect English and with a small bow of his head, and tells the captain that he was waiting for him and asks to invite him to tea. Fitz Roy, between surprised and frustrated by the appearance, answers the kind proposal satisfactorily. When he points to the ship's tea room, which Jemmy already knows, he asks for clothes to wear. The Indian quickly reaches for them, dresses quickly and the three men are already seated at the tea table.

After an initial silence Fitz Roy asks Jemmy what happened. Jemmy, without looking at him, takes a sip of tea very slowly.

(Flashback) Jemmy arrives at Matthews' cabin in the dark night. Inside is a Dantesque scene. In a corner, with a shotgun in his arms, the missionary points and threatens a group of Yaghans, including his mother and one of his brothers. They ask him for something that the missionary does not understand and he orders them not to touch anything while he insults them, calling them savages and sinners and other insults referring to their race or their pagan condition. Jemmy tries to mediate between them. Matthews seizes the moment and runs out of the cabin. Jemmy runs after him. Outside, the missionary manages to get on the roof of the cabin and talking about God and sins, he begins to shoot at the people. No one seems to be hurt, but in the darkness and the shouting it is difficult to know what is happening.

Fitz Roy offers Jemmy a ride back to England. He acknowledges to him that that night in St. James's Park perhaps Jemmy was right not to want to return to Tierra del Fuego. Jemmy finishes his tea. Lasswea's cries from the canoe begin to sound more desperate. Jemmy falls silent and replies that no, he really should go back. That he is a Yaghan and that in England there are too many people, too much noise, and too much dirt. That his place is here, Wulaia.

Fitz Roy is sad, Darwin reminds him that from the beginning he explained to him that his social experiment had no scientific basis because savages are by nature and because God does not exist, he says this in an unpleasant and haughty way.

Orundellico quickly builds a large bonfire on the shore and with the column of smoke he dismisses the Beagle. He throws the new lamp that Fitz Roy had given him into the fire. In the distance, from the Beagle the column of smoke is seen on the coast of Ushuaia.

Old Yekamush's eyes are red from the fire and yellow from the years. He finished narrating the story to Yexalem who looks at him in astonishment and silence. The boy understands that the stranger who was called Jemmy Button is now in front of him and is the wise old man who tells the stories and is his grandfather. Yekamush speaks to the boy as Wapisa spoke to him. He tells him that those white people did not come back anymore but others came looking for Jemmy, more and more and more and they did not stop coming.

Old Yekamush is alone on the beach, in front of Onashaga, behind him the forest. Chelaé is sitting among the trees. He is a few meters away from Yekamush. He does not need to turn around, he knows he is there. He tells him aloud that it's good of him to come, calls him an old friend, and tells him it's time for the last trip. Chelaé calmly nods under the snow.

Night is about to fall, the painting of his body is finished. The old man climbs into the canoe and sets off for the canal. Smoke from the fire carrying the canoe rises into the sky, lost in the fog. Yekamush turns to look at the boy.

The Yámana boy smiles and raises his hand, then turns, puts his hands in his jacket and crosses Maipú Street away from the beach and into the center of the city of Ushuaia today, 150 years later.



Project Concept

Teke Uneka is a historical film with many scenes that take place on a 19th century ship. The story begins in a virgin-looking Tierra del Fuego, still populated by canoe communities that coexist with an inner world in which dreams and protective spirits play a key role. There will be no explicit separation between this magical world and the “real” one. On the other hand, the story develops in the England of the mid-19th century in a populous and dirty London with its characteristic architecture, the English countryside and Saint James Palace (the royal residence). In this respect, animation has no limits and we will be able to reconstruct these physical or mental places and populate them with our characters with the only limit of our imagination.

This film aims to focus the story on Orundellico’s experiences, what he sees, what he dreams or feels. The animation allows us to build a world that sometimes seems to be solid and material, but on the other hand, will not draw boundaries between the magical and the real or the oniric world and the vigil.

We aim to use a mixed animation technique. We will use rotoscoping for the movement of the human characters, although we will use digital 2D for the clothes and facial expressions. Also the boats and cameras will be made in 3D and be rotoscoped. This will allow us to have a lot of freedom in the use of color and stroke, when necessary.

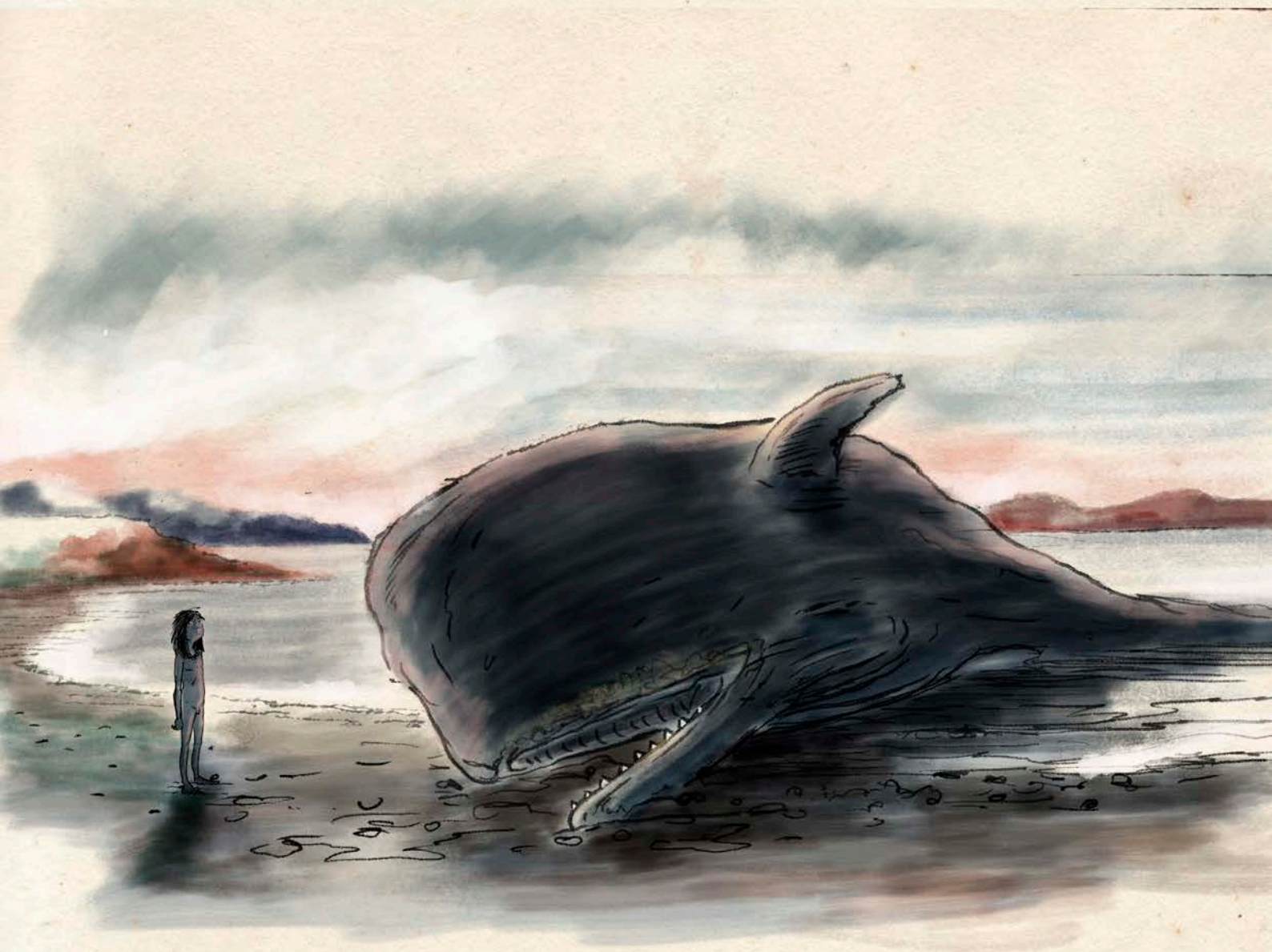
The backgrounds will have pictorial references and will be worked with several levels of halftones; on the other hand, flat colors will be used for the characters, with a light color and a shadow color. The backgrounds and sceneries of the trip are inspired by paintings and engravings of the 19th century, impregnated with European romanticism. A primary source is the later watercolors and engravings of Conrad Martens, official painter of the HMS Beagle and the first to draw the four abducted Fuegians.

The characters will have realistic physical proportions and will be painted with flat colors, one of light

and one of shadow. Throughout the story, there is a strong opposition between the naked body and the dressed body. When Jemmy is dressed, he is “civilized”. The Yamanas painted their bodies with different abstract configurations, lines, dots, etc and every figure had a meaning.

This is a film with a lot of silence, as many of the relationships between characters will be resolved without dialogue. Those who have visited Tierra del Fuego know that silence is broken only by the sound of wind or water and is one of the characteristics of the landscape, a silence that becomes overwhelming when the snow falls.

Another fundamental reason for the silence is because this story is about the impossibility of “translation” in the broadest sense. The characters in this film not only speak different languages, they inhabit different worlds, and the fact that they do not understand each other is part of the central theme. We propose a more expressive than realistic sound replacing natural sounds with atmospheres formed by noises and effects.



The main characters

Orundellico /Yékamush / Jemmy Button

Orundellico /Yékamush / Jemmy Button

Our protagonist lives several lives and as a consequence, throughout the story, he has several identities:

Orundellico (14 years old in 1829), is a young Yaghan who lives with his family. He is curious and cheerful, has a sensitive and peaceful soul. He stands out for his great capacity of observation and imitation. Like some Yamanas, he has the ability to communicate with animals. He has a close relationship with his father and with all the small community he is part of. He is attracted to Lasswea, a Yaghan girl with whom he plays on the beach. At the age of 14, he is kidnapped by the crew of the HMS Beagle and baptized with the name of Jemmy Button.

Jemmy Button has the sensitivity and curiosity of Orundellico. His enthusiasm for learning leads him to try to ingratiate himself with the white people in order to survive and understand this vastly different world. He is submissive and does not seek confrontation. When he gets anxious or angry he withdraws into himself. He is loyal and obedient.

Finally, Yekamush (52 years old in 1864) is the elderly Orundellico. He has been an initiate for years and became the Yekamush (sorcerer/shaman). In his life, he has seen the white men's ships become more and more frequent and the Malvinas missionary settlement tried to set foot on the islands. He has seen families fall apart, get sick, give up ancestral customs, lose their children, just as his father lost him. He has learned something: the whites are dangerous even if they come in peace, so he decides to tell his story as a legacy and farewell.

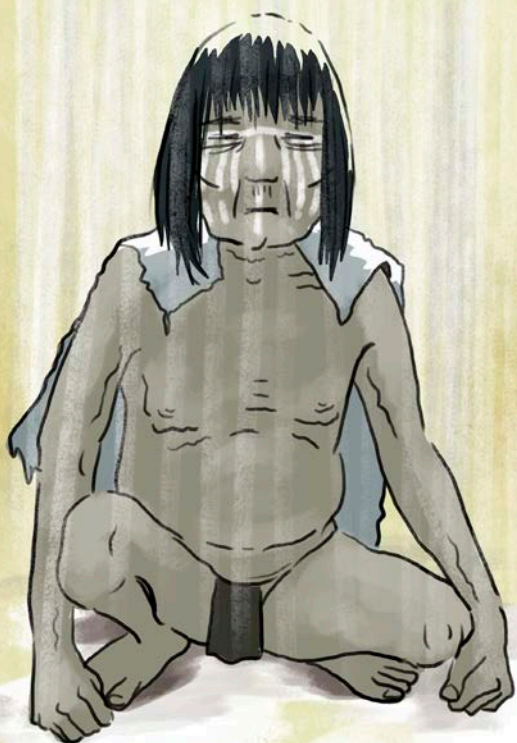
Orundellico's dramatic arc begins with his experience, based on the value of innocence. He lives peacefully with his community and an event destabilizes him: he is appropriated by Commander Fitz Roy and taken to a totally different world. This forced trip generates a great dilemma, producing tension and contradiction within him. Orundellico is motivated by the desire to learn, to know more, he boarded the ship believing in an adventure: trading, hunting guanacos, getting to know a big ship. What he never imagined is that the journey would imply not only getting away from his world but also having to change his identity. Orundellico, now called Jemmy, is taught another language and other customs. He learns, but when he becomes aware of this, he is frightened and distressed. Inside him the tension increases, he has a mark that comes from far, his world is activated and makes it impossible for him to continue with his life as it is. The dreams and the characters of the fox (Chelaé) and the whale (Wapisa) function as "the voice of his conscience", the memory and also as spirits that accompany him on this journey.



Orundellico



Jemmy Button



Yekamush



Chelaé

Robert Fitz Roy (26 years old in 1829)

Captain of HMS Beagle. Young officer in the British Navy. Neat, polite, correct, competent, although with a volcanic character at times. Of straight morals, somewhat inflexible, he does not take very well that his plans do not go as he thinks. His family belongs to the minor nobility, he has always been part of the most influential group of English politics but his resources are limited. He prefers the sea, he does not move comfortably between palaces and power. He is a fervent Christian and in some ways a humanist.

He does not doubt the humanity of the native peoples and is able to see the personal qualities of the natives, although always from a paternalistic point of view.

He assumes command of the Bergantin due to the suicide of his superior in command. The “social experiment” of civilizing the Fuegians is his idea. He believes it will be good for them and at the same time facilitate future English navigation and settlement in the area. His life will be a continuous struggle with the Admiralty to obtain support for his expeditions.



Elleparu / York Minster (26 years old in 1830)

Kawésqar youth who was taken aboard the HMS Beagle against his will and does not forgive it. He lived with his family group in their temporary settlements among the sheltered bays and harbors of the channels southwest of the Big Island of Tierra del Fuego. He is strong, proud and arrogant. He has an ambiguous relationship with Jemmy, on the one hand he makes fun of him, despises him and in other situations he is a brother and can keep pace with him. He likes horses, he is not obscured by civilization, he always values what is simple and what he owns. He has a close relationship with Fuegia that grows until they decide to escape together. He is unwilling to yield to the whites or to imitate them. He is reluctant to change his habits and follow orders. He is not afraid of violence and can be violent. He is just waiting for the right opportunity to return to his own kind.



TEKE UNEKA

Charles Darwin (22 years old)

Travels on the HMS Beagle on a scientific mission. Naturalist. Educated and from a wealthy and religious family, he is the rebellious son. Adventurer. He lives with the civilized Fuegians on his return voyage to Tierra del Fuego. He does not believe in Fitz Roy's mission to "civilize" the Fuegians. He has long conversations with Fitz Roy about this disagreement. On the other hand, he finds it difficult to adapt to life at sea, he gets seasick and spends long periods of time feeling sick.

Yokcushlu / Fuegia Basket (9 años en 1829)

Kawésqar girl kidnapped by Fitz Roy and taken to England. She shares with Jemmy the trip and stays in England. Like him, she is not able to decide her destiny and as a prisoner she lets herself go and tries to please the whites. She being a woman gives her a special status, as someone to be preserved, so the English are particularly protective of her. She is friendly, smiling and obedient, which provokes great empathy towards her on the part of the British. She enjoys wearing skirts and twirling around in peek-a-boo dresses. Fuegia and York develop a relationship during their captivity that they will maintain after returning to Tierra del Fuego. She has always had a sympathetic relationship with Jemmy.



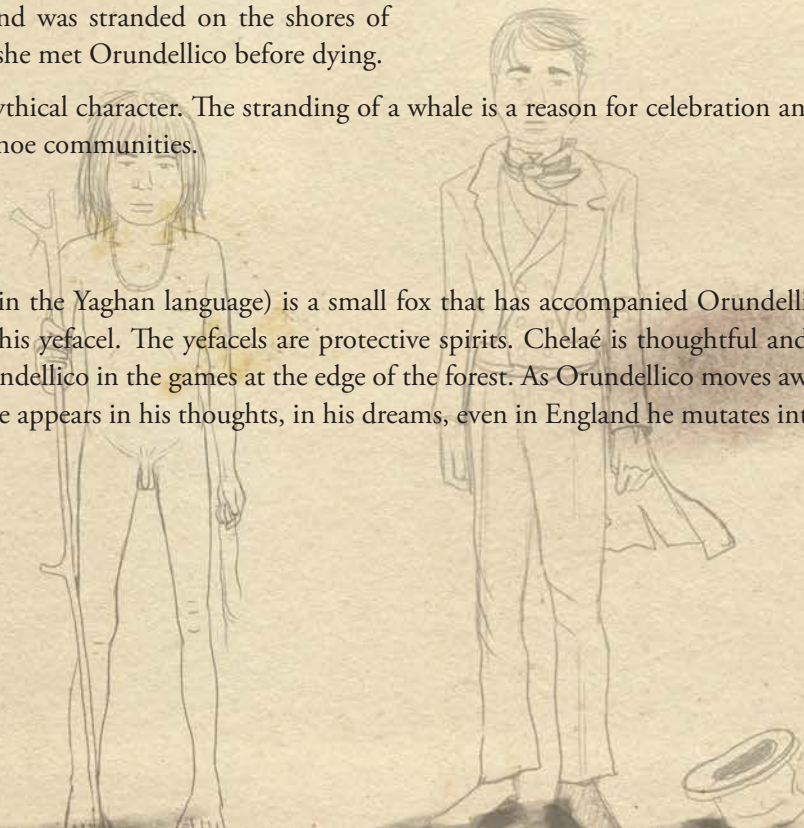
Wapisa

Wapisa (literally "whale" in the Yaghan language) is a female sperm whale of about 50 years old. Wapisa was mortally wounded in an encounter with whalers in the South Atlantic, in which her son and sister lost their lives, and was stranded on the shores of Onashaga where she met Orundellico before dying.

The whale is a mythical character. The stranding of a whale is a reason for celebration and gathering in the Fuegian canoe communities.

Chelaé

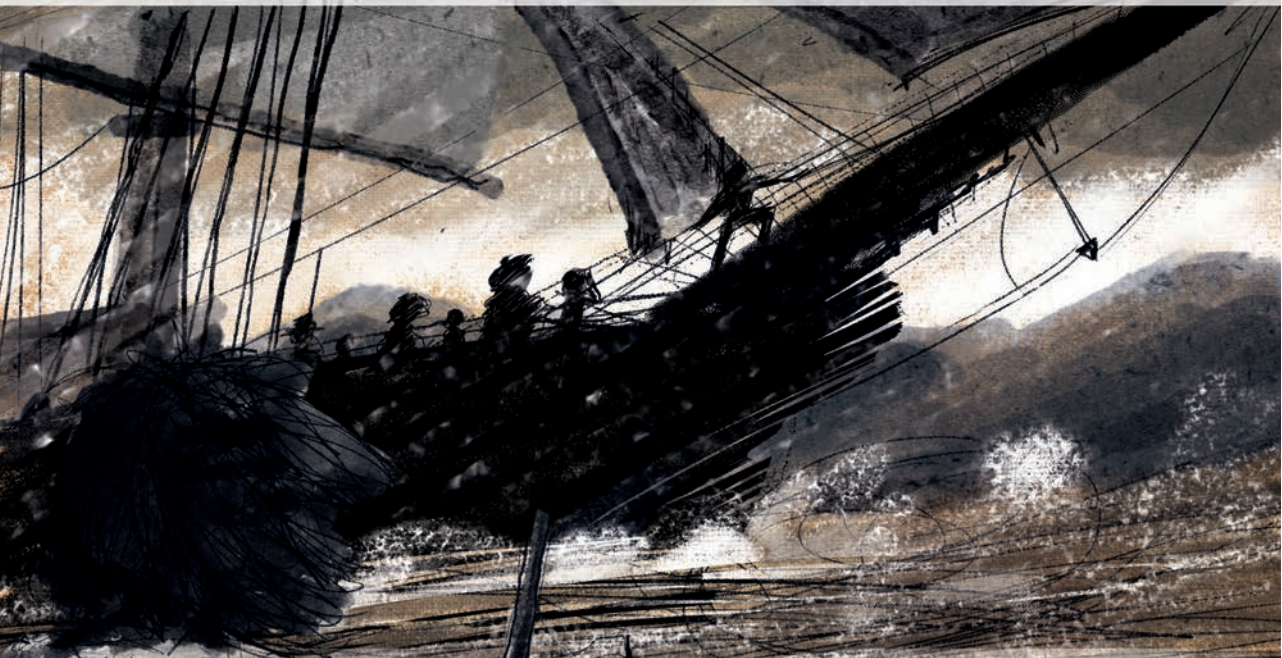
Chelaé (gray fox in the Yaghan language) is a small fox that has accompanied Orundellico since he was a child. It is his yefacel. The yefacels are protective spirits. Chelaé is thoughtful and frugal. He accompanies Orundellico in the games at the edge of the forest. As Orundellico moves away, he takes different forms: he appears in his thoughts, in his dreams, even in England he mutates into a red fox.





TEKE UNEKA
no te entiendo





TEKE UNEKA
no te entiendo



ORUNDELIC

ORUNDELICO

1930



Some references

Colors and landscapes from Tierra del Fuego

Winter: Blues, cool greens, lots of white and some pink



Summer: Blues, turquoise greens, orange and lots of light.





John Constable's English countryside.



We will mix rotoscoping with a limited type of facial animation to emphasize and at the same time make facial expressiveness more legible. We will use, then 2d digital animation with key frames that emphasize the expressions to simplify their decoding. This mix of techniques was already used by the director in one of the chapters of the fourth season of the series “Old Folk’s Tales” (“Victoria, in the bay that enters towards the west”). This episode was entirely made and it is our main reference.

Photo frame from the episode

Old Folk’s Tales- Episode 4: Victoria in the bay that comes to the west (Dematei, 2018).
Realistic proportions in an stylized design with emphasis in facial features



“Old Folk’s Tales. Victoria, in the bay that enters towards the west”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTjP4KXhtL4>

The creative team

Author/script

María Laura Piaggio Fonterosa (1970 - 2022)

Producer, transmedia director and graphic designer. Specialist in development, design and production of transmedia audiovisual projects, interactive projects, webdocs and animation. Speaker and international jury in multiple digital and audiovisual events. Co-founder of Piaggiodematei.

Author/director

Marcelo Dematei

Audiovisual director, illustrator, designer and Comic artist. Co-founder of Piaggiodematei Studio in 2011. Director and designer of the multi-award-winning series “Old Folk’s Tales” (2013-2018, Señal Colombia) among other works. Author of animated works for TV, short films, installations and interactive developments, transmedia, comics and VR.

Author/script

Natalia Ader

Lives in Ushuaia, Argentina. Image and Sound Designer (UBA) and master candidate in Digital Audiovisual Communication (UNQ). Assistant professor and researcher at the National University of Tierra del Fuego. As audiovisual producer she works as a scriptwriter having written both fiction and documentary scripts.

Producer

Carlos Smith Rovira

Director/producer of series, short and feature films. Founder of HIERROAnimación. Selections and awards at festivals such as Annecy, Hiroshima, Anima Mundi, Japan Prize, Prix Jeunesse, Oberhausen, among others. Currently director of School of Digital Animation at Universidad Veritas in Costa Rica.

Producer

Maximiliano Dubois

Partner and founder of the companies Bellasombra and Habitación 15/20. He produced “Gilda” (1 million viewers), “Con el viento” (Berlin 2018), “Ausencia de mi” (IDFA), “Infancia Clandestina” (Premier Cannes and Oscar 2012 representative for Argentina); in addition to 30 other films. He has produced numerous series for TV and platforms. He has received numerous awards, has been a jury member in contests and has attended the main festivals and markets around the world.

Producer

Toni Marín Vila

Executive producer of documentaries, feature films and animated series. Winner of multiple awards. Among other works, the feature film “Wrinkles”, the TV series “The Triplets”, “TOM”, “Asha”, “Lila” and “The Baby Triplets” and the short film “À la dérive”. He is currently producing the animated feature film “Winnipeg, the ship of hope”.

Script

Mario Torrecillas

Screenwriter of films and graphic novels: Holy Christ and The son (2009, 2010, Glénat), The Original (2019, Bruguera) and Dream Team (2015, Reservoir Books), made into a movie in La Fourmi (Rappeneau, 2018). Screenwriter of Loli Tormenta (Villaronga, 2023) to be released soon. In 2008 he founded PDA Films (Pequeños Dibujos Animados).

Research/script

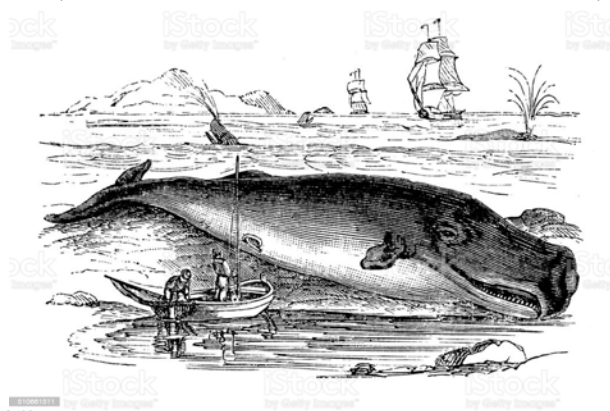
Carolina Robledo

Colombian director, scriptwriter, head of content and researcher for documentaries, unitary tv programs, miniseries, series and transmedia content. Workshop leader and consultant in audiovisual narratives. Her work has focused on issues related to ethnic groups, children and youth, women and oral memory, among others.

Musician

Sebastian Villanueva

Composer, producer, researcher and teacher. Master in composition and production for audiovisual and scenic media. He is currently the vice-president of the Colombian Guitar Community Foundation and director of the media music production company “El Maravel” with which he has produced music for audiovisual media, such as the relaunch of the Barcelona Museum, Old Folk’s Tales, Grave-



www.piaggiodematei.com

www.marcelodematei.com

<https://vimeo.com/piaggiodematei>

Reel 2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6oCimuvoRk>

Reel Dirección: www.marcelodematei.com/gallery/reel2020

Why we want to tell this story

Laura Piaggio

After 20 years living in Spain, moving from Barcelona to Tierra del Fuego with no scales is an experience that, obviously, shakes to the core. Not only because of the drastic change of scenery but mainly because the experience of turning back after 20 years sets you on a permanent condition of a migrant.

The experience of otherness hits you (again) by surprise in the return to a country that you thought was your own and that has become unintelligible and strange. Simultaneously, my Spanish children suffered the uncertainty first and the very fact of uprooting afterwards. However, they accepted our decision with a certain docility. As a mother, being responsible for and at the same time witnessing this process is one of those things that questions you deeply.

Maybe because of the deformation of the profession, one of the ways to explore the new territory is by also exploring his story, myths and characters. The city of the “end of the world” has a lot of stories to tell, many of them very popular. Nevertheless, the incredible story of Jenny Button was totally unknown to me. Jemmy (or Orundellico) was the same age of my older son when he was “abducted” by Robert Fitz Roy to the unknown. His story is one of an adolescent that lives an external and involuntary experience of the encounter with Another and he never could fully return. Saving the obvious differences, its history inevitably resonates in my personal and family history.

Fuegia Basket, Tekenika, Wulaia... are words on the urban map of Ushuaia and are also fragments of that history that connects this place with the rest of the world and with a crucial moment in history, when the ideas that will shape the world as we know it are woven: colonialism, scientific thought, the theory of evolution, industrialized capitalism, the mass extinction of species and the consequent annihilation of native cultures. Then, the second motivation is born: the story of Jimmy Button is a story that should be retold, it must be known, because the voices of the native people resonate today more than ever in face of the global ecological emergency. But this is not an easy story to tell without simplifying it. It can't be told very easily. It is an odyssey. That is why it deserves a feature film.

Marcelo Dematei

I knew the story of Jemmy Button a long time ago and since the beginning it touched me. The huge distance between the ordinary life of this young yámana and the impressive voyage he embarked on without asking for it. All the historical elements that come together in his experience, starting with the geographical, climatic and cultural particularity of Tierra del Fuego, and then that voyage that became so famous. Fitz Roy, Darwin, the theory of evolution when it began the worst period of colonialism powered by the European countries.

I was also moved by the tragedy of the Yámana and Selk'nam people in Tierra del Fuego, both genocides on which the conquest of these latitudes by the Argentine and Chilean states was based.

This movie is a huge adventure and also a story of the hero's involuntary journey, which is about otherness (another morality, another god, another beauty), is the involuntary journey of the hero who brings the light, but is a light that neither he nor his people desire.

Project's Advancement

In the first stage of development, this project has required a long research of documentary sources, previous interviews, all of them an ineludible reference (the travel diary written by Robert Fitz Roy, the travel diaries of Charles Darwin, the writings of Lucas Bridges, Martin Gusinde, Anne Chapman and others and anthropological research describing Yámana and Kaweshqar ceremonies, myths and narratives that deepen into the self-representation of the Yámana people themselves). We are currently counting on with the collaboration of representatives of the local Yámana community in order to validate certain representations, clarify specific doubts and ideally include the Yaghan language in the film.

We completed the first script writing, defined the creative proposal and started the first versions of the character design and visual concepts.

In the production process, we have contacted potential partners to join the project, as we believe that co-productions are more solid and fruitful if they join in the development stage. In this regard, we have the support of our partner HIERRO Animación (Colombia) who has expressed interest in the co-production and has committed to seek funds for both development and production in his country. We also have the support of the production company La Ballesta (Barcelona, Spain) in the search for financing in that country.

In Argentina, the project will be represented by the well-known producer Maxi Dubois and his production company Habitación 15/20, who have extensive experience in the production of feature films.

We have participated in the Chilemonos Animation Industry Market (8MAI! 2021), in June 2021, with the main objective of exploring co-production possibilities in Chile.

We have started conversations with production companies in Chile and Peru. In order to strengthen the project and search for financial resources for the development stage, we applied and won the Feature Film Development Contest organized by TDFilms and the Audiovisual Development Directorate of the province. We were also winners of the 12th Raymundo Gleyzer Federal Competition for the Development of Feature Film Projects 2020 of the National Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts of Argentina (INCAA). Recently the project was selected to participate in the Animation! Session Pitch at Ventana Sur (Buenos Aires, November 2022) where it received a mention of the MIFA-Annecy award.

Finally, we are developing, in parallel, the production of a graphic novel based on the same story, although with specific narrative and content particularities.

Upcoming development plan

- Script: revision of the current version, writing of dialogues including a consultant from the Yagán community
- Regular working interviews with local Yagán community referent/s.
- Preparation of concepts and still frame models.

- Completion of character design.
- Color script.
- Animation tests.
- Production of a 30 second teaser.
- Preparation of communication pieces in their international version.
- Attendance to industry events and search for co-producers (Ventana Sur and MAI! in 2021).

Participation in markets and contests

- Participant in the Animation Industry Market of Chilemonos (8MAI! 2021).
- Winners of the Feature Film Development Contest organized by TDFilms and the Audiovisual Development Directorate of the province.
- Winners of the 12th Raymundo Gleyzer Federal Competition for the Development of Feature Film Projects 2020 of the National Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts of Argentina (INCAA).
- MIFA Award Mention - Annecy, Sessions Pitch Animation! Ventana Sur (INCAA - Marché du Films Cannes- MIFA) Buenos Aires, November 2022

Budget

The estimated budget for the production is € 1864000 This amount may vary depending on the countries involved in the co-production. Between our own contribution and the funds that INCAA Argentina may provide, we would have 20% of all the budget.

The project is in the first stage of development. As we described above, our intention is to add co-production partners. In principle, the goal is to obtain financing to complete the development stage and during this time to get other partners to join the project.

CITIA

c/o Conservatoire d'art et d'histoire

18 avenue du Trésum

CS 50038

Annecy

FR-74001 Annecy Cedex

Ushuaia, Argentina, February 6, 2023

I, Marcelo Alberto Dematei, identified with 18344811 , author of the project TEKE UNEKA (I don't understand you) certify that the above mentioned project has not already been presented to a European public audience in the current year.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, loopy initial 'M' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that extends to the right.

Marcelo Alberto Dematei



piaggiodematei
Wapisaestudio
argentina



la
ballesta



HIERRO

contact

Marcelo Dematei
marcelo@piaggiodematei.com
+54 9 2901615884 +34 636432396

Carlos Smith
animacion@hierro.tv
+506 7007 0993

