

BABENCO

TELL ME WHEN I DIE

BABENCO TELL ME WHEN I DIE
(BABENCO ALGUÉM TEM QUE OUVIR O CORAÇÃO E DIZER: PAROU)

A film by

BÁRBARA PAZ

Produced by BÁRBARA PAZ and MYRA BABENCO

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QUOTES

“This film has the flavor of Hector... his thoughts, character and work... a poetic meditation, a love poem to him, life, death and cinema.”

Willem Dafoe, Associate Producer

“You have made something extraordinary. He trusted you with his life and his death and you handled it in the most exquisite way.”

Julian Schnabel

“Few filmmakers in their first attempt succeed in delivering a masterpiece. Barbara Paz accomplishes this.”

Miguel Barbieri Jr (VEJA SP/Br)

“The testament of one of the most supreme exponents of South American cinema.”

Veridiana Paolucci (Cinematographe/It)

“Barbara makes us dream about love and the power of cinema. At a time when humanity faces such pain, BABENCO - TELL ME WHEN I DIE soothes and heals. As if that weren't enough in itself, the movie is also a beautiful tribute to a filmmaker who masterfully captured some of Latin America's most challenging wounds.”

Petra Costa, Associate Producer

“It's more than a documentary. It's more than a biography. It's an ode of love through images.”

Fabrizia Mirabella - Marie Claire (It)

“It conveys the essence of the man, the filmmaker and the thinker”

Joana Oliveira (El Pa s/Br)

“A gem”

Paraná Sendrós (Ámbito/Ar)

“Exquisite”

Diego Semerene (Slant/US)

“Beautiful film. It is such a moving piece of work, and your deep connection, love and respect for Hector as a human being and an artist shines through.”

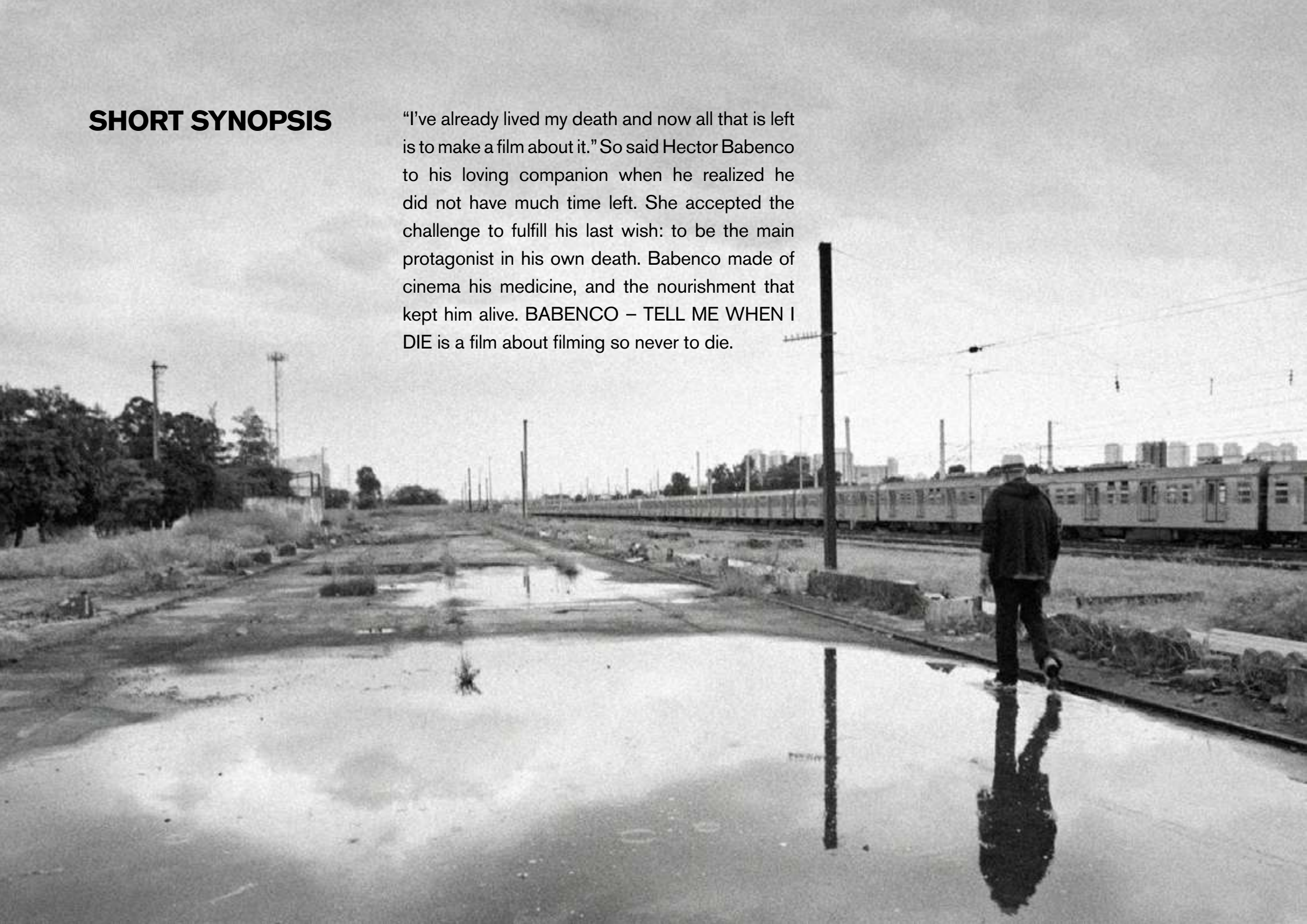
Ed O'Brien (Radiohead)

“Paz's film represents a passing of the baton between a mentor and his student, who were also lovers. A loving portrait of the man and the filmmaker, but also as a love letter to the filmmaking process itself.”

Emiliano Granada (Variety/US)

SHORT SYNOPSIS

"I've already lived my death and now all that is left is to make a film about it." So said Hector Babenco to his loving companion when he realized he did not have much time left. She accepted the challenge to fulfill his last wish: to be the main protagonist in his own death. Babenco made of cinema his medicine, and the nourishment that kept him alive. **BABENCO – TELL ME WHEN I DIE** is a film about filming so never to die.



LONG SYNOPSIS

“I have already lived my death and now all that is left is to make a film about it.” So said the filmmaker Hector Babenco to Bárbara Paz when he realized he did not have much time left. She accepted the challenge to fulfill the last wish of her late partner: to be the main protagonist in his own death.

In this tender immersion into the life of one of the greatest filmmakers from South America, Babenco himself consciously bares his soul in intimate and painful situations. He expresses

fears and anxieties, and also memories, reflections, and fantasies, in this face-off between his intellectual vigor and physical frailty, which were the hallmarks of his career.

From the onset of cancer at the age of 38 until his death at 70, Babenco made of the cinema his medicine and the nourishment that kept him alive. *BABENCO – TELL ME WHEN I DIE* is Barbara Paz’s first feature film, but is also, in a way, Hector’s last work: a film about filming so never to die.



AWARDS AND FESTIVALS







Director's Statement - Bárbara Paz

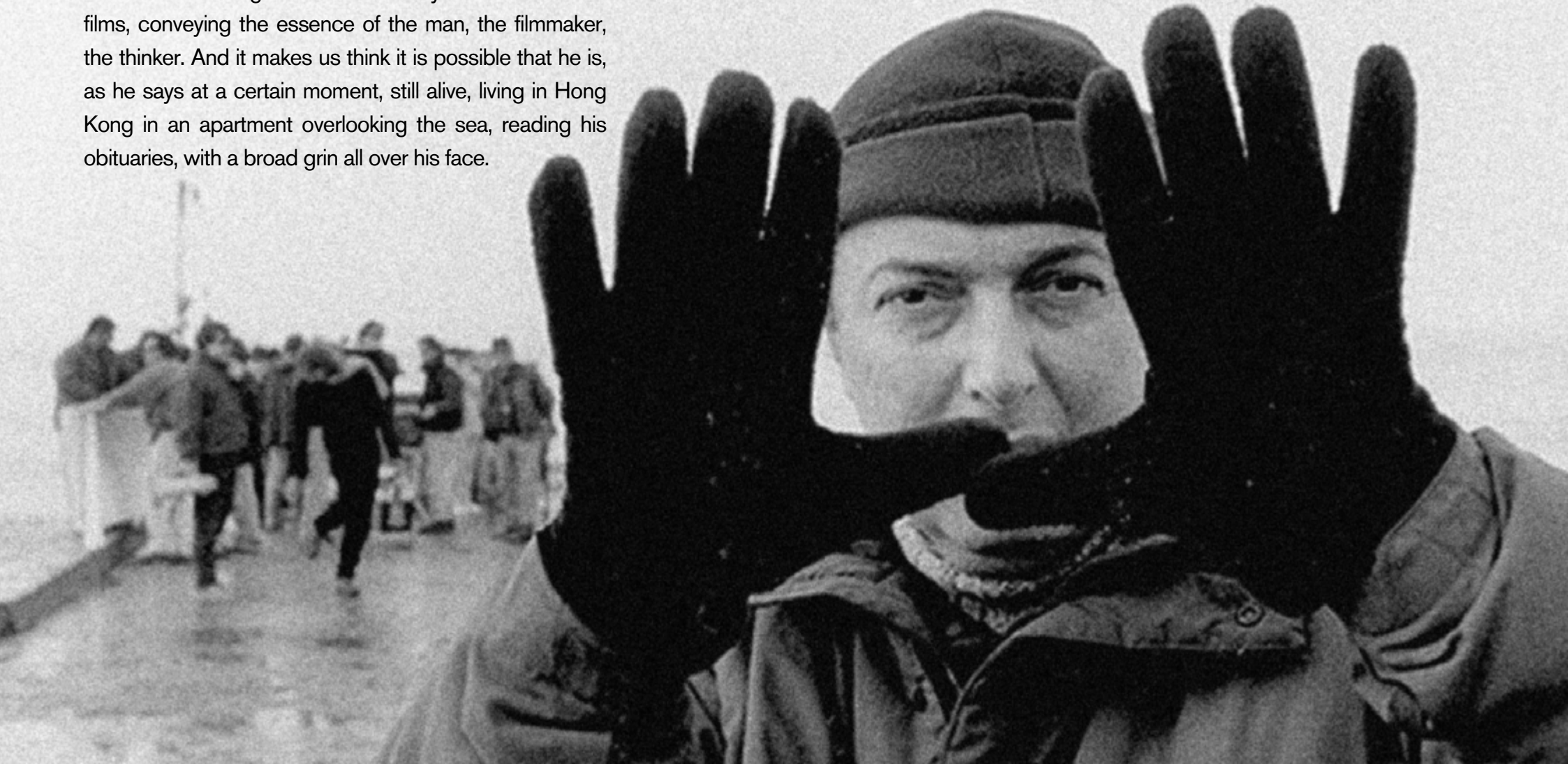
I decided to make the documentary when I saw my much loved companion one day in one of the many hospital beds he occupied, and became fearful that there would not be enough time to tell the story of the man whose strength so impressed me. Basically, I wanted everyone to hear what he was hearing, to get to know the thinker over and above the filmmaker, this man who fought to survive because he lived to make films. Every time Hector was on the verge of death he would think of another film to make.

In his final years, after the cancer returned, he was in an increasing hurry, he wanted to be filmed all the time. The idea was to capture the man, the human being, the filmmaker, who was above all a thinker. We made some of the decisions together, Hector and I for example, the decision to go for black and white.

I always wanted to make a film in black and white. He used to say his memory was in b&w because each time he thought about cinema he thought in b&w. So that's why the film is in black and white. His life and his work were one and the same thing. I made this film as a comprehensive testimony, a ball of thread. Shortly before he died I showed him a teaser of the film and it really touched him. He said: "Yeah...I'm actually quite an interesting guy. Who knew?". He was really pleased with it. He said: "Do what you want with this film. You've got free rein."

None of us wanted a conventional documentary with interviews. That would be too easy. Babenco was alive and wanted to speak. He had that thing about filming so he'd never die. But how do you film someone at death's door? We had so many hours of footage in hospitals, I could really have made a film about the end alone. But I wanted to show who he was throughout our relationship. It's an intimate portrait of a couple in which he tells me his story. In one of the most touching moments of the film for me, I dance smilingly in pouring rain, reinterpreting Gene Kelly's movements in Singin' in the Rain for him. That was a very powerful day. I was re-presenting a scene I did for him on a day when he was very sick. At the end he had said, "That will be the last scene of my next film, and I don't know what it will be. I want my last scene to be full of life, let there be sunshine!" We both knew deep down that it would indeed be the last.

I wanted to make an ode to his body of work and make him accessible to generations that may not have seen his films, conveying the essence of the man, the filmmaker, the thinker. And it makes us think it is possible that he is, as he says at a certain moment, still alive, living in Hong Kong in an apartment overlooking the sea, reading his obituaries, with a broad grin all over his face.



Producer's Statement - Myra Babenco

I am very honored and grateful to Barbara Paz for having faith in me to produce this brilliant, personal and unique Documentary.

Since my father died I have felt certain that my mission was to support Barbara throughout this creative work and await its completion, like a seamstress waiting for more thread. So my role as producer of this independent film is very personal and unconventional. The film was made with love and affection, primarily between Barbara and Hector, and it spread to everyone involved.

Working through her grief and at her own pace, Barbara embraced her role as filmmaker, and found her voice as documentarian, working from a powerful screenplay written by my childhood friend Maria Camargo and intimately sharing this authentic man who expressed himself through the art of filmmaking.

Hector's own desire and willingness to hand over to Barbara his inner thoughts revealed on camera, sharing with us his vulnerability and fragility are truly remarkable. She embraces him with this emotional work of art that is filled with tenderness and absolute devotion, as a joyful way for him to come to the end of his life.

BABENCO - TELL ME WHEN I DIE evokes the legacy of the visionary and groundbreaking filmmaker and human being.



As much as death is very present in the film, so is love and joy. This is especially pertinent at a time when we are all reflecting on what a privilege it is to be alive, to live with love and joy, and above all to live with a purpose. I'm convinced that, as is said in the film, "Those who have a dream to fulfil, have a better chance of survival."

BABENCO is our way of ensuring that Hector and his films will stay with us forever.

It is also an opportunity for those who did not have the privilege of knowing him personally to see excerpts of his remarkable filmography that speaks so profoundly about global issues such as poverty, social inequality, prejudice, the environment and other relevant human themes that are very present in our societies today.

I am now completing restoration of **King of the Night (1975)** and **Lucio Flavio (1977)**. My personal mission following **BABENCO - TELL ME WHEN I DIE** is to complete the restoration of my father's entire filmography.

It is with profound emotion that I present this film as my first production



ABOUT HECTOR BABENCO

Film director, screenwriter and producer Hector Babenco was born in Argentina in 1946, moved to Brazil in 1969 and became a naturalized Brazilian. He began filmmaking in 1972 as executive producer and co-director with Roberto Farias on *THE FABULOUS FITTIPALDI*. In 1975 he directed his first feature film, *THE KING OF THE NIGHT*, a fictional story about a bohemian Brazilian Don Juan. His next film, *LUCIO FLAVIO* (1977) is about a notorious bank robber and it broke Brazilian box office records. Then came *PIXOTE* (1981) which was widely acclaimed around the world, voted Best Foreign Film by the Los Angeles and New York Critics Associations, gained Hector international attention, and is now considered a classic. It is about a boy, played by Fernando Ramos da Silva, a 13 year-old first time actor from a São Paulo shanty town, who descends into a vicious cycle of increasing poverty, petty crime and prison. It became a case of life imitating art because da Silva did descend into crime and was shot dead by the police in 1987.

Hector's first international English language film was *KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN* (1984). A gay sex offender, played by William Hurt, and a political prisoner, played by Raul Julia, share a cell. It was the first ever independently produced film to be nominated for an Oscar for Best Picture. It received three further nominations for Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Director, and William Hurt won the Oscar for Best Actor. It also won awards at several other festivals, including Cannes. Hector went on to direct *IRONWEED* (1987), a searing tale of down-and-out alcoholics during the Great Depression. It starred Jack Nicolson and Meryl Streep, both of whom were nominated for Oscars. In 1990 he directed *AT PLAY IN THE FIELDS OF THE LORD*, produced by Saul Zaentz and shot entirely on location in the Amazon. It is about the tensions between the indigenous Niaruna Indians, some American missionaries and two ne'er-do-well adventurers. It starred Tom Berenger, Daryl Hannah, Kathy Bates and John Lithgow. *FOOLISH HEART* (1998), filmed in Argentina, was inspired by memories of Hector's youth, and was selected to compete for the Palme d'Or at Cannes.

In 1987 Hector was diagnosed with terminal cancer, though he continued to defy the odds and astound his doctors for the rest of his life. His eminent Brazilian oncologist, Dr Drauzio Varella, became a lifelong friend and, encouraged by Hector, wrote a bestselling book about the prisoners he treated each week in the infamous Carandiru jail in São Paulo. Hector turned it into the superb film, *CARANDIRU* (2003). Yet again at Cannes it was screened for the Palme d'Or competition to thunderous applause, and yet again smashed box office records in Brazil. In 2005 Hector created *Carandiru - Other Stories*, which became a successful TV Globo series.

Back in Argentina, Hector directed *THE PAST* (2007) about a self-destructive interpreter played by Gael Garcia Bernal. His final film, *MY HINDU FRIEND* (2015), was filmed in São Paulo. It is a semi-autobiographical depiction of a cineaste living with and dying of cancer. It starred Willem Dafoe and Hector's partner Barbara Paz, a renowned Brazilian actress who went on to direct *BABENCO - TELL ME WHEN I DIE*, which won Best Documentary in Venice and will compete for Best International Feature film at the 2021 Oscars. Hector finally succumbed to cancer in July 2016.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Barbara Paz is a critically acclaimed, award winning Brazilian actress, producer and director. In her acting career she has performed in over 25 plays by a wide range of playwrights, from Oscar Wilde to Tennessee Williams. She is also a hugely popular television star under permanent contract to TV Globo. In 2013 the Ministry of Culture awarded her the highly prestigious Medalha do Cavaleiro - Knight's Medal, in recognition of her outstanding work. As a director and producer she has worked on many television shows and shorts among which are **Conversa com Ele - Talk to Him (2019)** and **Ato - The Act (2020)**. In 2019 Barbara published the book **Mr. Babenco**, and its success inspired her to go on to make her first feature-length documentary **BABENCO - TELL ME WHEN I DIE**. It was first shown at the 2019 Venice Film Festival where it won Best Documentary in the official Venice Classics competition. At MIFF 2020 (Mumbai, India) it also won Best Documentary, and won the same prize again at FICVIÑA 2020.



PRODUCER'S BIO

Myra Babenco is a Brazilian film producer and art curator. She is currently the Executive Director of HB Filmes, the production company of the late filmmaker Hector Babenco (1946-2016), her father. Since 2017, she has been in charge of the restoration project of his filmography. The effort started with Martin Scorsese's invite to restore the 1985 film *Pixote* for The Film Foundation now available at Criterion Collection's World Cinema Project. From 2008 to 2018, she directed Raquel Arnaud Art Gallery. She was responsible for the commercial department and the international market and liaison, where she participated in fairs across Europe, the United States and Latin America. Prior to that, she worked in financial institutions in Brazil, in the Private Banking area. The documentary **BABENCO - TELL ME WHEN I DIE** is her debut as a film producer. It premiered at the Venice Film Festival 2019 where it won Best Documentary in the official Venice Classics competition, and also the Independent Critics Prize - Bisato D'oro.



BIOGRAPHIES

Maria Camargo - Screenwriter

Maria Camargo is a scriptwriter for Cinema and Television based in Rio de Janeiro. She has made screen adaptations for works like **Correio Feminino**, by Clarice Lispector, and **The Brothers**, by Milton Hatoum, for TV Globo. She has collaborated in the soap operas **Lado a Lado** and **Babilônia**, and worked as co-writer of the film **Nise: The Heart of Madness**. Camargo has written and directed two short films, **O Coração às Vezes para de Bater** and **Se Meu Pai Fosse de Pedra**. She had her book **O Medo e o Mar** published by Companhia das Letras. Among her future projects, Camargo is working on two other screen adaptations of the work of Milton Hatoum, this time for feature films: the tale **Farewell Captain**, to be directed by Sérgio Machado, and the romance **The Tree of the Seventh Heaven**, to be directed by Marcelo Gomes.

Stephan Ciupek - Cinematographer

Since its inception, Stephan Ciupek has been at the forefront of Digital Cinematography. His career began with Europe's most acclaimed filmmakers; his expertise in the field helped shape such projects like Alexander Sokurov's **Russian Ark**, Susanne Bier's **After the Wedding**, The Brothers Quay's **The Piano Tuner of Earthquakes**. His close collaboration with Anthony and Julie Meyer contributed to the visual style of films like Danny Boyle's **Slumdog Millionaire** (Oscars, BAFTA and ASC Awards for Best Cinematography) & **127 Hours**, Lars Von Trier's **Antichrist** (European Film Award for Best Cinematography), and **Manderlay**. Ranging from Digital Cinematography Supervisor, 2nd Unit DOP to Film Colorist, these collaborations paved the way for his career as a cinematographer. He has shot films across genres as well as with directors and crews from around the world. His cinematography credits include **Posthumous** (starring Jack Huston, Brit Marling) and **In Embryo**, a dark psychological drama by Ulrich Thomsen. Stefan has just wrapped principal photography for **Guns Akimbo**, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Samara Weaving.

Cao Guimarães - Editor

Cao Guimarães works on the crossing between the cinema and the visual arts. With intense production since the late 80s, the artist has been collected by prestigious names such as Tate Modern (United Kingdom), MoMA and the Guggenheim Museum (USA), Fondation Cartier (France), Colección Jumex (Mexico), Inhotim (Brazil), Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza (Spain) and others.

He is the author of nine feature films: **The Man in the Crowd** (2013), **Otto** (2012), **Elvira Lorelay Alma de Dragón** (2012), **Ex It** (2010), **Drifter** (2007), **Accident** (2006), **The Soul of the Bone** (2004), **Two Way Street** (2002) and **The End of the Endless** (2001). Cao Guimarães has been invited to display his works at renowned international film festivals including Cannes, Locarno, Sundance, Venice, Rotterdam and Berlin. In 2011, MoMA held a retrospective of his films. In 2014, **Bafici** (Buenos Aires) and Mexico's Cinematheque also held retrospectives of his work. Is represented by Galeria Nara Roesler in Sao Paulo (Brazil) and Xippas Galerie (Paris and Montevideo).



HB FILMES

HB Filmes was created in the 1970's by Hector Babenco (1946 - 2016) to give exposure to his diverse activities in audio-visual. The filmography of HB Filmes and Babenco as a Director, Writer and Producer are inseparably linked.

Since its foundation, HB Filmes has been dedicated to the film industry, being attached to projects such as **The Kiss of the Spider Woman**, with 4 nominations at Academy Awards 1986, including Best Film, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay and winner of Best Actor category (William Hurt). **Ironweed** (Academy Awards and Golden Globe 1988), **Pixote** (Golden Globe 1982), considered one of the 10 best films of the 80's, **Lucio Flavio**, one of the top Brazilian Box Office, are some of the highlights over HB Filmes' history. HB Filmes has also produced **At Play in the Fields of the Lord** (Golden Globe 1992) starred by Kathy Bates, John Lithgow, Tom Waits and Daryl Hannah, **King of the Night** (Brasília 1976), **Besame Mucho** (1986), **The Past** (Rome 2007), **Foolish Heart** (Cannes 1998) and **Carandiru** (Cannes 2003).

Its last production was **My Hindu Friend** (Cinema Brazil Grand Prize 2017) starring Willen Dafoe. After Hector's passing, his daughter, Myra Babenco, took over the directorship of the company.

In 2017, the film **Pixote** (1981) was restored, at the invitation of Walter Salles and The Film Foundation, under the direction of Martin Scorsese, for the World Cinema Project. **Pixote** was listed by The New York Times among the ten most important feature films of the 1980s, and considered the best foreign film of the year by the Los Angeles and New York Critics Associations.

Gullane

Founded in 1996 by the brothers Caio and Fabiano Gullane, the Brazilian production company Gullane has produced more than 50 feature films, 25 series, as well as numerous TV specials and documentaries, released in Brazil and abroad. The trajectory of the company started with award winners **Carandiru**, by Hector Babenco (Cannes competition 2003); **Brainstorm**, by Laís Bodanzky (Toronto and Locarno 2001), and **The Year my Parents Went on Vacation**, by Cao Hamburger (Berlin competition 2007 and Oscar Short List), followed by many successful titles. **The Traitor**, by Marco Bellocchio (Cannes competition 2019); **Ex-Shaman**, by Luiz Bolognesi (Berlin Panorama 2018); **The Second Mother**, by Anna Muylaert (Sundance and Berlin Panorama winner 2015); **The Violin Teacher**, by Sérgio Machado (Closing Film in Piazza Grande at Locarno 2015); **A Worf at the Door**, by Fernando Coimbra (Best Film at San Sebastian – Horizontes Latinos and Miami 2013 and Official Selection at Toronto); **Amazonia 3D** by Thierry Ragobert (Closing Film at Venice and Official Selection at Toronto 2013); **Rio 2096, A Story of Love and Fury**, by Luiz Bolognesi (the Best Film at Annecy 2013); **Tabu**, by Miguel Gomes (Competition at Berlin 2012); **Birdwatchers**, by Marco Bechis (Competition at Venice 2008) are some of Gullane's highlights.

An active player in the growth of the Brazilian Audiovisual industry, Gullane works in partnership with the best talents and companies in Entertainment. Its ability and commitment in all production stages has guaranteed important international co-productions, and the commercialization of its projects in more than 60 countries, bringing the identity of the Brazilian cinema to audiences across the globe. In its 22 years, Gullane's projects have received more than 500 awards and nominations, including official selections at the most important festivals, such as Cannes, Berlin, Sundance, Toronto and Venice, as well as recognition by the Academy and the Emmy Awards, among others.



CREDITS

A **HB FILMES** production in co-production with **GULLANE**

Director	Bárbara Paz	Associate Producers	Willem Dafoe
Screenwriters	Maria Camargo Bárbara Paz	HB Filmes Producer	Petra Costa
Cast	Hector Babenco Willem Dafoe Bárbara Paz	Cinematographer	Myra Babenco
Production Company	HB Filmes	Production Designer	Stefan Ciupek Carolina Costa Bárbara Paz
Co-Production Companies	Gullane Ava Filmes Lusco Fusco Globo Filmes GloboNews Canal Brasil	Editor	Lara Tauzs
Producer	Bárbara Paz	Editing Consultor	Cao Guimarães Bárbara Paz
Co-Producers	Caio Gullane Fabiano Gullane	Supervising Sound Editor	Yael Bitton Karen Harley
		Original Soundtrack	Miriam Biderman, ABC Rodrigo Ferrante
			O Grivo

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