



Hawker Haunted 2015
Video-installatie / 3D Animatie
Variabele afmeting

Hawker Haunted

Arguably, the most iconic image of the 1973 military coup in Chile is that of the bombed La Moneda palace. The attack, ordered by the commander-in-chief of the Chilean Air Force, Gustavo Leigh, was carried by lieutenants Eitel Von Muhlenbrock, Fernando Rojas, Ernesto Gonzales and Gustavo Leigh Yates, his son.

Gonzales was the first one to release a missile, which went right through the main gate of the palace. He later became quite famous for his shooting accuracy. On the other hand, Leigh Jr. ended up mistakenly bombing the Air Force Hospital which was located 10 miles away from the target.

In any case, the mission was a success and was celebrated with enthusiasm once the pilots had come back to the airport of Carriel Sur. But there was an exception: a still unnamed pilot (not Leigh) came out of his Hawker Hunter fighter/bomber and was welcome with silence. Witnesses of this moment said that once he touched the ground, he lowered his head and said: "I am sorry, it wasn't my fault... It wasn't my fault... Forgive me".

At that very moment, my eldest brother was four years old. He was not in Chile, but in New York City with my parents. They had left a year before to accompany my father, who went there to graduate in Political Science after spending some years working with a corporation from Allende's government.

His American friend, uncle Joe, was renting the family house. But Joe, who helped my father get a scholarship from the U.S government, was a Marxist (or so Dad told me) and had to leave in a hurry. In any case, he returned safe and sound to the University of Wisconsin Madison – where he taught –, and my family returned to Chile five years later with a couple of Master Degrees and a PHD under the belt.

Eight years later, I was born in a hospital that belonged to the military police. My father was teaching Political Science there at the time and was teaching constitutional law in other universities too. My Mom was a housewife, and I slept with my older sister on the second floor.

I have very fond memories of my childhood during the 80's, as I felt – for the most part – protected and safe. But the event of 1973, and the periods of time that surrounded it, were a different story, one about ambivalence: on the one hand, it was the idealized time when the mythology of my family was founded, some nine years before I was born, in a country that I didn't know and in a language I could not understand. Stories of love, sacrifice and endurance abounded during the time my mother worked at a factory in the Mid-West, international phone calls were prohibitively expensive, and the City of Madison became the Camelot of my pre-existence.

But the public history of the time was completely absent. My family didn't come back until the late seventies, but even the stories of my relatives, who were in Chile at the time, dealt almost exclusively with the situation before the event: "I had to wait in line for hours in order to get one miserable piece of chicken breast for my family of eight", aunt Cristina used to say. Which was frantically followed by her brothers and sisters talking about how awful and unsustainable the situation was before the coup.

The first time I asked someone about the event itself (12:08 p.m, September 11th, 1973) it was when I asked my brother about the image of the La Moneda palace being bombed. He was in his early twenties then, I was about 8, and his answer to my question about the image that captured the exact moment where Ernesto Gonzalez missile exploded past the door of our palace of government, was one about performance: "Even though our armed forces don't have the equipment of developed countries, we do have the best fighter pilots in the world, and though their missiles were primitive, they were able to pierce through the doors and windows of the building with absolute accuracy".

And alas, I was sold. My question deflected by the performance of lieutenant Ernesto Gonzales; in my brother's mind, who was able to perform what must have been only comparable to a scene from a movie he had seen in the United States: Luke Skywalker's protonic torpedoes piercing through the Imperial Death Star in Star Wars... Only backwards.

Looking back to this moment of deflection (which is the opposite of any notion of revelation), I am perplexed by what my brother actually saw, and wonder if the fact, that is, Hawker Hunter fighter jets bombing the house of their own democratically elected government, was actually invisible to him.

I wonder about the mechanics of this operation of denial. What did we see? And how was that pathetic epic of self-destruction able to conceal the rest of the story?

Cristóbal Cea

Achter gesloten deuren

HUIS
CLOS

de-Passages

Cristóbal Cea

Richard Neef

Josje Peters

Margreet Bouman

C.A. Wertheim

Zijlmans & Jongenelis



Alma, 2003, videostill, 360 x 480 pixels



Refectie 2013, Shau Fenster, Berlijn



Zonder titel 2015
200 cm x 150 cm

Zonder titel 2016, collage 41,5 x 21 cm



Schutter; onderdeel van de *Bijdragen aan het Verenigd Europa* 1993 - 2015 brons / leren plateau schoen, H: 60 cm