

TAPIR MEMORIES

A short film that portrays a heartbreaking conflict that still
has deep wounds in the minds and hearts of the people.



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Introduction >

About 8 years ago, I started with the idea to make a short fiction film in 2D animation based on real facts about the armed conflict in Colombia between 2002 and 2008.

Tapir Memories ended up being a visual representation of the consequences of the Colombian armed conflict, where most of the victims have been farming families who end up in the city with severe mental, social, and economic problems. Direct or indirect exposure to different acts of violence and atrocities, such as the burning and destruction of their homes, animals, and personal belongings. Sexual abuse, torture, forced displacement, illegal recruitment, and training for war by armed groups.

One of the central topics of this animated project is enforced disappearance, classified as one of the world's most painful crimes resulting from the war. A problem that continues today and affects not only Colombia but also countries such as Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, and many other places in the world.

This short film with a mother as a survivor searching for her missing son could become a memory of the historical happening, bring reflections, raise awareness, and be a powerful pedagogical tool for the people who have suffered the consequences of armed conflicts in the world, especially women and children.

Motivation >

One of my strong motivations for making this project was my need to tell and reflect my point of view and personal experiences of what happened during the time in which the short film is inspired. At that time, together with my family, we had to face the atrocities of this war. We ended up losing our loved ones, our land, and the possibility of ever returning to the place where all my memories remained like a drawer buried in the ground.

The fact that I was still a child did not allow me to understand what was happening, and I could not find any explanation for that tragedy. I felt like I was in a hostile environment, confused, and without any hope. Nowadays, I realize that, until the present, there has been very little audiovisual material made related to this issue in Colombia, which is inspiring and motivating me to continue using my artistic skills, experience, and knowledge in filmmaking to create tools and visual representations to help children and mothers who have been the most affected by this endless issue.

It is important for me to keep the memory alive in the minds of new generations as a tribute to the innocent victims who have suffered any kind of violence because of the consequences of war.

Film details



Logline

A mother Tapir looks for her missing son.

Synopsis

A Tapir mother reveals the story of her tragedy through an embroidery. She experienced a violent attack, the loss of her home and the disappearance of her son. Will she find him?

Credits

Direction, story, layout, art direction, character design, compositing & editing

Pedro Nel Cabrera Vanegas

Animation

Pedro Cabrera Vanegas & Pablo Andres Oviedo

Music

Sebastian Androne-Nakanishi

Guitar

Sebastian Villanueva

Foleys

Dieter Hebben

Sound design & editing

Maya Baur

Sound mix

Jeroen Visser

Production

Hochschule Luzern Design und Kunst-2023

Technical information

Format

2D digital Animation HD, 1080p, 16:9, 24fps

Long

9 min. 20 sec

Audience

+12 years old

Style

Rough picture book

Music

Violin, instrumental & natural ambience

Language

Non-dialogues

Mentors

Jochen Ehmman & Anja Kofmel

Story background

> Back in 2011, the newspapers, magazines, and news in Colombia and foreign newspapers began to overflow with stories of people who were victims of the conflict of the previous 10 years. More and more people were talking and publishing stories of mothers and their children who were displaced to the city.

According to the Colombia's National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH), between 1958 and 2020, 4.210 massacres have taken place in Colombia, leaving 24,447 victims murdered. The civilian population has been the most affected, with 23,937 deaths. Moreover, 2001 has so far been the year with the highest number of massacres: 406.

Regarding forced disappearance, the CNMH has so far registered 68.431 facts. Of these, 63.6% of the cases occurred in 135 municipalities. The total number of victims was 80.472 and those who were most forcibly disappeared were civilians (79.245).

Media reports in 2013 and 2014

Seis millones de víctimas deja el conflicto en Colombia
El número de víctimas del conflicto armado registradas llegó a 6.043.473. Una cifra aterradora.

Six million victims leave the conflict in Colombia. SEMANA (2014)

Intensity of the conflict does not decrease. EL ESPECTADOR (2013)

Intensidad del conflicto no baja
Entre 2002 y 2012 las Farc perdieron presencia en el centro del país, pero se fortalecieron en la periferia.

BBC NEWS MUNDO

Colombia le pone números a su conflicto armado

Arturo Wallace
BBC Mundo, Colombia

24 julio 2013

Colombia puts a number on its armed conflict. EL ESPECTADOR (2013)



Colombia ya conoce el número de víctimas dejadas por el conflicto armado.



In this report from SEMANA in 2014, it can be seen that the highest figures are for displacement, homicide, and forced disappearance topics featured in Tapir Memories

The crimes of war and its victims in Colombia

Victims (1985-2018)



* Según estimaciones, podría ascender a 800.000. Datos al 26 de junio de 2022.

Fuente: Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad



Source: <https://es.statista.com/grafico/19344/numero-de-victimas-del-conflicto-armado-en-colombia/>

Initial idea

> In 2018, with the plan underway to do to the master's degree in film animation at Hochschule Luzern, I made some sketches of a mother Tapir with a child as the main character who was suffering the havocs of displacement. At that moment I realized that I wanted to tell the story with animals and without dialogues. And what better idea than the animals Tapirs and Chigüiros that lived in the place where I grew up. Caquetá, an Amazon region in the south of the country, which was considered a military objective during the years 2002 and 2008.

I decided to tell the story from the mother's point of view to show her psychological struggles and therapy through embroidery due to the consequences of this problem. It was important for the protagonist to be resilient and have universal values such as bravery, determination, and solidarity so that she could inspire other women who have been victims of forced disappearance and displacement and who have experienced the loss of a loved one like her.



First sketches of the Tapir mother, 2018 ↑

Sketches of the creative proces: story and design. ↓

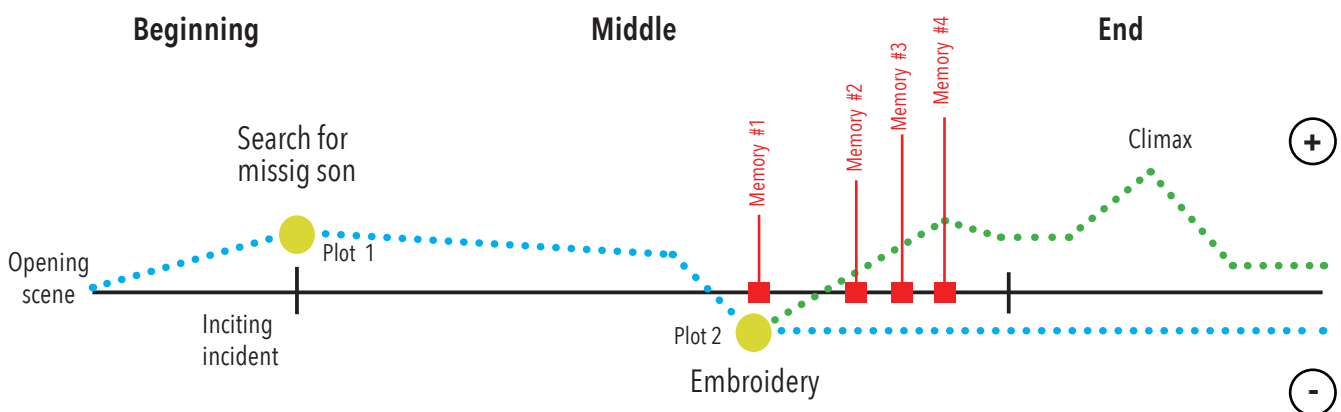




Narrative structure

> The narrative structure of Tapir Memories is designed to support the concept of the story, in which the protagonist's goal is to join the pieces of embroidery to reconstruct her traumatic memories. Generally, when we remember either positive or negative events in our lives, they come as fragmented images.

The story has a classical narrative structure. Beginning, middle, and end. Although it presents a variation of events to support the concept of memories. The film has two plot points, the protagonist's search for her missing son, and the embroidery that reveals the memories. These two plots converge in parallel at the end, where the search for the son ends with no success and the work with the embroidery ends with success.



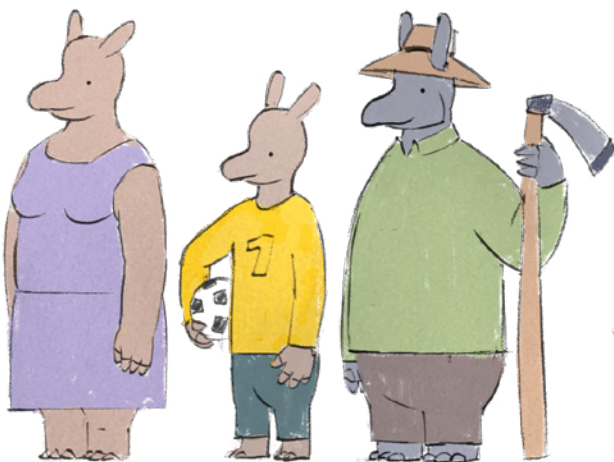
Visual development

The visual style of Tapir Memories is based on my artistic representation and research, where simplicity, brush strokes, texture, light, color, and atmosphere predominate. The main objective was to make the art direction support the concept of the story for the three styles of the film: The present and the trauma memories are connected to my own visual style, and the embroidery is inspired by The Weavers of Mampuján, Colombia. For example, in the city, the place where the protagonist must look for her son presents less light, desaturated, and cold colors; it is desolate with a dense atmosphere; thus, the city as a narrative element becomes an antagonist for the Tapir mother.

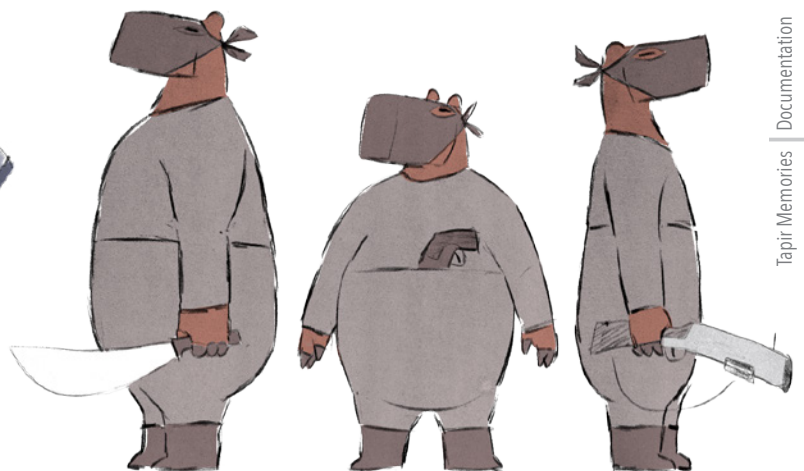
Characters

Some characteristics that I considered for the design of tapirs were that they are friendly, have simple, rounded shapes, and use their ears and body language to communicate their emotions. Chigüiros show seriousness and danger; their jaws and square heads are based on simple shapes with great personality. They also use their body language to communicate their emotions.

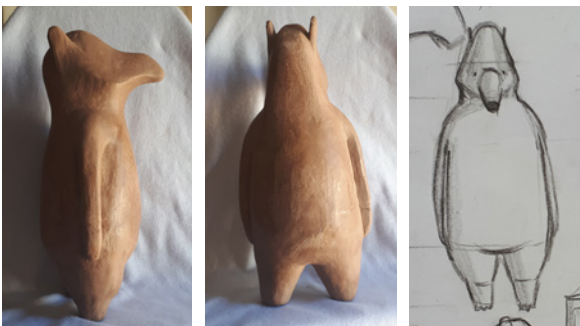
Tapir family
(Mother protagonist)



Chigüiros
(Antagonist)



Early studies (Tapir)

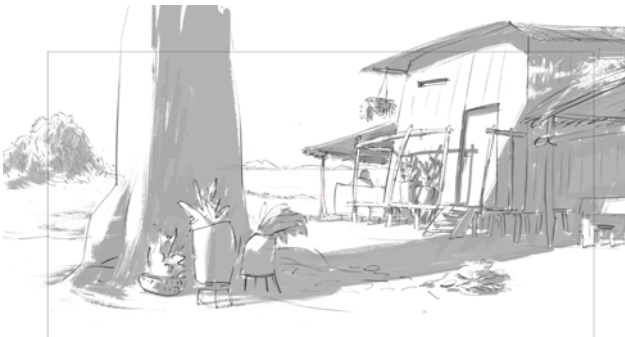


Early studies (Chigüiro)



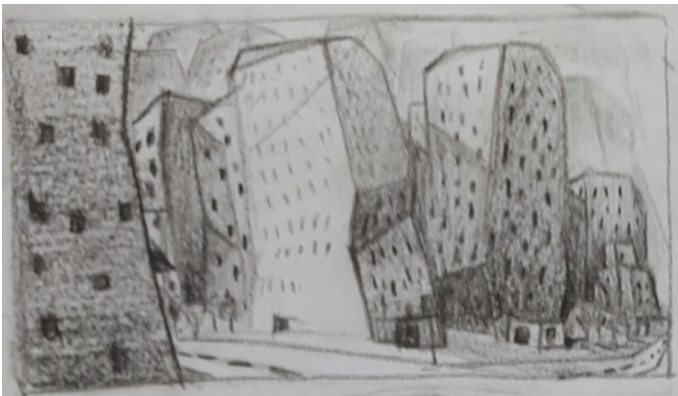
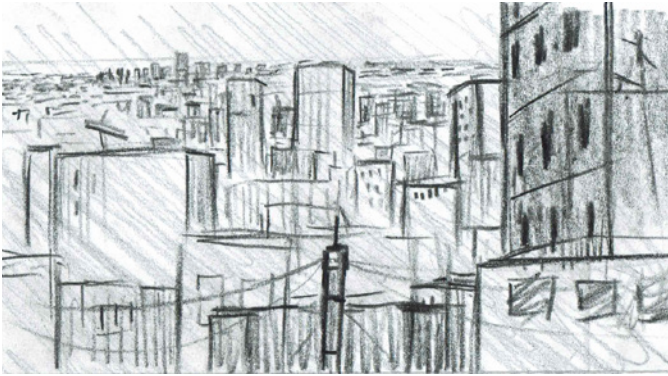
Backgrounds

Exploration: Tapir's home

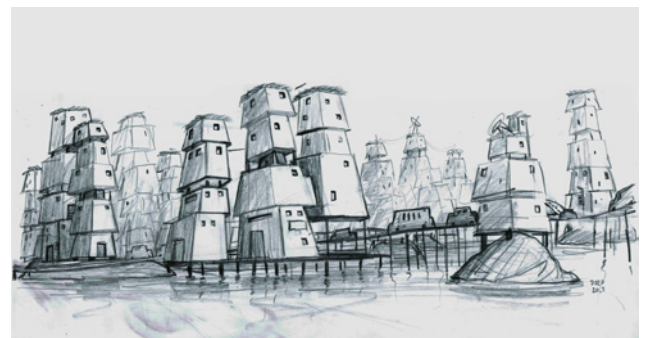
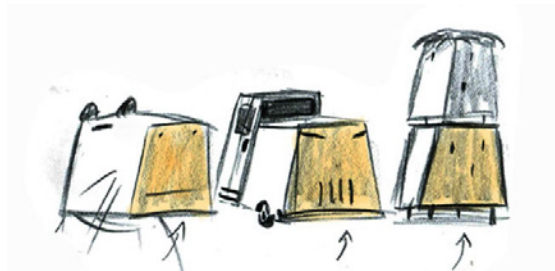


Final design

Exploration: Chigüiros's city



Design concept



Final design

Visual styles

Present



Embroidery



Trauma memories





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