





Fri, Apr 29 / 9:30 PM / HART HOUSE Theatre

Sat, Apr 30 / 10:30 AM / TIFF Bell Lightbox 3

Sun, May 8 / 4:00 PM / TIFF Bell Lightbox 3

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TECHNICAL DATA

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN Germany, 2016 LENGTH 87 Min. FORMAT 1:1,85 SOUND 5.1 digital LANGUAGE Nepali, EN subtitled



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SYNOPSIS

Urmila wants to change Nepal. This young woman fights with admirable energy against centuries-old social structures. She has but one goal: the end of child slavery. Her political activities drive her to assume responsibility for others, but must also think of herself.

"Children go to school. Adults go to work!" Urmila shouts angrily in a protest march on the streets of Kathmandu. Together with her fellow campaigners she frees girls from captivity, demands of the Prime Minister the end of slavery, holds press conferences, travels to Oslo and New York — and tries back at home in Ghorahi to complete the next year at school. She has big plans: she wants to study and become a lawyer.

At the age of six Urmila Chaudhary was sold by her family as a household slave to people in the capital. Every year her parents received € 50 from her masters, for whom Urmila had to work up to 15 hours every day. The deep-rooted traditions of bondage continue to keep the people in southern Nepal in abject poverty. She was eventually freed at the age of 17. Since then she has been trying to find her own way in life.

"Urmila — my memory is my power" is an intimate portrait of a young woman who draws from the memories of her time as a slave the strength to make a stand against injustice.









DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Eleven years of Urmila's life — her entire childhood and youth — were spent in captivity, without positive attachment figures, without love and affection and full of physical and mental cruelty. Looking at those years we must ask ourselves: Where did she get her incredible strength from, her ability to feel empathy and social responsibility? Why was she able to survive those years in slavery without being broken by them? My aim was not to produce a film that would inform people about the slavery and human trafficking in Nepal. This young woman was at rock bottom, but nonetheless she managed to get back on her feet again, for herself and for others. Now she is in the process of finding her own way through life.

And yet, the demons of the past remain her constant companions. During the process of producing this film we decided not to use any shots that showed the girls as slaves. Indeed, it is difficult in retrospect for the former Kamalari to speak in detail about what happened. Urmila's memories and thus the events of the past are shown through the scenes of the trauma theatre. In the film we have assembled these scenes together those showing the everyday lives of the former slave girls as they are now, in order to show subtly how what happened continues to lurk, evil and threatening — quite simply, that it is still there.

These ghosts are still very much with them. They remain active, lying in wait in very different corners of the country. Child labour and exploitation are still a relevant topic in Nepal. Now, especially following the earthquake, there is no control over the trafficking to India, the neighbouring country. The girls' parents are dead or homeless and desperately poor, and that makes it easy for people smugglers to lure children across the border with tempting promises. Or — to name an example from the tourist industry — during your next trek in the Himalaya, just take a look at who is serving the tea. In many cases it will not be the children of the hut operator.

PRODUCTION NOTE

The film was shot between January 2012 and September 2015. I have been travelling to Nepal 8 times in these years, more or less every 6 months I visited Urmila. On 2 trips I had a soundguy with me, an assistant and a translator and this already felt like being on the road with a big team. All the other journeys I did more or less on my own. I tried to get close to Urmila as much as I was allowed to. We rescued the little girl out of the bus and we cried together on the bed when she was failing her SLCexamen. We slept on straw at her parents house and went to the river barefeet in the winter at 3:00 am. My camera was not always allowed, therefore I had to take a small photocamera to shoot. I never applied for a so called "shooting permit", which, as a foreigner you would need for a professional film. But they would have never giving it to me, because of the cruelty of the topic. So, one leg was always in jail during my visits to Nepal.



Last year there was the earthquake 10 days after we left the country. And big political fights in the summer, which blocked all roads for 4 months and shot people to death. But most of all we all had tons of luck. I am very

gratefull that we achieved to make this film. I had a great team behind me, even I was shooting alone in Nepal so often. But many wonderfull people in Nepal itself helped to make this film posible. It is a great country. With a lot of powerfull women which, step by step come into power. They will change the country for the better so that the future might be brighter for everyone.



TEAMLIST

Protagonists in order of their appearance

Urmila Chaudhary
Phulpat Chaudhary
Khalsi Chaudhary
Annita Chaudhary
Sarmila Chaudhary
Man Bahadur Chhetri
Karmu Chaudhary
Andreas Riechelmann





Filmcrew

director susan gluth camera susan gluth

script susan gluth, Silke Cecilia Schultz, Kristl Filippi

editor Xavier Box, susan gluth

music Dominic Miller, Hagay Sofer, Christian Conrad

re-recording mixer Matthias Lempert

original sound Benjamin Simon, Ulla Kösterke

sounddesign Helen Neikes

HD-colour grading Ronney Afortu, Optical Arts

artistic and dramaturgic consultant Thomas Heiber

producers susan gluth, Martin Hagemann

financial support

Filmförderung Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein, FFA Filmförderungsanstalt, Filmförderung der Beauftragten der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien, Deutscher Filmförderfonds, Kuratorium junger deutscher Film, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg supported by Kirchlichen Entwicklungsdienstes / Brot für die Welt — Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst.



ABOUT URMILA CHAUDHARY

Nationality: Nepali

1996 Start Kamalari work

2007 Freed from Kamalari work

Academic expertise

2007 Nonformula education started

2008 Formal Education: Admit Government School

Degree, institute/board, division (grade)

2015 10+2 Higher, Higher Secondary Education Board, running

2013 Secondary level passed, School Leaving Certificate, 2nd



Professional experience

2007 President: Common Forum For Kamalari Freedom

2011 President: Freed Kamalari Development Forum – Dang district

2012 Ambassador: Because I am Girl

Award & Exposure

2011 Women Have two Wings Award (USA/Women Have two Wings)

2013 Globle Education Youth Courage Award (U.N./Malala day)

2014 Best Award of Youth Dang District (Ghorahi/Tribhuvan JICC

2016 Abhinandan (Ghorahi/ Udgarsa Film Pvt.Lt.)

2009 Kadar Patra Samman (Ghorahi/DCWC Dang)

2012 Exposer Visit for Speech About the Girls and Women Situation in Nepal (Norway, Oslo Freedom Forum)

2012 Exposer Visit for launch of Int. Girls Day, UN (USA, Plan Int.)

2015 Exposer Visit for The Int. Girls Day (France, Plan Int.)

2015 Exposer Visit for Human Rights Day (The Netherlands, Plan Int.)

Other professional training and workshops

Title of training / Duration (Venue/organizer)

Child Wall Journalist: 5 Day (Lamahi/FNC)

Women Capacity Building: 3 Days (Lamahi/OHCHR)
Street Drama for Aware Society: 5 Days (Lamahi/FNC)

Photograpy: 7 Days (Lamahi/SWAN)

Women Justice: 3 Days (Nepalgunj/OHCHR)

Co-Operative Management: 3 Days (Ghorahi/NYF)

Interaction Program Involv5: 5 Days (Kathmandu/SWISH)

Skills and competencies

Languages: Tharu (Mother tongue), Nepali (Fluent), Hindi (Fluent),

English (Good)

Experienced in Office Automation (Computer Fundamentals, Windows, MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, Multimedia, Email and Internet)



ABOUT THE CAMERAWOMAN, DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER SUSAN GLUTH

Before studying at the Academy of Film and Television in Munich in 1995, Susan joined practical training as a forest ranger, cook and a veterinarian in the 1980ies. After secondary school and studying business and commerce for two years she went in 1990 for longer stays in Italy and France, developing her photographic skills.

Already at filmschool (1995-2002) she produced, shot and directed several films that were shown at festivals worldwide as well as on TV. For example 1996 **everyday life**, 1999 **I'amour chez TATI**, 2000



OSTWÄRTS, 2003 **Nulla si sa, tutto s'immagina ... secondo Fellini** (Milano: Best Feature Film, Munich: Best Documentary).

Susan's first feature film after filmschool she finalised 2006 **Shad-ows of Fate, a refugee childhood.** The documentary was shot in Chad/ Afrika in a refugee camp with Darfuri

children. After finishing the german film 2008 **Soap and Water** (North German Film Award, North Carolina: Best Direction, Czech Republik: Best Documentary) she spent one year to learn about the distribution business. Susan distributed Soap and Water in 2009 for theatrical release in Germany, Austria and Switzerland on 35mm prints.

Already at filmschool up to date she works also as a freelance camera-person for documentary films all around the world, so far she was in Mexico, Guyana, Brasil, China, Israel, Bhutan, Japan, India, Nepal, Indonesia, Kenia, Korea, Namibia, Seychells, Senegal, Chad, USA, Europe. She speaks English, French, Italian and German.

Her next feature film **Playing Hooky** — **getting old is not for sissies** premiered after 10 years of work in April 2015 in Arizona, Sun City. The documentary is to be theatrical released at the end of 2016 in Germany. Parallel she went to Nepal many times during the past 5 years to work on her final documentary 2016 **URMILA** — **my memory is my power** which is pre-listed for the german film award LOLA and will be premiered in Toronto at Hot Docs in 2016.



Filmography

2016	Urmila - my memory is my power / Nepal 87 Min.
2015	Playing Hooky - getting old is not for sissies / USA 100 Min.
2008	Soap and Water / Germany 85 min.
2006	Shadows of Fate, a refugee childhood / Chad 70 min.
2005	Mit den Augen eines Flüchtlingskindes / With the eyes of a refugee child / Chad 58'30min.
2003	Nulla si sa, tutto s'immagina secondo Fellini / Italy Nothing is certain, it's all in the imagination according to Fellini 56 min.
2001	Bhutan, a land in Himalaya / Bhutan 20 min.
2000	OSTWÄRTS / EASTWARDS / Germany Encounters in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania ten years after Reunification 75 min.
1999	l'amour chez TATI / France 48 min.
1998	Eric and his children / Kenia 8'30 min.
	Anne Wachira, portrait of a homeless mother / Kenia 8 min.
1996	everyday life. / Germany 11 min.
1995	A pleading for the circus / Germany 15 min.

ABOUT THE PRODUCER MARTIN HAGEMANN

From 1990 to 2006 Martin Hagemann produced with his company zero film numerous fiction and documentary films for the screen and TV with directors like Hal Hartley, Aleksandr Sokurov, Peter Bogdanovich, Roger Spottiswoode, Didi Danquart, Jan Schütte, Thomas Arslan, Michael Klier and others.

Since 2006 he is producing with his company zero fiction film. In 2011 THE TURIN HORSE by Béla Tarr won the "Silver Bear — Grand Jury Award" in Berlin and the Israelian documentary THE LAW IN THESE PARTS by Ra'anan Alexandrowicz, co-produced by zero fiction film, won "Best Documentary" in the 2011 Jerusalem Film Festival, "Best Documentary (World)" in SUNDANCE and the special Jury Price HOTDOCS in Toronto 2012. In 2014 JACK, a feature film by Eddie Berger co-produced with Port-au-Prince, was invited into the competition of the BERLINALE and later won the German Film Award "Best Film" in Silver. In 2016 zero fiction is completing a documentary by Susan Gluth shot in Nepal. URMILA-My Memory is my Power will premiere in Toronto's HOTDOCS in April 2016.

Martin Hagemann is board-member of the German Film-Academy, member of the European Film-Academy and member of the German documentary filmmaker's organisation AGDOK. He was called 2011 into the advisory-board for the German Cultural Minister on questions of the automatic German Film Financing scheme.

In 2009 Martin Hagemann took up the professorship "Film- and TV-Producing" at the FILMUNIVERSITY BABELSBERG in Potsdam-Babelsberg.

Martin Hagemann lives in Berlin, he is married and has four children.

Filmography

FICTION (selection)

2014	Jack directed by Eddie Berger (Berlinale competition, German Film Award - Silver		
2012	Berlin Telegram directed by Leila Albayaty (Geneva "Best french-language film")		
2010	The Turin Horse directed by Béla Tarr (Hungary/Germany/France, Berlinale Silver Bear)		
2009	The Race directed by André Nebe (Germany/Ireland, Children Film)		
2007	Marcello Marcello directed by Denis Rabaglia (Germany, Switzerland) The Children of Huang Shi directed by Roger Spottiswoode (Germany, Australia, China)		
2006	Love comes lately directed by Jan Schütte (Germany/Austria, Toronto) Fay Grim directed by Hal Hartley (Germany/USA, Toronto)		
2004	The Flying Scotsman directed by Douglas Mackinnon (Germany/UK) Creep directed by Christopher Smith (Germany/UK, Toronto)		
2003	September directed by Max Färberböck (Cannes Un Certain Regards) Father and Son directed by Aleksandr Sokurov (Germany/France, Cannes) Free Radicals directed by Barbara Albert (Germany/Austria, Locarno) Farland directed by Michael Klier		
2002	Chen Mo und Meiting directed by Liu Hao (Germany/China, Berlinale)		
2001	The Cat's Meow directed by Peter Bogdanovich (line produced by zero film) A Fine Day directed by Thomas Arslan (Berlinale)		
1999	Nordrand directed by Barbara Albert (Venice) Moloch directed by Aleksandr Sokurov (Cannes Competition Best Script) Jewboy Levi directed by Didi Danquart (Berlinale)		
1998	Lola und Bilidikid directed by Kutlug Ataman (Berlinale)		
1997	Mother and Son directed by Aleksandr Sokurov (Berlinale)		
1994	Flirt directed by Hal Hartley (line produced by zero film)		

DOCUMENTARIES (selection)

2016	Urmila – My memory is my Power directed by Susan Gluth (HotDocs 2016)
2011	The Law in these Parts directed by Ra'anan Alexandrowicz (Israel/Germany/USA, Jerusalem FF "Best Documentary, Sundance "Best Documentary (World), Torono HotDocs Special Jury Price)
2009	Trace of the Bears directed by Hans-Christoph Blumenberg and Alfred Holighaus (Berlinale Special)
2001	Black Box Germany directed by Andres Veiel (European and German Film Award Best Documentary)
2000	El Acordeón del Diablo directed by Stefan Schwietert (Berlinale) Escape to Life directed by Andrea Weiss und Wieland Speck (Berlinale)
1996 1991	A Tickle in the Heart directed by Stefan Schwietert (Berlinale) Blockade directed by Thomas Kufus (Berlinale)



About Dominic Miller

Born in Buenos Aires to an American father and an Irish mother, Miller studied guitar at the renowned Berklee College in Boston and at the London Guildhall School Of Music. He has been a highly coveted session musician since the late 1980s. The list of artists he has worked with is sheer endless; among his collaborations are The Chieftains ("Long Black Veil"), Eddi Reader ("Mirmama"), Manu Dibango ("Wakafrika") and Tina Turner ("Wildest Dreams"). As of "The Soul Cages" (1991), Miller has also been involved in every single album produced by Sting; he has been on stage with the former vocalist of The Police more than a thousand times, and was involved in the creation of hit songs such as "Shape Of My Heart". Sting once even described his faithful companion as "my right and my left hand, which brings to life all that my clumsy fingers cannot play."

Miller isn't idle as a solo musician as well: 1995 saw his personal debut "First Touch", in 1999 "Second Nature" followed, then "New Dawn" (with Neil Stacey) in 2002, and "Shapes" in 2003 (2004 in Germany), an album with new interpretations of renowned classical works of composers like Bach, Beethoven, Elgar and Albinoni. In February 2004 "Third World" ensued — a production of soft tones, which enlarged Miller's wordwide fan base even further. His gentle playing did and does inspire terms like 'grace', 'amenity' and 'sensuousness', taking the listener away to places that are so much more inviting than the present here and now usually can muster.

Miller is a guitar player of the utmost proficiency, that needs no further emphasis. So he doesn't emphasize it. He just plays. With an air of ease and aptitude that defies description. What elevates him above and beyond his incredible skillfulness is his ability to transcend it to a point where only beauty remains. To captivate you. Whenever you listen to t/his music. While the sun shines. While it rains. While you're sad. Or in love. While you drive over land or go for a walk; while you look

out across wide open country or gaze at the sea. And so on. "Fourth World" is that kind of record that will please you time and time again. No matter at which occasion/s you listen to it, the setting is very likely to be magically enhanced. 'Cause Miller has a way of turning the many sides of life to music, blending Jazz, Classical, Pop and other modes and moods into his signature style. A mildy intoxicating treat, one of the few that deserve and justify being called 'exquisite'.



Just recently he recorded his newest album with legendary music producer Manfred Eicher / ECM in Munich. It will be released in 2017.

For more information: www.dominicmiller.com



Albums

SOLO/DUO ALBUMS			WITH STING	
1995	First Touch	1991	The Soul Cages	
1999	Second Nature	1991	Acoustic Live In Newcastle	
2002	New Dawn [with Neil Stacey]	1993	Ten Summoner's Tales	
2003	Shapes	1996	Mercury Falling	
2004	Third World	1999	Brand New Day	
2006	Fourth Wall	2001	All This Time	
	Heartbeats [compilation, Japan-release]	2003	Sacred Love	
		2009	If On A Winter's Night	
2009	In A Dream [with Peter Kater]	2010	Symphonicities	
2010	November	2010	Sting — Live in Berlin	
2012	5th House	2011	Sting – 25 years	
2014	ad hoc	2013	Sting – The Last Ship	
2015	First Touch (20th Anniversary Edition)		3	

QUESTIONS TO SUSAN GLUTH

How did you come across Urmila Chaudhary? What made you decide to make a film about her?

My first encounter with Urmila was in early March 2011. In an article in Der Spiegel entitled "The Slaves' Revolt" I read about Urmila Chaudhary, a young woman aged 20 at the time. She had worked as a slave until she was nearly 17. Since being freed she "travelled with helpers through the villages and towns of Nepal in order to free other girls from the clutches of their masters". And: she was finally attending school. She wants to become a lawyer. What a success story. David and Goliath, in a way. I immediately thought about a political fairy tale: a story that will tell us all something and that will mean something to us — a story, above all, that will move us emotionally.

And so this film shows my admiration for Urmila, who has managed despite her past — or perhaps because of it — to make use of her circumstances to produce a positive potential. She possesses a strength that drives her on, that allows her to follow the path which has been prescribed for her through life. She is neither traumatised nor a victim of her fate, but she is able to rise above it and to change it.

How did you prepare for this project? Was it difficult to establish contact with Urmila Chaudhary and to convince her to take part?

Immediately after our first meeting in Hamburg, Urmila invited me to Nepal. And so I was able to share in her life, to follow her daily routine, to meet her family. The camera was simply always there in these moments; she accepted it from the start. We established a feeling of trust from the very beginning. That was the basis. And then we agreed on a number of rules: When Urmila was at school we would not disturb her or drag her out of her school routine. School is the most important thing in her life, and I wanted to respect that.

In the film we see many (former) Kamalari; for example, you show how a Kamalari is freed from captivity. How were you able to persuade the other protagonists of the importance of your project and to convince them about a scene like that?

I was able to experience these moments, which occurred spontaneously, because I was close to Urmila. It is not possible to plan things like that. You are sitting at the kitchen table preparing lunch. And then there is a phone call and, like the fire brigade, the girls — wherever they are — just grab their coloured vests and meet at the agreed place to sound out the location (in this case the town bus park). At this point we were lucky and were able to get six-year-old Sarmila out of the minibus and free her from her mistress. It was a very risky situation: there were armed soldiers all around, and I did not have permission to film. And so the film was simply filmed with a normal photocamera. No one knew how long the situation would last: when the bus driver would set off again; whether the police would help us or whitewash the whole event — or even prevent what we were doing. In moments like that I ask no questions as a film-maker; I can simply be there and follow my instinct. Henri Cartier Bresson said, it's about the "decisive moment".

Were there any special challenges involved in shooting in Nepal, problems you had not initially expected to encounter? What were they? And how did you cope with them?

All our film locations lay in the plains of Nepal — the Western Terai, near the Indian border, and in the capital, Kathmandu. Most of the time we were operating in regions where there is virtually nothing by way of tourist infrastructure. That didn't exactly make our work easier. We didn't always stay in comparatively comfortable guest houses. We also had tents or slept on straw in the house of Urmila's family, and then the next morning we cursed the fleas which had clearly enjoyed spending the night with us under the old woollen blankets. Apart from the one tarmac main highway, the only roads were sand tracks with



huge potholes or holes eroded by the rain. That was a time factor which we had to take into account when calculating the number of days we would need for filming. Throughout the entire country there is power only for a few hours at a time, and sometimes not at all. Mobile phones can be charged using solar power, so small units were easy to deal with. But we needed to copy and look at the material we had shot during that day, and that required more power.

Working like this is very exhausting but at the same time exciting in a positive way and very inspiring. In any case you need quite a spirit of adventure in order to shoot films there. I knew what would be required as a result of previous film trips, and in that respect I was well prepared.

The earthquake in April 2015, on the other hand, was totally unexpected. Shortly after we left, part of the country was destroyed and 9,000 people were killed. On the day of our departure we had climbed the Dhaharara Tower in the capital to take some early morning shots. Ten days later, we would have been dead too. The tower collapsed completely.

How long were you on location in Nepal? How long did you spend producing the film?

My first research trip was in the summer of 2011 and the final post-production stage ended on 31 December 2015. Over the years I spent a total of about six months in Nepal. And there is always so much to do at my desk: there are bills to be examined and paid, expense accounts with patrons and sponsors that need to be dealt with and texts like this one that have to be written. Then you need subtitles in various languages and a poster, the face of the film, so to speak. And here I need my colleagues who are all specialists in their particular field and who work away so that one day the film can exist in its own right. And then the film is really finished.

What did you learn about Nepal and the traditions that still hold sway as a result of shooting the film there and establishing contact with Urmila?

Nepal is a small country with incredibly impressive landscapes. Its people are friendly, hospitable and sunny-natured. I already miss the time I have spent shooting there over the past few years. 160 tribes live there, mostly in peace with each other. The religions and languages are diverse: a Buddhist can also be a bit of a Hindu, or vice versa. The different tribal languages are mostly not mutually comprehensible. Among the Tharu in particular (Urmila's tribe) the wearing of traditional dress is highly valued. They dance a lot, hold family celebrations and eat very well. The people are very proud although they represent the lowest social class within Nepalese society.

Over the years I tried to understand the social context, for example, why serfdom still exists there. Urmila's great-grandfather on her father's side owned his own land; the family was well-off. It was only when the rain forest was cleared and the swamps were drained to fight against malaria (the Tharu are immune against malaria) that people from higher castes came down into the plains from the mountainous regions and started farming the fertile farmland. The farmers were mostly better educated and they purchased the land for a absurdly low prices from the Tharu, who tend to be very trusting. They recorded their purchases in contracts which the Tharu were unable to read, thereby driving them off their native soil. Over the years this led to serfdom. And to their selling their own daughter.

Why should people make a point of watching URMILA — my Memory is my Power?

Urmila is beautiful, defiant, proud, frightened, malleable, obedient, rebellious and brave. She makes it easy for us to enter her world. And we continue to follow her; we enjoy watching her. By asking the question



as to how Urmila's fight against slavery and her determination to decide for herself how to live her life will actually end we quite naturally have to examine the dreadful social abuse of slavery and the values of justice and freedom. Urmila's fate does not make me sad, even though her story up to the age of almost seventeen is really devastating. The film conveys something like hope and confidence in what will come. "Urmila" means in Nepali "New Beginning" or "Second Chance".

And at the same time the film transports us into a world about which we know very little — a world of open spaces, full of colours and bright saris, of aromas, dirt and noise. We do recognise the Himalayas, but are far away; here we learn incidentally about some of the political structures and social hierarchies as well as the role of women in the lowland plains of the Terai. But first and foremost this is a film about Urmila, whom we accompany on her journey to freedom.

And perhaps this young woman also gives a signal for us, in a time in which fears are gaining the upper hand in our society. Urmila shows us that we must stand up to injustice. Girls from the lowest social classes in Nepal have few opportunities to find their way out of the labyrinth, and yet they are trying to do precisely this. I believe it is a story worth telling. Because there are parallels between the revolt of these young women and our lives here in Europe. We have plenty of reasons to take a strong stand against those elements of our society which do not run as they should. Perhaps Urmila can encourage us to face life less fearfully.

