

led to the hasty departure of the Marcoses into exile in Hawaii.

They left in such a hurry that a hoard of jewellery, clothing and Louis Vuitton luggage was discovered at the presidential palace in Manila. Today, even Imelda smiles about the fabled 3,000 pairs of shoes she left behind—they are now in a museum—and proudly points to a poster she spotted in New York, “There’s a little Imelda in all of us.”

Diaz was brought up in the Philippines and studied film at Stanford University. She was well aware of Marcos’s larger-than-life personas. In her documentary, Diaz tries to tread the fine line between eulogy and parody. For decades, Imelda Marcos provided a powerful female role model, promoting the arts and charity at home, while putting her sleepy archipelago nation on the international map. In the documentary, she

is shown surrounded by adoring crowds whenever she ventures into public. In private she rationalizes her extravagance by saying “the people want me to be beautiful.”

Furious at the documentary, Imelda claimed that the filmmaker was shooting for a thesis project, that the footage was never meant to air in public. Diaz says “she’s thinking of another film, *Spirits Rising*, which I made in the early ’90s and was indeed my thesis project. This one is completely different, and was always meant to be distributed.” And, she says, she has a release signed by Imelda to prove it. Diaz says making the film “helped me to understand that between good and evil, there’s a lot of grey—and it’s that grey we should look at more closely because that’s where the truth lies.” ■

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