

Salomé Lamas

PARAFICTION  
Selected Works

Mousse Publishing

# PREFACE

## Salomé Lamas: Parafictions

In February 1926, the *New York Times* ran a breathlessly laudatory review of a recent film set on a remote Samoan island, rapturously described as an “idyll of the South Seas”:

Here we have a poem which is filled with charm, without any makeshift villain to interfere with the effort... [The] players, all Polynesians, are natural in every expression and gesture, and there are playful incidents, such as the participants might indulge in without a camera before them. Sometimes it seems that Mr. Flaherty does so well that it is hard to believe that a camera was near the characters.<sup>1</sup>

Following the success of *Nanook of the North* (1922), a documentary depiction of the life of an Inuk man and his family, the filmmaker Robert Flaherty was offered a blank check and a ticket to anywhere in the world by executives at Paramount, with the stipulation that he bring back “another Nanook.”<sup>2</sup> Flaherty settled on a small village in the western Samoan island of Savai’i where wild boars were hunted, women made cloth from mulberry bark, and young men were painfully tattooed as a rite of passage. All of this was to be captured on film. The absent “makeshift villain,” as noted by the reviewer, was of course the fictive, or rather the lack of interference of any artifice or narrative antagonism in this otherwise undisturbed paradisiacal setting.<sup>3</sup>

João Ribas

Despite the attempt at apparent realism, however, the island was far from the natural or social idyll represented on-screen. It was, in fact, entering a period of anticolonial resistance. The 1926 film, *Manoa*, was eventually subtitled as “The Love Life of a South Seas Siren” perhaps because it was a fictional film in all but pretense, ironically reflected in Flaherty’s stereoscopic lens and its forced, formalized proximity.<sup>4</sup> Laconically, the filmmaker John Grierson wrote of *Manoa* that, “being a visual account of events in the daily life of a Polynesian youth,” it “has *documentary* value.”<sup>5</sup>

Ninety years later, this terse assessment—the first noted use of the term *documentary*—still haunts the genre and its relation with social reality.

The work of the artist and filmmaker Salomé Lamas over the last decade has centered precisely on this border between documentary and fiction. Effectively collapsing the difference between the two as a structuring divide, or even as a generic element, her work proposes a type of filmmaking directly engaged with the dialectical tension between representation—the ethics of witnessing and registering—and the narrative power of social reality. In her filmmaking, the limits of the documentary image become the threshold of narrative, while the fictive is a kind of mediating element between reality and representation. Her films suggest the particular ability of the documentary image to enact a parafictive kind of cinema: around, but not beyond, the real; beyond, but not beside, the fictive. This is cinema that neither simply relies on a belief in verisimilitude, nor offers us, in contrast, “a gun and a girl.”<sup>6</sup>

Part of this approach subtly enacts the ethics of presence apposite to the documentary as a genre. The empiricist “having-been-there” evokes the cinematic equivalent of the real through forms of presence, in which the image is a witness and reality a proximity effect. Much of Lamas’s cinema, in fact, is structured around a set of relations that are created to be filmed. There is, on the one hand, a relation to the ostensible subjects of the film, from a potentially

sociopathic mass murderer, to the intricate class and gender dynamics of a campsite, to the lives of immiserated Peruvian miners. These are social, personal, and economic relations that are crystallized as a film; they imply a cinematic kind of waiting, of constructing proximity (or its affective equivalent, *intimacy*) simultaneously through and beyond the camera. It is a proximity created precisely in order to be witnessed or to reveal. What the films seem to attempt is to provide space—be it pictorial, historical, or affective—for the narrative to reveal itself. The documentary image, in this case, both creates *and* registers the event. Filming, in this sense, is waiting, constructing time.

The episodic structure of *Terra de Ninguém* (No Man’s Land, 2012), for example, shapes a narrative around decades of time and memory, but as evoked in the present by the film itself. The horror and violence narrated within it is at once brutally, descriptively real, and yet, we’d like to believe, *impossibly* true. As the narrator relates, “I’ve always wanted to tell the story of my life, and everyone can think what they want.” The intimacy implied, which allows the film to exist as testimony, is as casual as the killing thereby related. The symmetry between doing and telling makes the image documentary in the full, horrible, and truest sense. One hopes for the story to be untrue precisely because of the horrendous veracity of the testimony—its smell of blood and gunpowder—unfolding over days yet within the enclosed confines of the film’s artificially episodic form.

Location, on the other hand, also functions as a structuring element in a similar sense. Lamas’s films might be more precisely documentary in their concern with human *scale* rather than in any division between truth and fiction. That is, their “documentary value” might rely less on the ethics of representation than on the relation of the human to the scale of the landscapes in which social life is lived. The cramped interiors of *A Comunidade* (The Community, 2012), for instance, evince the false middle-class comforts of

leisure in nature, much as the open expanses of *Encounters with Landscape 3x* (2012) revisit the sublime, the quintessential occidental relation of the human to nature. These are landscapes shaped by time and nature, as well as by the forces of global capital and colonial power. The dark void mise-en-scène of *Terra de Ninguém* suggests another of these landscapes: the rugged face of its protagonist, his facial lines and glassy eyes set into relief. This is the face, we are to believe, of a sadistic torturer, a face that attests to unimaginable brutality, to the desire to enter a hospital just to smell blood one more time.

Lamas's epic-scale *Eldorado XXI* (2016) perhaps best exemplifies these various concerns of her cinematic practice. Set in the anti-idyll of La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, the highest settlement in the world, in the Peruvian Andes, the film approaches the immiseration of the mining community through the expansive, arid beauty of the surrounding landscape, relating place with event. From wide-open expanses of jagged rock and picturesque mountains, seemingly inhospitable, yet from which the miners make their living, the film closes in on the cramped quarters of daily life. At the film's center, however, is another void, the black hole from which men enter and exit the mine continuously, captured in a single, nearly hour-long shot from a fixed camera bathed in crepuscular light and the bobbing of the workers' own headlamps.<sup>7</sup> The accompanying soundtrack weaves us through the aural interiority of this world, all accident reports and radio jingles. Dantean<sup>8</sup> in scale and implication, this setting is nonetheless devastatingly real, the desolation beyond actual grasp. But here is an image of a sublime at once natural and savagely capital.

If Flaherty's intuition was to travel south to seek a version of Edenic social life, Lamas's impetus is to do the same for the opposite purpose: to observe the human relation to the material devastation of the Global South, the same that

supports the frictionless motion of the global economy. Yet Lamas was there: at that asphyxiating elevation, in that bitter snow and that dusty, toxic wind, in that beautiful, forsaken mountain, in the warm glow of a miner's home. These are films, then, arranged around limits: not only the limits of the documentary image, but the limits of exhaustion, of endurance, of visibility, of ethnography, and of the possibility of comprehension. At the limits of the image, of its time and texture, in relation to social reality.

## NOTES

- 1 <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9A0DEF-D71239E633A2575BC0A9649C946795D6CF>
- 2 <http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/4765>
- 3 As the review notes, the film had been kept "free from sham."
- 4 <http://www.jonathanrosenbaum.net/2015/12/moana/> The members of the family at its center, for instance, were not actually all relatives, and this mixed cast was required to perform certain rituals that, by the time the film was made, were decidedly archaic.
- 5 John Grierson, writing in the *New York Sun*, February 8, 1926, my italics.
- 6 To quote Jean-Luc Godard quoting D. W. Griffith.
- 7 [https://www.berlinale.de/en/archiv/jahresarchive/2016/02\\_programm\\_2016/02\\_Filmdatenblatt\\_2016\\_201607438.php#tab=video25](https://www.berlinale.de/en/archiv/jahresarchive/2016/02_programm_2016/02_Filmdatenblatt_2016_201607438.php#tab=video25)
- 8 From a conversation with the artist.



## Letter to an Unknown Director

Salomé Lamas  
100 High Street  
Peterborough, NH 03458

September 14, 2013

To an unknown director,

*I hope that this letter finds you well. I have delayed writing it. Had I written it by hand you would have found several smudges. You would sit before sloppy penmanship, very small letters, illegible, and I would not be there by your side to decipher it.*

I was always an avid reader of extraneous letters, primarily due to their capacity to entertain, and deal with the nonfiction associated with a precise space and time, into which I have the pleasure to project myself. I prefer to read private letters and biographical notes. Observe that the written word is very different from the spoken language. Examine lines of correspondence that span years and decades.

It is with some regret that I find that they are objects in disuse. When I am away for a determined period of time, I have the practice of sending postal mail. In the meantime

Salomé Lamas

I return to discover that in some cases a letter never left the mailbox of the addressee, perhaps because it was an isolated act or due to the recipient's fear of finding utility bills, charges, or outstanding balances—which is understandable because it is the bulk of the post received these days. Some letters end up being delivered by hand.

The idea that we can write or say what we like about the other as long as we present ourselves as an inferior—this rawness with oneself prevents cruelty with others—appears to be the secret solution for the essential matters and irresolvable ethical confusion in autobiographical writing. It is a lazy and erroneous idea to pose this question if we add the fact that the reading of this letter will not coincide with the moment of its writing. A temporal dissonance in which, under very different circumstances, feelings from the past turn present. Such dissonances can, in the meantime, offer exclusive information regarding the ways that writing can be a metronome of emotion, instead of a testament of emotional truths and unchanging desires.

*I find myself in the forest on a property in New Hampshire, United States. The trees are in transformation—the song of autumn approaches, which is a real occurrence in these parts. It seems like everybody is busy producing here, busy putting things out there, in the middle of nowhere, amongst the vegetation, insects, empty trails, birds, and wild animals. I just saw a flock of Meleagris gallopavo, commonly known as wild turkeys, for the first time. The night is pitch dark and during the first days I wander in blackness on the paths of the property, afraid and alone, my head filled with American thrillers and stories of rifles.*

*Being in the middle of the forest occupied with matters that are in no way related to the forest is in a certain way worrisome. Time here now expands, now shrinks, and the delay of the eye on a single tree is impressive.*

The images that I speak of here are disparate. They occupy me. I also stumble upon them when I watch your films. They can seem full of themselves, but they are not; they are just inarticulate attempts.

I believe that the majority of us would agree that violence is not justified unless the purpose of its use is the elimination of a greater evil. Cruelty in cinema can be an attempt at surgical precision, transgression, unnerving frankness, acknowledgment of the sadistic, and the wisdom of radicalism or of clairvoyance, even. At the same time, we find it in line with many sophistries and sophisticated self-justifications that often tend to value it, as if it were fundamental.

Is this the search of absolution, the reiteration of evidence, or the product of a society that nurtures a culture of violence?

It is possible that the act of contemplating cruelty will make us not more human, but in fact more cruel. That when we restate the evil of our spiritual condition, this causes us to consent to it.

That by examining issues that hover around individual or collective acts of extremism(s), through time and space, we run the risk of floating more and more into a state of alienation—what Walter Benjamin called the experience of our destruction as an aesthetic pleasure.

The principal issue could be: When is it necessary, or when does it turn redundant, gratuitous, or exploitative? The problem is that this border can be difficult to locate and in order to move it, it is sometimes enough to release a handful of rhetorical justifications. It is likely that the answer is related to the *sport* of ethics and the exercise of its two dimensions. The first deals with the director's action toward the outside world. The second is closely related to the director's actions and intentions behind

the camera. Not moral for the sake of morality, doctrinal, poorly defined, or amorphous, but fully conscious of the responsibility that private matters are being transformed into public discussion.

To know the *truth*, unfortunately, is not a *kit* that comes with redemption. The feeling of redemption is also not guaranteed at the end of the cycle of reproducing the evil. It can even cause the opposite effect and be the explanation for the perpetuation of it.

The deepest knowledge that we have of someone comes through seeing that person live. This way the ethical and the aesthetic could coincide, being that it is the eye that permits the quotidian to be seen. A gaze that frames and that for moments suspends life. If on the one hand distance obliterates affection, we can affirm that we will never understand the depth of contemplation. On the other hand, it is difficult to know that we will never do justice to the person depicted because we know that we will never produce a *theory* that is satisfactory.

The starting point that I take is simple and childlike. I choose a confined reality to which I relocate. At this point there is no return. And I wait. I wait until the presence of my foreign body and the presence of the other in me generate friction, until the quotidian becomes *extraordinary*. I wait patiently. Sometimes the movement of the initial relocation is enough, other times it is not, and it is necessary to readjust the distance. It is an exercise of distance, duration, and occupation. How many times can you repeat the same trick?

*I just saw two deer.*

Now this responsibility, when we speak of translating any reality, is not equivalent to *honesty* or *fidelity*, either.

Translating reality can be thrilling, to the extent that liberty and fidelity are concepts that would never be side by side. Here, they are necessary as a pair.

We speak about the irremediable difference between the object and its representation, a reflective ambiguity that allows the viewer to assume its function. A mirror effect of the similarity of the maps that present a creative version of the reality we believe we know, but that in the process transform it into something radically different.

*I am there.*

(The child points to a green rectangle labeled with the name of the park he chose.) *But I am also here.*

(And he places his index finger on his chest with force; at the same time he has a confused expression on his face.) As in any other image we oscillate between the real and the fake, and this ambiguity is at the same time its power.

All of the maps represent the world in one way and therefore not otherwise.

The hope that shame, guilt, or simply embarrassment are still operating principles in the culture of the viewer and in current political life can be a well-intentioned assumption, but it is challenged by the apparent ease with which those in power and others are repeatedly caught in monstrous acts of irresponsibility and dishonesty that generate literal consequences for the citizens.

The embarrassment also comes from *the marker*, for a documentary at its core desires for reality to stay still, in order to go there and film it. This is also associated with the fact that we can take this practice as an exercise of social and political power. Which does not mean that *the maker* is the oppressor. Truth be told, this is where it turns

interesting if we examine how productive relationships of power can be.

Perhaps this could be the intention of *the maker*. Perhaps I should have asked about things that were less dark. Perhaps the character should have hidden his *brutal honesty*. Perhaps I should have apologized, for he never wanted to be impolite, he was only *speaking the truth*. Duty.

*I just saw a deer.*

Films that deal with the evidence that these days *facts* are not interchangeable with *truth*, independently of the logic we may take from this, make it clear that the distance between *fact* and *truth* is an accepted and cloudy commonplace.

Also, what distinguishes truth from persuasion? Being persuasive does not imply lying. Something true does not always correspond to something believable. Or we can present the issue in another way: Is truth an illusion, is illusion a truth, or are they exactly the same thing? If so, we are left with an existence of truth that is equivalent to an innate illusion of the dialects of language.

The way in which history crystallizes is extremely problematic. The facts are closely related to a reality that does not contain a story until the moment that it is remembered and transformed into a collection item.

Can it be that we are not giving historical properties to those we represent? Is documentary not also a way to reflect on trauma? Trauma is often time left out of our memory and outside history. That which cannot be represented cannot be brought to memory and is unforgettable. And is history not the *original container* for trauma? Is this not a process of desire?

Films may not be political, but the act of presenting a film is always political. Especially when it has as prejudice the consciousness of *good* and *evil* in the spectator, this will always have moral consequences. And then being a spectator is a bit paradoxical, as it means being the spectator of a *show*—the opposite of *knowing*, the opposite of *acting*. It is this dialogue between the maker and the spectator that can be misleading and lead to serious problems. The moral way is to produce a just film, but what does being just mean if not to confront moral issues?

This *relativist* culture traverses all of the strata. Academic belief assents to the idea that history is dependent on who writes it; the rhetoric and the political discourse generally called *creative nonfiction*; concepts such as *credibility and perception* took the place of an *objective truth*, and so forth. Today we can welcome the *politic of make-believe*; *parafiction*.

*My sincere apologies for the insecure and convoluted writing.*

*P.S. Can you send me a sweater? It is cold here at night.*

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# 18 VHS VIDEO HOME SYSTEM (2010)

## SYNOPSIS

How can I lie that I'm asleep and be faster than my body?  
"But it wasn't so violent, was it?"

She stayed in bed, repeating that she was sleepy, for 40 minutes. "I wanted it to be almost like a mantra and to generate tension."

Time past and time present—if all time is eternally present, all time is unredeemable.

"It was a school exercise. I would use what was close to me, what was domestic, and you were part of it." Fourteen years have passed. I take her images; I compel her to answer me. She is the mother. She is the daughter.

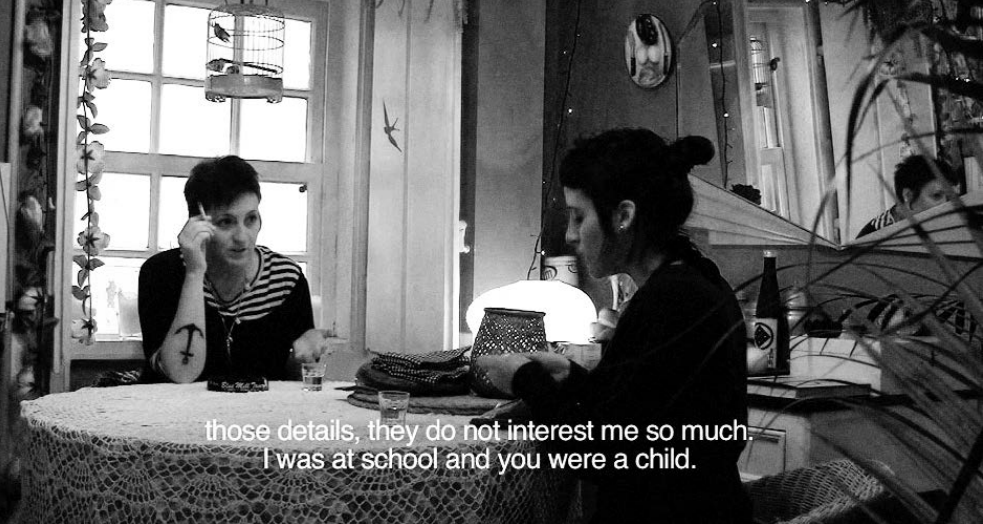
## THE GOOD?

In *Lectures on Literature* (1980), Vladimir Nabokov declares that a great piece of writing possesses three characteristics—magic, story, and lesson—and that three distinct authorial points of view should be considered: "He may be considered as a storyteller, as a teacher, and as an enchanter... Finally, and above all, a great writer is always a great enchanter, and it is here that we come to the really exciting part when we try to grasp the individual magic of his genius and to study the style, the imagery, the pattern of his novels or poems." Nabokov describes literature here, but we believe that if we make a childlike trade of the terms *writer*, *novel*, or *poem* for *filmmaker* and *films* we would still arrive at the essential categories for a "good" filmmaker.

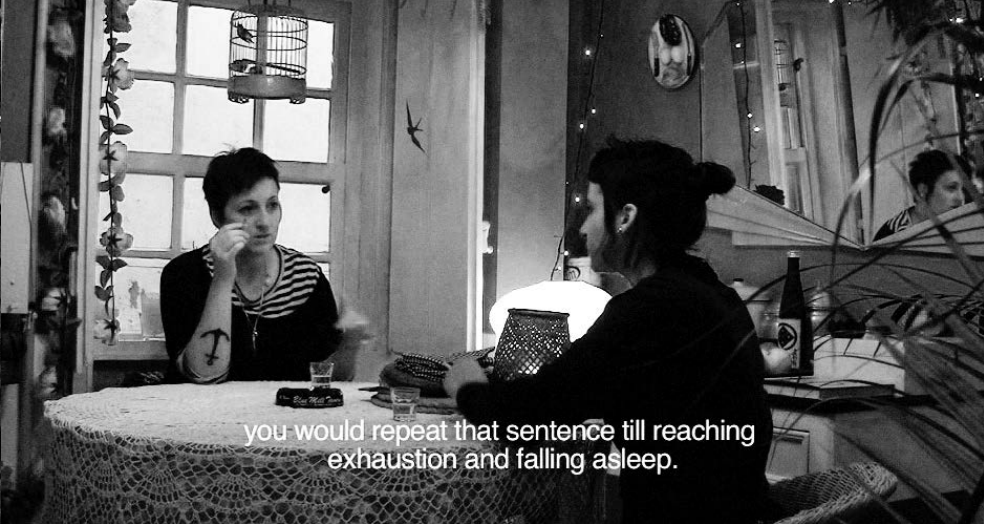
(EXTRAS P. 148)

I DON'T WANT YOU TO FILM ME.  
WHAT DO YOU NEED ME FOR?  
WHY DON'T YOU DO IT YOURSELF?  
WE HAVE SIMILAR VOICES.  
YOU COULD DO IT ONLY AS A SOUNDTRACK.  
THAT WAY YOU WOULDN'T NEED ME.





those details, they do not interest me so much.  
I was at school and you were a child.



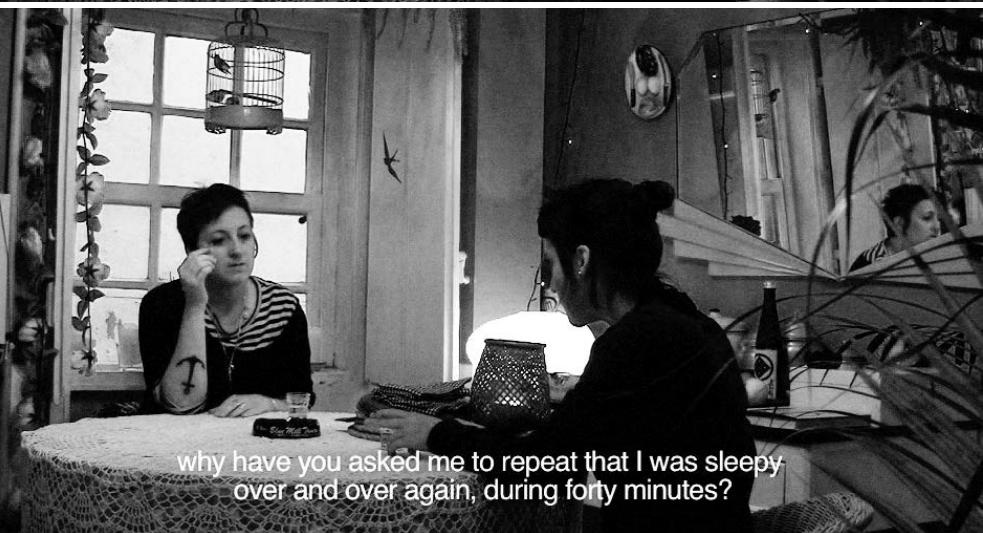
you would repeat that sentence till reaching  
exhaustion and falling asleep.



...I used to film everything, it happened that I filmed you,  
as you were part of everything in my life.



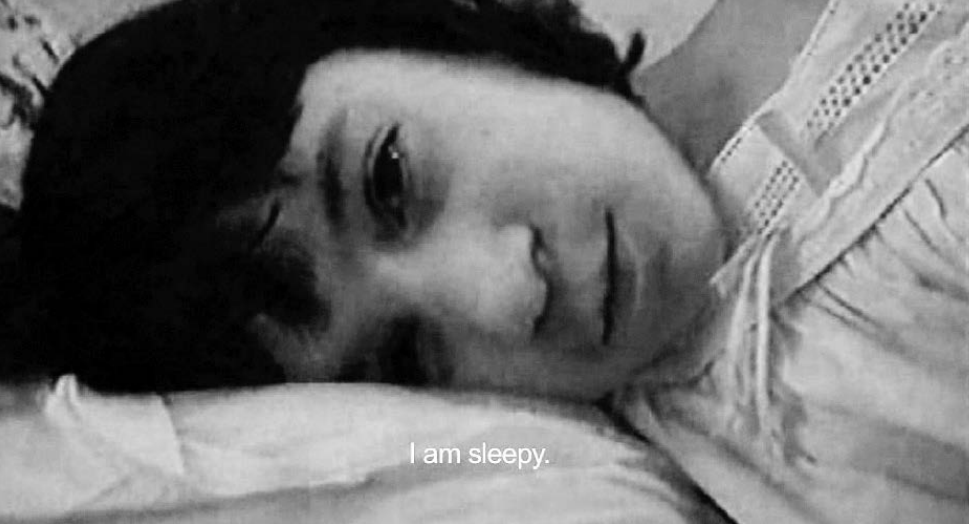
...it wasn't such a violent thing, was it?



why have you asked me to repeat that I was sleepy  
over and over again, during forty minutes?







I am sleepy.



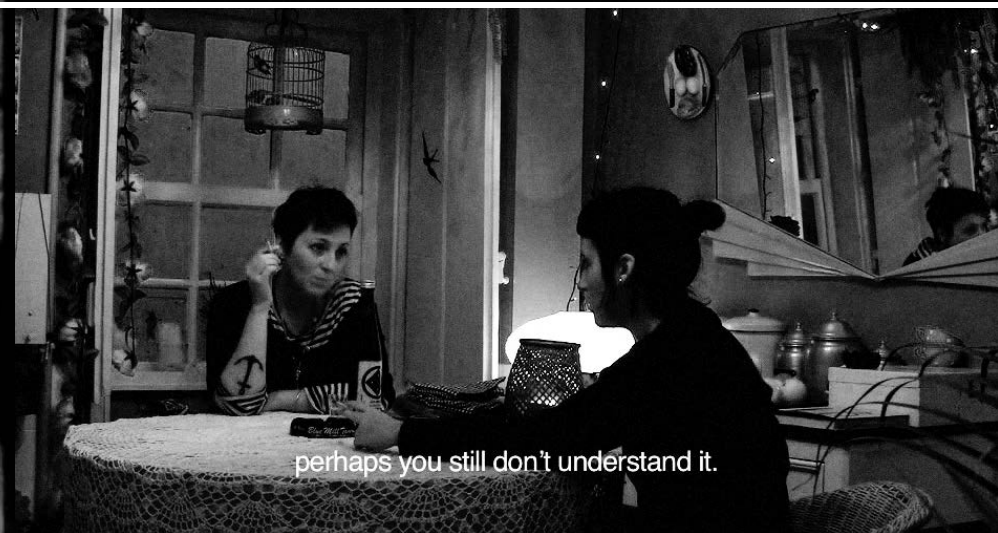
I am sleepy.



if I was good with words,  
I wouldn't draw so much.



I respected it. it was a work of yours.  
as I respected evething that you would ask me then.



perhaps you still don't understand it.



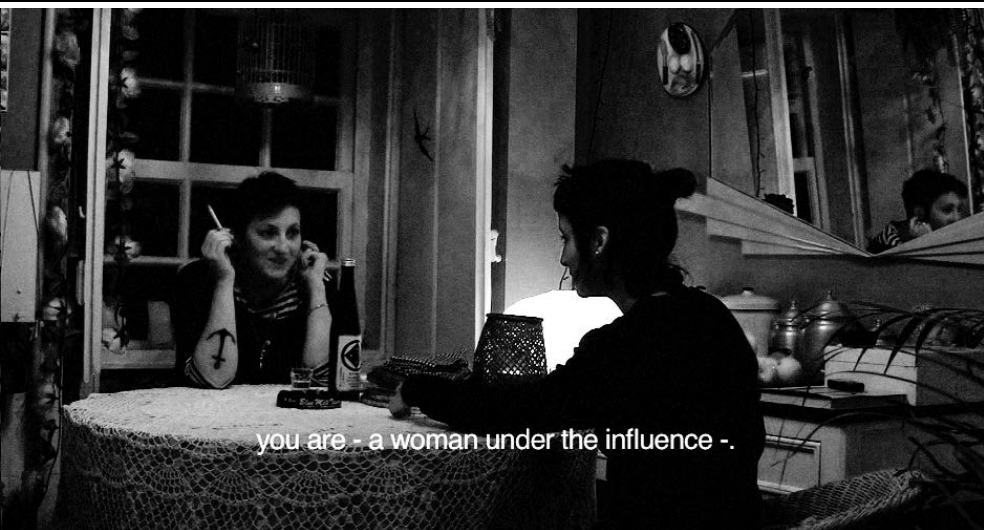


that ought to happen in all the homes.  
oughtn't it?

what should I do with  
those images?



people living together  
for a long time.



you are - a woman under the influence -



and because we were very  
close to each other...

25  
A COMUNIDADE  
(THE COMMUNITY)  
(2012)

## SYNOPSIS

*A Comunidade* (The Community) is a short documentary about the oldest camping park in Portugal.

### THE LANGUAGE OF THE REAL IN CINEMATOGRAPHIC LANGUAGE

If we circumscribe the sphere of action, we acquire the four initial movements of the filmmaker's intention: language, translation, critique, and story (these concepts are based on a prism by Walter Benjamin).

**LANGUAGE:** According to Benjamin, no event or object exists in nature that does not somehow have a whereabouts in language. All and any exteriorization of human spiritual life can be understood as a form of language. This way, the spiritual essence communicated as language does not coincide with the language itself. What does language communicate? It communicates that to which it corresponds. Language is imperfect in its communicative essence. It covets universality since the spiritual essence is not entirely a linguistic structure.

Names are attributed to that *which does not have a name*; nevertheless those who are nameless do not exist in this game. It is in the translation of the language of things into human language that the concept of translation is founded. It is the translation of that *which does not have a name* into a name, and this way many translations, such as languages, exist.

**TRANSLATION:** Will it be a valid translation for they who are not familiar with the original? It seems to be the only reason to say the same thing again! What does a film say? What does it communicate? Translation is form; to design implies returning to the original. A translation must be taken into consideration even if it is untranslatable to the spectator. If translation is form, then the possibility of translation should be the essence of some works.

In order to evaluate the authenticity of a translation and its original, some criteria that are analogous to processes where critique or knowledge proves the impossibility of an image-copy theory must be met. If knowledge rejects the objectivity or the demand of the objective—that

is, if knowledge is composed of an image-copy—this shows that no translations can aspire to have a similarity with the original. It will therefore be a metamorphosis of the original. In this, concepts that would never be paired together, such as “liberty” and “fidelity,” are crucial when the translator's work begins. Being faithful to the language, to the sound and the image, is an immeasurable task.

**CRITIQUE:** Critique seeks the hidden truth in the artistic object and comments on its material properties. The wisest process is to search through the more intelligible *brothers* and *sisters* of the work. It is almost as if the filmmaker would build a reference map to navigate around the production. The job of interpretation is virtually that of the translator as well.

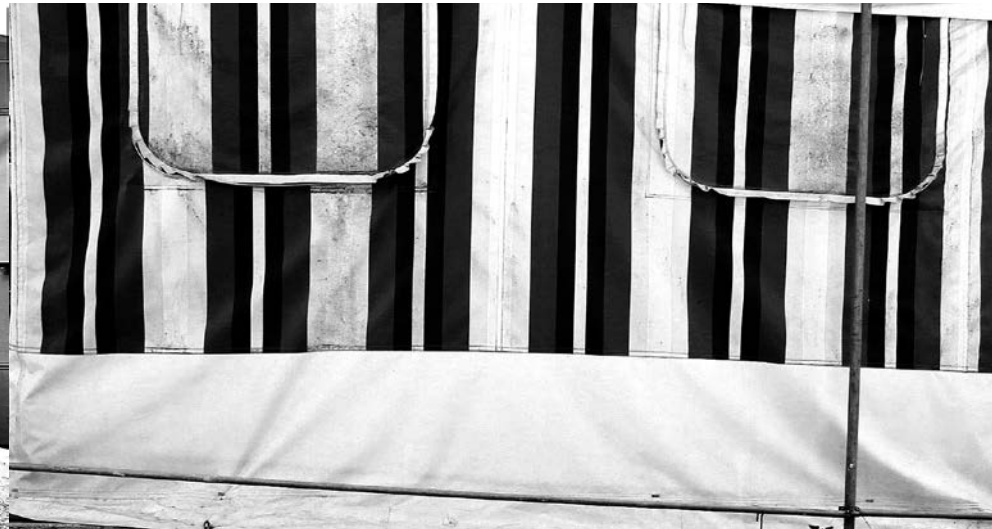
**HISTORY:** The history converts the representation of the past into its own theme. It is an exponential (integration) of reality, in which a past event (of its remote time) contains a greater degree of actuality than that of its existence. The honest method of making a past event present consists of bringing it or representing it in our (contemporary) space, so that the event forms part of our lives. In any case, we can enter the space of time, but not the life of time. Looking back does not bring the past back. Thus it is necessary to bring the past to our time, and inscribe it into our current reality. Here time is a dialectic suspended between past and present, containing in an elevated way the mark of the critical moment.

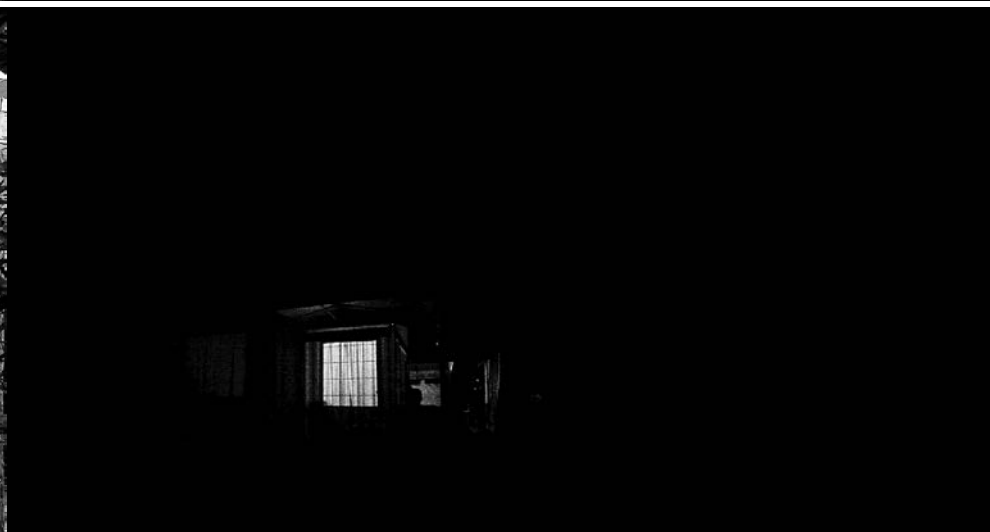
We believe that these tempos are pivotal to the filmmaker's motivation in translating reality—transporting the language of the real to the cinematographic language. It is also at this point that the discursive forms of fiction and nonfiction overlap.

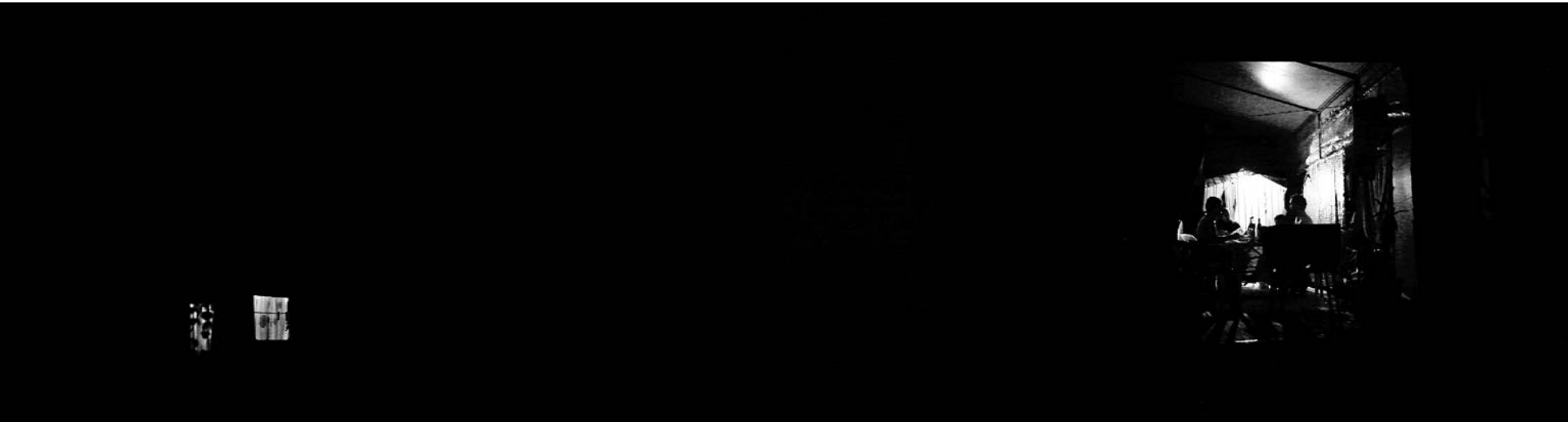
(EXTRAS P. 154)











# 36

## ENCOUNTERS WITH LANDSCAPE 3X (2012)

### SYNOPSIS

In late 2011, I arrived in Sete Cidades, Azores. I recalled some loose ideas on the sublime. We experience the sublime when our imagination fails to comprehend the greatness of natural events, in the process of determining concepts of understanding, and supplants this failure with a delight stemming from its ability to grasp these aspects of nature by virtue of an idea of reason. That idea appropriates the supersensible and human moral nature.

To experience the sublime sensibility, a body, being human, and being finite are preconditions. Was it a lack of sensibility?

While filming I felt the urge to formalize landscape through language games. It is the sight that makes things valuable. *Encounters with Landscape 3x* happens to be this exercise. Landscape becomes a dangerous playground.

When one is young, one is daring and stupid. As you grow older, you tend to lose the daringness and become less stupid. We change the rules as we go along.

### THE BORDER, THE OFF-THE-MAP, THE NO-MAN'S-LAND

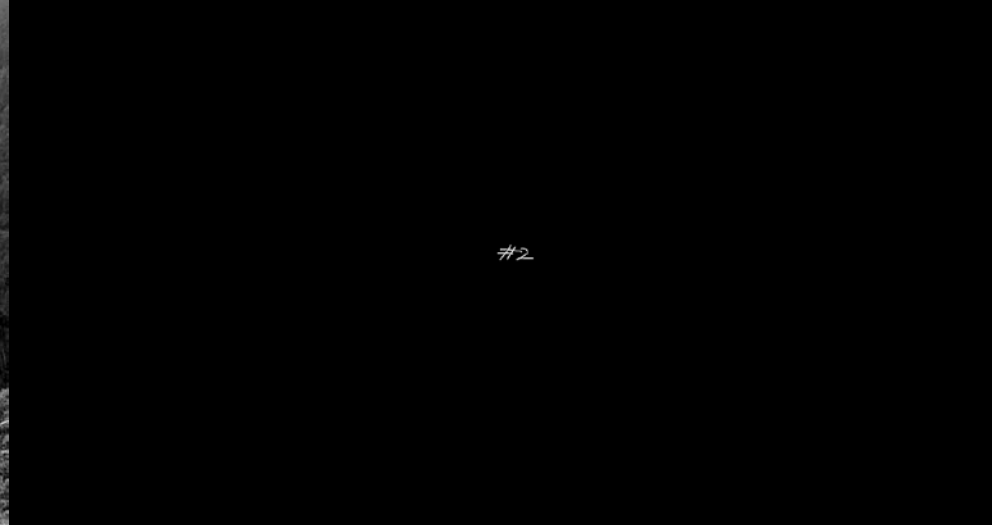
I do not have an easy relationship with borders. They frighten me and unnerve me. I have been searched, provoked, delayed time and time again for having had the senselessness to cross a few meters of land. Borders are bureaucratic lines, authoritative and enemy. Their existence is routinely criticized by academic geographers who portray them as hostile acts of exclusion; nonetheless, in a world without borders, where would we escape to? Where would it be worth going to?

No man's land is the natural land of the imagination. It is in that non-place that we arm ourselves with the means to withstand the immaculate silence of the universe that goes beyond our own imaginations, so that we do not succumb to pure panic or the threat of dissolution. Silence from the abyss that is foreign to us but to which we also belong. In this part of us that is abandoned to the pure possibilities, the unsubdued obsessions of any form, the inertia of fear, from which we falsely protect ourselves by convention.

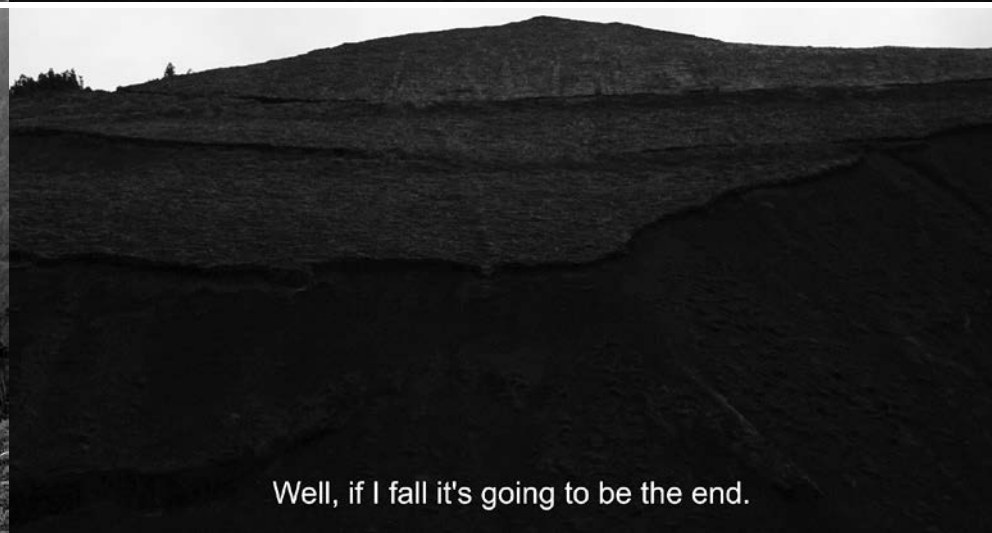
(EXTRAS P. 155)







I can't see a thing.



Well, if I fall it's going to be the end.





This is almost like Super Mario.

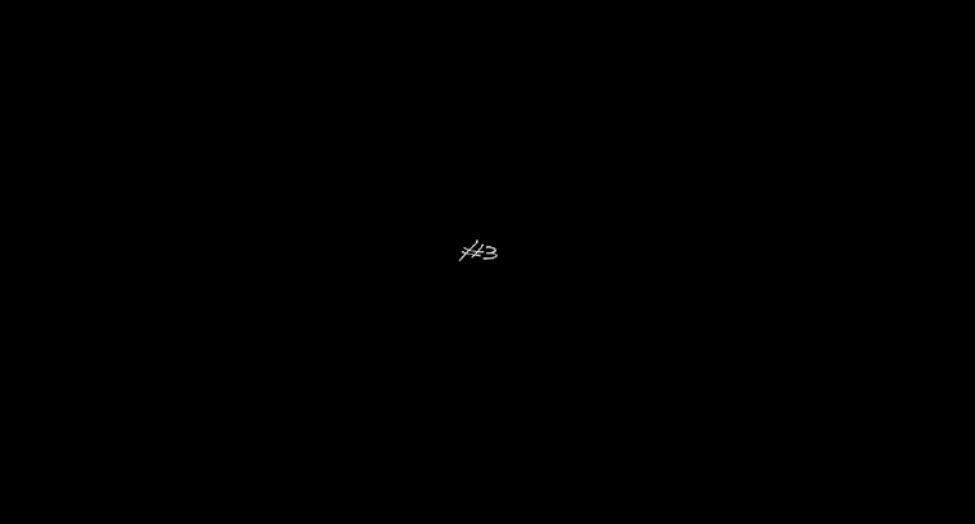
Can you see me?

OK. You went the wrong way.

- Let it go slowly.  
- But, I can't let it go...

Isn't it? What does "high" mean?

- I am here waiting for you.  
- Aaaaaaaaahh!



# 43

## TERRA DE NINGUÉM (NO MAN'S LAND) (2012)

### SYNOPSIS

A mercenary sits in silence on a chair in an abandoned palace in Lisbon, as if posing for a portrait. Facing the camera, he begins narrating and performing his own history, constructing a record that slowly reveals, in its turns of phrase and mismatched events, a series of doubts and contradictions. The camera watches, relentlessly. Paulo describes his involvement as a hired killer for special military forces during the Portuguese colonial war, the part he played in the GAL (Antiterrorist Liberation Group), a death squad illegally established by the Spanish government to annihilate high officials of ETA, and his work as a mercenary for the CIA in El Salvador.

Rather than affirming or discrediting the veracity of the historical record, or proving or disproving an official narrative, *Terra de Ninguém* (No Man's Land) dwells in the present moment of witnessing—the space inhabited by the performance of a memory. Refusing to linger on a static moral duality, throughout the film accuser and accused are frequently asked to change positions. At a certain point, after describing a series of crimes he committed, responding to a question from the director, Paulo replies with one of his own: “How much is worth the life of a man? A man like me or men like them?” As the film’s own processes of making are slowly revealed, *Terra de Ninguém* creates a set, a stage, where information and documentation are peripheral to the question of how one plays out and affirms as history one’s own personal truth.

#### THE MARGINAL CHARACTERS

Nonfiction characters should, in the first place, be real if we intend to affirm fiction as a power and not a model. They should begin to tell stories if they intend to affirm themselves as real and not fictional. The character is permanently turning into another, and will never be able to separate this motion. This premise is also valid for filmmakers. They turn into another as they gain control over real characters as intercessors and substitute their own fictions for those of the storyteller. The filmmaker seeks to reach both: who the character was before (origin) and who he or she will be after (translation).

It is this perception of transformation that dissolves the difference between fictional cinema and documentary filmmaking. In one move descriptions turn pure, crystallizing optics and sounds, forging narratives and simulations. The blacksmith and his or her power, the filmmaker and his or her characters—on the contrary, this alliance allows them the creation of the truth.

We are interested in the “small” characters on the margins of larger narratives, existential fables, and the common hero.

(EXTRAS P. 156)



primeiro dia  
*(África - guerra colonial)*


FIRST DAY  
(AFRICA – COLONIAL WAR)




Then I started my life as a mercenary.




With one grenade they were really marmosets. In pieces.

A black and white photograph of an elderly man with a mustache, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and light-colored pants. He is sitting in a chair with his arms crossed, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.


We never took prisoners.  
Just bodies.

A black and white photograph of the same man, sitting in a chair with his hands clasped in his lap, looking directly at the camera.


They didn't need them anymore,  
neither the head, nor the fingers, nor the ears.

A black and white photograph of the man sitting in a chair with his hands resting on his thighs, looking slightly to his left.

As the saying goes, for great evils,  
strong remedies...liquidate them.

A black and white photograph of the man sitting in a chair with his hands resting on his thighs, looking directly at the camera.

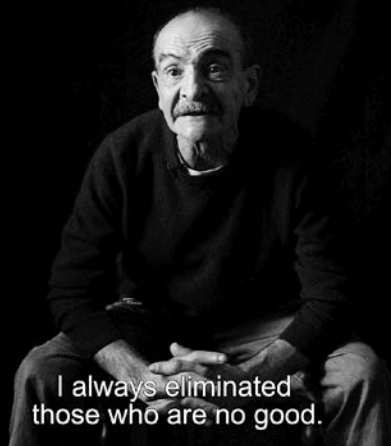
Maybe a bit of sadism.  
Really sadist.

A black and white photograph of the man sitting in a chair with his hands clasped in his lap, looking slightly to his left.

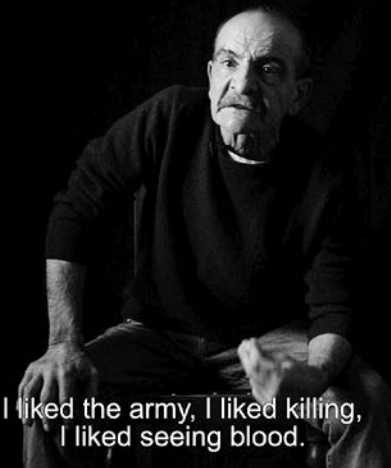
The trophies were more of a joke.

A black and white photograph of the man sitting in a chair with his hands clasped in his lap, looking slightly to his right.

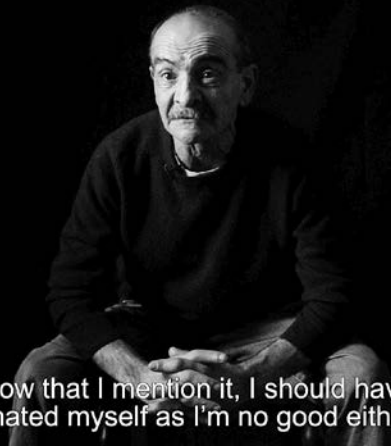
It's kind of a St. Thomas,  
"Seeing is Believing".



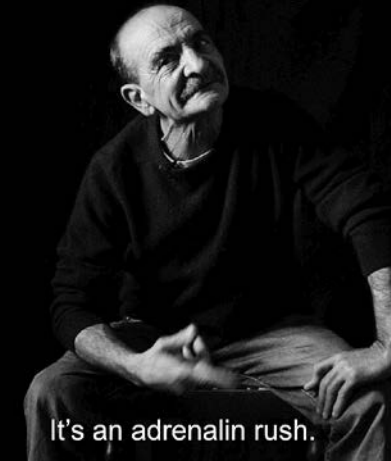
I always eliminated those who are no good.



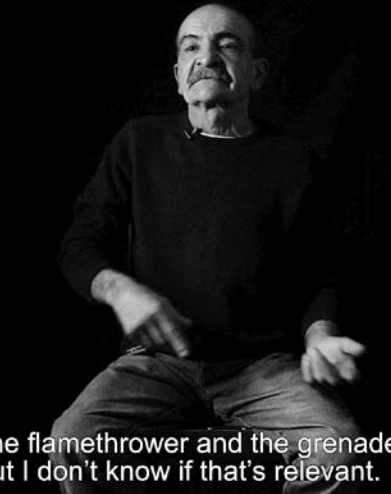
I liked the army, I liked killing, I liked seeing blood.



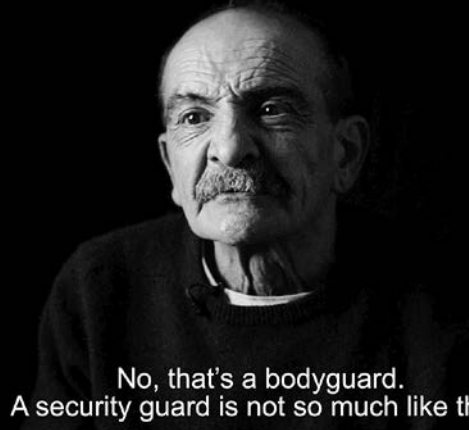
But now that I mention it, I should have eliminated myself as I'm no good either!



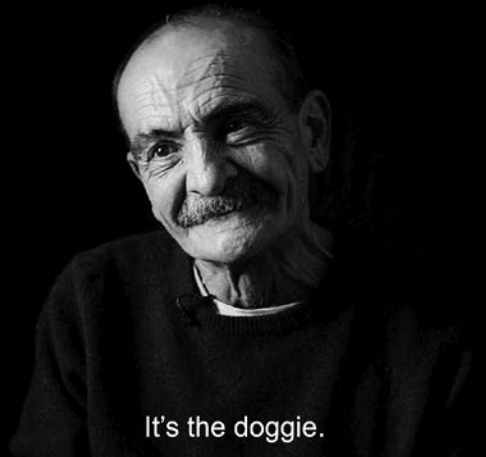
It's an adrenalin rush.



Between the flamethrower and the grenades and... but I don't know if that's relevant.



No, that's a bodyguard. A security guard is not so much like that.

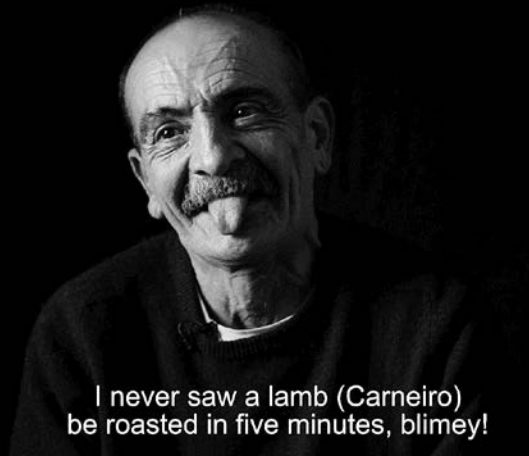


It's the doggie.

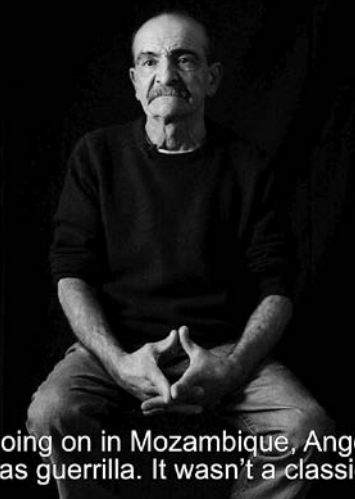


segundo dia  
*(Rodésia, El Salvador - CIA)*

SECOND DAY  
(RODHESIA, EL SALVADOR - CIA)



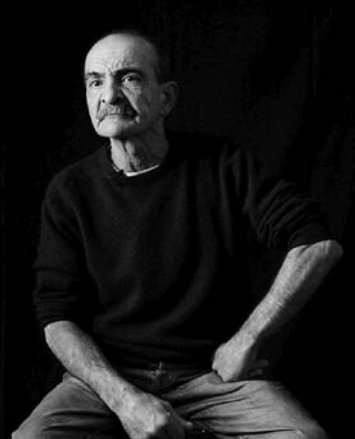
I never saw a lamb (Carneiro)  
be roasted in five minutes, blimey!



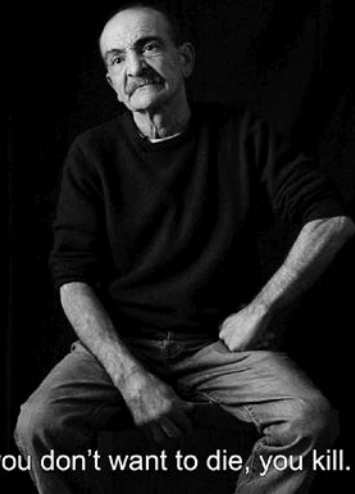
What was going on in Mozambique, Angola  
and Guinea was guerrilla. It wasn't a classic war.



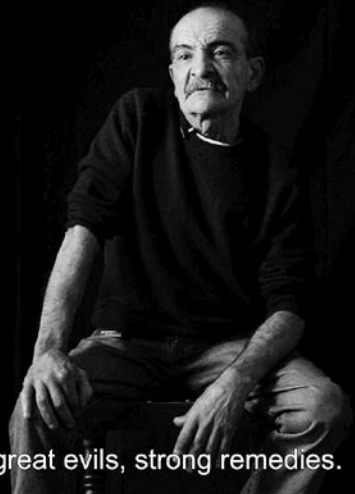
*I'm interested in his truth,  
not in mine, not in anyone else's.*



That was always the goal,  
the American goal was always that.



So, if you don't want to die, you kill.

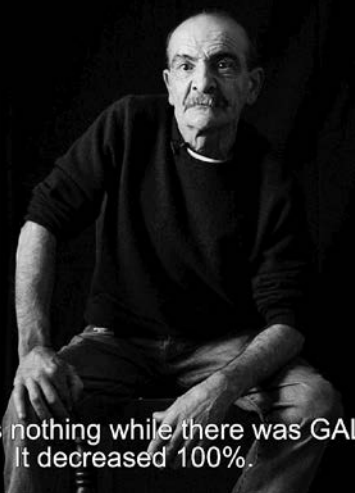


For great evils, strong remedies.




To dominate terror, only with terror.

*Who covered their strategic retreat  
towards the Spanish border?*



ETA was nothing while there was GAL.  
It decreased 100%.



*Here the judicial power would never be  
disconnected from the political power.*



terceiro dia  
*(GAL - grupo antiterrorista de liberación)*

THIRD DAY  
(GAL – ANTITERRORIST LIBERATION GROUPS)



The Black Lady of GAL...



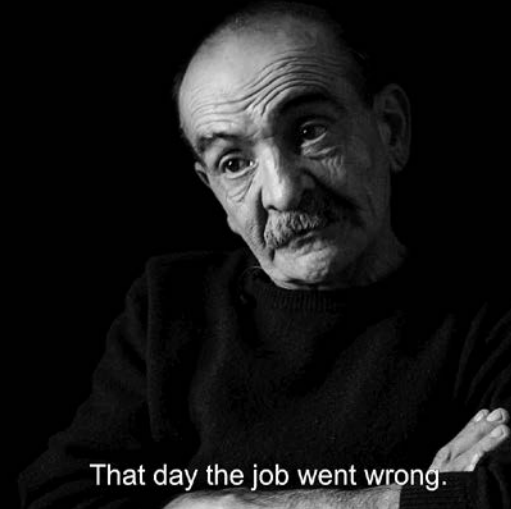
It was Christmas Eve, I went to celebrate  
my Christmas in Monte Carlo.



I went past the table  
and wiped them out.

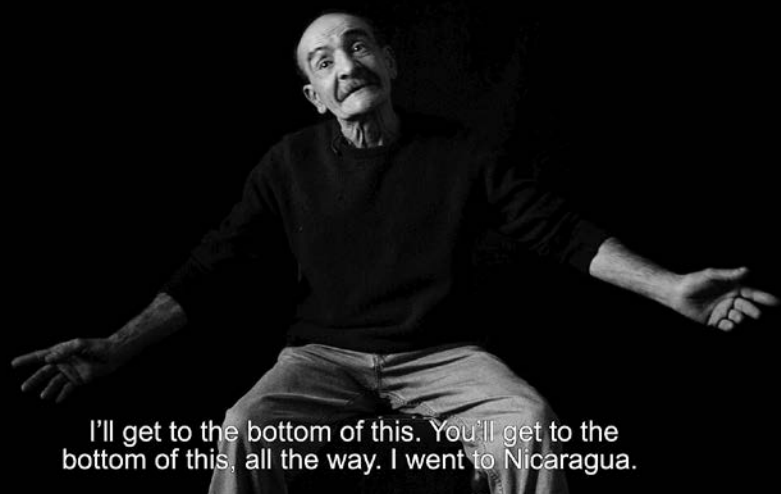


Where do they get the information?  
I don't know and I don't care. I know they know.

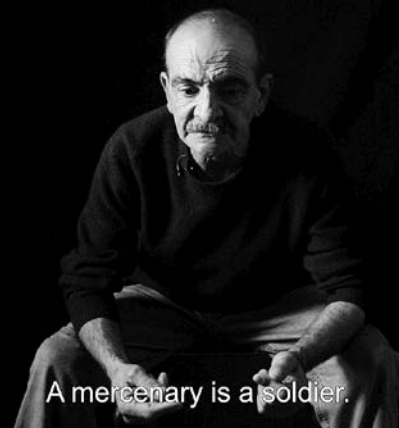


That day the job went wrong.

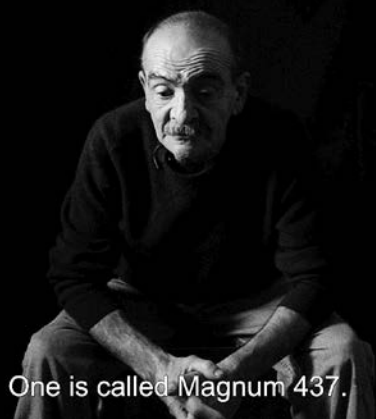




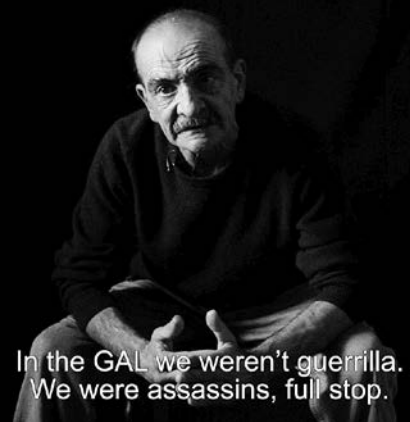
I'll get to the bottom of this. You'll get to the bottom of this, all the way. I went to Nicaragua.



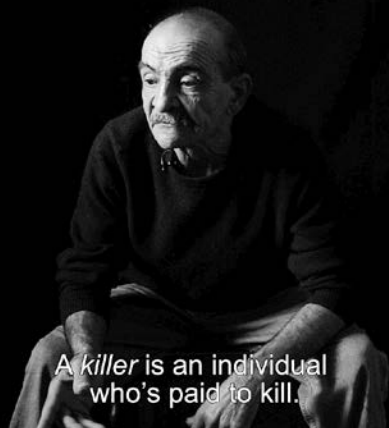
A mercenary is a soldier.



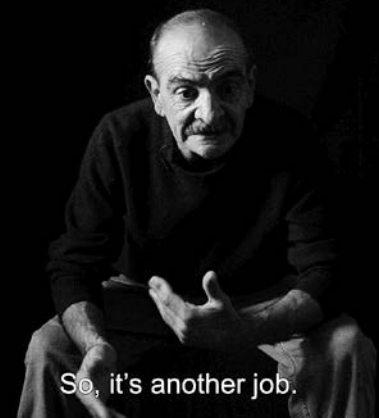
One is called Magnum 437.



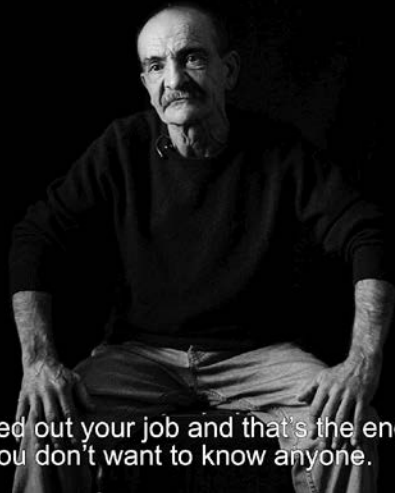
In the GAL we weren't guerrilla.  
We were assassins, full stop.



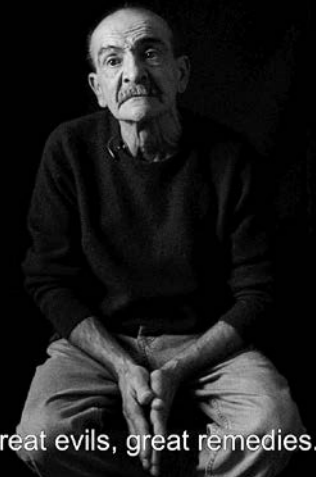
A killer is an individual  
who's paid to kill.



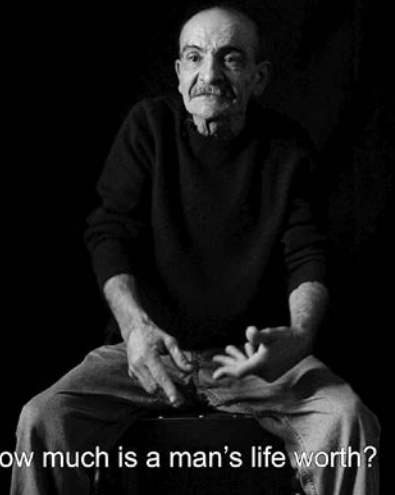
So, it's another job.



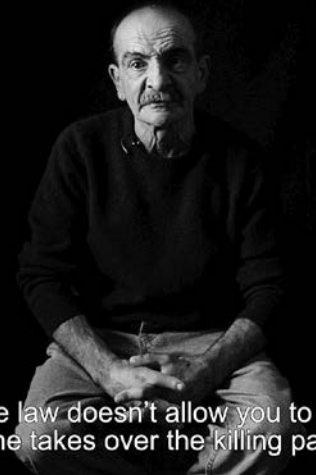
You carried out your job and that's the end of it,  
you don't want to know anyone.



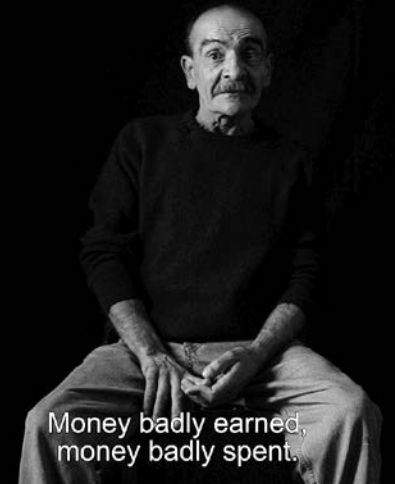
For great evils, great remedies.



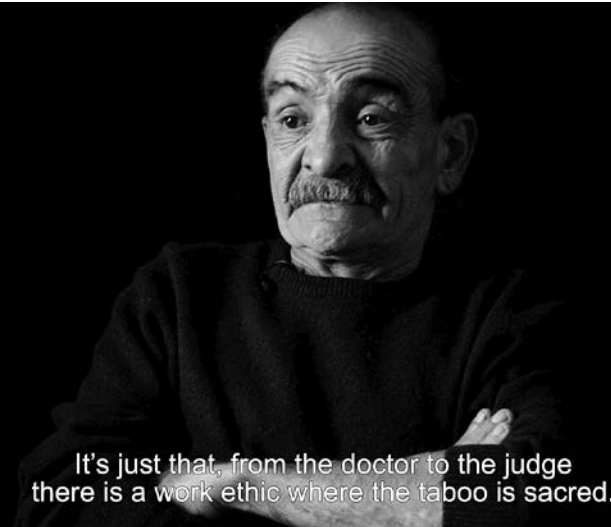
How much is a man's life worth?



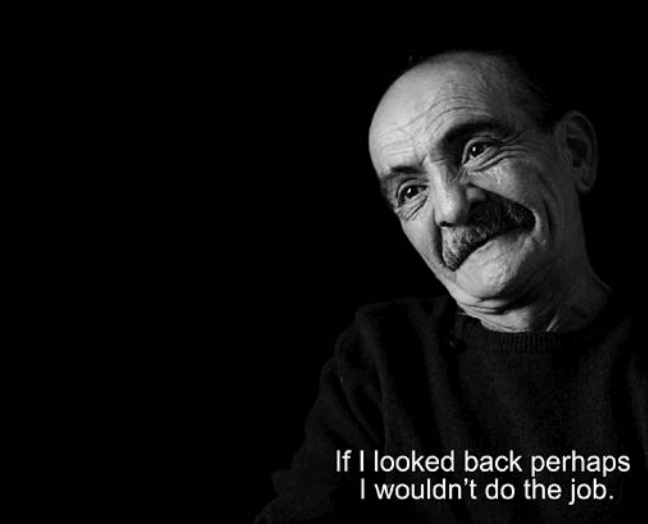
Since the law doesn't allow you to kill,  
someone takes over the killing part.




Money badly earned,  
money badly spent.



It's just that, from the doctor to the judge  
there is a work ethic where the taboo is sacred.



If I looked back perhaps  
I wouldn't do the job.



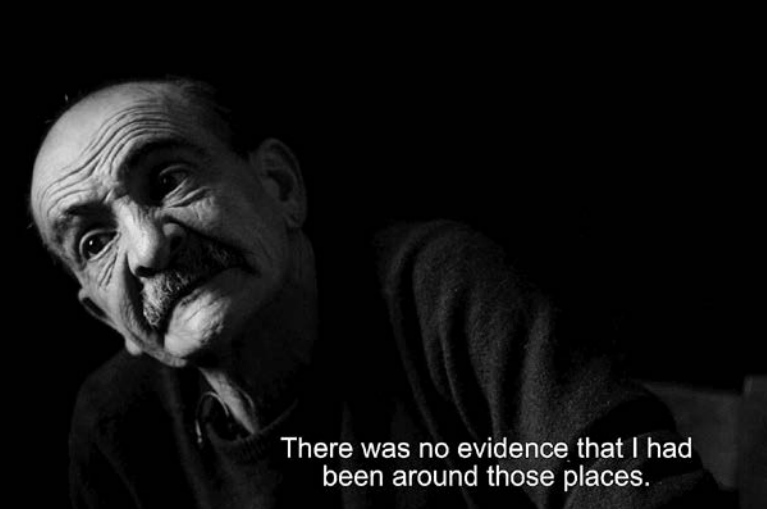
There's no body, there's no killing.




That's how I got arrested.



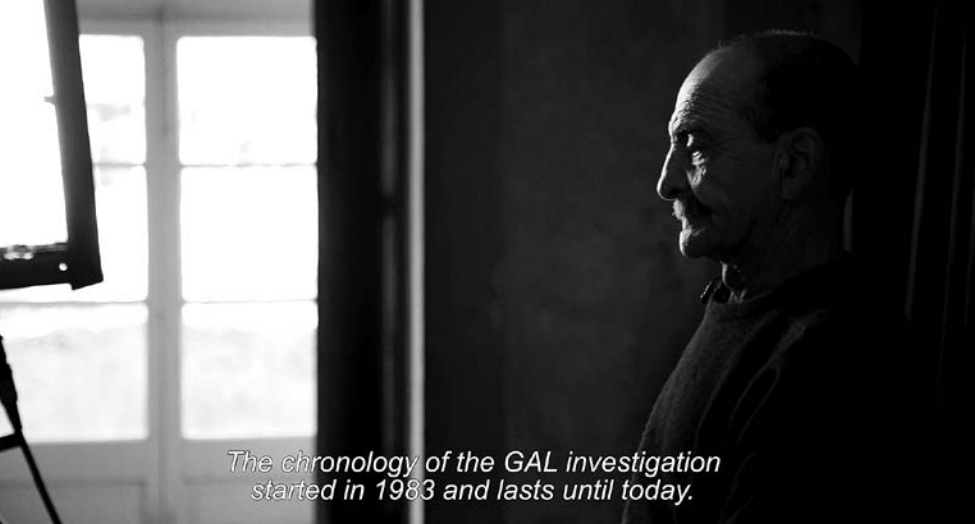
What is it like to bury a dead person?  
It's very hard work.



There was no evidence that I had  
been around those places.



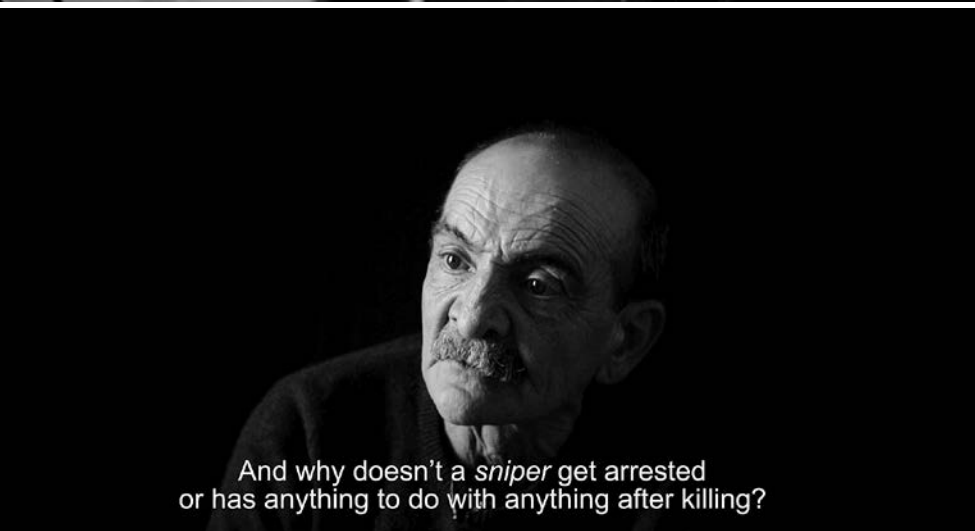
The dead don't scream, damn it!



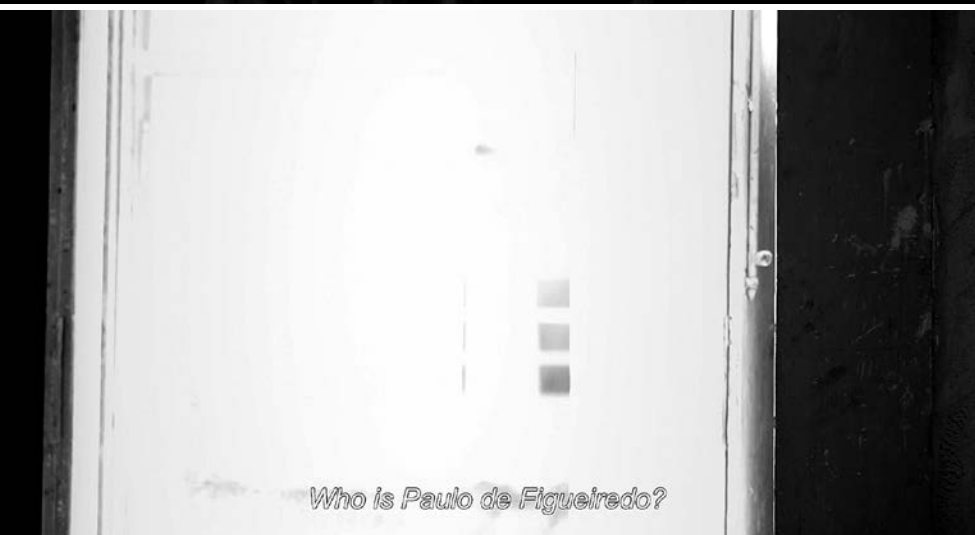
*The chronology of the GAL investigation started in 1983 and lasts until today.*

quarto dia

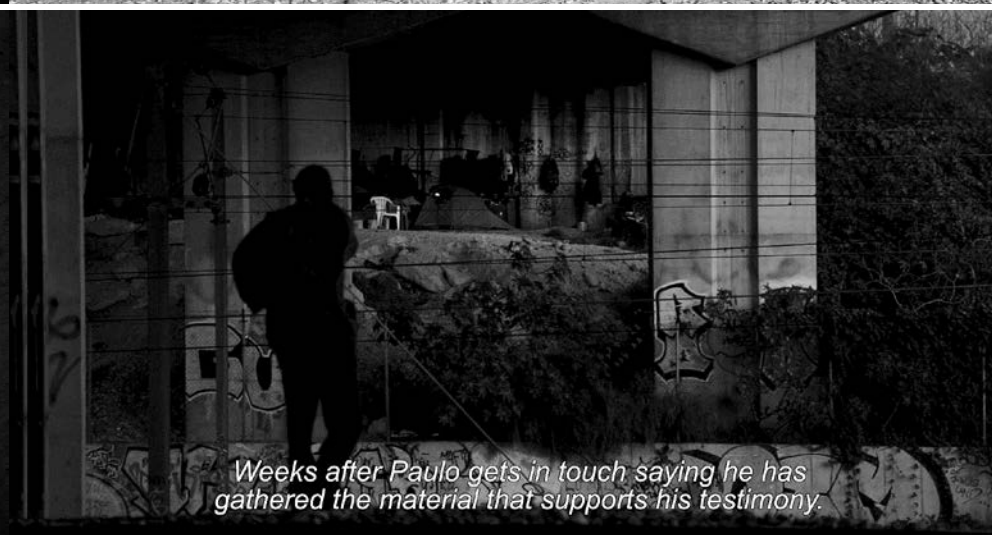
FOURTH DAY



*And why doesn't a *sniper* get arrested or has anything to do with anything after killing?*



*Who is Paulo de Figueiredo?*



*Weeks after Paulo gets in touch saying he has gathered the material that supports his testimony.*



*This meeting will never take place.*

Epílogo: ficou acordado que o Paulo seria o primeiro espectador deste filme. Esta última nota está aqui apenas por esta razão. Não fosse o acordo não haveria qualquer menção à morte de Paulo. Acabo por me aperceber que dou esta notícia a todas as pessoas que conheço, até às menos próximas, como se o meu pensamento em aflição fosse que todos deviam conhecer o Paulo e que se não o conheciam a falta era deles.

*If wasn't for the agreement there would be no mention of Paulo's death.*

64  
THEATRUM ORBIS  
TERRARUM  
(2013)

SYNOPSIS

*The Theatre of the World* (1570) is thought to be the world's first modern atlas. *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* may be considered a film exploration, a sensorial journey, a vertiginous history, but definitely an adventure story. "When I look at the sea for long, I lose interest on what happens on land," says our shaman leading character.

OFF THE FIELD

Absence is more violent than presence. The mystery of off-the-field (set forth in the film) is more stimulating than the impression. The latent image (imprinted on silver salts before being developed in the laboratory) is more effective.

(EXTRAS P. 172)





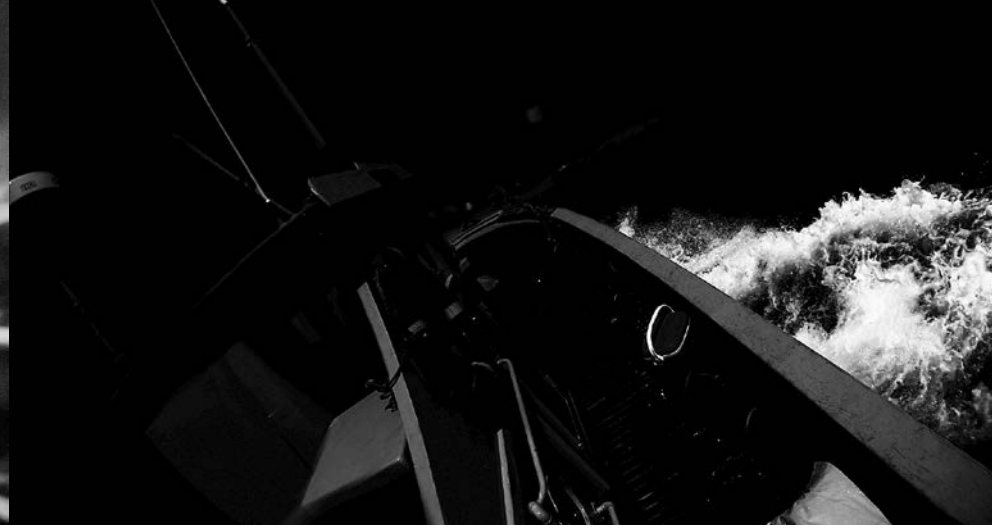
fim de mensagem  
stop copying



fim de palavra  
word space









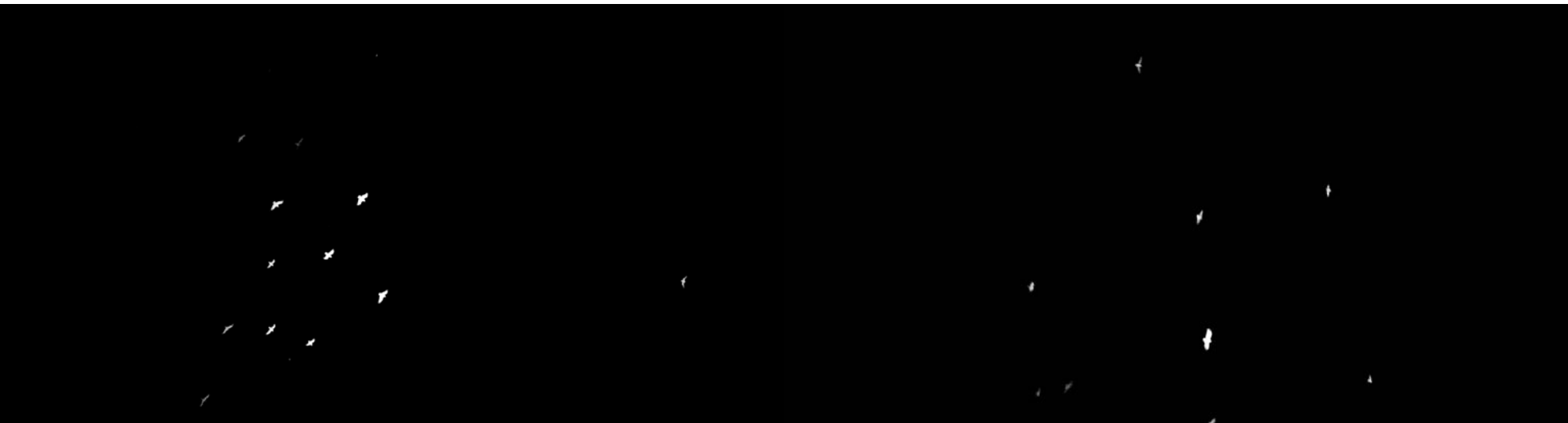
I can't look at the sea too long,



otherwise I lose interest in  
what happens on land.











*My little boat turned over.*

#### SYNOPSIS

“None of the people who were asked about me had seen me.” *Le Boudin* documents the encounter of the young Elias Geissler with the testimony of Nuno Fialho, who at the age of sixteen was forced to enlist in the French Foreign Legion. “I didn’t enlist. They enlisted me.”

#### DYSTOPIA

Dystopia, the *doppelgänger* of utopia, is not a way to state what is to come, but a hidden logic of revealing the present.

(EXTRAS P. 173)




None of the people who were asked  
about me had seen me.

78  
LE BOUDIN  
(2014)




I didn't enlist.  
They enlisted me.



*My first mission?*

*We didn't care for their ideologies.*




*That is to forget.*

*That's roughly the story of our platoon,  
we existed, but officially we didn't exist.*




*Where was I living when I was 16 years-old?  
In the desert. In the French Foreign Legion.*


*No. The motto was different,  
but we would say "They pay we do."*



It was like we were a restricted club,  
like Club Med or a VIP Club....



We weren't to blame.



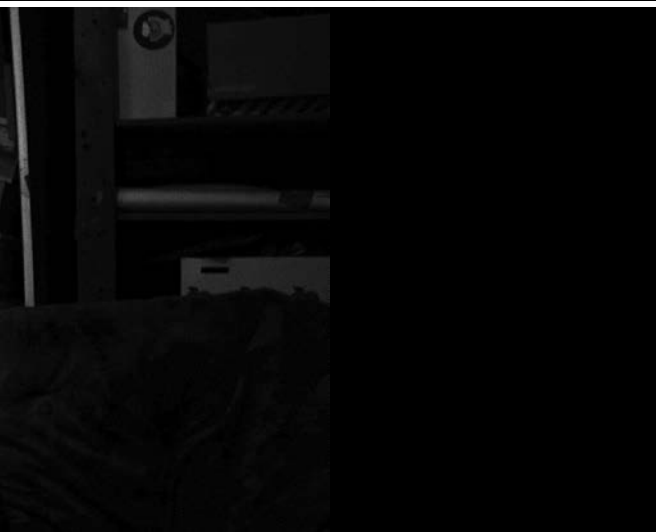
I was only a boy.



I got to choose between  
juvenile reformatory or the army.



A toll.

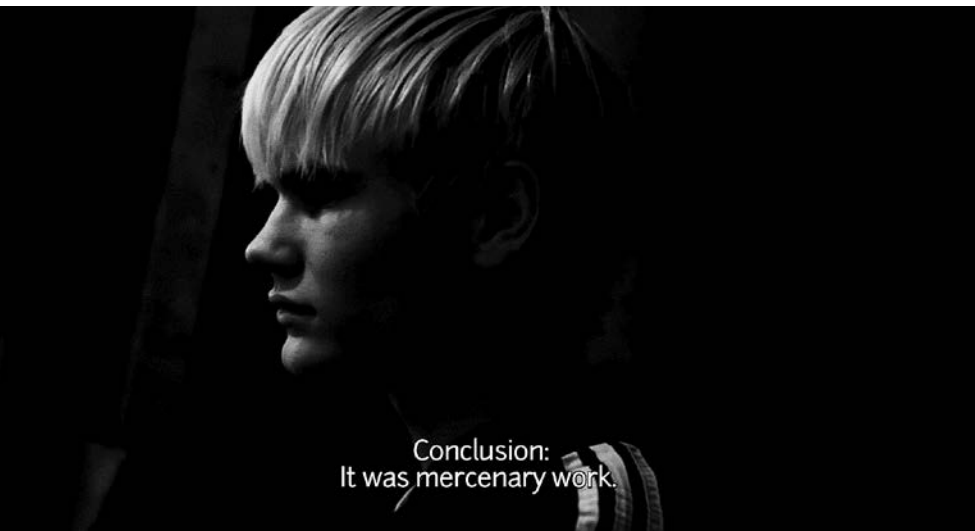


*...I don't remember  
what I was saying ...*



*A couple of legionaries presented  
me an eight year contract to sign.*

*I'm kind of a persona non grata.*



Conclusion:  
It was mercenary work.



Well, that's something to forget.

## 85 A TORRE (THE TOWER) (2015)

### SYNOPSIS

*A Torre* (The Tower) is made using materials collected during the production of the feature film *Extinção* (Extinction, 2017), directed by Salomé Lamas, produced by O Som e a Fúria and with the collaboration of Christoph Both-Asmus.

Maybe Kolja's experiment of merging his body (human) with the tree (nature), venturing into a border zone between the earth and the sky, is due to his purity of spirit, to the grandeur of the idiots, or the foolishness of the mystics. Or is it all of these together? Maybe it is a symptom of the enlightened—or simply an elaborated suicide.

## HISTORY

The way that history crystallizes is extremely problematic. In contemporary society it is commonly accepted that the writing of history can be called creative writing. Those who write history devote too much attention to events heard throughout the world, and neglect the periods of silence. It is these periods of silence that interest us.

(EXTRAS P. 176)





89  
NORTE/NORTH:  
TRIAL BY FIRE  
(2015)

#### SYNOPSIS

A daring group of boys feel the nightly hoods with their Mirandês cries. Mysterious, hypnotic, and trance-like old rites are set around a bonfire by the Caretos. Wild musical loops, improvisation, and endurance set the mood.

#### TRAUMA

Trauma is outside one's memory, outside history. It cannot be represented; it is not memorable, or unforgettable. How can we witness trauma, meaning, how can its inability to be represented be represented? Is history itself not the original container for trauma? The endeavor of memory, and its memorial transformation of time and space, of the political, of the public and private, of the nation and the family—is this not a process of desire?

(EXTRAS P. 176)











94  
MOUNT ANANEA (5853)  
(2015)

SYNOPSIS

A haunting and mysterious ethnographic reality cut-up, where a continuous flux of miners and peasants conflict in the darkness, vanishing in the out-of-frame.

THE FACTS ARE ALWAYS FALSE

Facts such as “data” are representations and representations will always remain interpretations.

(EXTRAS P. 177)





# 96

## ELDORADO XXI

### (2016)

#### SYNOPSIS

*Eldorado XXI* is a haunting and mysterious ethnographic reality cut-up. Set in the Peruvian Andes at La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, the highest settlement in the world at 5,500 meters, it depicts an illusion that leads men to self-destruction, moved by the same interests, dealt with the same tools and means, in contemporaneity as it has been dealt in the ancient times. *Eldorado XXI* is a parafictional attempt to combine a sensory ethnographic approach with critical media practices. Some eighty thousand people live in crowded dwellings in La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, without even the minimum for subsistence farming; they foster the hope that one day they will find the means to resettle elsewhere. There are enough stories of fortunes made randomly to keep hope and the fever alive. As a measure of safety, the miners chew large quantities of coca leaves. They carry the leaves in their pockets daily to deceive hunger and prevent exhaustion. If they live to work again the next day, it is common to celebrate with alcohol and to frequent the local brothels. This becomes a quick road to self-destruction, the only motivation behind it being to soften the harshness of everyday life. Under the system of *cachorro*, the miner works for 30 days without remuneration and on the thirty-first day (if lucky) he is allowed to explore the mine for four hours for his own profit. The little precious metal he might carry down the mountain has now to be separated from the rock through antiquated methods using highly toxic levels of mercury. Then the value of the gold powder has to be negotiated in a nonregulated establishment within the community, and the miner will be offered the minimum amount possible. The system is an

unpredictable lottery; nevertheless *cachorro* means that miners and employers avoid “certain taxes.” It is a mental game, in which the possibility of generating a small fortune motivates the miners. To believe in and aspire to “something bigger” can be a greater motivation than a miserable paycheck at the end of the month; a constant low wage would simply not be worth a life of danger. La Rinconada and Cerro Lunar are doomed towns, which will very shortly become ghost towns since the mines are running low on precious metal.

You are alone. You hear nothing, you know nothing, and you expect nothing. This is a mysterious film dwelling on the complexity of the human being. It stimulates the viewer to reflect and contemplate, constantly seeking an active audience. It will carry you on a hallucinatory journey. You will not be indifferent to it.

#### PARAFICTION, PLAUSIBILITY, AND MAKE-BELIEVE

In contemporary society the concept of “objective truth” has been replaced by concepts such as perception and authenticity. The equation of Visible = Real = Truth is no longer applicable, and other tricks have been put into practice.

These films are casual juxtapositions of the elevated with the banal, with a strange and convincing paradoxical logic. Like all images these films oscillate between fact and fiction, and this ambiguity is at the same time the power of representation.

In both documentary filmmaking and the reception of these documentaries, the focus is more on ethical, political, and aesthetic options. In order to counter this we can ask if it is not also this that moves the interests that surround fiction cinema: Are these not all very personal? Do these not have moral or even ideological points of view that are grounded in their characters, action, and sets, and do these not intend to distinguish themselves as aesthetic artistic products that elevate reality to the level of critique? Contemporary fiction tends to constantly suck up reality by renewing its realistic codes and intensifying its effects on the real. When the language, as Roland Barthes demonstrates, disappears like a construction in order to merge with the things and the real appears to “speak.”

In a panorama where fiction is documented and documentary acquires fictional properties—that is, where the transit between fiction and documentary is in an unprecedented way both in the contemporary audiovisual and in the quotidian, traversed by all types of images, displays, and technologies—the growth of documentary responds to the generalized spectacle, where what is disputed is the most authentic performance, the most extraordinary confession, the capacity of empathy, and the spontaneity of the characters (anonymous individuals or celebrities).

Increasingly reflective, attractive, and distant, combining the incident with the theatrical, contemporary documentary makes us consider: What do I see on the screen? Am I watching reality, truth, manipulation, fiction, or all of these at the same time? These are questions that according to the critic Jean-Louis Comolli belong to the institution of cinema, but when they are set forth in the world of spectacle in which we live, they turn into questions that pertain to us all.

(EXTRAS P. 179)



















# 111 THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD (2016)

## SYNOPSIS

There is no need to design or stage an apocalyptic landscape, for the earth we inhabit is already in crisis and the apocalypse is now. Attempting to redefine ethnographic film tradition, *The Burial of the Dead* is a video installation set in the Peruvian town of La Rinconada, at an altitude of 5,500 meters on the edge of a gold mine; it captures a dystopian world that scarcely seems possible in the twenty-first century. The cinematic triptych conveys the extremity of its situation and the dimensions of its misery without having to resort to graphic images. Indeed, it is a Dante-esque Escher-scape of haunting beauty.



Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,  
And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,  
Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,  
Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find  
The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.  
I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.  
Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,  
Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:  
One must be so careful these days.  
—T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 1922

## THE LIMITS OF NONFICTION CINEMA

We would like to make a distinction between reporting (facts) and literature (imagination), without it being very clear.

The difference between “literature” and “reporting” does not stand. We believe in documentary because it is built based on “reporting.” But we remove one or two



fictional bricks and the wall of “authentic” reality crumbles. What bounds it is imagination, which inscribes in our memory a real world that we try to describe through documentary.

It is at this point that we find that the spectator must feel that the borders between fact and fiction dissolve.

(EXTRAS P. 198)



55  
Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,  
And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,  
Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,  
Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find  
The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.  
I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.  
Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,  
Tell her I bring the horoscope myself.  
One must be so careful these days.

— Waste Land, "The Burial of the Dead" by TS. Eliot.





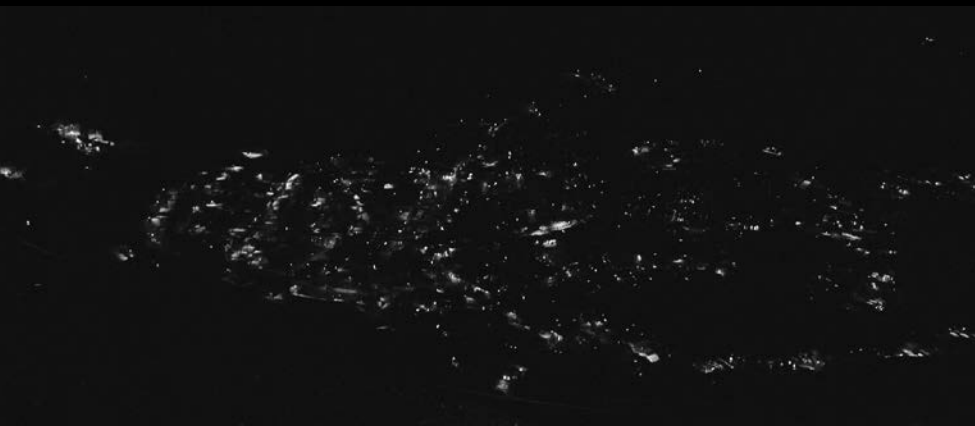
...so many, I had not thought death had undone so many...











121  
HORIZON NOZIROH  
(2017)

## SYNOPSIS

Part 1, São Paulo: History timelines are overlapped into one single block of cement with its windowless facades, brutal containers to personal narratives. Architecture curators wonder whether the new temporary, analogous to the development of modernism, might soon become the new *modus operandi*.

Part 2, Forest: Nature is sublime, empty, and stormy. It is the natural land of the imagination where we assemble ourselves to resist the silence of the universe, in order not to succumb to the pure panic and the threat of dissolution. At first glance the spectator might not acknowledge the frame's mutation. As time lapses, one realizes that we are moving toward a human figure at the center of the image.

## AN ACTIVE SPECTATOR

In order for these films to be effective, it is necessary that the filmmaker "doesn't take sides" which is not synonymous with being neutral but more about the challenge of not passing judgment, so that the spectator may be given that task. The discomfort of this discourse questions the hypocrisy that coexists with supposed democracy, or the discourses that are built in the shadows of democracy.

(EXTRAS P. 199)





location, in the dynamic movement of the distance between the crew apparatus and the “actor,” thus resulting in a choreographed cinematography. The action is allowed to develop its own rhythm while creating changeable melodies. The cinematic mechanism limits itself to organizing and unveiling the real. Minimalism, rawness, and detachment are not synonymous with a lack of empathy or compassion. However, the dynamism of emotions comes from the temporal duration of the shot and the mise-en-scène and not from an orchestrated use of film language.

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# 124 EXTINÇÃO (EXTINCTION) (2017)

## SYNOPSIS

The question concerning the borders of the territories of what was once the USSR has proved to be a potential time bomb. *Extinction* is an eclectic patchwork of materials (fiction and nonfiction) led by Kolja, who is of Moldovan nationality, but declares himself a national of Transnistria. Fragments draw the viewer to the collective imaginary of the Soviet Union. The film aims to make an abstract comment on Vladimir Putin’s latest political stands of “war without war, occupation without occupation.”

## MATTERS OF STYLE

The narrative wishes to be radically minimal and stripped, by simultaneously appropriating for itself the semantics of both documentary and fiction. A hybrid narrative surges from that dialectic, in the length of the occupation of the



*If someone said that you are Moldovan,  
then you would counter: No, I'm Transnistrian.*



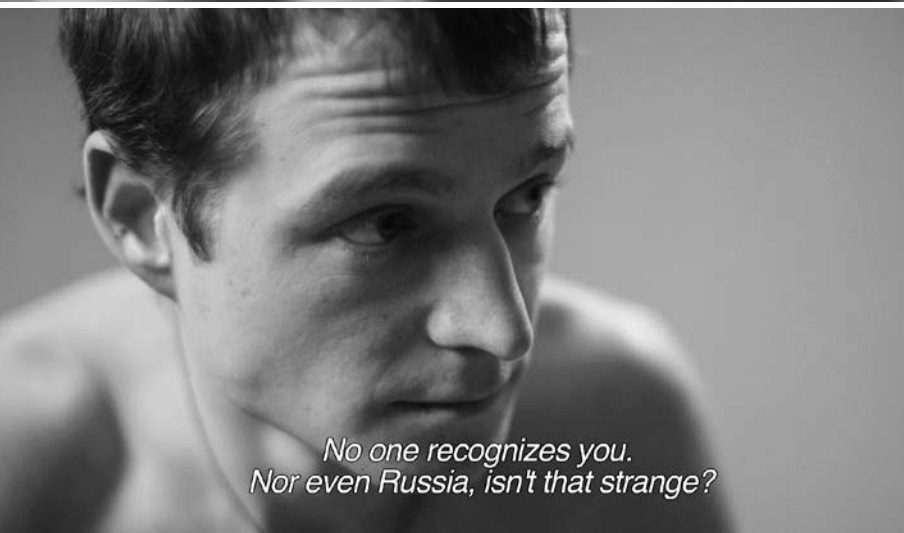
*Where they don't exist,  
or do they exist?*



*It's the history repeated  
over the same script.*



*No, but it turns out that Ukraine and Russia  
are real countries and this is not.*



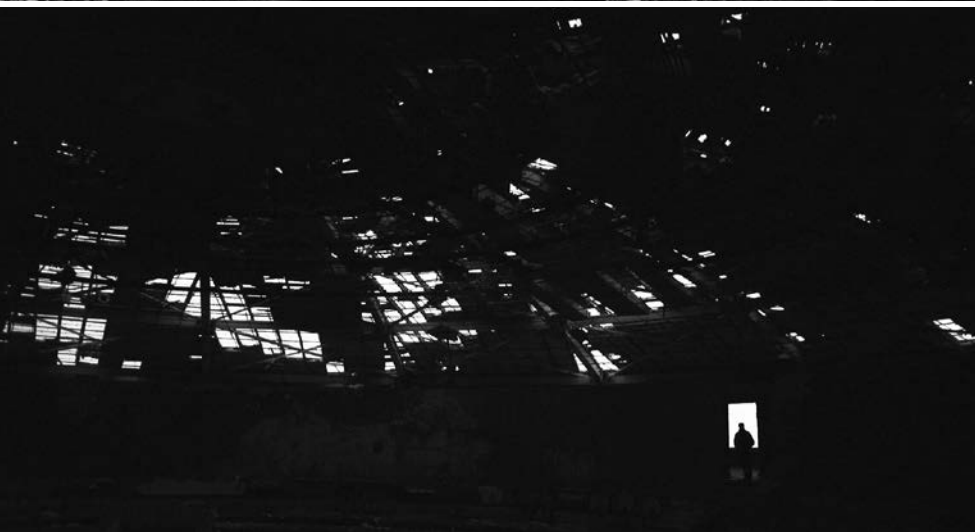
*No one recognizes you.  
Nor even Russia, isn't that strange?*







*What is Stalin's chessboard?*







132  
COUP DE GRÂCE  
(2017)

## SYNOPSIS

Leonor returns from a trip on a day where her dad wasn't expecting her. In 24 hours they will live a crescendoing hallucinated reality, led by Francisco's unsettling state of apparent normality.

## NOTES FOR A POSSIBLE METHODOLOGY

Our gaze frames, and for a moment suspends life. When one is young one is defiant and stupid; when one grows up one becomes less defiant and less stupid. One of the core issues in these films is the physical experience of reality. We speak of a predisposition, or the motivation of situations (that we do not control) that leave us trapped, from which we cannot escape (in some cases literally), situations that demand an immediate reaction. We are interested in the perception of the moment in which control is lost. At this point reality turns into a "children's playground."

First we circumscribe reality to a geographic or time perimeter. This circumscription is born from curiosity, but should be simultaneously uncomfortable to us. We physically project ourselves into the interior of this reality in order to turn into foreign bodies and feel strange to the other who is present. It is this occupation and the spark that arises here that could encourage a film. Sometimes an adaptation is demanded from us (as simple as a step forward, or a step to the side). The rest has to do with waiting.

The question could be: How long should I stand still here in order for the quotidian to become extraordinary?

It is common to film, or even not to film, but to remain there an entire day observing, until it "occurs," and you immediately know that you have won the day. It is so evident that sometimes you notice or you intuit the moment in which it will "occur."

Although there are notes written of a possible script in these films, the reality is certainly more detailed than our imagination, and it is in the recognition, the site of occupation, and the dialogue with the character that the narrative will appear.

The writing of these films comes from a fact that is intolerable to deduce, which is that what is most precious

in the world should be left to chance. It is because it is intolerable that it should be contemplated. The imagination, which fills the void, is essentially a lie. Although they have an author, these films should contain anonymity in their essence to be successful. Their process will be obscure, mysterious, and isolated.

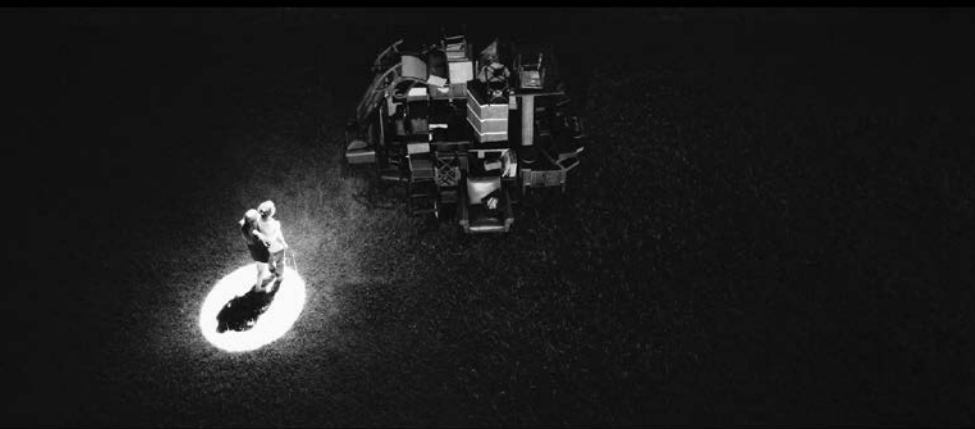
Nevertheless a large part of the work is the *métier* (as is the shoemaker's)—the tricks that each one finds, what one does later. Making films—it could be anything else, there is nothing essential here.

(EXTRAS P. 207)

















# EXTRAS



## VHS VIDEO HOME SYSTEM (2010)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

HD video, 16:9, color, mono sound, 39 min.,  
The Netherlands – Portugal

### CREDITS

Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas  
Production: Salomé Lamas  
Cinematography: Salomé Lamas  
Sound and mix: Bruno Moreira  
Editing: Salomé Lamas  
With: Cristina Lamas, Salomé Lamas  
Support: Sandberg Instituut

### THEATER OF THE WORLD by Salomé Lamas & Mónica Savirón Edited by Stephen Broomer

**MÓNICA SAVIRÓN** “Tell me what you want me to be, how you want me to be. I can be that. I can be anything! You tell me,” cries Gena Rowland’s character to Peter Falk in *A Woman Under the Influence* (John Cassavetes, 1974). Filmmaker Salomé Lamas admits to be governed by such an authority when her mother video-recorded her as a little girl. Twenty years later, Lamas’ work is shown at galleries and festivals around the world. It subtly but fiercely rebels against conventions of duration, rhythm, supposed clarity, structure, visual convictions, assumed roles, and rules. She exposes the cinematic language as a tool not only for transgression, but also for confusion. Her three-channel installation *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (2013, 26 min.), and her videos *Encounters with Landscape 3x* (2012, 29 min.), *VHS – Video Home System* (2010, 39 min.), and *Fall II* (2011, 1 min.) are exemplars of artistic defiance. In this conversation, we will get to know more about her, and the literary, philosophical, and filmic references that articulate her work.

The way I interpret your installations, but also the rest of your video work, is that they problematize seeing as a way of knowing. Merely looking, or doing so quickly, is not enough. We must continue working, over time, to be able to see. At a time when all seems to be rushed and superficial, you make us stare at time, at the passing of time. For me, the complexity of your work frustrates the presumption that recognition is simple, immediate, and in the viewer’s control—as in Latin, *dammnat quod non intelligunt*: they condemn what they do not understand.

**SALOMÉ LAMAS** I guess one should think twice about imprinting a new image because of the overall saturation of visual stimulus in contemporary societies. When we create images, we are somehow translating the language of things into a graphical language. I personally like to reflect upon what is at stake in that process. For me, what distinguishes an image from its phenomenological essence is its historical mark.

**MS** What do you mean by that?

**SL** Each present is determined by its synchronous images; each now is a now of categorical reference. One in which truth is filled with time until its explosion. The image is the suspended dialectic between past and present, containing on a higher level the mark of the critical moment (borrowing from Walter Benjamin). I am interested in playing with or unveiling how these images shape our reality. Images have extraordinary mutation qualities, and I believe that the sort of endless becoming gets extended with duration. My work dwells on a couple of main lines. One of these lines could be understood as some kind of flexible account upon the notion of *limit – border – margin*. I tend to flirt with crystal-images, and crystal-images are unpredictable. Images contain riddles, they set traps and many times we are asked if we are not only casting an illusion. I like to lay the cards in front of the viewer, to play a fair game, but I am also forcing the viewer to be active in their reading. It is about the grey areas. Lazy people are a drag. I am not mystical but I have strong convictions that filmmaking, besides being the work of a shoemaker, is also an act of faith and that each image is able to communicate its duration in juxtaposition with what comes before and after... I also believe in honesty, and if your aim is to challenge or even to trick the viewer, you should be explicit about what you are doing—even if you reveal it at the end.

**MS** This honesty seems to have to do, in great part, with form. I would say that your videos and installations have a solidly structured conceptual framework that allows for unexpected things to happen—and yet, I wonder if the documentary genre is too constrained, too limited, not a good enough way of presenting the world. Does the gallery setting help to fill those gaps for you, and to what extent?

**SL** Notions of expanded cinema and video installations in gallery spaces lead to different work experiences, that lead to different outcomes, that lead to different ways of

reaching an audience. Single-channel works travel easily from space to space, whereas a brand new video installation, multi-channel, is usually site-specific or it is developed with a careful exhibition design. Today we welcome the make-believe, and the plausibility against authenticity. Nonfiction cinema interests me, the limits of documentary filmmaking, this idea that we believe in the documentary because it is constructed upon reality... If we are to build a brick wall erected upon the real, with its foundations on reality, and we remove one or two fictional bricks, the wall will crumble down. We do need those bricks to believe in what is placed in scene. We end up slightly reflecting on how we can erase the borders of vectors such as storytelling, memory and the concept of history. I usually address realities that present some kind of discomfort, no-where places, and territories hard to describe in one blow. Nonfiction today is played precisely in the field of ethic, political and aesthetic factors, also simultaneously present in fiction films. In both the gallery and the theater, the intentions are the same, the way to address reality is the same, only the formats and exhibition displays are different. I usually invite a designer to outline the gallery space. I’m very picky with beamers and the machinery used, and try to direct and predict the spectators’ movements, etc. It is fun.

**MS** It is amazing to me to realize that the first considered modern atlas, back in the sixteenth century, was called *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Theater of the World). The title already sounds like a critique to the guided lines that the author had drawn. This map was written by cartographer and geographer Abraham Ortelius in Belgium. He concluded that all the land was joined together before drifting apart, understanding that things change and move. In the video installation *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, you present images of the ocean as a medium that not only brings objects to the surface, but also bumps against the rocks on the shore, eroding them over time, changing the sketching lines of those divisions. Nothing is really defined or definitive. I feel that in your work you like to present a situation or a landscape and ask, “look, is this a map or a labyrinth?”

**SL** Maps, among other things, are pictorial reflections of anthropocentrism. Like the colourful banners that bear the title of the exhibition, drawing homographs in the air, maps devise coded messages that are then exposed to the entropy of the elements. The spaces dreamed up in *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* act as a map made of memories.

Objects that belong to different moments of the line of time overlap and move into the spaces between the screens. An addition on the power of maps, and how mapmakers have been of key importance in the build of nations or the way they are still deforming reality: maps are representations of reality, and the same goes for Google Maps. How many of us would dare to question its rigor? As an amusing example, during the Cold War there were two kinds of global maps being printed in the world. One type was disseminated by the National Geographic Society in America and, on it, right in the middle, in the central spot we would find the American continent surrounded by two oceans—the Atlantic, and the Pacific. The former Soviet Union was cut in half and placed discreetly at both ends of the map so that it would not frighten American children with its immense bulk. The Institute of Geography in Moscow printed an entirely different map. On it, in the middle, in the central spot we would find the former Soviet Union, which was so big that overwhelmed us with its expanse; America on the other hand, was cut in half and placed discreetly at both ends so that Russian children would not think: “My God! How large this America is!” These two maps have been shaping two different visions of the world for generations.

**MS** I take it that, in this video, you criticize archives as sites of resistance, that they are not a reliable representation of the past, especially in colonial countries and other zones of conflict. I remember working as an archival researcher for documentary filmmakers in Europe. Often, these audios, texts, and images only existed in the archives of the political parties, where the bureaucratic obstacles to get to these materials were internal. Once you got access to the documents, if you did not pay attention, one would never see that the photographs had been, for instance, radically manipulated in the dark room, and the captions described the names of people who were not pictured, or vice versa.

**SL** The winning parties’ archives, I assume.

**MS** All sides, I must admit.

**SL** What is entitled to be preserved? How can ordinary people or researchers access this patrimony? Who owns it? Why are some sections confidential? Who determines confidentiality? How high are the preservation and storage costs? What gets lost when Alexandria’s Library burns down? It is humanity’s duty to collect, and to remember, but collections are limited, and someone is curating.

We cannot break away history from trauma. There are incredibly beautiful archive projects around the world. As a kid, and still today, whenever I visit a foreign country I look for the national archive. Accessibility differs enormously from country to country. Yet we, if there is still a “we” to protect, cannot forget...

**MS** At some point in your work *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, the main character, interpreted by Portuguese actress Ana Moreira (Miguel Gomes’ *Tabu*, 2012) comments, “I can’t look at the sea too long, otherwise I lose interest in what happens on land”—as if looking were misleading...

**SL** Working with Ana Moreira was incredibly rewarding. She is first known by her acclaimed roles in Teresa Villaverde’s films. There were only a couple of guidelines given before the shooting, and we worked for just two days. Ana’s character is a witness, a wanderer. She works as a sort of shaman figure, or an orchestra conductor in an imaginary territory: first, at a geological museum where she is preached to by a professor, casting a spell on an unpredictable, alienated, voyage; then, at a decadent Tiki lounge. The sentence “I can’t look at the sea too long, otherwise I lose interest in what happens on land” is stolen straight out from Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Red Desert* (1965). For my character the meaning might be about a strong desire for getting lost in the maze...

**MS** The way that you and your collaborators work with sound seems to also be a way of questioning maps, and representations chosen by those representing. Somehow, for me, sound helps to translate visual demarcations into experiences, like in your installation *Mount Ananea (5853)* (2015), a silent exhibition except for two vinyl records that can be played individually near the screens. If I got it right, the images of this show were part of the documentation for your feature film *Eldorado XXI* (2016).

**SL** Thanks for pointing it out. I have a hard ear. I always had, even when playing violin as a kid, for which I absolutely had no talent. In opposition, I have always been extremely visual. Maybe that is why I never recognized that sound might play a key role in my work. Yes, you are right, if I quickly browse the works we have been naming here and also my two features, sound plays a decisive role. *Terra de Ninguém* (No Man’s Land, 2012) is a film grounded on words and language, descriptions that might lead the viewer to violent images, even more violent and painful than if I had actually showed what

is being described by the only character in the film. In *Eldorado XXI*, the almost one hour trance-like shot captures the viewer with its orchestrated musical composition, though there is actually no music. Instead, there is the sound construction that explicitly creates spatial chambers combined with a patchwork of personal testimonies, radio shows, etc. The genesis for that *trompe-l’œil* sequence shot was an installation that the Serralves Museum co-produced for a solo show in early 2015 after location scouting in late 2014. You make me realize that in *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* the soundtrack is artificial and over the top; we are editing the film *Extinction*, where I collaborate with composer Andreia Pinto Correia. Also recently, Pinto Correia came up with the idea of a new opera work (a mono drama), and there might be a chance that I will be working on a stage work with a symphonic orchestra in a nearby future.

**MS** In your video *Encounters with Landscape 3x*, a three-part dialogue with nature, you speak to yourself in the third person and, through this strategy, you become a character in a play. Each story is a kind of game. We don’t really know who is filming, what exactly is being filmed, and the video ends with a, “to be continued”, message. It is as if the filmmaker were giving away her power. For me, there is a question in this work about what happens during the times (in the story, and in life) when the image is a black screen, and sound does not exist. The spectator needs to figure out how to arrange the puzzle.

**SL** The stories in this video take place in Azores, a Portuguese Island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. I recalled some notions on the sublime. Attempting to film the landscape, I realized that I could intellectually preconceive the sublime, but could not feel it. That led me to a question: Was it a lack of sensibility? The film deals with distances, with the inscription of the human body in the landscape. I guess it crossed my mind to use reality as a playground. Also my humor tends to fork into two dimensions, the slapstick and the highbrow, tongue-in-cheek. The humor present in *Encounters with Landscape 3x* is the first element. There are two complete sequences, and a third that is incomplete. In it, the setting is Dantesque—if the other tableaux contained fragile connections to a volcano land, here its presence is explicit. It is an unaccomplished scene to be continued. Am I decoding or encoding reality?

**MS** It makes me think of Raúl Ruiz quoting Walter Benjamin: “A dust-cloud of meaning-

less signs capable of conspiring against visual convictions” (*Poetics of Cinema*, Éditions Dis Voir, 2005, p. 32). There is a book by Ruiz that particularly fascinates me. In fact, it is two books in one: *The Book of Disappearances & The Book of Tractations* (Éditions Dis Voir, 2005). One of the books proceeds on the right side or page, and the other on the left, being this side displayed from the back forwards, and in-reverse image—just like film when running through the projector. There is also a cryptic message composed by bold letters throughout the books, one that needs to be deciphered by the reader. Ruiz wrote this book as a response to his multimedia installation *The Expulsion of the Moors* (1990) at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. In the handout of the show, Ruiz described its theme as “the total exclusion of one community from another. Part of the French society is developing an intolerance towards a community—the North African immigrants—who share the same territory.” I love that this was his first museum work, and that the books were originally written in Spanish, his mother tongue. I am giving you an edition translated in English.

**SL** It is a beautiful book. Thank you for the gift.

**MS** The title of Ruiz’s exhibition, *The Expulsion of the Moors*, refers to Diego Velázquez’s painting, which disappeared during a fire at the Real Alcázar in Madrid on the Christmas Eve of 1734... The book does not come with any instructions, and the reader has to figure out how to read it. As a clue, enclosed there is a foil mirror card. I know that you do not directly refer to the concept of mirroring when interviewing characters in your work. A broken mirror might be a more appropriate metaphor, and perhaps that is why Ruiz only reverses half of the story, but I was wondering about the relationship between your work and the reality portrayed, how much *showing* or *reflecting* reality becomes a driven force in your works.

**SL** The assumption that translating can never equal the original is not fair. It is when an image crystallizes, that it achieves the expression of truth. Only then is the image allowed to be autonomous and in parallel competition with life. It is unique and eternal, while reality can be banal... I guess that the image is more perfect as much as it is harder to identify its original referent. A film is not a mere representation; it is the idea in translation. The expression “representation of reality” is a mistaken definition of documentary, once the idea of film as mirroring is accepted as false. Jean Rouch, in an interview for

*Film Comment* magazine, exemplifies this: “I go on the subway, I look at it and I note that the subway is dirty and that people are bored—that’s not a film. I go on the subway and I say to myself ‘these people are bored, why? What’s happening, what are they doing here? Why do they accept it? Why don’t they smash the subway? Why do they sit here going over the same route everyday?’ At that moment you can make a film.” The rise of the documentary responds to the general spectacle. What is mobilized or disputed is the more authentic performance, the more amazing confession, the capacity of empathy and the character’s (anonymous or celebrity) spontaneity. Increasingly reflexive, engaging, and distant, binding the scene and the theatrical, contemporary documentaries push us to consider: what do I watch on the scene, do I watch reality, truth, manipulation, fiction or all at the same time?

**MS** I like the idea of gravity in your work, of going against the current, Sisyphus’ struggle, the interplay of forces. Correct me if I am wrong, but I get the sense that falling, physically and metaphorically, does not have in your work the romantic, fatalistic commentary on humankind that we can get from films by Phil Solomon (*American Falls*, 2000-2012), or even Arthur Lipsett (*Free Fall*, 1964). Instead, there is a humorous piousette in them, it is falling as an act of liberation, more in the spirit of Amy Halpern’s films (*Falling Lessons*, 1992). I would add that falling for you seems to be an active way of saying “stop, enough, not this way, not everything goes”—affirming one’s own life, personality, and criteria. You seem to ask: why is falling understood as failure, whenever not to fall would be the failure?

**SL** Yeah! Gravity, according to Simone Weil: “We want everything which has a value to be eternal. Now, everything which has a value is the product of a meeting, lasts throughout this meeting, and ceases when those things which met are separated.” I guess the distinction you drew suits me. I also like an idea of falling into language, if we take our need to give names to the non-named, and their sub-sequential translations, as many translations as languages. Can we see my fall into the landscape in *Encounters with Landscape 3x* as a fall into language? Funny.

What about the “fall of men” being a fall into language? What about the Babel Tower? Well, Joyce was certainly busy with that... Also where at times there is the idea that the author is written by (rather than being the writer of) the language. Regarding your

last observation about my considerations of “the fall” being perceived as a desirable, yet unknown or unpredictable outcome: I guess if we would like to bring it down to earth, the fall might also be linked to the pre-expected accident, as I look for realities I can trap myself into, and to an extent being too late to go back. Sometimes falling is the only getaway.

**MS** Your work refers directly to Bas Jan Ader’s films (*Fall II*, 16mm, 19 sec.; *Broken Fall* (*organic*), 16mm, 1 min. 44 sec.). This is a quote by him: “I want to do a piece where I go to the Alps and talk to a mountain. The mountain will talk of things which are necessary and always true, and I shall talk of things which are sometimes, accidentally true.”

**SL** I believe, like Ader might have, that there is something primordial in the act of diving into reality. I guess he was interested in a creative process that can only be of obscurity, mystery, and isolation.

**MS** In your work, you seem to challenge urban and natural landscapes, and yet the production value of your videos and installations is remarkable, despite the difficulties of working in unfamiliar environments—definitely not the easiest settings one would have access to when thinking of making a film. You get to realize these projects, while keeping intact the sense of adventure.

**SL** One must be very assertive, and convince people to go along with you. Some projects that we have been naming here start with a bluff. I guess that by now the people I have been working with, and specially production, they are all already expecting the bluff... I am a very bad poker player. You have noticed that already in my films [laughs]. I am very grateful that in a number of occasions, some facing more risks and unpredictability than others, he not only “pays to see,” but also triples the bet... Let’s see for how long I can keep up with the trick! I think that in most cases it is clear since the beginning that things can go wrong, and we accept those conditions as part of the project. We also build up strategies to reinforce multiple backup plans. For me that is also what it means to be a good producer. It would not have been that unexpected if suddenly, while shooting *Eldorado XXI* in the Peruvian Andes, I had to call up the production company (O Som e a Fúria) in Lisbon, to say that we must send the crew home. Honestly, this phone call was about to happen shortly after the second week of the shooting, but we kept going, and I found another way out, thanks to the crew I was

working with. These projects have different scales and commitments, crew and budget wise. There are smaller scale projects that I self produce or that I co-produce. So let’s say that, on top of all, I am extremely pragmatic, and do try to predict all case scenarios, and possible consequences. You just have to be very honest, lucid, play an open game, and find the right partners.

**MS** I am wondering how the interaction with realities that are not familiar to you has affected you as an artist, as a person.

**SL** Exactly, that is also part of why you do it. Besides the seriousness, and the honesty of the work, there is also something that you might be tempted to mask with idealistic and noble intentions, but that deep down also serves your self-obsessed needs for challenging experiences. Some of these interactions are tough but, when you look back at them, you realize that you have grown more capable of enduring the next challenge. It is a way of visiting this strange place we all call reality. Of course there are work commitments, expectations, partners, and further responsibilities, but no matter the outcome of the projects, I am there first for the ride. I guess I can no longer distinguish life from what I do. I am happy because I’m not working on Wall Street or I would have a short life... Let’s just say that creation arises from a fact that is intolerable to suppose, that what is the most precious in the world should be given a chance.

**MS** In all your work there is a sincerity that I find very rare, especially in the documentary realm. Things are not embellished or manipulated in your favor. In your work *VHS – Video Home System*, you confront the person who filmed you when you were a little girl. She is your mother, though that is not explained. I would say that you tend to leave things open, purposely undefined.

**SL** I guess that is the only possible way for me to bear the fact that I make nonfiction films, and to accept that making nonfiction is a “dirty job.” Although there are ways to seek some kind of balance, and that is also why sometimes my presence in the work is more noticeable than in others. Every filmmaker that works with nonfiction film has to deal with core ethical questions. The way to deal with it cannot be separated from the way you inhabit the world in general, the way you shape your relationships and your moral behaviors... Nonfiction filmmakers are responsible for what they represent, while turning personal affairs into public discussion.

They are responsible for their subjects, and for their audiences. There are always judgments involved. Filmmakers need to weigh their actions, and they should regard production, representation, and reception as social acts that bear ethical consequences. More than simply asking if what we see and hear is credible or authentic, we should think about what interests a documentary serves, what impact it might have on the spectators, and whether or not it takes into account the welfare of the people represented. Let’s think of the following vectors, and how they are related to the filmmaker: sponsors, subjects, and spectators. What is the power voltage contained in each of these links? Are honesty and fidelity equal to responsibility? No. There are different ways of pursuing equilibrium, but seeking a balanced methodology will only allow the gap to be clearer. This gap has a place to be, and it is precisely on *nobody’s land* that the film can exist as an autonomous piece. If on one hand we might be tempted to examine documentary as an exercise of political and social power, on the other hand it does not mean that the filmmaker is the wolf—and this is precisely where it becomes interesting, if we regard power relations as productive as they might be. As a filmmaker one should be aware that a film allows the spectator to know as much about the represented object as about the maker itself. Therefore it is pertinent that the maker finds an authorial and ethical voice.

**MS** Your voice, in your performance for the camera in *VHS – Video Home System*, gets repeated over and over again. This insistence, or echoing, is not a consequence of editing, as if in films from an avant-garde lineage. Instead, it is a deliberate, hypnotic, inductive action. This video makes me think of Karlheinz Stockhausen’s musical piece *Mantra* (1970), where there are two piano tones, one consonant and the other one dissonant, playing together. The same information starts once and again, it does not vary, only gets expanded and contracted. The experience changes because it is durational—just as in your work. We see you as a little girl repeating, “I’m sleepy, I’m sleepy,” until you, apparently, fall asleep. It is because of this retelling, that the dramatic play of the girl becomes reality.

**SL** That brings us to how duration affects our perception of the images, how the viewer perceives repetition within the extended image, and how that is linked with the notion of becoming. How duration within a particular image is also unveiling the creative process, the waiting methodology, the falling unveiling freedom and fidelity—two concepts that

would never go together except in the act of translating reality. “Tell me what you want me to be. I can be that! I can be anything. You tell me,” Mónica!

This conversation follows the presentation of the program *THEATER OF THE WORLD: Videos & Installation Works* by Salomé Lamas, organized by Mónica Savirón for UnionDocs, 20 March 2016.

## IALOGUE LIST

*I don’t want you to film me.  
What do you need me for?  
Why don’t you do it yourself?  
We have similar voices.  
You could do it only as a soundtrack.  
That way you wouldn’t need me.*

**SALOMÉLAMAS** The idea is that we talk about those images. The question is... How old were you when you shot that?

**CRISTINA LAMAS** I don’t remember, but I was in school. The bottle will fall.

**SL** No, it won’t. Go away Uma. Take this.

And, don’t you remember how old you were?

**CL** No. I was young.

**SL** Come on, how young?

**CL** Twentyish...

**SL** Twentyish... And how old was I?

**CL** Seven? Eight? I don’t remember. I have a terrible memory... Or a selective memory. Those details, they don’t interest me very much. I was in school and you were a child... That age “thing” is unpleasant. I didn’t like that in the beginning. This *sake* is good.

**SL** Is it?

**CL** It’s excellent. It won prizes.

**SL** How old where you?

**CL** I don’t know. Twenty-five.

**SL** And I was eight.

**CL** I don’t remember. Do you remember? Just do the math. Salomé. Look. I don’t consider that work of mine. I used to film everything. It happened that I filmed you since you were part of everything in my life. Since you were always willing and manageable. I filmed you but I never finished it. By the way, you were the one who found that. I don’t know where. It was somewhere—just as a lot of the stuff I had recorded.

**SL** Why did you ask me to repeat that I was sleepy over and over again, during 40 minutes?

**CL** At that time my idea was to create a tension between your will to sleep and the impossibility to do so... You would repeat that sentence until reaching exhaustion and falling asleep. Whether that’s interesting or not, I don’t know, but at that time those were my concerns.

**SL** That didn’t work out very well for you. How could one fall asleep while repeating that?

**CL** Well, isn't it like counting sheep?  
**SL** No... you were asking an eight-year old girl to fall asleep while repeating that she's sleepy. And counting sheep doesn't work.  
**CL** I don't know I've never done it. A child wouldn't be thinking about that. It was like a mantra. The idea was to generate that tension.  
**SL** And it never crossed your mind that I was doing that to please you?  
**CL** Obviously! But everyone does things to please the others. It wasn't such a violent thing, was it? Medium level.  
**SL** No. Since I was willing to do that kind of stuff...  
**CL** ...Sure, and I've always admired that. All that I have done... Was to try to integrate my domestic life instead of... Oh! But I don't remember that. Actually, I've never seen those images again. I remember a ladybug. A stuffed animal. The ladybug had an antenna. The antenna was here and it resembled a microphone. That's all I remember.  
**SL** For instance I was a thumb sucker. In one take I suck my thumb. But in the other I was told not to do it.  
**CL** Well, if I had told you to speak, you couldn't be sucking your thumb. I guess this is the only explanation.  
**SL** You wanted me to fall asleep in the living room.  
**CL** And you would repeat the sentence until you had fallen asleep.  
**SL** And you believed that I would fall asleep?  
**CL** But you were asleep!  
**SL** No.  
**CL** You were asleep!  
**SL** No, I wasn't.  
**CL** Believe me, you slept. It's true you slept. It ends when you are already sleeping.  
**SL** No, it ends with me pretending to be asleep.  
**CL** Have you watched it? No, no. That's a lie. You were sleeping. Have you watched it?  
**SL** Yes. I have.  
**CL** Have you found the tape?  
**SL** I have.  
**CL** Well I haven't watched it in a long time, but you had definitely fallen asleep.

[...]

**SL** I am sleepy. I'm sleepy. I-am-sleepy. So-sleepy. Is it over?

[...]

**CL** If I were good with words, I wouldn't draw so much.  
**SL** Do you feel that you are not good with words?  
**CL** No.

**SL** What should I do with those images?  
**CL** I don't know. I guess that if you feel like making something out of it, you ought to do it. But... You are the one who knows. Not me. You better ask yourself.  
**SL** I respected it. It was a work of yours like I respected everything that you would ask me then. I guess that... I guess that I didn't get it so well.  
**CL** Perhaps you still don't understand it.  
**SL** If you gave me a premise, I would do it... And that's all. That was not something I would argue about, for the reason that it was you who was asking.  
**CL** That ought to happen in all homes. Doesn't it? People living together for a long time. You are – "A Woman Under the Influence." We all are.  
**SL** Perhaps this dialogue should have been written before.  
**CL** So, that I would only utter the right thing?  
**SL** No... We could have a... I don't know...  
**CL** A script.  
**SL** A script.  
**CL** And because we were very close to each other... Not only on an affective level but also on a quotidian level. You came everywhere I would go to. You were always with me. We were only apart when you were at school. I wouldn't go there. I wouldn't attend elementary school. But apart from that we were always together. That was a choice. It wasn't lack of opportunity. You know I'm an expert at finding opportunities. So it was a choice. And those things are actually powerful. They're greater than us.

## A COMUNIDADE (THE COMMUNITY) (2012)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

HD video, 16:9, color, stereo sound,  
23 min., Portugal

### CREDITS

Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas  
 Production: Salomé Lamas  
 Cinematography: Salomé Lamas  
 Sound and mix: Bruno Moreira  
 Editing: Salomé Lamas  
 Consultant: Francisco Moreira  
 Color grading: Pedro Paiva  
 Assistants: Marta Brito, Cristina Robalo  
 With: Clube de Campismo de Lisboa  
 Support: Galeria Zé dos Bois, Clube de Campismo de Lisboa, Galeria Miguel Nabinho

## ENCOUNTERS WITH LANDSCAPE 3X (2012)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

HD video, 16:9, color, stereo sound,  
29 min., Portugal

### CREDITS

Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas  
 Production: Salomé Lamas  
 Cinematography: Luísa Homem,  
 Frederico Lobo, Maria Clara Escobar  
 Sound and mix: Bruno Moreira  
 Editing: Salomé Lamas  
 Color grading: Pedro Paiva  
 With: Salomé Lamas  
 Support: Galeria Zé Dos Bois, Corredor Associação Cultural

### FILMIC NOTES by Salomé Lamas

For me, Azores was the vague memory I had of São Miguel island, where I remember having hitchhiked together with Cristina (my mother) and a friend. I was eight years old. When we would get lost, they would follow my instincts, since there was not much else to do.

### DIALOGUE LIST

**SALOMÉLAMAS** A hole!  
 Ferns, brambles.  
 She fell in a hole...  
 Fuck it oh, oh.  
 No, no.  
 Ok.  
 (The wind whistles)  
 Can it be?  
 Let's go.  
 I can't see anything.  
 Well, if I fall down there, it's the end of the "sting."  
 Go on!  
 Ok...  
 Well, this deepens...  
 ...this goes up to my waist.  
 Oh, no. Ok jump!  
 Jump, I can't see where the edges are.  
 Ok, oh!  
 There must be a path up higher. Too deep.  
 Ok, ok, fuck it.  
 Very good, very good!  
 This is almost "Super Mario."  
 This is a tutorial on: how to climb a mountain without getting trapped in holes.  
 Ok, she went the wrong way.

Now what? Fuck.  
 Therefore...  
 Damn Salomé. Now what? You were looking for adventures on the mountain and now you fucked yourself.  
 You don't have a phone... you can't move or else you'll fall.  
 I'm going to wait a bit.  
 Fuck it. Ah! Shit!  
 No!  
 Fuck, fuck, cock!  
 No!  
 Now what?  
 No.  
 No, go on!  
 No! Ok!  
 Luísa... Luísa!  
 Luísa... Luísa!  
 Along the road below!  
 The road below, where they had the cars... where the kid with the motorbike was!  
 No!  
 The road below! Quickly. The road below the mountain!  
 No, no, no, no!  
 Oh my god!  
 I can see you guys, continue on the road.  
 Farther.  
 Can you see me?  
 Luísa!  
**LUÍSA HOMEM** Here you are. Pull!  
 Salomé, no it's too high.  
**SL** No? Too high, it's about how high?  
**LH** It's not very high, you know?  
**SL** Is it high or what?  
**LH** It's about... Look it's a lot lower than the height from which you jumped into the water. And below there is a mountain of crushed stones, I'm here. Slide down slowly.  
**SL** I can't slide down slowly  
**LH** I'm here waiting for you.  
**SL** Ahhhh! Shit.  
 (Hurried footsteps)  
 "To be Continued" [...]

### THE IMPOSSIBLE DUEL by Javier H. Estrada

Shot on São Miguel, the largest island of the Azores, *Encounters with Landscape 3x* is divided into a prologue and three acts. Salomé Lamas embraces a three-act structure to wage a war of mythical proportions, culminating in a reaffirmation of the inferiority of humans with respect to nature. During a car journey we are led into a lush and highly threatening environment. The wind rustles the trees and the camera. Everything we see next is an attempt to take the reins of a situation, the ancestral fantasy of interacting with the wild, struggling against its energies.

The first of these exercises is next to a



river. We see Lamas in a tree on the riverbank, climbing along its branches. This static shot, dominated by the sound of the water, portrays the insignificance of the artist in relation to her surroundings. Without exactly knowing whether to go forwards or backwards, she finds herself awaiting an inevitable outcome: her defeat. The second encounter is with a lofty hill. Lamas is a microscopic dot, rendered visible by the intense red colour of her coat that contrasts with the dark shades of the earth. Now the objective is to hurl herself into the gorge; although, she seems to be ensnared in doubt. When and at exactly which point? As the minutes pass, night falls, the camera loses focus, and the object leaves the frame. The sound of the filmmaker's convulsive breathing is amplified. Control over the situation proves to be impossible and once again the forces of nature prevail. By virtue of its extremity, her predicament finally becomes laughable. Lamas verges on self-parody during her distressed monologue: "Salomé, you wanted to have an experience in the mountain and now you're screwed." The third and final segment is the only one in which we see the young filmmaker from a close distance. She is inside a cave, observing the gases it emits. In the end there is no challenge, only the act of surrendering to the intangible impulses of nature, an emotion not unlike transcendence, as ultimately her experiences are the source of a valuable lesson. Salomé Lamas was only 24 years old when she began working on this germinal and intuitive work that incorporates elements of performance art and reaches an illuminating conclusion. One can assume that it is the courage and audacity of youth, its physical spirit and conceptual recklessness, which makes *Encounters with Landscape 3x* a fascinating work.

Text originally published in *Angular: Experimental Cinema and Artists' Video*, Volume 1 (© English translation: Mattea Cussel, 2015).

## TERRA DE NINGUÉM (NO MAN'S LAND) (2012)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

HD video, 16:9, color, stereo sound,  
72 min., Portugal

### CREDITS

Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas

Production: O Som e a Fúria  
Producers: Luís Urbano, Sandro Aguiar  
Cinematography: Takashi Sugimoto  
Sound and mix: Bruno Moreira  
Editing: Telmo Churro  
Color grading: Paulo Américo  
With: Paulo de Figueiredo, Chiquinho and Alcides  
Sound and image equipment: Galeria Miguel Nabinho, O Som e a Fúria  
Editing studio: O Som e a Fúria  
Mixing studio: Óbvio Som  
Laboratory: Bikini  
Support: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Carpe Diem Arte e Pesquisa, Galeria Miguel Nabinho

### DIALOGUE LIST

– ...*And what are your days usually like?*  
– *They're practically all the same.*  
*Wandering around town, nothing else.*  
– *And how did you get here today?*  
*Which way did you come to get here to Rua do Século?*  
– *All the way along Rua de Campolide, Rua de Campo de Ourique, Rato... Boom! Here.*  
– *In your opinion, what's the purpose of this film?*  
*What do you think we're doing here?*  
– *What are we doing here?*  
*To tell you the truth, I don't know for sure.*  
*I know I wanted to tell the story of my life*  
*And then everyone can think what they like.*

### FIRST DAY AFRICA – COLONIAL WAR

– José Paulo Rodrigues Serralho de Figueiredo, 66 years old.  
I graduated as an electrical engineer. When I joined the army I was ensign in the Commando unit.  
And there I did my military service. I was there from 1966 to 1980, 1980/1981, and then I started my life as a mercenary.

The commandos unit came about because of the upsurge of terrorism in 1961. The first commandos came from prison. Salazar offered freedom in exchange for doing military service in Africa. In my day it wasn't so much like that. It was us who volunteered. I became a commando and off to Angola I went. I joined the 19<sup>th</sup> company in 1966. And finished in the 2045<sup>th</sup> where (Captain) Jaime Neves was. We were in Mozambique. We were thrown out and went to Angola be-

cause we didn't accept that FRELIMO (Liberation Front of Mozambique) was in town causing trouble.  
We had fun in some warehouses that existed in Luanda.  
And spent the rest of the afternoon in the bar. We had fun with the havoc we caused with the paratroops and the marines. And especially with the PM (Military Police). We had fun turning Jeeps up side down, taking the batons from the PMs, and so on. We were sent from town to where the conflict was.  
And when we went, our goal was to liquidate them.  
We never took prisoners. Just bodies.  
We had the G3, the HK21. Light weapons, and a Walther pistol. I was known as Ensign Grenades to each *sanzala* (slum) a grenade.  
When we went to do the so called hand blast, that were the *sanzalas*, I usually preferred using a grenade.  
To say the least.  
It's just that they looked like monkeys jumping around, they were marmosets. With one grenade they were really marmosets. In pieces.  
The trophies were more of a joke. They didn't need them anymore.  
Neither the head, nor the fingers, nor the ears, we adorned the jeeps with that, and my belt.  
Passing by other *sanzalas*, showing them what it was like.  
What the pay back was for what they had done.  
Maybe a bit of sadism, really sadist. Because I saw a lot of white people impaled, especially women, when we got to Nambuangongo, in the farms of Nambuangongo, in the east of Angola.  
We found impaled women, we found headless white people and so on.  
As the saying goes, for great evils, strong remedies, liquidate them.  
There's a story which is actually funny. One day we were in Malange, towards the end.  
We were called to Malange because there was too much violence, and we still had military barracks in Malange, where we had our troops.  
The administrator called me. I wasn't called.  
At the governor's level he sent for the commandos.  
And then we were faced with... we were faced with a guy lying on a mat bleeding. And we saw another guy with one of those old Portuguese cauldrons with water and

olive oil, it must have been olive oil, I think. So it reflected an image, a blurred image. The fact is that he started pricking with a pin and blood started coming out, blood... something red.  
We tried to find out where the guy that appeared in the image lived.  
The accusation was that he was trying to steal the other African's woman.  
So we went to the *sanzala* where he lived, 20 kilometers away.  
When we got there the man was pricked and bleeding.  
What we did was simple.  
From the witchdoctor to the patient... We executed them.  
But not on no one's orders, on our own initiative.  
Because we don't believe in the supernatural.  
No commando believes in the supernatural. We believe in what exists, but not in the supernatural.  
Ever since I was small that I believe and I don't.  
It's kind of a St. Thomas's, "Seeing Is Believing."  
I don't believe in priests.  
I believe in God and in Christ, everything else for me is puppetry.  
And currently with Christ I have to think twice, because there's so many churches selling Christ that I don't believe in any. I believe in myself, and sometimes not even in myself, when I drink I get tipsy, I don't care if it's green or red.  
Preferably Red, because it's another enemy that I knocked down it's another scoundrel.  
I never eliminated decent people, People you can call People, I always eliminated those who are no good.  
But now that I mention it, I should have eliminated myself as I'm no good either! It's just that... We are brave for everything. Except for ourselves.  
We did many things, what do you want me to say?  
Little kids with their flesh stuck to the trees and so on.  
Between the flamethrower and the grenades and... but I don't know if that's consistent.  
But, think of this.  
The history of Africa... Most people from my time we all went there.  
I liked the army, I liked killing, I liked seeing blood.  
But always for the truth, never for pleasure. But blood and gunpowder are like coke and heroin in your blood.  
When I arrived in Portugal, to feel good,

I had to go to S. José Hospital, to the emergency room. See people coming in bleeding and that sugary smell, it gets into your blood, it's an adrenalin rush.

Yes, the 25<sup>th</sup> of April (Carnation Revolution) in Africa arrived really late. We only heard about the 25<sup>th</sup> of April two months later, because communication wasn't like nowadays.

We never put a carnation in our gun, in Africa no one put a carnation no one ever felt the revolution.

We felt the consequences of the revolution when the parties arrived, the MPLA (People's Movement for Liberation), the FNLA (National Liberation Front), the UNITA (National Union for Independence).

Only then we realised that the 25<sup>th</sup> of April had happened.

That surrender was a joke, they took away the guns from the Portuguese military, and in came the local political parties, who went around the city centre shooting each other.

Because the hatred between them always existed: that is "tribalism."

They never understood each other, and they never will.

And from then on, everything beautiful that the Portuguese left was destroyed by them, without any notion of what a gun was.

They would shoot directly at a building and destroy it, when the target was to hit the other party's men.

They had no notion of what a gun even was. And they killed both blacks and whites, they didn't care.

The day I left Africa the memories are few. From the moment we were in the regiment we went out at night.

They told us to go to the military airport.

We took the plane. We came to the metropolis.

No, I was a security guard at Fidelis for the Association of Commandos in the handing over of large estates.

I handed over Copam, which is a fodder factory in São João da Talha, I handed over in Alentejo, Alto Alentejo, in Grândola, not in Grândola, no... In Elvas an estate that belonged to a TAP pilot.

Then I was at Mocar S.A., the Mocar was in the hands of the owner.

We only had to maintain the safety of Mocar.

Garagem Pintosinho Lda, all the garages that belonged to Mocar, that's where Fidelis was.

What's a security guard, I mean, it's to keep

third parties' property safe.

Also with Fidelis, I was in the Pão de Açúcar shopping centre in Olivais.

Today it's a shopping centre, in those days it was just Pão de Açúcar.

We were looking after Pão de Açúcar's interests.

Many people took advantage of what wasn't theirs, so we went in as security guards.

Because Olivais was also known as a communist area.

So much so that there was a stage when Mário Soares went there and we had to seek refuge inside Olivais' Pão de Açúcar. No, that's a bodyguard.

A security guard is not so much like that.

As a security guard you're at the entrance, you're at a desk watching people.

A bodyguard is totally different.

You go to the toilet, I have to go too, if you're a man, if you're a woman, I chase everyone out and I stand by the door while there's people there.

It's the doggie.

I say this because I was with (General) Kaulza de Arriaga in Av. João XXI, 4<sup>th</sup> floor.

I had a desk by the door where I had to sit, and the only job I had to do was stand up and wiggle my tail when people went out.

When Kaulza went out I had to go too, when Kaulza didn't go out I wagged my tail and sat down again.

I became a security guard to prime minister Sá Carneiro for Fidelis.

Fidelis was an organisation of commando security guards.

They were scared of Sá Carneiro because during the first post revolution governments it was communism.

Where they bust into houses, robbed people... They did whatever they liked until (Captain) Otelo was arrested.

And it was at that stage that Sá Carneiro stepped in.

And Sá Carneiro was right wing.

From then on he had to be eliminated when he tried to put (General) Soares Carneiro as president, another member of the right wing. I remember, I was on my way to Porto, by land, with Soares Carneiro.

No, the Cessna plane was completely burnt, carbonised, like the bodies.

Charred.

I never saw a lamb (Carneiro) be roasted in 5 minutes, blimey.

NOTE: NOVEMBER 2011

*Paulo is determined to tell the truth, what really happened. I'm interested in his*

NOTE: DECEMBER 2011

*truth, not in mine, not in anyone else's. He offers sublimated portraits of the cruelties and paradoxes of power as well as of the revolutions that deposed it, only to erect new bureaucracies, new cruelties and paradoxes. His work as a mercenary lies between these two worlds.*

SECOND DAY

RODHESIA, EL SALVADOR – CIA

– So in those years it was around 1979 it was an unstable situation.

Meanwhile the destruction of Apartheid was happening in South Africa, and that influenced Rhodesia very much.

I went to Rodhesia to see what the situation was like.

What was happening with bishop Abel Muzorewa.

It was an unstable situation, but they weren't accepting mercenaries, so I gave up on the idea.

Meanwhile Sá Carneiro's death happened and I went to El Salvador.

It was the CIA who contacted me, it wasn't me who contacted them.

No Portuguese commando contacted the CIA.

The Agency knew who we were, it was the commando association, and those who wanted to volunteer to do that work went.

As mercenaries and no longer as military, as mercenaries.

The environment for me was similar to others, similar to Africa.

Because it's like this: everything is guerrilla. This was a guerrilla case, we were prepared for guerrilla, what was going on in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea was guerrilla.

It wasn't "classic war."

But the difference was minor, different trees, the longevity was the same, so I felt as if at home.

Elimination. Both of Farabundo (Martí) as of ARENA (Nationalist Republican Alliance), and eliminate some from the regular army, to generate panic.

That was always the goal, the American goal was always that, with or without motives operations were properly executed.

The order was to kill, the order was to not get killed, so, if you don't want to die, you kill.

To dominate terror, only with terror, since they were terrorising, they were terrorised.

The truth is that it decreased both in El Salvador and in Spain the terrorist attacks.

ETA was nothing while there was GAL, it decreased 100% and in El Salvador it was the same.

For great evils, strong remedies.

*Between ETA and the legacy of GAL (whose attacks were concentrated between 1981 and 1987), Spanish democracy was under threat for the first time since the end of Franco's dictatorship.*

*Everything was suspected, a lot was known, nothing was proven.*

*As the facts could be denied.*

*This was the paradox of the first attempts to unmask the individuals behind the mysterious acronym GAL.*

*The series of obstructions that Felipe González's government and PSOE placed on the investigators way was possibly the clearest indication of their involvement.*

*This investigation carried out by France, Spain and Portugal would have several crossroads, false leads, dead ends.*

*Here the judicial power would never be disconnected from the political power.*

*El País wrote: "No one in their right mind can suggest that members of the international mafia are killing members of ETA by their own initiative, inflamed by their love of western civilisation's values."*

*After what was heard in several French and Spanish trials, it is appropriate to ask: Who recruited, organised, armed, supplied and paid GAL's mercenaries?*

*Who approved the assassinations, decided on the victims and gave the order to shoot?*

*Who covered their strategic retreat towards the Spanish border?*

*If silence is the only answer to these questions, it shouldn't be forgotten that there are instances when silence is the most eloquent attitude.*

THIRD DAY

SPAIN – GAL

– My first job was with GRAPO (First of October Anti-Fascist Resistance Groups) to liquidate an individual in Lille.

I spent 24 hours up a tree, from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of December, of 1979, at the end, I spent 24 hours there.

The individual wouldn't show up, and right when I'm about to give up on the job he shows up in his car with his wife and son.

I gave up on the idea the moment his son and wife were there.

After a few minutes the individual goes back to the car alone, and there he stayed. It was Christmas Eve, I went to celebrate my Christmas in Monte Carlo.

I was headed for Portugal, but because I needed a rest, I stopped in Monte Carlo.

I had something to eat in Monte Carlo, cav-

jar and a bottle of whisky.  
It didn't cost me much.

In those days it was 382,000 escudos, around, more or less.

If I didn't have money in those days I would have been thrashed.

The place I happened to go in was frequented by Stephanie and Caroline of Monaco, and the Formula 1 guys, but I didn't even guess where I was at the time.

After that job, that's when I made the connection with ETA and from then on I went to different places, both the French Basque Country and the Spanish Basque Country. We were hired by commissioner Amedo and by commissioner Dominguez.

So it's like this: it's easy, because we're a closed circuit of men, and no one is together, we're all apart.

We don't even know each other to start with, but they know who we are.

Where do they get the information?

I don't know and I don't care, I know they know.

They didn't know who I was but they knew where to find us: The Commando Association.

So the information could only come from inside the army.

The Black Lady of GAL.

Let's see!

They named her Dama Negra (Black Lady) but there's nothing black about her.

She's of Japanese descent, she lived and lives in Andorra.

In *Calle Santa Lúcia*, in Santa Lúcia or Santa Lúcia something... one that has an enormous supermarket in Andorra, Opposite that.

The only thing she did was go to a *zulo*, a cache we had, drop off CESID's (Spanish Intelligence Agency) papers with photos and addresses, and leave us the weaponry already in France, between Puigcerdà and Rimont.

She had nothing to do with the killings, pure and simple, she was Amedo's secret girlfriend.

She gave us the information, we seldom met her, because we went to the cache at dawn and everything was already there.

The first time, I didn't know if I was working for GAL or for the Basque Spanish Battalion. The first time I went in the restaurant through the front door and came out through the back door.

I went past the table and wiped them out. I can't explain, the feeling is so!... I can't! That was the Batxoki restaurant, it's Texas style, it has a main entrance door, and

there's an exit to the other street.

I went in one way and came out... but that was the first time, the seven.

The second time I went with Georges Mendaille.

I didn't go on the motorcycle, I went with him, because there's a first time and there's a second time.

That day the job went wrong, for the second time, the first time we got it right, it was the seven deaths.

Not the second time, there were children at the table as well, and it had been badly arranged, so I refused to liquidate them.

Although I shot, but I shot more as a warning, not to kill.

No!

A lady was moaning about her leg but without a bullet.

I'll get to the bottom of this, you'll get to the bottom of this, all the way.

I went to Nicaragua to liquidate two ETA members.

One called Pedrosó Barroco, and the other Migueis something.

I liquidated them both. I returned to Portugal. They were actual members of ETA who were refugees in Nicaragua.

The service was inside a *boaco*, that they call I don't know what, it's a name they use there.

It's a type of *sanzala*, like Portuguese sheds.

In the outskirts, I caught them and I liquidated them, in a bar.

And then I disappeared.

So after that I came back to Portugal.

I did other jobs in the Spanish Basque Country, in Vitoria and in Burgos.

In Vitoria it was good, it was to liquidate an individual, and in Burgos it was to liquidate two.

I have several friends, but mainly two. One is called Magnum 437 and the other is called Winchester 128, with telescopic sight.

One goes almost to 2,100 meters, and the other doesn't go past 300 meters.

It depends on the distance, because the Winchester is a rifle and has a longer range, and the Magnum is a pistol, with a shorter range but it's more effective.

The Magnum makes more noise, it's like thunder, the shot is not as loud.

Because, get this, the work for GAL has nothing to do with mercenaries.

The Portuguese term is a bit harsh, but like the Americans say, a killer, it's different.

A killer is an individual who's paid to kill, a mercenary is a soldier.

A mercenary continues to do military service outside the army.

With the same functions as a soldier.

El Salvador was guerrilla, therefore military, in the GAL we weren't guerrilla, we were assassins, full stop.

There's no other name.

There's money, the job gets done, you don't even care about where it comes from.

So, it's another job.

It's the same as going to the office at 8 a.m. and leaving at 5 p.m., it's another working day.

You don't care about who sent the letter asking, you don't care at all.

You carried out your job and that's the end of it, you don't want to know anyone.

How much is a man's life worth?

Now I ask you.

What type of man?

Men like me or men like them?

I make a price to whoever asks me to liquidate X people.

I evaluate the person and make the price.

In GAL's case it was 10 million pesetas per man killed.

There's a Portuguese saying, I go back to Portuguese sayings a lot.

Money badly earned, money badly spent, do you get it?

Money badly earned, money badly spent.

No. I never executed for money.

But money interested me, if there was no money there was no job, but deep inside it's the revulsion I have for cowards.

Because for me it's inadmissible that a force such as ETA can be set up.

Who have fun putting bombs in schools, putting bombs under cars, innocent people.

Whenever they hired me I went straight to the target and to right person.

No one ever paid for the guilty, I never got the wrong person.

Their case is totally different, they killed more innocent than guilty, that's why I provided that service to them.

It's what I told you not so long ago, for great evils, great remedies.

When justice doesn't allow it, when the law doesn't allow killing your fellow man, and your fellow man keeps killing whoever, there has to be a solution.

Since the law doesn't allow you to kill someone takes over the killing part. That's us.

In Africa, I don't know why I never kept count.

In Spain and France I do know, they weren't many, they were nine.

I don't protect anyone.

I don't even protect myself.

It's just that from the doctor to the judge there is a work ethic where the taboo is sacred.

And we have that work ethic, we don't know anyone, we don't know anyone's name, and that's it.

If I looked back perhaps I wouldn't do the job, you never look back, always forward.

Every mercenary who looks back is subject to never do another job and to lose his life.

I went to France to do a killing and the gendarmes were waiting for me.

I tried to seek refuge in Spain.

The Guardia Civil (Civil Guard) let me in, but the gendarmes were already on me.

I had a means of transport, which was a Kawasaki 1100, which was a heavy motorcycle in the Pyrenees and they wouldn't let me through to the Spanish control, and that's how I got arrested.

In the Audiencia Nacional (Spanish National Court) I didn't claim anything in my defence, I claimed that it hadn't been me.

There was no evidence that I had been around those places.

The National Police Corps, the CESID and even the National Police Corps, to this day they haven't found any of those bodies although they incriminated us.

But as everybody knows there's no body, there's no killing, and today they're still missing.

What is it like to bury a dead person?

It's very hard work because you have to dig a hole about 1,5 meter deep.

You don't need a coffin, you throw it inside and cover it up, and all of them have rocks on top in case there's digging.

If an animal digs, because of the smell of the body it wouldn't reach the body.

We put rocks on top like it's done in Alentejo, in those hills where there's hares, it's almost the same, and then you cover it with soil.

I did some of those killings and where is the body?

I never saw it, actually, I saw it and I know where it is!

But I was never faced with the body or any evidence that the individual was dead.

How can you convict an individual, if the body doesn't appear to prove he's dead?

The evidence was more than enough neither, I wasn't innocent, nor guilty.

I was convicted and I shut up.

I shut up because that was the reality, and they took a shell from my bike that matched the bullet, which had killed one of the individuals.

Not one of those I buried... from the Batxoki restaurant, those bodies were identified and seen and they were dead.

Too much, not even the individual from the restaurant could identify me, because it

had been just me, and I wasn't recognized. As I told you I came in through one door and came out another with the motorcycle. I only stopped next to the table, did my job and took off, and while I was there, the people as they saw the bike burst in, they panicked and didn't even know what was going on.

They just heard a noise and it was over, there was no time for them to concentrate and see who it was or wasn't and if someone was dead, or not.

Only a quarter of an hour later... I actually heard something, I was already far away and heard the screams.

But not from the dead, screams from the people, the dead don't scream, damn it! Don't scream, well it depends, if after it's dead, the belly is swollen and you press the guy goes...

NOTE: JANUARY 2012

*Notes taken from El Mundo 1991, El Sol 1991, Diario 16 1989.*

*During several visits to French prisons Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón gathers testimonies from mercenaries that are later solemnly read in court.*

*Here was Fontes Figueiredo who was admonished by Amedo and by his French agent for refusing to shoot indiscriminately in bars full of women and children.*

*Here were stories of mercenaries who slept in cars and took trains because Amedo retained the payments in his pocket.*

*Most of the verdicts were confirmed by French courts, and the same issues were repeated several times:*

*1. Amedo and Dominguez, or their intermediaries, hired mercenaries to kill members of ETA.*

*2. Amedo and Dominguez told them—or at least made it implicit—that their operations had the support of the Spanish government (and sometimes of the French secret service).*

— José María Aznar started all the detentions.

From my detention to Medaille's to Interior Minister Barrionuevo's detention, to Lieutenant-Colonel Galindo from the Spanish Civil Guard and some other members, a Frenchman and other mercenaries like myself.

Prime Minister Felipe González never set up any terrorist party, or any terrorist group.

Felipe González accepted what he found. Baltasar Garzón was an individual who wanted to be in politics, and had a launch pad: ETA and GAL.

He started investigating with little information, he only got more information the moment José María Aznar started talking, and he knew what the government had to do to get rid of ETA.

From that there came the downfall of Felipe González and the destruction of GAL.

Two hundred and ten years, but for each, 30 years.

With concurrent sentences it meant 30 years maximum, both in Spain and in Portugal, with probation it was 15 years.

Life in prison: actually in Spain it has an advantage, because I spent 23 hours locked in maximum security.

I was in Cadiz, in the port: maximum security, I was in Teruel: maximum security and I was in Alcalá Meco: maximum security, and Herrera de la Mancha.

I watched TV for 23 hours and spent one hour in the yard.

I strolled around the yard a little, an hour later, boom!

Back to the cell, as it was called.

My cell was 1,5 x 3 meters, with the bars facing the yard.

The only wonder you could see was the *picoletto*, the civil guard, who walked backwards and forwards on the wall, that was wonder number one and nothing else.

NOTE: FEBRUARY 2012

*The chronology of the GAL investigation started in 1983 and lasts until today.*

*The majority of the trials of the Dirty War took place in the Audiencia Nacional, a Spanish special court which deals with drug trafficking, fraud and terrorism since 1977.*

*The remaining trials took place in France and Portugal.*

*One of François Mitterrand's interior ministers openly said that democracy ends when the interests of the state start.*

FOURTH DAY

— When Amedo and Dominguez were authorized to come and hire personnel from the Commando Association, everyone in the government, either from PSD or PS, including the Portuguese president Ramalho Eanes, knew about it and gave *carte blanche* saying there was no problem, that they were for the Spanish government.

As for members of the government, I only met one, the Minister Barrionuevo who was in jail with me in Alcalá Meco.

Why am I convicted to 15 to 30 years in prison for killing an assassin, 30 years with probation it's 15 years, which was my case,

and why doesn't a sniper get arrested or has anything to do with anything after killing? Why?

Because they receive orders from those who rule, which was who sent us to kill, they said there wasn't a problem, it was for the Spanish government.

For instance, you can be in a governmental organisation, or non governmental, and deal with people, where I'm serving, I'm in a cause where I know I am right, because they're the ones who like cowards liquidate X people but it doesn't mean that whoever hires me is better or worse than them.

On the contrary, those who hired me, knowing I'm going to kill, are worse than them and me.

It's just that to get rid of problems that may arise, they have them shot down.

Because no one has the right to take someone else's life, but its' like this: if we don't shoot, justice doesn't stop the killings and the murders either.

Justice may give you 30 years in prison for one death, but with the possibility of probation, after 15 years you're out, and after those 15 years, you can go back and do the same thing.

Moreover, everyone who's arrested for murder, at terrorist level, which is ETA's case, always goes back to the same. Because they'll never break from the setting where they are.

There's a Portuguese saying, if you're born crooked, you die crooked.

So those people never get straightened, they start and finish the same way.

Like me, at 66 years, but... I'll stay the same.

Make no mistake, don't look at me like that or I'll squeeze your maw.

It's easy, the hunter is always the hunter. Strange as it may seem I'll tell you this: all those I killed, I never stopped sleeping, I never lost any sleep over them, it was always like drinking a glass of water, and I don't like water, only brandy. Damn!

Our education was you don't do this, you don't drag your chair on the floor, it was all principles, the principles of those days, a five star education.

My grandfather was a forward looking man, he was almost like me, only in a different way.

My grandfather was in tourism, he ran what is now called CP (Trains of Portugal) from Cais do Sodré to Cascais.

They created the Estoril-Sol Corporation with its casino and its hotel, and turned that area into a touristic area.

Fausto Figueiredo (grandfather), the man

from the Estoril-Sol Corporation, who later joined Champalimaud in business, and Manuel Vinhas.

He resembled my mother in almost everything, except in height, eye colour and hair. My mother was almost 1,90 meter, blond with blue eyes, like my sister.

I took after the Chico (Chuck) Norris that was my father, short with black hair, Latin. My mother was German Jewish.

My father ended up being a bigamist, marrying my mother when he was already married by the Catholic Church.

I was born, my sister was born. We were in Angola, from Angola we returned to Portugal.

Actually we spent our time between here and there.

Wonderful, it was wonderful for me.

Mainly in Malange, I remember my childhood when we were in Cacusó, 70 kilometers from Malange, my hometown.

And the long evenings! The evening there start at 5:30 p.m. and until 11 p.m., it was wonderful!

Few people, one café, only one café was open and seven or eight people lived, what many people didn't live among the Africans, peace and quiet and a common well being between everyone, whites and blacks. But it really was... It was wonderful.

But that was my childhood the reality of my childhood, for the adults it was very different they wanted to have a new Portugal in Angola, this is what I deduce from all my experience until the decolonisation.

Wonderful, Portugal doesn't know what it lost.

What would please me the most both now and some years ago was to get to the end of a working day, put on my slippers, hold my children or my grandchildren and watch TV. It never came about, because I'm 66 years old I don't think I'm going to go much further, so I'm not going to worry and I don't worry.

My life has no meaning anymore but it's not because of the killings, it just doesn't.

Life for me is gone, I lived a lot in a short time.

I think I've done almost everything, there's only one thing missing, before I go... It would be to say goodbye to my family, nothing else.

I'm going to smoke a cigarette.

NOTE: MARCH 2012

*Paulo doesn't have any I.D. I can't find any official records in his name. Although the events he describes are different from what's been reported, they*

have obvious similarities.  
Who is Paulo Figueiredo?

— *Tu me parles, tu parles, tu parler, je me parle.*  
— You're the one who cooks.  
Stop saying you're the one who cooks. How does it go? The woman does the cooking.  
— *Tu parles, je parle.*  
— Really?  
— You speak, I speak.  
— Hey, but that's logic, how does it go?  
*Tu parles, vou parlez.*  
— Who goes to the kitchen?  
— I don't know. Who goes to the kitchen?  
— Girl be careful.  
— Who's going to cook?  
— The husband gets home. And doesn't find his dinner to eat. What am I going to eat? You're the one who's going to cook.  
— Girl be careful with life... Girl be careful with life, be careful.  
— Hey you are... who cooks?  
— There are problems that never end... Girl... Be careful.  
— The husband gets home for dinner. What am I going to eat?  
— You're the one who's going to cook...

NOTE: JUNE 2012

*I try to contact him without success. Weeks go by, since our last meeting. Paulo sounds disturbed on the phone. He tells me that the material I shot has no value whatsoever, without the documents to support it. He adds that I'll never understand his life choices, and that he's not used to have someone "chasing him." I tell him that it is obvious that our stances are different. I say that I care about him. Weeks after Paulo gets in touch saying he has gathered the material that supports his testimony. This meeting will never take place. I pass Paulo on the street. We arrange a meeting downtown the following day. We talk, the film is only remembered as another thing. The documents will not be mentioned again.*

*Epilogue: It was agreed that Paulo would be the first person to watch this film. This last note is here for one reason only. If wasn't for the agreement there would be no mention of Paulo's death. I've just realized that I'm telling these news to everyone I know, even to those who aren't as close, as if my thoughts in this affliction were that everyone should know Paulo, and if*

*they didn't, it was their fault. At that moment, the film seemed to me to be so small.*

**DIARY NOTES ON  
TERRA DE NINGUÉM  
by Salomé Lamas  
(excerpts)**

SEPTEMBER 2011

The interview [Paulo de Figueiredo's first development video interview] is rough and inaccurate. The display: a chair in front of a black piece of textile, fill lighting, one camera. Paulo smokes a pack of cigarettes and drinks half a bottle of whiskey.

We start rolling. I get the feeling that Paulo wants to say all that can be said in one breath. It's chaotic. I ask X, he answers Y. His answers quickly slide to opinions. He is evasive. He keeps shouting: next question! I totally lose control of the conversation. He keeps repeating that I don't know what I'm dealing with, that he is telling the truth and that the truth has to be proved.

Besides the frenzy I realize that his statements are consequential.

DECEMBER 2011

Interview? We believe that by allowing an interview to take place you are providing your subject with a voice, and the possibility to direct and to choose how to interact with the filmmaker and the spectator. Although in the very end the filmmaker retains the power, when you allow an interview the relationship is a trade.

Paulo is extremely coherent on the one hand, chaotic and contradictory on the other. The conflict must grow from his rhetoric. The film should be the pure witnessing of a monologue.

I want to explore the border between telling a story, recalling, and history.

I set that the conversation should take place in no-man's-land—neither my space nor Paulo's space. It should create a strange feeling of displacement for both of the parties involved.

It should start in an anonymous setting. A black piece of textile hung on a wall, a chair, lighting, and Paulo sitting in front of the camera.

Two different framings: one close, the second farther away.

Every aspect of the process should be registered in that space: the cigarette breaks, the waiting, the hesitations, etcetera.

Step by step the out-of-frame takes place. Step by step we get a sense of space and time. We notice the location is indoors, a ground floor with an exit to a private abandoned garden. We discover an old empty room, a corridor. It gets darker outside. Still, you can't tell where we are.

The Portuguese Colonial War ended in 1974, but pioneer psychiatrists such as Afonso de Albuquerque had to fight a long battle to convince the Portuguese government to recognize PTSD.

Paulo does not accept the idea of war trauma; his homeless condition is a tactic to avoid society. He does not depend on welfare, like most of the homeless population. Here we might argue a right-wing soldier's mentality. Soldiers are to be recognized as war heroes, therefore there is no such thing as a traumatized soldier. There are only cowards or renegades.

He states that his lifestyle is his social resignation. What about suicide? we are tempted to ask, but Paulo's answer is clear: "Suicide is for cowards."

He holds no welfare ID, no ID card, no driver's license whatsoever. In Campolide, where his campsite is located, his behavior is atypical and he quickly merges with the environment. In his careless, drunk manner, with a flow of spoken slang, he becomes another.

JANUARY 2012

Paulo agrees on setting the dates for a five-day shoot.

I do not want facts, and I know that facts are never true.

He keeps pushing for my work to be that of a reporter. I tell him that it is not something I will do, nor do I have the skills for it. I was trained in a different way. I tell him that a re-

porter's work is all about the moment, and news. That documentary filmmaking, even if dealing with the real, has other goals.

I inform him that I want to tell the story of his life. He agrees.

He offers sublime portrayals of the cruelties and paradoxes of power and of the revolutions that brought it down, only to erect new bureaucracies, new cruelties and paradoxes. His work as a mercenary lies on the fringe of these two worlds.

This is not comprehensive academic history; there are snapshots as jumping-off points, and a nonlinear style. If you want names and dates, you can visit your local library. What is "authentic" is Paulo's storytelling, accompanied by the moment it takes place between his and my breath. It is in this breathing that the documentary is generated. It is this meeting point that the viewer must feel is liquidating the borders between fact and fiction.

This brings us to the question of ethics. I suppose that if you intend to be a documentary filmmaker, you should be aware of your own ethics. The means and criteria of an ethical documentary film can be somewhat complicated and blurred because of the simple fact that it deals with the issues of ethics. Ethics concerns itself with how moral values are determined and how a moral outcome can be achieved. Why is ethics a key issue on the documentary agenda?

There are two dimensions when speaking about documentary ethics. The first deals with the filmmaker's action regarding the outside world (subjects, outside influences, re-creation of physical scenes and sets). The second has to do with the filmmaker's actions behind the camera such as editing, voice-over commentary, and intent.

Let's think of the following vectors and how they are related to the filmmaker (sponsors, subject, spectators). What is the power voltage contained in each of these links?

Is honesty and fidelity equal to responsibility? No.

In any social relationship there is a power game. We might be tempted to examine documentary as an exercise of political and social power.

As a filmmaker one should be aware that a film allows the spectator to know as much about the represented object as about the maker itself. This is precisely where it becomes interesting if we regard power relations as potentially productive.

[...]

He says he is using me to tell his story, I tell him that I am using him to produce a film. We trade and everyone gets what they want. I respect him, and I get his respect (?). I have doubts about the authenticity, but again this doubt is personal.

Aims and expectations are established on both sides and the game—to please, to achieve one’s goal, and to be surprised—is set in motion.

We are creating a relationship to be filmed, and this is what unites us.

[...]

The frame becomes a closed window that emphasizes the closeness instead of emphasizing the difference. It unifies both the filmmaker and the subject, crystallizing them into a unique image. This representation for the spectator becomes a game: to tell apart who is fabricating what, and to try to portray his or her self as part of the frame.

The ambiguity is essential to cinema and the construction of its mechanism conducting the emotional response of finding the other in oneself, and realizing that the other, as we might think, is not so different from the first. This mirror effect was the aim of *Terra de Ninguém* (No Man’s Land). Like any other image, it oscillates between true and false; this ambiguity is at the same time the power of representation.

FEBRUARY 2012

The interview works but not totally as I planned. The information does not come out in a single, organized blow. It comes in fragments, and it is hard to maintain continuity and flow. We go backward and forward in time. And after each reply I am tempted to ask for more and more details that sometimes lead us off track.

[...]

I await his next attempt to contact me.

[...]

He tells me that the footage I have is worthless without the documents.

[...]

I realize that my attempt to track his past is not my job, because I know Paulo myself. Is this not enough for the spectator? Is it not enough that we listen to his words and observe his gestures? Is my quest for his identity something that Paulo triggered himself when he asked me to film documents and other proof, when he told me that his discourse and experience regarding events was not enough for him, that it would not be enough for the film?

[...]

We might pose the question this way: Is truth an illusion, or is illusion the truth, or are they the exact same thing? If so, we are left with the inexistence of truth that equals an illusion born from the dialectics of language.

[...]

Reality does not contain history until the moment it is remembered or transformed into a collection item. When I place Paulo in front of the objective, asking him to narrate past events, am I conferring historical properties on his speech?

MAY 2012

We agree that by working around the bloody businesses of genocide, state-sponsored war, terrorism, and individual acts of sadism across time and space, we run the risk of floating further and further into a state of alienation.

[...]

When dealing with cruelty the question might be: when is it worthwhile, and when does it become redundant, in bad faith, or exploitative? The tricky problem is that the boundaries between these might be difficult to track.

To cast light on the evilness of historical events, to know the truth, unfortunately does not come with redemption, nor does the feeling of redemption guarantee an end to a cycle of wrongdoing. It can also generate the opposite; it can be the key to maintaining it. The hope that shame, guilt, and even simple embarrassment are still operative principles

in the spectators’ culture and political life can be good-hearted. Maybe that was our intention in *Terra de Ninguém*.

[...]

This “relativistic culture” crosses both reality TV and academics who argue that history depends on who is writing history, and rhetoric and political speeches currently going by the name of “creative nonfiction.” Concepts like “credibility” and “perception” have replaced old-fashioned ideas of “objective truth.” Nowadays we shall welcome a “make-believe policy”; “parafiction” and “plausibility” have been coined and are here to stay.

JULY 2012

I tried to contact Paulo so he could watch the final film edit; it has been agreed that he would have the last word. I looked for him, and then found out that he had been dead for two months already. This news caused me great turmoil. Is the film complete without his consent? Is his death significant to the film’s narrative? No, it is not. But our pact had been clear since the start, and I cannot overlook that he was not able to watch the final edit. His death should be mentioned only because of our pact. If Paulo had had the chance to watch the film, his death would have been kept private and would not have been mentioned, but to my sorrow this was not the case. A written epilogue was added to the film.

[...]

Among popular sayings, comic book stories, war film heroes, the lonesome cowboy, the psychopath, Paulo’s narrative is crystal clear, with its short and sharp contradictory sentences, and sometimes rhetorical interrogations. It is humorous or naked in its radical cruelty. In his speech Paulo has the style of an American narrative: direct, without fussiness, calling things by their names.

The discomfort this speech produces makes us question our complicity and hypocrisy that coexists with a so-called democracy, or even with the shadow discourses that aim at democracy’s deconstruction. Paulo’s situation is a fine paradox. It is in his radical fidelity to an old-fashioned status quo that resentment deepens and an inevitable marginality is raised. Nobody came out unharmed—neither the Portuguese government nor the liberation movements. In the war the military were murderers: they not only consented to it, but also legitimized it. We all know that. Nationalism, right- or left-wing, communism, fascism, and democracy all have these logics. The

mercenary is a product of the economic and political system; his business is above the regimes, working in the gap of revolutions, coup d’états, and political crises for the interests of other powers.

Paulo tries to imply that we are all guilty, but that he finds his cursed role appropriate, like the one of the traditional hero. The filmmaker cannot forgive the cruelty, nor mask it with last-minute moralism. What *Terra de Ninguém* shows are the multiplicities of fragilities coexisting in violence, where Paulo and the filmmaker, coming from opposite sides simultaneously, disassemble the epic to create a lyrical film.

## SALOMÉ LAMAS AND NUNO LISBOA IN CONVERSATION

**NUNO LISBOA** Salomé, you directed *Terra de Ninguém* (No Man’s Land) in 2012. I was at its first public screening and recall having thought of a question that applies to every film and all cinema practices: the fact that every film is the outcome of a contract—between the filmmaker and her subject, but also between the filmmaker and her technical crew or her producer. What kind of contract is in the foundation of this film, and to what extent is the film a documentary, concerning the consequences of the established contract?

**SALOMÉ LAMAS** Shortly after I met Paulo, he stated that he was using me to tell his story. I replied that that was absolutely fair, since I was using him to produce a film. This meeting point is extremely important for me, because it is the beginning of an equilibrium that cannot be entirely fulfilled. Once one is dealing with documentaries, there is a posture that arises, which is the one of power, not only toward an audience but also toward the object of the film itself. In that sense Paulo’s commitment, or the situation that we attempted to create, was the idea that we were building a relationship in order to film. The availability was the attempt of creating a display where I allow Paulo to sit straight in front of the spectator, to be judged by the spectator, while simultaneously I dare not judge. To be able to drain the film, to create a minimal display that drives us solely to Paulo’s words. These were the mechanisms existing in the contract you mentioned—a space that is a neutral space, or a space that is a comfort zone for neither Paulo nor myself. We struggled to reach that equilibrium. When we talk about documentary or nonfiction film, we are turning private matters into public matters. I think that every director



must find the best way to deal with this question or this discomfort. And this drives us to the field of documentary ethics. How are you responsible not only for the person you are filming, but also for the audience?

**NL** You mention the balance between those stands, which makes me think now in terms of a mutual exposure: of the director and of the one who is filmed, but also of the spectator that the film fabricates, as you said. Paulo, through his own postures and gestures, gives the impression of being someone who is absolutely conscious of the camera's work. So, in which ways are you maintaining and controlling, or not, the balance between the exposure of the person you are working with and also of yourself in the role of the director?

**SL** This is a film that deals not with the victim but with the perpetrator. To substantiate what was stated I could have opted for reenactments, archival footage, talking heads who are specialists on the subject, or satellite imagery. But what I came to realize was that Paulo's life, his history of violence, has a parallelism with historical events that are extremely contemporary. To these historical events it would have been pretentious if I had claimed that this happened like this or like that, or if I had placed myself in the role of a historian, journalist, or judge. I wanted to make a film, so, as I mentioned before, we created a relationship explicitly to be filmed. There is a reflexive property to it, almost like a mirror, in that established situation. You have this display where I am present (but maybe my questions are not present), but most times the spectator ends up intuiting the question or posing a question in their own mind that might be answered at a later time. There is an attempt by the spectator in projecting him- or herself into the frame to also take part in the conversation. I was seeking a straight line where I was there in the out-of-frame, but the audience is also in the out-of-frame.

**NL** The structure of the film is very clear. It is the outcome of intense shooting over a limited period of time, later resulting in extremely fragmented editing. When did this structure emerge? Was it prior to the shooting, or rather its outcome? Or did it result from the confrontation with the images and sounds during the editing process?

**SL** I realized that the words—the concentration in the act of listening and the images suggested by Paulo's discourse—were more violent than any image I could have fabri-

cated or any outside resource I could have brought in. On the other hand, Paulo, as you see in the film, is extremely charismatic. He is someone who knows how to tell a story and how to be charming, is challenging at times, and clearly wants to create a reaction among his listeners. What I realized was, well, if we create this conversation, we will also create the limits to the conversation. So we defined these borders: we will have five days, and the five days start at this time and end at another time. We followed this structure, while at the same time Paulo was free to wander in his own story. I realized at the outset that it wouldn't be linear. That's the reason why we had to break it down, and that's also why the editing is probably so fragmented, because we had to make Paulo's discourse intelligible to the viewer. On the other hand this is also faintly connected to the events that Paulo attempts to portray, or with the idea of contemporary history, which is something that is not completely mapped out, something that contains a leap—a matrix cut, fragmented, and simultaneously the idea of having a printed number in between the fragments that creates a longer pause. We were working with the notion of days, and those were to be present, and with the idea of chapters somehow, which would introduce a literary aspect, like a novel. The notion of literature, of bookends being linked up to another question, related to the notion of language. It was also something that has interested me since the first moment I met Paulo and that is connected with the idea of the charmer. What interested me in the film since the very beginning has to do with: what is the act of telling a story? How does one recall past events and retell them to someone? This causes us precisely to question the limits of documentary filmmaking. Nonfiction cinema has authoritarian properties. We believe in documentaries because they are built upon reality, they have a reportage disposition. Consequently what is authentic—that's also in the inclusion of the days. Paulo is in front of the camera telling his personal story here and now. The documentary is generated between the gestures and the breathing space.

**NL** Still in relation to the structure, there is also the question of your own presence. Namely your voice and the final letter. Would you like to clarify the necessity of those?

**SL** Yes, the necessity of those is related precisely to the way that each and every director or person who makes documentaries confronts him- or herself with ethical questions. I felt the responsibility, and that was the only possible way for me to make this film. I

owed it to the spectator and to Paulo. Essentially we are talking about a triangle, where it was extremely important that I addressed the doubts that emerged during the process of making the film. And on the other hand, when I include that final voice-over—where I mention that Paulo wants to bring those documents and that his testimony is not valid if he doesn't bring the documents—deep down what is showed is that Paulo knows how our history is constructed. If there are no documents, there is no history. If there are no documents, it didn't happen. I think that those details are of great importance to the film, because the film talks about all of these events and being about Paulo's life, but also about the way history is written. For me the way history crystallizes events is very problematic. Historians, or those who are dedicated to the construction or the writing of what we call history, devote too much time to the so-called events heard throughout the world while neglecting the periods of silence. Paulo's story is a period of silence. Paulo is just a small player in a much bigger plot. The film raises questions that transcend Paulo and myself.

**NL** A film is not over when the editing is over. I would like to ask about how the film was received in Portugal—the reactions of the audiences, not the commercial aspect. And also you as a director and artist, as a producer of experiences that you put yourself into—how has the film influenced you, if at all?

**SL** I think that stepping back and not daring to judge can create questions or misunderstandings. It brings up misapprehensions and inflammatory reactions on the part of the audience. And when you don't clearly unveil your position, while seeking an active spectator and not a passive spectator, this also generates problems. In this sense it is a film of contrasts: either you're able to approach this other dimension that lies beyond the narrative that is being told, or not. If you are only addressing the history and not the questions that are being posed, it is a film that leaves you dissatisfied because you want to know from the producer of the film whether it is true or not. You tangle yourself in the myth mania and try to label Paulo. When the film was released in Spain there was a tendency to not write about it in the cultural sections of the newspapers, and that is dangerous—because a film is a film. I don't make *campaign* films; I think that films are important because they stimulate our thoughts and because they can lead people in other fields to do different work. But I don't believe that films can change reality.

**NL** If films don't change reality, they add something to that reality. A film is another object in the world, not a simple recording of a preexisting reality. In this context, how do you reflect on your work as a director?

**SL** It is a work of curiosity, the work of a mapmaker, a waiting process, no? Firstly you attempt to circumscribe the reality to a terrain in order to not lose yourself; you try to create a fence or a temporal limit like in *Terra de Ninguém*. Subsequently you occupy, or you transport yourself out of, your comfort zone, to the interior of that reality, and you wait for this movement that is atypical not only for the inhabitants of that reality, but also for yourself. This discomfort creates a friction that can create this object that we will call a film.

**NL** How do you, as a young person, deal with facts that developed way before you were born and others that are open and may still have consequences today?

**SL** The film was very hard for me. It was a very long process, and especially there was the matter of how I would face this person. Where would the differences be? Where would the similarities be? What are these events? Because they are events that I have not experienced. Events that mostly took place before I was born.

In that sense it is not gratuitous. I did research—I probably read most of what has been published on the GAL case in Spain—and I came to realize that the press, which played a very relevant role in the investigation together with Baltazar Garzón, contained contradictory testimonies. The articles were contradictory. It is a history where the historical distance has not yet taken effect. And the same can be said of the Portuguese colonial wars. Luckily today we can find a number of objects related to these fields in cinema, in the arts, and so on, that start to deal with these questions. And those are maybe the first objects, which open the space for historians and journalists to begin to create other works with another magnitude and another impact.

Transcription of the interview conducted by Nuno Lisboa, part of the DVD edition of *Terra Nullius, confessions d'un mercenaire*, distributed by Shellac-Sud.

**WARRIOR TO WARRIOR:  
SALOMÉLAMAS'S  
TERRA DE NINGUÉM**  
by Deirdre Boyle

The documentary avant-garde today seems focused on perpetrators rather than victims. One of the most compelling and controversial of such films comes from filmmaker Salomé Lamas, who offers us one of cinema's most arresting subjects in her brilliantly imagined, starkly powerful cinematic work. *Terra de Ninguém* (No Man's Land) brings us face-to-face, it seems, with a classically unreliable witness, a man in his sixties who is charming, engaging, and terrifying all at once. Paulo de Figueiredo is small, wiry, weather-beaten, and oddly attractive. He settles into a chair, and the camera shoots him in medium shot as he tells us his life story. He was a mercenary, a veteran of the Portuguese colonial wars in Angola and Mozambique, a hired gun for the CIA in El Salvador, and an anti-ETA commando for the Spanish and French government-sponsored security forces. Yet he is so much more and, possibly, less. Lamas slowly and deliberately pulls us into the confounding mystery and complexity of this mustachioed guerrilla as he confesses to a career as a mass murderer. It is made clear through the sparkling glint in his eyes and the ironic smile that often plays upon his lips that Figueiredo relishes telling stories about his life-long love affair with blood, death, and political warfare. But what holds us forcefully throughout this 72-minute testimony is not just his larger-than-life personality but Lamas' filmmaking. She is a master stylist working with a brilliant cinematographer (Takashi Sugimoto). Within a minimalist set atmospherically lit to evoke both an illicit interrogation chamber and the shadowy recesses of a disturbed self, Lamas stages the interview to elicit our curiosity about Figueiredo and our attraction-repulsion to him and his story. The details of his exploits are appalling and often sordid, but his skill at storytelling and her skill as off-screen interrogator hold us fast like prey caught in a predator's grasp.

Throughout there is a tacit understanding that Lamas and Figueiredo are equals in this enterprise, partners who respect each other, and this is what allows for this frank exchange to happen. Each are warriors in their own right. This is made especially clear when Paulo playfully threatens the cinematographer with a casual remark that asserts his power to bend and to break. But his cruelty never is directed at Lamas and, by extension, to us as viewers. Still that reality remains, always hovering in the background. And Lamas lets us feel it.

The film begins and ends outside the darkly lit stage set for Paulo's autobiographical rem-

iniscence, contrasting the spaciousness and brightness of the natural world with the underworld darkness of an assassin's life. There is a greater contrast at the end when the garrulous henchman proves to be more anonymous than ever, without passport, identity or home, a forgotten, marginal man whose degeneration is revealed through gestures and acts now stripped of words. Lamas' decision to refrain from including her voice asking questions is a bold choice. Instead, we are given consecutively numbered black outs that cut between scenes, a montage device that orders the film into brief chapters that create a structure vaguely reminiscent of the numbered stanzas in Wallace Stevens's poem, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*. Paulo is the blackbird, an ominous figure whose purposes are unclear yet menacing, whose power is dominant and pervasive, and whose presence is haunting, sexual, and inexplicable. Lamas' creative decisions fix our attention on Paulo and his revelations foster growing apprehension that mounts with each disclosure of who he is and what he is capable of doing.

This is a film that will leave you thinking about colonialism and its abusive aftermath, about the personal sources of violence and aggression that can be tapped by political powers around the globe, about the foot soldiers who enthusiastically wage clandestine wars, hidden and invisible. It is also about madness and sociopathy and the thin line dividing heroes from villains. It is a film that brings us to the brink to see ourselves in people we may not want to know yet cannot stop contemplating. Whether Paulo is who he claims to be or not, he embodies the banality of evil in the modern world and offers us much to consider about him and about ourselves.

No man's land is the space between warring parties that is left open out of fear, a contested land where no one dares to go. It is, arguably, the space between Paulo and Salomé, between them and us, the very space of the film. Lamas skillfully negotiates this space as a warrior. She is not afraid and so is able to hold her ground with an assassin without flinching. And as a cineaste, she is able, like Paulo, to create a masterful story that seduces and unsettles us without entirely revealing the truth.

**THE TRUTH OR THE LIE  
IN TERRA DE NINGUÉM**  
**A FILM BY SALOMÉLAMAS**  
by Irene Flunser Pimentel

It begins with groves of trees and vegetation seen from above, with a zoom to the bottom, to a path, that we neither know where it is or what it is. I recalled the beginning of Rober

Musil's book: *The Man Without Qualities*. It also commenced with a cosmic vision, in its case meteorological, of a beautiful August day in 1913, of "minimal barometric pressure" hovering over the Atlantic. From there the written lines take the reader closer to a city, in this case Vienna, with neighborhoods, a street, to the home of the man without qualities, and finally to the man himself. In the film *Terra de Ninguém* (No Man's Land), that is now in theaters, by Salomé Lamas a dark room with decrepit walls, a chair, a black cloth, almost prison like and empty, is the set. Voices can be heard, the room lights up and the "show" begins. As if the truth and the knowledge of a person, of a man, was gradually illuminated as the duration of the film elapses.

Afterwards there are three days, divided by frames, between 2011 and 2012, that refer to an account of past times, between 1966 and the 90s, with a glance back at the childhood and the present of then, of the man. The gaze and curiosity, almost *voyeur* like, of the spectator, try to trap the man's truth, harboring an irrepressible will to get to know him through the stories told in the contexts of a dictatorial and colonial Portugal in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the democracy (?) in Spain. The man claims to be named José Paulo Sobral de Figueiredo, to have been an electronic engineer, and begins to recount episodes of his life. He knows them and wants to tell us about them. Why? We don't know.

Perhaps he wants to leave a trace of his traveled path, to seek contact and empathy from those who hear him and film him, despite knowing that what he has to say will not result in sympathy because his stories reveal a commando soldier, a mercenary and a killer whose profession is to murder. He finds empathy in Salomé Lamas from who there is neither sympathy nor judgment, although it is present through the questions, that we do not hear but we perceive. Can sympathy exist for a man who was a commando in the colonial war between 1960 and 1980/81 in Angola and Mozambique, a man who refers to black people as monkeys or tamarinds jumping off the plantation trees, torn to pieces by the grenades? "Every plantation, every grenade" recounts the man. It had to do with "pay back," he said, while recognizing that there might be a bit of sadism. "But for great evils great remedies." Paulo Figueiredo likes to use Portuguese proverbs, and this one is repeated to the point of satiation.

The spectator is now wrapped up in the story, eagerly following it to try and learn more and know Paulo Figueiredo better, the truth(s) and lie(s) of a man in the-wrong-context of the Portuguese dictatorial and colonial

history of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He affirms to never having eliminated "people," but only "those that weren't any good." Paulo Figueiredo recognizes that "the smell of blood and gun powder" are addicting, just as cocaine and heroin are. The "adrenaline" brought on by that smell was surely proven by him, for he even confesses—and it is probably one of the most genuine parts, for it would be unlikely to invent such a fact—that in times of peace he would go to the Emergency Room of São Jose Hospital to see, feel and smell blood once more. In that particularly impacting point in the film Paulo appears to want to provoke a reaction of disgust and repugnance in the interviewer who films him.

The second day follows the first, for it is the report of his life as a mercenary. It is like this that we arrive to the third day, where Paulo Figueiredo is a paid assassin for the Anti-terrorist Liberation Group (GAL). For brief instances the film becomes a documentary and the filmmaker becomes an investigator contextualizing the operation, between 1981 and 1987, of the terrorist group created by the Spanish state during the governing of Felipe Gonzalez of the PSOE, which left the Spanish democracy in question. A democracy that self-destructs every time it utilizes torture and assassination. Acts of state terrorism that are justified by the terror of the "terrorist." Almost everything that Paulo says about GAL can be proven by the research done by the Spanish press. Either he experienced everything he recounts, or he appropriated himself of the identity of someone who lived it and told him about it and/or he himself did the research. The question of how much is a Man's life worth, is countered with another: "A man like me or like them?"

In voice-over, we hear that Paulo has no documents or official records. "Who is Paulo Figueiredo?" asks Salomé Lamas, giving hints without answers, and allows the spectator, with their piqued curiosity, to decide for themselves and investigate on their own account. But there is one truth—yes this one—that we still need. The secluded area shown from above in the beginning, and now treaded upon by a man who carries water. He drinks, sings, and laughs with his companions of a life of homelessness, two Africans. Paulo is in fact one of many homeless people, without a face, without a recognized existence, to which one turns their back on in order to not know that they exist, and whose tenuous belonging to common humanity transmits through the instances of contact with the filmmaker; she who speaks about what remained of the brief life of this man of which she knows a lot, but cannot prove its veracity through documents. The rest is almost everything and it is in the

film, not allowing itself to be constrained by any comment that is made about it. At the end of the documentary, which is not here revealed, the filmmaker reveals “the affliction” and urgency in making Paulo known, who everyone should know, and if they do not it is their own fault. That urgency was fulfilled. The film is here, a work of unusual maturity, raising questions about the relationship of memory with history, contributing to the acknowledgment of a human being in his complexity. Without being a historical investigation—and very less a trial—for the lack of documents/sources that prove and contextualize what Paulo relates, the film is a beautiful narrative of the life of a Portuguese man, a commando, a mercenary, a hired assassin, and a homeless man. All of that, a bit of everything or nothing at all, for no human being can be restrained by a single definition. Paulo existed, hence the need for him to be filmed. Thanks to Salomé Lamas for placing herself in the position of another, despite how repugnant his life may have been, to not judge, nor forgive, but open a sliver of opportunity to understand how this man was possible.

Text originally published in *Público* newspaper, 27 November 2013 and available at <https://www.publico.pt/portugal/noticia/a-verdade-ou-a-mentira-na-terra-de-ninguem-filme-de-salome-lamas-1614046> [accessed 19 May 2016].

## THEATRUM ORBIS TERRARUM (2013)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Three-channel HD video installation, 16:9, color, stereo sound, 26 min. sync in a loop; DVD, 4:3, black and white, silent, 5 min. loop on TV monitor, Portugal

HD video, 16:9, color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 23 min., Portugal

### CREDITS

Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas  
Production: Salomé Lamas, Joana Gusmão  
Cinematography: Mónica Lima, Rafael Matos, Gonçalo Soares, Telmo Romão  
Sound and mix: Bruno Moreira  
Editing: Salomé Lamas  
Color grading: Andreia Bertini  
Music: Montanhas Azuis with João Lobo  
Guest appearance: Ana Moreira  
With: João Fernandes, Cavaleiros do Mar, Dr. Fernando Ramalho (Museu-Geológico),

Renato Cortes (Bora-Bora)  
Sound and image equipment: Screen Miguel Nabinho  
Editing studio: Lamaland  
Mixing studio: Óbvio Som  
Laboratory: Ingreme  
Support: The Macdowell Colony, MNAC – Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, DGArtes, DuplaCena, Festival Temps d’Images

### DIALOGUE LIST

Here we can see an ensemble of Paleolithic archeological pieces that were collected in several locations surrounding Lisbon. As one can notice they are essentially instruments made of stone and silex. They have a relatively reduced size, which means that there has already been some kind of significant technological evolution. Lisbon’s neighboring populations used these small stone pieces for several purposes such as: cutting animal skin; cutting meat or scraping several items, including maybe, small weapons such as little axes, and arrowheads. Therefore it gives us an insight into the ways these populations lived, and it provide us with the only chance of getting to grasp with the everyday life of these inhabitants.

All these displays here are full of material that was collected within these zones, specially, in the region of Estremadura. These are materials that were placed near funeral monuments that would accompany the dead and that were lined up around the bodies. The bodies were usually buried beneath very large stones that composed these funeral buildings called dolmens. The bodies would be accompanied by a collection of instruments, ceramic pieces, they probably thought the dead would be needing these objects in a life after death, this included also weapons, etc, all with a precise conceptual belief in an existence beyond death.

*I can't look at the sea too long, otherwise I lose interest in what happens on land.*

*I had a little boat.*

*I set it on the water.*

*I wrote a little message,*

*I stuck it on a funnel.*

*I sent it to my true love,*

*Who lives across the ocean.*

*I wrote a little message.*

*Who lives across the ocean.*

*He never got the message,*

*My little boat turned over.*

*He never got the message.*

*My little boat turned over.*

*I lost my concentration.  
I cannot remember the message.*

## MAPS OF SAND, BOATS CAPSIZING ON THE SEAS Notes on *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* by Salomé Lamas and Joana Pimenta

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the *Padrão Real* hung from the ceiling of the Map Room in the Casa da Índia. It was a secret map, guarded from the eyes of foreign spies, which was changed and reworked with the comings and goings of each expedition. Aided by scientific equipment to measure distance, the navigators dreamed up the representation of the expanses that they had covered. When at sea, they looked up to the heavens and gauged their path by the stars, hands drawing in space fictional lines that carved territories. Upon returning to shore, they took the map that had previously belonged to others as their own, erasing divisive lines and constructing new borders. The map that they followed has been lost over time, and what remains of it is a stolen copy, made from memory by one of the cartographers in order to outwit enemies.

Maps are imaginary lines projected in space, visual representations of territories that have been traversed. They create spaces for navigating, utopias and dystopias, fictions created and broken by memory. Like the colourful banners that bear the title of the exhibition, drawing homographs in the air, maps devise coded messages that are then exposed to the entropy of the elements. The spaces dreamed up in *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* act as a map made of memories that sketch out their own territory, constructing and reconstructing the minute borders existing between the three screens.

The water line initially serves as a separation between what exists below and above the level of the sea. But when the ruins of a sunken village come into contact and collide with the rocks on display in the museum, the images begin to question the chronological time that divides the different surfaces, and what was previously buried in time and space starts haunting the elements that are above. Objects that belong to different moments of the line of time overlap, inserted into a contiguous space. They move into the spaces between the screens, breaking the projected lines that divide them. The historical period to which they belong becomes as ephemeral and malleable a substance as the hazy, cloud-like ghosts that are summoned to the images. *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* pits chronology against stratigraphy. It proposes

an anachronous, geological time that expands and contracts; a landscape where the linearity of progression crumbles between porous layers. These rocks dissolve in water, where the words of those who try to order and catalogue history are lost. “When I look at the sea... I lose interest in what is happening on land,” says the visitor to the museum, having turned into a shaman. The atlas that the installation draws creates an island, a piece of land in the high seas. You can reach it by boat, following maps that lead everywhere, and take you from everywhere to places that do not yet exist. With a proper name yet no fixed place, the boat drifts between being self-contained and existing in the space between each port. In civilisations that do not have boats, “dreams dry up, adventure gives way to spying and pirates are replaced by the police.”<sup>1</sup> *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* creates a territory where we can imagine another kind of geography, formed of chance and contingency, with sailors on land, and lands adrift.

Text originally produced for the exhibition *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* by Salomé Lamas, curated by Emília Tavares at the Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado, Lisbon, 17 October–17 November 2013.

1. Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias”, in Neil Leach (ed.), *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997), 336.

## LE BOUDIN (2014)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

HD video, 16:9, color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 16 min., Germany – Portugal

### CREDITS

Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas  
Production: Salomé Lamas  
Assistant director: Mónica Lima  
Cinematography: Salomé Lamas  
Sound: Carlos Godinho  
Editing: Salomé Lamas  
Mix: Bruno Moreira  
Color grading: Unai Rosende  
With: Nuno Fialho, Elias Geissler  
Translations: Barbara Bichler (Portuguese-German), Gloria Dominguez (Portuguese-English)  
Editing studio: Lamaland  
Laboratory: Mengamuk Films  
Support: Berliner Kuenstlerprogramm des DAAD

## DIRECTOR'S INTENTIONS NOTE

In 2011 I did an interview with Nuno Fialho. It might have been the toughest interview I have directed, due to the fact that remembering was a delicate experience for Nuno. Asking someone to remember can be cruel. It explains the fragmented discourse and the abstractions.

In *Le Boudin* it is Elias (the German youngster) who says, "I'm looking at that wardrobe, but it was smaller," but it had been Nuno looking at the wardrobe in the room where we stand.

I never knew the crime he committed. Nor I have asked. We only know what happened after that event, and we have no clue where he might be now. On the other hand, we only know that where Nuno lives, "no one is concerned with anything." We watch cut-ups, the copying and pasting of excerpts where nothing was rewritten. Nuno was sixteen years old when he left Portugal to join the French Foreign Legion, integrating the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Platoon at and the Urban Guerrilla Division.

In *Le Boudin* (French Foreign Legion march) Elias Geissler, a sixteen-year-old German actor, represents Nuno's narrative. His voice appears from time to time. We observe the friction between Elias's androgynous figure and Nuno's deformed voice—between the boy who stumbles over the words of a text that he doesn't understand, that he theatrically pretends to feel and exceeds, and a voice that contains the traces of its narrative.

A voice (Nuno) who didn't choose the story it narrates, but who knows it well, contrasts with the voice (Elias) who chose the story represented on-screen. Nuno didn't choose, he was led to X and then to Y: "I didn't enlist. They enlisted me. Because if it were now or if I had been given the choice."

When the first mission is described, the one where the African village was decimated for the establishment of a game reserve—the same game reserve that is later portrayed in the National Geographic Channel broadcast—the "hygienization" is clear and the criticism that may prevail resonates within the display of this film. Simultaneously it highlights the paradox that surrounds classified missions led by governments and private entities. *Le Boudin* is the fragile documentation of Elias's encounter with Nuno's account.

Salomé Lamas  
Berlin, July 19, 2014

## DIALOGUE LIST

**SALOMÉLAMAS** Ok, Elias. Whenever you are ready...

**NUNO FIALHO** We would either work for a drug baron, a warlord, a corrupt government, or we would uncover them. It was up to the highest bidder. That was it. That is to forget.

**ELIAS GEISSLER** None of the people who were asked about me had seen me. Where was I living when I was 16 years-old? In the desert. In the French Foreign Legion. Three months before my birthday, in the National Guard office, I got to choose between juvenile reformatory or the army. Due to my age the only one that accepted me was the French Foreign Legion. Firstly I went to France. I didn't enlist. They enlisted me.

**NF** How can I explain it? The GNR (Republican National Guard) at Cacém took care of everything. I went on a military plane... I was taken to the base.

**EG** I did training and I was meant to go to the Special Forces – 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Paratroopers. In France it was only training. A lot of mountain training. They'd say I was talented for that work. The Drill Sergeant said: "Be at this place, at this time, at that aerodrome." I had no idea where they were taking me. I took a military cargo plane and I realized I was on way to Libya. To the Libyan Desert that borders Egypt.

**NF** I stayed and that's all. My platoon was an urban guerrilla platoon. We were not always on a mission.

**EG** We would provide specific training to anyone... Let's assume the IRA wants to send a group to specialize in, be it weaponry, communications, or urban guerrilla warfare. That was it. A lot. Too many paramilitary troops for my taste. We always had North American groups; who at the time patrolled the border between the United States and Mexico to prevent illegal immigration. However they would choose... Each one would choose a sector and there you go. Mossad, Assad, English Secret Services MI6 or MI7 (I believe it was MI6). We knew them all.

**NF** We didn't care for their ideologies. Those were the orders, and they were to be followed, that's what we would do. In that platoon most were... Fugitives running from justice. Or they wanted to vanish for some reason.

**EG** We weren't very fond of talking about our private life. We had code names. I was not the soldier Elias Geißler. Our identity was not revealed. When I left, the Legion, I kept my name, but if I had wanted to be Jakob, Tobias or Peter, they would provide the means... I would get to Germany and show it: "Here it is, this is me." That's roughly the story of our platoon, we existed, but officially we didn't exist. Ghosts in the desert, that's what we were.

**NF** Let's say that we were busy on another mission. The Legion. The Legion itself, would contract a mercenary group of former legionaries to carry out the mission. My first mission? It is hard to forget. It was an ethnic cleansing, ordered by a Belgian citizen that wanted a game reserve in Africa for safaris.

**EG** Only that there was a village there and they didn't want to leave. They didn't care for money, they didn't care for anything. They had their lives there. So, they sent a helicopter to release a toxic substance. So, in the village the animals died, and everything else died. Others and myself we were on the ground troop, we were ordered to wait for the men that were out hunting, or that for some reason weren't there. And clean everything, not leave a trace. We didn't have a clean up team. We had to see the job through... It was only us... The other day I was watching TV, where I live no one is concerned with anything. I was watching the Geography Channel, they did a report on a game reserve in Africa. The wild life was portrayed in a protected environment followed by an interview with the landowner. I'm sure that was the same reserve, at least the location matched.

**NF** No. The motto was different, but we would say "They pay, we do." Whether we liked it or not, that was our family. Independently of what we did.

**EG** It was more than friendship that was asked for. It was a life. Here, you entrust the motorbike keys, the car keys. There you entrusted your life. It was like we were a restricted club, like Club Med or a VIP Club... Only that we did what we did... I was only a boy. A toll.

**NF** In Africa we took down regimes, we placed new presidents into power, in countries I had never heard of.

**EG** In Mogadishu a group of Doctors of the World, accompanied by a platoon of UN Blue Berets, ended up detained. They sent a team of North American Rangers. They got stuck.

They sent a North American Seal team, they were detained. Until finally they sent us. But once we arrived to the UN barracks, we shot against civilians. Each of us takes from 1,000 up to 1,500 bullets, so you can imagine. We were 20 legionaries, plus the Rangers, plus the Seal adding to the Blue Berets. It ended up running well. We would go in, execute the service and we would be on our way. Who happened to get in our way... We weren't to blame.

**NF** I find that this was the mission on which I feared for my life the most. There was a group only for interrogations. Everyone had a turn. Everyone had to do it. It was part of our training.

**EG** There we had liquid opium available... Occasionally during interrogations, in order to obtain information, we would resort to heavy torture. They would provide the opium in a liquid form, we only had to place it in a syringe and inject. It gives the same withdrawal and hangover that heroin does or worse. It creates dependency. That was my case. Depending on the individual... There are people more sensitive to some things than others. From electric shocks, to blade inflicted pain, asphyxiation...

**SL** Ok... Let's make a break.

**NF** ...I don't remember what I was saying... But I guess I had already answered.

**EG** You could not refuse a mission, because the punishment was... Solitary confinement. I'm looking at that wardrobe, but it was smaller. We would place a shoulder on each side and our back on the other side. Four metal plates. During the day temperatures ranged from 44°/48° and -3°/ -4° at night... To put it nicely. It was torture. With no food or water. They provided salt pills to be placed under the tongue to prevent severe dehydration. Nothing more.

**NF** The punishments were like this, but it wasn't for refusing a mission. That was like deserting. Therefore, no one is nuts enough to do that. I did two years. They sent me home for two days. No more than 48 hours. A couple of legionaries presented me an eight year contract to sign.

**EG** I refused. After three weeks had gone by: "We have found work for you as a security guard on the African continent." I was going to be very well paid. I received 10,000 Marks per month, with everything paid for. I went to Casablanca. I went to Morocco

because I was told it was a multinational company, that had its headquarters or a department in Morocco and that I would be a security guard. That wasn't the case. Conclusion: it was mercenary work. I was only a boy.

**NF** One thing is to do because we are ordered to do it, independently of being good at what one does. Now, who leaves the Legion and becomes a mercenary, it's because they really like doing it.

**EG** I had a six-month contract, but one day we had a mission... A company, unfortunately this happened a lot in the region, of diamonds was extracting at the river mouth, and some settlers obtained a permit to go right to the river spring. Resulting in that when the company's diamonds reached the river mouth, they were very tiny and the production decreased drastically. The company hired us to go "talk" with the settlers. Well, that's something to forget.

**NF** No. Because if it were now or if I had been given the choice...

**EG** In Africa we took down regimes, we placed new presidents at the head of countries that... I'm sorry.

**SL** No problem. Cut.

**NF** I don't know if you want to ask anything else?

**EG** In Morocco they made a mercenary out of me. I picked up the phone, called the official that had offered me the job and said: "This is not for me. I'm leaving." I left the phone in the room. I left everything in the room. Got on an airplane and I came to Berlin.

**NF** After Morocco I find it was very clear where I stood. I'm kind of a *persona non grata*.

## A TORRE (THE TOWER) (2015)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

HD video, 16:9, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 8 min., Portugal – Germany – Moldova

### CREDITS

Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas  
In collaboration with: Christoph Both-Asmus  
Production: O Som e a Fúria, Mengamuk Films  
Producers: Luís Urbano, Sandro Aguilar, Michel Balagué, Marcin Malaszczak  
Cinematography: Jorge Piquer Rodriguez  
Focus puller: Salomé Lamas  
Sound and mix: Bruno Moreira  
Editing: Salomé Lamas  
Color grading: Paulo Américo  
Music: Alvin Singleton  
Production director: Stanislav Danylyshyn, Michel Balagué  
Driver: Alex Cuciuc  
With: Kolja Kravchenko, Christoph Both-Asmus  
Editing studio: Lamaland  
Mixing studio: Universidade Católica do Porto  
Laboratory: Bikini  
Support: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Berliner Kuenstlerprogramm des DAAD, Yaddo, Bogliasco Foundation, Bikini, Fundação de Serralves – Museu de Arte Contemporânea

## NORTE/NORTH: TRIAL BY FIRE (2015)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

HD video, 16:9, color, live music, 40 min., Portugal – Spain

### CREDITS

*Norte/North: Trial by Fire* is an audiovisual performance commissioned by FILMADRID Festival Internacional de Cine

Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas  
In collaboration with: Filipe Felizardo  
Production: Fernando Vichez and Nuria Cubas – FILMADRID, Salomé Lamas  
Cinematography: Salomé Lamas  
Sound and mix: Bruno Moreira  
Editing: Salomé Lamas  
Color grading: Andrea Bertini  
Music: Filipe Felizardo  
Additional sound: Bruno Moreira  
Production director: Pedro Rocha  
With: Grupo de Caretos de Lazarim  
Sound and Image equipment: Screen Miguel Nabinho  
Editing studio: Lamaland

Laboratory: Ingreme  
Support: FILMADRID Festival Internacional de Cine, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Junta de Freguesia de Lazarim, Grupo de Caretos de Lazarim, La Casa Encendida

### NOTES ON NORTE/NORTH: TRIAL BY FIRE by Filipe Felizardo

Each year they dress up and immolate an effigy. Each year they listen to a testament that is written by them, dress up, read it out loud, and burn an effigy of the supposed authors, who will die and die again and again. This happens in the north of the country, where time is not city time, where there are no concert venues, where I would like to live and will die. I don't think I'll ever play a concert there. It's already done, like this: they dressed up, we gave them wine, food, and the guitar amplifier I despise the most. They ate, drank, and burned it. Some of them were in a rush to go home early to quench their mothers' complaints, as if they'd gone to a concert and had a curfew. It was all made up. Nobody would ever let me burn an amplifier during one of my concerts. I could never play guitar dressed like that. These men don't like my music. Me and Salomé were guilty of having this idea and the only way of giving up on it was to do it like this, destroying the concert and the film to make them happen later as a mirage of a will to die and be reborn, put to the test by an act much older and more irrational than our witty performances.

## MOUNT ANANEA (5853) (2015)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Video installation HD video transferred to 16mm, color, silent, 20 min. loop; two turntables, two vinyl records, two headphone sets, Portugal – Peru

### CREDITS

Concept: Salomé Lamas  
Production: O Som e a Fúria  
In association with: Fundação de Serralves – Museu de Arte Contemporânea  
Support: Screen Miguel Nabinho, The Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Bogliasco Foundation, Bikini, Yaddo, Berliner Kuenstlerprogramm des DAAD, Universidade Católica do Porto

### 16mm Film

Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas  
Production: O Som e a Fúria  
In association with: Fundação de Serralves – Museu de Arte Contemporânea  
Producers: Luís Urbano, Sandro Aguilar  
With: La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar (Peru)  
Cinematography: Salomé Lamas  
Director of production: Raquel Silva  
Drivers: Jorge Llerena, Orlando  
Assistant: Niche – Neceforo Quispe Pari  
Crew: Tambo Films (Peru), Maxim Holland, Céline Wald, Lali Madueno, César Egoavil  
Color grading: Paulo Américo (Bikini)  
Laboratory: Andec Berlin

### Vinyl Edition

Production: O Som e a Fúria  
In association with: Fundação de Serralves – Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Porto  
Graphic design: Catarina Lee  
Photography: Salomé Lamas  
Image editing: Sara Rafael  
Plant: Record Industry  
Side A, 20:27 min.: *Y arriba quemando el sol*, Bruno Moreira and Salomé Lamas  
Sound: Salomé Lamas, Raquel Silva, Lali Madueno  
Sound design and mix: Bruno Moreira  
Mixing studio: Universidade Católica do Porto  
Side B, 22:47 min.: *Untitled*, Norberto Lobo and João Lobo  
Musicians: Norberto Lobo, João Lobo  
Masterization: Manuel Mesquita  
Music studio: Fonte Santa

### DIRECTOR'S INTENTIONS NOTE

*Mount Ananea (5853)* is an installation produced from materials collected during the research in September and October 2014 for the feature film *Eldorado XXI* (2016), directed by Salomé Lamas and produced by O Som e a Fúria (of Portugal) in coproduction with Shellac Sud (of France). The film is an existential fable that travels through 24 hours in the life of an informal miner in La Rinconada, Peru, at 5,500 meters the highest settlement on the planet. He works under the lottery system called the *cachorro* (similar to the scheme imposed by the Spanish Crown) in the hope that one day he can release his family from their Dantean inferno and return to their home village.

The fixed, silent shot, filmed in La Compuerta, a key-access gorge to the mining pits, is a haunting and mysterious ethnographic reality cut-up, where a continuous flux of miners and peasants conflict in the darkness, vanishing in the out-of-frame.

It is an illusion that leads men to self-destruction, moved by the same interests, dealt

with the same tools and means, in contemporary as it has been dealt in ancient times.

#### Side A, 20:27 min. Track

*Y arriba quemando el sol* by Bruno Moreira and Salomé Lamas is an eclectic soundscape collection—a patchwork composition of ambient sound, interviews, direct sounds, radio news, folkloric tracks, et cetera.

#### Side B, 22:47 min. Track

*Untitled* by Norberto Lobo and João Lobo is a carte blanche invitation resulting from Lobo's enthusiasm for Andean guitar folk music, and comprises a melodic drone approach to La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar's landscape. Both sides of the record are studies to, and variations on, drafts, dreamed dialogues, and free approaches to La Rinconada's reality.

### Y ARRIBA QUEMANDO EL SOL Mount Ananea (5853) Vinyl Edition, Side A

Here we earn according to the *cachito* and the *cachorro*. The *cachito* and the *cachorro* means that we work for the house. Every day we work double shifts and the house lets us have a cut. Basically, if you are lucky you can do well, and if you are not lucky you won't get anything. Almost all of the La Rinconada mine is running low. The mine is vanishing. The majority of what we've been extracting is mineral.

Mineral... because what exists here is the native gold. It has diminished a lot, we can no longer obtain it. Now we are trying to survive from the mineral. We extract the mineral, we grind it, *quimbaletiamos* and we sell it. And the miner is crass, of course.

*Uly, mine engineer, La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, Peru (2014)*

Let's go! I went up the hill. Therefore I said: Where it is crowded I know there is gold. Where there's not a lot of people, they say that there isn't any. What shall we do? Let's *pallaquear*, there is no other option... I'm going to *pallaquear*. I'll find gold. I'll learn. We went. Down the hill. Little by little. He was also afraid. Neither him, nor I, nor the kids had seen gold.

A young man comes out and he says: "Do you know metal?" Yes I do.

Because we didn't know but one should say "yes!" of course. "Choose if there is any." But we didn't know the metal. Beautiful stones I collected in my bag. The bag was full. I'll take these ones because they must have gold. Also some were shining, it should be gold that I'm taking...

*Julia & husband, La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, Peru (2014)*

The miners love women as they love beer. That is the demand. That is their way of distraction, so to say, no? From the stress they suffer at work, for instance. There's always at home... They tell us they get tired. Sometimes the wife complains, the children hassle him, but when they come here they relax. We don't mention the children, no. We play, we laugh, we dance and they loosen up. I serve here, no? They declare their infatuation. "Do you want to be my girl?" I accept. Another comes and I accept. Let's suppose I go to the hotel. Suppose that for revenge they kill me. Or they fight or kill each other. That's how it is. There are two classes of people here. Sometime they fall in love with the girl and abandon their wives. Also, others stay for a while, stick with their wives... they respect it. But here in the mine it is all like this. Everything. There are no saints. Even the saintliest sins here.

*Owner of a Cantinita, La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, Peru (2014)*

Professors, colleagues and general public. I'm going to recite a poem that has the title *Happy Day, Rinconada*.

"In the heart of the San Francisco mountain, among the cold, the wind and the snow, there you find the men, strong and fighters of today. Rinconada land of the miners, where contractors, *pallaquearas* and merchants work. Where I spend my life together with them." Happy day. Thank you.

*Student from Los Angeles elementary school, La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, Peru (2014)*

Here as the saying goes: "La Rinconada is no man's land." There's a lot of death, there are killings, too many hidden bodies, hidden corpses...

Yeah, no man's land where I came to without knowing... They already know the person they are looking at... he doesn't know them...

They take him to the mine, they call it the *Gran Pagachi*. They do it to the youngsters, of small brains. They do that and they disappear. Then posted upon posted flyers appear: "We are looking for this missing person."

But they never appear. Sometimes they find them... the corpse thrown away... after

two months, three months, four months...

There're a lot of stray bullets, several cases of... corruption and theft here. The authorities are corrupt, even the healers offer them money, the others offer them money. In this way they let it flow. It is almost like their pay. Almost like their minimum wage that they collect out of this land.

— What do I do? I do my rituals in the mountain. So, I must do my *pagachis*. In any case, they are offering human life. Therefore, for the sake of it. To an unknown person, they make him drink, eat well and straightaway: How will they kill him? That doesn't matter as long as the heart still beating is sacrificed... Of a human... now that his workers covered that up. What will he do? The corpse has to be thrown away. That's the reason why corpses show up, in bags, in the trash, or... — Burned.

— They also appear burned. Therefore, that's how it is. Many are open to that.

— There are many shamans, many healers, that keep practicing those rituals here. It is said that by acting in such way, they can extract the beautiful gold.

*Anonymous, La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, Peru (2014)*

Rinconada, place of gold, only you know how much I've cried.

Ritipata, Riticuchu *pallaqueava* with my friends.

Dawn after dawn enduring cold and hunger.

Dawn after dawn life is sorrowful.

Fighting mother who works day and night.

Fighting mother who works day and night.

While the men believe themselves brave

abandoning their children.

While the men believe themselves brave

hitting the bottle in the cantinas.

*Julia, La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, Peru (2014)*

## ELDORADO XXI (2016)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

HD video, 2:39 color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 125 min., Portugal – France – Peru

### CREDITS

Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas  
Cinematography: Luis Armando Arteaga  
Sound: Bruno Moreira

Editing: Telmo Churro

Assistant editing: Rita Quelhas

Sound editing: Miguel Martins

Foley artist: Aleksandra Stojanovic

Foley sound recorder: Vladan Nedeljkov

Mix: Fred Bielle

Color grading: Caique de Souza

Music: Norberto Lobo and João Lobo

Production director: Raquel da Silva

Production manager: Lali Madueno

Fixer: Niche Neceforo, Leon Quispe

Huaranca

Drivers: Edwin and Nercy

Catering: Juan Quispe

With: Adolfo Calcina Cotacallapa, Dayron

Calcina Choque, Ronaldino Calcina

Inofuente, Julián Calcina Calcina, Grober

Mamani Calcina, Esteban Mamani Valegas,

Lizbeth Calcina Choque, Reveca Choque

Ramos, Cristian Rodrigo Mamani Meza,

Denis Calcina Choque, Milagros Alicia

Mesa Pacco, Padre Martin, José Mamani,

Luis Iruque, Víctor Raúl Iruque Apaza, Arturo

Calsina Ramos, Luz Marina Quispe, Jaime

Chalco, Luisa Vargas, María Quispe, Vilma,

Hilda, Ovaldina, Beridiana, Virginia, Lourdes

Riviera, Elixabeth Montenegro, Plácido

Bravo, Julia, Kalisaya, Goya, Amelia oblitera,

Andrés Lipa Figueroa, Rusbel Apaza,

Leli, Julia, Hugo Supo, Joana, Víctor Raúl

Iruque (Alcalde de Ananea), Cinthya Pari,

Argandona, Pedro Chambi Cayo

### Portugal, O Som e a Fúria

Production: Joaquim Carvalho, Cristina

Almeida, Fabienne Martinot, Sofia Bénard

Accountants: Aline Alves, Amadeu Soares

### France, Shellac Sud

Coordination of production: Francine Cadet

Assistant: Marion Schreiber

Administration of production: Cyrille

de Laleu

Assistant: Elodie Latriglia

Marketing: Mélanie Vincent, Jennifer Kirkoz

### Peru, Tambo Films

Coordination of production: Celine Wald

Accountant: César Egoavil

Producers: Luis Urbano and Sandro Aguilar

Coproducer: Thomas Ordonneau

Associate producer: Maxim Holland

Translations: Gloria Dominguez

(English–Spanish), Joana Cabral, Sublimages

(France), María Pares (Spain),

Isabel Pettermann (Portugal)



Sound and image equipment: Screen Miguel Nabinho  
 Editing studio: O Som e a Fúria  
 Sound studio: Sunflag  
 Foley studio: Loudness Films  
 Mixing studio: Studio Lemon, Pierre Armand, Fred Bielle

Laboratory: Cosmodigital, Philippe Perrot  
 Insurance: Gras Savoye, Riskmedia  
 Support: ICA – Instituto do cinema e do audiovisual, CNC – Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International – Institut Français, EURIMAGES – Council of Europe  
 Région Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur  
 Development Support: FIDLab 2013 FID Marseille, Berlinale – DocStation 2014, The Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Yaddo, Bogliasco Foundation, Berliner Kuenstlerprogramm des DAAD

#### DIRECTOR'S INTENTIONS NOTE

*Eldorado XXI* is a critical media practice parafiction attempt. Aesthetically similar to the majority of contemporary contemplative cinema, the mise-en-scène allows the action to unfold in its own rhythm. Drifting organically into non-diegetic orchestrated sequences, the film also lingers on a direct ethnographic cinema fashion approach combining visual sequences accompanied by off sounds.

The question raised is how an individual can carry his entire family to hell seeking a desired fortune and wishing to break free from poverty. A random lottery promises the awakening of one's oblivion of oneself. It is an illusion that leads men to self-destruction, moved by the same interests, dealt with the same tools and means, in contemporaneity as it has been dealt in the ancient times.

The objective and the subjective are displaced, not transformed. The story remains truthful—really truthful instead of fictionally truthful. But the veracity of the story had not stopped being a fiction. The break is not between fiction and reality, but in the new mode of storytelling, which affects both of them. What is opposed to fiction is not the real; it is not the truth; it is the storytelling function of the poor, insofar as it gives the false the power that makes it into a memory—a legend.

To turn to the words of Glenn Gould: "No Man's Land is the natural land of the imagination." It is in this non-place where we assemble ourselves to resist the silence of the universe, in order not to succumb to the pure panic and the threat of dissolution. The silence of the abyss is strange to us, but we

do belong to it, a piece of us abandoned to the pure possibilities, to the (un)submissive obsessions of any kind, to fear's inertia, that we are falsely protected by conventions.

#### DIALOGUE LIST

I

— *Rinconada, Lunar de Oro only you know how much I've cried. Ritipata, riticucho, pallaqueaba with my friends. Dawn after dawn tolerating cold and hunger. Dawn after dawn oh how sad life is. Fighting mother you who work day and night. Fighting mother you who work day and night. While the men thinking themselves brave abandon their children. While the men thinking themselves brave continue drinking at the bar.*

— I was the daughter of a single mother, a lonely daughter.

I grew up with my mother.

Who well maybe had little experience.

I finished high school at 16 and I left my hometown.

Cause my hometown is far.

It's Allapata.

I came to Puno, looking to develop myself and change my life.

Well, I found a partner much older than me.

We spent time together, we became a couple but do to matters of fate we separated, with my four children. I had my four children, two, four, three boys, a girl.

Which in the separation we separated in half with the children too.

Two went with him and I stayed with my younger children.

Being in... entering the trade of a vendor.

We met this man.

I also was a radio announcer, and he had a radio station.

We met and formed a friendship.

He became a widower.

He was left with five children.

We began chatting, we became a couple and established a home.

Both with our children.

But things didn't go well for us in the course of life.

And there we were...

So I thought to record my...

...album first so that with the sales we could get ahead.

In the middle of recording the video clip our son had an accident.

The son from our union.

He had the accident during child's play, they stab him and he loses his cornea.

So we became very indebted.

With the bank and with other people.

We didn't have a way to pay, and we also had a lot of children.

He has five, I have two, that's seven, plus the child we had, eight, plus us that's ten.

We couldn't feed ourselves.

We thought: "Where are we going to go work?"

He works as a college teacher and doesn't earn much.

He earns 282 EUR, which are divided in rent; he had to commute, plus the transport fare. It wasn't enough.

I couldn't be a vendor, because we had kids in primary and secondary school to care for.

We couldn't make it.

So we thought about coming to La Rinconada mine.

Where everybody always said that there was progress and one could lift themselves up.

Blindly, on a January day, we came, my son, my youngest, my husband and I, the four of us.

We didn't have money, we only had 11 EUR, and that too was on loan.

Sadly we arrived.

This kitchen we didn't have.

I had a gas cylinder and two buckets to carry water, my *prasad*s, the plastics.

When we arrived the market didn't exist yet, it was mud, it was dirt.

We arrived on a snowy day.

There was nowhere to hide, to store our things.

We arrived. There was a game shop where they played goals. I don't know.

Next to it I say: "Lord please, I leave you my children and I'll be back." We left.

I say to my husband: "We rent wherever we find a room."

We didn't know anybody nor which door to knock on.

So he said to me if all else.

"We will search in the mountain." "No!" It has to be on the outskirts of town where we'll go.

So we took to both streets.

On one street knocking on both sides.

"Knock on all the doors see if they hear you. They might have a room."

"I'm also going to knock on the other side." We knocked. No!

Nobody has a room and they don't know us. They distrust of others.

I'm crying.

It's late now.

I think it was 5:30 a.m. My children trembling in the square because they didn't know what this place was like.

A man comes out.

"Please Sir! Please! Rent me a room!" "I don't have one. My sister does."

We knocked on his sister's door. "Rent to them." He says. "Sir, rent to them

please, one day this could be me, or one of us could be in need."

A man comes out and says. "I can't rent to you. What's your work?" We didn't know what to answer.

We couldn't.

He was a professor and I was a vendor or homemaker, I couldn't.

What to offer him?

What was my work?

He surprised us. I said. "Sir my husband knows how to work in the radio."

"Before we had work, now we don't, we want to work.

We are going to be able to pay you!"

"I have a newly made room but water is running on the floor."

"It doesn't matter we want a roof."

We went in with our things, adjusted things with plastics.

We settled in and morning came. There was no dinner. We had to go to the square to eat rice with egg.

It cost 0.70 EUR.

0.70, 0.70 and it adds up.

"What should I make?"

What do I cook?"

I had tripe I brought to cook. "I don't have money, what should I make?"

"I have no kitchen or gas, a gas cylinder I do have."

He ran into his friend of two days. Ask him.

"Will you loan me money?" He loans him money. With that we bought gas and a kitchen, this little kitchen.

We bought a kitchen and had no more money. Not a single EUR.

But I did have a kilo of rice and a bit of sugar. I cook tripe. I boil it because I could now.

"I'm going to cook this."

I fry, I sell, we live like that for a week.

One day we don't have anything. Only enough for their treats. I can't eat any more.

I can survive.

The three of them are men.

I have to give them more priority, whatever the baby leaves I can eat. That's how we have survived.

One day we went up to the mountain. To the peak.

I say. "Where there're a lot of people there has to be gold. Let's *pallaquear* (minerals)!"

He told me: "How do we get there?" We were embarrassed.

"It's our last chance. I'm not cheating. I have something to offer!"

We arrived. "Sir please can you let us *pallaquear* (choose the minerals)?"

We weren't familiar with gold or metal.

"Let's see if you can *pallaquear*."

He sends us to the minerals. "Yes there. *Pallaqueasen*."

I am *pallaqueando*, soft stones, smooth stones, no!

A guy comes. "Ma'am you are mistaken. You are throwing out the minerals."

In one of those scuffs. "Well this looks like metal to me, this is gold!" I say.

We couldn't find any. "Tomorrow I will also come."

Please I say. "Will you come?" "No."

Only his people were there, the owner wasn't, only his people.

We also went on the following day, we sold four *palos* (sticks). We had 8 EUR.

— First we all wanted to *pallaquear*.

— The baby was also there!

Sure he didn't gather rocks.

He was too young.

He was 7 or 6 years old.

The oldest was 15, so he's *pallaqueando* with us.

— I began to work with my son Cristian, we went to the mine.

In the first attempts we haven't had any success. There wasn't any.

We barely got enough to eat.

Like this the days were passing by, the months too and little by little we have become familiar with the minerals.

I began to work like any other person here.

One starts to work in the lowest position.

A laborer, a *palero* (carpenter), as a *cartillero* (machinery operator).

I began to work. Little by little, I began to move up also.

In different mines with no success. Only enough to eat, sometimes we came out indebted.

— I continued *pallaqueando*.

*Pallaqueando*.

I recognized the minerals, I've worked here in the back, we've gone there.

I've worked, thank God.

Yes, it's gone a bit well for me! But him, particularly, in his work as a male it has not gone well.

— Yes, I worked a lapse of almost two years?

Almost, no?

— Two years.

— Two years with no success, but in the meantime my wife had discovered the minerals.

It kept getting better and better.

— I think so, a bit of luck, and faith also.

— Yes, a lot of people have prospered here.

It seems like a lie.

Something I have learned from this experience is that La Rinconada gives its blessing and its prosperity, to those who at a time have suffered greatly.

I worked in the districts in Azangarro. People of a very low class, let's say extremely poor.

Their children have come to the mine, today they are contractors.

They are successful.

They are contractors in the mines, with money, cars, big businesses.

Now they don't even live here.

They live in Juliaca, Puno...

— It's not easy in the mine, not everything that glitters is gold.

In Puno and Juliaca they say, "In La Rinconada mine the streets are dripping with money, gold."

It's not like that as you can see.

It's not so easy to find a gram of gold.

It's not easy to sell it. On a snowy day you don't even sell a single EUR.

Neither for the trader, nor the worker.

On a snowy day you can't even *pallaquear* because the snow covers everything. The cold kills you.

This is for the brave, this land is not...

— Not for everybody...

— They leave, sell everything.

Their cylinder, their bed. They leave.

— Sadly.

— They leave because they haven't found gold.

— It is 6:00 a.m., plus 21 minutes, the time in all of the national territory.

It is 6:21 a.m. my dear friends.

Good morning my friends.

Good morning at this early hour.

An attack could have ended in tragedy.

It occurred in the early hours on Sunday against the building of Radio Latina,

in the neighborhood Independencia, in La Rinconada.

The account took place when two unknown subjects launched sticks of dynamite, on the roof of the second floor of the radio station.

According to the police it has not been dismissed that the attack was committed by some members of political parties to intimidate the journalists, who are investigating the aspiring candidates for the mayorship.

A young woman tired of being locked up poisons herself.

Her partner prohibited her from seeing her family and threatened her.

She couldn't take that her partner would deprive her of her freedom, listeners.

She ingested rat poison.

She was taken to the hospital Manuel Nuñez Butrón, where they saved her life.

More headlines. Four drunken subjects seized with a firearm, were arrested, listeners.

They gave off four shots in the air near a bar, dear listeners.

Four subjects were arrested by the police when one fled giving off shots in the air, followed by three others.

The strange event occurred on Sunday afternoon when they were drinking liquor.

When Luis Choqueguanca Colqueguanca 34 years old, who possessed a gun had an argument with Wilbert Chambi Alegre 27 years old, with whom he was drinking.

He threatened him, with the gun to tell him that he had to buy more beer, my dear listeners.

There's a person who has taken their own life in La Rinconada, this is what we non-officially know.

Yesterday sadly, it appears, we still don't know the motive.

It is very sad listeners that cases like this occur.

No? People who despairingly make a fatal choice. That is not good.

Never think to do that because that is negative, I believe that every problem has a solution.

Only death doesn't have a solution.

— We buy the gold here and take it to

Juliaca and in Juliaca we sell it.

Also driving down to Juliaca with gold is risky because of the many robberies that occur.

Now to come with the money we have, that is also another risk.

This year four or five gold traders were killed. It could even be our clients.

They see you buy and they think that we handle a lot of money and they choke you, sometimes with guns also.

You are left with nothing, so many years of sacrifice and you lose it all.

Well, La Rinconada is for...

For the people who... have tried everything,

no? Then they come here.

Yes...

Yes, many poor people have gotten ahead here in La Rinconada.

— My life was a bit sadder.

I came, I was called to *pallaquear*.

So supposedly I was brought here, when they brought me I came.

I borrowed some money.

I didn't know of the *saca* (extraction of minerals from veins).

We didn't have what to *pallaquear* with, we needed our own buckets, tools, and cylinders.

We have to buy the water to be able to work.

I arrived very naïve, since I didn't know anything.

For me it seemed that the gold had to appear here, but it wasn't like that.

When you aren't familiar you don't know what is material and what is gold.

A friend said. "The gold is here you just have to search for it."

Therefore she would take a big bag, a small bag and a plastic bag.

I took a big bag and I could never fill it with gold.

I searched, searched and in one of the attempts I found a tiny flake to put in the big bag.

My coworkers had big bags full and I thought. "They have found so much gold!"

"I have found nothing!"

Just three, four tiny stones.

When we had lunch I was afraid to go near them. Once I was there two, three days, I made a friend, a friend who is a bit...

Who spoke to me. I got near her and saw in her bags.

In one there were stones, in the other there were big rocks with gold, and in one other small bag there were tiny rocks also with gold. That's how we search for the flakes, that's what we call them here.

"Ah!" I said. And they don't teach you.

We are selfish here.

I didn't know we had to make it *chancar* (crush the mineral).

She told me. "If you are going to *chancar*

you have to pay for a *pala* (steel hammer)."

A *pala* is a *pala*! Imagine how many days you must work to wash and gather the mineral!

I said. "How can that be?"

So I took an entire day.

You can't smash the rock into tiny bits.

It is the big rocks with a good hammer and I worked.

"Oh not even a bucket full I can *chancar* in a whole day."

Like that I have come to know about gold, minerals... That's how it has been.

— We are independent. We chose the time we want to *pallaquear* or also if we don't. No?

— Yes. If now we say let's go forward, we go forward and if not, not.

There is no one who controls us. There's nobody.

We don't have to work for a boss.

— Associations have work schedules.

From 6:30 a.m. to 8 a.m., then after 8 a.m.

They get off till 12 p.m. or till 2 p.m.

Then they go in from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

— So what we *pallaqueamos* is the waste that is ejected from the mine.

That's what we wash and those flakes that are left, those tiny rocks, that's what we gather.

We don't have anyone to tell us. "You work this many buckets in order to get paid." No.

Everything that we gather is for us.

We grind it. We take care of everything.

— Independently.

— Welcome ma'am! How are you?

Good morning.

Get closer to the mic, the other line is open.

How are you? Good morning.

— Very good morning Mr. Niche and in first place a very good morning to you, to the dear town of La Rinconada and to my fellow *pallaqueras* a very good morning.

— Let's see. We're with the vice president

of Central de Pallaqueras.

– Yes, please.  
I want to clarify something here. Please, I don't want any confusion comrades. All of this that has been done—these requirements—is with the objective of commercializing our gold.

– All of these requirements are placed on you by the Corporación Minera Ananea S.A.?  
– Exactly. Exactly.  
– Why?

Because all of these requirements make it seem like you are employees of a company. Then I would understand why they are imposing all of these requirements.

– Yes, all of a sudden they have asked for this...  
– Why have they asked for this?

– Cause previously...  
In past years, they say, the Corporation has kept records and there were problems.

There was trafficking of gold (Bolivia-Brazil). Why don't they monitor the men? Why don't they go after them like they do with my *compañera*?

– But...  
– It is not a crime for a woman...

I'm going to say this harshly.  
It is that in La Rinconada it seems like the men are bugged if a woman excels.

– You can't generalize it like that ma'am.  
– Well...

It might be. No?  
I'm not saying that all men are like that.

That's why I'm saying.  
But the men here in La Rinconada...

– When you say “the” you're generalizing ma'am!  
– Well, I apologize, you are excluded!

As I was saying... We the *pallaqueros* have existed for many years in La Rinconada.

“Since when do we exist?”

For many years we've been here.  
– But in an unorganized manner.

– Unorganized. Surely.  
Now that we are organized.

Now that suddenly, one of our comrades has dared to participate in politics and run for office.

Now it appears that a bucket of cold water is being thrown on them. No?

“Why a *pallaquera*?”  
They say. “No!”

Well I am proud to be a *pallaquera* and I'm very aware of what I am.

It's not because of this that they are going to humiliate my comrade.

*For the safety of the citizens of Ananea, towns of La Rinconada, Lunar de Oro, Trapiche, rural communities and mining cooperatives, we will install video cameras, surveillance 24 hours a day, communication radios of the latest technology, and training for a safe and healthy district. This 5<sup>th</sup> of*

*October choose the Quinoa of Poder Andino of your brother Samuel Ramos Quispe, a synonym for work and management. Friend and brother, Samuel Ramos Quispe for mayor, vote for the Quinoa of Poder Andino!*

– Thousands of people commute every day. Thousands of miners commute every day via the neighborhood of Compuerta, my friends. Nowadays Compuerta is terrible, it is full of trash, full of mud you can't walk in the area. You have to wear boots if not you will lose your shoes. Compuerta is truly like this! We're not exaggerating, the quantity of trash that accumulates is enormous. It's tons! If we were located somewhere else or had another habitat and temperature.

My God half of La Rinconada would be dead from contamination!

From that illness, from that plague that spreads with the heat.

Our good fortune is that we are at above 5,000 meters, the temperatures are low and this is what has been favoring us.

If not, we would all be sick.

All of our children would be sick!  
The health center would collapse! It would collapse with this environment that we have. It would totally collapse.

A few days ago I was with some women. We did not speak about trash.

We spoke about another topic, IDs.

Do you know what their response was?  
With sarcastic smiles on their faces.

“Are you crazy? Why would I change my residency?”

I am from Puno and I'm forced to work here!”  
But they don't realize that they live from this town. We eat from this town.

We educate our children from this Holy Land. While we don't care about the well-being of this town in the least bit.

We aren't in the least bit interested that our town of La Rinconada could change in some way.

*The force is felt Keiko with the people.  
The force is felt Keiko with the populace.  
It is the force of the...*

*This is the force of the young people.  
This is the force of Leonardo Huanca.  
For productive, transparent and concerted management.*

*For a safer, more ordered and healthier Ananea. For sustainable and responsible mining for all. With education, health and work.*

*This 5<sup>th</sup> of October choose the K of Fuerza Popular, for your friend Leonardo Huanca. Leonardo and you with Fuerza Popular choose the K. Yes, the K of Keiko!  
For the development of Ananea.*

*Choose the K of Fuerza Popular!  
...is felt Keiko with the people.  
The force is felt Keiko with the crowd!  
Fuerza Popular! The K!  
The K is Fuerza Popular!*

– For our work here, here we don't receive a salary.

Here we receive through *cachito* and *cachorro* (payment agreement).

*Cachito* and *cachorro* consist of us working a week and a half for the house.

We work every day double shifts and the house gives us cuts.

These are cuts we get by doing the perforation, we explode it, the gangue is extracted and we take out the mineral.

The mercury employed in the job makes you more irritable. It turns you into a more explosive person.

Due to the exposure to mercury.

And the miner is crude!

It depends. If you are lucky it can go very well and if you aren't lucky you don't earn anything.

Currently the mine, almost all of the mine La Rinconada is running low.

What we are predominantly extracting is mineral.

Around here there is native gold.

The gold in *charpa* (gold nuggets).

This has minimized considerably, we can't find it anymore.

So now we are trying to survive only from the extraction of minerals.

We extract the mineral, we grind it, we *quimbaleamos* (crush-smelt), we sell it.

The problem here is that we are a cooperative. There are more than 415 members, of which more than 60% don't want to be formalized.

There's a group that is formalized.

But due to those who don't want to be formalized, we are all affected because we all depend on the Corporation.

The Corporation is the head. All permits are under the name of the Corporation.

Lamentably the mine is drying up!

Basically here in La Rinconada there is very little gold left.

Now what costs the most are the explosives and we can't advance very quickly.

– There are good and bad contractors. Contractors pay every week or biweekly for the *contrata* (work agreement).

We haven't had any of the respective payments. Contractors that...

Personally mine is Walter Chambi.

That has not paid us our *cachorro* for almost two months.

Two months.

Therefore we are here...

Because he didn't pay our *cachorro* we stole a machine.

Well, a piece of machinery so that we could sustain ourselves, at least a month with that money. This is why we are being held at the police station.

At this moment we ask for justice, we ask for the support of the people and of all of the workers.

It happens not only in this *contrata* but also in others.

In La Rinconada there have always been these complaints.

– Workers don't complain.

They are threatened.

Sometimes they're threaten to death and the comrades leave.

They don't file a single complaint.

They never return.

The police department truly favors, the people who have money.

Here there are very loyal people.

So they put up with it and they are made to suffer at the police station.

Many fellow workers have truly been hidden, lifeless. It has gone that far.

– They hide them inside the mines and their corpses are never found.

The contractors don't carry on their conscience how we work like a laborer under this system of payment and they fail to pay our *cachorro*.

In order to support our family we place our life at risk here.

– Very well honey.  
Thank you very much.

Very well, now...

– Thank you.

– Honey. We've listened to you.

– Thank you sweet daddy, thanks mommy...

– Thanks to you honey.

– Thank you *papito*.

Thanks dad.

– *La Bella Durmiente* is a woman.  
They are three siblings.

Another is in San Rafael.

He is male.

San Rafael mine, he is male. He is there and is the keeper of that treasure also.

And she is the keeper of La Rinconada.

Back there is Aporoma.

It is there in Mount Aporoma.

It's on the way to Sandia (jungle).

It's a glacier as well.

– The main one here in La Rinconada, is *La Bella Durmiente*. She is known by that name now.

She was also called for a while in this region; the miners used to call her the *Awichita*.

*Awichita* is an elderly person but not in this case. It is the snowy mountain. That's the *Awichita*. They have a lot of faith.

– Every mine has its sacred place.

A sacred place where they give offerings to the *Awichita*.

Let's say they take their best quality coca leaves and leave her a little portion.

They also offer her their *cañihuaco* (cereal), fruits, the best fruits.

The best apples, whatever is of best quality.

There are also fine liquors.

They are small but they toast to her.

The *Awichita* is only a big rock with gold, but it is a sacred place for them.

– Before we *picchar* (chew coca) we have to choose the leaves and give it as an offering to the *Awichita* so that we don't have accidents. So that nothing bad happens to us and that we always return home safely.

We all learn how to *picchar*, those who don't have to learn.

– Yes...

– Coca is the most sacred thing here in the mine.

The *Chinchilico* (treasure keeper) is a myth around here.

He is a small character...

People always say that he is dressed in gold...

– He exists, personally I haven't seen him.

He has seen him!

– It casually happened to me.

When I saw him I stood still, my heart froze.

I couldn't speak or say anything.

I was speechless for a moment.

– Not even his lamp, he said that his lamp went out.

– My lamp turned off by itself.

He left like a figure.

After a short time I left that mine because I was frightened.

They have many beliefs...

– They ought to have them. That's the way it is.

During the time I have been here I have seen many things.

For example, why do miners die, right?

Thinking about it and dealing with rituals. It's not necessary for someone to execute a ritual.

Why has he died?

Cause he doesn't have faith.

First in *La Bella Durmiente*. They say. "It's only a rock. The rock will give me when I want."

Right?

He's out drinking he shouts. "The rock has given to me!" But he had not paid tribute to it.

When the rock has given him 20 grams of gold.

He sells it and goes out to a bar to indulge himself.

In one night the money is gone.

He keeps asking cause the rock is going to give more.

But it won't give him more. Cause he hasn't given it, rituals, fruit, liquors.

He hadn't offered, hadn't thanked the rock and kept asking for more.

One of those times a slab falls and crushes him! And he dies! Cause he kept asking.

The *Awichita* punishes.

She gives but she also punishes.

The mine is like this, isn't it?

It has its props.

Its large poles that hold it up.

If not the rock can come down, those poles hold it up.

– The risk workers take...

Every day there are deaths here.

That isn't so much because of the safety conditions.

Many times it is the negligence of the people. Desperately people here always want to gain a bit more.

– A bit more.

– A bit more for themselves and that is

where they get sloppy.

In other word, it is their ambition because

they want to extract a bit more mineral to take home.

– There weren't any bars or nightclubs.

Now there are tons.

Now at night it is... Uhf!

It seems like *Sodom and Gomorra*. Indeed!

Those in the hills, lots of lights. Oh! My God!

I get lost in those streets. Really!

For the single men, for example the single

miners work and take their earnings there.

Let's say 280 EUR, they save 54 EUR in their

room and go out with 215 EUR.

Out all night the money vanishes.

Others to show off put it all in their wallet.

"I will spend 56 EUR!"

The next morning they wake up without money,

or without shoes, or wounded, or dead.

That is how it is here.

That's why they call it *no man's land*.

– That's cause the miners like women as

they like beer as well.

It's a form of distraction let's say, of the

stress that they have at work.

At home, they tell me that, they get tired.

Right?

Sometimes their wife complains also his children

annoy him. They come here to relax.

We don't mention the children, no?

We play, we laugh, we dance.

They relax.

We don't force them to come here.

"Come!" They come.

When they come they are always single.

Even the very old men who come are single.

They take off their ring.

But others are honest.

They say they have a family and wife.

"I have my wife."

There are some who are honest. But most aren't.

They always say they are single.

Of the girls? Let's say I serve here.

I speak with one with another, let's say.

They declare their feelings. "Do you want to be my baby?" I accept.

Another. I accept. What if I go to the hotel?

What if out vengeance they kill me?

They fight or kill each other.

That's the way it is here.

Let's say that I talk to three or four.

What if one day they all show up here?

Who am I going to choose?

They are not going to want to hug one another.

They fight and take out vengeance on the girl.

There are many deaths that occur because of that.

Here at the mines everything is like that.

No one is a saint, even the most saintly sins here.

– Lamentably it was reheated.

What upset me the most was that I complained to the waitress that the food was old.

She arrogantly said. "How can it be old? We just fried that up." But it was evident that it

had been reheated.

The potatoes, the chicken and the tomato. When we are served this food we're not being

nourished.

We're being infected with an illness or... Or some sort of infection this food could have.

Thank you.

– Thank you, many thanks. Your participation is very important, we thank you for your call

listener.

There's a lot to be done in this regard dear

listeners.

There are restaurants that have terrible service. Honestly the clients don't even complain.

"What is that Jesus?"

Yesterday the cook looked like a longshoreman with dirty clothes. He didn't look like a cook.

We don't want to say more, but that is the reality of our establishments here in La Rinconada.

Especialy where they handle our food listeners. Let's remember that Chile was ruled with

*manu dura* in the Pinochet era.

That change hurt a lot of people.

Sometimes it seems like human beings need a firm hand so that we can have change.

A short time ago there were three gold smelting houses in the market, where the meals are prepared.

The alderman calls us. "We are taking action."

What are they intervening for?

To greet and congratulate them?

There is no form of sanction.

If there is no penalty we will never be able to get things right.

– The *blanqueo* is when they have made no money, not even for their costs.

"Brother Brandon I've *blanqueado*. It's been four, five months, one year but I have *blanqueado*."

That's why others come and say. "Mr. Brandon, I want to make an offering to the

mine, I have no luck."

Most come with these problems. There are others that come with sentimental

problems, couple's problems.

"Brother Brandon my spouse has changed. She's behaving badly. I have heard gossips."

An infinite number of sentimental problems that a human can have.

Those sentimental problems, as it's clearly stated, all of us can have and this is listed

globally.

But we see through the sacred coca leaves. Also through the tarot cards, we see how to

offer solutions.

When it's a problem related to the mine we also see a way. How we can offer support?

Someone who is greatly unlucky they mainly ask me.

They say: "Brother Brandon, how do I make an offering to *Santa Tierra*?"

It's very true. The *Santa Tierra* better known also as the *Pachamama* is a single one globally.

Unique, only that in different countries they know it by other names but it's the single one.

To make offerings to the *Santa Tierra* it's a very long task.

It's as if you are giving food to the *Santa Tierra*. You are feeding the *Santa Tierra*.

With your poverty, humility, affection, love and with faith and the *Santa Tierra* gives you

in return!

The double, triple and even much more. That's the *Santa Tierra*.

So to say, here we use animal fetuses, the fetuses of lamas, alpacas, the fetuses usually of the *vicuña*.

If you say: "Mr. Brandon I'd like to make an offering to the *Santa Tierra* for the mine."

If you bring me a fetus of a pig, it won't have an effect.

Why? Because that is not for a mining area. That is why the fetus of each animal has a

meaning.

There're a lot of people who sometimes make offerings with a human fetus, with the

miscarriages.

To my understanding and I have seen others, who are witch doctors, they do it for the

money.

They make offers with humans with elderly people, young ladies who are virgins, young men are used to make offerings to the mine.

It is a bit more, it might be 10% or 20% more effective.

Of course that they charge you a bit more because obtaining those materials is difficult. Not only is it harder to get that material but if I'm caught with that material it is punishable by law!

Here in this town of La Rinconada there have been found...

There have been people without hearts found, lying dead on the street but without a heart.

They're missing organs. Surely, the result that it gives you are bit more effective.

What worth does that money have that you're going to earn?

Then the fact that you've burnt a man will lie on your conscious.

Although they're already dead it doesn't matter you have burnt them.

– Here as the saying goes:

“La Rinconada is *no man's land*.”

It's *no man's land*.

Why do I say that?

Because there is a lot of death, massacres, many hidden deaths, hidden corpses and many missing family members.

Meaning it is basically corrupt.

Corrupt!

*No man's land* where I come without knowing. They already know that the person they are looking at is clueless.

So they take him to the mine.

They call it the great *Pagachi* (ritual).

They do that to the little ones of seven or eight, to young men and young ladies.

They take them. Some say that they give them something in the food to make them fall asleep.

Or they take them to night clubs here.

They take them, offer them booze and the young men fall asleep.

They take their warm sleeping bodies to the mine.

They take them around everything...

The chimneys, everything...

They take them back and take out their hearts.

Their hearts are found in the mine right inside the rock.

They *challan* everything, the blood of what they didn't take. The corpse they take it and toss it in the landfill.

So that is why a lot of dead bodies appear, corpses, in bags placed in the trash, but without a heart.

There are others that are unrecognizable.

A person disappears and fliers after fliers... Hmm on wall after wall appear. Such and such person has disappeared and he's never found.

If they sometimes find a tossed corpse it is two months, three months or four months later.

Many times this happens not only because of inopportune opportunists.

There are a lot of shootings.

There are a lot of stray bullets.

There are a lot of cases of corruption and of theft here.

Since the authorities allow this. They are corrupt, even the shamans give them money.

Others give them money and the authorities turn a blind eye.

It is basically their wage. Practically like their minimum wage that they take from the land of La Rinconada.

## II

– I always forget about the *Awichita*. I never remember her.

– I didn't *picchar* at all.

– You didn't chew?

– When I'm around them they say that you should chew or you won't find gold.

– Well, young lady if you don't chew...

– I do chew here.

When I go to the... I *piccho*.

– You do everything with coca. When you don't *picchas* there's no strength.

– No strength. You become hungry. Your head hurts.

– That's how it is.

– That is why here I only want to chew with baking soda.

Here... “Where is the coca?”

I keep looking for it.

– Here you *picchas* at home?

– At home I also *piccho*. I use it as a rub. In the evenings my knee hurts, also my feet with the cold...

– On Tuesdays I also chew.

– I don't do coca at home but up here always.

– Me too.

– When your brother isn't there also I chew and when he arrives upss...

She can't make it without chewing.

Here you are in the mine...

– We are in the mine...

– *Awichita*, only... to work we chew.

– I also don't chew.

– To do laundry I also chew.

I go gather coca and quickly I go. Quickly...

– If I don't chew up here I get dizzy.

– It's the gas, the extracted material has that smell.

So when you chew coca it goes by quickly. You don't feel it.

– You don't even feel fatigued at all.

– But when you don't chew forget it.

– Also when you don't bring your own coca... When they give you some. You don't feel right. They don't give you very much. It's not the same, they give you very little.

– It warms you up, doesn't it? It warms you up.

– Yes...

– They told me I have smoke...

– In the lungs?

– What do you have? Smoke in the lungs?

– What?

– Smoke.

– Smoke?

– It blackens you. That's what I've heard...

– The stuff we *chancamos* releases off dust.

– By a lot they tell me, he who has checked me...

– Oh God!

– I like it. I smoke.

– I like it too.

– Work will kill us. *Picchando*... We will die anyway.

– From gas poisoning also.

– Yes?

– I like to smoke tobacco... The smell makes me feel good.

– She's smoking cigars...

– All this formalization has failed.

That's why... Hernando de Soto, a global economist says.

“The government has not been formalizing you on the contrary it has been deformatizing you.” That's true! Before we used to work in a well-organized way.

We had a work schedule... Aid was provided. Now we are criticized on the radio.

Those who have left return...

There is no order.

– It's Ollanta's (Humala–President) fault that we lost the gold.

– Yes, it was Ollanta's fault.

– We lost the gold.

– Yes. Who supports the miners first?

– Hum. The miners...

– Yes. He won because of Puno.

– Ollanta won because of the mining sector. He wouldn't have won.

– Will they support us...

– ...If the lady wins?

– Who will win? Who will be elected? Who will support us? Nobody.

– Who might be elected to office?

– That's not the worst part...

Keiko (Fujimori) might win.

Weren't you telling me that yesterday? You told me. “It will be Keiko.” Didn't you?

– Who will win? Alan García (Aprista Peruano)?

– Alan García can return (President 1985–1090/2006–2011).

– With (Alejandro) Toledo (President 2001–2006) it has not been like that.

– No, they created the laws.

– Toledo? Who did?

– Yes. Toledo started, Alan García followed, Ollanta implemented.

Ollanta has just been implementing the laws. Nothing else.

– ...El Chino created the laws (Fujimori President 1990–2000). El Chino was selling out Peru.

– He would have sold us too.

– He wanted to sell us. I guess!

– If she wins, will she sell us?

– Chileans...

– It can't be Chileans in here. Where does Keiko come from? From Japan?

– Keiko was born here. His father and mother were Japanese I believe. No matter who it is. They'll all cheat us. No matter who wins. No government will come and say. "Ladies you have been suffering in such a way." Or. "We'll provide aid."

The head of county was elected. He asked for our support. Will he show up here? Never. Whoever becomes the mayor, it doesn't matter who, everything will remain the same.

– Asociación Central Base Lunar de Oro...

– You could take it down to legalization maybe...

– No, now you are going to legalize, how are you going to do that? It's no longer going to be called Base Comité de Lucha Cerro Lunar de Oro?

– No. It's never been called that Mrs. Aida.

– Yes?

– Comité de Lucha Base Lunar de Oro, always...

– It's Asociación de Pallaqueras Central Cerro Lunar. Mrs. Luisa isn't it right?

– Yes.

– Mrs. Luisa we don't have anything ready, not even copies. Or maybe a letter of...

– No, it says Asociación Central. I don't have it.

– Convened by Comité. de Lucha Base Cerro Lunar.

– Yes.

– I've always done it like that, you know.

– Comité de Lucha is made...

– Comité is as it's always been.

– Until now.

– Comité La Rinconada for example... Lucha Base La Rinconada...

– Ladies!

– They do it like that at the Corporation.

– Look. It reads: "President of Comité de Lucha de la Asociación de Pallaqueras."

– Let's see ladies come to this side please. The meeting is serious we aren't here to sit around.

– We are not going to postpone the meeting because of one association. We can't postpone this meeting for one association. We have a majority there're six associations present now. From Mercedes put your hands up!

– I don't know, only five...

– From Mercedes!

– Five of us are here.

– Damn it!

– Title the minutes as ordinary.

– This is not an ordinary meeting, it's extraordinary.

– No.

– This meeting is ordinary! When it's extraordinary it's simpler.

Today we were going to meet simply to talk about the... The document we are going to present to the Public Registry. Isn't that so? Comrades I'm asking you all, is this the case or not? Participate comrades! I won't talk like a crazy person, this is not how things work. I guess we are associations and organizations.

We must be more united every day.

– Last time it was ordinary, with a lot of people. As I was commenting with the sir. Today it's small. It's extraordinary.

– Write extraordinary then.

– At extraordinary meetings only one topic is addressed.

– I have a pen.

– Yes

– The presidents should leave their cell numbers for us to get in touch in case of an emergency.

– *In the heart of Mount San Francisco, In the river, wind and snow. There you find the strong and fighting men of today. Rinconada, land of miners. Where contractors, pallaqueras and merchants work. Where I spend my life next to them. Happy day Rinconada. Thank you.*

– You are going to follow my steps.

– Ok.

– Almighty God. Brothers tonight I want you to understand me very well. When I say to repeat the prayer you are going to repeat it. Meaning you are going to follow my steps. The first six leaves. This is your job. This is the *Santa Tierra Pachamama*, the *Awichita* who's always with us. This is your health and this is protection, so nothing bad happens to you here in this mining center. My Lord.

– My Lord.

– Holy God. Almighty God.

– Holy God. Almighty God.

– On this night. Holy night. I ask you. To my name.

– On this night. Holy night. I ask you. To my name.

– On this night. Holy night...

...Protect me... Bless me... Almighty God.

...Bless me... Almighty God.

– Holy Santa Tierra... Holy Pachamama... I ask you. ...On this night... and I offer... with affection... with humility... ...with love... my offering. Thank you... Tierra Santa. Amen. Brother ask for what you want so that you can... Set your table.

– Mentally?

– You can speak out loud or say it mentally.

My God, Holy God, Almighty God. Blessed Lord in your name illuminate him. Jesus, blessed God, blessed God, Lord, Holy God, Holy God, God Almighty, Lord... Give him strength so that he may have success in his work at the mine. Illuminate him blessed God. *Santa Tierra* give him strength, give him power. Protect him of all danger, of all the envious people, selfish people, spiteful people. So that he may have success at work, for the well-being of his family. Give him strength blessed *Santa Tierra*, Holy *Pachamama* in your name cleanses him. I present at this moment your son, on this holy night with this holy mass. So that he may succeed in all aspects of his work during this year 2015. Amen. Do this three times.

It won't take much longer. We are almost finished.

– Thank you Lord Jesus for your glorious resurrection. Make it so that every one of us, leaves behind our tomb of sin, and lives as if resurrected among others.

*Our Father, Who art in heaven; Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.*

– Long live this cross of May!

– Long live!

– Long live the *alferados* (religious patron)



of this year 2015!

– Long live!

– Long live the new *alferados* for the year 2016!

– Long live!

– We congratulate dear brothers and sisters with a loud applause the... the new *alferados*, the main *alferado*, the number one *alferado*, let's hear it!

Take your hats off madams, or your face will be covered and Jesus won't see you.

– Padre Martin.

*My life is ending,  
I will never look for you.  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sadness,  
like you killed my poor heart.  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sad...  
like you killed my poor heart.  
With a glass of beer...  
I would not have this sadness.  
For you my Love!  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sadness,  
like you killed my poor heart.  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sadness,  
like you killed my poor heart.*

– People of La Rinconada!  
Get up, get up!

**TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH  
AN INTERVIEW WITH  
SALOMÉ LAMAS**  
**The cinema of the emerging  
Portuguese director is born out  
of the tension between thinking  
and doing, looking and sharing  
by Jorge Mourinha**

It's one thing to head to the top of the world to shoot at the highest-altitude human settlement, another entirely different to see the result of that shoot projected on a screen. But if the screen is the giant-sized IMAX at Berlin's Sony Center, the experience may be closer than you'd think. Salomé Lamas may look small next to either the top of the world or the IMAX screen, but the Portuguese director, only 29, is a tough cookie behind her apparently fragile and youthful looks, as can be seen from *Eldorado XXI*, the feature film she shot in the Peruvian mining town of La Rinconada, 5,500 meters high in the Andes—a "nightmarish shoot" by her own admission.

(And not the first one. While shooting in Transnistria for another project, the KGB arrested and interrogated her and her crew.)

*Eldorado XXI*, an immersive nonfiction essay bridging Werner Herzog's postcards from the edge of human resilience and exploration and Wang Bing's minimalist observations of struggling communities, was one of the high points of a particularly strong lineup in this year's Berlinale Forum, and is now heading to New York's New Directors/New Films. It's the second feature-length work for Lamas after 2012's *Terra de Ninguém* (No Man's Land), an equally fascinating deconstruction of memory and history, reality and fiction, through the direct-to-camera narrative of a Portuguese special forces soldier turned mercenary for hire.

A film graduate with a masters in art from Amsterdam and currently a PhD candidate in film studies, as well as a former DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm and Rockefeller fellow, Lamas has also a number of short films and video installations and performances under her belt. And while theory underlies all of her work in any format, she always wears it lightly and never forgets there's an audience in front of her that may not be familiar with it.

Her cinema is born out of the tension between thinking and doing, looking and sharing. *Eldorado XXI* widens the scope of that dichotomy, by engaging with the neo-feudal, post-apocalyptic landscapes of La Rinconada's mining facilities and the impoverished communities that survive there as best they can, in a multi-layered exploration of history, politics, society and capitalism

that corresponds to Lucrecia Martel's definition of "political cinema" as raising questions and doubts rather than offering cut-and-dried solutions.

Lamas spoke at the Lisbon offices of production company O Som e a Fúria, in between arriving from France where she supervised *Eldorado XXI*'s post-production, and leaving for Berlin for her film's world premiere. Parts of this interview were first published in and appear courtesy of Público.

**NOTEBOOK** *Eldorado XXI* premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival's Forum. Is that something you looked forward to?

**SALOMÉ LAMAS** We did discuss with the producers where we would pitch the film. Within the large window that film festivals are, the Forum is open to experimental work and treats it accordingly. It's a carefully curated section, with a rigor that transcends the mere sidebar within a big festival, and that makes me very comfortable.

The Forum was the right place for the way the film turned out, within a family of filmmakers that makes sense to me.

**N** The Forum makes a point of looking beyond cinema, into the connections with modern visual and multimedia arts. That's something you do as well, switching between installation work and more traditional film.

How do you decide what is the correct form for each project?

**SL** In the specific case of *Eldorado XXI*, the original idea was to make a kind of hybrid documentary, with a loose script and characters. But then it moved in other directions. The long shot at the beginning of the film happened because I was thinking of doing a parallel museum piece, but when I came back from La Rinconada I realized that particular shot could very well be a part of the film. From that moment on, I wouldn't use it in a museum piece so as not to cannibalize my work, and that led the film into a more radical, less classical side.

That was due in part to my own way of structuring and approaching the picture, but also because we shot in such a difficult place. It was a really troublesome shoot, nightmarish almost.

But back to your question, my studies were originally in cinema and it was only later I did my masters in art, so the installations and gallery work are a more recent development. Probably, though, everything I've ever done has always had that possibility to be presented in either of those venues. Some projects demand a more consistent financing

and lead to different results. It's different to go to La Rinconada on your own than to go to La Rinconada with a team after two years waiting for the funding to come.

I'm always doing many different projects at the same time. This year I'll spend a month in the jungles of Borneo, and I have another project I want to shoot in the Middle East, between Cairo, Dubai and Beyrouth. Smaller projects that I fund in other ways, but that are necessary to me. Not just for artistic reasons but also so I can have a life like everybody else and a job like everyone else. It's really a way to live your daily life.

**N** Shooting in the Peruvian Andes is a weird way to live your daily life...

**SL** But there is a practical side to it. I don't have a romantic vision of filmmaking, I find creativity and talent meaningless words. I'm closer to being a cobbler, working on a craft you have to master in order to improve. It's all about experiences, and storing experiences, and that makes you look differently at everything. I find it utterly all about experiences, and storing experiences, and that makes you look differently at everything. I find it utterly condemnable that some directors shoot abroad in a very gratuitous way: there's not enough drama in the Northern Hemisphere or in the place they live in, so they go elsewhere in the world to look for it. Those films are very easy to spot, they're much closer to the militant, campaigning documentary, which doesn't really stimulate me as a viewer. I find lots of ethical problems in them.

So, on one hand, it's all about managing your daily life, and on the other it's about that storing of experiences and your ability to live anywhere, about understanding how other places you can live in interfere with you and you with them. That's where most of the ideas probably present in all my work come from. The sense of waiting, of finding something surprising to me that I may find interesting to record; of me being an alien in a different reality, and how the friction that creates can generate a project, a desire to bring to the forefront realities unknown or forgotten.

**N** But a craftsman usually sits at his table, while you travel around the world...

**SL** That's related to a certain mental confusion, and to my sense of hyper-activity [laughs]. I like paradoxes, I like conflict, though I don't deal at all well with conflict. I don't like to shoot, so I put myself in situations I can't later run away from. Sometimes you need to have some luck for it to work out fine; you have to be on the lookout for some-

thing, wait for it to happen, whether premeditated or unexpected. But it's also connected with the inability to separate life from work, and with my need to do several projects at the same time. I may be shooting something in a particular corner of the world and then I come across something that links to something else, so I make a note and save it for a future project. You can't just turn off your brain and say, I'm compartmentalizing this. Everything happens constantly at the same time.

**N** Do you find people have a different perception of your work depending on where they come across it first, in the theatre or in the museum?

**SL** I don't think so, but it is difficult for me to say because I'm the maker. That's something that comes more from critics, or curators, or even the institutions... It's never something I'm worried about. Also, when you are trying to invoke a lineage, that means you're not really interested in the work but in something else. I'm attracted by a series of things related to the ends of the earth, exiled places, margins; I'm always seeking the limits of the forms themselves, whether of non-fiction cinema or of presentation, showing the same work in different contexts. I don't think that theoretical reflection is what gets the films going, though. That comes from a more... kamikaze side of me, slightly irresponsible, though actually very pragmatic. I'm very aware of the risks I'm taking, which are always measured even when I'm pushing physical or geographical limits.

**N** Why do you feel attracted toward those limits?

**SL** I think initially out of curiosity towards people, towards all that's around me, and also with the idea of how to translate reality into a filmic language.

**N** Your work invites the audience to experience the journey with you, and not just respond passively.

**SL** Oh, absolutely, I don't like comfortable people [laughs]. I'm interested in how the perception of the audience changes. I like to push the limits of the audience, whether of appreciation or of understanding. I never liked going to a museum and seeing interactive pieces because they're usually accompanied by instructions on how to interact. I'm more interested in active viewers, and leave others to judge and reflect. Essentially, I ask questions, and questions bigger than myself, and bigger than the audience. There's also

something else: a question always has an answer. However, that answer isn't always in the film, or if it is it's hidden in a little box, and it's up to the audience to find it.

**N** In shooting in La Rinconada, I'm reminded of Werner Herzog. But his work has a more spontaneous, personal side, while yours is more distanced, very thought through.

**SL** I'd love to meet Herzog! But I don't know what his spectrum of enthusiasm is. It probably bleeds into the films. I tend to play with the entire spectrum of what enthusiasm or emotion is, but because of the way I tend to look at things, the films look like they're very controlled. That's another paradox. I'm always looking to let go of control, but I need to have a measure of control. I don't know if both things can coexist, but I feel they do anyway... Just because you don't see me jumping for joy, it doesn't mean I don't feel it, I just don't show it outwardly...

**N** You keep saying you don't like shooting. Do you take more pleasure in editing?

**SL** I suppose so. Or maybe that's the way I found to live in the world [laughs]. I'm always moved by the pleasure of watching, not so much by sharing my way of watching. I take enormous pleasure in watching, but that's never enough. That's why you're always looking for extremes, because it's never enough to just film reality.

**N** You make it sound like an addiction...

**SL** Yes, maybe. But that's also got to do with obsession. You're always trying to go further while knowing full well you'll never go far enough. So it's that thing of the journey rather than the destination being the thing. What matters is that I went to La Rinconada and spent time with those people. And that shapes the film, because the end result is always unpredictable. Beforehand, all I can say is, I'm going to go there and bring a film back. Now the film I bring back can be A, or B, or C...

**N** ...but you don't really know until you come back.

**SL** Precisely. Because very often I haven't even scouted locations, I just get there and set up the camera and shoot in the moment, though that wasn't the case in *Eldorado XXI*.

**N** Do you recognize a through line that connects all your films? Like a worldview of your own?

**SL** More than I used to, because I'm constantly asked to inscribe myself in a circle or in a world. Also, I can look at my work in other ways after doing Q&A sessions with audiences, or reading or talking with other people after the film is done. I have a lot of fun developing a project on paper, trying to imagine all the possible outcomes of a reality I don't fully know, and all I can do with it. It's a theoretical construct. Then I go out and shoot, knowing full well I'm playing with expectations, not all of which will come true. There's a more emotive, intuitive side to it; you need to react because you don't always have time to think. You need to be there in the moment, aware. Then, when I return home with the material, I can certainly go back to the theory, but that can be dangerous, because theories don't always work in practice. For the editing to work, I find I need to carry over that intuition, that emotional side from the shoot, while needing a structure. You have to accommodate the film so it becomes a film but then, once it's finished and you're free of it, it becomes something else, it's no longer yours.

Also, working with the right people can enrich the film vastly. They will open doors for you and allow you to explore territories you'd be reluctant to explore on your own. A dialogue may allow you to make a suggestion and somebody else will take it to the next level and you'll be thankful they did—that happened in *Eldorado XXI* with the sound post by Miguel Martins and the amazing cinematography by Luis Arteaga. You don't always have to have the most brilliant technicians in the world, you just need the right people to understand what you're doing as a person. When the film is done, and it starts being seen and read by the world, then you can go back to the theory, and start thinking how to speak about the film, how to put on paper what happened by impulse. This is one reason why I have a hard time communicating with people during a shoot...

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### **ELDORADO XXI** by Peter Galison

Salomé Lamas's *Eldorado XXI* is grounded as only an hour-long shot of men entering and exiting from a gold mine can be. In a kind of march of the dead, miners from the community of La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, in the Peruvian Andes, file by the camera, their equipment and occasional helmets dangling, night falling, the procession almost wordless as they trudge past the rocky slope. Meanwhile, audio fragments of life here in

this high-altitude town floats by, radio announcements, stories of miners and cooks, practical matters and voiced anxieties about the magical powers of the mountain. Then the shots go even higher into the bleakest of snow-blown mountainsides, people hitting rocks with trowels, trying to break out a bit of mineral subsistence wealth from this vast mound of slag.

Just when the viewer thinks this is a story of eternal mining, of the most primitive kind of barely industrial extraction, there is an extraordinary scene of women in a room suffused in an orange light coming through the corrugated plastic walls. These miners start talking about eking out their livelihoods, their dependence on the pain-killing coca, and then suddenly they are talking politics, the politics of their government, of who comes from where, of Chile and Japan, of legitimate and illegitimate leadership. Like everything in this extraordinary film, it is absolutely in the here and now, and everywhere else at the same time. It is stuck deliberately in the literal, visceral lives of almost destitute, hard-scrabble lives and also constantly, in images, in testimony and in allusion, about our fragility in a world we barely scrape.

*Eldorado XXI* is an extraordinary film set in an almost unimaginably hard place, in the earth itself, 15,000 feet above sea level. It is a privilege to see something of this world, so carefully and empathetically brought to the screen.

### **UNITS OF MEASUREMENT: ELDORADO XXI** by James Lattimer

What can five shots hold? Two are enough to capture a landscape, an expanse of rock, ice, cloud, and snow so vast it feels like the frame can hardly contain it, like the lake, mountains, and sky stretch on forever. Everything appears frozen, immobile, devoid of life, it's only when a bird flies overhead and the wind moves through the blackened reeds that you can even tell it's not a photograph. There's no sign of where the voice might be coming from, it can only have emerged from beneath the tundra, carried and amplified by the wind. It sings of a sorrow as immeasurable as the land, of endurance, of endless exertion and the endless drinking needed to assuage it, of a life spent between Lunar de Oro, La Rinconada, and *pallaquear*.

One more shot and something else emerges from the landscape, although it carries the same grey and white color. At first glance, this could be a natural formation, some rare mineral outcrop spilling out of the side of the mountain, a geological structure of countless

proliferating rectangles. A cut follows and with it certainty, the rectangles are iron huts and the outcrop is a city, albeit one as silent and still as the expanse it nestles within. One final cut and the city fills the frame, but this is a city unlike any other. No light, no color, no movement, nothing that stands out, nothing to catch your eye. A place of pure function, without ornament, a place extracted from the elements, not designed. Five shots to hold a landscape and a city and blanket both in misery. What can one shot hold? It can track the changes in light that occur over 57 minutes. It's dusk at the beginning and you can still see the path, a strip of mud that zigzags down the mountain, disappearing from time to time behind the mounds of sandbags and trash that form its makeshift borders, topped off with a sprinkling of snow. For a while, there's light enough to make out the yellow and orange of the hard hats, the patterns that adorn bags and clothing alike, the white reflective strips on the black uniforms. But darkness falls quickly and soon only torches light the way, marking the course of the now-invisible path, alighting on the rubble and detritus encased in the muddy, icy ground, picking out babies strapped to their mothers, sacks resting on shoulders, bent backs swaddled in thick blankets. Although the radio announcer says it's 6:21 a.m., it's getting darker by the minute, day and night make little difference here and time is a relative concept. These 57 minutes could be any 57 minutes, a unit of measurement as perfectly unwieldy as the place it's measuring.

The announcer is one voice among many, one voice amid the flurries of call-ins, interviews, and news reports, election ads, music, and extended first-person testimonies. People talk of arriving with neither money nor experience, of learning to extract gold without guidance, of selfishness, isolation, and hardship. Shootings in the street, desperate suicides, dynamite attacks, robberies; the voice that sang the opening song wasn't beneath the tundra, it was here. Stories pass through the mind and bodies pass in front of the camera, and the natural impulse is to attach one to the other. But while the flow of stories sometimes slows, the stream of bodies is ceaseless; for every body you manage to affix a story to, there are ten left without one. Things are not neat and not everyone gets their say; for each story that can be told, there are scores more that cannot.

When talk turns to prospects, to aspiration, to hierarchies, each person passing the camera becomes a fleeting embodiment of the only two possible directions. Some start from nothing and ascend, taking the road that leaves behind the individual to reach the

association, a place within the Corporation located at the summit. It's a seductive trajectory, which is why the stream of bodies never abates. But few reach the top; even while a wife may rise, a husband can still fall. It's not just that it's hard to get your footing, a place as volatile as this can take your feet out from under you. This image is thus a constant reminder, that any path that leads up must also lead down.

By the time the mountainside is in total darkness, there's nothing to stop sound from overriding space. When the wind begins to howl, it's as if the scene has moved further up the mountain, where the throngs of people must cling on to the rock for dear life. When the noise of dripping water comes to the fore and everything starts to echo, it's as if the people no longer swarm up and down the mountain but rather inside it, passing through the vast cavern where *La Bella Durmiente*, the *Awichita* dwells, two names of many for the sacred keeper of La Rinconada's treasure. If it weren't so dark, you could see the offerings littering the ground: coca leaves, fruit, liquor, human hearts ripped from bodies still living; the greater your offering, the greater the protection. But this is just one more relationship of scale in a place that is full of them, so many, in fact, you could overlook the one simplest and most shocking. For light, time, subject or location may change, but whatever happens, there's no breaking the chain. One shot to hold the fuel that powers the mountain, a stream of bodies that never ends.

What is left to do when the counting is done? Mental images need fleshing out, relationships need adjustment, and first assumptions need to be overturned. After all the endless climbing, only a vehicle can take you to the highest plateau. Up here, the parts are familiar but their arrangement different. There are the same iron huts from the city below, but here they form clusters, not one conjoined mass. The time it takes for the thunder to cross the valley proves the landscape is as vast as ever, but there's no snow on the ground; beyond the piles of debris, there are even tufts of grass. When the workers take to the slopes to sift through the scree, it's the same story. You've seen the helmets and been told the names of the tools, but this is the first time you've seen them put to use. You've heard the sound of the wind whipping the mountain, but you've never seen how easily it could pull you off the edge.

The women chewing coca leaves do indeed mention *Awichita*, but also all the other, more prosaic things the leaves protect from, whether dizziness, hunger, or fatigue. Their chatter reveals that the true gods of the mountain are just as earthbound, if still

impossibly far away, deities named Fujimora, Ollanta, or García with temples in distant Lima. Just like in the election ads, it's all about promises, not how they're delivered. When an offering is made on the mountainside, reality is less spectacular than the imagination, a modest nighttime ceremony held on a pile of trash, with torches and a small fire for atmosphere. There's something far more ceremonial about how the mysterious figures in masks and hats dance in frenzy around the bonfire, although it's never clear what it is they're invoking: suffusion with divine energy or release from infernal work. It's no coincidence that the masks arrive when perspectives are already shifting: when the little boy nervously places the mask over his face as asked, it's as much about changing what things look like as how they're actually seen.

When the camera returns to the city, it no longer feels like the place seen at the start. Whether down at street level or viewed from above, there is now light, color, and movement, a place of noise, activity, life. Both the steep, narrow streets and the many bodies thronging through them recall the pathway up the mountain, although now there are more than two directions to choose from. Girls veer off to the side, a couple wander down the hill together, a man stops to urinate in the street before dragging his inebriated friend with him up the road. It didn't look like there was any space for celebrations, yet the square before the church can hold music stages, marquee swathed in yellow bunting, and a long, curving line of plastic chairs, to say nothing of the crowds of people. It's Easter and the sky is blue, the *alferados* have been generous, the costumes and icons are lined with gold. It's only when the dancing gets going that thoughts return to sorrow, which is now something to be fought, not to be measured: "In a glass of beer, I will kill this sadness." It looks like a happy ending but this is not the end, there's still one final glimpse of the landscape to remind you it's as implacable as always. You must take the ice-rimmed passage to reach the cavern in your mind.

What is the sum of three parts? The experience of a place and the maxims used to document it: there are things you can quantify and others you cannot; only a complex structure can do justice to a complex subject; how you see a place at the beginning is never how you see it in the end.

**ON SALOMÉLAMAS'S  
ELDORADO XXI (2016)  
by Lawrence Weschler**

At 5,100 meters (16,700 feet), the sprawling Andean goldmining encampment at La

Rinconada, in the southeastern corner of Peru, just shy of the Bolivian border, is quite simply the highest-elevation permanent human settlement in the world, encompassing a population of close to 30,000 souls, the vast majority of them desperately poor. The principal enterprise there is overseen by the Corporación Ananea, but, as William Finnegan pointed out in a recent piece in the *New Yorker* ("Tears of the Sun: The Gold Rush at the Top of the World," April 20, 2015), "Nearly all the mines and miners there are 'informal,' a term that critics consider a euphemism for illegal. [Others] prefer the term 'artisanal.'" The mines, whatever you call them, are small, numerous, unregulated, and, as a rule, grossly unsafe. Most don't pay salaries, let alone benefits, but run on an ancient labor system called *cachorro*. This system is usually described as 30 days of unpaid work followed by a single frantic day in which workers get to keep whatever gold they can haul out for themselves."

Not surprising, then, that such an extreme locale might draw the attention of the precociously accomplished young Portuguese filmmaker Salomé Lamas (still in her twenties though already the veteran of cinematic projects ranging from the Azores to the Netherlands to Maldovan Transnistria and focusing on everything from the confessions of former French Foreign Legionnaires and Portuguese colonial mercenaries to the midnight exertions of North Sea fishermen and the borderland perambulations of Post-Soviet nowhere-men)—but aye, the terrible splendors, by turns devastating and grace-flecked, that she has managed to haul back from her time up there.

Lamas's *Eldorado XXI* launches out with a series of sublimely still images, mountain lakes and sheerscapes, like nothing so much as the magisterial photographs of Ansel Adams, except that in this instance black and white are the actual colors and, wait, those scraggly grasstufts over there in the corner turn out to be shivering in the wind, a bird suddenly floats by, and all that scabbly scree isn't a mountain face at all but rather an entire town, barely clinging to the cliff-face.

Shortly after the credits, the biggest marvel of all: another long take (long and then longer and then longer still)—one is put in mind of those amazing careering single-takes at the outsets of Scorsese's movies or the endlessly roving vantage in Sokurov's *Russian Ark*, except that in this instance (an audacious Copernican flip!) the camera doesn't move at all, peering down instead from on high as Lamas holds her unblinking gaze for close to an hour, while dozens and then hundreds (and presently thousands?) of miners, groaning under

the weight of their burdens, trudge by in squeezed files, some heading up and others down the narrow pitched mountain path, the scene starting out in thin crepuscule but persisting into pitch black (by the end all we see are the criss-crossing beams of the workers' hardhat headlamps), the soundtrack consisting of the crunch of their boots played off against stray wisps of audio testimony and wafting passages of radio banter. A human antfile. A Dantesque Escherscape: Möbian Sisyphi.

An hour in, Lamas finally blinks, and what follows is a veritable avalanche of sense impressions, one haunting and haunted setpiece after the next. Tin shacks scattered about a high desert plateau. The wind. Snug inside one of those shacks, a huddle of weathered women, bundled against the cold, sifting and sorting coca leaves, stuffing the occasional wad into their cheeks as they trade gossip and often surprisingly sophisticated political analyses (one of the women weaves in the insights of the economist Hernando de Soto) laced between considerations as to the relative beneficences of coca chew and tobacco toke. A lone truck lumbering up a stark barren switchback. In the distance, silhouetted against a precipice of scree, a few individuals braving the blowing snow, hunched deep, scrabbling, clanking, chipping at the rocks, leaning in, tossing most of the shards aside, stuffing the occasional promising chunk into ever more bulging bags and then heaving their tentative hordes back up the crumbling screeface. (It occurs to us that in much the way they are sifting for ore, Lamas is panning for souls, the main difference between them being the veritable bonanza of her takings compared with the pathetic paucity of theirs.)

Later on: an organizing meeting on an exposed windswept plateau. And then a different lone truck comes wending down the steep mountain track, its back filled with miners already celebrating the end of their grueling day: a bit after that, we meet up with the same guys once again, though now they are grotesquely masked and prodigiously caped, dancing up a storm around a spitting bonfire: Goya incongruously set to the frantic pulse of the latest in electropop.

Elsewhere, earnest rituals imploring the protection of various patron saints. Or nighttime alleys, with drunks tumbling out of shanty bars. Or a little boy scrunched alone in his little shed, gazing intent, palming of all things a remote control unit (could it be that he is playing video games?), after which we get to see him one last time as he simply stares out at us, his gaze mute, shy, inheld, penetrating, perfect: *and then the thing he goes and does!*

The hush, in short, of witness. Toward the end of it all, Lamas's visit opens out onto a daytime procession of some sort, a religious festival, and amidst the clanging and the toots, the banging and the shouts, the shuffle and gavotte, the sway and dip, the soar and smiles—two hours in and somehow, thanks to Lamas's intrepid wizardry, the feeling rises and we know, we just *know* that we have *been someplace!*

Someplace we will in fact likely never go, though on second thought, as we emerge from the trance in which Lamas has had us entrapped all this time, and gaze, say, down upon the rings on our fingers or the baubles hanging from our ears or necks, a place whose sordid travails actually implicate us all, and profoundly so. *And what are we to make of that?*

Text originally published in *Artenol* magazine, Summer 2016; published by Art Healing Ministry, New York.

## THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD (2016)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Three-channel HD video installation, 2:39, color, three-channels mono sound, 90 min. sync in a loop, Peru – Portugal – Switzerland – France

### CREDITS

*The Burial of the Dead* is an original video installation produced in the framework of the Biennial of Moving Images 2016 (BIM), Switzerland.

The project is coproduced by Centre d'Art Contemporain de Genève with the support of Fonds d'art contemporain de la Ville de Genève (FMAC), Fonds d'art contemporain du Canton de Genève (FCAC), Faena Art, In Between Art Film, and HEAD.

The project is produced with materials collected in April 2015 for the shooting of the feature film *Eldorado XXI* (2016), produced by O Som e a Fúria and Shellac Sud with the support of ICA – Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual, CNC – Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International – Institut Français (CNC), EURIMAGES – Council of Europe, and the additional support of FIDLab2013 FID Marseille, The Rockefeller

Foundation – Bellagio Center, Berliner Kuenstlerprogramm des DAAD, The MacDowell Colony, Bogliasco Foundation, and Yaddo.

### Shooting of *Eldorado XXI* (2016) April 2015

(Credits for other production stages of *Eldorado XXI* excluded)  
Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas  
Producers: Luis Urbano and Sandro Aguilar  
Coproducer: Thomas Ordonneau  
Associate producer: Maxim Holland  
Cinematography: Luis Armando Arteaga  
Sound: Bruno Moreira  
Production director: Raquel da Silva  
Production manager: Lali Madueno  
Fixer: Niche Neceforo, Leon Quispe Huaranca  
Drivers: Edwin & Nercy  
Catering: Juan Quispe  
Sound and image equipment: Screen Miguel Nabinho  
Insurance: Gras Savoye, Riskmedia

### Portugal, O Som e a Fúria

Production: Joaquim Carvalho, Cristina Almeida, Fabienne Martinot, Sofia Bénard  
Accountants: Aline Alves, Amadeu Dores

### France, Shellac Sud

Coordination of production: Francine Cadet  
Assistant: Marion Schreiber  
Administration of production: Cyrille de Laleu  
Assistant: Elodie Latriglia

### Peru, Tambo Films

Coordination of production: Celine Wald  
Accountant: César Egoavil

### Additional credits for *The Burial of the Dead* (2016)

Editing: Salomé Lamas  
Assistant editing: Rita Quelhas  
Intern: Henrique Real  
Editing studio: Lamaland  
Sound concept and design: Miguel Martins  
Sound mix: Miguel Martins  
Sound studio: Sunflag, Lisbon  
Color grading: Caique De Souza  
Laboratory: Filmfactory, Paris  
Music: João Lobo and Norberto Lobo  
Exhibition design: Fernando Brizio  
Translations: Gloria Dominguez

## Switzerland, Centre d'Art Contemporain de Genève

Director: Andrea Bellini  
Head of exhibitions and registrar: Maxime Lassagne  
Head of communication and special projects: Natalie Esteve  
Assistant to the director and external relations: Priscilla Gonzalez  
Administration: Régine Gorgerat  
Technical coordination: Benoît Delaunay  
Education department: Frédéric Stordeur

### Biennial of Moving Images (BIM)

Artistic direction: Andrea Bellini  
Curators: Cecilia Alemani, Caroline Bourgeois, Elvira Dyangani Ose

## HORIZON NOZIROH (2017)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Two-channel HD video installation, 16:9, black and white, stereo sound, 8 min. sync in a loop, Denmark – Portugal – Brazil – Germany

### CREDITS

*Horizon noziroh* is produced by Salomé Lamas and Gregório Graziosi  
Commissioned by CPH:LAB by Tine Fischer and Patricia Drati with the economic support of the Danish Film Institute  
Sound design: Apeles

### Part 1

Directed by: Gregorio Graziosi  
Monument: Duque de Caxias by Victor Brecheret  
Cinematography: André S. Brandão  
Editing: José Menezes  
Image post-production: João Moreira  
Location scout and credits design: Bruno Alfano

### Part 2

Directed by: Salomé Lamas  
In collaboration with: Christoph Both-Asmus  
With: Christoph Both-Asmus  
Cinematography: Jorge Piquer-Rodriguez  
Focus puller: Salomé Lamas  
Art direction: Chika Takabayashi  
Direction of production: Michel Balagué  
Production assistant: Unai Rosende

Intern: Aída Suarez  
 Editing: Salomé Lamas  
 Image postproduction: Paulo Américo (Bikini)  
 Credits design: Bruno Alfano  
 Produced with materials collected during the production of the film *Extinction* (2017) by Salomé Lamas  
 Production: O Som e a Fúria  
 In coproduction with: Mengamuk Films

## EXTINÇÃO (EXTINCTION) (2017)

In production

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

HD video, 16:9, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 70 min., Germany – Portugal

### CREDITS

Written and directed by: Salomé Lamas  
 Production: O Som e a Fúria  
 Producers: Luís Urbano, Sandro Aguiar  
 Co-Producer: Michel Balagué  
 Assistant director: Stanislav Danylyshyn  
 Cinematography: Jorge Piquer Rodriguez  
 Sound: Salomé Lamas, Stanislav Danylyshyn  
 Editing: Francisco Moreira, Telmo Churro  
 Assistant editing: Rita Quelhas  
 Intern: Maria Inês Gonçalves  
 Music: Andreia Pinto Correia  
 Production director: Iulia Puica, Stanislav Danylyshyn  
 Production Manager: Alexandru Cuciu  
 Assistant production: Julliette Rigaleau  
 With: Kolja Kravchenko, Sergiu Finite, Valentin Chenkov, Victor Drumi, Galina Lazarencu Popescu, Ninela Caranfil, Christoph Both-Asmus, Natasha Veleanik, Alexandr Veleanik, Ivan Shvet, Paraskovia Shvet, Anatolii Shvet, Anna Chesnok, Danila Babenko, Viktor Shvet, Oksana  
 Translations: Anna Avramenko, Alina Lunina  
 Sound and Image equipment: Screen Miguel Nabinho  
 Editing studio: O Som e a Fúria  
 Support: Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, ICA – Instituto do Cinema e do Audiovisual  
 Development support: The Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Bogliasco Foundation, Yaddo, Agora Works in Progress 2016, Thessaloniki International Film Festival

### DIRECTOR'S INTENTIONS NOTE

The end of the Cold War did not produce a thaw throughout the continent. A peculiarity of today's Europe is the variety of "frozen conflicts" it contains.

Shot in Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, and Transnistria, with additional scenes in Germany, the film departs from Transnistria, where it appears that several eras coexist simultaneously but time doesn't stand still, which might be a case study in a much wider portrait. Dystopia, utopia's *doppelgänger*, is not a way to enunciate what will come, but more of a logical and hidden revelation of the present. Now, it seems Moscow is moving from sticks to carrots in its attempt to persuade Moldova to rethink an upcoming EU Association Agreement.

If on one hand, the memory of the Holocaust was influenced by the evolution of the Cold War in the Western part of Europe, and if years after the fall of the Berlin Wall Europe was leaving the Cold War or a long-war period, then any consideration related to memory must answer this simple question: Why are the East and the West today bursting with spectral figures?

### DIALOGUE LIST (selection)

#### I

*I don't have an easy relationship with borders. They frighten me and unnerve me. I have been searched, prodded, delayed, again and again, for having the temerity to cross a few meters of land. Borders are bureaucratic fault lines, imperious and unfriendly. Their existence is routinely critiqued by academic geographers, who cast them as hostile acts of exclusion. And yet where, in a borderless world, could we escape to? Where would be worth going?*

What is your name?  
 – Nikolai (Kolja).  
 – How old are you?  
 – 24  
 – Married?  
 – Yes.  
 – Do you have Russian or Moldovan citizenship?  
 – I have our Transnistrian passport and a Russian one.  
 We are in Transnistria.  
 – What?  
 – This is not Moldova.  
 – You were born in Transnistria, weren't you?

– I was born on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1990, Rybnitsky district, Lenin village, Soviet Union.

– But now—what are you? If someone said that you are Moldovan, then you would counter, "No, I'm Transnistrian."

– Sure.

– Aren't they all the same people?

– You could also ask for a Moldovan passport.

– What for?

– Then you could easily travel in Europe.

– I don't need Europe and Europe doesn't need me.

– No!

– What's so good about Europe?

– Is Russia better?

– Why not?

– What if Transnistria wouldn't have joined with Moldova, but with Russia?

– I want.

– To connect with Russia. Yes?

Therefore, we would call it Russia?

– Does Transnistria need Russia?

– Probably it does.

– Why?

– Their military is implemented here, I don't know. Well, we have our own factories. But Russia helps with pensions. In fact, it is all owned by us.

– Would you like your kids to grow up in an unrecognized territory? Where they don't exist, or do they exist?

– It is not important if the country is recognized or not; they will grow up.

– What is important? I don't get it. Doesn't Russia have an army in Transnistria?

– Yes.

– What if they said: "Let's move this army to the Odessa region." Wouldn't the Transnistrian military under contract go, too?

– No. Why?

– Why not? Together with Russia?

Who granted Transnistria its independence? Russia didn't sign!

– Transnistria is an independent republic.

– Did Russia recognize this independence?

No one recognizes you. Not even Russia, isn't that strange? It is strange. Russia, also, doesn't want that. If Transnistria breaks away from Moldova, it would be a disadvantage. Having an army here is uniquely a strategic interest. Surely the people have understood that. They are controlling the territory.

– What matters is that we won't have another fucking war.

*The USSR ceases to exist. The red flag with the hammer and sickle is removed from the Kremlin.*

*The question concerning the borders of the territories of what was once the USSR is a potential time bomb.*

*Many of these borders, as in Africa, cut through lands inhabited by the same people.*

– I must see your permit.

– Permit? What kind of permit?

Tiraspol, Transnistria... "Tiraspol, Transnistria...?"

– Yes.

– We don't have it. But everything is okay. We were already checked by a KGB agent...

– I can't. I've just called to Gorvoset. They told me to refuse it without an official permit.

– Why?

– I've just called. She asked me, "Have you checked the permit for them to be in our territory?" I said, "No." So, I asked her, "What kind of permit?" Because I thought you had a permit from Chisinau (Moldova). She told me, that the authorization must be from the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic. From Tiraspol, or some other institution registered here. Otherwise we can't do it.

#### II

– How are you?

– It is all good until now. All okay, nobody has been bombed yet. We are afraid to go. The other day we went to Kulna (Ukraine), my brother lives there. I am Ukrainian, my homeland is there.

...To Stara Kulna and the bastards were at a crossroad... So they stopped us, four tall men with guns came out...

...Shit... "It will be our fucking end here Vanja!" ... They will shoot us... They will take the car and what will we do?

"What kind of passport do you have?" I said, "Ukrainian, and we are going back." We were on our way back to Voronkovo (Transnistria).

They checked it. It was really stressful for me.

He said, "Don't worry, grandmother, I can see that you're a native."

He asked, "Where are you going, through here or across the border?"

"Through the border, because we can't cross through the forests. There are a lot of trenches." But we have never tried to cross the border in any other place.

They say that there are a lot of trenches and panzers.

– Where?

– In Ukraine.

*The train is speeding into a luminous future. Lenin is at the controls. Suddenly it stops, the tracks come to an end.*

*Lenin calls on the people for additional Saturday work, tracks are laid, and the train moves on. Now Stalin is driving it, again the tracks end. Stalin orders half the conductors and passengers shot, and the rest he forces to lay new tracks. The train starts again.*

— After 73 years of bolshevism, people do not know what freedom of thought is. And so in its place they practice freedom of action, and there freedom of action means freedom to kill. And there's perestroika for you—the new thinking. How was Communism built? Communism was built by Stalin with the help of the *bezprizony*, the millions of orphaned, hungry, and barefoot children, who wandered along Russia's roads. They stole what they could, Stalin locked them up in boarding schools. There they learned hatred and when they grew up they were dressed in the uniforms of NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs). The NKVD held the nation in the grip of bes-tial fear, and there's Communism for you.

*Khrushchev replaces Stalin and when the tracks come to an end, he orders that the tracks over which the train has already passed be dismantled and laid down before the locomotive. Brezhnev takes Khrushchev's place. When the tracks end again, Brezhnev decides to pull down the window blinds and rock the cars in such a way that the passengers will think the train is still moving forward.*

— And thus we come to Epoch of the Three Funerals (Brezhnev's, Andropov's, Cherenko's), during which the passengers of the train do not have the illusion that they are going anywhere. But then, in April 1985, the train starts to move again. This time Gorbachev is the engineer, and the slogan GLASNOST-PERESTROIKA is painted on the locomotive.

*At the end of 1991, the telephones of Gorbachev's desk ring less and less frequently, as the center of the power has moved elsewhere. As of June 12<sup>th</sup>, the president of the Russian Federation is Boris Yeltsin, who gradually seizes the reins of government over the greater part of the territories of the Imperium.*

*On December 25<sup>th</sup>, Gorbachev resigns as president of the USSR.*

*The red flag with the hammer and sickle is removed from the Kremlin. The USSR ceases to exist.*

*The question concerning the borders of the territories of what was once the USSR is a potential time bomb. Many of these borders, as in Africa, cut through lands inhabited by the same people.*

— What is Stalin's chessboard? He resettled nations, mixed them up, displaced them, so that now one cannot move anyone without moving someone else, without doing them injury. There are currently 36 border conflicts, perhaps even more. And there's Stalin's chessboard for you, our greatest misfortune.

"Heaven only knows where we are going and heaven knows what is happening to us."  
—Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, 1869

**SOVEREIGNTY AND THE VICISSITUDES OF RECOGNITION: PEOPLEHOOD AND PERFORMANCE IN A DE FACTO STATE (excerpt)**  
by Michael Bobick

With its dissolution in 1991, the Soviet Union's fifteen constituent republics became independent states. Overnight, individuals and populations became subjects and citizens of new nation-states, some of which did not exist prior to Soviet rule. The demise of the Soviet Union was far from peaceful, and struggles over the territory and resources of its newly independent states took a violent turn. The April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1993 edition of Pravda states, "Since 1991 we have lost approximately 150,000 in wars on the territory of the former Soviet Union. This is eleven times greater than [were lost] in ten years of war in Afghanistan—such is the scale of the new tragedy" (Babilunga and Bomesko).

In Eurasia, the demise of Soviet power resulted in a number of "frozen" conflicts that birthed polities with varying degrees of international recognition: Transnistria in Moldova, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, and, more recently, the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics in Ukraine. These de facto states, some of which have existed for more than two decades, raise a host of questions related to sovereignty and political authority in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. De facto states bring up not only the issue of de jure versus de facto sovereignty, but of recognition more broadly.

What forms of recognition are required for statehood, both internally and externally?

In what ways do processes of recognition operate *vis-à-vis* constituents, state institutions, and other sovereign states?

**SUBSTITUTION, SATIRE, AND PERFORMANCE: EURASIA'S DE FACTO STATES**  
by Michael Bobick

Winston Churchill once remarked, "history is written by the victors." After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the West collectively basked in the victory of Western liberal democracy. In a stunning reversal of Karl Marx, who imagined that the antagonistic contradictions of history would end with communism firmly displacing capitalism, it was capitalism and its political armature, liberal democracy, that had proven to be the enduring feature of humanity, the point at which the Hegelian dialectic had reached its ultimate goal. One prominent American scholar, Francis Fukuyama, boastfully remarked in 1992 that:

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of government.

Viewed more than two decades later, this astounding statement offers a prescient vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Given the absence of any competing alternatives, even those who oppose liberal democracy have embraced it. Russia is but one example of what Dmitri Furman terms "imitation democracies." Given the absence of any competing alternatives, imitation democracies combine democratic constitutional norms with a reality of authoritarian rule. The form is democratic, the content—autocratic. It is through this uneasy embrace of democracy that one must view Russia: as a country that purports to be a liberal democracy in order to subvert and undermine is principled underpinnings.

Since the demise of the Soviet Union, we have assumed that Russia has been transitioning to a liberal democracy, albeit with its norms, standards, and practices. The West has its own liberal democracy, while Russia has its own sovereign democracy. This fusion of two contradictory concepts—sovereignty as the basis for government and states, and democracy as the system in which citizens participate equally in government—is Russia's unique contribution to an already contradictory era of late-liberalism.

This is not to say that Russian democracy is or is not abnormal, but rather that it is an exercise in substitution: Russia substitutes the principles of democracy with strategy. This strategy trumps all—it was not a single threat that forced Russia to intervene, but rather the example Ukrainian protesters offered to Russians. The Euromaidan movement's overthrow of a corrupt regime offered a blueprint for deposing Putin. This revolutionary fear echoes the thought of Vyacheslav von Plehve, Nicholas II's Interior Minister, who in 1904 remarked "We need a little victorious war to stem the tide of revolution." This led to defeat in the Russo-Japanese war and revolution in 1905. Unable or unwilling to wage a formal war with Ukraine, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Russia must use the tenets of democracy and human rights (intervention, self-determination, human rights protection) to wage war by other means. This following out of terms—a democracy carefully stage-managed, a people cultivated to further Russian goals, an occupation without formally occupying, a referendum without choice—is the most important takeaway from Putin's Crimean adventure.

**Victors and History**

Mere days after the close of a successful Winter Olympics in which the host nation won the most overall medals, Russia invaded and subsequently annexed the Crimea peninsula, a *de jure* Ukrainian territory. Though this Olympic victory is perhaps of a different scale than what Churchill imagined, this victory has proven to be much more symbolic than even Russia's two Chechen campaigns. Russia's reemergence on the geopolitical stage is both surprising and expected, given Russia's desire to overcome the perceived harm and humiliation it felt at the hands of the West during the 1990s. NATO's 2004 expansion in Eastern Europe was perhaps the most recent slight, though one must not underestimate the humiliation and privation felt by millions under Yeltsin. Russia's resurgence as a geopolitical superpower is embodied in the figure of Vladimir Putin, occasional Prime Minister and, it would appear, President for the foreseeable future. Putin is the first leader in generations that Russians can be proud of. Not since Lenin has Russia had a leader capable of embodying the collective voice of a people wronged and misunderstood by outsiders. Precise, charismatic rhetoric (and, it must be said, grammatically correct Russian) is a hallmark of Putin's tenure. This ability to articulate a national vision should not be underestimated. Putin's accuracy, fluency, and clarity are part of his appeal, as is well-documented use of criminal slang. As Prime Minister, Putin famously declared in a



press conference, “We will pursue terrorists everywhere... we will kill [moisten] them in the outhouse.”

Putin’s celebrity is not only political, but cultural. He has become larger than life, an emblematic figure who exudes the confidence of a resurgent nation. In 2002, a hitherto unknown Russian pop duo—“Singing Together”—had a surprise hit that shot to the top of the Russian charts. “My boyfriend is in trouble again, got in a fight got drunk on something nasty,” the duo sings. Fed up with their drunk, deadbeat men (a stereotype with a particular salience in post-Soviet Russia), they collectively declare that want someone ...like Putin.

One like Putin, full of strength,  
One like Putin, who won’t be a drunk,  
One like Putin, who wouldn’t hurt me,  
One like Putin, who won’t run away!

The music video shows Putin at his most confident: meeting with world leaders, fielding questions at a press conference, and, of course, taking down an opponent with his judo skills. In 2002, this video existed at the representative level as an intentionally ironic song. Over time, the core message of this song has increasingly taken on a literal meaning as Putin’s adept, quick annexation of Crimea reinforces his image as one who “won’t run away” from Russia’s enemies or forsake their own compatriots.

During Putin’s Address to the Federal Assembly in 2005, he called upon Russians to recall “Russia’s most recent history.”

Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our co-citizens and compatriots found themselves outside Russian territory.

(Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005, The Kremlin, Moscow)

Though much discussion focuses on first part of this quote, Putin’s comments on Russian compatriots in the “near abroad” are perhaps more relevant. Russians living outside of Russia constitute a category of people that are specifically protected under Russian law. The specific law, “On State Policy of the Russian Federation with respect to Compatriots Abroad,” defines compatriots as “people living in other states deriving from some ethnicity that has historically resided in Russia,” along with people who have “made

a free choice to be spiritually, culturally and legally linked to the Russian Federation.” This choice can include “an act of self-identification, reinforced by social or professional activity for the preservation of Russian language, the native languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation, the development of Russian culture abroad...” The fundamental indeterminacy within this concept is not unlike the “people” who are the constituent holders of sovereignty in the West.

### Geopolitical Leverage

A key element of Russian strategy is to use separatist regions (Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Crimea) as enclaves from which to threaten the states that should legally govern them. Russian actions in these territories offer no single plan or blueprint, but instead a variety of aid and forms of intervention. Some territories are recognized as independent states (South Ossetia or Abkhazia), some are merely supported (as in the case of Transnistria, in Moldova), while others are annexed directly (Crimea). In all of these contested territories, the Russian military directly or indirectly guarantees their security. By creating conflicts and subsequently keeping the peace, Russia occupies the roles of aggressor, provocateur, and peacekeeper yet does not formally occupy any territory. Through these separatist entities Russia indirectly controls the internationally recognized sovereign states in which they reside. This re-establishment of control and influence in Russia’s “near abroad” constitutes a new form of warfare. Russia, observing the experiences of US intervention in the post 9/11 era, have learned that wars may be short and cheap, but occupations are exponentially more costly. By threatening occupation, Russia creates a climate of mistrust and fear that controls the actions of the sovereign states and their polities. The Russian-born anthropologist Alexei Yurchak has referred to this as new post-Soviet, post-imperial political technology of “non-occupation.”

By creating territorial conflicts and supporting claims, Russia guarantees that these states will never be admitted to NATO or any other military alliance, given that no organization would accept a member with an ongoing territorial dispute with Russia, a nuclear power and Security Council member.

With these conflict zones, Russia cultivates (in the agricultural sense of the term) peoples for harvesting once they are ripe and needed to further their strategy. First, Russia gives individuals residing in these territories Russian citizenship. Yet these citizens, permanently residing outside their

purported homeland, are objects of affection kept at a distance (think of that awkward relative you are forced to see once a year). Though these citizens are supported materially through aid, subsidies, and cheap natural gas, as they are in Transnistria, their most important benefit is their role in the Russian geopolitical imagination. As such, intervention can occur on their behalf in accordance with Russian and international law.

These citizens of convenience speak Russian and readily consume Russian media. They have become acclimated with the “Russian” outlook on the world in which the principled, cherished concepts of the West—democracy, freedom, the rule of law—threaten their uniquely “Russian” way of life. To Russian compatriots as well as to the Russian state, these “foreign” ideas are implanted by covert Western agents through NGOs seeking to destabilize Russia. As the Russian media ceaselessly reiterates, once these ideas are put into practice, their true origins are unmasked—their practitioners become fascists, and these supposedly democratic protesters topple legally elected governments. As was the case in Georgia (the Rose Revolution), Ukraine (2008’s Orange Revolution and Maidan), and, to a lesser extent, Moldova (the 2009 Twitter revolution), the violence and disorder inherent in every revolution becomes a pretext for humanitarian by the perpetual, paternal bearer of peace and stability: Russia.

### Satire, Liberalism and Humanitarian Intervention

Recent events in Crimea have illustrated the degree to which the Russian state has created a new form of extraterritorial governance in its “near abroad.” This political technology of non-occupation allows for its military forces to be both anonymous yet recognized, to be polite (witness the selfies with soldiers posted on Instagram and other social networking websites) yet threatening (in particular, to Ukrainians and Ukrainian military forces). Until the Crimean referendum of March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014, and its almost immediate annexation by the Russian Federation, these well-equipped “self-defense” forces operated without any official, recognized existence, i.e., without insignia. They were an army without the formal backing of a state, without an individual or collective identity (the vast majority of these forces wore masks), and, at least initially, without an explicit goal (save for keeping the “peace”). They were not fighting terrorism, bringing sovereign democracy to Crimea, or formally invading a sovereign Ukrainian territory. They occupied without occupying. Simply through their

presence they projected enough force to keep lawful Ukrainian forces at bay and allow a hastily-organized referendum to occur under the careful tutelage of this armed, organized, and disciplined army that is in fact not, legally, an army.

Putin’s repeated disavowal of these soldiers as self-defense forces is a cynical joke, a satirization of international law, human rights, and humanitarian intervention. This comedic drama has real consequences, as the Russian populace has increasingly embraced Putin’s narrative script and potential Crimean scenarios proliferate across the former Soviet space (in Moldova, eastern Ukraine, the Baltic states, and in northern Kazakhstan). Through his defense of Russian compatriots, Putin both utilizes and satirizes humanitarian intervention and the “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P) political doctrine. The Responsibility to Protect authorizes intervention in the domestic affairs of another sovereign nation if the sovereign state cannot protect its own population from gross human rights violations such as ethnic cleansing and genocide. It was originally intended to authorize foreign intervention in situations like the Rwandan genocide, and to authorize international interventions to protect separatist minority populations seeking ethnic self-determination. But like all cherished political doctrines, its meaning has shifted in practice. The United States, in particular, uses humanitarian intervention to further its own immediate geopolitical interests. By masking attempts to re-establish the Soviet empire in a humanitarian cloak, Putin performs the same script as Western governments but with a noted cynicism, overtly claiming to use the same principled intervention while transparently revealing a previously unarticulated equivalence between American and Russian imperial ambitions. America does this, so why can’t Russia?

These “double-standards” are a staple of political rhetoric within these separatist states, given that they see the West as collectively denying their claims to self-determination. By distancing the effects of war from the term itself (similarly to its non-occupation as occupation), Russia has redefined peace as a continuation of war by other means. Humanitarian intervention becomes an instrument to intimidate and control neighboring states. Putin’s distortion of the rhetoric of international humanitarian action reveals the *realpolitik* at its core. When Russia occupies another country’s sovereign territory, organizes self-determination (i.e., a referendum) under an implicit military threat, annexes those seeking

self-determination, and uses humanitarian intervention and international law to justify its actions, satire has come full circle. Unable to offer any countermeasures to Russian aggression, the West is left to make its case against Russia using these same terms from an obvious position of sincerity, even though these terms have been obviously morally evacuated.

### Conclusion

What is important to remember about Crimea is the performative nature of the Russian incursion. At first, soldiers operated without insignia and, *ipso facto*, unofficially. Yet after they have been unsurprisingly unmasked as Russian forces, their presence enables the new Crimean authorities to perform the constituent actions of any sovereign. This performativity illustrates an increasingly large gap between legal (*de jure*) and actual (*de facto*) sovereignty, though international law holds that recognition by other sovereigns is purely declaratory. These separatist entities exist, they fight wars, and their constituents believe in them despite their many visible failings. Most discussions about the legitimacy or illegitimacy of Russia's intervention in Crimea obscure a particularly salient point that must be addressed: these *de facto* polities are artifacts of war. Their residents and citizens are inadvertent combatants who have been conditioned to see the stakes of acceding to the *de jure* sovereign as capitulation to enemies at best, and to fascists at worst. Renouncing their tentative independence is equated with a liquidation of the region's distinguishing features and peoples.

More broadly, Crimea and Eurasia's other *de facto* states illustrate how a critical mass of dedicated individuals, with the implicit backing from another state, can come to embody a phenomenon long the purview of political science: geopolitics. During trips to Transnistria, Crimea, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, people would stress the geopolitical importance of their place in the world. During field research on statehood and sovereignty in Transnistria from 2008 to 2009, residents remained certain that Russia would rescue them from Europe and help them keep NATO and Euro-Atlantic values at bay. This would also, *ipso facto*, stop the extinction of their Russian (Soviet) culture. Events in Crimea have only heightened expectations. While on a November 2008 trip to Crimea, I toured the dachas of Chekhov, Stalin, and the Russian painter Aivozovsky (born Hovhannes Aivazian), it was clear these Russian cultural icons remained safe under the tutelage of the Russian Black Sea

Fleet. In Yalta, at the summer retreat of Nicholas II, the conference rooms remain as they were when Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin presided over the geopolitical division of post-war Europe. In March 2013, this curated cultural narrative took on a life of its own. At a 2008 NGO conference in Georgia (oddly enough, on the topic of interpersonal conflict resolution), my Georgian hosts lamented the lack of NATO intervention as a geopolitical oversight caused by other, more distant wars; the West would come, they said, though it was obvious that Russia would remain. While a visiting scholar at the American University of Central Asia, similar concerns emerged. Kyrgyzstan, the most democratic country in an otherwise autocratic region, could astutely extort the US for financial gain, as its location as a vital logistical terminal overstated its otherwise peripheral location. One taxi driver, happy for US military contractors who paid him generously, wondered how long this geopolitical game would go on. In the absence of a real economy, the rents generated by geopolitics and remittances would have to suffice. In the absence of any other compelling reason, geopolitics became the primary reason for their country's importance. These claims are not simply the ideological remnants of the Cold War, but must instead be seen as attempts to (re)inscribe themselves in a new world's order. As Russian actions in Crimea have shown, this new geopolitical order offers no firm conceptual designations; paradox, contradiction, and double-standards are its means of creating coherence for those living amidst the liminality-at-large. In this sense one must look at these polities not as outliers, but rather as entities in which problematize a worldview in which reality can be described with an accepted-upon conceptual vocabulary. The leaders and elites of Eurasia's unrecognized states champion national self-determination, while the states in which they reside stress the need for stability. In the face of these incompatible principles, these entities illustrate the double standards that allow for recognition of some states (Kosovo) yet deny it to others (the PMR, Abkhazia, South Ossetia). Attempts to delegitimize these entities or to discern their artificiality obscures their communality with our own existence as political subjects.

Crimea, along with Eurasia's other separatist states (Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh) illustrate the very real conceptual slippage of the foundational terms of contemporary politics. Freedom, equality, democracy, self-determination, and intervention are

fundamental political concepts of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, yet in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we can witness their ongoing (re)definition in old, new, and emerging democracies. Far from being concepts with an agreed-upon basis in reality, their flexible reimagining in Eurasia's *de facto* states illustrates their inherent indeterminacy. The West intervenes on behalf of principles, while Russia intervenes to further their strategic goals. Given the absence of the Cold War as a stabilizing reference point, we are left to comprehend our own uncertain moment with political concepts that have long since lost their referent. In this sense Russia's humanitarian intervention and support for self-determination should not be seen as perversions of long-sacred principles, but as a reflection of uncertain times.

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## COUP DE GRÂCE (2017)

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

HD video, 2:39, color, Dolby 5.1 sound,  
25 min., Portugal

### CREDITS

Written by: Salomé Lamas, Isabel Petterman  
Directed by: Salomé Lamas  
Production: O Som e a Fúria  
Producers: Luís Urbano, Sandro Aguiar  
With: Miguel Borges, Clara Jost, João Pedro Benard, Gabriel Abrantes, Margarida Lucas, Álvaro Covelo and Pinto workers  
Assistant director: Mónica Lima  
Cinematography: Rui Xavier  
Assistant image: Helena Marina  
Grip: João Almeida  
Sound: Miguel Martins  
Boom operator: Ricardo Leal  
Art director: Nádia Henriques  
Leonor's dress: Fernando Brizio  
Assistant art directing: Maria Ribeiro  
Decoration intern: Daniela Simões  
Assistant costume: Francisca Nabinho  
Editing: Salomé Lamas, Francisco Moreira  
Assistant editing: Rita Quelhas  
Sound and mix: Miguel Martins  
Color grading: Paulo Américo  
Production director: Isabel Silva  
Production manager: Miguel Perdigão  
Assistant production: Susana Lopes  
Interns: Henrique Real, Carolina Lamounier, Maria Inês Gonçalves

Production coordinator: Cristina Almeida  
Accountants: Aline Alves, Amadeu Doreis  
Sound and image equipment: Ricochete,  
Screen Miguel Nabinho, Miguel Martins  
Editing studio: O Som e a Fúria  
Sound studio: Kino Sound Studio  
Laboratory: Bikini  
Insurance: Riskmedia  
Support: ICA – Instituto do cinema e do audiovisual



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S: from Lisbon, with Love, j



**MICHAEL BOBICK** first traveled to Transnistria in 2006 and has returned to the region regularly. He earned his PhD in sociocultural anthropology from Cornell University in 2012, and has taught at Cornell, the American University of Central Asia, and the University of Pittsburgh. His most recent work focuses on legitimate and illegitimate forms of political and legal authority that emerged in Eurasia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. He has written numerous academic and popular articles on Transnistria, sovereignty, and separatism.

**DEIRDRE BOYLE** is a writer, film critic and Associate Professor in The School of Media Studies at The New School in New York. She is the author of numerous essays and reviews for publications like *Cineaste*, *Film Quarterly*, *Frameworks*, *Millennial Film Journal*, *Short Film Studies*, *Wide Angle*, and *Documentary Testimonies: Global Archives of Suffering* (Sarkar and Walker, Routledge) and *A Companion to Documentary Film* (Juhász and Lebow, Wiley-Blackwell), among others. She is the author of several books, including *Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited* (Oxford University Press) and is currently working on a book on the work of Cambodian filmmaker and genocide survivor Rithy Panh.

**FILIFE FELIZARDO** lives in Portugal. He works in music, text, and images, and his work has taken the form of music records, books, and land art. He is currently working on a new book, *A Conference of Stones and Things Previous*.

**IRENE FLUNSER PIMENTEL** has a BA in history from Faculdade de Letras da Universidade Clássica de Lisboa (FL/UCL), an MA in contemporary history, a PhD in institutional history and contemporary politics from the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa (FCSH/UNL) (2007). She is a researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History at FCSH/UNL and was coordinator of the project “Political Justice in the Transition to Democracy in Portugal (1974–2008).” She is working now on topics related to the extinction of the Portuguese political police in the transition to democracy. She is the author of several books about the Portuguese dictatorship, the “New State,” the woman question, and Portugal in World War II: *História da Oposição à Ditadura, 1926–1974* (2014); *Espíões em Portugal durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial* (2013); *A Cada um o seu Lugar. A Política Feminina do Estado Novo*

(2011); *Cardeal Cerejeira. O Príncipe da Igreja* (2010); *Fotobiografia de José Afonso* (2009–2010); *A História da PIDE* (2007); *Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina* (2007); *Biografia de um Inspector da PIDE* (2008); *Judeus em Portugal durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial* (2006); *Fotobiografia de Manuel Gonçalves Cerejeira* (2002); and *História das Organizações Femininas do Estado Novo* (2000–2001). She is the coauthor of several books, including *Bystanders, Rescuers or Perpetrators: The Neutral Countries and the Shoah*, ed. International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance/Metropol (2016); *Mulheres Portuguesas. História da Vida e dos Direitos das Mulheres num Mundo em Mudança* (with Helena Pereira de Melo, 2015); *Salazar, Portugal e o Holocausto* (with Cláudia Ninhos, 2013); *Democracia. Ditadura, Memória e Justiça Política*, coord. Irene Flunser Pimentel and Maria Inácia Rezola (2014); *Conflicts, Memory Transfers and the Reshaping of Europe* (2010); *Tribunais Políticos. Tribunais Militares Especiais e Tribunais Plenários durante a Ditadura e o Estado Novo* (2009); *O Corporativismo em Português. Estado, Política e Sociedade no Salazarismo e no Varguismo* (2007); and *Vítimas de Salazar. Estado Novo e Violência Política* (2007). She has been the recipient of several prizes, among them Carolina Michaelis (1999); Adérito Sedas Nunes/ICS (2007); Pessoa, Expresso and Unysis (2007); and Seeds of Science, social and human sciences category (2009).

**PETER GALISON** is the Joseph Pellegrino University Professor in the history of science and physics at Harvard University. In 1997 he was awarded a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship; he won a 1998 Pfizer Award (for *Image and Logic*) as the best book that year in the history of science; and in 1999 he received the Max Planck and Humboldt Stiftung Prize. His books include *How Experiments End* (1987); *Einstein's Clocks, Poincaré's Maps* (2003); and *Objectivity* (with Lorraine Daston, 2007). His films include *Ultimate Weapon: The H-Bomb Dilemma* (with Pamela Hogan, 2000), and with Robb Moss he directed and produced *Secrecy* (2008), which premiered at Sundance, and also *Containment* (2015), about the need to guard radioactive materials for the ten-thousand-year future. Galison collaborated with the South African artist William Kentridge on the multiscreen installation *The Refusal of Time* (2012).

**JAVIER H. ESTRADA** is a film critic, professor, and programmer based in Madrid. He is a contributing editor for the film magazine *Caimán. Cuadernos de Cine* (previously known as *Cahiers du cinéma. España*) and for the film journal *Secuencias. Revista de Historia del Cine*. He has contributed to several books, including *Cinema Filipinas: History, Theory and Film Criticism* (2010); *Thomas Heise. Fragments of Seeking* (2013); *World Film Locations: Barcelona* (2013); *Nagisa Oshima* (2013); *Film Festival Yearbook 6: Film Festivals and the Middle East* (2014); and *New Japanese Independent Cinema 2000–2015* (2015). He curated the film programs “Tales from the Bosphorus: Istanbul in Contemporary Turkish Cinema” for Casa Árabe Madrid (2011) and “Amir Muhammad” for the international film seminar Punto de Vista in Navarra, Spain (2012). In 2013 he became a programmer for the Lima Independent International Film Festival, Peru. He is a cofounder and head of programming of FilmMadrid International Film Festival.

**ANA JOTTA** was born in Lisbon, where she lives and works. She frequented the Escola Superior de Belas Artes de Lisboa (ESBAL), Lisbon's fine arts school (1965–1968), and the École d'Architecture et d'Arts Visuels de l'Abbaye de la Cambre in Brussels (1969–1973). Then she worked as an actress and as a stage designer with Produções Teatrais, Universidade Clássica, Lisbon (1976–1979). Since the 80s she has focused her activity on the visual arts. In 2005 she had a retrospective exhibition at the Museu de Serralves, Porto, Portugal, entitled *Rua Ana Jotta*. In 2014 she had an anthology exhibition at Culturgest, Lisbon, entitled *A Conclusão da Precedente*.

**JAMES LATTIMER** is a film curator, critic, translator, and filmmaker based in Berlin. He started working for the Berlinale Forum in 2008 and became a member of their selection committee in 2011. His writing on film has appeared in *Slant* magazine, *Senses of Cinema*, MUBI's *The Notebook*, *Film Parlatto*, and *desistfilm*. His first short film, *All Still Orbit*, a collaboration with Dane Komljen, premiered in competition at the 2016 Rotterdam International Film Festival and was subsequently shown at Art of the Real at the Film Society of Lincoln Center, New York.

**NUNO LISBOA** is the director of Doc's Kingdom International Seminar on Documentary Film.

**JORGE MOURINHA** has been a film critic and journalist at the Lisbon daily newspaper *Público* since 2005. He maintains the film blog *The Flickering Wall*, tweets as @RJMourinha, and has contributed to *Senses of Cinema*, the *MUBI Notebook*, and *Filmmaker* magazine. Previously he wrote for the music magazine *Blitz* and worked as a record reissue producer for EMI Records Portugal.

**JOANA PIMENTA** is a filmmaker and writer from Lisbon, currently living in the United States. Her short film *The Figures Carved into the Knife by the Sap of the Banana Trees* received the Competition Award at Indielisboa 2014, where it premiered, the Tom Berman Award for Most Promising Filmmaker at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, and has been screened at the Toronto International Film Festival, the New York Film Festival, Jihlava, Mar del Plata, Ambulante, Edinburgh, Videoex, Taipei, and other festivals. Her video installation work has been recently presented at the Festival Temps d'Images, Lisbon; the Fundacion Botin, Santander; Galeria da Boavista, Lisbon; Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and the Pipe Factory, Glasgow, among other venues. She teaches in the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University and in the BFA program in film at Rutgers University. She is completing her PhD in film, visual studies, and media practice at Harvard University and is a fellow at the Film Study Center and the Sensory Ethnography Lab there.

**JOÃO RIBAS** is deputy director and senior curator of the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto, Portugal. He was previously curator of the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Drawing Center, New York. Ribas is the winner of four consecutive AICA Exhibition Awards (2008–2011) and of an Emily Hall Tremain Exhibition Award (2010), and his writing has been featured in numerous catalogues and publications, including *Artforum*, *Mousse*, *Afterall*, *ARTnews*, *Frieze*, and *ArtReview*. His most recent publication, *In the Holocene*, was published by Sternberg Press in 2015.

**MÓNICA SAVIRÓN** is a writer, independent curator, and experimental filmmaker who explores through her work the cinematic possibilities of sound and avant-garde poetics. She is a consulting editor for the film journal *La Furia Humana*, and her essays about avant-garde and



artists' cinema have been published internationally. As a curator, she has organized shows at Microscope Gallery, New York; Anthology Film Archives, New York; and the Museum of the Moving Image, New York. Her film *Broken Tongue* (2013) is a tribute to the conceptual poet and performer Tracie Morris. Winner of the best film award at Fronteira Film Festival in Brazil, it has been shown at more than 50 major festivals and art venues around the world. Her previous video, *To Begin With* (2012), had its world premiere at the Experiments in Cinema Festival, Albuquerque. She is originally from Madrid and currently based in New York.

**LAWRENCE WESCHLER** attended the University of California, Santa Cruz, and was a staff writer at the *New Yorker* for more than 20 years (1981–2002). His writing for the magazine shuttled between political tragedies and cultural comedies. He recently became director emeritus of the New York Institute for the Humanities at NYU, where he was director from 2001 to 2013. He is also an artistic director emeritus, still actively engaged, with the Chicago Humanities Festival, and sometime curator for the New York Live Ideas Festival.

His books of political reportage include *The Passion of Poland* (1984); *A Miracle*,

*a Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers* (1990); and *Calamities of Exile: Three Nonfiction Novellas* (1998). His "Passions and Wonders" series currently comprises *Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees: A Life of Contemporary Artist Robert Irwin* (1982); *David Hockney's Cameraworks* (1984); *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder* (1995); *A Wanderer in the Perfect City: Selected Passion Pieces* (1998); *Boggs: A Comedy of Values* (1999); *Vermeer in Bosnia* (2004); and *Everything That Rises: A Book of Convergences* (2006). *Mr. Wilson* was shortlisted for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award, and *Everything That Rises* received the 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award for criticism.

Recent books include a considerably expanded edition of *Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees* (2009); *True to Life: Twenty-Five Years of Conversation with David Hockney* (2008); the collection *Uncanny Valley: Adventures in the Narrative* (2011); and, just out, *Domestic Scenes: The Art of Ramiro Gomez* (2016). He is a contributing editor to *McSweeney's*, the *Threepenny Review*, and the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and has recently been contributing regularly to *Vanity Fair*, the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, and *The Believer*.

Salomé Lamas (1987, Lisbon) studied cinema in Lisbon (Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema) and Prague (Filmová a Televizní Fakulta Akademie Múzick VCH V Praze), visual arts MFA in Amsterdam (Sandberg Instituut, Gerrit Rietveld Academie) and is a PhD candidate in Contemporary Art Studies in Coimbra (Universidade de Coimbra).

Her work has been screened both in art venues and film festivals such as Berlinale – Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin, NIMK – Netherlands Instituut voor Mediakunst, Festival Internazionale del Cinema di Roma, BAFICI, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, FIAC, MNAC – Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado, DocLisboa, Cinema du Réel, Visions du Réel, MoMA – Museum of Modern Art, Museo Guggenheim Bilbao, Pacific Film Archive, Harvard Film Archive, Museum of Moving Images NY, Jewish Museum NY, Fid Marseille, Arsenal Institut für Film und Videokunst, Viennale, Hong Kong Film Festival, MALBA – Museu de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, UCLA Film & Television Archive, Serralves – Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Tate Modern, Centre d'Art Contemporain de Genève, Bozar – Palais des Beaux-Arts, Tabakalera, Les Rencontres Internationales – Nouveau Cinema et Art Contemporain, ICA – The Institute of Contemporary Arts, Mostra de São Paulo, CAC – Contemporary Art Center Vilnius, MAAT – Museu de Arte Arquitectura e Tecnologia, Ann Harbor Film Festival.

Lamas was granted fellowships such as The Gardner Film Study Center Fellowship – Harvard University, The Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Fundação Oriente, Bogliasco Foundation, The MacDowell Colony, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD.

She collaborates with the production company O Som e a Fúria and is represented by Galeria Miguel Nabinho.

## FILMOGRAPHY SELECTED PROJECTS

### 2017 – FATAMORGANA

*(in development)*

Production: Les Films du Bal  
Development Support: CNAP – Centre National des Arts Plastiques  
Additional Support: Marra.tein, Ashkal Alwan

### 2017 – FATAMORGANA

*(in development – stage show)*

Commission: BoCA – Bienal de Arte Contemporânea, Portugal  
Support: Centro Cultural de Belém, Theatro Circo

### 2017 – EXTINÇÃO (EXTINCTION)

*(in production)*

HD video, 16:9, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 70 min., Germany – Portugal  
Production: O Som e a Fúria  
Support: Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, ICA – Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual, Screen Miguel Nabinho  
Development Support: Bogliasco Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Yadoo, Agora Works in Progress 2016 Thessaloniki International Film Festival

### 2017 – COUP DE GRÂCE

HD video, 2:39, color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 25 min., Portugal  
Production: O Som e a Fúria  
Support: ICA – Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual

### 2017 – HORIZON NORIZOH

Two-channel HD video installation, 16:9, black and white, stereo sound, 8 min. sync in a loop, Denmark – Portugal – Brazil – Germany  
In collaboration with: Gregorio Graziosi  
Commission: CPH:LAB 2015 – CPH:DOX, Denmark  
Support: CPH:DOX, Det Danske Filminstitut

### 2016 – UBI SUNT

HD video, 2:39, color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 25 min., Portugal  
Commission: Câmara Municipal do Porto – Pelouro da Cultura, Portugal

## 2016 – THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

Three-channel HD video installation, 2:39, color, three-channels mono sound, 90 min. sync in a loop, Peru – Portugal – Switzerland – France  
Commission: BIM 2016 – Biennial of Moving Images, Switzerland  
Production: CAC – Centre d'Art Contemporain de Genève with the support of FMAC – Fonds d'Art Contemporain de la Ville de Genève, FCAC – Fonds d'Art Contemporain du Canton de Genève, FAENA ART, In Between Art Film, HEAD. Produced with materials collected in April 2015 for the shooting of the feature film *Eldorado XXI* (2016) produced by O Som e a Fúria and Shellac Sud. With the support of ICA – Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual, CNC – Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International – Institut Français, EURIMAGES – Council of Europe and the additional support of FIDLab2013 FID Marseille, The Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, The MacDowell Colony, Bogliasco Foundation, Yaddo

## 2016 – ...RIOTS AND RITUALS

Web video installation, 122 gif (81 gif HD video – 41 gif 35mm transferred to HD video), red tinted black and white, stereo sound, sync in a loop, Portugal – Spain  
Commission: Tabakalera – Centro Internacional de Cultura Contemporânea, Spain  
Support: Tabakalera, Fundación Donostia – San Sebastian, Cinemateca Portuguesa – Centro de Conservação ANIM

## 2016 – ELDORADO XXI

HD video, 2:39 color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 125 min., Portugal – France – Peru  
Production: O Som e a Fúria, Shellac Sud, Tambo Films  
Support: ICA – Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual, CNC – Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International – Institut Français, EURIMAGES – Council of Europe  
Development Support: FIDLab 2013 FID Marseille (Le prix Sublimage, Le prix Vidéo de Poche), Berlinale – DocStation 2014, The Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Yadoo, Bogliasco Foundation, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, Critical Media Practice – Workshop (WIP), Harvard University

Distribution: O Som e a Fúria, Shellac Sud  
Theatrical Release: Portugal, France

## 2015 – NORTE/NORTH: TRIAL BY FIRE

HD video, 16:9, color, live music, 40 min., Portugal – Spain  
In collaboration with: Filipe Felizardo  
Commission: Filmadrid, Spain  
Support: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Filmadrid, Screen Miguel Nabinho

## 2015 – A TORRE (THE TOWER)

HD video, 16:9, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 8 min., Portugal – Germany – Moldova  
In collaboration with: Christoph Both-Asmus  
Production: Mengamuk, O Som e a Fúria  
Development Support: Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD  
Support: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Bogliasco Foundation, Bikini, Universidade Católica do Porto, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD  
Distribution: Agência da Curta Metragem

Video Installation Edition: Fundação EDP – MAAT Museu de Arte Arquitectura e Tecnologia – collection, Portugal

## 2015 – MOUNT ANANEA (5853)

Video installation HD video transferred to 16mm, color, silent, 20 min. loop; two turntables, two vinyl records, two headphone sets, Portugal – Peru  
In collaboration with: Bruno Moreira, Norberto Lobo, João Lobo  
Production: O Som e a Fúria, Fundação de Serralves – Museu de Arte Contemporânea  
Support: The Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Bogliasco Foundation, Bikini, Fundação Serralves – Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Universidade Católica do Porto

## 2014 – LE BOUDIN

HD video, 16:9, color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 16 min., Germany – Portugal  
Support: Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD  
Distribution: Agência da Curta Metragem

Video Installation Edition: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian – Coleção Moderna do Museu Calouste Gulbenkian – collection, Portugal

**2013 — THEATRUM  
ORBIS TERRARUM**

Three-channel HD video installation, 16:9, color, stereo sound, 26 min. sync in a loop; DVD, 4:3, black and white, silent, 5 min. loop on TV monitor, Portugal

HD video, 16:9, color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 23 min., Portugal

Commission: Festival Temps d'Images, Portugal

Support: The MacDowell Colony, Screen Miguel Nabinho, MNAC – Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, DGArtes – Ministério da Cultura, DuplaCena  
Distribution: Agência da Curta Metragem

DVD Edition: Shellac Sud DVD, EXTRA, Terra nullius: Confessions d'un mercenaire, France

**2012 — TERRA DE NINGUÉM  
(NO MAN'S LAND)**

HD video, 16:9, color, stereo sound, 72 min., Portugal

Production: O Som e a Fúria  
Support: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Carpe Diem, Bikini, Óbvio Som, Galeria Miguel Nabinho  
Distribution: Shellac Sud, O Som e a Fúria, Abordar Casa de Películas, Zon Lusomundo

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DVD Edition: Shellac Sud DVD, Terra nullius: Confessions d'un mercenaire, France; Alambique DVD, Terra de Ninguém, Portugal

Video Installation Edition: Fundação Serralves – Museu de Arte Contemporânea – collection, Portugal

**2012 — A COMUNIDADE  
(THE COMMUNITY)**

HD video, 16:9, color, stereo sound, 23 min., Portugal

Support: Galeria Zé dos Bois, Galeria Miguel Nabinho  
Distribution: Agência da Curta Metragem

Internet: Doc Alliance

**2012 — ENCOUNTERS  
WITH LANDSCAPE 3X**

HD video, 16:9, color, stereo sound, 29 min., Portugal

Support: Corredor Associação Cultural, Galeria Zé dos Bois

Distribution: Collectif Jeune Cinema

DVD Edition: FNAC/Indie Lisboa Short Films DVD, Portugal; Angular Films DVD, Spain; Shellac Sud DVD, EXTRA, Terra nullius: Confessions d'un mercenaire, France

**2011 — GOLDEN DAWN**

HD video, 16:9, color, mono sound, 16 min.,

The Netherlands – Portugal

Support: Sandberg Instituut

Video Installation Edition: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian – Coleção Moderna do Museu Calouste Gulbenkian – collection, Portugal

**2010 — VHS – VIDEO HOME SYSTEM**

HD video, 16:9, color, mono sound, 39 min.,

The Netherlands – Portugal

Support: Sandberg Instituut

Distribution: Collectif Jeune Cinema

**2010 — IMPERIAL GIRL**

HD video, 16:9, color, mono sound, 11 min., Portugal

**2009 — JOTTA: A MINHA  
MALADRESSE É UMA FORMA  
DE DELICATESSE**

HD video, 16:9, color, stereo sound, 70 min., Portugal

Co-directed with: Francisco Moreira

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