



FIRE IN THE MUD

A FILM BY

CATARINA LARANJEIRO
& DANIEL BARROCA



FIRE IN THE MUD

DIRECTED BY

Catarina Laranajeiro and Daniel Barroca

PRODUCED BY

Rui Ribeiro, Elsa Sertório and Ansgar Shaefer
(Kintop, Portugal)

LOGLINE

Haunted by memories of the liberation war, still inscribed in present-day rituals, bodies, landscapes, and techno-music, a peasant community claims their future in contemporary Guinea-Bissau.



SYNOPSIS

Unal is a village of rice producers whose inhabitants played a crucial role in Guinea-Bissau's liberation struggle against Portuguese colonialism. They were the first to engage in the armed uprising, mobilizing their ancestral spirits, the *Irãs* - the natural land-owners to whom they pay reverence – into the guerilla. Still today, every gesture of the rice cycle – from plowing to harvesting – is haunted by memories of the war. A trauma that is also inscribed in their present-day rituals, bodies, landscapes, and techno music. In the war's aftermath, a group of soldiers got possessed by a messianic vision, "The Shadow", that gave them the power to foresee the future and heal their communities with bush plants through talismanic writings.

"Fire in the Mud" takes a deeply immersive approach to a complex melting pot of religious forms and political turmoil within a diverse community claiming their future in contemporary Guinea-Bissau.



DIRECTORS BIOGRAPHIES

Catarina Laranjeiro (1983) is a visual anthropologist holding a Ph.D. in Post-Colonialism and Global Citizenship. In the last ten years, she has researched the relationship between cinema and cosmological images during the liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau, also part of her master thesis short film “Pabia di Aos” (2013). At the same time, she led and participated in several projects interlacing anthropology, cinema, and visual arts. Currently, she is conducting a six-year research project about vernacular film production in Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and their diasporas in Europe.

Daniel Barroca (1976) is a visual artist who works in audiovisual and interdisciplinary formats. He has completed residencies at Spanish Academy, Rome, (2003-2004); Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, (2007); QBox Gallery Residency Program, Athens, (2009); Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Amsterdam, (2010-2011); Home Workspace Program, Ashkal Alwan, Beirut (2013-2014); and Open Sessions, The Drawing Center, New York (2014-2015). Barroca’s work includes expanded cinema installations which, over the years, have been presented in venues like Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto, (2003); Videoformes, Clermont-Ferrand, (2004);



DIRECTORS BIOGRAPHIES

Cinemed, Montpellier, (2005); Rencontres International Paris/Berlin, Paris, (2005); Espace Videographe, Montreal, (2006); Festival de Curtas Metragens, Vila do Conde, (2006); Exis, Seoul, (2006); National Center for Contemporary Art, Moscow, (2006, 2009, 2012); Experiments in Cinema, Albuquerque, (2007); IFCT, Washington DC, (2007); Cornwall Autonomous Zone, Cornwall, (2011); DocLisboa, Lisbon, (2011); Museum Abteiberg, Monchengladbach, (2013); Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, (2014); Videoex, Zurich, (2015); Festival des 3 Continents, Nantes, (2016); MADC, San Jose, (2017); Khiasma, Paris, (2018); MAAT, Lisbon (2021).

Solo exhibitions of his work have been organized by Fundação Carmona e Costa, Lisbon (2006); Electricity Museum, Lisbon, (2007); Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, (2008); The Mews, London, (2009); A Certain Lack of Coherence, Porto (2010); Galleri Image, Aarhus, (2011); Galeria Fernando Santos, Porto, (2011); De La Charge, Brussels, (2015); and the Hunter College Art Galleries; New York (2015).

In 2018 he finished a Master's in Anthropology at the University of Florida, Gainesville, as part of his broad research about the creation of immaterial images in a colonial war setting.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Unal's particular historical experience regarding the liberation war from the 1970s against Portuguese colonialism in Guinea-Bissau was what united us in this joint documentary film project to which we decided to call *Fire in the Mud*. We should start by saying that we come from different backgrounds. Catarina studied Psychology, Anthropology and Post-colonial studies. Daniel has a career in Fine-Arts and more recently Anthropology. Nevertheless, both of us have a long-term interest in understanding the complex human experience of the war through film especially in that particular geography of the south of Guinea-Bissau. As a visual artist and as a scholar of anthropology, Daniel has been closely working on his father's experience as a soldier of the Portuguese army in that same war. A tough legacy that has been a central element of his work and that gave him the need to look for how people at the other side of the war lived through that same complex process on a personal level. Catarina, on the other hand, had a two-year experience as a member of an NGO working on educational development in Guinea-Bissau that gave her not only a strong sense of the country's cultural diversity but also a knowledge of local languages and political complexities.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

So, the starting point for both us in this project was to look at the memory of the war within the boundaries of a subaltern community who experienced it directly. The other important aspect for us was to convey a local non-hegemonic narrative about the liberation war and subsequent nation state formation. So, the film became a very broad project about the memory of the 1970's liberation war, the current tension between the community and the State, the complex religious diversity within the community, and the activity in the rice paddies which is one of the pillars of the community's identity.

We established close ties to many people in Unal that influenced our filmic approach. After learning about the diversity of experiences during the war, we decided that instead of telling the audience about the history of Guinea-Bissau as a liberated nation we wanted to convey strong personal stories that could defy and introduce diversity into that national narrative with a strong visual approach. The main goal became to provide a strong cinematic account about people and their political landscape today.



CREDITS

FOGO NO LODO FIRE IN THE MUD

DURATION

118'

DIRECTED BY

Catarina Laranjeiro
Daniel Barroca

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

Mamassaliu M'Baatcha (Sada)
Julio M'Baatcha

IMAGE AND EDITING

Daniel Barroca

SOUND ENGINEER, SOUND DESIGNER, SOUND

MIXER

Dídio Pestana

ARTISTIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISOR

André Neto

COLOR GRADING

Gonçalo Ferreira

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Rui Silva

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Catarina Laranjeiro

PRODUCERS

Rui Ribeiro
Elsa Sertório
Ansgar Shaefer

PRODUCTION MANAGER — GUINEA-BISSAU

Queba Quebi

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS — GUINEA-BISSAU

Mamassaliu Quebi (Sada)
Clódi M'Baatcha
Malam M'Baatcha



CREDITS

LOGISTICS

Mata Quebi
Celeste M'Baatcha
Malam M'Baatcha

DRIVERS

Braima Tumane Ture
David Capecalon
Sarafim Brama

BISSAU-GUINEAN CREOLE TRANSLATION

Maimuna Sambu
Letana Dan Lama

BALANTA KENTOHE TRANSLATION

Fernando Nhaga Kumba
Julio Mario Siga
Letana Dan Lama

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Paulo da Fonseca

MUSIC

N'Pans – Nau Guiné Ka Pobri

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Kintop

PRODUCTION COUNTRY

Portugal

FINANCED BY

ICA – Instituto do Cinema e do
Audiovisual
República Portuguesa - Cultura



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