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CANNES 2013

A film by film Basil Da Cunha



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ATÉ VER A LUZ

ATÉ VER A LUZ (APRÈS LA NUIT)

A film by film Basil Da Cunha
Switzerland 2013

95 minutes, 1.85, 5.1 SR
Original version Creole
(Portuguese based)
Subtitles french, english, portuguese

DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT SCREENINGS

Official screening

Wednesday 22nd May 2013

18:00, Théâtre de la Croisette
Preceded by an on-stage
introduction by the director
and crew

Other screenings

Wednesday 22nd May 2013

9:00, Théâtre de la Croisette
Followed by a Q&A

Friday 24th May 2013

9:00, Théâtre de la Licorne

Saturday 25th May 2013

22:30, Cinéma les Arcades

SYNOPSIS

Straight out of jail, Sombra returns to his life as a drug dealer in the creole slum of Lisbon. In between the money he has lent and can't get back, the money he owes, a fanciful iguana, an invasive little girl and a ringleader who begins to mistrust him, he starts to think that he might have been better off in the clink...

IN CONVERSATION WITH BASIL DA CUNHA

Tell us about your point of view and your approach to film making.

Each one of my films is the fruit of craftsmanship. They were all made within a family circle, with the people and about the people that surround me, whether it be in Switzerland or in Portugal. The actors, for the most part friends or neighbors, have been accompanying me for several years.

I wrote and shot "Até ver a luz" in close collaboration with the people who live in the Reboleira slum. The film is structured around the people and with the people and is like a kind of reinterpretation of their lives. The people become characters, fiction enhances reality however hard or incongruous it might be.

What is the driving force of your film making?

One thing is certain, the source for many of my films, is the will to bring dignity to those to whom it is too often denied. That's the origin: restore their beauty to those I love. My films are never born of an idea or a concept. I don't give myself a specific subject or theme to write about. At first, there is the wish to film this person, or stage such and such a situation. Then there can also be a place that I find cinematographically powerful, or a musician who is magical and whose music can enhance the story. And then, of course, there are the fragments of stories that you hear and that feed the imagination. Gradually, the story comes into focus led by this belief in all things that is the heart of the film.

"Até ver a luz" immerses us in an original visual world, blending different cinematographic genres, can you tell us about that?

It's a genre movie in a realistic context. The film wavers between a thriller and documentary.

The audience witnesses the troublesome daily life of a dealer barely out of prison, but also the atmosphere and culture of a very particular place in Lisbon.

The film noir narrative style is used to allow you to grasp the evolution of the character. But the genre movie style fades from time to time to give room to some astonishing characters: an iguana, an intrusive little girl, a protective aunt, a crazy yet some-



BASIL DA CUNHA'S BIOGRAPHY

Swiss of portuguese origin born in 1985, Basil da Cunha joins the Cinema Department at the Geneva University of Art and Design in 2007. In 2011 and 2012, his short films "Nuvem" and "Os vivos também choram" are selected by the Director's Fortnight where "Os vivos..." receives a Special Mention from the Illy Jury. "Até ver a luz" is his first feature film.

what prophetic friend, a spell breaker. My ambition is to get beyond a certain kind of one dimensional and condescending socially conscious movie. So the idea is to blend a cinematographic language with the reality I'm working with, leaving room for poetry, tender and authentic relations between the characters. The highly realistic tone of the film noir is associated with moments of sheer madness, of the poetic absurdity of daily life and this contrast sometimes creates an offbeat humor.

How do you work with your actors?

I'm not interested in recreating a reality. And I don't expect my actors to imitate reality. I hope to capture things that happen in front of the camera. Life. Otherwise, I'm bored. The film shoot for me is a space of freedom. It's a time of research and risk, since even if we want to get somewhere, we're never quite sure how to get there. And that's what we're filming: the journey. To sum up, the essence of my work is to create a space where it's possible to live.

The actors never rehearse and do not read the screenplay. They are only given acting intentions, certain cues they can't miss and the rest is a bit like jazz, a kind of orchestrated improvisation. They produce a kind of reinterpretation of their own lives.

My work, with each take, is to surprise them, to reinvent the tools they will play with to live something that is real.

The rule when I'm shooting is that the outcome of the power struggle between the movie and the life of the neighborhood has to be to the latter's advantage, because even if we shape it and stage it, we give it its own space. So we work with a small crew of four: the director of photography, the sound engineer, a friend who multitasks and me. For the rest, the people who live in the neighborhood give a hand here and there when possible, covering several different professions of film making. It's important that more things take place in front of the camera than behind.

But you had a written screenplay?

For "Até ver a luz" as with « Os vivos também choram » or even « A Coté », (unlike « Nuvem ») there was a script with dialogue that mostly served to clarify and solve the narrative questions. It's very useful before shooting to anticipate the ellipsis, the off screens. But we didn't use the screenplay with the actors before shooting and even less so during the shoot. I only kept a paper with one sentence for each scene.

In the end, does the film match what you imagined as you were writing the screenplay?

That's never happened to me, luckily. Of course, the essence remains the same. But what is given to me is always so much better than what I could have written.



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CAST

Sombra

Pedro Ferreira

Olos

João Veiga

Nuven

Nelson da Cruz Duarte Rodrigues

Mix

Paulo Ribeiro

Tchicks

Francisco Mota

Franguinho

Ruben Dias

Osfera

José Milton Moreira

Kikas

Carlos Rodrigues Fonseca

Clarinha

Ana Clara Baptista de Melo Soares Barros

Tia do Sombra

Susana Maria Mendes da Costa

Kiki

Euclides Mendes Fernandes

Dr Julio o Bruxo

José Zeferino da Cruz

Camps

Luis Fernandes Pereira

Castaloni

Pedro Armando Delgado Piedade

Carica

José Carlos Rei

Alex

Alexandre Mota Silva

Alison

Alison Teixeira

Machine

Pedro Diniz

Zico

Elias Lopes

CREW

Directed by

Basil da Cunha

Written by

Basil da Cunha

Director of photography

Patrick Tresch

Editing

Renata Sancho, Basil da Cunha,
Emilie Morier

Sound

Filipe Tavares

Sound design and mix

Philippe Ciompi and Adrien Kessler

Assistant director

Pedro Diniz

Set Decoration

Carlos Baessa De Brito

Directeur de production

Elena Tatti, Joana Cunha

Production

Box Productions

Coproduction

HEAD – Genève (Geneva University of Art
and Design), HES-SO Genève

Coproduction

RTS Radio Télévision Suisse,
Alberto Chollet, Sophie Sallin

With support of

Office fédéral de la culture – Suisse

With support of

Cinéforum et la Loterie Romande

With support of

Pour-Cent culturel Migros

With the collaboration of

O Som e a Fúria,
Luis Urbano, Sandro Aguilar

Producer

Elena Tatti

Associate producers

Elodie Brunner, Thierry Spicher,
Jean Perret

