

Pure Cinema

Curtas Vila do Conde

20 Years After

Book Description:

This book celebrates the 20th Curtas Vila do Conde – International Film Festival, through a reflection on cinema, from twenty interviews and talks with twenty-six authors who have been in the festival. It intends to be, therefore, a document that discusses the changes and trends in contemporary cinema in its various mutations, calling into question the very definition of what cinema is. The result of this analysis also helps to clarify the identity of Curtas Vila do Conde in the last two decades while film festival contaminated by other art forms.

The book is complemented by personal reflections on the festival by film critic Augusto M. Seabra and by American filmmaker Mike Hoolboom; finally, there is a critical history of the festival.

Curtas Vila do Conde
20 Anos Depois/20 Years After

Puro / Pure Cinema

Daniel Ribas 4
Augusto M. Seabra 14
Mike Hoolboom 18
Manoel de Oliveira/Alexander Sokurov 38
Luc Moullet 48
Kenneth Anger 56
Ken Jacobs 60
Peter Tscherkassky 68
Gus Van Sant/Jon Jost/Manoel de Oliveira/
Mikhail Kobakhidze 76
Apichatpong Weerasethakul 84
Thom Andersen 88
Matthias Müller/Christoph Girardet 96
João Pedro Rodrigues 104
João Canijo 112
Sergei Loznitsa 120
Corneliu Porumboiu 126
José Miguel Ribeiro 130
Paulo Furtado 138
Hervé Marins Jr 146
Yann Gonzalez 156
Louis Garrel 162
Bertrand Mandico/Elina Löwensohn 166
Basil da Cunha 172

Interviews included:

Manoel de Oliveira	Mikhail Kobakhidze	Corneliu Porumboiu
Alexander Sokurov	Apichatpong Weerasethakul	José Miguel Ribeiro
Luc Moullet	Thom Andersen	Paulo Furtado
Kenneth Anger	Matthias Müller & Christoph Girardet	Hervé Marins Jr.
Ken Jacobs	João Pedro Rodrigues	Yann Gonzalez
Peter Tscherkassky	João Canijo	Louis Garrel
Gus Van Sant	Sergei Loznitsa	Bertrand Mandico & Elina Löwensohn
Jon Jost		Basil da Cunha

Festival bio:

Curtas Vila do Conde - International Film Festival is now a major cinematographic and cultural event in Portugal. Since 1993, the Festival has consolidated its position as curator of the latest trends in contemporary cinema also gaining a prominent place in the European landscape of international film festivals. Its main attraction is the short film, but Curtas has progressed to a multidisciplinary festival around the moving images. In 2012, the Festival reached its 20th edition, with a special celebration programme, which included the book "Pure Cinema", and the commission of four short-films by four celebrated directors: Sergei Loznitsa, Thom Andersen, Helvécio Marins Jr., and Yann Gonzalez. (+info at: <http://festival.curtas.pt/>)

On the authors:

The book "Pure Cinema" includes several interviews and talks with celebrated authors of current World Cinema, the experimental avant-garde and Portuguese film scene. Included authors range from well-known classics (such as Manoel de Oliveira, Alexandr Sokurov, Luc Moullet, Kenneth Anger or Gus Vant Sant), current high-profile directors (such as Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Matthias Müller & Christoph Girardet, or Sergei Loznitsa), until recent discoveries (such as Corneliu Porumboiu, Helvécio Marins Jr. or Yann Gonzalez). The book also features prominent Portuguese directors, such as João Canijo, João Pedro Rodrigues or José Miguel Ribeiro. In the essays section, the book offers new perspectives by Augusto M. Seabra, one of the most respected Portuguese cultural critics; and Mike Hoolboom, Canadian experimental filmmaker and author of several books. Book editors are Mário Micaelo, Curtas Vila do Conde festival director since the first edition, and Daniel Ribas, editorial coordinator of the Festival since 2010 and a film studies researcher and professor.

Details:

Editors: Daniel Ribas, Mário Micaelo
Bilingual edition (Portuguese and English)
ISBN: 978-972-98574-4-7
Publisher: Curtas Metragens CRL
Publication Date: 03/07/2012

Size: 30x20 cm

Pages: 176

Paperback

Price: 20 €

Publisher contacts:

Curtas Metragens CRL
Auditório Municipal, Praça da Republica
4480-715 Vila do Conde, Portugal
info@curtas.pt
Tel +351 252 646516

Credits:

Editors

Daniel Ribas, Mário Micaelo

Texts

Mike Hoolboom, Daniel Ribas, Augusto M. Seabra

Interviews

Mário Micaelo, Daniel Ribas, Antonio Rodrigues, Nuno Rodrigues

Translations

Alex Bennett Carvalho, Karen Bennett Moira Difelice,
Maria José Lemos, Marta Lisboa

Revision

Sheena Caldwell, Salette Ramalho, Daniel Ribas

Transcriptions

Cláudia Ferreira, Marta Lisboa, Tiziana Pelusi, Vanessa Ventura

Graphic Design

Drop, João Faria

Printer

Tipografia Minerva

Thanks to

Tiago Carvalho, Paulo Cunha, Miguel Dias, Christoph Girardet, Sérgio Gomes,
Dânia Lucas, Pedro Maia, Matthias Müller, Mónica Nunes, Instituto Politécnico do
Porto, Serviços de Vídeo do IPP, Vasco Pucarinho, André Oliveira, Dario Oliveira,
Tiziana Pelusi, Salette Ramalho, Hugo Ramos, Antonio Rodrigues, Nuno Rodrigues,
Raquel da Silva, Vanessa Ventura

Photo credits

Festival Archive, 1993-2011 (João Brites, Ana Pereira, António Maia,
Cesário Alves, Margarida Ribeiro, Nelson Garrido, Nelson Sousa,
Rui Pinheiro, Rui Xavier, Ruben Vieira, Pedro Martins, Gil Ramos).

intro

- Daniel Ribas**
4 Anatomia de um Festival/Anatomy of a Festival
Augusto M. Seabra
14 Filme é?/Film is
Mike Hoolboom
18 Lost/Lost

a descoberta de um outro cinema /the discovering of another cinema

- Manoel de Oliveira/Alexander Sokurov**
38 finalmente um encontro sobre arte e religião/finally a meeting around art and religion
Luc Moullet
48 uma ironia cinéfila/a cinephile irony
Kenneth Anger
56 controvérsias de um iconoclasta/controversies of an iconoclast
Ken Jacobs
60 a reconstituição da memória/the reconstitution of memory
Peter Tscherkassky
68 o quarto escuro como laboratório/the dark room as a lab
100 Anos de Curtas-Metragens/100 Years of Short-Films
76 Gus Van Sant/Jon Jost/Manoel de Oliveira/Mikhail Kobakhidzé

a reconstrução contemporânea /a contemporary reconstruction

- Apichatpong Weerasethakul**
84 waterfall
Thom Andersen
88 uma lição de história/a history lesson
Matthias Müller/Christoph Girardet
96 experimentar a galeria/experimenting the gallery
João Pedro Rodrigues
104 masculino - feminino/masculine - feminine
João Canijo
112 identificação de um país/identification of a country
Sergei Loznitsa
120 o homem errante/the wandering man
Corneliu Porumboiu
126 notícias romenas/romanian news
José Miguel Ribeiro
130 o desenho da animação/the drawing of animation
Paulo Furtado
138 em stereo/in stereo

uma nova geração emerge /an young generation arises

- Helvécio Marins Jr.**
146 sobre a leveza do ser/on the lightness of being
Yann Gonzalez
156 uma canção pop/a pop song
Louis Garrel
162 com o cinema nos poros/with cinema in the skin
Bertrand Mandico/Elina Löwensohn
166 uma teoria do surrealismo/a theory of surrealism
Basil da Cunha
172 nas nuvens/up in the air

Sample pages



Exposição Suficitismo, Guedes Pinheiro, 2008

FILME É? / FILM IS?

Augusto M. Seabra

É um interessante exercício de revisão geral a que me leva a devida celebração do 20.º Curta Vila de Conde, revista não só de filmes e programação de eventos, mas inclusive rebitada dos textos com que fui acompanhando o festival ao longo dos anos.

Assim, constata-se que desde logo se me mantêm instintos o título do artigo com que saúdo o aparecimento do festival, *Curta-metragem, grande cinema* (PUBCCO 15-06-93), perspectiva que o Curta altera, mudando o conteúdo, justificando a mudança de nome: com que terminaria esse texto? "Este Festival de Vila de Conde pode vir a ser um grande acontecimento de cinema, que creio o nível de não ser exclusivamente nacional. Se os críticos de cinema não se esquecerem, a única razão do cinema não das curtas-metragens mas das vistas curtas".

Relembro que não foi apenas a perspectiva e a atenção crítica de crítica pública ao festival, o que se tem vindo a desenvolver, o Curta consolidando-se ao longo dos anos como evento obrigatório do panorama cinematográfico em Portugal. Mas deve também dizer que o seu estatuto como "grande acontecimento de cinema" viria a ultrapassar em muitos as melhores expectativas que eu pudesse ter antes da 1.ª edição.

Reverendo a história do festival, e além da sua saliente importância para um impressionante conjunto de realizadores portugueses, que além dos seus próprios indivíduos profundamente envolvidos no modo de produção, importância essa do festival em si mesmo depois também da Agência do Curta-Metragem, criada em 1999, não se pode deixar de constatar o papel essencial e a maior firmeza construída — que com o alargamento do Curta, designadamente com a apresentação de instalações, primeiro na Alameda Regia e depois, em 2005, com a abertura da modular Salar — Galeria de Arte Cinematográfica, a extensão do campo do festival passando a acompanhar a obra de alguns autores a vir em particular associada, incluindo mesmo longas-metragens, com a secção *Block in Progress* desde 2002, ou então novas secções como *Remix*, em 2009, e depois, na sequência daquela, uma específica categoria *Experimental* entre as secções competitivas, com mais isso.

Vila de Conde transformou-se num espaço imprescindível para pensar o tema de resto, da diversidade, no período de passagem da película análoga a trabalho de montagem e de montagem entre a produção de filmes na sala branca de cinema e a apresentação de instalações de imagens em movimento, no que podemos considerar a dialética entre o *block* e o *white cube*.

As princípios, era a razão. O cinema, recordemos, nasceu em formato curto, com as emblemáticas *La sortie des usines* de la fabrique Lumière à Lyon, das irmãos Lumière e Auguste Lumière (cuja produção para uma arte de *har e semblance*), ou *Le voyage dans le Lune* de Georges Méliès. E então, já agora, rememo que nasceu um ano depois, *Short is beautiful* (PUBCCO 15-06-94): "Não há nada mais bonito do

In the context of the 20th edition of Curta Vila de Conde, I felt obliged to undertake an interesting exercise — to recall not only some of the films and events that have taken place there over the years, but also to read again the articles that I myself wrote on occasion of the different editions of the festival.

What immediately jumps out is that the title of the article with which I greeted the appearance of the festival, *Curta-metragem, grande cinema* / *Short film, great cinema* (published in PUBCCO, 15-06-93) was proved by long. This seems to justify the urgency of attention at the conclusion of the article: "This festival at Vila de Conde may become a great cinema event. But there is a risk that it will not be fully noted. If the film critics don't take note, that will not be the fault of the cinema, not of short films, but of short-sightedness".

Fortunately, as regards the prominence and attention that the media and public have given to the festival, my fears have proved unfounded. It has grown in strength over the years to become an important event on the Portuguese cinema scene. Indeed, its status in this respect has far exceeded any expectations that I might have prior to the 1st edition.

The festival has proved important not only for Portuguese filmmakers, who, in addition to their own individual merits, have profoundly changed production methods, something to which the festival itself has contributed (as indeed the Agência — Portuguese Short Film Agency, set up in 1999). Looking back at its history, we cannot but conclude that, with the extension of the festival to include installations (first in the Alameda Regia, the cinema house, and then, from 2005, in the Salar — Cinematic Art Gallery), retrospectives of filmmakers with strong ties with Vila de Conde (up to the point of including even feature films, with the section *Block in Progress* since 2002), and proposals such as *Remix* in 2009 and afterwards *Experimental* amongst the competition sections, Vila de Conde has become a key platform for reconsidering cinema. And all this happened on a crucially period when film was being replaced by digital, and when connections were being more and more established between the production of cinema in a dark theatre and the presentation of installations of moving images, in what we might consider as a kind of dialectic between the *black room* and the *white cube*.

In the beginning I was the short. For cinema, as we recall, was born in this way, with the milestones of *La sortie des usines* de la fabrique Lumière à Lyon by the brothers Lumière and Auguste Lumière (a scene that was some how emblematic for a part of light and shadow), and *Le voyage dans la Lune* by Georges Méliès. On this subject, let me return to something written a year later, in an article entitled *Short is beautiful* (PUBCCO, 15-06-94): "One thing that is completely taken for granted in cinema is movie length. Let me be clear about this: it is a social practice that is responsible for this, an established condition, which has imposed the hour and a half on the standard length, a rule that is as arbitrary as it is usual. There is no aesthetic reason for this. It has arisen as a consequence of the mechanisms of production and the procedures of distribution and marketing. Indeed, I would be interesting

100 Anos de Curtas- -Metragens

Gus Van Sant/
Jon Jost/
Manoel
de Oliveira/
Mikhail
Kobakhidzé



Gus Van Sant, Jon Jost, 1995

Em 1995, no decorrer de 1.º Curta Vila de Conde, o festival organizou uma mesa redonda com os quatro cineastas convidados dessa edição: Manoel de Oliveira, Gus Van Sant, Jon Jost e Mikhail Kobakhidzé. O tema que se seguiu antes as intervenções destes convidados, com a moderação do artista João de Medeiros. O cinema aqui tratado foi o cinema de vídeo, o papel da curta-metragem, com uma duração de noventa segundos de cinema. Todos os realizadores participaram também na sessão de exibição de curtas-metragens, assim como uma sessão pessoal dos filmes que realizaram na mesma noite. O programa também permitiu conhecer alguns dos filmes mais significativos da história do cinema.

In 1995, during the 1st Curta Vila de Conde, a round table was organized with the four special guests of that edition: Manoel de Oliveira, Gus Van Sant, Jon Jost and Mikhail Kobakhidzé. The next day followed a long afternoon of interventions by these guests in a session chaired by the artist João de Medeiros. The main theme was a reflection on the role of the short film, one hundred years after the birth of cinema. All the participants had made a selection of their own works, as well as of the films that had most influenced them. The programme that resulted thus included some of the most significant films in the history of cinema.

[illegible]

Em Funchal, 2006, quando esteve em Portugal, Osvaldo Martins, um também ex-estudado português em Paris (Wortzel, 2006), mencionou a sua ligação ao Brasil. Nesta entrevista, o autor da *Idade da Arquitetura* e especificamente sobre a sua memória de Vila do Conde.

Comoçou a realizar em meados dos anos 1990 e tem também uma licenciatura em arquitetura. Porque decidiu começar a fazer filmes?

Interessei-me por cinema e arquitetura. Ambos envolvem uma mistura de arte e ciência, mas o cinema é mais transitivo e pode ser mais pessoal. Em certa medida, os computadores em arquitetura ajudam bastante a lidar com o espaço e o tempo – no cinema.

Vem de outros origens (Tailândia) mas estudou nos EUA. Essa experiência alterou a sua percepção das coisas? Poderia dizer-nos

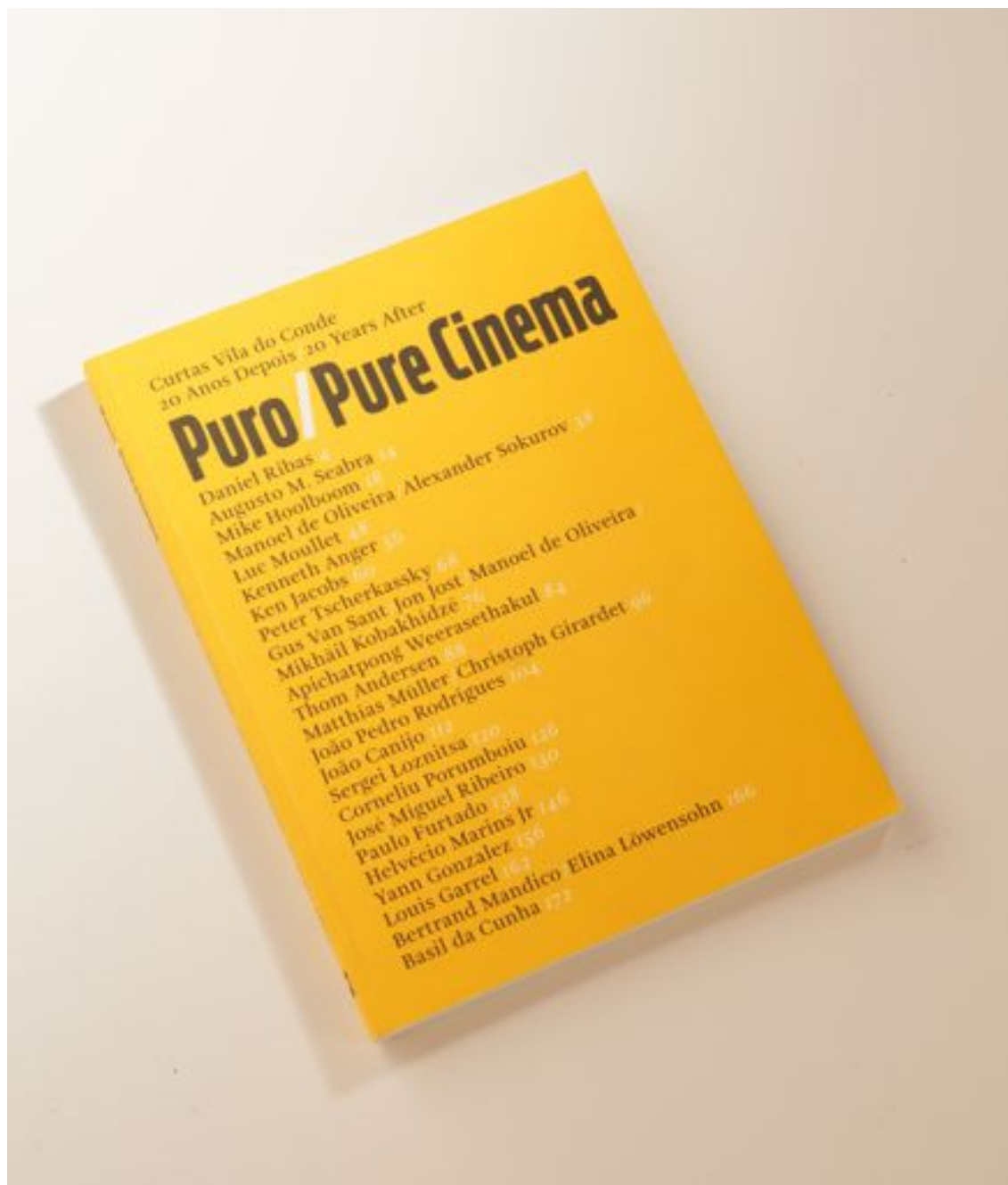
...made for the Solar (Wortzel, 2006), his films clearly mark his importance in the field. In this interview, he talks about his work and particularly about his memory of Vila do Conde.

You began directing in the mid nineties and you also have a degree in architecture. Why did you decide you wanted to make films?

I am interested in both film and architecture. Both of them involve a mixture of art and science, but film is more transient and can be more personal. In a way, using architecture helps you deal with space – and time – in film really well.

Coming from another background (Thailand) but studying in the USA, did this change your perceptions of things? Can you tell us

Photo



Citations

Apichatpong Weerasethakul

There are so many memories. I like to work slowly in tracing what I remember from when I was growing up. Filmmaking-wise, I am still a 10-year old kid. When I get older, I will reach my teen memory I guess. For me, cinema is a healing apparatus. It allows me to understand myself and, hopefully, others.

Manoel de Oliveira

I'm not really into this idea of experimental films. I think that experiments should be done at home. A film is a product of a great deal of thought, reflection and study and it is the possible result of this. And this result is definitive, just as when a cabinet maker finishes a piece of work and at a certain point says: "It's ready!" and doesn't know how to answer when people ask: "Why is it ready?"

Sergei Loznitsa

It is absurd, in my point of view, for any artist to claim to capture "reality", as each of us has our own "reality" – our own ideas and vision. Film is only shadows on a white canvas. It emerges from the interaction between the director, who projects his ideas in the form of images onto the screen, and the spectator, who interprets these images.

Thom Andersen

But the inspiration and the turning point [for my work] was seeing "Summer with Monika" by Ingmar Bergman [1953], which I saw in Berkeley in a repertory cinema, and I thought "This guy is famous but I can make a better movie than this." Of course what I wasn't taking into account was if he had made better movies he wouldn't be famous. So it was a little mistake on my part. It wasn't easy as I thought, I guess.

João Pedro Rodrigues

Anyway, my films are mostly fiction, even though they are based on something real. They start off being based on something in my life. It's a kind of investigation that goes on before you start writing. I like being anchored to reality. But what really interests me is fiction, in creating a kind of world, a story. It can be simple or complex, as long as you have the opportunity to transcend reality. That's what I try to do in my films.

João Canijo

My work is developing and I still have a goal, a dream: to achieve the kind of pure emotion in my films that Mark Rothko describes. Now I'm certain of one thing: I want more and more to merge the fictional and the documental, or in other words, to confuse the actors that are playing characters with real people that are playing themselves.

Ken Jacobs

(...) film can really capture a lightness. It captures the moment, to a certain extent, very convincingly. So, I see our kids, who are now 37 and 41 years old, as being kids and I imagine a mother beginning lactating, her breast giving milk, to see these images of these kids. So there. And at home, I have sound recordings and the kids sound like themselves. This is a strange age. We are able to document passing time and look at it later and you're in two worlds. You're there, the kids embracing who they are but they don't ask you anymore, they don't argue with you. That is crazy-making.

Luc Moullet

Madness is very connected to creation. When you're crazy, you have two options: the first is to become a filmmaker or a painter or a novelist; the second is to give in to your madness, which is what can lead you to kill people, or yourself.

Mike Hoolboom

Losing Time

What is so helpful about movie festivals is that they happen in real time, as the saying goes, and in a real city. Watching the same selection of shorts and longs streaming on the internet is no substitute, just as

buying books on the internet is no substitute for a book store. Because on the internet you are efficiently delivered to the book you know you want. But in the bookstore you are inefficiently delivered to books you don't know you want. In the bookstore (will there be any left, by the time this is published?), the possibility of an un-useful time opens up, a time that is not commandeered and driven to a point. Call it browsing. The art of losing time. Cinema is the art of losing time. And naturally enough the film festival was created in order to extend this art of losing time. It is such a gift, particularly now, in this timeless time, with its mounting pressures for incessant digital contact, to be able to wander through the theatres, the cafes, the unfamiliar faces that are turning into a new family, the familiar faces that suddenly appear strange and faraway. We need this time, now more than ever, so that we find ourselves, and our memories, by becoming lost, entirely disarranged and incomprehensible. The festival invites us to give up our cover stories, to leave our proper faces at the door, to surrender to our secret ambitions, to ambush our best intentions, to speak as if we didn't already know what we were going to say. In other words: to invent. The festival invites each of its participants to invent themselves, to relinquish the convictions that are busy turning so many of us into parodies of ourselves. As if we were cast in the same play night after night, forced to emit the same cloud of language in the same way with the same results.

Yann Gonzalez

I love no man's lands. It's like we're in the middle of nowhere, but with some invisible history beneath it. The whole film, the whole story of my characters has yet to be made, but they're already surrounded by some kind of ghosts, spirits from the past.