

EXPERIMENTING POST-COLONIAL FILM LANDSCAPES. A CONVERSATION WITH ANA VAZ

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ABSTRACT

The artist and experimental filmmaker Ana Vaz shares in this interview a critical overview of her body of work. From the initial elements that would structure her artistic practice up to the connection between cinema and the colonizing modernity, the artist describes how the moving image can participate in this discussion, challenging established forms of representation. Inspired by the pedagogic contributions of Paulo Freire and Jacques Rancière, Ana Vaz assumes the importance of undisciplinarity in her work – the challenging of the borders of traditional disciplines – and a “walk and listen” methodology.

Keywords: Experimental cinema; Brazilian cinema; Poetry cinema; Avant-garde cinema; Postcolonial cinema

Ana Vaz (b. Brasília, 1986) is one of the most notorious Brazilian experimental filmmakers working today. Her films were shown at festivals and institutions such as: Berlinale Forum Expanded, New York Film Festival, TIFF Wavelengths, Cinéma du Réel, CPH:DOX, Flaherty Seminar, Tate Modern, Palais de Tokyo, Jeu de Paume, LUX Moving Images, Courtisane, among others. Her body of work narrates stories hidden in the lost memories of the nuances of colonial landscapes. By exploring multi-temporalities, her films reflect the borderland experience – be it the borders between Brazil and Europe; art gallery and film theater; poetry and cinema, or between humans and non-humans. In addition, her films are the result of meaningful dialogue with the greatest thinkers of our time, such as: Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway, Jacques Derrida, Viveiros de Castro, David Kopenawa, João Guimarães Rosa, and Clarice Lispector.

The filmmaker gave this exclusive interview to JSTA, in which she talks about the central themes of her filmography. She also addresses her most recent production: *13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* (2021) and *The Voyage Out*, her first feature film currently in production with the support of the Sundance Documentary Film Fund. Departing from critical pedagogy and a “walk and listen” methodology, we invite readers to explore the space borders in Ana Vaz’s counter-cinema in this interview given especially to JSTA in Lisbon, August 2021.

1. THE FOUNDING MYTHS

Bárbara Bergamaschi: I thought we could start talking about your films individually, but outside an “evolutionary” perspective that begins in childhood to finally get to an artistic maturity. I propose we think about the seed or the embryo, that already exists in your first films and that, with time, gains strength and blossoms. Following the plant metaphor, thinking about films that grow roots, that create rhizomes, that is, within a network logic.

Your first film *Sacris Pulso* (2008) was made with amateur family archives mixed with excerpts from the 1968 *Brasiliários* film (directed by Zuleica Porto and Sérgio Bazi). The film won the Best Music Award (composed by Guilherme Vaz, your father) at the Brasília Film Festival of that year. Your mother, Claudia Pereira, stars in the film as the writer Clarice Lispector.

Your first film brings several founding myths to light: the utopian city; the great Brazilian writer; the family myth of the mother and the father as symbolic figures. We are both *Candangas*, that means natural from Brasília (Brazil’s capital city), and I believe that growing up in this particular landscape, with broad horizons, marked by this architecture and modernist utopia (which, to some extent, did not materialize) really imprints something very particular in our spirit and ways of understanding the world. I thought we could start our conversation from this experience that unites us: being from this “Martian city”, as Clarice Lispector once said.



Figure 1. Still from *Sacris Pulso* (2008). Courtesy of the artist.

Ana Vaz: The experience of living in Brasília is almost perfectly translated in a quote that I always remember, like a sort of mantra, that my mom used to say: “here is a place where the space seems more like time”. It makes me emotional because it translates that experience. That phrase is said in a panoramic shot, that starts from the ground with red dry dirt and then it goes up, up, up, and suddenly, it is no longer just the sky, just Brasília, but something cosmic. A place with an active camera that transforms possible relationships with other dimensions of time and worlds.

Brasiliários became some kind of a foundation myth about my existence, because people would tell me “Ana is a Brasiliária”, “Ana was born nine months after *Brasiliários*”, hearing that as a child is unsettling, strange, what does it mean when people say you were born out of a film? My parents didn’t live together for long, even though they were great friends and partners in life. My relationship with that time, of my possible conception, of their meeting in a film set is a playful interpretation, and also a critical one, of Brasília – as Clarice Lispector said, “the future’s ruin”. When you see an image of my mom in *Brasiliários*, walking around the city, we don’t see anyone else... We see the body of Clarice as a ghost (and I think *Brasiliários* is a film about ghosts) that crosses this place that used to be something but that no longer is – the embryo of something that is already gone.

And suppose we understand this embryo as the social and political human architecture of Brasília, as a kind of skeleton, the body of frenzied modernity, of a toxic modernity with its highways. In that case, its concrete, its stones that cover the soil, with its clear white monuments that pretend nothing existed before them, that affirm the beginning of history with their own birth. That is to say, the burden of this dystopian

inheritance that Brasileenses (people born in Brasília) carry, all of that is in *Brasiliários*, in a very opaque way.

But it is there because the city itself is made of bones. It is the entropy of what can never be. I insist that the problem of utopia is the “U” before the “topia”. It is the “U” that negates the *topos*. In a very concrete sense, we can think of the number of endemic trees from the Cerrado biome that was removed in trucks and by trucks, removing the fauna, transforming the *topos* into a *u-topos*, a utopia, denying the local topography.

BB: Utopia is a no-where, *u-topos*. In fact, the premise of every utopia is that it doesn't exist.

AV: Yes, exactly. And given this artificial emptiness, because the place that denies the *topos* does not exist, because *topos* is the place, *topos* is history, and the land is history. So, being the daughter of the denial of history is very complicated... [laughing]. Who are my ancestors then? Where are my dead who are in Minas Gerais and Goiás, but not here? My family arrived in Brasília in 1962, two years after its constructions, the impact was huge, my mom told me about this feeling of coming to the city by car and my grandfather saying, “it's Brasília”, and she answers “Where is the city? Where is the city? It looks like the city is flying! Where are we?”.

There is something almost real in this monstrous science fiction that is Brasília, something that haunts me and that has haunted me from the beginning. There was something I couldn't quite understand there, these family accounts of arriving in a city where there is nothing, a construction site, a desert, is my clearest memory. There is also the short-lived dream of a social democracy project that was the University of Brasília, Anísio Teixeira's project. It is one of the most radical projects concerning pedagogy that I have ever seen – in which a mathematician has classes with a musician; architects teach anthropologists, so there was a profound idea of interdisciplinarity in the city's project. My parents went to this school, and I inherited this notion of interdisciplinarity, or rather, being undisciplined in the face of disciplines.

But sadly, in 1964, with the military coup, Brasília became a panoptic architecture, Brasília became a vigilant architecture, the daughter of the military dictatorship... Of course, I didn't think like that in 1980, but today I understand why my father left Brasília. It was the pinnacle, the beginning of the conceptual art movement in Brazil, in which my father, Cildo Meireles¹ and Luiz Alphonsus² already had their first critical work, still very underground, the issue of the panoptic that was rising, with the strong demeanor of the military.

I only understood all of that later in life, but I have an embryonic memory from when my mom was pregnant: the notes; the chords, and the deep and reverberating songs my father wrote for *Brasiliários*, that was a base for other music he wrote later, in the Amazonian period. *Brasiliários* was composed in my father's *sertanejo*³ period before he left Rio de Janeiro city, and before he denied the bourgeois world of art.

1 Cildo Campos Meireles (Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 1948) is recognized as one of the most important contemporary Brazilian artists. He began his studies in art in 1963, at the Fundação Cultural do Distrito Federal, in Brasília. Through publications, he gets to know the Neoconcreto Group, from Rio de Janeiro. He is then attracted by the movement ideals and get interested in the possibility opened by the group “of thinking about art in terms that are not limited to the visual”. In 1967, he moved to Rio de Janeiro. That year, the artist abandoned expressionist figuration, turning to three-dimensional works. In 1970, he participated in the group exhibition Information, at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), in New York. The exhibition brings together much of the conceptual matrix production from the 1960s. His underlined works are: the installation “Desvio para o Vermelho” (shown at MAM/RJ, first in 1967, now available at the Inhotim Museum in Minas Gerais); Virtual Spaces: Cantos (1967-1969) and Insertions in Ideological Circuits (1970), a series of works in which he prints subversive phrases on banknotes and Coca-Cola bottles, shifting the reception of the work from the “public” dimension to the of “circuit”. The political intervention in banal objects is constant in his production between 1970 and 1975, such as *Árvore do Dinheiro* (1969), *Introduction to a New Criticism* (1970) and *O Sermão da Montanha: Fiat Lux* (1973). (Source: Cildo Meireles. Enciclopédia Itaú Cultural. <https://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/pessoa10593/cildo-meireles>)

2 Born in Belo Horizonte, in 1948. Luiz Alphonsus (de Guimaraens) lives and works in Rio de Janeiro. He is a photographer, painter, sculptor and multimedia artist. He began his career in the late 1960s in Brasília, a city of great importance to his artistic formation. There, he made part of the group formed by the artists Cildo Meireles, Guilherme Vaz and Alfredo Fontes. This generation of artists went through the most oppressive period of the Military Dictatorship, a fact that strongly influenced the works of that time. In 1969, he founded the MAM Experimental Unit – Rio de Janeiro with Frederico Moraes, Guilherme Vaz and Cildo Meireles. He also served from 1993 to 1998 as Director of the Parque Lage School of Visual Arts. (Source: Bio. Luiz Alphonsus' official website. <https://www.luizalphonsus.com.br/bio>)

3 The *sertanejo* is a typical folkloric figure in the Brazilian Northeast. It is a result of the contact between the white population and the indigenous people, which gave rise to a mestizo population. The “sertanejos”, would be something similar to the “cowboys” that would incarnate the “spirit” of Brazil's hinterland. It is also a word nowadays used to refer to the popular musical genre, the “country music” that plays in the Brazilian pop radios.

BB: He threaded his way deep in Brazil.

AV: He went inside, in the deep double meaning of the word: turning to himself and going inside the country geographically. When I left Brazil for the first time, I went to a place that was as “western” as the place I come from. That’s when I finally got around all these stories I carried inside me. Australia was an essential place for my critical perception of the world, and for a kind of body maturity with real experiences, friendships, and teachers with whom I was so lucky to study cinema, in an unusual place.

BB: Australia is also desertic; in a way, they have a wild nature that is similar to Brasília.

AV: When I got there, I couldn’t believe it, it was the same feeling of “here is the place where space seems more like time”, Australia has broad horizons, sun, the arid vegetation. I was at Vitória, a place that is supposed to be more humid, very distant from the Anglo-Saxon Cristian colonial cultural imposition. It was where I studied and could understand all those things about the place where I come from, which was very unexpected.

And it was maybe this kind of empty place that I was coming from, a place that denies history, from that I wanted to start digging out what origin means, what root means, what seed means. What does it mean to have a root if I’m no longer there? We know that in any transplanted, the plant may survive, but the nutrients and minerals are different. The soil is different, and being different, we start to create new roots and try new ways of contact and affinity with other beings and unexpected people.

BB: You were under new codes, languages, symbols, bodies, flavours and knowledge...

AV: Everything was new and that was how *Sacris Pulso* emerged, as a kind of imaginary return through film. I started seeing cinema as this machine that connects worlds, times and spaces that could not be connected without this force, that is a little bit like magic, very animistic, in the profound meaning of the world, that camera and editing do. In other words, all the *cinematographe*, the cinema equipment allows us what I would call creation or co-creation of parallel worlds and dimensions. Something that Jean Epstein understood right at the beginning of cinema when he said: “the intelligent machine!”. The intelligent machine is so smart that, in fact, it gives us the capacity to dehumanize our sight. Through its techniques: the focus, velocity, which transforms perception, it changes what it is to be human, and the human body.

I started editing *Sacris Pulso* at an unexpected moment. I was researching the Australian experimental cinema. I was deep in that wonderful universe made by Arthur and Corinne Cantrill, the first filmmakers to work with the film’s materiality concerning the body and the Australian territory. They would go camping, to try to understand the desert, which is never truly a desert since it is made by a weave of

relations. I was blessed to have this teacher, Adrian Danks, who studied and analyzed the relationship between experimental cinema, time and, memory – through Chirs Marker and other filmmakers that are very important to me like Su Friedrich and Abigail Child.

One day I met Dirk De Bryun, a very important filmmaker for me, and I interviewed him about his relationship with trauma and cinema, and how he taught and imagined that, and how he had experienced the informal and friendly (but real) movement of experimental cinema in Melbourne in the 1970-80s. I was there to interview him, and he ended up interviewing me [laughing]! When I got there, he asked me: “where are you from?” And when I told him what I told you today, he asked me: “So, don’t you think you should watch *Brasiliários* again? Think about your relationship with it?”.

I left the interview confused by it. I knew *Brasiliários* by heart. I knew it in my body! At the same time, I was collecting abandoned images, images I found, amateur, family images that strangely end up in thrift stores. I started observing these images, and I realized that I didn’t have a family archive like those people I was studying. How can I make up an archive? How can I elaborate on a trail that doesn’t exist?

BB: You had to fabricate the ruin!

AV: Yes [laughing], I had to fabricate my “*enprint*” – my steps. I started watching those films, with a telecine, completely homemade. I had a small projector, and I projected on the wall, and I would film with a digital camera, and I would exhume those images. I was very moved by what I saw. For instance, that shot of the Australian couple buzzing a sheep.

BB: Besides the work with the image’s skin, that scene reminds me of the symbology of a snake that changes skin. Is the film a kind of rebirth?

AV: Exactly, that would be a good translation. The film has all those found images, and I create a fictitious autobiography with it, images that are with me and haunt me until today. There is a kind of violence and sweetness there, when they both look at the camera, look at the sheep and buzz the sheep, the sheep’s fur is a rebirth, but it is also a transplant, in a way, because they remove the first coat. It is connected to the image’s skin because I’m working with a material that demands a hand, time, smells, breath, being there and observing, filming, zooming. The telecine is made in the film in a very amateur way because it is a bodily response to what I was watching.

And then I had to go back to *Brasiliários* because it was the only existing trail, a kind of primitive scene. I started thinking about it and writing about it: what does it mean to have a primitive scene in a film? A film that is fictional but based on a text that talks about the ending of a place that is almost becoming a new place that new people will seize.

BB: When we separate from our parents, we also re-elaborate ourselves in repetition and difference, right? Because we all repeat our parents

to some extent, but in the repetition, something diverges, and so in this difference, we can “kill” our parents symbolically to be reborn. Your story reminded me of Oswald de Andrade when he said in the *Manifesto Pau-Brasil* (1924/1986) he only knew what Brazil was when he went to Paris!

AV: [laughing] And maybe with the same acidity and anthropophagic hunger that Oswald is alluding to there! But I wouldn't say it's anthropophagic in the Oswaldian sense of eating the roots of Brazilian culture because I didn't know exactly what they were, beyond the fabrication of all these fictions: Brasília, parents, travel, family. I am beginning to understand this game of artificialities that coexist there. Everything was forged because I didn't have any videos of my family. I didn't have anything, just photographic images. And I'm starting to understand that no biography exists without a layer of fiction and that writing about yourself has a lot to do with fictionalizing, as being analogous to reinventing yourself.

I could say that *Sacris Pulso* is a fictional biography, not an autobiography, but it touches on all the issues that will be present in all my other films. I could never have been aware of this because it comes from something so feverish and so unusual that it was a meditation film for me. It wasn't meant to be seen in a room by other people; it's a very intimate film. The images do not allow me to go underground, but there is a game of superimposing images as if I was going to build a kind of soil in the film, and the soil becomes more and more hybrid, more and more mixed. There are so many images, and at the same time you no longer see anything. I remember having this feeling a lot in the editing room, starting to understand that my editing was done by overlapping layers because I understood that no single image could do it, and it will never do it... So, it's partiality and opacity that I'm always trying to bring to the image so as not to reveal it — respecting a certain opacity in each image as an embryo of a world that we cannot see as a whole.

2. UTOPIC LANDSCAPES

BB: *Sacris Pulso* would become the first of a trilogy of films, right?

AV: Yes. And that is one of the permanent cores of the films I make, something I would call a deep connection to the multidimensionality of times. And how there is no future without a past, there is no present without a future and past, and how these times actually mingle and intersect constantly. We know that many peoples believe that the past is ahead of us and not behind us.

This issue of the multidimensionality of time, which is something that takes place in space, is something that is *akin*. It is an ally, a partner, inherent to what cinema is: what cinema can be. At the time, I thought there would be a trilogy I called the Utopia Trilogy - which started with *Sacris Pulso*, then went through *Entre Temps* (2012) and finally *A Idade da Pedra* [*The Age of Stone*] (2013).

BB: *Entre Temps* is also about the city's archeology, the hidden story underneath the modernists buildings in Paris, the same modernist constructions of Le Corbusier that are similar to the idea of the Brasília project...

AV: Exactly. What is underneath the buildings? Nothing? In *Entre Temps*, the child is searching for something, and *Invisible Cities* (1974) by Italo Calvino is there. After making the film about distance in Australia, I made this film in France, and I decided it was time to go back to Brasília. That's when we get to *A Idade da Pedra*.

BB: You were slowly walking back to your homeland. The use of CGI in that film is different from your other films made with analogical film, 8mm and 16mm...

AV: I said to myself – because I was very resistant at the time: I'm not going to film Brasília's architecture! There is enough documentation of that architecture! It exists in the festive and effusive imaginary of its construction. I will try to deform Brasília as a Frankenstein of what it could be when it becomes derelict. An entirely speculative project. What will Brasília be when it is, at last, a ruin? Believing that every ruin is always entropic, it won't resemble to the clean and curved architecture's drawings, it will be something else.

I was photographing the city for a long time, the places I knew, the iconic sites, the less iconic locations, and with this set of photographs, I started making collages, where I transformed the city. I took the columns of one place, the buildings of another, the façade of another, and that was how I got interested in the relationship between 3D, sculpture, and cinema. And I understood that the true utopia would be to insert something that does not exist inside the film. This film would not be about this monster, the ruined city as an entropic structure. The film is fictional as a timeless ethnography; we don't know if it is past, present, or future.

What we need are assemblies that can look at these territories, live these territories, talk to the territories and their peoples, to understand these assemblies is what interests me more and more. That is what happens in *Apiyemiyekî?* (2019): How can we look at these drawings⁴? This happens in *Há Terra! [There is land!]* (2016): how can we talk with this young woman Ivonete (she is incredible!) with whom I had already filmed *A Idade da Pedra*. While she doesn't identify as Calunga, her story is ultimately linked to the Calunga story in the north of Goiás. I went back to show her *A Idade da Pedra* – which we had done 2 or 3 years prior –, and I said, "let's reshoot it?". I only had one reel, and this time there's no crew; it was just me and her. And I suggested to her: "you make the sound, and I record the image".

And when the conversation started, she told me that she was living in a Landless Workers' Movement (MST) camp with her father. She told me about Major Felipão, a great landowner who terrorized and expelled rural local people. You see this entire continuous loop of the same colonization story there in the present.

4 *Apiyemiyekî?* interprets and dialogues with drawings made by Waimiri-Atroari, an indigenous people from the Amazon, documenting and narrating their encounters with the "civilized man" – a traumatic history of genocide.

5 *Grande Sertão Veredas* is a novel published in 1956 considered the masterpiece of one of the great Brazilian writers, João Guimarães Rosa. It is regarded as one of the most important novels of Portuguese language and South American literature. The novel narrates the epic tragic story of Riobaldo, a former "jagunço" (mercenary or bandit) that sells his expertise to farmowners and politicians that dispute land and power in the countryside of Brazil during the end of the 20th century. The original title refers to the veredas - small paths through wetlands characterized by the presence of buritizais, groups of the buriti palm-tree (*Mauritia flexuosa*), that criss-cross the Sertão region, that creates a especie of natural labyrinth in the woods. The region of Sertão in the book not only refers to a geographical site, but also works as a metaphor for the ethical paths one can choose in life and the innumerable contradictory desires of the human soul. The book is written in both archaic and colloquial Portuguese, an oral register made by the author during his ethnographic research in the Sertão region in northern Minas Gerais. The book is also known for the author's remarkable neologisms, which makes the book a challenging task to translate to other languages. Rosa's writings are the theme of investigation of many theorists and philosophers, such as Jacques Rancière in his recent book *Les Bords de la fiction* (2017).

BB: There is a visual vocabulary in your filmography that points out to the fauna and flora of the Cerrado biome. For example, the siriemas, the cicadas, the moriche palm, and the white quartz of Pirenópolis (that are present on the floors of the modernists buildings of Brasília's Plano Piloto), the cherimoya, the pequi, are all in *Há Terra!, A Idade da Pedra, Olhe Bem as Montanhas* [*Look Closely at the Mountains*] (2018) and the recent *Apiyemiyekî?*. These beings are also present in Guimarães Rosa's books. People usually think that *Grande Sertão Veredas*⁵ [*The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*] (1956) is set in Northeast Brazil, still, the landscape is in the Cerrado biome, the border between Goiás State and Minas Gerais State, right? That landscape is similar to Brasília's! Can you talk about this symbolic dictionary composed by this landscape and nature that seem to be so important in your films?

AV: In *Olhe bem As Montanhas* I was in the park where Guimarães Rosa wrote the book, in Minas Gerais hinterland, near Januária, up the São Francisco river. From there, you arrive at the Grande Sertão Veredas national park. There is a parquet guide in the film that quotes an excerpt from the book. And there is something very extraordinary about Guimarães Rosa's book, as we know very well, that it is a book that only exists until the point where you start to read it aloud. In other words, *Grande Sertão* asks your body to activate the text so that you begin to understand what seems incomprehensible when you read it. And, when I finally arrived at Chapada Gaúcha, inside the park where he wrote the book, and I started to hear people talk, I realized how great a documentary filmmaker he was!

What he did was literally a translation – when thinking about the question of the word and transduction, the transformation from something oral to something written – in which a transformation already takes place. Above all, the strength of *Grande Sertão Veredas* is this: to observe. Interact with attention and presence – and with our body, because he can only write that book because he crosses that landscape – the *sertão*. I only understood *Grande Sertão* when I started to realize what Guimarães Rosa's methodology would have been the methodology of walking and listening. And I would say that these are two key elements of my entire filmography: walking and listening.

If you think of all the films, whether it's *O Olha Bem as montanhas*, which is a film about walking and listening, or *Há Terra!*, and *A Idade da Pedra*, I would say that they were born out of a powerful desire to say: there is something under this city, there is something beyond the visible, there is something that haunts this place, and we don't see it.

BB: Some of the images in *Há Terra!* and *Occidente* (2014) were made in the zoo, right? The two films are complementary in any way?

AV: All the images of animals and nature documentaries in *Occidente* were found on the internet, I didn't record them. In *Há Terra!*, the film's

structure is divided into two moments: the first is the meeting with Ivonete, who is haunted by the soundtrack of Manoel de Oliveira in the film *Francisca* (1981) – a film no one recognizes as a film about the malaise of colonialism, but that’s what I think it is about.

The first line in the film says: “With its independence, Brazil starts a moral crisis in the Portuguese court”, which is the pinnacle of the Porto’s bourgeoisie. What we see is the death by asphyxia of a young English woman that was married to a Portuguese bourgeois, but I don’t think the film is about that. The film is about the things it doesn’t show. Therefore, the soundtrack is made by Manoel de Oliveira’s *Francisca* (1981) soundtrack, the “Há terra!” (“There is land!”) that is shouted throughout the film and the excerpt that says, “we are lost and don’t know where to go!” it all infiltrates in Ivonete’s narrative. For me, these are the two times that are the same time – the coming together of temporalities.

The film’s second part is set on Brasília’s Zoo, and I also filmed books and Rugenda’s paintings. I went after what Rugendas had painted in Goiás to try to understand the historical relationship and colonial view of that territory. So, seeing these paintings by Johann Moritz Rugendas and right after listening to Ivonete, you see that all the paintings are of these colonels and landowners, with the enslaved Black people in the surroundings, and the Indigenous natives near the trees in the background. So, you begin to understand this naturalized historical enactment as a history that is not one of a smooth and peaceful colonialism - which is how Portuguese colonialism presents itself in official history books.

The film takes place in these two moments: Brasília’s Zoo transforming into this great cinedoc of the domestication of everything. Everything that modernity wants to tame. Bruno Latour says this in a very blunt way in *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), he says: “the problem with modernity is that it has the disease of history, the more it exterminates, the more it creates museums, photographs, writes books, encyclopedias, and disciplines.” And this overwhelming destruction goes hand in hand with overwhelming conservation - this is a disease of history. The disease of modernity, which for me has a lot to do with Brasília, is



fig. 2 – Still from *Há Terra!* (2016). Courtesy of the artist.

what I'm trying to undo in my films. Remembering always to try to address these monstrous ancestors of mine more than anything else.

BB: Speaking more about *Entre Temps*, I remember that the film begins with a black screen and the sound of someone describing the landscape and objects, almost like a concrete poem. It is very curious that in the “dark,” we can imagine and visualize all those things perfectly. As if it was possible to “see it better” in the dark.

AV: Precisely. And I think that this goes against something that seems antithetical to cinema, that cinema is apprehended, perceived, disseminated, used, as optical art, as visual art. And I think above all cinema, or at least the cinema that I'm interested in doing, is about what doesn't fit in the frame, about what we can't see. In each one of the films I've made, I'd say what you see is only a part of another film that isn't quite there. I would say all my films are cryptic. They are camouflaged. They don't give everything away; they try to allude to something that they won't completely resolve because they believe that the meeting of people and film is also a fabrication process. So, they are constantly being retold and re-manufactured through each of these projections, through each conversation or debate. Watching a film here in Lisbon or at Chapada dos Veadeiros, or an international festival, are entirely unique experiences, and I believe that films have this charge, like any other object, that they are in fact situated. My films are situated in their production and diffusion; it is also important to think about this issue of how the public receives them.

BB: And right after the opening of *Entre Temps*, there is a text about the Byzantine relics that are buried under that housing complex, the housing projects in the banlieues of Paris: buildings built for immigrants, which have the architecture inherited from the same modernist project done in Brasília but that somehow is in “decay”. This modernism that was impoverished to become merely utilitarian, and today is in the buildings of the peripheral social districts of Europe. So, we are left imagining the wealth buried beneath this “poor” landscape.

AV: *Entre Temps* begins with the idea that the landscape is like a face. I say that in the film. And the face you see is the corner of a modernist social building. My French friends used to tell me that I couldn't compare that to Brasília! But it's the same kind of thinking, they share the same roots. Only here you're using it as a social architecture to segregate, to push out the populations that you don't want in the city center, and for me that was appalling...

Something that has always disturbed me a little in cinema is the relationship between cinema and landscape, that evolves from the relation established by painting. Historically, landscape was understood as something that would be in the background, behind a character, humans (very often white men). There is the foreground and the background, the viewer has a subjectivity, and the landscape appears

as a tangled nature – this “thing” called nature that is not part of us. It corresponds to the modern historical break between nature and culture. And a kind of “window” in the painting opened this exterior to observation: this immutable, lifeless, uninhabited nature. In fact, the representation of the “empty” landscape is once again an image par excellence of colonialism. There is nothing here and we will take it! So, let’s build! A cross is traced on the ground. The first colonial images of all the colonies in the world say the same thing: “here, there is nothing!”

Therefore, when I’m filming a territory I try to escape from the notion of landscape. Unlike the landscape, the territory is produced by historical, biological, social, spectral, spiritual relationships, and they are alive; the landscape is never inert. What I’m going to try to do in the films is this game between what’s behind and in front, between figure and background. I’m much more interested in doing a cinema of the backgrounds than a cinema of figures.

3. THE EARTH PERSPECTIVE

BB: The film that explores more deeply this idea of the deconstruction of Renaissance’s “window effect” seems to be *Amérika: Bahía de las Flechas* [*Amérika: Bay of Arrows*] (2016). The film starts with upside-down images, where the camera is taken completely off its axis, disorienting the device and the viewer as well. It seems to me that the world is seen from the perspective of the colonized, resembling the works of art by the Uruguayan Joaquín Torres-García, who paints the map of South America inverted, as if we were seeing everything from the point of view of the “Global South”, to quote Boaventura de Sousa Santos.

AV: I would rather say it was an Earth perspective, instead of a Southern perspective. We spent about 10 days in the Dominican Republic walking around these landscapes that were going through processes of systemic transformations: a lake that dried up and suddenly flooded, territories in deep drought, a forest with many difficulties to renew itself. And on the last day, Guaranex, who was the person who accompanied us, a guide and forester of Tainó origin, told me: “do you know that we are walking on top of a large Tainó cemetery? If you dig just a little, here is the entire history of our people.” This conversation made me realize that it was necessary to try to invert this relationship between heaven and earth, this relationship with ascension in the modernity, a relationship with space that always looks up, always looks messianically at something on the rise, moving upwards off Earth – exemplified, today, by the process of space exploration.

Amérika is born from an almost corporeal need to work the camera as an extension, or as a prosthesis of the body. It was where I made the most choreographic gesture of all my films. Dance was extremely important to me, as I danced for many years. Also, we should consider that the relationship with the camera in cinema has always been a relationship with the body, a choreography and a form

of presence. And there, I did this 360-degree rotation with my body – similar to the rotation of the earth, the rotation of the sun, the rotation of cycles of nature –; it also became a form of inversion of time, the alteration of what usually is below and what’s on top. It was somewhat a delusional and hallucinated movement. I believe that cinema is a great art of hallucination, regarding what it can do with our ability to apprehend and perceive the world. Hallucination as an affirmation of the multidimensionality of times.

BB: Speaking of hallucinations, in *Olhe Bem As Montanhas* you depict those cave paintings that are very astonishing. They resemble the city landscape of Belo Horizonte, with those hundreds of skyscrapers buildings. It is almost as if that original, “prehistoric” native people had had a premonitory vision of the future.... Also, the image of the cave immediately makes us think of the – quite obvious – of Plato’s allegory of the cave. Many theoreticians have already underlined the relationship between the architecture of the camera obscura and the cinema theater with this allegory. They state that cinema would also be this place of creation of pure illusion and magic, as well a place for political alienation.

AV: The problematic of the allegory of the cave has always bothered me a little in relation to this Platonic ideal of perfect apprehension of the world. As if we only lived in a game of deceive and shadows in contrast to something that “really” exists, in an almost idealized idea of outside of the cave. As if inside of the cave we only had access to non-conforming copies and non-faithful copies, all unreliable. What interests me is the cinema of the outskirts, which believes both in the shadows and in reflection, where figure and shadow can coexist, and there are no hierarchy between them. There is no difference between what we learn to be a reflection of the real world and the real world, they are one as a whole.

BB: Thinking on this magical aspect, the Early Cinema came to my mind – those short films that staged magic tricks, vaudeville spectacles, little gags, circus shows, etc. And I noticed that in your films *Atomic Garden* (2018) and *Amazing Fantasy* (2018) there is a certain re-reading or re-elaboration of the cinema of that period, no? It also seems to me that you got inspiration from the structuralist films and neo avant-garde filmmakers, who were doing physiological experiments with vision, using the flicker effects, for example. Visual experiments that are present in the films of Rose Lowder, Marie Menken, and Peter Kubelka, to mention a few. But now the protagonists are no longer western subjects, there is a radical shift in your body of work to the other extreme of the world: the east.

AV: *Atomic Garden* and *Amazing Fantasy* are the first two films I made on a territory very far from where I came from, which is Japan.

A country where I've been working for around 6 years on a film project that requires long time of producing and listening. The project exists as a sort of film archipelago of ghostly films, I would say. All these films have a high phantasmagorical element. *The Voyage Out* – which is the name of this ongoing project – is not only a ghost film in the sense that it already exists even if it hasn't still consolidated as a materialized body of work, but also because it has a series of ghostly incarnations.

Indeed, due to its simplicity and economy of means, both films you referred take us back to Early Cinema. What interests me the most about Early Cinema is this belief in the device of cinema as a means for transforming perception, or challenging perception, through magic and illusion. An illusion perhaps very real, because the most appealing and beautiful thing about cinema is that it affirms the illusion. It's what Derrida would call the "Suspension of Disbelief", isn't it? This cinematic suspension of disbelief is almost as strong and important as the suspension that allow us to believe that there are other dimensions, or a different world in this world, not just in a mystical or religious way.

It is interesting to think about how these films relate to experimental cinema. Maybe they are closer to Jean Epstein and to Méliès, than to Rose Lowder or to Marie Menken – filmmakers I respect immensely – because I think in my films there is a narrative desire. And this is the big difference from what was a certain part of the avant-garde cinema, as it was practiced by Brakhage and other filmmakers who are interested in the materiality and structure of the cinematographic device.

BB: And why they would be narrative?

AV: *Atomic Garden* is not just a *flicker* film. They are not fireworks and flowers that could be together without context. We are in the fields surrounding the nuclear power plant that was broke down after the Fukushima nuclear accident, one of the greatest nuclear disasters in our recent history. And a nuclear disaster never happens in just one isolated place. Because nuclear particles travel. They penetrate winds, currents, tides and seas. And there, above all, they penetrate the soil. The way they are doing the decontamination in the Fukushima region – that I've been trying to follow since 2016 – is that they take layers and layers of soil, allocate them in big plastic bags, and throw these bags in short term deposits, which can only be deposited for 30 years and then they change location. This removal of the soil layer, it is also as a recreation or an attempt to recreate a new territory through a kind of geoformation.

The film's opening scene starts with something very beautiful: during late summer the cicadas singing so loud, almost like a kind of Haiku. We met with Ms. Aoki Sadako, who is taking care of her flowers, despite the fact that she has been displaced from her main



Fig. 3 – Still from *Atomic Garden* (2018). Courtesy of the artist.

house and lives now in a temporary house due to the Fukushima disaster. That means, this woman was displaced due to that nuclear accident, and she comes back every week to take care of her garden.

BB: It is interesting that the earth nourishes, gives us food, sustenance, but it is also the place where the dead go. And the flower that comes from that land has this paradoxical side, because it is something that embellishes, but in some way, the flower is also a corpse, isn't it? And this radioactive soil, that can cause a cancer... the cancer itself is, in a way, an implosion of cells, an uncontrolled reproduction. And the fireworks formation also can refer to both that carcinogenic process and the atomic bomb explosion. It is like if the film was composed in the same way of a poem, like a series of internal visual rhymes.

AV: Death, earth, phoenix, rebirth, implosion... It's almost concrete poetry. The two images should have never been together. It's two three-minute rolls: a roll with Aoki Sadako in her garden happy to show me her flowers at the end of the blooming process of the summer; and three minutes of fireworks recorded at the Bon Odori celebrations. By chance, the two rolls were revealed together. Bon Odori is the celebration of the ancestors; it is a festivity for the dead that takes place throughout the month of August with almost a set of daily fireworks. At this ritual, people wear their Yukatas (a kind of bathing suit) and go to the bank of a river to light a candle for their ancestors, and that's when the connection between the present time and alternative times happens.

When I saw that these images were revealed next to each other, I realized that they fed on each other. Instead of being separated into two films, they should be together, there should be this forced approximation between them. It was the possibility of a reconnection with something that once was – this land that can never go back to what it was before. Aoki Sadako's drama is the drama of any indigenous native community: she was forcibly removed from her homeland; her land was contaminated, and

she can no longer live off it. She wants to be back there because her dead are there, so she's going to even undergo radiation effects to be there.

I only understand this relationship when I show this film to a friend I've been working with, Yoko Hayasuke – we are doing an adaptation of her original text for *The Voyage Out* project. The summer and the month of August marks the period of the year when the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings happened. She then says: “for me, as a Japanese, when I see fireworks, I see nuclear explosions.” So it's a very heavy weighted film... What bothers me is that the film can be read superficially, as a beautiful film because of the flowers, but my flowers are monstrous... For me *Atomic Garden* is a monster film, it is closer to Godzilla than Marie Menken [laughs].

Amazing Fantasy refers to Early Cinema because it is a performance made for the camera, remembering that the beginning of cinema has a lot to do with drama and the theater. It has to do with this mental state of suspended attention, where a performance takes place in real time. Again, it's a 16mm reel with just three minutes, made with a magnificent child



Fig. 4 – Still from *Amazing Fantasy* (2018). Courtesy of the artist.

I met at the end of my trip to the islands of Ogasawara, where we were filming *The Voyage Out*. When I met him, he had been practicing that game with that spinning top that levitates, with that T-shirt. In other words, none of that is invented: I listen, I walk, I document.

BB: It's the documentation of magic [laughs].

AV: In addition to recalling Early Cinema, these films for me are very narrative. The levitating spinning top is about desire for mastery and the impossibility of floating, it has everything to do with this strange desire for a certain humanity of mastery and loss of control. I think the English expression is good: trial and error, I try but I fail, I try again and I fail again.

BB: It seems to be this desire to control the forces of nature, to go against the laws of gravity. I think both films touch on the issue of the laws of physics. Because *Atomic Garden* is also about the atomic issue,

the nuclear fission and quantum physics. Both films are somehow challenging modern science. But your films are by no means purely and solely formalistic... There's the whole debate about the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene, isn't it?

AV: Form is narration, form is content. This is an old debate, but a debate that still exists. There's something about experimental cinema that's constantly going back to the beginning of cinema because it's actually pointing to the future of cinema. What cinema is constantly trying to remember through the decomposition, destruction and fragmentation of its very structure is to remind you of what cinema is capable of doing. This goes far beyond the climax colonizing industry, the so-called "commercial" cinema, which is a consumerist form of entertainment. To remember that cinema is not consumption: it is perception, transformation of perception, it is time and space. So many things are there that experimental cinema inherently points out to. It flips back to the start to point to where it will end.

4. CYBORGS AND SPHINXES IN THE CAPITALOCENE.

BB: Going back to the theme of the Anthropocene or the Capitalocene, there is a project of yours in partnership with Tristan Bera, entitled *A Film, Reclaimed* (2015). It is one of your few commissioned films, made entirely with archival footage excerpts from other films, such as Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* (1982), Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979) and Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Your film was commissioned for the opening event organized by Bruno Latour in 2015 called *Theatre of Negotiations* – a kind of *mise-en-scène* based on his text *The Parliament of Things* [*Esquisse du Parlement des choses* (1994)]. In this film you quote several thoughts of the philosopher Donna Haraway. I find it interesting how you relate the ecological debate with a surreptitious criticism to certain canonical films. I would like you to talk a little more about this relationship.

AV: It's very important for us to talk about Donna Haraway because the forms of thought and the forms of language she developed have been – and continue to be – big influences in almost everything that I do. If in my films there is something inside the frame of cinema and something outside the frame, in her writings there is also a kind of staging, or enactment, of what I would call an "essay" of another world possibility. And for this essay she needs language, she needs concepts, she needs images, sometimes she makes films or even collages, playing around with matters of science and perception of the natural world, so I think she is very complete and *undisciplined* philosopher.

A Film, Reclaimed was born in a context in which me and Tristan started remembering which films had influenced our current thoughts, and our existence in a way to elaborate a kind of common monster. Tristan calls them "the terrifying and beautiful films that accompany the Anthropocene". *A Film, Reclaimed* became a critical game with that footage from our favorite films – and I've always had a great love for

monster and horror films! As we started to look carefully at the scenes from these films, we understood how each one of them is a perfect and limpid synthesis of modern problems, whether it's Fitzcarraldo wanting to cross a giant boat in the middle of the Amazon jungle, or the explosions of home appliances, such as refrigerators and phones in Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1970). Cinema – despite this being the opposite of the cinema I seek to make – was also an accomplice of this colonizing modernity. Its narratives portrayed the dramas, collapses, and conflicts inherent to the construction of this modernity. So, we decided to think of the film as a historical object that would go through three moments: the Anthropocene, then the Capitalocene, and then finally Chthulucene (Haraway, 2016b).

BB: This former one is based on the Lovecraft monster, isn't it? The one who will get revenge on humans.

AV: Yes, but it's also the earth monster, a bit like Gaia, who takes revenge on humans but also blurs the boundaries between beings. This monster will show that beings are much more composed and hybrid, just as Donna Haraway reminded us, that we are also made of viruses and bacteria, of diverse forms of life.

BB: And that we are already cyborgs, right? This relationship with cellphones and computers that permeates our daily lives, machines have long since become extensions of our organs and bodies.

AV: Exactly, for Donna we have always been cyborgs, at least since the moment we started taking antibiotics or other medicine... (Haraway, 1985) We are part of a machine and that for me is one of the most important statements in her philosophy. It's something that we feel and see in our experience of the world, and that I try to translate into the films I make.

BB: And that mechanical aspect has become even more evident during the pandemic, when we became completely dependent of screens, with the mandatory home office. We are living a life absolutely guided by the movement and "desires" of a virus.

AV: That's right. But I think Donna Haraway claims the cyborg, she loves the cyborg! She wonders what the cyborg can do beyond totalizing machines.

BB: Yes... I remembered that she also says something like: "we have to kill god but also the goddesses". Haraway problematizes the feminism that glorifies the goddess inside every women a sort of essentialization of femininity, she criticizes this idea of female "nature".

AV: Yes, she is against this idea of creating the heroine – almost always represented by white women –, she wants to kill heroes and heroines. I think the cyborg theory is something much more fantastic and ironic, it is capable of imagining new possibilities from the garbage, from inside the machines and the “troubles”, because she says, “stay with the trouble”



Fig. 5 – Still from *Pseudosphynx* (2020). Courtesy of the artist.

(Haraway, 2016a). There is no use in closing the door and saying “I deny this bad modernity, it’s not part of me.” No! I am her daughter... She is part of me. I need to look modernity in the eye and understand what to do with this Anthropocene garbage, what to do with the toxic structures of modernity? This idea is central and structural for everything I do.

BB: Speaking of monsters, in one of your latest films, commissioned by the Moreira Salles Institute (IMS) during the pandemic, *Pseudosphynx* (2020) takes the inspiration from the scientific name of the moth, which in Brazil we popularly call it “Witch”. This name has a relationship with the sphinx, the monster that terrifies Thebes in the tragedy of Oedipus? It also reminds us of the women who were burned during the inquisition. But the film starts with an image of a popular street demonstration, I wanted to understand what those images are...

AV: To distinguish from the scientific term the title has a ‘y’ to show that the film is a fiction. This is one of the most deliberately cryptic films I’ve made. I refuse to define or summarize what’s going on in the first part of the film, but I can tell you what it is...[laughs] In this first part, I am following the counting of votes for the first round of the catastrophic presidential elections in Brazil (in 2018) with the community of my Brazilian friends who lived in France and voted there. And that was a horror. I decided from that moment that I was going to start recording – with a very dramatic name, like a kind of *esprit du temps* of what we’re living – what I call “The Diaries of Barbarity”. The name is a little inspired by the writings of Isabelle Stengers in which she says that we have to prepare for the coming barbarism, which is already taking hold of our times.

“The Barbarian Diaries” started that night, where I shot this first three-minute roll as far as I could. I’m very undisciplined with this diary thing, and I filmed the second roll in Pirenópolis, which is a healing place for me, where I go to bathe in the riverbank and to meditate, where I look for a place of refuge in this dense situation of current politics in Brazil. I think this was two days after the presidential inauguration. And when I went to bathe in the river, I saw that Plumeria, that Jasmin-Manga tree, being devoured by those caterpillars. And I said to myself: “it’s the time of devotion and death, it’s the time of plague, of disease...”

Some time passes by and my biological ignorance clearly shows the opposite. I decided to study a little this phenomenon of fire caterpillars that infest the Jardins-Manga, which happens every late summer and I discover that it’s actually a mutualism process between the two species, where caterpillars speed up the natural process of revitalizing and changing of leaves. Caterpillars eat the sap of Jasmin-Manga and transform themselves into moths, the Pseudosphinx. And I thought it was magnificent to discover that later on. I wanted to make not only a hopeful film, but I also wanted a film about transformation, about mutation and about hallucination. Because once again, to counteract the political delusion is to make another delusion: a beautiful monster.

BB: At *Olhe Bem as Montanhas* there is the presence of the rattle at an indigenous ritual. The anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2007) says that the shaman’s rattle works “as a particle accelerator” – it serves as a bridge between physical and spiritual orders, and it operates in different dimensions of anti-matter. In Gilles Deleuze (1997) there is also the understanding that the artist or writer would be a species of “sorcerers”. Deleuze remembers that the wizards in fables always lived haunting the limits of the woods, they were always found on the edge of the village, or between two places. Only sorcerers – by extension writers, poets, artists, but I also think that the scientist – could transit and walk through this interstitial place, creating a bridge, an alliance, a pact between different “becomings”. I think we can make also make this relationship with the ‘witches’ in your film.

AV: I believe there is something profoundly psychic or spiritual in the act of writing or in the act of filming. For me, cinema has always been a mediumistic art, as writing for me is increasingly a mediumistic art. It doesn’t just come from me, but things are channelled through me. I really like the word “media”, the word that has to do with the medium, and also refers this transduction of forces that exist in spectrums that were separated by modernity.

The history of witches in Europe is 300 years of continuous death of women who thought, ate, dreamed and healed through earth and plants. They had a profound autonomy in relation to each other, and those beings they cultivated, the animals that co-lived with them such as: cats, wolves, crows. Contrary to Deleuze’s position (because Deleuze’s relationship with animals is still one of distance, where we are not animals), I am more interested in witchcraft with animals alongside,

this need for becoming-animal again. Remembering that becoming only creates its own becoming, so it only creates more animality, not only through living with animals but through a recognition of the animal body that is also in us and that we inherit. This becoming-animal and wizarding across borders (without my active or conscious choice) also became the path of my life. The question of the body and its perspective is essential for this frayed geography.

Thinking about Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, I'm perhaps more interested in what the indigenous Yanomami leader Davi Kopenawa says in his beautiful essay *Floresta de Cristal* [*Crystal Forest*] (2006), which is an essay that talks about visibility, cinema and spectrum. Kopenawa talks about the way the *xapiripë* appear and the conditions necessary for them to appear. The way in which they dance, the vibration of this apparition transforms the relationships between beings. There is no totalizing formula for the conditions of their appearance. That's why I think the scientist couldn't be a shaman, unless that scientist was perhaps also a mystic [laughs]. I can think of a scientist like Karan Barad who talks about quantum physics, regarding body and language. She will demonstrate something that perhaps any shaman already knows: that the body is porous, the body is made of agitation, restlessness. The body is subject to contagion, the body is not circumscribed and closed around this impermeable being.

We are in the same territory where Derrida states: "cinema is a dance with ghosts." When he says this he is asserting a witch/wizard corporeality in regard to cinema. And a witch is always in contact with other things that go beyond the visible, that manifest themselves, that are there as a presence. I joke: I'm tired of being called a mystic for saying these things, when in fact you're only called a mystic because there's



Figs. 6 – Still from *13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* (2021). Courtesy of the artist.



Figs. 7 – Still from *13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* (2021). Courtesy of the artist.

something that the colonizing modernity has pulled of and torn apart, which is a relationship that our ancestors all had with land and the earth. A relationship with the food they grew, the territory they inhabited, the air they breathed, the animals they co-existed with. It is this dimension with this connection that interests me above all to investigate with my cinema.

BB: Finally, talking about your last film, which has just premiered at IndieLisboa Festival, *13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* (2021), I think it also touches on this issue of the Amerindian perspectivism of Viveiros de Castro and Kopenawa that you mentioned, in addition to proposing a transliteration of Wallace Stevens' poem into the audiovisual language. Could you comment a little on how it was to make this film-process?

AV: The origin of *Blackbird* was very simple. The name of the workshop was "The camera as a body". We would be thinking about what could be this "cinema-body". To do this, we didn't touch the camera for about four months, which at first was a little frustrating for the students, but eventually led us to precisely consider and think about how to film the space. One of the students' projects was to work on animal vision, and the more we speculated about it, the more we realized that we were caught in a trap, a sabotage against the giant scientific machine that sees and reveals everything. The idea of the film ends up revolving a lot around of what we don't see. It's much more about the filmmaking process, the visualization of processes, that we were addressing in classroom conversations. It is more a meta-film that questions what it is to make cinema, than a process of representation.

The project was also very inspired by Paulo Freire, or Rancière's *Le Maître Ignorant* [*The Ignorant Schoolmaster*] (1987), when they propose that there is no teacher in a process of critical pedagogy, but

that we collaborate in a kind of ephemeral community, creating an assembly around questions, which is something that male and female students in high schools are unfortunately not offered. Schools are still thought of as real organs of knowledge transference and transmission of one history. In other words, the school colonizes the imaginations and thoughts of its students. There is very little room for autonomy in the most classical school model of pedagogy. I was looking for precisely that, in the year I spent with them, we saw a lot of experimental films, we did sensorial exercises, there was a lot of walking together.

To get out of this idea of translation as a representation, Stevens' poem fit in like a glove. It was proposed by Paula Nascimento, who is our narrator and who is also the producer who accompanied us throughout the entire process of the film, a person of immense sensitivity and who brought this poem to one of our workshops. And the poem becomes a kind of structure and a pretext for the film, because the beauty of the film is that in each of the verses or *stanzas* it will present a perspective, a possibility to see or be seen. Is it the bird that sees, is it the bird that is seen? Are we the ones seeing the bird or is the bird seeing us? That is, it animates a landscape, and the landscape comes alive.

In the opening scene there are two portraits of two students, two characters with their eyes closed. There's something in the off-limits of that film continuously that you can imagine. It could be that bird, or it could be just the classroom process, or the process of them locked up at home in the middle of a pandemic filming. That in itself is a kind of process of detaching the gaze, of thinking about cinema beyond cinema, cinema against cinema. It's a film that almost seeks to implode cinema's methods of representation because it doesn't allow you to enter. The film is like a gesture, an affirmation. It is a film about the very method of making cinema.

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