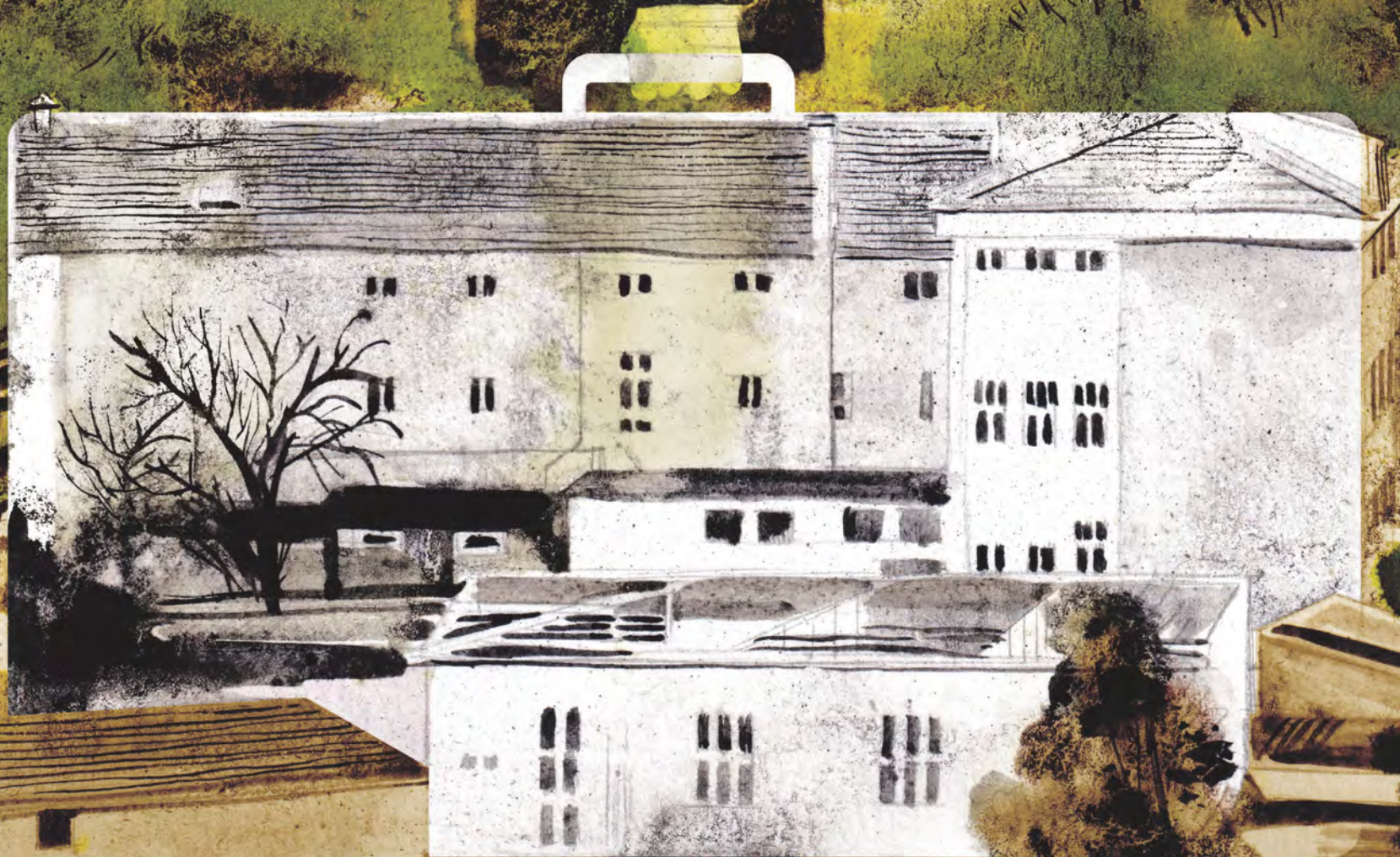


THE OLD HOUSE

a film by **FILIFE ARAÚJO**



[PRESS KIT]

BLABLABLA MEDIA PRESENTS "THE OLD HOUSE" A FILM WITH **ANTÓNIO OLIVEIRA, DINIS DIAS, TONITO OLIVEIRA** CINEMATOGRAPHY, SCRIPT AND DIRECTION **FILIFE ARAÚJO**
ASSISTANCE **SÉRGIO DIAMANTINO** MUSIC **ANA ARAÚJO** EDITING **FILIFE ARAÚJO, FRANCISCO COSTA** SOUND DIRECTION **PEDRO MIGUEL CARVALHO**
ILLUSTRATION **ANDRÉ CARRILHO** DESIGN **IDEIAS COM PESO** EFFECTS **RICARDO NUNES** COLOR GRADING **SALA CONTRALUZ** SOUND DESIGN, MIXING **BILLYBOOM SOUND DESIGN**
PRODUCERS **HEMI FORTES, FILIFE ARAÚJO** CO-PRODUCTION **RTP** FINANCIAL SUPPORT **ICA / MINISTÉRIO DA CULTURA, SPAUTORES**



O CASARÃO

THE OLD HOUSE



By Filipe Araújo

Documentary. 2021, color, 72'55 [DCP - 2K - 7.1/5.1] | Blablaba Media, Portugal

In the Portuguese cinemas from Nov. 2021 to Jan. 2022 and May 2022 | National Premiere: Caminhos do Cinema Português
blablablamedia.com/theoldhouse

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Quite often, while lulling me to sleep, my father used to make up stories from real events of his past. The most puzzling took place in a land inhabited by children and men in white. A huge house without electricity enclosed in a valley amid the woods. Only after his death, upon discovering his correspondence and notes written by friends of his youth, would an inexplicable urge lead me there.

SYNOPSIS

An old house withers away at the heart of a village ripped in half by a road where cars no longer stop. During the dictatorship, this building was the most progressive Catholic seminary in Portugal. António, the front door neighbour, was brought up and raised a family in its shadow. Ever since the Dominican priests left, he has been its most faithful caretaker – keeper of ghosts, memories, and hallways now emptied of life. Abandoned for years, the town's former epicentre now hopes for a new life.

SUPPORTED BY

ICA- Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual

RTP - Rádio e Televisão Portuguesa

SPA - Sociedade Portuguesa de Autores





CONTEXTUALISATION

Over the course of the southern European dictatorships of the 20th century, access to education was a luxury. For a long time, Catholic seminaries, generally conservative and aligned with the regime, were the only academic path for less privileged young men. This is a story about what remains of the derelict walls of the most progressive seminary in Portugal – the country with the longest dictatorship in Europe – today an abandoned old house in an inland village through which cars merely drive by.

LETTER OF INTENT

“I’m neither an orthodox nor a heterodox; each of them only expresses half of life. I’m in the paradox that contains the whole entire life.”

Agostinho da Silva, philosopher



I was still a kid, long before visiting Aldeia Nova and its remarkable big house, when this small unknown village earned a place in my imagination. Every night my father used to tell me a story to make me go to sleep. As years went by, he passed from improvised fictions to anonymous narratives even if, so often tired, he would rather turn off the light and rekindle his memories. Depending on my reaction and our sleepiness he would embellish these memories, interlacing reality with fiction. From my bed and his voice I would land on that intriguing place for the first time: at first sight, a kind of boarding school managed by

The premise of this project springs from the will to relive the experience of a paradox. During the Salazar dictatorship, in a place laden with isolation, the paradox became the “discovery of freedom” by a group of pre-teens who were getting ready for something that would never be

men in white within the isolation of a village without electricity or running water.

During the dictatorships of the 20th century and in the aftermath of the Great Wars, whether in Portugal, Italy, Spain, Greece or Ireland, access to education for lower classes and within rural contexts, where most of the population dwelled, was virtually non-existent. There were, however, two exceptions: professional military training or the religious life — both seen as exceptional passports to a better life. In one of these nights of storytelling, I would come to realize that this had been my father’s path, at the time a university professor and a scientific researcher. Born in a village in the north of Portugal, he was the only one of his brothers to proceed his education. It is told how he was convinced by the local prior, who, enticing him with the most exciting areas of knowledge, introduced him to the religious calling as a “gift to make the world a better place”. He was 10 years old when he joined the seminary of Aldeia Nova.

The awareness of this choice obviously led to inevitable questions and conversations. Nevertheless, it would only be after his premature death that I would once more come upon the old house. Life is unexpected. Surprisingly, as I was googling my father’s name, I came across a blog by his former colleagues from Aldeia Nova who had re-established contact after 40 years. Alongside this discovery came the revelation of a phenomenon: from

the about 120 seminarists contemporary of my father, most of them had given up the call and started a family — some even after taking their vows. Furthermore, despite the deprivations of their home, the sombre look of the old house and the conservatism generally associated with these institutions, the references to the past in that Dominican house were almost always accompanied by words like “freedom” or “progressiveness”, uttered with the nostalgic confidence of those who experienced the privilege of having sifted and absorbed the best of two worlds. Not a believer myself, I have nurtured a special affection for the Dominicans. Evidently, this familiar con-

nection to the Order, the forthright spirit of its references and its encompassing humanism were decisive. But I confess that finding out that these men had introduced the democratic system to the Church also weighed in my decision.



Portuguese philosopher Agostinho da Silva writes that he is “neither an orthodox nor a heterodox” for “each of them only expresses half of life”. Instead, he is in the “paradox” where life’s totality can be found. The premise of this project springs from the will to relive the experience of a paradox. During the Salazar dictatorship, in a place laden with isolation, the paradox became the “discovery of freedom” by a group of pre-teenagers who were getting ready for something that would never be.

In an intimist mood, the story that The Old House wishes to unearth is the journey of a seminarist of Aldeia Nova from the time he left his parents’ home (with all his fears and ghosts) to his reintegration in civilian life after the April 1974 revolution and a final reunion 50 years later. But it is also the story of the end of a cycle: the contemplation of an old building about to be gutted

The story that The Old House wishes to unearth is the story of the journey of a seminarist but it is also the story about the closing of a cycle — visual metaphor of Portugal’s laicisation process



from the everyday life of a contemporary village – a visual metaphor of Portugal’s laicisation process. After all, as the seminarist renounces his calling, so this last Dominican seminary, meanwhile sold for lack of use and means, allows itself to be emptied out for the mirage of a commercial enterprise.

For this purpose, I chose to create a bicephalous structure based on two autonomous narrative threads abounding in connections and with a common en-



A collective character concentrated into one voice develops from a collage of excerpts of reflections and experiences woven from hundreds of pages of privileged material from my father and his colleagues

ding – part of the audio medium is reserved for the past (the narrative voice interspersed throughout the film) while the present time is unlocked by the medium of the image and direct sound in a narrative led by António's everyday life – caretaker of the old house and a pious native son, born when the Seminary was still the heart of the village.

Distributed throughout the film in moments of a more oneiric atmosphere, the figure of the seminarist is shaped by a personal narration that is also a story about forging a friendship and about the growth life provides. A collective character concentrated into a single voice develops from a collage of excerpts of reflections and experiences woven from hundreds of pages of unique material from my father and his colleagues. Diverse documents, such as, a diary, old letters, interviews, a book of chronicles, posts, emails and even a highly acclaimed and essential work of Portuguese literature: *Gente Feliz com Lágrimas* (Happy People in Tears) by Aldeia Nova's former seminarist João de Melo.

Flávia Araújo





ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

FILIPPE ARAÚJO'S BIO-FILMOGRAPHY

Co-founder of the production company Blablabla Media, Filipe Araújo is a Portuguese film director, scriptwriter and independent producer from Lisbon, Portugal, with a ten years' experience in journalism. Up today, his work in film was distinguished with four first prizes, one honorable mention, dozens of participations in international festival's Official Selections, and showings in venues such as Casa del Cinema (Rome, Italy), Círculo de Bellas Artes, Filmoteca Española (Madrid, Spain), or the Unesco's Universal Culture Forum (Monterrey, Mexico).

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm5873168/>

A SÉTIMA VIDA DE GUALDINO

The Ninth Life of Gualdino

2014, documentary, 61'



AWARDS

Best Portuguese Film, Temps d'Images 2014

Grand Prize Award, MUVI Lisboa '14

SPECIAL SCREENINGS

Cinemateca Portuguesa — World premiere (Lisboa, Portugal)

Maison du Brésil (Paris, France)

Museu Municipal de Faro (Faro, Portugal)

FESTIVALS

Thessaloniki Documentary Festival, Official Selection (Greece)

SPFF, Official Selection (Croatia)

Festafilm, Regard Etranger (France)

12nd Tartu World Film Festival, Main Program (Estonia) MUVI

Lisboa, Official Selection (Portugal)

Temps d'Images, Official Selection (Portugal)

BROADCASTERS (TVs)

RTP (Portugal)

8TV (France)

HRT (Croacia)

ERR (Estonia)

IBERIANA

2011, drama, 12'30



AWARDS

Nomination to Best Film on Arts, Temps d'Images 2011

SPECIAL SCREENINGS

King Afonso Henriques Foundation (Zamora, Spain)

LeV - Literatura em Viagem (Matosinhos, Portugal)

FESTIVALS

Avanca International Film Festival, Competition (Portugal)

Temps d'Images, Official Selection (Portugal)

BROADCASTERS (TVs)

RTP 2 (Portugal)

Radio televisión de Castilla y León (Spain)

SELVAGENS, A ÚLTIMA FRONTEIRA | The Final Frontier

2006, documentary, 30'



AWARDS

Best Prize Award, FEST New Directors

Convergence Award, IMPRESA 2007

SPECIAL SCREENINGS

Universal Forum of Cultures, UNESCO — Opening (Monterrey, Mexico)

Casa del Cinema (Roma, Italy)

Circulo de Bellas Artes (Madrid, Spain)

Cines Alexandra (Barcelona, Spain)

Filmoteca Municipal (Zaragoza, Spain)

BROADCASTERS (TVs)

SIC (Portugal)

RTP (Portugal)

FESTIVALS

San Francisco Short Film Festival (USA), Official Selection

Documenta Madrid (Spain), Official Selection

Oxford International Documentary Film Festival (UK) , Official Selection

13th ENVIROFILM - Environmental Film Festival (Slovakia) , Official Selection

FEST Novos Realizadores (Portugal), Official Selection

FESTROIA (Portugal), Man and Nature's competition

VII Encontros de Cinema — Viana (Portugal), Olhares Frontais

FILIPPE ARAÚJO

PROFISSIONAL PAST

PRESS: After debuting as journalist in the daily newspaper A Capital (1996-1999), Filipe Araújo insured two weekly pages at Grande Reportagem magazine and 24 Horas newspaper, wrote for publications such as Jornal de Letras and Público, and collaborated with Sábado, Visão, FHM, Notícias Magazine, NS, Dia D, Ed., Pública and Fest Forward magazines.

RADIO: At the turn of the Millennium, he integrated the Radio RAI Uno's weekly program Oggi 2000, became the voice of the Portuguese web portal Clix, signed four weekly commentaries in the Portuguese news-radio TSF and narrated institutional spots for the Calouste Gulbenkian's Foundation.

TELEVISION: After working for the first Portuguese news channel, CNL (1999), Filipe Araújo moved to Rome, where he did a professional internship in the Italian public television, RAI (2000). In February 2007, SIC exhibited his first documentary film, The Final Frontier. It was the third most watched program of the day. Since that year, his documentary works and short-films have been broadcasted by RTP (the Portuguese public television) and other TV networks from Europe and Africa.

INTERNET: In between 2002 and 2004, Filipe Araújo was editor-in-chief and reporter of the first Portuguese web-based television, Clix TV. During two years, he wrote and edited the official Portuguese Summer Festivals' website, worked for Clix (the second biggest Internet provider in Portugal) and collaborated with the lifestyle webzine Le Cool Magazine. Later in 2007, in a regular collaboration from Spain to Expresso newspaper, Filipe also signed with French photographer Guillaume Pazat the first videocast series from the Portuguese press, Madrid Expresso.

OTHER: Lectured Cinema and TV Direction in a Master at the Catholic University of Lisbon and was responsible for two seminars dedicated to documentaries at Porto and Coimbra universities. Represented Portugal as Erasmus Ambassador for the 25th Anniversary of the largest mobility Programme of the world. In December 2015, was one of MUVI film festival juries. Within the universe of advertising and institutional communication, has written and directed films for cultural foundations, companies and various brands – such as TAP, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Vanity Fair, Adega Mayor or Delta.

STUDIES: Degree in Media Studies, by the Catholic University of Lisbon (Portugal). Erasmus student for one year at the LUMSA University, in Rome (Italy). Master in Documentary Film Direction, by TAI — Escuela de Artes y Espectáculos de Madrid (Spain).



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