

INTRO- DUCTION

In the Spring of 2020, the School of Arts at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa and CITAR (Research Centre for Science and Technology of the Arts) organised a seminar – that has taken place every year since 2019 – dedicated to the theme that is the title of this book: *Revolution & Cinema*. The intention was to gather a handful of researchers to discuss how cinema and the visual arts were and are at the forefront of representing the “revolution”. We started from the statement that the fields of cinema and contemporary visual arts have been positioned in recent years from the perspective of recovering a historical memory of colonised peoples. The change of viewpoints came either from the images produced in contemporaneity or by the recovery of films produced by native filmmakers and artists retrieved from archives, allowing the uncovering of their imaginary, built after the revolutions and the departure of the colonisers.

The academy itself has produced a series of books and texts that aim to document and consider these archives, as well as these national cinemas and artistic objects, giving them a place of visibility and contradicting established canons of cinema and its Western worldview. As an example, the conference also included the launch of Professor Ros Gray’s *Cinemas of the Mozambican Revolution*, which traces a history of the INC (Mozambican film institute) and the cinema made by Mozambican militant filmmakers. As in the seminar, which this book seeks to complement and deepen, the texts below engage with the discussion of this uncovering, either from this silenced history of a national cinema and/or art of colonised peoples, or from Western artists and filmmakers who work on this legacy from a postcolonial perspective.

This volume opens with an engaging conversation between Ros Gray,

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specialist in militant filmmaking, particularly in relation to liberation struggles and revolutionary movements in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Burkina Faso, and June Givanni, film curator, archivist, international consultant around Pan-African cinema and founding director of the June Givanni Pan-African Cinema Archive (JGPACA). This conversation picked up from the contribution of both researchers as keynote speakers of the seminar, to explore the confluences and intersections of Gray's and Givanni's research practices regarding "anticolonial and militant filmmaking from the mid-twentieth century through to the present day".

After this conversation, the book presents five articles from participants in the seminar. In the first, Aldones Silva engages with some works by contemporary Brazilian painter Marcela Cantuária, while also addressing the role of Latin American cine-documentary and art in general for an emancipation of the imaginary. Counterpoint readings, critical positionings, changes of social context are issues that should be considered inside the symbolic universe of the arts, while questioning the colonial processes of artistic and cultural interpretation that enabled the emergence of certain narratives and iconographies.

The book follows with Eduardo Prado Cardoso and his reading of the film *Malunguinho* (2013), directed by Felipe Peres Calheiros. This short film refers to the assassination of Malunguinho, the black leader of Catuca's quilombo, in 1835. According to the author, this work challenges the privilege of the written word and certain narratives instilled in official archives, while transporting the continuous, real and symbolic importance of Malunguinho's struggle to present-day Brazil. Cardoso proposes that Calheiros' film deepens the relationship with Brazilian history by "documenting cultural practices known to be at risk" and by "making its own audiovisual expression a critical and sensorial counterpart to hard facts".

From the same timeframe, Isabel Capeloa Gil writes about *Tabu* (2012), the cinephile wonder by Miguel Gomes, Ivo Ferreira's *Letters from War* (2016), and *Nostalgia* (2002), by Maria Lusitano. Drawing in notions about the Portuguese colonialism, Gil proposes the concept of ectoplasm of empire to discuss how contemporary Portuguese cinema questions the imaginary and the lessons of history that go underneath.

João Oliveira Duarte analyses the work from 1999 *Facing Forward* by artist Fiona Tan. This piece brings together archival footage from different places with passages from Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. Duarte reflects not only on the artist's ability to challenge a certain reification of gazes, bodies and

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past in the fields of the ethnographic and the anthropologic, but also proposes that, apart from the finding of a past in the present and future, or the recurring images of memory, *Facing Forward* and Fiona Tan, both in the condition of migrant and artist, might address the idea that one is excluded from the past. A certain disorder of identity where the interplay and rearranging of images is the only way, since “there is no narrative that could be able to restore the true image of the past”.

With a more historical approach, Matthew Mason writes about of Jean-Luc Godard’s *La Chinoise* and the way it encapsulates some tensions in the West concerning politics, capitalism, and revolution in the 1960s. The author argues that the film is caught “between Marxism and Postmodernism” and that elements of colour, *décor*, *mise-en-scène* both reflect the renewal of western hopes for revolution, relating with Mao’s “cultural revolution”, while at the same time connecting with consumer society and with a Pop Art aesthetics.

Finally, Riccardo Uras analyses two Ethiopian documentary films: *Adwa: An African Victory* (1999) by Haile Gerima, and *Blood Is Not Fresh Water* (1997) by Theo Eshetu. These works, in his view, contribute to attenuating an absence of debate on Italy’s colonial past, and to the deconstruction of myths regarding a “colonialism with a human face” and the “good will” of Italians towards Ethiopia’s process of colonisation. The views expressed by these two directors on Ethiopian history are good examples of attempts to build an African counter-history, “questioning mainstream historiography which often looks at the African world from a Eurocentric and exotic lens”.

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