

A film by TERESA VILLAVERDE | With JOÃO PEDRO VAZ | ALICE ALBERGARIA BORGES | BEATRIZ BATARDA | CLARA JOST | TOMÁS GOMES | DINIS GOMES | RICARDO AIBÉO | SIMONE DE OLIVEIRA | RITA BLANCO |
Director of Photography ACÁCIO DE ALMEIDA | Editor RODOLPHE MOLLA | Sound VASCO PIMENTEL | MARION PAPINOT | JOËL RANGON | Set Decorator MARIA JOSÉ BRANCO | Assistant Director PAULO
BELÉM | Production Manager ANTÓNIO GONÇALO | Co-production SEDNA FILMS / CÉCILE VACHERET | Production ALCE FILMES / TERESA VILLAVERDE | Written and directed by TERESA VILLAVERDE

COLO

A FILM BY TERESA VILLAVERDE

 **67** Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Competition

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COLO

A film by Teresa Villaverde
Portugal, France. 2017.
Drama / DCP/ 136 min.

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SYNOPSIS

A mother doubles up jobs to pay the bills since her husband is unemployed. Their teenage daughter tries to keep living her everyday life even if the money's running short and makes everything uneasy. Escaping their common reality, they slowly become strangers to one another, as the tension grows in silence and in guilt.



THE SOLUTION LOOKING AT THE PROBLEM

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT BY **TERESA VILLAYERDE**

RECENTLY I HAD A CONVERSATION WITH A PSYCHIATRIST who told me about his anguish after receiving a patient, he said he has lots of depressed patients, these days, who really need jobs and not anti-depressives, and that he felt helpless at their regard. I think that these times we are living in, leave us in an awkward silence, awkward expectations. It's hard to talk about the film without talking about politics. I say awkward silence because I see something like a white blurred future, like something with no color, an immense fog with no blood.

At the same time if we think about all of what is happening in the world, we can almost feel guilty for feeling so bad. It's delicate. But each person lives, of course, with his or her own pain, his or her own problems to be respected. Sometimes it's a long way before we are able to relativize. And, of course, our small problem can lead us to death. The suicide rate rises in every country where unemployment grows. That's why I say it is delicate, the human being is a rich and complex creature.

I started to write a film about a small family, father, mother, and a teenage daughter. Sometimes three is a hard number for a family. Often I observed, particularly when in holidays, a family of three, like this one, eating in a restaurant in a complete silence or the parents may talk, but the teenage is set-aside mute. I always try to imagine their lives inside a small apartment, if they don't talk, maybe they hardly know each other, and if they hardly know each other, to live in a small apartment can almost be promiscuous.

In my country people don't talk much about what they feel. From the outside, it's easy to imagine us as a country full of sun and happy people, but I don't see us quite like that. We tend to hide what is not well and what is really important to us. We are not very verbal.

That was my starting point, the loss of a job in a family of three. Since we still live in a society where equality of gender does not exist, it interested me to imagine a family where the man is the one who loses his job.

In the film we don't see the beginning of this drama, when we catch them, things are already deteriorating and a lot is already unsaid. The mother is tired, the money starts to disappear and the bills are to be paid. The unemployed feels guilty, useless, and as it often happens, the one who works starts in silence to blame the other for what is happening, feeling at the same time guilty for his/hers thoughts. It is a drama that grows in silence and in guilt. The teenager can only observe the collapse of the family from a distance because there are the concrete problems, but the ones that affect her the most are those feelings that everyone keeps inside, it's the non said that really hurts the most. Maybe the platform of communication was broken long before the reality that they're living at the moment, it's possible.

I felt the need to shoot the film from a distance, also in silence, not interfering. My camera almost never gets really close. I am waiting as they are waiting too. I don't know what I am waiting for, as they don't know either.

One of the actresses, after seeing the film, told me something that I found very interesting, she said that she felt the film was "the solution looking at the problem".

I could say that too, the solution looks at the problem but is unable to touch it.

On the last shot, we try to understand, to go there and get close, and explain something, but being unable to fully understand it, we pull back.

This film has no answers, only an impossible desire to start from scratch.



THE GROWING SILENCE

AN INTERVIEW WITH TERESA VILLAYERDE BY **FILIPA LEAL**
LISBON, JANUARY 2017

The title of the film, COLO, is not translated. Why?

We decided not to translate the title because I believe that even for a Portuguese speaking audience, the title brings an oddness. The word “Colo” in Portuguese has several meanings. When you hold a baby, for example, you take it in your colo. You can give symbolically colo to an adult friend who is sad, you can say that someone needs colo, or that someone else has too much colo, meaning that they’re spoiled. Colo is a vague, abstract, and rich word. Here, I think it means something like „net, in the sense of a net that holds you when you fall from a trapeze. The net is maybe still there, but almost invisible and that is scary. It will be a mysterious choice of a title even for a Portuguese speaking person, that’s why we didn’t translate.

The characters in COLO, especially the adults, appear to be in a state of apathy. Is it the apathy that’s the aftermath of horror? Are we already past the end of this world?

When we have hope, there’s still the will to fight, to protest. When hope vanishes, so does the will to

cry out because one feels it’s not worth it, that it will change nothing.

I don’t think the end of our world is this, we’re very far from the end of the world. In the global context, we’re still very privileged, and a lot of what has happened to us has been our fault. We fell asleep. We thought that democracy meant voting once every now and then. We took what we had for granted, but it wasn’t. And if we think about it, what we had was already not that much. People who have a job are already the happy ones, but if we consider how many of us do the job we dreamt, we are certainly just a few.

This is just a simple example, but look, in my city, Lisbon, house rents are very high for someone earning a Portuguese wage, so most people live on the outskirts and come in every day. It takes hours to get in and hours to get back. Then there are the children to pick up from school, the dinner to make and so on. By the end of all that, everyone’s exhausted; they barely see one another, barely speak. They live in the same house but hardly know one another. They don’t even have one full month a year to enjoy holidays, and most often they stay at home in that period or don’t go far. And then, after three

weeks or so, everything starts again. One tends not to reflect about these things, but people are exhausted, and maybe that is one of the reasons they don’t protest anymore.

In recent years, a lot of people lost their jobs. When both the husband and wife lose their job it’s a total catastrophe. They’re forced to resign adulthood, to become children again, living in their parents’ house, and sometimes not even that is possible.

If only one of them loose their job, the guilt of that one and the exhaustion of the other ends up making life hell, and the home they share often becomes a place of distrust and anguish. It could be the beginning of the end of the family if it continues like this, but maybe not yet the end of our world as we see it.

Adolescents have remained central, from the beginning of your work through to COLO, too. What is it about them that interests you — is it their being the future of the world? Do you trust them?

I do trust them. All my hope is centered on them. They have no guarantees, they never had, but those who will not give up will have to think about finding new ways, will have to reflect on everything. I’m afraid they won’t look much into the past, which could also be a bit dangerous, but I’m sure they’ll find a way to take us out of this mess. Of course, I am not as naïf as to think that a whole generation is as how I just said. But, nevertheless, I feel that change will come from them.

I like that the music of the final credits of the film was composed by a 17 year old.



In the world of the arts, I think we could be on the verge of entering a very rich, diverse, intelligent period.

The father in the film seems to try to hide in himself, at a certain point. It seems that he hides for fear of being useless. This is a script written at a time when the unemployed feel invisible, as if they have lost their purpose?

When there’s a general recession, a war, everyone loses everything, and in that loss we are all equal, and each individual’s self esteem can remain intact. When this occurs in small niches, not to everyone, in apartment buildings where people barely know each other, there’s immense solitude, and that can’t be shared. The unemployed are ashamed of being unemployed, they’re humiliated. It’s very hard to live as a family like that, to look at the children, the husband or the wife. It’s very tough. One feels very lonely and, to a certain point, ashamed as well.

That man is the man who finds, in the end, ”usefulness” for himself, a sort of purpose: looking after one adolescent, the friend of his daughter. But the doubt remains: does he save her or does he take advantage of her vulnerability?

He feels misfit. He wants to help, to be useful and to do the right thing but perhaps he doesn’t know what he’s doing anymore. What moves him is profoundly well intentioned and altruistic. We don’t know what will happen after that risky decision.

When his mother in law mistakes that girl for her own grandchild, he doesn’t correct her. He’s already beyond the reality of every day life, he’s lost, a ghost.

Are you afraid of what the world is, today?

Yes, of course. But I don’t think that feeling fear is an option because fear is paralyzing, we must fight it. It would be great to knock everything down, all the rules, and start from scratch but, unfortunately, I don’t believe that is possible.

I think we have to put everything on the table, all the ideas, discuss everything, and question everything.



TERESA
VILLAVERDE

Teresa Villaverde was born in Lisbon in 1966. She is a writer, a director, and a producer.

FILMOGRAPHY

A IDADE MAIOR (ALEX), 1991
WORLD PREMIERE: Forum, Berlin film festival, Germany
AWARDS:
Best Film at Film and Video Festival of Montreal, Canada
Best Actress (Teresa Roby) - Festival of Dunkerque, France
CICAE Award - France
Special Jury Award - Valencia
Bordallo Award from the Portuguese press, Portugal

TRÊS IRMÃOS (TWO BROTHERS, MY SISTER), 1994
WORLD PREMIERE: Venice Film Festival, in competition
AWARDS:
Best Actress (Maria de Medeiros) - Venice Film Festival, Italy
Best director-Valencia, Spain
Best Actress (Maria de Medeiros) – Valencia, Spain
Better Photography (Volker Tittel) – Valencia, Spain
Best Actress (Maria de Medeiros) – Cancún, Mexico

O AMOR NÃO ME ENGANA, 1996
(TV documentary for ARTE/ZDF)

OS MUTANTES, 1998
WORLD PREMIERE: Cannes Film Festival - Official Selection - Un Certain Regard, France
AWARDS:
United Nations award on the 50th anniversary of the declaration of human rights-handed in Rome, Italy
Best young director - Festival of Seattle, U.S.A.
Best Actress (Ana Moreira) Festival Taormina, Italy
Best Actress (Ana Moreira) Festival of Buenos Aires, Argentina
Best Film - Luso-Brazilian Film Festival, Portugal
Best Actress (Ana Moreira.) - Luso-Brazilian Film Festival, Portugal
Best Cinematography (Acácio de Almeida) - Luso-Brazilian Film Festival, Portugal
Bordallo Award from the Portuguese press, Best Film, Portugal

ÁGUA E SAL (WATER AND SALT), 2001
WORLD PREMIERE: Venice Film Festival – Cinema del Presente, Italy

A FAVOR DA CLARIDADE, 2003
Film essay about the work of artist / sculptor Pedro Cabrita Reis. Framed in the Portuguese presence at the Venice Biennale of Art, Italy

VISIONS OF EUROPE, 2004
Segment: “Cold Wa(te)r”

TRANSE (TRANCE), 2006
WORLD PREMIERE: Cannes Film Festival - Quinzaine des Réalisateurs, France
Special Prize of the Jury - European Festival of Lecce,

Italy.
Better Photography - European Festival of Lecce, Italy
Best director-Coimbra, Portugal
Best Movie - Coimbra, Portugal
Best Movie - Covilha, Portugal
Eurimages Award, best film with Eurimages support - delivered in Novi Sad, Serbia.
Best Photography - Festival of Portuguese speaking countries, Brazil
Best Actress (Ana Moreira) - Festival of Portuguese speaking countries, Brazil
Best Film and the Critics award, Ankara Film Festival, Turkey
Humberto Mauro award in Joao Pessoa, Brazil.

CISNE (SWAN), 2011
WORLD PREMIERE: Venice Film Festival – Orizzonti, Italy

VENEZIA 70 - FUTURE RELOADED, 2013
WORLD PREMIERE: Venice Film Festival - Official Selection
Segment: “Amapola”

BRIDGES OF SARAJEVO, 2014
WORLD PREMIERE: Cannes Film Festival - Official Selection
Segment: “Sara and Her Mother”

Paris 15/16, 2016
(documentary short)
WORLD PREMIERE: DocLisboa Film Festival, Portugal

On stage she directed the national homage to José Saramago one year after his death, “The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross.” Music by Joseph Haydn and words by José Saramago.



JOÃO PEDRO VAZ
The father

He was born in Oporto in 1974. He started at the Student Theater of the University of Coimbra in 1993, to which direction he belonged until 1996; He was co-founder and co-director of Assédio (theatre company in Oporto) between 1998 and 2001. He also collaborated with TEP and TNSJ in Oporto, and in Lisbon with Theatre Aberto, Theatre Meridional and T. Cornucópia, the T. Maria Matos and the TNDMII, among others. Actor since 1994, director since 2001, he worked with various directors. He was artistic director of the Comedies of Minho from October 2009 to the end of 2016. He is artistic director of T. Oficina in Guimarães.



ALICE ALBERGARIA BORGES
The daughter

She was born in Lisbon in 1997. At the age of five, she moved to the island of São Miguel, Azores, where her mother came from. She studied piano from the age of 7 to 18, initially at the Regional Conservatory of Ponta Delgada, later at the Music Conservatory of the National Conservatory in Lisbon. Studied Artistic Production - Textiles at the António Arroio Art School. Currently studying in London in Textile Design at Chelsea College of Arts. She believes she learned to be an actress playing classical music and talking to herself.



BEATRIZ BATARIDA
The mother

Born in London in 1974. She grew up in Lisbon, where she first started her work as an actress. She graduated from Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London in 2000 where she was awarded a gold medal. Since then, she has worked with film directors such as Manoel de Oliveira, José Álvaro Morais, Teresa Villaverde,

João Canijo, Marco Martins, Mike Dowse, Christine Laurent, among others. She works in theater as well, where she acts and directs.



CLARA JOST

She was born in Lisbon in 1997. She studies direction and editing at the Superior School of Theater and Cinema. She participated in the work of the Sons of Lumière Association. She worked as an actress in films by Sandro Aguilar and Salomé Lamas.



TOMÁS GOMES

He was born in October 1997 in Lisbon. He studied Electric Guitar at the Jazz School of the Hot Club of Portugal. He attended the National Conservatory of Music in Violin to 6th grade. He took part in the short film “Francisco e o vento”. He was Vocalist and Guitarist in the band LUKE.

CREW

Director **Teresa Villaverde**
Screenplay **Teresa Villaverde**
Director of Photography **Acácio de Almeida**
Editor **Rodolphe Molla**
Sound **Vasco Pimentel**
Sound Editor **Marion Papinot**
Sound Mixer. **Joël Rangon**
Set Decorator. **Maria José Branco**
Assistant Director. **Paulo Belém**
Production Manager **António Gonçalo**
Co-production. **Cécile Vacheret**
Production **Teresa Villaverde**