the hissing of summer sands

a film by Catarina Mourão

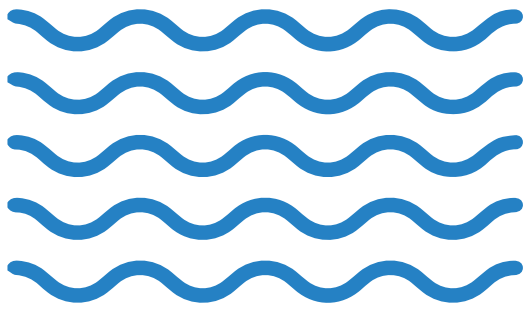
synopsis

'The whistle man' was a typical character of the portuguese sea-side during the Fascist Portugal. His story has so many versions that he has become a myth: a poor crazy man who lost his baby girl, a professional homeless who lived from the charity of rich families, a pedofile or a summer father Christmas. His whistle announced his arrival and attracted boys and girls or made them run away.
Last year I found 30 seconds of footage of this man which until then was just a memory. Is he more real now?

bio-filmography

I Studied Music, Law and Film (MA Bristol University). In 1998 I was a founder of Apordoc, Portuguese Documentary Association and started teaching Film and Documentary in 2000. In 2000 with another filmmaker (Catarina Alves Costa) we started Laranja Azul, an independent production company for creative documentary and visual arts in Lisbon.
My films were screened at several film festivals like Rotterdam International Film Festival, International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Visions du Réel, Nouveau Cinema and Viennale.

[2019] The Hissing of Summer Sands (short); [2015] The Wolf's Lair; [2010] Through Shadows; [2009] Mother and Daughter (short); [2006] On Edge; [2006] My Village Doesn't Live Here Anymore; [2004] Love Me, Love Me Not; [2002] Restless; [2001] Next Stop (short); [1998] The Lady of Chandor; [1997] Out of Water (short); [1996] The Port (short); [1994] Mecca Before I Die (short)



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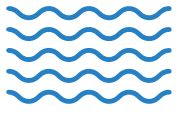
note of intention

These past years, I've explored and worked with archive images, taking them as a privileged territory to represent dreams and blocked memories in film. Acknowledging that memory is always constructed in order to exist in the present tense, I believe that family films and family archives are necessarily spaces of truth but also of fiction, in the sense that they are always produced and interpreted in a world of affect and subjectivity.
This is the starting point for this film. I realized that this story was obviously an excuse to reflect on what is history, myth, memory and truth. This is also a film about appearances and the things that are hidden.
The sea is always present and this is no accident. The sea will always be infinite, unknown, fascinating, enchanting and feared. Maybe this is why the whistle-man chose the sea-side as the location for his wanderings.
We never really find out the true identity of this character. Was he crazy, a pedophile, a beggar? Nevertheless the myth surrounding him nourished the conversations and the collective memory of many bathers.
Ultimately this film is also about having time to stay inside a beach tent on windy days, chatting and listening to the hissing of summer sands.

Catarina Mourão April 2019



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a film by Catarina Mourão

Documentary, Fiction
Portugal | 2019 | 15'

Script: Catarina Mourão
Cinematography: Paulo Menezes
Sound: Armanda Carvalho, Tiago Matos
Music: Joana Gama, Luís Fernandes, Ricardo Jacinto, Bruno Pernadas
Editing: Pedro Mateus Duarte
Production: Laranja Azul

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