

Pedro Costa:  
Producing and Consuming  
Contemporary Art Cinema

Nuno Barradas Jorge

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2015



## Abstract

This thesis examines the work of Portuguese filmmaker Pedro Costa as a paradigm of recent developments in production and consumption practices in contemporary art cinema. With a notable problematic relationship with industrial film production and with a pragmatic approach to distribution, Costa's working methods have sustained an evolving narrative of production that negotiates between interstitial filmmaking, and different authorial and collaborative practices, which helped his work to circulate in different circuits of consumption.

Scholarly study of Costa's work has stressed particular stylistic tropes within his films, yet little attention has been given to the authoring processes and production contexts of his oeuvre, or to the mediating factors that impact on his work's multifaceted exhibition and circulation. These practices come to impact, to considerable extent, in Costa's filmic style, and to define his agency as a filmmaker – both as a creative practitioner and a linking agent in different fields of production and circulation.

This study emphasises the importance of Costa's agency as a salient factor in the negotiations shaping contemporary art cinema. It maps the cultural, industrial and economic contexts from which the Costa's working practices emerged, and how these contexts formed a production blueprint that came to support both the production and consumption of his films.

## Acknowledgements

This research result of a process that started in my teenage years, when my cinephile activities prompt in me the necessity of discover cinema(s) distinct from the offer available on my suburban surroundings. Before Internet's democratic access and the opportunities brought by DVD, my cinephile longings for niche, art, and cult cinema were mostly fulfilled by television late-night broadcasts, constant visits to the Cinemateca Portuguesa and small cine-studios in Lisbon, by eavesdropping conversations of older cinephiles, by traveling long distance to attend special screenings and through the exchange of VHS tapes via mail.

Over the years, slowly but insistently, these sources allowed me to discover the work of João César Monteiro, Paulo Rocha, Manoel de Oliveira, António Reis, and Pedro Costa (to name very few). The work of these Portuguese filmmakers revealed a unique cinema which could not fit the reductive labels I once used to define a constellation of international art cinema films that populated my teenage personal preferences. Pedro Costa's cinema became a particular object of my interest, because of both his evolving filmic style and filmmaking ethos. I have discover his earlier works during the 1990s and, since then, accompanied his progression from a young Portuguese art director to an international acclaimed (albeit controversial) filmmaker with pragmatic work practices.

Costa's cinema seems to me an ideal case study to express both the passion-driven curiosity of my teenage years' cinephilia and enquire on the nature of art cinema's production and consumption. I am very grateful therefore to all who allowed me to carry this passionate investigation further. Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Mark Gallagher and Julian Stringer,

for shepherding me through the entire doctoral process, and for their continuous generosity, motivation and inspiration. I also like to acknowledge the support of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures and Nottingham's Graduate School, whose research travel grants (in 2012 and 2013, respectively) allowed me to carry research in Lisbon.

During the completion of this thesis, colleagues at Nottingham have provided constant stimulation. I am particularly grateful to Daniel King, for his valuable help with the dissertation manuscript and to Sriparna Ray, for her useful suggestions. I would also like to thank Aaron Calbreath-Frasieur, Juyeon Bae, Mag Yung-Wen, Melissa Shani Brown, Yu-Peng Lin, Jing Meng, Mike Miller, Barbara Spreiz, Adity Singh, Stefanie Petschick, and Yin-Chao 'Creek' Lu. I am also grateful to all who contributed to the productive intellectual environment around the 'Mutante!' Friday screenings, and to all who provided feedback and encouragement during the 'Work in Progress' sessions at Nottingham's Department of Culture, Film and Media.

My gratitude is also extensive to Pedro Manuel Sobral Pombo, Iain Robert Smith, Caroline Edwards, the Castro family, Maria do Carmo Lino, to my mother and my father, Alec Millward, Filipe Francisco, Kevin Ryan, Natalie Chabaud, and Eriko, Akiko and Kumiko. Their support in different stages of my life provided me with confidence, valuable encouragement and emotional backing.

Special thanks go to Pedro Costa, whose generosity was deeply touching. I am also grateful to Francisco Villa-Lobos, for providing information concerning the production processes of *In Vanda's Room* and *Colossal Youth*. This research also benefited hugely from information provided by many film professionals and institutions. I thank Patrícia Saramago, Cláudia Tomaz, Teresa Villaverde, Jörg Schneider (Das Kleine Fernsehspiel, ZDF), Daniel del Negro, Cláudia Rita Oliveira,

Mariana Pimentel (Instituto Português de Cinema), Isabel de Carvalho (RTP), Teresa Barreto Borges (Cinemateca Portuguesa), Chris Barwick (Second Run), Craig Keller (Masters of Cinema), Pedro Borges (Midas Filmes), Ji-Hoon Jo (JIFF), Yano Kazuyuki (Cinematrix), Richard Dumas, Valerie Massadian, Francisco Ferreira, Luísa Barbosa (Federação Portuguesa de Cineclubes), Clara Almeida Santos and Teresa Baptista (Rua Larga, University of Coimbra), and to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Portions of this thesis have been previously published as an article and as a book chapter. The first part of Chapter Four appeared in a different form as ‘Pedro Costa on the Island of the Dead: Distant Referencing and the Making of Casa de Lava’ in *Adaptation* vol.7, Issue 3 (2014). I would like to thank the editors and anonymous reviewers from Oxford University Press their invaluable comments. Segments of Chapter Five appear as the chapter ‘Living Daily, Working Slowly: Pedro Costa’s In Vanda’s Room’ included in *Slow Cinema* (2016), edited by Tiago de Luca and by myself. I am extremely grateful to Tiago for his comments and support and to the support of the editorial team at Edinburgh University Press.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Maria Manuela de Castro, for her dedicated and unconditional support, and to Jaime, who came into being in the middle of this PhD research. This work is dedicated to you both.

# Table of Contents

Abstract .....	i
Acknowledgements .....	ii
Table of Contents .....	v
List of Figures .....	vi
Introduction .....	1
<b>PART I</b>	
1. Contemporary Art Cinema as an Institution and Practice .....	16
2. Portuguese Art Cinema: Production and Circulation Paradigms .....	48
<b>PART II</b>	
3. Pedro Costa's Artistic Formation .....	81
4. Negotiating Filmmaking: Adaptation, Location and Authorship .....	112
5. Digital Filmmaking at the Interstices .....	149
<b>PART III</b>	
6. Critical Reception and the International Film Festival.....	181
7. Between the Black Box and the White Cube.....	214
8. Renegotiating circulation: retrospectives and DVD releases .....	245
Conclusion .....	274
Bibliography.....	281
Pedro Costa's Filmography.....	296

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1:</b> One of the versions of the Portuguese poster for <i>Horse Money</i> .....	17
<b>Figure 2:</b> Promotional image of <i>Blood</i> .....	107
<b>Figure 3:</b> Still frame of the initial scenes in <i>Casa de Lava</i> (1994). ....	114
<b>Figures 4 and 5:</b> Pages from the <i>Casa de Lava</i> notebook. ....	133
<b>Figure 6:</b> Spatial divisions in <i>Bones</i> (1997).....	143
<b>Figure 7:</b> Still of <i>In Vanda's Room</i> (2000). ....	164
<b>Figure 8:</b> Jean-Marie Straub, Pedro Costa, and Danièle Huillet. Copyright: Richard Dumas, 2001. ....	190
<b>Figure 9:</b> Still from <i>Little Boy Male, Little Girl Female</i> (2005), included in the DVD extras of <i>Letters from Fontainhas</i> (Criterion, 2010).....	232
<b>Figure 10:</b> Some of Costa and Chafes' installations presented in <i>MU</i> , at the Hara Museum of Contemporary art, Japan (2012-2013).....	233
<b>Figures 11 and 12:</b> Costa's video installation <i>Filhas do Fogo</i> (2013-2014) at the São Roque Church. ....	242



## Introduction

We know that works of art get to be what they are because some labor has been expended in producing them, but what if we place the emphasis exactly here – on the work of the work, and on the making visible of that work as style?

John David Rhodes<sup>1</sup>

The way you do a film is, firstly, the way you make it economically, financially.

Pedro Costa<sup>2</sup>

The work of Portuguese filmmaker Pedro Costa (Lisbon, 1959) summons some of the productive tensions between film aesthetics, filmmaking practices and forms of consumption that permeate discussions concerning contemporary art cinema. Costa can be defined as an art film practitioner with an austere filmic style created and deployed through a filmmaking revealing equal measures of stoicism and artistry, and with a production framework supported by diminutive budgets. His films are discussed as presenting a dialogue between cinephilic references and aesthetic and narrative permutations, and between fiction and documentary styles. In terms of circulation, Costa's works are aimed mostly at international niche audiences congregated around the art-house and film festival circuits, appreciative of the not-easily recuperated qualities of contemporary 'difficult' art film.

Different aesthetic permutations and evolving filmmaking processes define Costa's cinema. The filmmaker's first three feature films – *O Sangue* (*Blood*, 1989),

---

<sup>1</sup> John David Rhodes, 'Belabored: Style as Work', in *Framework* 53 (Spring, 2012), 48.

<sup>2</sup> Pedro Costa, personal interview (Lisbon, 2 July 2012).

*Casa de Lava* (1994)<sup>3</sup> and *Ossos* (*Bones*, 1997) – not only summons a cinephile universe influenced by the films of Robert Bresson, Yasujiro Ozu, Jacques Tourneur and António Reis, to name just a few, but also negotiates between different industrial filmmaking practices in national and European contexts. His subsequent feature films, *No Quarto da Vanda* (*In Vanda's Room*, 2000), *Juventude em Marcha* (*Colossal Youth*, 2006) or more recently *Cavalo Dinheiro* (*Horse Money*, 2014), not just refine these (and other) filmic influences further, but are also informed by a contemporary art cinema placed at the interstices in terms of production, collaborative working practices and forms of exhibition and circulation.

Costa's films from 2000 to the present have insistently documented and re-enacted the lives of the inhabitants of Lisbon-area communities of Fontainhas and Casal da Boba. Characterised by a docufiction style with scenic minimalism, filmic deceleration conveyed by long takes and narrative fragmentation, these films support a thematic universe centred on disenfranchised characters whose real lives are tied to these settings. However, more than just supporting Costa's aesthetic formulations, these films reveal a filmmaking practice characterised by particular production methods. Costa's works after *Bones* are deployed protracted shooting processes, marked by digital video's unobtrusive equipment and collaborations with non-professional actors informally recruited on location. Known for his problematic relationships with producers and aversion to large-scale filmmaking apparatuses, Costa negotiates between collaborative practices by pragmatically merging

---

<sup>3</sup> Previously known internationally as *Down To Earth*. The most recent release of the film (by Second Run, in 2012) uses the title *Casa de Lava*, which is the title that will be used throughout this thesis.

professional and personal agency, and between the freedom of artisanal low budget filmmaking and art cinema's normative industrial practices. This cohesive dialogue between film style and its means of production is highlighted by Costa's growing influence on other filmmakers – both Costa's contemplative docufiction style and his pragmatic filmmaking form a blueprint that has been cited as influential by several international filmmakers currently active on the film festival circuit.<sup>4</sup>

Costa's agency as a filmmaker informs not just the creative and production processes of his films, but also extends to exhibition and circulation practices. Partaking in the dynamics of contemporary art cinema circulation and consumption, Costa has been able to actively promote his oeuvre, expanding its circulation beyond the art-house and film festival circuit. Currently, Costa's works enjoy considerable circulation through international special screenings and retrospectives, the international art gallery circuit, as well as recent DVD releases targeting global markets. These multifaceted forms of circulation and consumption bring forth considerations about the state of art cinema's current aesthetic, production and

---

<sup>4</sup> Among several filmmakers citing Costa as an influence, both aesthetically and in terms of filmmaking, the most prominent is probably Valérie Massadian, whose film *Nana* (2011) was inspired by the working process of *In Vanda's Room*. José Luis Torres Leiva and Yulene Olaizola also recognise the influence of Costa's work in their films *El cielo, la tierra, y la lluvia* (*Sky, The Earth And The Rain*, 2008) and *Paraísos Artificiales* (*Artificial Paradises*, 2011), which draw on similar production frameworks as Costa's films and which feature stylistic marks indebted to *In Vanda's Room* and *Bones*, respectively. See 'Paraísos artificiales - Entrevista a Yulene Olaizola' (online: <http://vimeo.com/23096517>), and 'Entrevista a José Luis Torres Leiva' (online: <http://www.lafuga.cl/entrevista-a-jose-luis-torres-leiva/336>), [both accessed: 02.07.2015]. Costa's influence can also be observed in the work of several emerging Japanese filmmakers. In a personal email conversation (in 1 August 2014), Kazuyuki Yano, the spokesperson of Cinematrix (which currently distributes Costa's works in Japan), stated that filmmakers such as Kei Shichiri and Katsuya Tomita have pointed out Costa's importance in the development of their own filmmaking activities.

circulation practices, as well as the possible permutations of the art filmmaker – not just as an author or director, but also as a producer, artist and figure of commerce.

These facets of Costa's approach to maintaining his own agency as a filmmaker and their interactions with the modes and means of cinematic production and distribution, outlined above, have been only superficially discussed in the emerging scholarship. Discussions concerning his work largely stress thematic, aesthetic and political dimensions, subordinating their means of production as part of an overall context related to aesthetic formulations. Among others, essays by James Quandt, Thom Andersen, Jonathan Rosenbaum and Adrian Martin, examine textual properties and intertextual links constantly assumed by the filmmaker since his earlier feature films;<sup>5</sup> Jacques Lemière scrutinises the social, political and historical contexts from which Costa's works emerge,<sup>6</sup> and Jacques Rancière discusses the tense dialogue between film aesthetics and possible political readings in Costa's works.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> See James Quandt, 'Still Lives: The films of Pedro Costa', Thom Andersen, 'Ghost Stories', in *The cinema of Pedro Costa* (Jeonju: Jeonju International Film Festival, 2010), 21-4 and 246-54 respectively; Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'Cinema of the Future: Still Lives, the Films of Pedro Costa', in *Goodbye Cinema, Hello Cinephilia: Film Culture in Transition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 204-6; Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'Finding Oneself in the Dark: The Mysterious Cinema of Pedro Costa', in *The cinema of Pedro Costa*, 189-200; Adrian Martin, 'The Inner Life of a Film', in *Blood* DVD booklet (London: Second Run, 2009), 3-7.

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Lemière, 'Terra a Terra: O Portugal e o Cabo Verde de Pedro Costa', in *Cem mil cigarros: Os Filmes de Pedro Costa*, ed. by Ricardo Matos Cabo (Lisbon: Orfeu Negro, 2009), 99-111.

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Rancière, 'The Politics of Pedro Costa', in *Retrospective Pedro Costa*, booklet (Tate Modern, 2009), np. See also Jacques Rancière, 'Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community', in *The Emancipated Spectator* (London: Verso, 2011), 51-82.

Other scholars, such as Antony Fiant,<sup>8</sup> Ira Jaffe and Matthew Flanagan,<sup>9</sup> investigate the aesthetic formulations present in Costa's works, positioning his films as part of broader discussions of contemporary art film that privilege a contemplative, minimal and decelerated aesthetic – indeed, the formulaic term 'slow cinema', emerging in several scholar and film journalism to define Costa's work, is central to the study carried out by Jaffe and Flanagan. In these scholarly debates, only Flanagan's study devotes considerable attention to technology and filmmaking as part of the dialogue between filmic style and means of production. Furthermore, and apart from Flanagan's study, only Volker Pantenburg has situated Costa's film production as part of the close relation among production processes, technology and aesthetics.<sup>10</sup> Even considering that some of this academic literature – particularly Flanagan and Pantenburg's work – devotes some analysis to production, there is a lack of a more comprehensive discussion concerning the different production contexts and evolving processes that shaped Costa's oeuvre since his first feature film – a lack that extends to the discussion of the forms of exhibition and circulation, and how these also sustain the working practices of the filmmaker.

This absence is accentuated when looking at Costa's numerous published interviews and public communications (some of which are discussed in this study),

---

<sup>8</sup> Antony Fiant, *Pour un cinéma contemporain soustractif* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> See Ira Jaffe, *Slow Movies: Countering the Cinema of Action* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2014); Matthew Flanagan, '*Slow Cinema*': *Temporality and Style in Contemporary Art and Experimental Film*, unpublished PhD thesis (University of Exeter, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Volker Pantenburg, 'Realism, not Reality: Pedro Costa's Digital Testimonies', in *Afterall*, no. 24, (Summer 2010). Online: <http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.24/realism-not-reality-pedro-costa-s-digital-testimonies> [accessed: 21.01.2014].

in which he reveals and elaborates on the filming methods and operations deployed in his film's shooting and production processes. Costa has reiterated the importance of an approach to filmmaking defined by low-budget production and pragmatic methods of work, as well as the potential of digital video. Similarly, Costa has commented extensively on his personal approach to the settings of and collaborators on his films and, as already mentioned, his problematic relationships with producers.

Costa's films after *Bones* have been characterised by a pragmatic attitude summoned in the filmmaker's phrase: 'the film's budget is my screenplay'.<sup>11</sup> Conveying such pragmatic production values, Costa's phrase reveals a 'narrative of production', an evolving and on-going working process adapting to different contexts, emphasising the importance on the labour mechanisms and on the constraints and freedoms that allow his films to be made. While understood as a working process, this narrative also acquires discursive contours, expressed publicly by the filmmaker, in which his film's means of production are tied to a pragmatic ethos. Thus, questions arise about how Costa responds to the multiple production and circulation contexts of his works, as well as on how his personal agency forms and informs his professional and discursive practices. Furthermore, and considering this emphasis on labour – the 'work of the work', using Rhodes' phrase reproduced in the first opening epigraph – a further interrogation arises on how this narrative impacts on Costa's authorship and filmic style.

---

<sup>11</sup> In the original: 'para mim o orçamento é o argumento'. Costa expressed this sentiment during the event 'Pedro Costa and Rui Chafes in conversation', held at the Portuguese Cinematheque on 15 of January 2015, a session included in the 'invited director' initiative hosted by this institution. A video recording of this session is available online on: <http://youtu.be/KaYxUlgezSQg> [accessed: 30.04.2015].

In order to enquire about the multiple facets of this narrative of production, this dissertation examines the processes of production and consumption present in Costa's works. While considering the existing literature concerning the filmmaker, this study moves away from textual and aesthetic analyses. Instead, it examines the production and circulation factors which can be observed in Costa's working processes. Understandably, aesthetic considerations are pertinent to this dissertation; however, this study scrutinises these considerations as part of the filmmaker's evolving working practices. Therefore, this study investigates Costa's authorial processes as not just tied to an understanding of a particular filmic style but also, and more centrally, as an intrinsic part of an evolving filmmaking ethos placed in the multiple settings that permeate discussions concerning contemporary global art cinema.

This dissertation has two overarching goals. The first one, as pointed out above, is to offer an understanding of how Costa's artistic practices are mostly production processes, and how these same processes are negotiated through the direct agency of the filmmaker. As this study argues, this agency is tied to different contextual strata, formed by art cinema institutions and by social, political and cultural networks – with both formal and informal inflections – that permeates Costa's works' production processes. I argue that forms of circulation, reception and consumption are also a constitutive part of these production processes. Thus the second goal of this dissertation is to offer an understanding of how consumption of Costa's work partakes actively in a narrative of production, opening the way to further professional activities that complement his film production practices.

## Chapter structure

Providing a comprehensive study of Costa's production and consumption practices, this thesis examines the specific social, cultural and industrial contexts in which his works are placed. Consequently, this thesis is divided in two main sections, one dealing with the production context of Costa's work, the other turning its attention to the ways in which his work has been consumed.

There is, however, a need to define the theoretical context in which these two aspects will be discussed. Therefore, the thesis opens with an overview of discussions concerning the term 'art cinema'. On the one hand, the first chapter offers a contextualisation of different relations between filmic style, authorial agency, production paradigms and forms of circulation, which permeate scholarly usage of the term. On the other hand, it stresses the role of the art cinema institution, as a way of participating in the mediations between symbolic and economic capital that permeates cultural production. This discussion is central in understanding the role of the filmmaker, a key contributing factor to forms of agency that mediate between the economic and symbolic aspects in art cinema's production and circulation. Expanding on these discussions, Chapter Two outlines the political, cultural and industrial contexts that characterise Portuguese cinema. This chapter situates its argument within broader discussions of this national cinema, defined by a tense relation between art and industry, both historically and in contemporary terms. This analysis allows a succinct but broad understanding of the context in which Pedro Costa's filmmaking emerges.

Drawing on the contextual analysis looked at in these two first chapters, Chapters Three, Four and Five investigate the evolution of Costa's filmmaking process, with emphasis on the production context. Chapter Three describes Costa's



artistic formation, narrating his personal and professional development in the 1970s and 1980s. This chapter examines how these formative experiences inform the cinephilic influences that contribute to the making of Costa's first feature film, *Blood*, as well as analysing social and cultural contexts of the film's production. Carrying this dialogue between artistic agency and production further, Chapter Four discusses Costa's process of authorship in the context of European coproduction. Analysing the making of *Casa de Lava* and *Bones*, this chapter highlights two main aspects that will subsequently be constantly present in Costa's oeuvre. The first is the evolution of Costa's filmmaking from an authorial process marked by cinephilia influences (as expressed in *Blood*) to a form of creative agency that, while still considering these influences, also takes into consideration the social context of the films' shooting locations. The second aspect central to Chapter Four's discussion is the tense relationship between Costa's agency as an author and filmmaker, and the means of production and filmic apparatus of these two films.

Chapter Five investigates the making of *In Vanda's Room*, examining Costa's rejection of the industrial filmmaking model of *Casa de Lava* and *Bones*. *In Vanda's Room* uses digital video, low budget shooting processes and collaborative practices that mediate between personal and professional agency. These characteristics form Costa's current filmmaking blueprint, which became consolidated in subsequent works. The film's production process has been framed within discourses privileging notions of filmmaking independence or stylistic austerity. This chapter discusses how these notions nevertheless partake in art cinema's production framework, obeying to financial and industrial processes.

Scrutinising further the evolution of Costa's narrative of production, the second part of this dissertation establishes a rapport between film production and

forms of personal agency that impacts the filmmaker's reception, circulation and consumption. Chapter Six investigates the role of the international film festival circuit as a setting for discussing the symbolic and economic value of Pedro Costa. Central to the arguments in this chapter are, on one hand, the formation of film categories under critical reception, which establish different statuses of artistic consecration. On the other hand, this chapter looks into economic synergies present at the film festival, in which different agents collaborate in forms of cinematic production and commercial circulation. Chapter Seven analyses Costa's overlapping role of filmmaker and artist, discussing his video installations circulating in the international art gallery circuit. As I argue in this chapter, Costa's approach to the art gallery brings further understanding of the dialogue between film aesthetics and production practices, and its impact on aspects of exhibition and circulation. In this chapter I observe that assumptions concerning authorship are not just tied to filmmaking practices, but also extended to processes of exhibition.

Chapter Eight provides the reader with further understanding of Costa's activities concerning exhibition by examining processes of disintermediation impacting on the international circulation of his works. The two foci of this last chapter are the numerous film retrospectives Costa has enjoyed since 2005, and the international DVD releases of his films. This chapter reinforces arguments concerning the author as a commercial figure (as initially formulated in Chapter One), contributing to contexts of consumption and responding to audience expectations, as well as mediating between different forms of commodification of his works. Thus this last chapter stresses the argument that Costa's narrative of production is not just tied to aspects concerning filmmaking and production, but

expands to accommodate professional activities that concern circulation and consumption of his films.

## Methodology

The discussions carried out in the chapters outlined above significantly gain from engaging with an encompassing range of sources. In terms of primary sources, this study has greatly benefitted from two personal interviews with Pedro Costa, conducted in July 2012 and February 2013, as well as an interview with producer Francisco Villa-Lobos, conducted in February 2013. These interviews provided a considerable amount of information about the contexts of production and circulation of the works discussed in this thesis.

My interview with Costa in July 2012 also clarified some details of the social and industrial contexts of *Blood* and *Casa de Lava*, previously not publicly discussed, and which are explained in Chapters Three and Four. In the subsequent interview in February 2013, Costa contributed information concerning his video installations and the DVD editions, discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight. My conversation with Villa-Lobos addressed the production and circulation of *In Vanda's Room* and *Colossal Youth*, providing primary evidence used in Chapter Five and following sections. Also important to my research was a personal interview with Portuguese filmmaker Teresa Villaverde, conducted in June 2012. While not quoted in this study, Villaverde contributed with information concerning the filmmaking community in Lisbon during the late 1980s and early 1990s, offering context for Chapters Two and Three.

The information provided by the personal interviews with Costa and Villa-Lobos was considerably complemented by several email exchanges (in questionnaire

format) with different cinema professionals and institutions. My exchange with Portuguese filmmaker and cinematographer Daniel Del-Negro informed me about filmmaking activities preceding the making of *Blood*, as well as the influence of António Reis, material which is used in Chapter Three. Some of the discussions in Chapter Five, concerning the shooting and post-production processes of *In Vanda's Room*, benefited considerably from the email communication with Cláudia Tomaz and Patrícia Saramago, who collaborated in the shooting and post-production of the film, respectively.

Stressing the importance for this thesis of the financial context in which Costa's production framework is placed, this study benefited from information from producer Jörg Schneider (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, henceforth ZDF), Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (Radio and Television of Portugal, henceforth RTP), ICA (Cinema and Audiovisual Institute, formerly Portuguese Cinema Institute, or IPC), and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon). The information received from these sources highlights the nature of the financial mechanisms I explore when discussing Costa's films, as well as Portuguese cinema and, to some extent European art film. This information is used in the analysis of Costa's work, carried out in Chapters Three, Four and Five, and to some extent it is also present in Chapter Two. Other primary sources helped to give me a sense on how Pedro Costa's working practices and authorship processes are extended to include his film's circulation and consumption. Particularly relevant to the discussion in Chapter Eight was the material provided (via questionnaire) by several spokespersons of distribution companies currently releasing Costa's films on DVD. These include communications with Chris Barwick (Second Run, UK), Pedro Borges (Midas Filmes, Portugal) Craig Keller (Eureka! Masters of Cinema, UK), and Kazuyuki Yano (Animatrix, Japan).

Beyond consultation of these resources, the dissertation I present in this thesis draws on a wide range of articles, news, film reviews and official reports, published in both Portuguese and international newspapers, magazines, specialised press, or via institutional mediums, either offline and online. There was an effort to identify, to study and, in some cases, translate material not just specifically concerning Pedro Costa but also related to production, circulation and reception of Portuguese contemporary cinema. Research at the National Library of Portugal and at the Hemeroteca Municipal de Lisboa allowed me to access material from Portuguese newspapers and specialised presses. Some of this material is discussed in Chapters Two and Three. The research conducted in the archives of Cinemateca Portuguesa (henceforth Portuguese Cinematheque) allowed access to original press releases, as well two script treatments of *Casa de Lava* not previously identified in scholarly literature. These two documents are discussed at considerable length in Chapter Four.

This thesis offers a dialogue between these primary and archival sources and a range of academic literature which provides evidence for some of the arguments presented, while drawing attention to cultural, industrial and social aspects concerning Costa's work. In general terms, this study draws on film studies scholarship on art cinema, centred in forms of institution, authorship and mediations between symbolic and economic values. In particular, I take initial inspiration from Pierre Bourdieu's conception of the field of cultural production. The main aspects of Bourdieu's theories are presented in Chapter One and underpin subsequent chapters. Considering some of the contexts into which Costa's work is commonly placed, this study also draws on scholarship concerning notions of art cinema, previously analysed by David Bordwell, Steve Neal, Peter Lev, András Bálint Kovács and

Barbara Wilinsky, among others. Analysing comprehensively how this term is negotiated under practices concerning film production and consumption placed in a transnational context, this study also draws on the theoretical works of Thomas Elsaesser, Anne Jäckel, Hamid Naficy, Volker Pantenburg, Julian Stringer and Marijke de Valck. Lastly, acknowledging that the processes of production and consumption illustrated by Costa's work raise questions concerning authorship in contemporary art cinema, this study also reflects scholarly discussions presented in the works of Rosanna Maule, Janet Staiger, Timothy Corrigan, Jonathan Rosenbaum, Mark Gallagher and Adrian Martin, among others.

Addressing this dialogue between the production and consumption of contemporary art cinema observed in Pedro Costa's work, this thesis interrogates what possible mediations are observed when discussing artistic practices, defined discursively by notions of individual expression, and cinema production as a social practice characterised by normative industrial, economic and circulation processes. It scrutinises how a filmmaker can expand his working practices to all steps of the production and commercial life of a film, and investigate the factors and permutations that inform Costa's authorial agency – both as a creative practitioner and a linking agent in different economic circuits permeating contemporary art cinema.

## Part I: Critical and Historical Contexts

## CHAPTER ONE

# Contemporary Art Cinema as an Institution and Practice

Works of art are art because of the position they occupy within an institutional context.

George Dickie<sup>1</sup>

Discussions of artistic agency and filmic style have permeated scholar enquiries concerning art cinema. Yet, the term is considerably bound to specific mechanisms of production and distribution, and to discourses rooted in symbolic value. One of the posters promoting the Portuguese theatrical release of Costa's *Horse Money* (see Figure 1) serves as an example to illustrate this claim. The poster is headed by the sentence 'um filme de Pedro Costa' ('a film by Pedro Costa'), placed alongside the 2014 Locarno International Film Festival logotype, indicating the 'best director' award. These elements are followed by the title of the film, and a sentence in Cape Verdean Creole. The poster presents a photo of a man, whose bare upper body is illuminated by a spotlight, contrasting with a dark background. The bottom of the poster is filled with information with the film's premiere date and the theatres at which it will be exhibited. Also on the bottom of the poster, a row of logotypes is visible.<sup>2</sup> It can be assumed that the sentence and the image placed just below the film's title somehow reflect its aesthetics, created by the filmmaker identified on the top of the poster; it is evident that the film was recognised by an established cultural

---

<sup>1</sup> George Dickie, 'The New Institutional Theory of Art', in *The Philosophy of Art*, ed. by Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley (Boston: McGraw Hill, 1995), 213.

<sup>2</sup> This is one of several posters promoting the film. All the different posters have an identical layout, although some present the cast and crew credits.



institution; while the film's author is Pedro Costa (as indicated), the logotypes at the bottom — perhaps less noticeable but still visible — acknowledge the companies and institutions that supported its production, distribution and promotion.

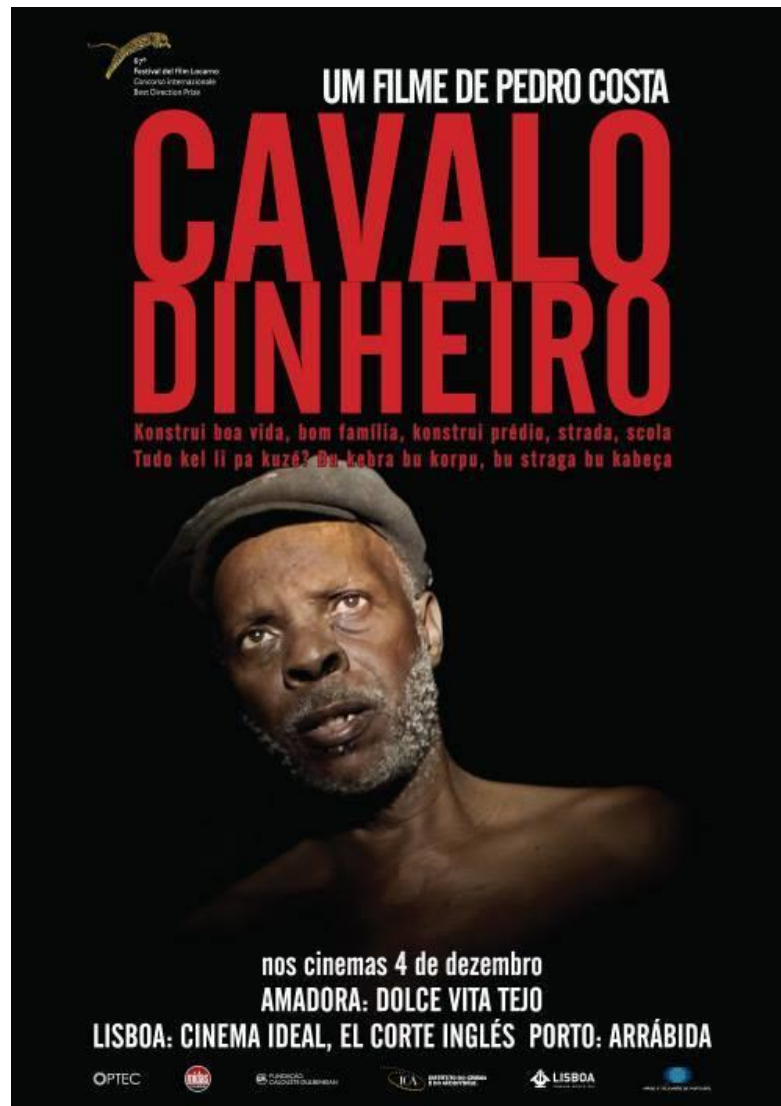


Figure 1: One of the versions of the Portuguese poster for *Horse Money*.

As a marketing object, the poster of *Horse Money* carries a set of interrelated properties: it helps to promote the film to a potential audience, presenting information such as the film's title, release dates and exhibition locations; but it also conveys a set of conventions that call for further interpretation of this information, related with art cinema's institutional context and its filmmaking practices. This

poster allows enquiry into aspects of institutional and industrial support and circuits of circulation, while potentially revealing the impact of discursive notions such as authorship, filmic style and artistic prestige. While these notions can surely be contested, nevertheless, these are properties central to an understanding of terms such as art cinema. These notions illustrate the different cultural, political and economic contexts that tie filmic texts to this term, as well as presenting clues as to how art film is created, produced and made available for public consumption.

The brief analysis offered above presupposes an understanding of art cinema as convening two overarching contexts; one carrying discourses of artistic value and cultural prestige and the other defining industrial and commercial characteristics. This chapter interrogates how these two contexts are placed under the auspices of an institution that discusses artistic discourses and industrial and circulation processes, and mediates between artefact and commercial product. In order to engage with different fields of enquiry – tentatively summed up in terms such as art, industry and commerce – this chapter carries out an analysis of art cinema as a term discussing theoretical constructions rooted in notions of artistic value, and properties that reveal a set of institutional and filmmaking practices. Thus, this chapter outlines possible mechanisms which shape the narrative of production carried out in Pedro Costa's oeuvre, as summarised in the Introduction, while tracing different production and circulation facets of art cinema. This analysis provides a broader understanding of the contexts into which Costa's agency is placed and discussed, as well as the transactions of symbolic and economic value to which his films are tied.

A Bourdieusian understanding of the nature of production and transaction of cultural goods informs the argument presented in this chapter. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's conception of the field of cultural production, different notions of value

and the position occupied by cultural agents in different sub-fields of production help to inform contemporary cultural practices. These notions summon discourse formations related to symbolic value, while mediating between production and commerce in an 'economy of symbolic goods'.<sup>3</sup> Analysing art cinema through Bourdieu's conception of cultural fields, this chapter considers theoretical debates framing art cinema's different facets as an institution. Firstly, it interrogates scholarship on art cinema examining differing discussions that, nevertheless, share terms negotiating between theoretical constructions and industrial processes. Secondly, this chapter expands on notions of artistic value, outlined in Bourdieu's theoretical model. Under this framework, this chapter analyses the attribution of different forms of capital to artistic commodities. It proposes that art cinema, as a term but also as an institution, is animated by notions concerning an economy of prestige.

Placing its emphasis on the discussion of art cinema as an institution, the third and fourth parts of this chapter analyse production and circulation, respectively. The third part of the chapter examines this institution as it operates under specific economy and cultural frameworks. It describes the dialogue between artistic status and industrial formations, both in national and European terms, explaining the different aspects of production under an institutional framework. Following this analysis, the chapter concentrates on practices of exhibition and circulation. It discusses theoretical conceptions related to the international art-house circuit,

---

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'The production of belief: contribution to an economy of symbolic goods', in *Media Culture Society*, 2 (1980), 261-93.

expanding its discussion to the multifaceted forms of exhibition and circulation operating within the international film festival circuit.

Lastly, this chapter discusses the role of the art filmmaker as an author. Animating this examination is the role of the author as a figure for attribution of symbolic value, as well as an agent placed between industrial and commercial practices and creation processes. Steering away from the discussion concerning *auteurism*, this last part interrogates instead how authorship mediates industrial and circulation processes. Providing an analysis that covers economic and symbolic value attribution, this chapter develops an inclusive model that attends to the different cultural and industrial contexts present in Costa's production and consumption practices, discussed throughout subsequent chapters.

### Art cinema as taxonomy of distinction

Definitions of art cinema have tended to highlight the duality between filmic style and forms of institutional presence. Among the term's theoretical characterisations, art cinema has been addressed, as David Bordwell proposes, as a mode of film practice transmitting the aesthetic vision of filmmakers,<sup>4</sup> or, as Steve Neale argues, as an institution composed by industrial frameworks and modes of circulation that mostly runs counter to the American domination of the international cinema market.<sup>5</sup> Other definitions offer readings centred in the mediations between filmic style, production, and practices of consumption carried out under the art cinema institution.

---

<sup>4</sup> David Bordwell, 'The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice', in *The European Cinema Reader*, ed. by Catherine Fowler (London: Routledge, 2002), 94-102.

<sup>5</sup> Steve Neale, 'Art Cinema as Institution', *Screen*, 22 no. 1 (1981), 11-39.

Peter Lev understands art cinema as a group of films produced nationally or internationally, catered to receptive, highly-cultured international audiences.<sup>6</sup> In similar terms, in Barbara Wilinsky's study of the rise of the American art-house circuit, the term is mainly understood as a mode of exhibition of non-mainstream films, to which artistic value was attributed, to great extent, as a circulation strategy.<sup>7</sup>

Understandably, these scholarly definitions aim at delineating what is and what is not an art filmic text, while leaving open further possibilities for inclusion. While to differing degrees, all these scholars point out that filmic style serve to create relational distinction from mainstream cinema. David Bordwell's influential article 'The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice' and his subsequent book *Narration in the Fiction Film* organise art cinema under a heterogeneous taxonomy of filmic style and thematic properties, as a unified cinematic discourse rooted in 'overall *functions* of style and theme',<sup>8</sup> which contrasts with what is considered the prevalent narrative qualities of Hollywood cinema. This taxonomy of style, as a central characteristic in art cinema, reveals problematic contours. Framing Bordwell's narrative categories within European art cinema traditions historically emerging from European Modernism, András Bálint Kovács argues that Bordwell's analysis of art cinema as a stylistic category may manifest inaccurate delineations. As Kovács points out, 'modern film narration consists in fact not just of one homogenous system, but a set of different modes of narrative styles' that reflect

---

<sup>6</sup> Peter Lev, *The Euro-American Cinema* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Wilinsky, *Sure Seaters: The Emergence of Art House Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Bordwell, 'Art Cinema', 95 (emphasis in original). See also Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (London: Routledge, 1988), 20ff.

different artistic approaches, some of which have been appropriated in contemporary Hollywood cinema.<sup>9</sup>

Contrastingly, Steve Neale points out that what constitutes a central characteristic of the definition of art cinema is the formation of cultural distinction conveyed by the institution supporting it. Neale illustrates this point by presenting examples of the binary discourses surrounding notions of art cinema and Hollywood, which carry polarised attributions of artistic value ('trash versus taste, hysteria versus restraint, energy versus decorum and quality').<sup>10</sup> Though transmitted in different stylistic forms (e.g. 'Neo-realism', 'subjective expression'), Neale argues that textual style in art cinema responds to specific institutional ideologies of art 'as the marks of Art itself'.<sup>11</sup> This association between filmic style and artistic distinction is further driven through forms of reception. As Peter Lev points out, art cinema's international audience is (or is thought to be) the cultural elite, who accept 'intercultural, as well as intracultural, communications' in art films, in which provenance also becomes a mark of value: '[t]he intercultural communication is usually European in origin, which connects art film to other high-culture pursuits (e.g. classical music, opera)'.<sup>12</sup> These relational notions rely on potential artistic value to contextualise art cinema as filmic expression transmitting an aura of exclusivity that places it apart from mass consumption entertainment.

---

<sup>9</sup> András Bálint Kovács, *Screening Modernism: European art cinema, 1950-1980* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 59-60.

<sup>10</sup> Neale, 'Art Cinema as Institution', 12.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>12</sup> Lev, *The Euro-American Cinema*, 5.

However, the term becomes troubled by the constellation of different cinema traditions and practices that can be contextualised through this relational dichotomy. The cohabitation of these two notions – non-definitive delineation and attribution of value – are not just observed in the theoretical construction of art cinema, but are also visible in other forms of film categorisation commonly supported by cultural discourses and taste cultures. Jeffrey Sconce's term 'paracinema', for example, reflects a similar non-definitive categorical relation, serving as an expression that encapsulates multiple distinct film practices gathered under the remit of taste. Wide-ranging film practices framed as 'critically disreputable' in cinematic history can still be connected, as Sconce observes, via a 'growing and increasingly articulate cinematic subculture' that unifies them as possessing similar artistic value.<sup>13</sup> While mediated as a flexible (textual) category, multiple and distinct film texts that translate notions of filmic 'excess' are presented in a unifying 'reading protocol', under particular taste cultures and by forms of institution.<sup>14</sup>

While Sconce's understanding of these different film practices may present possible subjective mediations rooted in stylistic properties, categorisations such as paracinema are also possible by the presence of an overarching institution that generates a reading potentiating distinction – a symbolic value attributed via cultural, artistic or political readings. Transposing this model to the analysis of art cinema presented in this chapter, I argue that a multitude of disparate films can be grouped

---

<sup>13</sup> Jeffrey Sconce, "'Trashing the academy": taste, excess, and the emerging politics of cinematic style', in *Screen*, vol. 36, no. 4 (1995), 372.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 373. In Sconce's analysis, it is understood that the legitimisation of such parametric texts is created through an institution formed by many different publications and forms of academic research, and by stylistic appropriations of these texts in contemporary mainstream entertainment.

under any kind of textual formation through an institution, which not just mediates between production and circulation contexts, as discussed later, but also sustains a discursive taxonomy of distinction, rooted in an economy of symbolic value.

### The economy of symbolic value

Pierre Bourdieu's proposed framework for the field of cultural production illustrates the dialogue between the attribution of symbolic and the mechanism of production and circulation, placed in an economic sphere. According to Bourdieu, cultural production practices function as a 'negation' (*dénégation*) of the norms commonly observed in capitalist economies, by 'pretending not to be doing what they are doing'.<sup>15</sup> This condition of disavowal is characteristic of a system in which culture industries rely first and foremost on the accumulation of symbolic capital, an 'economic or political capital that is disavowed, mis-recognized and thereby recognized, hence legitimate, a "credit" which, under certain conditions, and always in the long run, guarantees "economic" profits'.<sup>16</sup> Symbolic capital is, therefore, translated to the accumulation of prestige and in the mediation of an artistic status, which influences the level of recognition and consecration of a particular work, author or producer. As Bourdieu argues,

[f]or the author, the critic, the art dealer, the publisher or the theatre manager, the only legitimate accumulation consists in making a name for oneself, a known, recognized name, a capital of consecration implying a power to consecrate objects (with a trademark or signature) or persons

---

<sup>15</sup> Bourdieu, 'The production of belief', 261.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.



(through publication, exhibition, etc.) and therefore to give value, and to appropriate the profits from this operation.<sup>17</sup>

The relationships established in an artistic field allow this consecration, with all different agents being culturally and academically equipped with cultural capital to translate the significance of its symbolic value.<sup>18</sup> More pertinently for the discussion in this chapter, this framework relies on (symbolic) value attribution that is rooted in cultural prestige, while mediating (economic) production practices.

Drawing on Bourdieu's framework, James F. English describes this economic disavowal condition as an ambiguous 'economy of cultural prestige' composed by an international circulation of cultural value that, while not based on money, cannot be detached from the economic value condition.<sup>19</sup> While English's analysis is mostly centred on prize and award attribution, he argues that this economy of cultural prestige surrounds most forms of artistic practices circulating in a cultural market.<sup>20</sup> This economy of symbolic value transmits notions of 'certain basic continuities between economic behavior (that is, interested or advantage-seeking exchange) and the behavior proper to artists, critics, intellectuals, and other important players on the

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste* (London: Routledge, 2010), 5. It should be acknowledged that Bourdieu's analysis of cultural capital takes into consideration multiple social constructions (for example, social class and academic qualifications) that, while relevant in his comprehensive analysis of the judgement of taste, are outside the remit of this chapter.

<sup>19</sup> James F. English, *The economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 2005), 4.

<sup>20</sup> As analysed by Bourdieu, artistic 'positions' and homologous 'position-takings' are dependent on the field of cultural production, which is presented (also) as 'a network of objective relations'. See Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Author's Point of View: Some General Properties of Fields of Cultural Production', in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 231.

fields of culture'.<sup>21</sup> Attribution of symbolic capital relies upon an established institutional presence – a flexible apparatus that operates production and circulation, while gaining symbolic value through artistic discourses. In its broadest sense, this institution, or field of cultural production, presents a dualistic structure. As Bourdieu argues, this structure is composed of a sub-field of restricted or small-scale production of artistic forms and creative agency related to high art or avant-garde aesthetics and production formations, and another sub-field of large-scale artistic production in which popular cultural forms find acceptance and circulation.<sup>22</sup> This dualism translates to concomitant relationships with economic and symbolic capital – large-scale production centres on accumulation of economic capital, while restricted production is concerned with the accumulation of symbolic capital.

These two oppositional fields are not closed systems. As pointed out by Bourdieu, a wide range of cultural production practices are situated between these two extremes, generating similarly polarised relations. Furthermore, the dynamism of these fields and their broader interactions is also evident in Bourdieu's analysis. The constant tensions between the oppositional sub-fields imply that aesthetic renovation of the cultural production is dependent on artistic cross-pollination and cultural trends.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, institutions and their actors compete for symbolic capital by mediating between these binary relations, revealing forms of classification (e.g. bourgeois and avant-garde, dominant and newcomers, small-scale and large-scale).

---

<sup>21</sup> English, *The economy of Prestige*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Bourdieu, 'The production of belief', 268-9. See also 'The Emergence of a Dualistic Structure', in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 121-25.

<sup>23</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'The market of symbolic goods', in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 129.

As Bourdieu argues, aesthetic or formal characteristics are subordinate to these relations, since the cultural production fields take into consideration not just ‘the material production, but also the symbolic production of the work’.<sup>24</sup> This relationship between material practice and forms of symbolic production is visible when looking at art cinema as an institution. Institutional practices are reflected in a homologous relation between apparatuses of production and consumption, enclosed by an overall discursive or ideological apparatus of public or state-owned organisations and initiatives, and private forms of organisation rooted in commercial entrepreneurship.

### Institution and art cinema production

As Neale argues, the art cinema institution is composed by both ‘an economic infrastructure’, as a ‘commodity-dominated’ mode of ‘production, distribution and exhibition’ and by ‘cultural discourses in general and the high art and culture in particular’.<sup>25</sup> Neale centres his analysis in a historical perspective that contextualises governmental support to the film industries in France, Germany and Italy, pointing out that this institutional presence supports the ‘construction and perpetuation’ of European national cinemas, understood as operating in opposition to Hollywood.<sup>26</sup> This institutional support, which has been mirrored in other European nations (as discussed in the next chapter) legitimises national cinemas as part of broader

---

<sup>24</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Field of Economic Production, or: The Economic World Reversed’, in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 37.

<sup>25</sup> Neale, ‘Art Cinema as Institution’, 15.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

expressions of national culture. This support asserts a cultural discourse which allows a sense of distinction, opposed to the products of entertainment industries.

While framed in a discourse on cultural goods, art cinema in Europe inevitably participates in domestic circulation circuits but also occupies a ‘niche within the international film market, a sector that is not yet completely dominated by Hollywood’.<sup>27</sup> This understanding of (European) art cinema considers an industrial and business practice mediating between economic values and the attribution of a symbolic capital rooted in a national origin, while further propelling international recognition. Art films of any European provenance can surely be read as a form of national cinema (as Neale somewhat ambiguously positions them) but also, and more often, as filmic texts supported by cultural and industrial paradigms that illustrate the transnational nature of such institutions.

Historically, the dialogue between national and international dimensions of the European art film reflects collaboration between different national producers and among different European states. As Anne Jäckel points out, while problematic and issue-driven, this collaborative environment nurtured early manifestations of a framework of coproduction,<sup>28</sup> which became an intrinsic part of a narrative of production seeking to define European art cinema. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, successive international cultural cooperation agreements between European countries have consolidated the coproduction model, sustaining a dialogue between national

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>28</sup> Anne Jäckel, *European Film Industries* (London: BFI, 2003), 7-9. It can be noted, as discussed by Jäckel, that these coproduction collaborations also draw on American financial resources and personnel. For considerations on these international coproduction collaborations, see also Lev, *The Euro-American Cinema*, 49-57.

film industries and international production.<sup>29</sup> These forms of coproduction, which operate through a transnational art cinema institution, became consolidated with the formation of the European Union as a supranational central form of government in the late 1980s.

While European art cinema overall participates in forms of cultural exception, its economic value is reflected a multitude of production frameworks sustained equally by public institutions and private entrepreneurship. These production and coproduction frameworks are conditioned by budget and production apparatuses, ranging from practices maintained under various European studio systems to others deploying small-scale, and even artisanal, modes of production. Thus, while different forms of art cinema production may participate in similar cultural discourses and reclaim similar artistic prestige among art-house audiences (commonly in overseas markets), these are, nevertheless, produced under distinct industrial frameworks. In this context, some filmic expression of European art film have also been labelled as ‘author cinema’ (or *cinéma d’auteur*), positioning them both nationally and internationally as films with mostly an elitist aesthetic appeal, as the following chapter concerning Portuguese cinema illustrates.

While a variety of industrial frameworks sustained European cinema, from the late 1960s onwards, art film became connoted with a paradigmatic ‘cultural’

---

<sup>29</sup> Succeeding treaties dealing with the co-production of film between France and Italy (1946 and 1949), measures such as the Treaty of Rome (1957) established a unified market community. Successive multilateral agreements (e.g. that between Germany and France in 1955, or that between Italy and United Kingdom in 1967) have further supported the commercial activities of European film producers, establishing collaborative co-production practices. See Luisa Rivi, *European cinema after 1989: Cultural Identity and Transnational Production* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 41-3; 49-50.

mode of production synonymous, as Thomas Elsaesser points out, with ‘state finance supporting artisanal values’.<sup>30</sup> As Rosanna Maule asserts, until the late 1980s, art film production presented a model of filmmaking centred on the figure of the auteur, with its financing mainly done ‘through governmental subsidies, aid programmes for culturally oriented films, and national television networks, and characterised by slow production processes, small budgets, and poor or no theatrical distribution’.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, this mode of production acquired controversial value among broader social formations. Even if this support created the forms of cultural prestige sought by institution and filmmakers alike, this production framework revealed the problematic relationship between highly-subsidised filmmaking practices and its commercial sustainability.<sup>32</sup>

While the public perception of European art cinema as dependent on mostly public funding still persists (perhaps in some of its more artisanal expressions), this model of production has changed substantially. The notion of national film industries discussed by Neale may still retain a discourse of exclusivity and cultural prestige within popular and academic discussions, however in industrial terms, European film industries have become increasingly tied to business-integrated practices. From the

---

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *New German cinema: a history* (London: BFI, 1989), 40.

<sup>31</sup> Rosanna Maule, *Beyond Auteurism: New Directions in Authorial Film Practices in France, Italy and Spain since the 1980s* (Bristol: Intellect, 2008), 17. It should be pointed out that the qualities of distribution described by Maule are mostly observed at the national level, since many art films produced through this framework would have had an international circulation, even if restricted to the film festival and art-house circuits.

<sup>32</sup> In this context, such frictions acquired mostly political contours. A quote from the West German Minister of the Interior, Friedrich Zimmermann, taken from an interview with *Der Spiegel* from July 1983, illustrate these tensions in a considerable way: ‘[t]he taxpayer does not want to be provoked, he wants to be entertained’. Reproduced in Eric Rentschler, *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices* (New York; London: Holmes and Meier, 1988), xiii.

late 1980s onwards, several national and European political and economic measures favoured a cinema industry relying on competitive and commercial values. As Luisa Rivi points out, pan-European measures and initiatives such as the Television Without Frontiers Directive, Eurimages, and MEDIA revitalised the role of European coproduction, while encouraging further development for the cultural industries.<sup>33</sup>

During the 1990s, these measures provided production and distribution support for a multitude of cinematic practices, accentuating the gradual deregulation of the European cultural sector in several European countries and reflecting a new political climate after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc in 1991. However, while these changes reflected intentions to create economically sustainable film industries across Europe, the institutional discourses that accompanied these measures were still centred on assumptions of symbolic value and cultural prestige. Aiming at creating a unifying yet diverse pan-European cultural presence, these measures have been accompanied by a discourse that brought further polarisation between notions of culture and commerce.<sup>34</sup>

These changes, under the institutional auspices of the European Union, created a more commercial approach to film production and circulation, while revealing further tensions between cinema with commercial appeal and forms of art cinema more aligned to an artisanal approach.<sup>35</sup> In this changing scenario, the dynamism of cultural production discussed in Bourdieu's framework becomes, once

---

<sup>33</sup> Rivi, *European Cinema After 1989*, 53.

<sup>34</sup> Jäckel, *European Film Industry*, 94; See also Rivi, *European Cinema After 1989*, 56-57.

<sup>35</sup> See Maule, *Beyond Auteurism*, 16; Jäckel, *European Film Industries*, 14-15.

again, pertinent. Terms such as ‘European cinema’ or the ‘European art film’ came to indicate overlapping institutional spaces, and share nuanced cultural value.<sup>36</sup> These terms became connoted with multiple industrial practices (spanning high and low budgets), operated under different provenances and shaped by different film industry players, even if enjoying similar financial and institutional support and partaking in the formation of European cultural policies.

### Institution as exhibition and circulation

These considerations about art cinema’s production, as part of an institutional effort marked by the tensions between artistic and cultural prestige, gain further complexity when discussing it as a category of consumption. As already pointed out, discussions of art cinema inevitably refer to its global appeal, rooted in symbolic value imprinted by audiences with particular taste formations.

Barbara Wilinsky discusses circulation strategies rooted in notions of high culture, which seek a balance between ‘exclusiveness and inclusiveness’ to economically sustain circulation operations.<sup>37</sup> Observing the industrial and circulation characteristics of art cinema, Wilinsky argues that

[a]rt cinema, like mainstream cinema, exists in and supports the commercial film industry and as such does not deviate from Hollywood

---

<sup>36</sup> This relation is observed in European television networks, with television channels such as ARTE or ZDF supporting the production and exhibition of films with more-marked artistic tendencies while others, such as the Canal + in Spain and France, dedicating most of their efforts to forms of national cinema with broader audience appeal. For further details on these differentiations, see the introduction of Dorota Ostrowska and Graham Roberts, *European Cinema in the Television Age* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Wilinsky, *Sure Seaters*, 103.



cinema too drastically in terms of either business operation and stylistics. Art films are produced outside of the Hollywood studio system, but still aim to earn money. [...] Existing somewhere in between mainstream cinema and experimental, avant-garde, or modernist cinema, art films are different, but not too different.<sup>38</sup>

Reflecting historical and geographical contexts, this notion of art cinema reads as simultaneously pertinent and also potentially imprecise. Wilinsky's argument is surely pertinent in understanding the institutional practices related to exhibition. Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of sites of consumption as being key to qualifying the product consumed, Wilinsky formulates the notion that art cinema (as a term) is qualified by its relation with exhibition circuits and, more importantly, in the cultural discourses articulated by these same circuits.<sup>39</sup> However, while art cinema may be integrated into economically sustainable transactions, it also relies on symbolic value. Some film practices may not necessary translate to sustainable market practices; the state-funded artisanal cultural practices in European cinema, pointed out by Elsaesser and Rivi earlier in this chapter, may help to illustrate this point.

Furthermore, Wilinsky's perspective on art cinema circulation seems to exclude other forms of non-mainstream cinema, also present in similar art-house context. Even if rooted in distinct sub-fields of cultural production, these practices have and continue to occupy overlapping exhibition circuits and translate similar cultural discourses as art cinema – particularly ones related with alterity to Hollywood style and film production formulas. Centring the discussion on the

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 40; 130.

specific context analysed by Wilinsky, the US art-house, scholars such as David E. James, Mark Betz and Eric Schaefer have identified European art cinema as sharing the same exhibition and circulation circuits (even if only partially) as avant-garde, ‘minor cinemas’ and exploitation films.<sup>40</sup>

In a similar way to the nuances observed in the art cinema institution as a form of a production framework discussed earlier, the exhibition context of the art film presents a diversity of institutional forms. It reflects the overlapping interest of the agents of the different production and consumption sub-fields. Thus art cinema also maintains a variety of commercial and cultural practices that depend on the relationship between production and exhibition and that obeys this nuanced institutional presence, while negotiating different cultural formations and conventions of taste. Expressing this nuanced institutional presence, Janet Harbord argues that the contemporary art-house cinema functions as a differentiating marker from mainstream film, presenting a ‘heterogeneous’ programming without explicit criteria, one that includes ‘formally innovative film, the social realist text, [...] foreigner films’, and American films outside the studio system.<sup>41</sup> Harbord contends that these stylistically and textually different film traditions and practices, previously contextualised through filmic style, have become ‘reconfigured through [...]

---

<sup>40</sup> See David E. James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 221-223; Mark Betz, ‘Art, exploitation, underground’, in *Defining Cult Movies: The Cultural Politics of Oppositional Taste*, ed. Mark Jancovich, et al. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 202-222; Eric Schaefer, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True! A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1999), 331-7. It needs to be acknowledged that, while the concept of art cinema presented by Wilinsky may reveal some exclusivity, the plurality of the term is implicitly discussed in some other parts of her study.

<sup>41</sup> Janet Harbord, *Film Cultures* (London: Sage, 2002), 43.

different contexts of exhibition', giving way to a plural expression of what Harbord designates as 'film cultures', cohabiting in a web of institutional circulation forms that cater to different but overlapping communities.<sup>42</sup>

The international film festival is one of the stages on which this plural expression gains visible expression. As Julian Stringer discusses, this term comprises 'the existence of a socially produced space unto itself, a unique cultural arena that acts as a contact zone for the working-through of unevenly different power relationships'.<sup>43</sup> In this cultural arena, different discourses emerge, such as the ones deployed by independent filmmakers and producers or those articulated by the media and the film business, and location discourses promoted by the tourism and service industries.<sup>44</sup> Thomas Elsaesser has discussed this exhibition circuit in similar terms, arguing that festivals 'cluster a combination of economic, cultural, political, artistic and personality-based factors', contributing to the formation and branding of these events.<sup>45</sup> These factors contribute to an institutional formation that integrates the industrial economic value, while mediating forms of symbolic currency such as artistic significance, prestige, and authorial agency.

As a network, the international film festival circuit allows further comprehension of the hierarchical composition of the fields of cultural production, with large- and small-scale events cooperating and competing for both cultural

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 44-5.

<sup>43</sup> Julian Stringer, 'Global Cities and the International Film Festival Economy', in *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, ed. by Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 138.

<sup>44</sup> See Harbord, *Film Cultures*, 60.

<sup>45</sup> Elsaesser, *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*, 88; see also, Stringer, 'Global Cities', 139.

prestige and a place in the film market. The ‘two-tier’ model presented in this network, as Stringer, as well as Mark Peranson, point out, oscillates between business-oriented mega-events and smaller-scale festivals, marked by niche operations and constituency-driven criteria.<sup>46</sup> These two models are not static formations, as many festivals present inclusive programming activities, aiming to encompass several different film cultures. This is expressed by the inclusion of different sections (either competitive or non-competitive). Rooted in a prestige economy, the international film festival presents competitive marketing practices that aim to reach different audiences while responding to the necessities of industries and businesses of different commercial scales.<sup>47</sup>

The mediation between symbolic and economic value in the prestige economy of the film festival circuit is further contextualised by the nature of its exhibition practices. As Marijke de Valck discusses, these events allow the exhibition and circulation of art cinema outside the restrictions of ‘commercial settings’, maintaining an ‘alternative exhibition circuit of its own’ that relies on codependence between festivals and filmmakers.<sup>48</sup> Subsequently, these transactions nurture further circulation and production opportunities. The symbolic capital

---

<sup>46</sup> Stringer, ‘Global Cities’, 141; Mark Peranson, ‘First You Get the Power, Then you Get the Money: Two Models of Film Festivals’, in *Dekalog 3: On Film Festivals* ed. by Richard Porton (London; New York: Wallflower Press, 2009), 25-7.

<sup>47</sup> See Peranson, ‘First You Get the Power’, 27-8. For an account on the problematic relations between film cultures and commercial activities that mark the international film festival programming see Robert Koehler, ‘Cinephilia and Film Festivals’, in Richard Porton (ed.), *Dekalog 3: On film Festivals* (London; New York: Wallflower Press, 2009), 81-3; 87.

<sup>48</sup> Marijke de Valck, *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 106.

generated by the participation in festivals allows filmmakers to potentially ‘enter into distribution, critical discourse and the various exhibition outlets’, and to attract funding for subsequent projects;<sup>49</sup> equally, the film festival depends on the prestige endowed by some art filmmakers in order to respond to their audiences' expectations concerning artistic prestige.

The relationship between circulation and production observed in the festival circuit is further enhanced by contemporary commercial tendencies that tie circulation and production together in the enclosed economy of these events. As Elsaesser observes, some festivals foster the production of films in such a way as to bind filmmakers to these events.<sup>50</sup> One can observe this relationship in initiatives such as, for example, the World Cinema Fund (associated with Berlin International Film Festival) or Rotterdam’s Hubert Bals Fund, to which directors such as Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Lav Diaz or Carlos Reygadas are commonly related. In a similar way, non-European initiatives such as Korea's Jeonju Digital Project (in which Costa participated in 2007), carried by the Jeonju International Film Festival, help produce short films commissioned to several international art filmmakers. These films are premiered at events related to this festival, and subsequently circulate in other international events. While promoting film production, these initiatives constitute a further step in value attribution, with both symbolic and economic value being created.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Elsaesser, *European Cinema*, 97.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 503.

<sup>51</sup> For analysis on possible problematic contours of this form of production operated by festivals see, for example, Mark Betz, ‘Beyond Europe: On Parametric Transcendence’, in *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and*

The involvement of the festival in production processes is one of the more recent developments in the way art cinema institutions have mediated the binary mechanisms concerning production and consumption. Historically, this was a central field of intervention of European public television corporations (at national or pan-European level).<sup>52</sup> Even if maintained by different agents in the cultural field, this relation between production and consumption has been central to defining forms of cinema that sustain an economy of prestige grounded in a codependent relationship between institution and filmmakers. As Dorota Ostrowska argues, the production of art cinema (or *cinéma d'auteur*, to use Ostrowska's term) has been the mission of public television, in an effort to 'legitimise TV in the eyes of intellectual elites'.<sup>53</sup> The current production/circulation paradigm created by some film festivals – and indeed by the art gallery circuit, as studied in Chapter Seven – expands this dynamic relation between producers and filmmakers, maintaining an economy of prestige with global contours.

---

*Histories*, ed. by Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 32; Peranson, 'First You Get the Power', 34-5; Miriam Ross, 'The Film Festival as Producer: Latin American Films and the Rotterdam's Hubert Bals Fund', in *Screen*, 52:2 (Summer 2011): 265-6.

<sup>52</sup> A specific example of this production/exhibition relation is ZDF programme *Das Kleine Fernsehspiel* that since its creation in 1963 supported directors such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Jim Jarmusch, Theo Angelopoulos, Agnès Varda or, more recently, Pedro Costa, to name just a few.

<sup>53</sup> Dorota Ostrowska, 'France: Cinematic Television or Televisual Cinema: INA and Canal+', in *European Cinema in the Television Age*, ed. by Dorota Ostrowska and Graham Roberts (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 25.

## Authorship as discourse and practice

In its roles of supporting production, exhibition, and circulation practices, art cinema institution is dependent on the presence of filmmakers as figures deploying forms of artistic agency, but also helping to sustain an economy of prestige. The notion of authorship is significant in this context, since it considers cultural practices which are negotiating between individual expression and cultural production subordinated to collaborative commercial practices. As discussed in the following chapters, the filmmaker as an author presents similar dual aspects as the institution, mediating between symbolic and economic values.

Once again, the contrasting views of authorship presented by Bordwell and Neale come to define the already discussed duality between art and commerce observed in art cinema. Bordwell discusses the author as a formal component that expresses him- or herself as the textual force that organises the film, thus offering an ‘authorial commentary’.<sup>54</sup> As understood by Bordwell, the (art cinema) institution serves to legitimise this form of individual expression; thus the author becomes a creator, whose creative agency is legitimised culturally by institutional forms. Neale argues that the presence of the author serves as a mark of enunciation, generating meaning ‘in accordance with commodity-based practices of production, distribution and exhibition’, forming a brand ‘to mark and sell the filmic product’,<sup>55</sup> thus being predominantly a commercial agent.

---

<sup>54</sup> Bordwell, ‘The Art Cinema’, 97.

<sup>55</sup> Neale, ‘Art Cinema as Institution’, 15.

While these two definitions of the art filmmaker reflect cultural formations dependent on the historical contexts presented by Bordwell and Neale, both these understandings are, to considerable extent, complementary if understood under forms of artistic discourses permeating art cinema. Both readings have been legitimised by the dynamic negotiations of symbolic and economic value operated by this institution. On the one hand, understandings of the author as a creator are sustained by both academic and popular discourses, presenting the filmmaker as the main point of identification when analysing filmic texts. This identification allows for the development of forms of classification and authentication, via a discourse regulated by the culture in which it circulates. This understanding of the author is less an empirical attribution than a symbolic configuration, representing cross-textual characteristics detached from (collective) means of production – what Michel Foucault designated as the ‘author-function’.<sup>56</sup> In this sense, the art cinema author acquires the function of the personality who creates a text, a mechanism of authentication and legitimation of a discourse of artistic creation, detached from (faceless) industrial practices.

On the other hand, as discussed by Neale, the author is a commercial agent participating in this artistic-attribution discourse, constituting a marketability figure that helps mediate between symbolic and economic value in cultural production. As Bourdieu argues, the author is the ‘ultimate basis of belief in the value of a work of art’ while, simultaneously, veiling the nature of economic commodity-based

---

<sup>56</sup> Michel Foucault, ‘What Is an Author?’ [1969], in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: selected essays and interviews*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 130-1.



relations.<sup>57</sup> Thus it is not the author (as ‘apparent producer’) who attributes the value to the work, but the cultural businessmen who simultaneously exploit and consecrate the creator’s work in order to ‘proclaim [its] value’.<sup>58</sup> While conferring value and meaning, this positioning of the author as a figure mediating between symbolic and economic value projects discursive properties beyond the individual who created the text, while integrating him or her in the dynamic relations of the cultural production field.

Discussions concerning authorship in art cinema revert inevitably to this dual quality of artistic creation and commercial agency, as this thesis extensively discusses. Historically, the rise of the film director as an authorial presence, surpassing the role of the screenwriter or producer, became a ‘dominant ideology and practice’ in European art cinema during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>59</sup> While defining prevalent filmmaking practices in several of the European new waves observed from the 1960s onwards, this figure offered a reading strategy to define artistic postures. As Janet Staiger examines, several theoretical approaches to the role of the author allowed for the creation of a discourse of filmic expression rooted in personal agency. These approaches oscillate between romantic notions of independent agency and personality to broader understandings of the term, rooted in social and industrial

---

<sup>57</sup> Bourdieu, ‘The production of belief’, 263.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Kovács, *Screening Modernism*, 218; see also Lev, *The Euro-American Cinema*, 11. This reading of the role of the author, while manifested in preceding discussions surrounding cinema theory, became ideologically consolidated with François Truffaut’s much discussed phrase ‘la politique des Auteurs’, placing the filmmaker as aesthetically independent from the dominance of other authorial presences in filmmaking, such as the screenwriter and producer. Truffaut’s term firstly appeared in the article ‘Une certaine tendance du cinéma français’, originally published in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 31, (January 1954).

practices.<sup>60</sup> The different readings of the author discussed by Staiger reflect shifts in theoretical orientations, as well as a complementary positioning of the art filmmaker, as both a figure used to negotiate taste discourses and as a central agent in a specific industrial framework.

As Timothy Corrigan observes, historically the author has been a ‘heuristic category’ bound to international production and distribution strategies, while also dependent on flexible and less expensive film technology that supported film practices observed in 1960s new waves.<sup>61</sup> On one hand, this positioning via technology and production has served to sustain discursive notions such as authenticity, independence and creative freedom. On the other hand, the author can be described as a figure in a commercial strategy that organises ‘audience reception’, a figure ‘bound to distribution and marketing aims that identify and address potential cult status’.<sup>62</sup> While offering variations on this commercial strategy among several filmmakers, Corrigan argues that this figure has become less a creative authority and more a figure ‘within the commerce of that image’.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Janet Staiger, ‘Authorship approaches’, in *Authorship and film*, ed. by David A. Gerstner and Janet Staiger (New York ; London: Routledge, 2003), 30ff. In her article, Staiger enumerates seven different approaches to the term. Succinctly: the ‘free agent’ who creates the text (30), the agent who provides a ‘coherent personality’ reflected in the production of the text (33), the role of authorship as a reflection of a ‘sociology of production’ which translates structural-functional or critical tensions in the industrial process of making (41), and the ‘author-as-signature’ who recurs in particular signs of expression (either ‘unconscious’ or marked by cultural, social, and political contexts) (43). To these four categories, Staiger adds two ambiguous readings (or ‘dodges’): authorship as a reading strategy produced by audiences (45), and a revision of the author-as-signature (removed from agency), the author as a ‘site of discourses.’ (46) Lastly, in an approach that reinstates agency, Staiger presents a seventh formulation of authorship, as an expression ‘of the self.’ (49).

<sup>61</sup> Timothy Corrigan, *A cinema without walls: movies and culture after Vietnam* (London: Routledge, 1991), 101.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

While placed historically, both notions of the author pointed out above still animate discussions concerning contemporary art cinema, highlighting possible permutations observed in the agency of contemporary art filmmakers such as Costa. Looking firstly at the author positioning in production, it is argue that any supposedly creative autonomy is mediated through the relations with institutional forms of production and financial support. These relations place the filmmaker's agency at different levels of creative independence and funding and production dependence. These levels of independence and dependence are subject to the financial and production scale of the projects, the prestige attached to the filmmaker, and ambivalence in negotiating funding.

Illustrating this dynamic relation, Eric Rentschler describes the production mediations concerning the German *autorenfilm*, with romantic notions of autonomous artistic agency being challenged when dealing with subsidy applications, arrangements between coproducers, the critical scrutiny of industry gatekeepers, or the search for distribution deals.<sup>64</sup> Emerging from this production context is the paradigm of the art filmmaker as an 'artisan' and as a 'producer', who covers different technical tasks and provides pragmatic solutions to cover means of production.<sup>65</sup> Thus, depending on particular frameworks of production, the positioning of the art filmmaker as an author inevitably results in a discussion of his

---

<sup>64</sup> Eric Rentschler, *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices* (London: Holmes and Meier, 1988), 9.

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, Elsaesser, *New German cinema*, 101-105. This discourse on artistry in art cinema potentiated by industrial processes is also illustrated by different production positions observed in art cinema itself. Example of these positions are the divergences between the 'two avant-gardes' in 1970s European cinema, described by Peter Wollen. See Peter Wollen, 'The Two Avant-Gardes' [1975], in *Readings and Writings* (London: Verso, 1997), 103.

position in successive steps of production. This narrative of production creates, to some extent, an alterity to high-budget or industry-integrated practices observed in mainstream cinema.

This contextualisation of the art filmmaker as an authorial figure caught between the role of an artistic agent and the industrial figure dependent on production practices illustrates possible conditions informing art film as a practice. In this context, the figure of the author becomes a useful but contested term, serving to resolve forms of artistic attribution dependent on industrial and commercial processes. The dual aspects of the art cinema author, as both a creator and an industrial agent, need to be contextualised according to the different stages of the filmmaking process. Some of these conditions are reflected in medium- and low-budget production frameworks, such as those discussed by Hamid Naficy in his work on ‘accented’ filmmaking.<sup>66</sup> Forms of what Naficy calls ‘interstitial’ production can be observed in the agency of filmmakers such as Chantal Akerman, Amir Naderi, Atom Egoyan and Elia Suleiman. Naficy places these filmmakers’ practices under particular cultural, social and economic constraints, directly negotiating small pockets of public and private funding while maintaining considerable creative independence. This ‘interstitial’ production framework is maintained, for example, by the ‘multiplication or accumulation of labor’, or in film production placed between artisanal and industrial practices.<sup>67</sup> While using this framework to analyse the works of filmmakers placed under some form of cultural alterity, Naficy’s

---

<sup>66</sup> Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-49.

notions of interstitial production can be applied to practices deployed by many contemporary filmmakers working in low-budget frameworks – once again, Costa’s example is pertinent, as later discussed in Chapter Five.

This discussion of the author as a figure of production in contemporary art cinema informs an authorship tied to a collaborative environment. The closest example of these practices are the long-term collaborations between filmmakers and different technical and acting staff, whose technical, production and artistry is reflected in filmic style. This form of collaborative authorship is exclusive to long-term relations with networks of (professional or non-professional) collaborators positioned in particular locations – one example of this filmmaking relation is the collaborative work between Pedro Costa and the Fontainhas community in Lisbon. Similarly, other forms of authorship negotiation emerge in numerous film production companies created by (or centred in) contemporary filmmakers, such as Lars Von Trier, Pedro Almodóvar, Nanni Moretti, Agnès Varda and Wim Wenders. These filmmakers rely on such enterprises to negotiate sources of funding or distribution deals, as well as creating forms of production that allow creative independence.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> See Maule, *Beyond Auteurism*, 16; Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 105. In some cases, these forms of industrial collaboration propel a form of collaborative authorship that carries particular markers of aesthetic and production. Mette Hjort describes examples of this relationship between film style and production, as expressed in (transnational) collaborative production initiatives such as the ones maintained by Danish production company Zentropa (created by Lars von Trier and Peter Aalbæk Jensen), mediating between pragmatic approaches to filmmaking and forms of collaborative authorship under the stylistic formulations of Dogme 95. See Mette Hjort, ‘On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalism’, in *World cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Nataša Ďurovičová and Kathleen Newman, (New York; London: Routledge, 2010), 17-18.

This understanding of the author as marking a means of production is complemented by its commercial agency and discursive value. While many contemporary European filmmakers have repudiated the *auteur* label, the rise of the contemporary author as a market-integrated figure have gained visibility, with an effort ‘to address a vaster audience within the culturally oriented sector of film production and distribution’.<sup>69</sup> In practical terms, the availability of the filmmaker to promote film texts is generated in a multitude of first-person exposure activities and artefacts: public attendances and press conferences, interviews and citations in popular film journalism articles and academic journals, or subsequent ancillary products such as making-of features or other multimedia texts documenting aspects of filmmaker agency, to name just a few examples. As studied further throughout the second part of this dissertation, this first-person exposure allows the visibility of the filmmaker (as an author) among different cinephile and taste cultures, and contributes to the mediation of value in the different spaces of critical reception. These different but complementary readings of the contemporary author illustrate the role of the art filmmaker as a multifaceted construction, constituting not just a mediator between different production and circulation processes but also a discursive figure, potentiating symbolic value to the filmic text.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Maule, *Beyond Auteurism*, 17.

<sup>70</sup> Concerning author mediations at art cinema marketplace and transactions of symbolic value, see David Andrews, ‘Towards an Inclusive, Exclusive Approach to Art Cinema’, in *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories*, ed. by Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 69.

## Conclusion

The examination carried through this chapter characterises art cinema as a term relating to both artistic expression and institutional practices, and placed in an economy of prestige that ties filmmakers to authorial figures negotiating symbolic value, as well as intervening in the modes of production and circulation of his works.

Historically, theoretical discussions of art cinema place emphasis on dichotomies such as art vs. commerce or culture vs. entertainment, revealing economic tensions between cinema industries placed under national or regional frameworks, and the Hollywood production system. However, other industrial and commercial aspects revert to less polarised readings of the term. This chapter outlines how art cinema discusses a series of different and overlapping production and circulation apparatuses, ranging from commercial private enterprises to state-based establishments. Furthermore, this understanding of art cinema as institution reveals it to be a multifaceted economic activity that obeys to national and regional interests, but also responds to global cultural markets.

As this chapter also proposes, this dynamic relationship between different national, regional and global constituencies forms an institution maintaining multiple forms of film artistry which inevitably became categorised under art cinema. Supporting production and circulation, this institution makes possible a constellation of forms of filmmaking, simultaneously rooted in national industries and partaking in transnational production frameworks. Some of these forms of filmmaking overlap personal and collective means of production and rely as much on creative pragmatism as on cultural legitimisation. Expanding this analysis further, the next chapter explores these different facets by looking at contemporary Portuguese cinema, the context from which Costa's works firstly emerges.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Portuguese Art Cinema: Production and Circulation Paradigms

Incubated on the literal and figurative margins of Europe, Portuguese cinema can often seem a world unto itself, a semiautonomous territory that evolved at its own pace and at a productive remove from the rest of the continent. The lost years of the Salazar dictatorship and the pent-up energies from decades of repression and dormancy; [...] the vibrant cinematheque scene of the post-Salazar years – all have conspired to create in Portugal one of the richest and most distinctive film cultures in the world.

Dennis Lim<sup>1</sup>

As I argue in the previous chapter, contemporary art cinema is marked by mediations between artistic expression and institutional practices, and subordinated to the economic interests of different national, pan-national and global constituencies dispensing forms of symbolic value. Transposing this discussion to Portuguese art cinema, this chapter discusses the political, cultural and industrial contexts of a filmic expression that, while constrained in economic terms, was able to sustain production and circulation practices, form an institutional presence, and find artistic legitimation through international critical acclaim.

The national and international status mediations present in Portuguese art cinema since the 1960s are particularly relevant to this discussion. As understood in Dennis Lim's characterisation used as the chapter's epigraph, Portuguese national cinema is marked by different constraints and dynamic forces. Furthermore,

---

<sup>1</sup> Dennis Lim, 'Under the Influence', in *Artforum* (Summer 2012). Online: <https://artforum.com/inprint/issue=201206&id=31085> [accessed: 02.02.2015]



Portuguese art cinema becomes tangled in broader discussions of a national cinema which is marked by tense relationships between art and industry, between film style and commercial appeal. As Jacques Lemière points out, this national cinema is supported by cultural exception (reflecting similar cultural protection practices in other European film industries, discussed in the previous chapter), while also deploying practices used by ‘artists-filmmakers of a small country, without a cinema industry, that resists [commercial values] while submitting to the European film production and work practices’.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Portuguese cinema, and particularly art film, is characterised by production values concordant with public funding, while simultaneously benefiting from an international support in production and circulation terms.

This relationship between art and industry is further highlighted in contemporary terms. While the argument presented by Lemière (and Lim in the opening epigraph) highlight historical particularities closely related to a cinema of artistic expression, a coexisting filmmaking practice sustained by nuanced and interconnected production and circulation frameworks and forms of institution can, however, be observed. As discussed later in this chapter, this nuanced understanding of the Portuguese film industry is often described as forming into two main broad tendencies; on one hand, some industry players have maintained the thesis that a national filmography with audience appeal and financial sustainability may create the conditions needed to obtain favourable commercial positions in a domestic market

---

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Lemière “‘Um centro na margem’”: o caso do cinema português’, in *Análise Social*, vol. XLI nr. 180 (2006), 731.

dominated by Hollywood. On the other hand, a tendency to create works conveying austere aesthetics and sustained by low-budget and artisanal values, resistant to any creative and commercial pressures can be seen in working practices by successive generations of filmmakers. This latter tendency is deeply imprinted into the public perception of Portuguese cinema, sustaining considerable derision among mainstream domestic audiences while maintaining a favourable presence in international art cinema niche markets.

This chapter contextualises the production and circulation paradigms which can be observed in the national cinema of Portugal, and discusses institutional aspects supporting Portuguese art cinema. Expanding on the analysis carried out in the previous chapter, this chapter interrogates how institutions, production processes and mechanisms of circulation contribute to the formation of an art cinema mediating between artistic expression, cultural status and industrial conditions, while participating in a broader construction of a national cinema. This analysis illuminates the core features marking contemporary Portuguese art cinema, creating an understanding of the context that characterises the work of Pedro Costa, as presented in the following chapters.

In order to explain these characteristics it is necessary to look back to the historical and social context of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century during the last years of the Portuguese dictatorship before the 25 April 1974 Revolution, and to appreciate the social changes that can be observed in the following decades. This post-revolutionary period established the country's democratic process and subsequent economic and social changes brought about by the integration of Portugal into the European Union in 1986. These changes precipitated further evolution with the country's development in the following decade. Therefore, this chapter initially presents an

historical characterisation of Portuguese national cinema, and how its history informs the formation of Portuguese art film, both as a mode of artistic expression and an industrial framework. Following this analysis, the second part of this chapter concentrates on the consolidation of particular modes of production and circulation. It discusses Portuguese art film as both part of a national cinema – tied to infrastructure of production and circulation – and its international inflection, as part of a European art-house circuit. Lastly, it contextualises contemporary economic and cultural changes that mark this cinema industry, explaining the constraints and freedoms that made the emergence of a group of young filmmakers possible, Costa included, and which came to revitalise Portuguese art cinema.

### Portuguese art cinema: historical formations

Reflecting both the properties of a national identity and the mechanisms of a film industry, art cinema in Portugal brings together the different historical, cultural and social contexts of the country. Works of contemporary filmmakers like Pedro Costa, Manuel Mozos, Joaquim Pinto, João Canijo or Teresa Villaverde, contribute to a filmography that is particularly marked by reflections of *Portugueseness* (more of which below), as previously carried by works of João Mário Grilo or João Botelho in the 1980s and late 1970s. With differences, these different generations still explore the same national themes which can be seen in the Portuguese new wave of the 1960s, especially in the works of Paulo Rocha, João César Monteiro, António Reis and Margarida Cordeiro, to name just few examples. Predating and overarching these different periods and generations, the work of the late Manoel de Oliveira consistently presented, through eight decades, the different aspects of the country's identity – a profuse body of work that started with *Douro, Faina Fluvial* (1931) and

only ceased with his death in April 2015. Thus, and with understandable differences, these successive generations constitute what is considered a national art cinema *expression*.<sup>3</sup>

This art film expression shares not only particularities emerging from an examination of a shifting national identity, but also modes of production and circulation that examines its inclusion in the broader national cinema film industry. As the Portuguese critic and scholar João Bénard da Costa points out, cinema in Portugal was able to persist despite a lack of reliable infrastructures. However, this lack of reliable support did condition the industrial and commercial development of Portuguese cinema. This lack of infrastructure is illustrated by the number of films produced. According to Bénard da Costa, between 1896 and 1996, only around 461 Portuguese features films were produced.<sup>4</sup> Offering a similar argument, Luís de Pina notes that the phrase ‘Portuguese cinema’s crisis’ persists in decades of commentary on the country’s film industry.<sup>5</sup>

Understandably, this predicament is reflected in the number of works that may be considered as art cinema. Excluding art film pioneer Manoel de Oliveira, filmic

---

<sup>3</sup> This contextual formulation meets further discussion in the formation of critical labels such as the ‘Portuguese School’, a term that have been considered and further debated in, for example, Paulo Filipe Monteiro, ‘Autos da Alma: os guiões de ficção do cinema português entre 1961 e 1990’, doctoral thesis (Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1995) or Leonor Areal, *Cinema Português - Um país imaginado* (2 vol., Lisbon: Edições 70, 2011), among others.

<sup>4</sup> João Bénard da Costa, *O Cinema Português Nunca Existiu* (Lisbon: CTT, 1996), 11-22. João Bénard da Costa indicates that this number of features was the average of 10 years of production in Hollywood, during the 1920s or 1930s. He goes further by comparing this number with the production of other small European countries, a comparison which shows that in the same period Greece produced 2800 and Spain 5000 feature films, approximately.

<sup>5</sup> Luís de Pina, *História do Cinema Português* (Mem Martins: Publicações Europa-América, 1986), 215.

expression related with art cinema before 1960, may have existed but was imperceptible.<sup>6</sup> As Tiago Baptista argues, only after the 1960s did Portuguese cinema start to have a body of work that could be considered as carrying particular art film expression.<sup>7</sup> This consideration, characterising the 1960s as a decade of emergence of an art cinema in Portugal, needs to be refined further since it allows for an understanding of not just possible changes in filmic style (informed by contemporary European new waves), but also of changes in the institutional and production contexts. Furthermore, while Bénard da Costa and Baptista note this historical delimitation, before and after the 1960s, this periodization can be expanded to reflect successive evolutions in this country's film industry, as both an expression of a national cinema and the formation of an art cinema tradition.

Succinctly presenting its different periods through the last century, Maria Lupi Bello tentatively characterises Portuguese cinema as evolving from a

strongly (state) 'normalised' and popular cinema, typically from the 1930s and 1940s, to the affirmation of an author, presumably subversive and experimental in the 1960s, followed by a strong politicisation and ideological cinema (in the 1970s and first half of the following decade), immediately followed by several attempts to conquer a greater public by investing in 'pure' fiction [narratives] (mainly in the 1980s), until getting to the more irreverent radical 'realism' of the 1990s and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> As observed by da Costa, *O Cinema Português Nunca Existiu*, 60

<sup>7</sup> Tiago Baptista, 'Nationally Correct: The Invention of Portuguese Cinema' in *P: Portuguese Cultural Studies*, 3 (Spring 2010), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Maria Luppi Bello, 'A Implosão do Cinema Português: Duas Faces de uma Mesma Moeda', in *P: Portuguese Cultural Studies*, 3 (Spring), 20.

This description, while concise, identifies the basic political and historical periods which can be observed in the development of Portuguese cinema. The first two periods correspond to the dictatorship of the *Estado Novo* ('New State', 1933-1974), a Catholic-conservative, corporatist, and authoritarian regime.<sup>9</sup> Characterising the period after the 1974 revolution, the following period described by Bello relates to filmmaking practices emerging under democracy, an era characterised by economic crisis (observed in the mid-1980s), and marked by political and economic events such as the joining of the European Union in 1986 and the deregulation of the Portuguese market from that date onwards. Included in this latter period is a cinematic practices that corresponds, on one hand, to the production of films that could gain popularity among domestic audiences and, on the other hand, to an art cinema still influenced by aesthetic propositions emerging from the 1960s. Succeeding this period a contemporary cinema emerges from the late-1980s onwards reflecting, to some extent, a thematic and stylistic disconnection from the art cinema of the 1970s and 1980s.

Further characterisation of these different periods is needed, in order to trace the successive changes observed in Portuguese art cinema and how they relate to the production and circulation contexts of this country's national cinema. This characterisation allows for an understanding of the formation of Portuguese art cinema as an institution, helping to delineate characteristics that shaped contemporary Portuguese art film. To succinctly characterise the first period, the

---

<sup>9</sup> This period of dictatorship was first headed by António de Oliveira Salazar until 1968, succeeded by Marcelo Caetano until 1974.

Estado Novo, culture and entertainment were regulated through the Direction of Censorship Services, and cultural gatherings, even if informal, were monitored by the state. Understood as part of the effort of the propaganda apparatus, Portuguese cinema expression complied with notions of an ‘obedient and ordered society’, hiding any reality that disturbed the social utopia maintained by the state.<sup>10</sup>

In industrial terms, Portuguese cinema during the 1940s onwards enjoyed state support manifested in measures such as the National Cinema Fund. This support sustained a private initiative in terms of production and distribution that was closely monitored and ‘discreetly helped’ by governmental incentives.<sup>11</sup> Also during this period, it has been already noted that a potential dichotomy opened up between a cinema for mainstream domestic audiences (mostly comedy and melodrama), and other filmic expressions ‘that could be used to both promote films as art’ and enhance the image of the country internationally, at ‘the international film festivals’.<sup>12</sup> This emerging dichotomy reveals more a state-driven cultural preoccupation than an early form of art cinema institution, which would be defined only in the following decades. State investment in cinema became less marked in the 1950s, partially due to the governmental efforts to implement the public television network, a rather more effective propaganda tool. As Bénard da Costa points out (perhaps mockingly), 1957 was the year zero for Portuguese television, preceded by another ‘year zero’; in 1955 no Portuguese feature films were released

---

<sup>10</sup> Lisa Shaw, ‘A Aldeia da Roupa Branca, Chianca de Garcia, 1938’, in *O Cinema Português Através dos Seus Filmes*, ed. by Carolin Overhoff Ferreira (Porto: Campo de Letras, 2007), 48.

<sup>11</sup> de Pina, *História do Cinema Português*, 93, 113.

<sup>12</sup> Baptista, ‘Nationally Correct’, 7.

domestically.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to this lack of industrial development, this period is marked by a burgeoning network of independent *cineclubes* (cinema clubs) and cinema magazines (some defying the censorship control). From the late 1940s onwards, these initiatives laid down initial forms of art cinema institution and promoted forms of cinephilia, enthusiastically receiving new forms of cinematic expression such as Italian neorealism.<sup>14</sup> The *cineclubes* network initiated an enthusiastic cinephile manifestation that, even after the restraints imposed by the state in late 1950s, supported the emergence of Portuguese art cinema.<sup>15</sup>

It is during the 1960s that Portuguese art cinema started to rely on in what can be understood as the initial manifestations of an art cinema institution. Contributing to this institution was not just the already established National Cinema Fund, but also the financial support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Gulbenkian Foundation, henceforth) and independent producers such as António Cunha Telles. These entities created the conditions necessary for the emergence of a cinema contrasting with the normalised film production predominant until that date.<sup>16</sup> Among others, feature films such as *Acto de Primavera (Rite of Spring)*, produced and directed by Manoel de Oliveira with support of the National Cinema Fund, 1963), and specially the Cunha Telles productions *Os Verdes Anos* and *Mudar*

---

<sup>13</sup> da Costa, *O Cinema Português Nunca Existiu*, 47-8.

<sup>14</sup> Baptista, 'Nationally Correct', 9.

<sup>15</sup> de Pina, *História do Cinema Português*, 140. Tiago Baptista understands this support from the *cineclubes* as less expressive as de Pina, pointing out that this circuit contested some of the trends announced by the Portuguese art cinema of the 1960s, less aligned with neorealism and more related to other trends such as the French new wave. See Baptista, 'Nationally Correct', 9.

<sup>16</sup> de Pina, *História do Cinema Português*, 140; see also Eduardo Prado Coelho, *Vinte anos de cinema português: 1962-1982* (Lisbon: Instituto de Cultura e Língua Portuguesa, 1983), 156.



*de Vida* (dir. Paulo Rocha, 1963 and 1966 respectively) and *Belarmino* (dir. Fernando Lopes, 1964) announced the emergence of a new cinema, a *Cinema Novo*. This new cinema echoed both the aesthetic impulses and the production frameworks of other contemporary European new wave movements.

The funding support of the Gulbenkian Foundation helped considerably the emergence and maintenance of the Cinema Novo. Responding to a document presented by a group of filmmakers during the ‘State of Cinema’ conference (Porto, 2-10 of December, 1967), the Gulbenkian Foundation granted professional scholarships to filmmakers to study abroad. Later in the 1960s the foundation started to finance the production of short and feature films. Such efforts lead to the creation of the *Clube Português de Cinema* (Portuguese Cinema Club, henceforth CPC), a filmmaker co-operative managing a three-year funding programme made available by the foundation.<sup>17</sup> The activities of the CPC under the financial support of the Gulbenkian Foundation led to a renewed interest by the state in supporting further a national cinema that could transmit forms of artistic expression. These strategic interests were driven by different political cultural agendas and caused a tense dialogue between the state and the foundation. Cinema activities under the Estado Novo were under the cultural remit of the state, which did not abdicate of its presence in any cultural initiatives. The Gulbenkian Foundation occupied, nevertheless, a predominant position in film production which, at the time, was considerably neglected in official terms. As Bénard da Costa has pointed out, this

---

<sup>17</sup> da Costa, *O Cinema Português Nunca Existiu*, 78; João Bénard da Costa, *Cinema Português: Anos Gulbenkian* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2007), 20.

tense dialogue between institutions was partially solved with the Gulbenkian Foundation's decision to carry out this funding initiative with a discreet posture, postponing any official public announcements. In the meantime, the State Secretary of the Information and Tourism (SEIT, which supervised cultural activity) announced new laws for the protection of cinema and theatre activities, which would legitimise officially the CPC activities.<sup>18</sup>

These new public measures were translated into official policy by the law 7/71 (7<sup>th</sup> of December 1971), which announced the creation of the Portuguese Cinema Institute (henceforth IPC), which bore striking similarities to what the Cinema Novo filmmakers had proposed in 1967 to the Gulbenkian Foundation.<sup>19</sup> As Luís de Pina argues, the IPC became the main organisation 'orienting and developing the Portuguese cinema activity', and was particularly visible in the substantial funding granted – up to 100% in most cases – to the films produced under the co-operative during the 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the public support measures propelled by the law 7/71 constituted a tangible effort toward the creation of a state-supported 'national cultural and cinematic' tradition, reverting to cultural exception measures pointed out by Steve Neale (presented in Chapter One).<sup>21</sup> These different support mechanisms allowed the production of films which foregrounded artistic expression, contrasting with a national cinema with broader domestic appeal.

---

<sup>18</sup> da Costa, *Cinema Português: Anos Gulbenkian*, 28.

<sup>19</sup> de Pina, *História do Cinema Português*, 165.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> See Neale, 'Art Cinema as Institution', 34.

While predating the cultural politics carried out after 1974, these developments concerning the production of a national cinema only gained full expression after the 25<sup>th</sup> of April Revolution, which ended the authoritarian regime and established the democratic process in Portugal. Revealing the contours marking the production of Portuguese cinema in the post-revolutionary period, it has been pointed out that the law 7/71 generated a financial and political model that shaped the conditions present in the country's film industry until the late-1990s. This condition reveals the centrality of this measure in defining a film production marked by cultural exception during several decades. However, the prevalence of this cultural law also exposes the possibly inadequate political interest in providing forms of support and promotion for the country's national cinema, which explain the successive transformations taking place in film and media industry, as discussed further later in this chapter.

In cultural terms, the 1970s post-revolutionary period was marked by an openness and diversification of cinema production and circulation, precipitated by the sudden availability of various cultural goods that were either formerly banned by state censorship or placed under a restricted commercial access. Similarly, this period was marked by the exploration of Portuguese social, political and cultural realities not yet observed, explicitly, in a cinema production confined to the country's main urban centres. As discussed by Eduardo Prado Coelho, Portuguese filmmakers thematically 'discovered' Portugal, as a multifaceted country in which different stages of social and economic development co-exist.<sup>22</sup> This multifaceted reality is revealed in different film trends which, nevertheless, share a framework

---

<sup>22</sup> Coelho, *Vinte anos de cinema português*, 70.

marked by strict low-budget production values and collaborative and pragmatic filmmaking practices.

During the post-revolution years it can be observed the emergence of a highly-politicised cinema, developed by collective filmmaking formations and mostly deploying documentary filmic formulas (and to some extent with an anthropological inflection). While not so politically-engaged, some of these characteristics are also observed in a more consistent and prolonging cinematic expression of a Portuguese art cinema with a marked authorial presence, and in many cases combining fiction and documentary. During these years, works such as *Trás-os-Montes* (1976), directed by António Reis and Margarida Cordeiro, come to epitomise a resilient stylistic and production tendency. On one hand, this tendency reveals an austere film aesthetic that deploys a docufiction formula, already visibly emerging in Oliveira's *Rite of Spring*;<sup>23</sup> on the other hand, this filmic expression is informed by an artisanal, pragmatic and low-budget production carried further in, for example, *Veredas* (dir. João César Monteiro, 1977) and subsequent works by both Monteiro, and Reis e Cordeiro.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> See de Pina, *História do Cinema Português*, 185; Coelho, *Vinte anos de cinema português*, 71-2. Providing context to Oliveira's film, it should be explained that *Rite of Spring* documents an 'Auto', a traditional ancient representation of the Passion of Christ performed in the streets of Curalha (at the North of Portugal) by its population. In the film, this play (part of the popular Easter festivities) is combined with scenes taken from newsreels, inflecting its narrative with a contemporary reading, with clear political contours. Also relevant to note is that António Reis collaborated with Oliveira on the film, a collaboration that imprinted in it many of the filmic style mechanisms that would be described by later critics as the 'School of Reis', which is discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>24</sup> Concerning this austere aesthetic, see João César Monteiro remarks in *Moriturus te Salutant: Os que Vão Morrer Saúdam-te* (Lisbon: &etc., 1974), 21ff.

The attitude carried by this framework discusses a filmic style and a mode of production that marks the post-revolution period. However, and to some extent, this attitude can be observed in some contemporary Portuguese art cinema; Indeed, Pedro Costa's works from *Casa de Lava* onwards deploy a filmic aesthetic combining fiction and documentary styles, tied to the influence of António Reis, whose theoretical teachings were transmitted to Costa during his formative years in film school (as discussed in detail during the next chapter). Furthermore, *In Vanda's Room* is also a significant example of a contemporary Portuguese cinema still discussing a pragmatic, artisanal mode of production that emerged during the post-revolution period, a narrative of production that similarly reveals Reis' influence.

## Domestic and international circulation

This austere mode of filmmaking became one of the most visible marks of Portuguese art cinema. In production and circulation terms, Portuguese art film received further support through the IPC and by the public television corporation (henceforth RTP, now freed from previous censorship regulations and constraints), in line with the cultural politics observed in other European countries.<sup>25</sup> During the 1970s and throughout the following decades, the roles of both public institutions became central in defining a model of film production supported by – and mostly dependent on – public financing. In terms of domestic exhibition and circulation Portuguese cinema (and mostly, but not exclusively, art films) had less support – with the commercial exhibition network mostly under private ownership.

This division between a means of production with public support and circulation confined by private entrepreneurship allowed, in the late-1970s, the emergence of two distinct domestic exhibition modes. On the one hand, mainstream cinema, which began to suffer a considerable decline of audiences during this period. This led to the decline of the large movie theatre model and gave rise of a network of small-screening rooms – many of which were parts of the burgeoning urban shopping centre.<sup>26</sup> Film distribution further reveals the dominance of Hollywood cinema, favoured by the major Portuguese distributors. In this period, film

---

<sup>25</sup> For the importance of public television in Europe in the circulation and financial support of art film, see Elsaesser, *European Cinema*, 68; also Ostrowska and Roberts (eds), *European Cinema in the Television Age*.

<sup>26</sup> de Pina, *História do Cinema Português*, 176. This decrease in large cinema venues was further accentuated by a short but substantial increase in cinema audiences during the mid-1970s, mainly due to the screening of many films that had been banned during the dictatorship. During the 1980s, there was a substantial decrease in cinema attendance, mostly due to the proliferation of home video.

distribution is defined by the role of conglomerations aiming to dominate the domestic market, both in urban and rural areas.<sup>27</sup> This dominance becomes even more marked with the merging of different conglomerates under Lusomundo, which represents (among others) UIP and Warner Bros.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the exhibition of Portuguese art cinema during this period was confined to a small and unstable art-house circuit, originating in the late 1960s and greatly concentrated in urban areas. In Lisbon, this network is confined to a small number of screen rooms such as, for example, the Estúdio 444, Berna, Apolo 70, Londres or Quarteto (the latter was the only Portuguese cinema part of the European Art et Essay cinema network, C.I.C.A.E.). Reinforcing this art-house circuit in Lisbon, the Portuguese Cinematheque (formerly National Cinematheque, created in 1948) and the Gulbenkian Foundation have assumed an active role in exhibiting both classic and contemporary art film.

The austere aesthetics of the low-budget state-subsidised Portuguese art film reflects the polarisation of these two modes of exhibition. In general terms, Portuguese art cinema, contrasting so deeply with mass entertainment's formulas and production values, helped to sustain their audience's disaffection towards cinema produced in Portugal.<sup>29</sup> Some exceptions, however, need to be pointed out. During the 1980s, a small number of Portuguese films replicating the 'American

---

<sup>27</sup> de Pina, *História do Cinema Português*, 176.

<sup>28</sup> In 1987, Lusomundo (currently NOS) acquired the cinema distributor conglomerate Mundial Filmes, becoming the larger cinema distributor in Portugal. See Augusto M. Seabra, 'Exibidores precisam-se', in *Expresso* (31 October 1987), 130.

<sup>29</sup> Baptista, 'Nationally Correct', 12.

entertainment model' met considerable domestic box-office success.<sup>30</sup> The success of *Kilas, o Mau da Fita* (dir. José Fonseca e Costa, 1980), *Sem Sombra de Pecado* (also by Fonseca e Costa, 1983) and *O Lugar do Morto* (dir. António-Pedro Vasconcelos, 1984) reveal that Portuguese audiences had, even if only occasionally, interest in *some* Portuguese cinema – even if these examples were an exception to the hegemonic Hollywood presence in this domestic exhibition circuit.<sup>31</sup>

However, these exceptional box-office successes did not prevent Portuguese national cinema of becoming branded, in general terms, as a cinema of difficult or elitist formulas. Domestic audiences' general stereotypical assumptions seem to consider Portuguese cinema as a cinema of 'boredom', with sombre acting, deemphasized forms of narrative and unappealing filmic technique.<sup>32</sup> These stereotypical assumptions contributed to a persistent discourse marked by controversy. As Paulo Granja points out, this national cinema, and particularly art film, became branded as financially and commercially unsustainable, not engaging in any type of market practices, nor addressing any possible domestic audiences' expectations.<sup>33</sup> As de Pina observes, this non-competitive environment generated a

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> These films had 121 thousand, 92 thousand and almost 272 thousand spectators, respectively, as indicated in *Jornal de Letras* (2 July 1997), 9. At the time of writing, *Kilas, o Mau da Fita* and *O Lugar do Morto* all still featured in the Portuguese box-office top 20, in twentieth and sixth positions, respectively (currently the Portuguese film with biggest domestic audience is *O Pátio das Cantigas* [dir. Leonel Vieira, 2015], a remake of a popular Portuguese comedy directed in 1942 by Francisco Lopes Ribeiro).

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Pedro Boucherie Mendes, 'Cine-negócios', in *O Independente* (22 August 1997), 45.

<sup>33</sup> Paulo Granja, 'Paulo Rocha *Os Verdes Anos* (1962) And The New Portuguese Cinema' in *P: Portuguese Cultural Studies*, 3 (Spring 2010), 64.



‘creative anarchy’ that did not contribute to strengthen the national film industry, since it supported films destined to not receive any commercial release.<sup>34</sup>

This problematic relation with distribution, observed during the 1980s, can be illustrated with data made available by the IPC: between 1980 and 1987 the number of Portuguese films completed every year oscillate between four (1983) and ten (1980, 1981); in average only half of these films were released commercially, the only exception being 1983 (the four films concluded were all released) and 1984 (of the nine concluded, eight had commercial release domestically).<sup>35</sup> Similarly, and comparing the 1980s statistics with the previous decade, Portuguese journalist João Antunes points out that around 40% of the films produced and completed between 1976 and 1988 were ‘shelved’, never released in the commercial circuit.<sup>36</sup>

Confined to a domestic niche market that could not sustain its exhibition in a substantial way and generating dissatisfaction among domestic audiences, Portuguese art cinema increasingly relied on international art-house spectatorship and critical recognition. Precedents of international recognition were set by the enthusiastic critical reception of the Portuguese art cinema cycles promoted by producer Paulo Branco at the Cinema Action-République in Paris (from 1977 until 1979), which revealed to French art-house audiences the works of António Reis and

---

<sup>34</sup> de Pina, *História do Cinema Português*, 205.

<sup>35</sup> IPC numbers, cited in Alan Stanbrook, ‘Hard Times for Portuguese Cinema’, in *Sight and Sound* (Spring 1989), 119.

<sup>36</sup> João Antunes, ‘Os Filmes da Prateleira’, in *Sete* (October, 11, 1990), 15.

Margarida Cordeiro, Paulo Rocha, and Manoel de Oliveira.<sup>37</sup> Portuguese art cinema's international recognition becomes consolidated in the 1980s by the increasing number of Portuguese films featured in European festivals from the 1980s onwards, with a continuous presence of works by Manoel de Oliveira and João César Monteiro, but also with the incidence of filmmakers such as Paulo Rocha and João Botelho.<sup>38</sup>

The reception of Portuguese art cinema, oscillating between unsupportive domestic response and international critical acclaim, allows us to observe negotiations between the renewal of niche markets where art cinema is commonly positioned. As discussed by Tiago Baptista, the positive reception of the French film critics can be read as a 'discovery' of a 'new' filmography from a peripheral European country in which filmmakers still negotiate an artistic stance through an austere style and artisanal production, at the time less pronounced in French art cinema.<sup>39</sup> In similar terms, the increasing presence of Portuguese cinema in the international film festival circuit reflects similar encounters with films of nations 'not previously regarded as prominent' in terms of cinema, and that were able to

---

<sup>37</sup> Tiago Baptista, *A Invenção do Cinema Português* (Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2008), 137. Preceding Branco's initiative, it can be pointed out that the presence of films such as *Os Verdes Anos* (dir. Paulo Rocha, 1963, *Best First Film* award at the Locarno International Film Festival in 1964) or *A Promessa* (dir. António de Macedo, 1973, nominated for the Cannes Film Festival *Palme d'Or* in 1973). Equally, during the 1960s and 1970s, there were several European retrospectives and film festivals dedicated to Portuguese cinema, as discussed in de Pina, *História do Cinema Português*, 174.

<sup>38</sup> Oliveira's *Amor de Perdição* (1979) was presented at the 1979 Venice Film Festival, and was followed by the critically acclaimed *Silvestre* (João César Monteiro Monteiro, 1981) at the 1981 Venice Film Festival, and *Ilha dos Amores* (dir. Paulo Rocha, 1982) which was nominated for the Cannes' *Palme d'Or* in 1982. Since the early 1980s, Portuguese cinematic presence at the international film festival has been constant, as demonstrated by the impressive list presented in da Costa, *O Cinema Português Nunca Existiu*, 110-4.

<sup>39</sup> Baptista, 'Nationally Correct', 12.

‘transcend local issues and provincial tastes while simultaneously providing a window onto a different culture’.<sup>40</sup> These quests to discover national filmographies appreciated by niche markets also raises the question of whether national cinemas are a cultural product that coexists only outside its domestic borders. As Andrew Higson argues, national cinemas present inherent tensions between particular cultural national specificities, while tending to reflect a ‘difference’ that negotiates its international reception.<sup>41</sup> As Higson points out, this tension reveals that national cinemas, more than confined to particular borders, are also (and perhaps mostly) transnational in their production, distribution and reception<sup>42</sup> – qualities that became inherent to the discussion of contemporary Portuguese cinema.

The international prestige achieved by many of these Portuguese filmmakers opened the possibility for further international distribution, prolonging (and in some cases substituting) the exhibition offered domestically. Furthermore, from the 1980s onwards, Portuguese filmmakers such as Oliveira, Monteiro and Botelho come increasingly to rely on models of production sustained by international teams and mixed, pan-European public and private funding. The Portuguese cinema co-production model persists throughout the 1990s and, with several nuances, can still be observed in the present, particularly when discussing the narrative of production sustained by Pedro Costa, as analysed in the following chapters. This framework allowed Portuguese art cinema to maintain the status of a state-funded national

---

<sup>40</sup> Bill Nichols ‘Discovering Form, Inferring Meaning: New Cinemas and the Film Festival Circuit’, in *Film Quarterly* vol. 47, no. 3 (1994): 16.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Higson, ‘The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema’, in *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*, ed. by Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (London: Routledge, 2006), 18.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

cinema mostly liberated from domestic box-office and commercial constraints, while also enjoying pan-European production, exhibition and circulation support. As studied in the previous chapter, these characteristics reflect European Union cultural policies but also transmit the status enjoyed by European art cinema, as a cultural product, trading on symbolic value and relying on an international institution catering for cultural niche markets.

### A polarised national cinema

The period spanning the late 1980s to the late 1990s is marked by the structural economic developments reflecting Portugal's integration in the European Union's commercial, industrial and cultural policies. Similarly, the 1990s see the deregulation of Portugal's media sector and the formation of private-owned television channels: in late-1992, the Sociedade de Informação Independente (SIC henceforth) and, in 1993, the Televisão Independente (TVI), soon followed by the consolidation of the cable television network.

Simultaneously, there was an increase in the effort to promote a national culture which could be integrated into pan-European cultural policies. Large-scale exhibitions such as European Capital of Culture (Lisbon, 1994) or 1998 Lisbon World Exposition required significant infrastructures, which were built over several years, and marked the structural development of the Portuguese capital and its periphery (a scenario later extensive to Porto, in the years before the 2001 European Capital of Culture held in this city). Portuguese cinema partakes in these structural developments, contributing to a national effort in transmitting an external image of the country and mediations of prestige informing the country's geo-political inclusion in late 20<sup>th</sup> century Pan-European, Lusophone and global configurations.

Broader film trends started to emerge in this scenario. Mainstream domestic exhibition and distribution is still dominated by conglomerates such as Lusomundo;<sup>43</sup> however, the raise of domestic niche markets can also be observed, which would help the success of particular exhibition and distribution ventures. Atalanta Filmes and Medeia Filmes, formed by producer Paulo Branco in 1989 (associated with Miguel Ferreira and Gabriel Lopes), started to assure, respectively, the distribution and exhibition of domestic and international art cinema in Portugal. These circulation ventures allowed a small but consistent exhibition presence of works by both established and up-and-coming Portuguese filmmakers.<sup>44</sup> By then, Paulo Branco had become recognised as a major European producer, with numerous European co-productions by filmmakers such as Wim Wenders, Raul Ruiz, Oliveira or Alain Tanner, while also producing works of emerging Portuguese filmmakers such as Joaquim Pinto or João Canijo. The presence of Atalanta Filmes and Medeia Filmes brought further conditions to consolidate the 1990s domestic art-house circuit, exhibiting and distributing Branco's numerous productions (under Madragoa Filmes), as well as works by Lars Von Trier, Abel Ferrara or Pedro Almodóvar, to name just a few.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> See Stanbrook, 'Hard Times for Portuguese Cinema', 119; Cristina Baptista 'Ecrãs de Porta Fechada', in *Sete* (10 January 1990), 48.

<sup>44</sup> Among other Portuguese films, Atalanta Filmes and Medeia Filmes distributed and exhibited Joaquim Pinto's and Pedro Costa's first feature films *Uma Pedra no Bolso* (1988) and *Blood*, as well as critically acclaimed Manoel de Oliveira's *Non*, *ou A Vã Glória de Mandar* (1990) and João César Monteiro's *Recordações da Casa Amarela* (1989). This mixture between first films and works from established critically acclaimed filmmakers may have helped to create an acknowledgement of the new filmmakers amongst the domestic art-house audiences, while also propitiating a renewal in the offer

<sup>45</sup> According to the Atalanta Filmes website, now offline, around 'seventy per cent' of the catalogue of films represented by the company were European films, of which 'twenty per cent are Portuguese films'.

Branco's initiative reflected a commercial ethos supported by the consolidation of pan-European cultural efforts, such as the Eurimages and MEDIA programs, relating the Portuguese art-house circuit with broader commercial activities extended to the European Community market. Furthermore, Branco's entrepreneurship responded to burgeoning domestic urban audience with cultural capital and receptive to both international and national art cinema. Between 1991 and 1995 audience numbers in screening rooms owned by Atalanta Filmes had a threefold increase which represented, according to Pedro Borges (at the time Atalanta's marketing director), around 20% of the domestic market.<sup>46</sup>

Simultaneously to this consolidation of exhibition and distribution alternatives to the mainstream exhibition conglomerates, further governmental efforts aimed at restructure cinema funding schemes and state institutional support appeared during this time. The early 1990s saw successive updates to the 1970's cinema policies such as the law 7/71, and the reformulation of the legal roles attributed to the IPC and the Portuguese Cinematheque. These governmental measures were constantly shaped and rectified by successive Social Democrat Party and Socialist Party governments. Transmitting ambiguities marked by political programmes, these successive changes nevertheless aimed to equipped Portuguese cinema with more competitive and sustainable production and exhibition practices,

---

<sup>46</sup> Pedro Borges, qtd. in Rodrigues da Silva, 'Públicos: o direito à diferença', in *Jornal de Letras* (March 15, 1995), 15. While this estimate reads as optimistic, the same article presents numbers of attendance for both international and Portuguese films which contrast deeply with the domestic attendances observed during the 1980s.

while maintaining the cultural prestige brought by Portuguese art cinema's artistic international acclaim.

Reformulations of the laws governing cinema (e.g. law 350/93 in October 1993, the law 25/94 in February 1994, and the measures announced in 1998, further rectified by the law 15/99, in October 1999) assisted several changes in the financial decisions made by the IPC (which, since then met a succession of acronyms such as IPACA [1994], ICAM [1998], and later in 2007, ICA) and the Portuguese Cinematheque (and its archives and museum activities). These laws increased the funding available, while also establishing limits to the participation of state. Furthermore, these laws also created different funding schemes supporting formats such as documentary and short films. These successive changes reflect the somewhat confusing and interrupted actions of successive governments. These changes, however, had as their central concern the adjustment of the Portuguese cinema industry to the technological, industrial and commercial changes which had occurred during the previous two decades, and the different cultural and commercial conditions present under EU policies.<sup>47</sup> It should be noted that these re-formulations grouped cinema production and circulation under the (by then) emerging role of cultural industries, with these measures providing support to not just cinema but also merging it with activities such as multimedia and production of audio-visual contents. To some extent, these measures still account for the role of state support of

---

<sup>47</sup> See Lemière, “Um centro na margem”, 753.

a national cinematic expression, understood as part of the country's cultural heritage.<sup>48</sup>

These changes in cultural policy allow for an observation of the continuous tensions between Portuguese cinema and political powers under democracy. Since the 1970s several discursions and controversies driven by politicians and opinion makers reflected the public perception of a national subsidised cinema without entertainment appeal to the domestic audiences.<sup>49</sup> As filmmaker João Botelho points out, this relation is marked by ambiguity, with politicians wanting to 'provide a domestic image of [Portuguese] cinema as entertainment while, simultaneously, [maintaining the international] prestige achieved at the expense of filmmakers such as Oliveira or Reis'.<sup>50</sup> As already observed, the measures taking shape during the 1990s translated a dichotomised position in Portuguese cinema; it allowed state-sponsored cinema to answer expectations concerning international prestige tied to the major cultural expositions held in 1994 and 1998 but also to respond to the changing scenario of the emerging cultural and media industries. Thus, the political aim to integrate cinema under the country's cultural image was a constituent part of the efforts to conform to broader European cultural expectations, while negotiating its market changes. It can be pointed out that, while the prestige acquired in the international film festival circuit by filmmakers such as Oliveira and Monteiro

---

<sup>48</sup> It needs to be noted that the measures contained in these successive laws lacked a practical utility, being later redefined during the 2000s, extending the range of measures by creating an investment fund, co-financed by film and television distributors and operators. See Rui Telmo Gomes et al. 'Professional Careers in Cinema Production in Portugal: Different Contexts, Generations and Gender', *Culture-Biz* (Bonn: ERICarts, 2006), 3.

<sup>49</sup> See Bello, 'A Implosão do Cinema Português', 12; Granja, 'Paulo Rocha', 64.

<sup>50</sup> João Botelho qtd. in João Mário Grilo, *O Cinema da Não-ilusão* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2006), 38.



contributed positively to this external cultural image, these filmmakers were still being discussed, internally, as part of the commercial unsustainability of Portuguese cinema.

This ambiguous political positioning of Portuguese art cinema in this particular 1990s scenario reflects further polarisation of a national cinema aiming at captivate domestic mainstream audiences, and other filmic expressions with art-house and international appeal. This dichotomy can be framed in terms of thematic or aesthetic differences. However, it gains further relevance with far more industrial contours, when raised among cinema professionals. In a meeting at the Estados Gerais do Cinema conference (held at the Gulbenkian Foundation in December 1990), several generations of filmmakers and producers expressed divergent views on production and exhibition. On one hand, a group of professionals defended the specificity of cinema as industrially and artistically distinct from any other form of cultural industry; on the other hand, other professionals called for integrated policies that would allow cinema to be integrated in a broader audio-visual and multimedia market.<sup>51</sup>

The changes that occurred in the Portuguese cultural and media sectors during the 1990s consolidated new forms of cinema production, supported by integrated private companies, occasionally supported by state and public European

---

<sup>51</sup> See António Melo 'Unanimidade, nunca!', in *O Público* (December 10, 1990), 32; Maria João Martins, 'Cinema com Chamas', in *Sete* (December, 13, 1990), 14. These two divergent factions would soon be organised under the Portuguese Directors' Association (APR), formed in 1991 to defend filmic practices detached from the multimedia market, and the Cinema and Audio-visual Director's Association (ARCA), formed in 1995 by professional that defended a multimedia-integrated film industry. See Gomes et al. 'Professional Careers in Cinema Production in Portugal', 3; also Lemière, "'Um centro na margem'", 753.

funding. During the decade, Portuguese cinema's successes at the box-office not just mirrored but also surpassed the achievements made by some of the films produced during the 1980s. Combined efforts of SIC, Lusomundo and private production companies created a successful formula of producing, promoting and distributing new Portuguese cinema catered mainly for mainstream audiences. *Adão e Eva* (1995) and *Tentação* (1997), both directed by Joaquim Leitão and co-produced by Portuguese and Spanish, and Portuguese and Brazilian companies (respectively) enjoyed substantial promotional support from SIC (at the time dominating the domestic television audiences) and distribution (in a record number of screens) from Lusomundo.<sup>52</sup> The box-office success of these films encouraged SIC to develop an in-house production unit that would deploy the same integrated production, promotional and distribution formula during 1998 with *Zona J* (dir. Leonel Vieira), *Pesadelo Cor-de-Rosa* (dir. Fernando Fragata), and in 1999 with *Inferno* (dir. Joaquim Leitão) and *Jaime* (dir. António Pedro Vasconcelos).<sup>53</sup>

These 1990s box-office successes would be sporadically repeated through the following decades, showing contemporary Portuguese cinema to be divided between a mainstream mode of production aimed at maximising domestic audience appeal

---

<sup>52</sup> Jorge Leitão Ramos, 'Tentação, Jorge Leitão de Barros (1997)' in *O Cinema Português Através dos Seus Filmes*, ed. by Carolin Overhoff Ferreira (Porto: Campo de Letras, 2007), 217. *Adão e Eva* had almost 253 thousand spectators, and *Tentação* surpassed this number, with 361 thousand spectators. It can be pointed out that these films were also partially funded by IPC and, in the case of *Adão e Eva*, with financial support of the Eurimages - European Cinema Support Fund.

<sup>53</sup> With 246 thousand, 185 thousand, 84 thousand and 199 thousand spectators, respectively. See *JL* (2 July 1997), 9; Joana Amaral Cardoso, 'Estes são os 20 filmes portugueses mais vistos em 40 anos e O Pátio das Cantigas está no topo', in *Público* (25 August 2015), online: <http://www.publico.pt/n1705929> [accessed: 25.08.2015].

(supported by mainstream networks of production, distribution and promotion, and creating and maintaining a domestic star system) and an art cinema that consolidated its presence in the European art cinema institution. While this dichotomy is surely visible, it also created further ambiguities since these two tendencies share to a considerable extent the industrial and commercial formations, as well as common public financial mechanisms. This division becomes even more blurred with an understanding that these two trends are both seeking to negotiate a position in a domestic market dominated by Hollywood; similarly, while discussing successful commercial strategies carried by the more-commercial inclined industry players, many of these domestic successes share the same or similar state support in terms of funding – even if reclaimed under different financial strategies.

This dichotomy observed in Portuguese contemporary cinema meets further expression with the emergence of several filmmakers who produced their first works between mid-1980s and early-1990.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps transmitting a similar division in the national filmography as the one observed during the 1960s, these works were produced by an informal network of young filmmakers, under strict low-budget production conditions and competing with established filmmakers and producers for the limited state funding and means of production. These young professionals were united by personal and professional circumstances. Many of them lived their teenage years or reached adulthood during the 1970s; contrasting with some of the 1960s and 1970s filmmakers who had studied abroad (with scholarships from the Gulbenkian

---

<sup>54</sup> According to an article by journalist Teresa Carmo, from the 32 films produced in Portugal between 1990 and 1991, eleven are first works. See Teresa Carmo et al. 'A Primeira Vez', in *Sete* (May, 9<sup>th</sup>, 1991), 25.

foundation or via the National Cinema Fund), these younger professionals were trained, with some exceptions, at the School of Theatre and Cinema in Lisbon (from the late-1970s onwards); also, most of them built up professional experience and technical expertise during the late-1970s and 1980s, working in the projects of more experienced (national and international) filmmakers, while producing their own first short and feature films, in a collaborative environment.

From this group of filmmakers emerging at the time, names such as Pedro Costa or Teresa Villaverde met consistent acclaim in the international film festival circuit, but also João Canijo, Joaquim Pinto, Manuel Mozos or Rita Azevedo Gomes had garnered considerable national and international critical attention. More than professional and personal background, many of these filmmakers shared also a particular cinephilic predisposition fitting art-house sensibilities. Aesthetically and thematically, the works of these filmmakers differ substantially from the high-art and theatrical artifice of Oliveira, Botelho's literary adaptations, or the satirical-poetic personal universe created by César Monteiro. As discussed by Tiago Baptista, these filmmakers are united not just in the representation of new themes in Portuguese cinema – poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, human traffic, drug addiction – but also by not engaging in poetic reflections on 'Portugueseness' that marked previous Portuguese art cinema expression.<sup>55</sup> Contrastingly, these films present far more direct and gritty view of Portuguese social realities that emerged during the democratic period. Films such as Costa's *Blood*, *Xavier* (dir. Manuel Mozos, produced in the early 1980s, but only concluded in 1992), *Três Menos Eu* (*Three*

---

<sup>55</sup> Baptista, 'Nationally Correct', 14.

*Less Me*, dir. João Canijo, 1988), *Uma Pedra no Bolso* (*Tall Stories*, dir. Joaquim Pinto, 1988), *A Idade Maior* (dir. Teresa Villaverde, 1991), or *Nuvem* (dir. Ana Luísa Guimarães, 1992) express the concerns of the sceptical generations growing up in the confusing post-revolution years, as well as transmitting different cinephile and political influences from the more idealistic concerns observed in the works of older filmmakers.

However, while these films contrast with previous art cinema austere aesthetic and artisanal production values, these are, nevertheless, equally marked by a discordant ethos. Thematically, these early works predominantly engage with childhood or teenage issues, transmitting intimate family settings and narratives marked by angst and apprehension. Evolving from these initial themes, subsequent films by Costa, Villaverde or Canijo further emphasise the social divisions amplified by the sudden economic prosperity propelled by Portugal's inclusion into the European Union and the acute social changes this entry brought.<sup>56</sup> Films such as Costa's *Ossos* (*Bones*, 1997), Villaverde's *Os Mutantes*, and Canijo's *Sapatos Pretos* (both 1998) consolidate a critical view of the country's sudden and uneven development, with themes particularly centred in social and economic inequalities. Inevitably, this substantial group of films created a clear dissonance with the efforts of a national identity tied to European standards.<sup>57</sup>

More than sharing just filmic themes or a common post-revolution cinephilia culture, these younger filmmakers were also keen to participate in the way their

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>57</sup> See Ibid., 16-7.

works were produced and circulated. These filmmakers relied on public funding from the IPC and RTP (and in some cases also with the collaboration of the Gulbenkian Foundation), and were supported by the domestic art-house distribution network. Furthermore, these professionals were also able to form a supportive production network, complementing the role of the established producers like Paulo Branco. During the 1980s, many of these professionals established their own production units, such as G.E.R., Trópico Filmes, Produções Off and Azul. While some of these were impermanent ventures, these independent companies nevertheless served as a blueprint for a burgeoning number of small production companies that have sustained Portuguese art filmmaking in the following decades.

## Conclusion

The historical, industrial and cultural contexts presented above allows for an observation of both the long-lasting characteristics that mark production and circulation of cinema in Portugal, and also successive incremental changes that allowed the proliferation of a professional activity in the recent decades. Constantly marking this national cinema are small-scale production infrastructures, relying considerably on the state intervention and on a status of cultural exception. In similar terms, Portuguese cinema has relied mostly on a modest financing model, marking the production paradigms observed since the 1960s. This characteristic gained further visibility during the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the country's accentuated economic recession.

Concerning contemporary Portuguese art cinema, the small-scale national entrepreneurship and the international and pan-European co-production models allowed the prevalence of a mode of filmmaking with a particular and austere

aesthetic, which was able to maintain a presence and critical acceptance at the international film festival circuit. The international prestige acquired by filmmakers such as Oliveira, Monteiro and Reis from the 1970s onwards was soon expanded by successive international critical acclaim of works by filmmakers such as Costa, Villaverde, João Pedro Rodrigues, Miguel Gomes, Joaquim Pinto or João Salaviza.

These different aspects of cinematic production in Portugal are central to this examination of the professional formation and first works of a group of filmmakers whose work is marked by the post-revolutionary and subsequent democratic period of Portuguese history. Observing again at these characteristics, the next chapter examines in greater depth the production framework of contemporary Portuguese art cinema, by looking into Costa's personal and professional formation, aesthetic influences and filmmaking ethos that led to the making of his first feature film, *Blood*.

## Part II: Production and Authorship Processes



## CHAPTER THREE

### Pedro Costa's Artistic Formation

We have invented nothing. We adapt ourselves, with a few variations, into the network of possible courses. We get used to it, it seems.

Guy Debord<sup>1</sup>

I think it's through tradition that one can innovate, not through experimentalism.

Pedro Costa<sup>2</sup>

Pedro Costa's first feature film, *Blood*, allows for a more detailed discussion of the characteristics shaping the Portuguese contemporary art cinema analysed in the previous chapter. Its rich black and white cinematography carries stylistic traits that create some distinction between Costa's oeuvre and other first works produced by Portuguese filmmakers during the late 1980s and early 1990s. However *Blood* shares a thematic expression which permeates a significant corpus of first films by Portuguese directors that reflect on the country's social, political and cultural settings. These shared characteristics extend to the film's production. *Blood* is tied to the industrial and circulation constraints shaping 1980s Portuguese art cinema, but is equally indebted to a framework shared among young Portuguese filmmakers of the 1980s, which was sustained by pragmatic ethos and collaborative practices.

The defining features of the filmmaking practices followed by Costa and other filmmakers emerging at the time are rooted in the years immediately following the

---

<sup>1</sup> Guy Debord, 'Critique of separation' (filmscript), in *Society of the Spectacle and Other Films* (London: Rebel Press, 1992), 53.

<sup>2</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

1974 revolution. Costa's personal and professional development was shaped by Lisbon's youth culture of the 1970s and 1980s, a generation that enjoyed a new political and social freedom as well as a new cultural openness emerging during this period. Rooted in this youth culture is the emergence of an informal community engaged in forms of cinephilia, which shaped Costa's fascination with past forms of cinematic expression, a fascination which can be observed in *Blood*. In filmmaking terms, and as Mark Gallagher argues, the influence of past filmic works constitute an important part of a contemporary filmmaking discourse that, alongside other strategies, allows filmmakers to '[organise] diverse production teams, film aesthetics, and viewers responses into constellations of textual significance and authorial presence'.<sup>3</sup> Thus, I argue that the passionate and cinephile expression found in *Blood* not only combines thematic and stylistic influences, but also informs in ways in which Costa's film was planned and produced. Moreover, this same cinephilic form of expression also played an intrinsic role in the critical discourses that mark the film's reception.

Interrogating how cinephilia binds these different facets – film style, production and reception – together, this chapter discusses the making of *Blood*, as part of Costa's evolving personal and professional development. It aims to scrutinise how a filmmaking practice – understood as a product of professional but also personal activity – takes shape. This chapter investigates what personal and professional negotiations occur when a filmmaker seeks to author and produce a first

---

<sup>3</sup> Mark Gallagher, *Another Steven Soderbergh Experience: Authorship and Contemporary Hollywood* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 56.

feature film that pays homage to past cinematic traditions while also dealing with contemporary temporal and spatial contexts.

In order to carry out this examination, this chapter firstly discusses *Blood's* intertextual filmic style. This initial analysis considers how the film invokes critical discourses and theoretical formations, which are also indebted to Costa's cinephilia. Offering further context for the cinephile influences deployed by Costa in his first work, the second part of the chapter traces the filmmaker's personal and professional development after 1974. It discusses both Lisbon's film culture during this period and an emerging youth culture which would subsequently impact the filmmaker's thematic, stylistic and production choices during the making of his first feature film.

This examination of the milieu that shaped Costa's personal and professional development helps to contextualise *Blood's* production and domestic critical reception, which are discussed in the third and fourth parts of this chapter. Describing the making of the film, the third part of this chapter addresses the relationship between production and filmic style, which is revealed most clearly in the film's monochrome cinematography. Equally centred on the film's cinematography, the last segment of this chapter concentrates on the film's marketing and initial domestic critical reception. This examination allows for a positioning of Costa's first work within the context of Portuguese art cinema, and to identify the formation of discourses related to cinephilic and filmmaking practices, discourses that have marked the discussions of his subsequent films.

### Cinema's 'primitive beauty'

As mentioned above, Costa's first feature film features several thematic properties that are shared by contemporary first work by Portuguese filmmakers. *Blood* brings

together the anxieties of younger generations of filmmakers growing up in the confusing post-revolutionary years. As with other first feature films already mentioned in the previous chapter (by filmmakers such as Manuel Mozos, João Canijo, Joaquim Pinto, Teresa Villaverde and Ana Luísa Guimarães, among others), Costa's film depicts a cinematic universe influenced by themes including teenage angst, fragmented families and inter-generational conflicts. While sharing thematic characteristics, however, the film's shadowy black and white stands out from the majority of Portuguese films of this period, as well as being distinct from the films made by older Portuguese art filmmakers. Evoking 1960s European art house filmic expression and late-1940s and 1950s low-budget American film, *Blood* exhibits a cinephilia informed by past filmic influences, while also negotiating contemporary themes. As Costa points out, *Blood* was 'a kid's film, in black and white, very cinephilic', a form very popular amongst a thriving urban art house audience and reflecting the sensibilities of Lisbon's youth culture.<sup>4</sup>

The film had its domestic release on December the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1990, a release enabled by the support provided by Medeia and Atalanta Filmes in the exhibition and distribution of recent Portuguese art cinema. Atalanta Filmes' press release highlights the cinephile properties visible in Costa's film, stating that *Blood* 'brings back the primitive beauty of a cinema which still believes in the purity and rigor of its images, and in the simpler and stronger feelings that animate its characters'.<sup>5</sup> This expressive marketing proposition suggests that *Blood* integrates a filmic style

---

<sup>4</sup> Costa, personal interview (2012)

<sup>5</sup> Atalanta Filmes, *O Sangue*, press release (1990), np.

expressing aesthetic influences and stylistic allegiances, transmitting a past form of cinematic expression. As succinctly presented above, contemporary cinema employs a deployment of a past filmic style which features ‘explicit textual correlations’, which find their closest correspondence ‘through narrative and thematic similarity as well as aspects of visual style, editing and sound’.<sup>6</sup> In *Blood*, these textual correlations allude to the work of different filmmakers such as Nicholas Ray, Jacques Tourneur and Robert Bresson, or to films such as *Night of the Hunter* (dir. Charles Laughton, 1955). These correlations are present not just at a visual level, but also find correspondence to themes and ideas present in *The Night of the Hunter*, or Ray’s *They Live by Night* (1948), placing the film into an array of intertextual referential appropriations.<sup>7</sup>

A description of the film’s plot and stylistic characteristics allows for a further discussion of these intertextual qualities. *Blood* depicts young characters that try to keep their innocence and mutual affective links while being forced to deal with a reality imposed by adults, with broken family ties and ghostly absences. The film portrays the lives of two brothers, the 17-year old Vicente (Pedro Hestnes) and the 10-year old Nino (Nuno Ferreira), who try to live without their missing mother and frequently-absent father (Henrique do Canto e Castro). After their father’s death (in the film Vicente’s act of parricide is obscured, yet implicit), and assisted by Vicente’s

---

<sup>6</sup> Gallagher, *Another Steven Soderbergh Experience*, 47.

<sup>7</sup> Many of these films were not influent just textually, but were also incorporated in the film’s work process. According to Inês de Medeiros, films such as *They Live by Night*, *Night of the Hunter* and *Au Hasard Balthazar* (dir. Robert Bresson, 1966) were shown to the cast of *Blood*, as part of the character planning and working process of the film. See Isabel Coutinho, ‘Pedro, Inês e os fantasmas’, in *Público*, supplement Ípsilon (25 September 2009), 9.

childhood friend and love interest, Clara (Inês de Medeiros), Vicente and Nino try to carry on living without adult supervision. However, they are nonetheless caught between the attempts of their uncle (Luís Miguel Cintra) to adopt (or kidnap) Nino, and the violence of two gangsters (Henrique Viana and Luís Santos), who are trying to collect their father's debts.

The film's monochromatic cinematography emphasises the tense and melancholic feelings carried in its narrative. Taking place between Christmas and New Year's Eve of an unidentified year, *Blood* in no way reflects such a festive period of the year, instead engaging in a more wintry atmosphere. Placed in the setting of a rural town, the first part of the film divides its action between daylight scenery, presented as a mysterious place of children's play, and a night-time setting which looms with imminent threats posed by adult issues. The cinematography accentuates these differences, presenting the daytime locations as clear and open, though austere and melancholic, while by contrast, the night scenes are rendered in a contrasted *chiaroscuro*, illustrating the dominant feelings of loss and oppression which are heightened by dominant shadows and a lack of clarity in the *mise-en-scène*. The second narrative moment of the film, situated in Lisbon, also imposes this oppressive environment, representing the city as a place constantly obscured by shadows. This second part of the film demonstrates Nino's feelings of loss and confusion, after being taken away from Vicente and Clara, and his struggle to re-join his brother. Drifting through the city streets, the film's characters become part of shadow-filled backgrounds, casting a ghostly presence that adds yet more uncertainty to the already fragmented nature of the narrative. These two narrative moments are unified by the film's monochromatic palette, in which the moods of bitter

reminiscence and angst felt by the characters find a stylistic correspondence in the classic films that influenced Costa.

I argue that these intertextual correlations find their clearest expression in Costa's cinephilic formation. As Bénard da Costa pointed out, Costa's film 'didn't invent a new black and white, [or a] new love [or] ghost story'.<sup>8</sup> Instead, these stylistic properties convey an artistic discourse, rooted in previous modes of filmic expression, in a difficult-to-define 'libidinal, emotional, and affective attachment'.<sup>9</sup> Film academics have theorised this cinephilia expression in Costa's films. Jonathan Rosenbaum, for example, recognises the prevalence of the cinephilic 'moment' in Costa's first feature film, pointing out that *Blood* 'already announces the essence of Pedro Costa's cinema by declaring every shot an event, regardless of whether or not we can understand it in relation to some master narrative'.<sup>10</sup> Rosenbaum further defines Costa's event-driven narrative when characterising the filmmaker's oeuvre as portraying 'fully realized moments, secular epiphanies', instead of 'stories' or 'characters in the literary sense'.<sup>11</sup> Thus Costa's filmmaking displays a cinephile impulse that collects and re-uses moments with particular sentimental attachments as

---

<sup>8</sup> João Bénard da Costa, 'O Negro é uma Cor ou o cinema de Pedro Costa', in *Cem mil cigarros - Os Filmes de Pedro Costa*, ed. by Ricardo Matos Cabo (Lisbon, Orfeu Negro, 2009), 19

<sup>9</sup> Malte Hagener and Marijke de Valck, 'Cinephilia in Transition', in, *Mind the Screen: Media Concepts According to Thomas Elsaesser*, ed. by Jaap Kooijman, Patricia Pisters, and Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 19. Concerning emotional attachment and intellectual inquiry propelled by cinephilia, see also David T. Johnson, 'The "Flashing Glimpse" of Cinephilia: What an Unusual Methodology Might Offer Adaptation Studies', in *Adaptation*, no. 1 (September 2012), 27.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'Finding Oneself in the Dark: The Mysterious Cinema of Pedro Costa', in *The cinema of Pedro Costa* (Jeonju: Jeonju International Film Festival, 2010), 191.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'Cinema of the Future: Still Lives, the Films of Pedro Costa', in *Goodbye Cinema, Hello Cinephilia: Film Culture in Transition* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 204.

part of an artistic expression. Expanding on this artistic form of expression which is centred in the cinephile moment, Adrian Martin discusses Costa's works as part of a 'cinephile experience':

We compare, cross-reference, remember this moment in John Ford or the effect of style in Jacques Tourneur, a cut in [Jean-Luc] Godard or a superimposition in [Jean] Epstein [...]... films old and contemporary, classic and maudit. But this is not just a lazy habit or a customary reflex when it comes to Costa: it is a burning necessity, a question of cinema.<sup>12</sup>

Martin understands these intertextual correlations as distinct from contemporary cinema's 'quotations', or 'postmodern games of allusion, parody and re-working'; instead Martin argues that

[t]he poetics of certain filmmakers have been so deeply internalised, we may say so deeply lived (in the imaginary realm) by Costa, that a unique palimpsest has been formed at the intersection of all these visions, all these worlds, all these memories: his signature is that knotted thicket, too tangled, fused and transformed to ever be cleanly separated, now, into its various separate source elements.<sup>13</sup>

Martin's distinction between an intertextuality rooted on imitation (whether it is quotation, allusion, parody and re-working) and another, which reflects a signature approach to filmmaking that is understood as partaking in previous filmic poetic traditions, explicating a critical discourse that reads the links between past and contemporary filmic expression as a sincere form of stylistic re-working.<sup>14</sup> Common

---

<sup>12</sup> Martin, 'The Inner Life of a Film', 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> It can be pointed out that this distinction made by Martin participates in broader cultural and cinema discussions that defines critical discourses during the 1990s. See, for example, Jim Collins, 'Genericity in the



associations with past filmmakers seem to reinforce this stylistic sincerity; film critic and festival programmer Mark Peranson, who commonly expressed appreciation about Costa's work, calls him a 'post-Ozu', and 'post-Bressonian' filmmaker.<sup>15</sup> While Peranson and Martin's arguments can be read as critical appreciation of Costa's oeuvre, they also conjure a relationship between cinephilia-driven behaviours, stylistic traits, and quotation.

It is important to ask why such cinephilic formations (and not others) came to acquire such visible expression in Costa's work. It is also pertinent to interrogate how the monochromatic filmic-stylised teenage angst in *Blood*, with all its cinephilic connotations, expresses the cultural setting of the film's production context. In order to frame *Blood*'s cinephile expression, it is necessary to investigate further the social and cultural changes which emerged in Portugal after 1974, and to understand how a particular culture of cinephilia contributed to the making of Costa's film.

### Costa's personal and professional development

As concisely explained in the previous chapter, Portugal in the mid- to late-1970s was defined by constant political, social and cultural change. The end of the authoritarian regime and the country's colonial geo-political presence gave sudden visibility to latent political divisions, generating a political climate of idealistic exuberance and struggles between left- and right-wing political formations, conflicts

---

90s: Eclectic Irony and the New Sincerity', in *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, ed. by Jim Collins, Hilary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins (New York: Routledge 1993), 242-63.

<sup>15</sup> Mark Peranson, 'Pedro Costa: an introduction' in *The Cinema of Pedro Costa* (Jeonju: Jeonju International Film Festival, 2010), 127.

that escalated between 1974 and 1976 (a period commonly known as PREC, ‘On-Going Revolutionary Process’). While deeply rooted, the social values sustained by conservative Catholic family values became highly questioned during this period, generating considerable changes in Portuguese society. The end of political censorship in cultural, political and press activities (lifted soon after April 1974 and consolidated later officially in the 1976 Portuguese Constitution), allowed access to and circulation of an extensive range of works which were considered not suitable for release under the previous regime, such as a multitude of banned films, both contemporary and classic.

This sudden and unrestricted availability of cinema helped generate an urban culture of cinephilia centred on particular exhibition locations and around certain revered figures, which provided a sense of community.<sup>16</sup> Discussing the shared forms of expression supported by cinema cultures, Anna Schober points out that cinephiles imprint a social and cultural alterity to cinema locations which separate them

from the communities they were born into and their traditional ways ordering the world and led them to gather in new constellations, which shared judgements, taste, emotional intensity, interest or identification playing an increasingly important role. [...] [A] setting able to generate feelings and imaginations bringing people together. [...] Here the affiliations such as those of birth – the family, class, craft or local communities – can become less important in respect to new bonds that can be established vis-à-vis [...].<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> See Harbord, *Film Cultures*, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Anna Schober, *The Cinema Makers* (Bristol: Intellect, 2013), 62.

Although developing in a different context from the one described by Schober, Lisbon's post-revolutionary cinephilia generated similar cinematic affiliations and emotional attachment to films, and was similarly rooted in personal bonds. Central to this cinephile expression were the film cycles and retrospectives held at the Gulbenkian Foundation (just after 1974) and later at the Portuguese Cinematheque in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>18</sup> The latter became, over the course of several decades, the space routinely shared by many of the young Portuguese filmmakers who would start their professional activities during the 1980s.<sup>19</sup> Noting the importance of these film cycles and retrospectives, filmmaker João Botelho points out that these initiatives left a 'generational' mark, providing access to filmic works that came to influence an emerging group of Portuguese filmmakers.<sup>20</sup>

Recalling the Gulbenkian's film cycles, Costa evokes the vibrant community formed around the screenings in the institution's large auditorium, and the overwhelming experience of watching American classics and Mizoguchi films as part of a large, expressive audience.<sup>21</sup> This enthusiastic engagement with cinema was complemented by the Portuguese Cinematheque, which ran a series of retrospective programmes showing the filmographies of Fritz Lang, John Ford, Yasujirō Ozu and Roberto Rossellini, among others. Central to these film cycles and retrospectives in

---

<sup>18</sup> de Pina, *História do Cinema Português*, 206

<sup>19</sup> In a personal interview on 28 June 2012, filmmaker Teresa Villaverde noted the 'formative role' of the Portuguese cinematheque in allowing the discovery of many filmic expressions that would impact on her films, as well as many of her colleagues growing in Lisbon during the 1970s and 1980s. Similar impact is also pointed out in Jorge Mourinha, 'Geração Perdida', in *Público* (supplement Ípsilon, 25 September 2009), 12.

<sup>20</sup> Botelho qtd. in Grilo, *O Cinema da Não-ilusão*, 42

<sup>21</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

both locations was João Bénard da Costa, whose influence on the formation of both cinephiles and cinema professionals would soon extend to include the role of director of the Portuguese Cinematheque and that of lecturer at the Lisbon Cinema School. Like many other young Lisbon cinephiles, Costa enjoyed the films he discovered at these successive cycles promoted by Bénard da Costa at the two institutions, and the passionate discussions generated by the works of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Robert Bresson and Jean-Luc Godard.

This burgeoning cinephile culture was located at the intersection between the art-house circuit and other forms of cultural expression newly permitted in the post-revolutionary Portugal. As did many urban teenagers and young adults at the time, Costa participated in forms of expression that emerged from the developing youth culture in Lisbon, a culture which was shaped by the political ideals and rebellious attitude epitomised by Punk rock. Costa recalls that, apart from the intense schedule of movie-going, many of his daily routines would consist of ‘listening [to records] loudly’ in his and his friends’ rooms, and engaging in the political agitation that was lived at the time.<sup>22</sup> As the filmmaker explains:

I’ve lived, in the prime of youth, the [1974] revolution, the discovery of politics, [...] and, at the same time, [...] discovered Wire, Godard, The Clash, poetry, [...] all the films by Danièle [Huillet] and Jean Marie [Straub], the first films by Ozu and Ford, [which I] watched thanks to João Bénard da Costa.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Pedro Costa, Cyril Neyrat and Andy Rector, *Um Melro Dourado, um Ramo de Flores, uma Colher de Prata. Conversa com Pedro Costa* (Lisbon: Midas Filmes/Orfeu Negro, 2012), 17.

This intersection of different formative influences – a confluence which Costa understands as a ‘poetic coincidence’<sup>24</sup> – equipped the filmmaker with a variety of influences that would be reflected not just in *Blood*, but also in his subsequent works.

Many of these varied influences were shared by the expanding group of young Lisboners who, as pointed out by filmmaker Manuel Mozos, would gravitate towards the city’s alternative artistic community gathering in the bohemian Bairro Alto neighbourhood (as well at the close-by Cinematheque), and who would ‘end up collaborating in each other’s projects’.<sup>25</sup> This community, created an environment which mediated between public and private spheres, and personal and professional affiliations. These relationships came to offer alternative social formations in a post-revolutionary urban society characterised by the ‘desegregation of family [structures] and the increase of divorces’.<sup>26</sup> Formed by a cross-pollination among music, visual and performance arts and cinema, this artistic community offered a supportive and creative network that would prove to be decisive in the rise of a practical attitude towards filmmaking among Costa and his contemporaries, an attitude that is clearly demonstrated in some of the films produced in Portugal during the 1980s.

This climate of discovery and collaboration in Costa’s personal life was further enriched by the course he attended at Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema (henceforth Lisbon Cinema School) between 1978 and 1981. Costa was particularly interested in learning the

---

<sup>24</sup> Nuno Luz, ‘De Pedro Costa’, in *Revista Semanário* (December, 1990), 29.

<sup>25</sup> Mozos qtd. in Mourinha, ‘Geração Perdida’, 11.

<sup>26</sup> António Pires qtd. in Mourinha, ‘Geração Perdida’, 12.

practical side of [filmmaking], about the different cameras, film stock, or how to edit a film in the old ways, and so on. I like things of this kind – this is because [...] I believe that that the films I admire were a little bit made like that, people were very handy-crafted.<sup>27</sup>

This interest in the practical side of filmmaking was soon complemented by the theoretical teachings of charismatic filmmaker, poet and film theorist António Reis, whose lectures would have a lasting impact on Costa's work, as well as on the work of many of the filmmakers formed at this school, such as Vítor Gonçalves, Manuel Mozos, Manuela Viegas, Joaquim Sapinho and João Pedro Rodrigues, to name a few.<sup>28</sup>

Costa points out that Reis' teachings offered an alternative to the academic theory of the cinema school, a form of teaching that was influenced by an 'obscurantist theory, bourgeois, as called at the time'.<sup>29</sup> Reis' lectures allowed the students to develop a personal filmic language, by pointing out associations between

---

<sup>27</sup> Loreta Gandolfi, 'Lights Off On Pedro Costa', in *Take One* (March 23 2013). Online: <http://www.takeoneciff.com/2013/lamour-nexiste-pas-lights-off-on-pedro-costa> [accessed: 09.02.2015].

<sup>28</sup> See Mourinha, 'Geração Perdida', 12. Retrospectively, Reis influence would later be translated in what became known as 'The School of Reis', a term coined by Haden Guest, the curator and director of the Harvard Film Archive of the Harvard University. This term was later used as the name of Reis' retrospective at the Harvard Film Archive and subsequent film exhibitions at Anthology Film Archives and at UCLA Film and Television Archive, between May and July 2012. For more details on this retrospective, see Harvard Film Archive, online: <http://hcl.harvard.edu/hfa/films/2012aprjun/reis.html> [accessed 02.02.2015]. Furthermore, Reis' influence is stated in the artistic aims of the production company Rosa Filmes, which was formed in the early 1990s by Gonçalves, Mozos, Viegas, Sapinho and Rodrigues. See Rosa Filmes Website, online: <http://www.rosafilmes.com/#!sobre/c83u> [accessed 02.02.2015]. It also needs to be noted that Reis' influence can be seen not just in the work of these contemporary filmmakers, but it can also be seen in the numerous collaborations that mark works such as *Rite of Spring* (dir. Manoel de Oliveira, 1963, see previous chapter) and *Mudar de Vida* (dir. Paulo Rocha, 1966), or the multiple textual homages and citations of the filmmaker in works by João César Monteiro.

<sup>29</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

cinema and other forms of artistic expression.<sup>30</sup> As former student of Reis's Daniel Del Negro recalls,

[Reis] wasn't truly a 'filmmaker', above all he was an image poet. He didn't teach [technical aspects of filmmaking], he mostly called our attention to relations between images (normally small details of movement or shape), and other [possible] readings.<sup>31</sup>

This form of relational reading equipped many filmmakers, including Costa, to create a working method that incorporated different filmic influences into a personal filmic language rooted in poetic associations. Furthermore, Reis' teachings revealed a radical engagement with 'everyday life poetics', similar to the political engagement Costa observed in punk rock.<sup>32</sup>

Reis' influence on Costa's artistic formation was not just confined to his lectures in film school but also extends to his filmmaking practice. Films such as *Jaime* (1974), *Trás-os-Montes* (1976) and *Ana* (1985), the latter two co-directed with Margarida Cordeiro, display the same kind of relational readings formed by poetic image associations and by pragmatic mode of filmmaking that Reis lectured about in film school. *Trás-os-Montes*, for instance, deploys a filmic style blending between docufiction and a stylisation of everyday life and its reflections on folk tales, represented without any narrative separation. As Dennis Lim argues, Reis and Cordeiro's film conveys 'a ubiquitous sense of the immense and the eternal', while

---

<sup>30</sup> See António Cabrita, 'Evocação do Pedagogo', in *Expresso*, Cartaz (September, 21 1991), 17.

<sup>31</sup> Daniel Del-Negro, e-mail message to the author (28 July 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Pedro Costa, 'Depoimento', in *António Reis e Margarida Cordeiro: A Poesia da Terra*, ed. Anabela Moutinho et al (Faro: Cineclub de Faro, 1997), 67.

offering ‘a palimpsestic merging of past and present, and a refusal to distinguish between the flux of life and the flow of stories’.<sup>33</sup>

Reis and Cordeiro’s approach to filmmaking is not just centred on these aesthetic markers, but also on a practical approach to filmmaking. Produced under extremely low-budgets and with small crews, their films would become paradigms of austere filmmaking – aesthetically, technically, and economically.<sup>34</sup> As Costa argues, ‘Reis was more punk than us, so to speak, [and] far more violent than we were’, in his approach to film theory and filmmaking: watching *Trás-os-Montes* was ‘finding [the same] poetic reason that I’ve searched for in punk’ and the ‘attitude of “do it now”’.<sup>35</sup> The teachings and work of Reis allowed Costa to relate with cinema as both a passionate aesthetic formation with multiple influences and reflections, but also as an activity that could be sustained by a practical approach to filmmaking.

All these aspects of Pedro Costa’s professional formation and personal influences, combined with the supportive creative environment, equipped the filmmaker with expertise and reinforced a ‘do-it-yourself’ attitude that sustained his initial professional activities in cinema. Like many of the other younger members of the film community forming in Lisbon at the time, Costa benefited from the hectic film production environment which could be seen in Portugal in the early 1980s. Among other early roles, Costa worked as production assistant in several Portuguese

---

<sup>33</sup> Lim, ‘Under the Influence’.

<sup>34</sup> For details on Reis and Cordeiro’s film shooting and production, see Lim, ‘Under the Influence’ and the volume *António Reis e Margarida Cordeiro: A Poesia da Terra*, ed. by Anabela Moutinho and Graça Lobo (Faro: Cineclube de Faro, 1997).

<sup>35</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).



and European co-productions, such as *Arábia* (dir. Rosa Coutinho Cabral, 1982), *Der Stand der Dinge* (*The State of Things*, dir. Wim Wenders, 1982) and *À Flor do Mar* (Dir. João César Monteiro, 1986). By the mid-1980s, Costa began to find regular work as an assistant director. In this role, he worked on films such as *Do outro lado do espelho* (a.k.a. *Atlântida*, 1985, dir. Daniel Del-Negro), *Um Adeus Português* (*A Portuguese Farwell*, dir. João Botelho, 1986), *Uma Rapariga no Verão* (dir. Victor Gonçalves, 1986), and in *Agosto* (dir. Jorge Silva Melo, 1988).

Reflecting the workings of a supportive informal network observed at the time, many of the technical staff and cast involved on those films also collaborated on first works by emerging filmmakers. Among others, the creation of small-scale production units such as Azul, founded by Daniel Del-Negro and Victor Gonçalves in 1980, provided organisational support and offered mediation between financial sources and the production teams. Azul produced Del-Negro's first feature film *Do outro lado do espelho*, and started the production of Gonçalves' *Uma Rapariga no Verão*. Both films were produced with the help of this network, which gravitated around first works by students of the Lisbon Film School.<sup>36</sup> Costa, along with other former film students such as Pedro Caldas and José Bogalheiro, participated in both projects. Later in the production process of *Uma Rapariga no Verão*, disagreements between Del-Negro and Gonçalves led to the formation of Trópico Filmes (founded in the mid-1980s by Costa, Gonçalves, Caldas, Bogalheiro, and Ana Luísa

---

<sup>36</sup> It can be pointed out that this network was extensive to other participants such as filmmakers Manuel Mozos and Joaquim Leitão, who also worked in their first feature films around the same time. The former participated (even if informally) in *Uma Rapariga no Verão*; the latter acted in both Del-Negro and Gonçalves' films.

Guimarães). This company later produced Costa's *Blood*, as well as Guimarães' *Nuvem*.<sup>37</sup>

The production of *Uma Rapariga no Verão* exemplified a collaborative process, which later also benefited Costa during the production of *Blood*. Apart from numerous collaborators, the central production crew in Gonçalves' film were Del-Negro (cinematography), Costa (assistant director), Caldas (sound), Bogalheiro (production) and Guimarães (film edition); with the exception of Del-Negro, all these professionals were part of the film crew working in *Blood*. According to Costa, the film's production was a 'complicated and slow process,' which extended over a period of several years and with limited funding; a collaborative working process to which the participants often contributed without receiving any payment and which was maintained only during the participants' spare time from their paid jobs.<sup>38</sup>

Reflecting the constraints which can be observed in Portuguese cinema of the 1980s, explained in the previous chapter, *Uma Rapariga no Verão* became one of the 'shelved' Portuguese films, which were completed without securing a domestic commercial release, with its circulation confined to special screenings. The film's production, however, which was characterised by collaborative filmmaking practices and a pragmatic ethos, already announced a framework which would be deployed in the making of *Blood*.

---

<sup>37</sup> Del-Negro, e-mail message (28 July 2012). According with Del-Negro, Gonçalves' film was effectively produced by Azul and later, due to issues between Del-Negro and Gonçalves, the film's rights were transferred to Trópico Filmes, which is credited as the production company.

<sup>38</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012). Among the numerous paid jobs done by many of these professionals is the 12 episode children's TV series 'As Cartas para Júlia', produced for RTP during 1983.

## The making of *Blood*

*Blood* is shaped by production processes which can be seen in Portuguese filmmaking during the 1980s. While produced on small budget, it nevertheless benefited from a collaborative work environment which was formed by an enthusiastic filmmaking community that collaborated as members of the film's cast and crew. This team included different generations of film professionals. The technical crew was mostly composed of professionals involved with Trópico Filmes (named above), which would soon gain considerable technical support from more experienced technicians. In similar ways, the cast combined emerging actors Inês de Medeiros and Pedro Hestnes with veteran actors Henrique do Canto e Castro, Luís Miguel Cintra, Henrique Viana and Isabel de Castro, all with considerable acting careers in both cinema and theatre. Furthermore, it was through this filmmaking community that the production team ultimately met experienced crew members that enabled the film's recognisable monochrome aesthetic.

The initial stages of the film looked back to Costa's intense years of punk rock and movie-going. As pointed out by Costa, it was during the late-1970s that the filmmaker started to relate to the ideas that were put together in the initial script of the film narrative and its image poetics, which centred on 'three boys, or two boys and a girl, [...] that obviously came from Nicholas Ray, or maybe Mizoguchi...'<sup>39</sup> Later, during the 1980s, and parallel to his collaboration in *Uma Rapariga no Verão* and other professional activities, Costa consolidated these ideas into a script, produced to comply with the funding requirements of the IPC. This was, according

---

<sup>39</sup> Peranson, 'Pedro Costa: an introduction', 131.

to the filmmaker, ‘a classic script, 100 pages, huddled up with a storyboard’.<sup>40</sup> After being submitted several times to the IPC funding contests, an initial funding was granted to Trópico Filmes in 1987.<sup>41</sup> This financial support was soon supplemented by grants from the Gulbenkian Foundation,<sup>42</sup> and from the RTP.<sup>43</sup> Yet, this financial support was not enough to complete the film. The more experienced members of the cast (Luís Miguel Cintra, Henrique do Canto e Castro and Isabel de Castro) helped considerably in easing the costs by not charging any fees,<sup>44</sup> and the access to film stock and old equipment also helped to reduce some of the production costs.<sup>45</sup>

The planning and production of *Blood* was marked by the difficulties of finding a cinematographer to produce the cinematography planned in the film’s script. Because of the limited budget, the use of monochrome was problematic. According to Costa, the process was expensive and required technical know-how that was not easily available; Portuguese cinema technicians who would be willing to work with such film process were rather scarce, and many had retired; most of the younger cinematographers did not want to deal with the risky and time consuming production and post-production process associated with black and white film stock.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

<sup>41</sup> According to the information provided by ICA in an email communication to the author (27 July 2012).

<sup>42</sup> Information provided by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, in an email to the author (03 August 2012). This funding was provided in two parts, the first in July 1989 and the second in September 1989.

<sup>43</sup> According to Costa, *Blood’s* final budget was 32.000.000 Portuguese Escudos (approximately €160.000 in today’s currency). See Costa qtd. in Laurinda Alves, ‘Pedro e o Segredo’, in *O Independente*, supplement Vida3 (30 November 1990), 29. In the same interview, the filmmaker argues that this amount would be a third of the low-budget productions directed by Jim Jarmusch at the time.

<sup>44</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

<sup>45</sup> See Peranson, ‘Pedro Costa: an introduction’, 132.

<sup>46</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

Additionally, the abundance of night scenes scheduled – filming at night was ‘three times more expensive’, according to Costa – made it almost unaffordable.<sup>47</sup> Thus the filmmaker made a considerable effort to find an experienced and skilful cinematographer able to work with black and white film, and to create efficient but inexpensive ways to shoot the film without exceeding the available budget.<sup>48</sup>

Using his network of contacts, Costa managed to contact German cinematographer Martin Schäfer, who accepted the position on *Blood*, in the condition to be paid at the same rate as a Portuguese professional, a rate lower than the commonly charged by the technician. Schäfer had considerable experience with monochrome cinematography, having worked with Wim Wenders in *Im Lauf der Zeit* (*Kings of the Road*, 1976, sharing the cinematography credits with Robby Müller) and in *The State of Things* – both shot in black and white. Furthermore, Schäfer’s expertise in the use of black and white cinematography was also visibly deployed in the camera work of *Radio On* (dir. Christopher Petit, 1979), a British-German co-production (with participation of Wenders as associate producer) that conjures up aspects of cinephilia and intertextual references similar to the ones later seen in *Blood*.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> See Peranson, ‘Pedro Costa: an introduction’, 131. In this interview, Costa names Stanley Cortez (cinematographer of *The Night of the Hunter*) and Gabriel Figueroa (cinematographer who worked with Luis Buñuel and John Ford) as some of the professionals contacted at the time, in order to work on *Blood*’s cinematography.

<sup>49</sup> Several intertextual characteristics can be seen in *Radio On*, the most prominent being the clear connection of Petit’s film with Wenders’ *Alice in den Städten* (*Alice in the Cities*, 1974), a link clearly created by the recurring character played in both films by Lisa Kreuzer, which is intended to be the same in both films. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith has described *Radio On* as culturally conveying textual and production elements more

The inclusion of Schäfer in *Blood* eased many of the early production concerns raised by Costa's use of monochrome cinematography. Schäfer participated in most of the shooting, divided between Valada do Ribatejo and surrounding areas (approximately 70 km northeast of Lisbon) and locations in central Lisbon. His technical know-how was decisive in creating the distinctive visual style of the film, helping with the (technically difficult) overexposed spotlighting. Costa recalls:

it was a small team [around 30 people]. [On] the sound were two people, but the image had a lot of people. Perhaps not as many as it should, but the apparatus was big, with those big old floodlights. [...] Filming at night near the river... during the winter was complicated. [Martin Schäfer] had to do his best... and I was lucky with the professional relations at the time. [...] *Blood's* cinematography looked like the ones in the old Hollywood studios, but things were done that way [in Portugal] at the time. Today it's difficult to film like that.<sup>50</sup>

As Costa also explains, Schäfer imprinted in the shooting and post-production processes the necessary technical skills:

the concerns [in the initial production stages] were dissipated by the inclusion of Martin Schäfer in the project. Martin gave a lot to the film, he knew a lot about black and white and helped organising [the shooting]... helped us a lot! He knew how to organise the shooting settings. [...] We were a bit clumsy: [shooting] sometimes in one place, something in another... he used to concentrate everything in one place. [...]

---

rooted in (continental) European art cinema, being 'a British film (co-production elements notwithstanding) inserted into the context of a nonexistent British cinema.' See Geoffrey Nowell-Smith 'Radio On', in *Screen*, 3-4 (Winter, 1979), 30.

<sup>50</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

He also gave assurance to the [film processing lab technicians] at Tobis [Portuguesa], so things went faster. [The lab technicians] knew he was one of Wenders' DOPs.<sup>51</sup>

As explained by Costa, *Blood's* successful production relied substantially on Schäfer's technical know-how. However, in the interval between location shoots, the process came to a halt with Schäfer's death in April 1988.

In order to complete the last days of shooting in Lisbon, Costa once again used his network of contacts to find experienced cinematographers who would be able to complete the remaining scenes. Costa and the Trópico team came to rely on veteran Portuguese cinematographers Acácio de Almeida and, later, Elso Roque, both experienced directors of black and white photography. Yet, these final shooting sessions were also problematic:

we had almost all the shooting done, only five days to go, I think... I went to speak with Acácio de Almeida, [who worked with] Reis, César [Monteiro], and in [Jorge Silva Melo's] *Agosto*, in which I also worked as assistant. [...] Once again I was lucky; [Almeida] told me he would use his own team and equipment, at a minimum cost. While working with Acácio, [the actor] Luís Miguel Cintra got ill and we had to stop on the final day of shooting. Acácio had other work scheduled [...]. So I had to call another DOP, Elso Roque, someone I didn't know very well. [...] He finished the film... [by that time] all the team had changed, except the cast and the personal from Trópico [Filmes].<sup>52</sup>

The shooting of the film was eventually concluded, despite such dramatic changes in the technical crew. Martin Schäfer's cinematography, complemented by Almeida

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

and Roque's work, helped to create the gripping, sharply contrasted image of the film.

The making of *Blood* illustrates the constraints present in 1980s filmmaking in Portugal, a production context defined by low-budget production and constant adaptation to technical and production limitations. Simultaneously, it shows the dynamism of a network of younger professionals who were complementing their professional formation by working on their first feature films, but also by the dedicated support that experienced cast and older, more established and experienced professionals who had input into the film. As observed by Ana Luísa Guimarães, the production of *Blood*, as the subsequent Trópico Filmes production, *Nuvem*, emphasised 'collective work' practices and technical know-how, made under demanding conditions which were, however, free from impositions of external production companies.<sup>53</sup> This framework anticipates a narrative of production that came to define Costa's subsequent works – even if these were made under different production contexts. The film's monochrome cinematography demonstrates the effect of these collaborative practices and the resourcefulness of Costa's collaborators. Furthermore, in its negotiations between aesthetic and technical aspects, *Blood's* cinematography would therefore remain a central element in the reception of Costa's first feature film.

---

<sup>53</sup> Guimarães qtd. in *Os bons da fita: depoimentos inéditos de realizadores portugueses* (Faro: Cineclube de Faro, INATEL, 1996), 11.



## Cinematography as a reception discourse

The reception of *Blood* among domestic film critics shows both how Costa's film carries stylistic markers tied to filmic influences and how it became contextualised within contemporary Portuguese cinema. Furthermore, most of the contemporary film critics stressed the importance of the film's cinematography as a marker of filmic distinction. As already examined above, this exceptional status sustains a discourse rooted in notions of 'primitive beauty' that harkens back to the forms of classical cinema. As Costa himself points out, this choice was born from reluctance to film in colour, in order to avoid the processed 'standardised colour' observed in 1980s cinema.<sup>54</sup> Similar considerations were pointed out by the actor Pedro Hestnes, in one of his rare interviews with the Portuguese media. In this interview, Hestnes claims that the black and white palette used in *Blood* allowed him to feel a filmic 'nostalgia' that was impossible to achieve in undifferentiated 'standard-colour' films.<sup>55</sup> Thus, this resistance to 'standardised' colour film represents an effort to engage with particular filmic values through a (perhaps nostalgic) cinephile gesture.

This language of cinematic exception was clearly present in the marketing campaign for Costa's film, while discussions of the film's cinematography dominated the reviews of the film which appeared in the Portuguese press at the time. Atalanta Filmes promoted *Blood* domestically with an advertising campaign that adopted similar refined monochrome visuals to those found in the film. Some of the marketing materials used the elaborate and dramatic scene-stills of actors Pedro

---

<sup>54</sup> Costa qtd. in Alves, 'Pedro e o Segredo', 29.

<sup>55</sup> Rodrigues da Silva, 'O Rosto dos Verdes Anos: entrevista com Pedro Hestnes', in *Jornal de Letras e Ideias* (March 1, 1995), 6.

Hestnes and Inês de Medeiros, communicating the cinephilia-referencing essence expressed in the film (see Figure 2). Following a marketing strategy that became standard in the films distributed by Atalanta Filmes (until then unusual in Portuguese cinema), *Blood's* promotional materials featured in many of the arts and entertainment sections of the daily and weekly newspapers with wider-circulation in Portugal, and the trailer of the film was exhibited on both public television channels. Some Portuguese newspapers also ran special articles about *Blood*. The November 30th 1990 edition of the weekly newspaper *O Independente* included a four-page special about the film, with two pages partially reproducing information from the press release from Atalanta Filmes, accompanied by a two-page interview with Costa and Hestnes.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Similarly to the marketing materials, the design of this newspaper interview reflected the film's monochrome; the article's black and white photos of Costa and Hestnes contrasted with the normally colour-printed pages of this newspaper's supplement.



**Figure 2: Promotional image of *Blood*.**

These marketing materials highlighted Schäfer's work, particularly his link with Wenders, but also, it can be argued, the significance of his cinematographic craft in giving the film its recognisable look. The *Blood* press release makes evident Schäfer's importance. Schafer was, apart from Costa, the only member of the crew to be mentioned in the introductory text. The press release also highlights the visual aspects of the film, with only Costa and Schäfer featured in the space for biographic notes (which also included photographs of both men), giving to the cinematographer an visibility commonly bestow to the main actors. The prominence of Schäfer's work carried over to the press reviews, with a unanimous focus on the film's

cinematography, either directly discussing it,<sup>57</sup> or by commenting positively at the aesthetic and technical properties of the film.<sup>58</sup> While *Blood* was generally positively received, some film critics nevertheless pointed out issues with the film's narrative – a critical view that can be contextualised (at least partially) as intrinsic to the problematic dialogue between Portuguese art film and its domestic reception, as explained in the previous chapter.<sup>59</sup>

While most reviews highlight *Blood*'s cinematography, one article in particular, written by João Bénard da Costa, recognises the cinematographic quality as a crucial part of an overall stylistic and technical achievement. In this article, Bénard da Costa argues that Costa went back to the basic 'syntax of classical cinema', doing so without any 'mistakes'.<sup>60</sup> The observation of the film's debt to classical cinema places *Blood* as a film contrasting with the contemporary filmic expression. A strong defender of *Blood* (and of the subsequent oeuvre of his former student at the Lisbon Cinema School), da Costa emphasises the fact that Costa seemed to have stepped away from the typical narratives and aesthetic formulas common in Portuguese cinema during those years, as well as giving prominence to a

---

<sup>57</sup> For example in José Vaz Pereira, 'A Sangrar', in *Sete* (1 December 1990), 11; João Bénard da Costa, 'Sangue antigo e sangue novo', in *Revista K* (November 1990), 117.

<sup>58</sup> For example, Pedro Garcia Rosado, 'Anemia Ficcional' in *JL: Jornal de Letras e Ideias* (11 December 1990), 22.

<sup>59</sup> See *ibid.*; also in António Brás, 'Não é vermelho, é sangue' in *A Grande Ilusão* (December 1990), 52; Pereira, 'A Sangrar', 11. These reviews point out that the narrative of the film as unclear or unstructured, a quality that is mentioned as a recurrent issue in Portuguese cinema. Such reactions echo broader issues in the reception of contemporary Portuguese cinema, as looked at in Chapter Two.

<sup>60</sup> da Costa, 'Sangue antigo e sangue novo', 118.

technical artistry – expressed in the film’s monochrome – already uncommon at the time.

This notion of Costa’s film as a distinct work in contemporary Portuguese cinema is also expressed in the association made by some Portuguese film critics, who read *Blood* as being close to the thematic and stylistic properties present in Paulo Rocha’s 1963 first feature film *Verdes Anos*. Shot in black and white and under a restrictively low-budget, Rocha’s film transmits the rising discomfort of teenagers and young adults living in a culturally and politically isolated country, and the increasing social alienation felt by the burgeoning Lisbon youth culture.<sup>61</sup> An article by the film critic Augusto M. Seabra explicitly links Costa and Rocha’s films, arguing that both *Verdes Anos* and *Blood* express a similar ‘youthful’ cinephile expression – Rocha’s film title translates as ‘green years’. Seabra suggests that ‘perhaps [*Blood*] will become a mark of our green years’.<sup>62</sup> This association between the two films, conceivably more textual than objectively historical, places *Blood* as an example of works that convey a generational renovation, to some extent similar to the ones that can be observed in Portuguese cinema of the 1960s.

Retrospectively, Costa’s film participates in the renovation of thematic and stylistic properties operated by the filmmakers starting their activities during the 1980s. However, the latent nostalgic undertone sustaining Seabra’s analysis reflects also the ambiguous terms in which Costa’s film was critically received. On the one hand, the comparison with a paradigmatic example of the *Cinema Novo*, emphasises

---

<sup>61</sup> Granja, ‘Paulo Rocha’, 62.

<sup>62</sup> Augusto M. Seabra, ‘Verdes Anos’, in *Público* (December 1, 1990), 18. Such connection with Rocha’s film also emerges in the already cited interview with Pedro Hestnes; see da Silva, ‘O Rosto dos Verdes Anos’, 7.

*Blood*'s past influences and cinephile monochrome, positioning it as an anachronism in contemporary Portuguese cinema. On the other hand, Costa's film became part of the increasing polarisation between the defenders of a cinema understood as a distinct artistic and industrial activity and the professionals who called for industrially integrated policies under the audio-visual and multimedia markets, explained in the previous chapter. Thus *Blood*'s filmic style and the artistry deployed in its making convene not just art cinema expression rooted on cinephilic values, but also highlight a mode of filmmaking that is averse to readings of this national cinema as part of broader cultural and industrial structures.<sup>63</sup> These discursive formations positioned *Blood* as not just as an exercise of style invoking a (past) cinephilia discourse, but also as partaking in a continuous reformulation of a national art cinema.

## Conclusion

As I have argued in this chapter, Pedro Costa's *Blood* came to express both an evolving personal and professional process, and also the constraints and dynamics which can be seen in the industrial formations of art cinema produced in Portugal during the 1980s. As a first work, Costa's film exemplifies the layered contexts that came to define a group of filmmakers who started their professional activities during

---

<sup>63</sup> See da Costa, 'Sangue antigo and sangue novo', 117-8. Bénard da Costa places *Blood* (and particularly its cinematography) into a continuum of resistance against particular commercial strategies which seek to re-propose existing content as well as generating new contents, which was one of the main arguments in the split among Portuguese filmmaking professionals at the time. Da Costa alludes to the controversial practices of colouring black-and-white movies operated by the Turner Broadcasting System in the late 1980s as an example of these strategies. For more considerations on these practices see Paul Grainge, *Monochrome Memories: Nostalgia and Style in Retro America* (Westport: Praeger Press, 2002), 1-2.

that decade. While specific industrial conditions shaped the output of these filmmakers, the socio-historical period between the 1973 revolution to the late 1980s decisively inflected the production and reception of these films.

As discussed above, this mode of filmmaking foregrounds cinephilic impulses, which influenced not just its production processes, but also its domestic reception. The process that created the monochrome cinematography of *Blood* highlights forms of cinephilia and referential appropriations; this same cinephilia met further reflection in the reception of Costa's first feature, which situating the film in different filmic traditions, while also inscribing it as an example of a renovation in Portuguese cinema – a renovation which, retrospectively, became visible soon after the release of *Blood*, in numerous first works produced during the early 1990s. Taking the dialogue between intertextual creation and adaptive production practices observed in Costa's first work further, the next chapter discusses the creative and production processes of *Casa de Lava* and *Bones*. It interrogates how this dialogue between intertextuality and film production in Costa's filmmaking came to rely on the incorporation of themes and the mediation of shooting conditions inherent to specific filming locations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Negotiating Filmmaking: Adaptation, Location and Authorship

I would suggest that styles of works are to be understood in terms of the notion of styles of action. Specifically, attributing a style to a work involves, somehow, the idea of the manner in which it was made, the act of creating it.

Kendall L. Walton<sup>1</sup>

I don't like documentaries. [...] But it's always important for so-called fiction to be delicately tempered with a small dose of reality.

Pedro Costa<sup>2</sup>

The first images of Costa's second feature film, *Casa de Lava* uses images of the 1951 eruption of Cape Verde's Fogo Island volcano recorded by Orlando Ribeiro – a recording that was painstakingly edited by the Portuguese geographer (and proficient photographer), combining different photograms, enlarged and trimmed frames in order to compose the film (Figure 3).<sup>3</sup> Once confined to the scope of a scientific film, the repurposing of these images in Costa's work announce the close relation between location and its realist depiction as a central characteristic of Costa's creative process and filmmaking. *Casa de Lava* is a work which was initially planned as an attempt to translate the narrative and stylistic mechanisms of a particular filmic source, *I Walked with a Zombie* (dir. Jacques Tourneur, 1943); however, it offers a dramatic

---

<sup>1</sup> Kendall L. Walton, 'Style and the Products and Processes of Art', in *The Concept of Style*, ed. by Berel Lang (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 73 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>2</sup> Pedro Costa, 'I Died a Thousand Times: A conversation between Pedro Costa and Nuno Crespo', in *Casa de Lava: Caderno* (Lisbon: Pierre von Kleist, 2013), np.

<sup>3</sup> This is a segment of the film *A Erupção do Vulcão da Ilha do Fogo* (1951). The editing process explained above is described in José Afonso Furtado, 'Regresso e Chegada', in *Público* (10 February 1995), 6.



contrast to the cinephilia-driven style of Costa's first film. As Costa expressed in several interviews, the successive script and shooting changes that shaped the making of *Casa de Lava* were aimed at presenting a cinema without 'artifice',<sup>4</sup> and avoiding the 'lyric-romantic fodder' attached to his first film.<sup>5</sup>

Costa's subsequent feature film, *Bones*, convenes similar textual and stylistic intentions, offering a realist depiction of its shooting location. *Bones* provides an insight into the beginning of Costa's prolonged professional and personal relationship with the location of Fontainhas, a former shantytown near central Lisbon populated by a multicultural community, predominantly made up of native-born Portuguese citizens and migrants from former Portuguese colonies including Cape Verdeans and their descendants. It combines a fictional but nevertheless gritty and realist depiction of the lives of characters cast out of the mainstream social fabric of Lisbon, extending the theme of *Casa de Lava*'s engagement with Portugal's colonial and post-colonial history, before and after the 1974 revolution. Centred on contemporary Portuguese issues, *Bones*' depiction of the lives in the Fontainhas shantytown can be read (at least to some extent) as manifesting many of the topics connected with the political repression and social displacement observed in *Casa de Lava*, as discussed elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Costa qtd. in Nuno H. Luz, 'Estou desgostado com Portugal', *Diário de Notícias* (22 May 1994), 29.

<sup>5</sup> Costa qtd. in Vasco Câmara, 'Convalescer na ilha dos mortos', *Público* (10 February 1995), 3.

<sup>6</sup> For a reading of these characteristics see Nuno Barradas Jorge, 'Thinking of Portugal, Looking at Cape Verde: Notes on Representation of Immigrants in the Films of Pedro Costa', in *Migration in Lusophone Cinema*, ed. by Cacilda Rêgo and Marcus Brasileiro (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 49ff.



**Figure 3: Still frame of the initial scenes in *Casa de Lava* (1994).**

The contrast offered between *Blood* and these two films is not just stylistic or in its relation to its filming location. *Casa de Lava* and *Bones* also differ in terms of their production contexts. Different from *Blood*'s production, which was embedded in the national context studied in the previous chapter, Costa's following films were produced by Paulo Branco's companies Madragoa Filmes (Portugal) and Gemini Films (France), and relied on national and European state-funded institutions and initiatives, as well as public and private support from European film industry partners. Furthermore, reflecting these funding and production arrangements, both films have international casts and crews. Marking a new stage in Costa's narrative of production, *Casa de Lava* and *Bones* collaborate in an international film industry frameworks and European Community cultural policies (as discussed in the previous chapters), which impacted on the production of both films.

This chapter interrogates the processes of adaptation and location in *Casa de Lava* and *Bones*, as part of Costa's evolving authorship and filmmaking. In order to carry out this examination, the chapter firstly traces the different stages in the authoring and producing of *Casa de Lava*. While some textual analysis is necessary, this initial part of the chapter relies mostly on the existing documentation of the film's production, explaining the adaptation of Tourneur's *I Walked with a Zombie*, and the successive changes the initial script underwent during the shooting process.

Carrying the analysis between authorship and production further, this chapter goes on to explain Costa's relation with location, discussing the filmmaker's artistic process and its dialogue with the social and political contexts that can be observed in the settings of *Casa de Lava* and *Bones*. Concerning the former, I analyse how Cape Verde shaped the successive changes made to the film's script, through the specificities of its political and historical contexts. Regarding the latter, the chapter discusses Costa's approximation of Fontainhas, characterising the social and political impact this neighbourhood had in the filmmaker's authorial process. This analysis allows a highlighting of the importance of location in Costa's work, as a form of negotiation between filmic representation and the reality in situ. While problematic, this relation nevertheless allows for an understanding of how authorial expression can rely on contingencies related to location, not just at an aesthetic level but also as part of social and political formations.

In order to illustrate the mediations between location and filmmaking, the chapter concludes with an analysis of the production process of *Bones*. This last part of the chapter places emphasis on how constraints imposed by the shooting location formed an important part of the film's aesthetic and authorship processes. Analysing the production contexts of these two films, this chapter ultimately indicates how

Pedro Costa's creative ethos exemplifies a process of negotiation between filmmaking and the production process. Furthermore, it evaluates how the particularities concerning location have substantially marked these works, giving origin to the filmmaking processes observed in Costa's subsequent films.

### Authoring *Casa de Lava*

Accepting Paulo Branco's proposal to produce his second feature film, Costa started the process of screenwriting *Casa de Lava* soon after the domestic release of *Blood* in December 1990. Initially, Costa envisaged a project that would similarly reflect his cinephile attachments. As explained by Costa in an interview just after the domestic release of *Casa de Lava*, the ideas surrounding the screenplay were of 'a romantic story, in an exotic place', mixing numerous 'pastiche', like Tourneur's film, but also Richard Brooks' *Lord Jim* or [...] the [adventure] films of Fritz Lang'.<sup>7</sup>

As Jonathan Rosenbaum point out, over the years, film critics seem to have oscillated between Tourneur's film and Roberto Rossellini's *Stromboli* (1950) as referential keys to interpret *Casa de Lava*. As Rosenbaum argues,

[s]ome people, unlike me, feel that as a reference point, *I Walked with a Zombie* provides an obstacle or distraction when it comes to appreciating *Casa de Lava* rather than a useful key that unlocks some of the film's treasures. Others feel that *Stromboli* is a more helpful reference point, whereas for me it is the Rossellini film, with its very different and less politicized form of mysticism, that provides a distraction and an obstacle, whatever its own merits. *Casa de Lava*, by contrast, poses the

---

<sup>7</sup> Câmara, 'Convalescer na ilha dos mortos', 3.

unanswerable question of how one can honourably or usefully behave inside a charnel house, a former slave colony.<sup>8</sup>

Even if indirectly, Rosenbaum's preference draws attention to two central characteristics in *Casa de Lava*. The first one is the screenwriting influence that *I Walked with a Zombie* had in the project that culminated in *Casa de Lava*; and subsequent to that consideration, the second one is the political and historical context offered by the film's shooting location, explained later in this chapter.

Looking at the first characteristic pointed out above, and with an understanding of some of the visible sub-textual approximations to Rossellini's work that can be found in *Casa de Lava*, I argue that Costa's early screenplay was developed with a similar narrative structure and themes to that those found in *I Walked with a Zombie* – similarities which still remain latent in the film, even after that initial script was subjected to several successive revisions. Understandably, we could easily attribute such cinematic referencing to a common authorial strategy in contemporary art cinema, positioning textual citation and homage as sources of reflection which can lead to a new work. In Costa's work, as discussed in the previous chapter, this creative agency is particularly evident, forming a (perhaps subconscious) set of cinephile referents which recall cinematic memories or, to use Alain Bergala's term, 'reminiscences'.<sup>9</sup> However, *Casa de Lava* is an example not

---

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'Eruptions and Disruptions in the House of Lava', in *Casa de Lava* DVD booklet (London: Second Run, 2012), 4.

<sup>9</sup> See Alain Bergala, 'La Réminiscence (Pierrot Avec Monika).', in *Pour un Cinéma Comparé: Influences et Répétitions*, ed. by J. Aumont (Paris: Cinémathèque Française, 1996), 51.

just of possible filmic reminiscences, but also of an evolving process of adaptation, one which relies on a clearly identified source to create a different work.

Acknowledging the multitude and at times ambiguous facets of this process of authoring, the nature of *Casa de Lava*'s adaptation of this source should be made clear. As Jack Boozer points out, while reflecting on a consensual categorization in the nature of adaptation in film, authorial intent in adapting external sources can be grouped into three main categories:

1. A literal or close reading (such as the Ishmael Merchant-James Ivory adaptation of *Howard's End*, with Ruth Praver Jhabvala as writer);
2. A general correspondence (such as Anthony Minghella's highly sensitive screenwriter-director 'reading' of Michael Ondaatje's poetic and lengthy novel *The English Patient*); or
3. A distant referencing (as the Coen brothers' tacit borrowing from Homer's *The Odyssey* for *O Brother Where Art Thou?*).<sup>10</sup>

Considering this taxonomy, I argue that *Casa de Lava* employs distant referencing methods, which can be traced by looking into the making of the film. Pedro Costa's script, which partially appropriated and adapted Tourneur's film in its narrative format, includes a reproduction of the 1943 film's relations between the main characters. Furthermore, *Casa de Lava* refers to and expands on political issues only latent in Tourneur's original film, tacitly adapting it to a different context.

The film's process of adaptation and Costa's authorial intent is visible in the project's different phases of production. Two relevant sources allow for the analysis of this process. The first one is an early script treatment that includes a synopsis, a

---

<sup>10</sup> Jack Boozer, 'The Screenplay and Authorship in Adaptation', in *Authorship in Film Adaptation* ed. by Jack Boozer (Austin: University of Texas, 2008), 9.

project description and an initial script of the film, titled *Quando Ninguém Olhar Por Mim* ('When no one looks after me'; *Quando Ninguém* henceforth), submitted by Madragoa Filmes for the funding contest held by the IPC in June 1991. The second source is a document titled *Down to Earth*, dating from 1992, which gathers similar information.<sup>11</sup> The latter document is an English version of another film script treatment entitled *Terra a Terra*, presented to IPC in order to re-apply to the same funding contest in 1992.<sup>12</sup> These documents provide elements that allow for an understanding the different stages of the film's writing and production from its early stages, and help to explain the creative and production negotiations to which Tourneur's text was subjected.

Throughout *Quando Ninguém* there are clear references to Tourneur's work, both in terms of narrative structure and characterisation, but also in terms of the shadowy look and feel initially planned. In order to explain the similarities between *Quando Ninguém* and *I Walked with a Zombie*, some textual and narrative description of Tourneur's work is needed. Produced by Val Lewton for RKO's B-movie horror division, *I Walked with a Zombie* relies also on distant referencing, drawing most of its story and narrative from an article written by Inez Wallace for the *American Weekly* about life in Haiti, and on Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*

---

<sup>11</sup> Both documents are part of the collection of the Portuguese Cinematheque Library archives in Lisbon.

<sup>12</sup> In an email communication from ICA to the author it was revealed that the funding was granted to the project when it was still called *Terra a Terra*. It can be assumed that the document referred in this chapter as *Down to Earth* is the English version of the same script treatment submitted by Madragoa Filmes to the IPC funding contest in 1992, probably to help gather funding internationally.

(first published in 1847, and not credited in Tourneur's film).<sup>13</sup> Conveying an eerie atmosphere and psychological horror, the film tells the story of a Canadian nurse, Betsy Connell (Frances Dee), hired to care for Jessica Holland (Christine Gordon), the wife of a sugar plantation owner in the Caribbean island of Saint Sebastian in the West Indies, whose plantation is mostly inhabited by the descendants of African slaves. When Betsy meets the Holland family, she becomes aware of the family issues related to Jessica's unresponsive, zombie-like mental condition (later understood as a *mal d'amour* condition, due to a tragic romantic entanglement with her brother-in-law). Disappointed with the ineffective treatment of her patient, and following Jessica's personal maid's (Theresa Harris) suggestion, Betsy takes Jessica to a Voodoo ceremony which is being conducted somewhere on the plantation. The narrative progresses through the problematic colonial tensions, explicitly visible, for example, in the scenes that stage a confrontation between the uses of magical belief with the conventions of modern medical practice. The intervention of the Voodoo worshippers, channelled mainly through the uncanny presence of the zombie Carre-Four (Darby Jones), precipitate the narrative's tragic ending, with Jessica dying while trying to escape her zombie curse.

Reflecting the plot of Tourneur's film, the narrative of *Quando Ninguém* focuses on the complicity between two patients and their nurse (all of them female), and their attempts to escape an isolated rural psychiatric hospital where most of the action takes place. The narrative tension escalates with the introduction of a young

---

<sup>13</sup> Kyle W. Bishop, *American Zombie Gothic: The Rise and Fall (and Rise) of the Walking Dead in Popular Culture* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2010), 82.



warden and a black gardener, both of whom exhibit symptoms of psychological disorders of some kind. The narrative structure follows the path of Tourneur's film by portraying the female characters as being divided between their efforts to resolve their mental health issues, and their ambiguous relations towards the male characters and the oppressive presence of the masculine-ruled order. This ambiguity is also explored in the scene descriptions contained in the early script, which feature a similarly eerie aura indebted to expressionistic lighting and *mise-en-scène*: the deep-sleep therapy the patient is subjected to, the reference to inactive behaviour that normally characterises lovesickness, the constant presence of the zombie-like gardener (and his subservient relationship to the warden), and the strange nocturnal walks the women take into the woods.

*Quando Ninguém* also displays evidence of some of Costa film's production details. Clearly, the initial planning of what would become Costa's second feature film was far more connected with the aesthetics and shooting locations featured in *Blood*, than the ones visible in the completed *Casa de Lava*. The film was originally planned to be shot on 35mm colour film, though the script designates numerous rainy days and night scenes that creates a perceptible aesthetic similarity to Costa's first (chiaroscuro monochromatic) feature film. Moreover, the three main actors from *Blood*, Pedro Hestnes, Inês de Medeiros and Nuno Ferreira, are also mentioned in this project document, also linking it with Costa's first film. Details of the cast list included in *Quando Ninguém* also reveal the inclusion early in the project of French actress Edith Scob, best known for her role as the disfigured, reclusive daughter of Doctor Génessier (played by Pierre Brasseur) in Georges Franju's *Les Yeux Sans Visage* (1960). This casting amounts to another cinephilic reference, perhaps reinforcing the intended oppressive hospital atmosphere of this initial project. With

Medeiros and Hestnes, Scob was part of the definitive cast of *Casa de Lava*, in the role of Edite, a character who can best be understood as a reworking of the zombie-like female patient in Costa's initial script.

Other relevant information in the early version of *Quando Ninguém* is the establishment of the initial shooting location. Initially, the project was to be filmed in the same locations as *Blood*, in the region of Ribatejo and in Lisbon, and although critics have assumed that the initial planned location of *Casa de Lava* was the volcanic islands of Cape Verde (something also stated by Pedro Costa himself) this was not, in fact, correct at this initial stage of the project. Thus, I argue that the definitive location of *Casa de Lava* was established later, during the second stage of pre-production, in which the locations in Portugal were substituted for the ones in Cape Verde. Reflecting on the Rosenbaum's observations transcribed earlier in the chapter, it can be pointed out that the cinephilic relations between *Casa de Lava* and *Stromboli* (which narrative is shaped by the eruption of the Stromboli volcano), became more defined only after this final shooting location was established.

While the reasons for this change of shooting location remain unclear, it can be pointed out, at least theoretically, that the narrative elements that connect the project to the presence of a volcano seem to have emerged from another project in which Pedro Costa was participating in the early 1990s. In an interview in 1990, after the domestic release of *Blood*, Costa revealed that he was working on two projects: one was a film commissioned by RTP, part of a group of four films thematically related to the four classical elements; the other was his second feature film, which he

(unclearly) defined as a project which would allow him to ‘became closer to things that [he] couldn’t explain properly [in *Blood*]’.<sup>14</sup> However, the project for the RTP was never made by Costa (presumably this would be the film representing ‘Fire’), but the filmmaker carried on working on his second feature film.<sup>15</sup> However, the pre-production process soon came to a halt, interrupted while Paulo Branco tried to gather enough funding for the project and Pedro Costa carried on promoting *Blood* internationally.<sup>16</sup> The application of *Quando Ninguém* failed to win funding from the IPC in 1991, and Costa and Branco re-applied to the same funding contest in the following year, this time with a document called *Terra a Terra*, of which *Down to Earth* is the English translation. In this document, which did win IPC approval, the shooting location of Cape Verde was clearly designated.

This new shooting location allows for further analysis of the nature of Costa's process of adaptation. The political and historical context offered by the film's shooting location thematically approximates Costa's project to *I Walked with a Zombie*. Like Tourneur's film (set in the West Indies), Cape Verde added a visible political dimension to *Casa de Lava*, due to its position as a former colony and the country's contemporary social contexts. This location implicitly refers to Portugal's colonial history, which became important to the narrative of *Casa de Lava*. As Fernando Arenas argues, the approximation between Portugal and Cape Verde result

---

<sup>14</sup> Maria João Martins, ‘Noites Apaixonadas’, in *JL: Jornal de Letras e Ideias* (11 December 1990), 21. This project is also mentioned in Luz, ‘Estou desgostado com Portugal’, 29.

<sup>15</sup> The four films commissioned were, however, produced during 1992: *O Fim do Mundo* (dir. João Mário Grilo), *O Último Mergulho* (dir. João César Monteiro), *Das Tripas Coração* (dir. Joaquim Pinto) and *O Dia dos Meus Anos* (dir. João Botelho), representing ‘Earth’, ‘Water’, ‘Fire’ and ‘Air’, respectively.

<sup>16</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

from ‘colonialism, widespread miscegenation’, and the ‘special legal and ontological status of Cape Verde within the [Portuguese] African colonial empire and the Portuguese imaginary, in addition to mass Cape Verdean migration to Portugal and economic dependence’.<sup>17</sup> During the twentieth century, Cape Verde became a symbolic representation of the ambiguities of a cultural identity under colonial rule. Portuguese propaganda kept to a discourse based on the idea of colonial unity, claiming that all territories under colonial presence were part of the same country. However, Cape Verde was historically ascribed an ideological significance during the colonial period as a ‘showcase of Luso-African racial harmony’, and its inhabitants enjoyed more rights than the ones allowed in mainland colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau.<sup>18</sup> In this way, the country served as one of the key examples held up by the Portuguese government in defence of a colonial position which became increasingly politically awkward after World War II.

While the official Portuguese discourse maintained this ideological relation, the islands’ remote location, separated from Africa and distant from Europe, made it an ideal destination for those forced into exile from mainland Europe and, simultaneously, for those escaping Africa via emigration to the American continent and to Portugal. This characterisation of the islands as a destination for exiles was further reinforced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the establishment of the Tarrafal prison camp, which was used until the 1950s for the imprisonment of the fiercest

---

<sup>17</sup> Fernando Arenas, *Lusophone Africa: Beyond Independence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2010), 57.

<sup>18</sup> Deirdre Meintel, *Race, Culture, and Portuguese colonialism in Cabo Verde*. Foreign and Comparative Studies/African Series, no. 41 (Syracuse: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1984), 3.

elements of opposition to the dictatorship. During the colonial/independence war(s) of the 1960s and early 1970s, the camp was reactivated, serving as a venue for the imprisonment and torture of African freedom fighters and liberation movement supporters. Reflecting on the location's historical meaning, Pedro Costa incorporated the themes of political and colonial repression, while presenting in his film situations that have shape the modern, post-colonial conditions in contemporary Cape Verde, mainly the immigration to Portugal.

In terms of the film's creative process, this relocation to Cape Verde allowed for a more direct identification with the colonial location that that which was portrayed in *I Walked with a Zombie*, but simultaneously made several changes to the script necessary. Both the exoticism and colonial tensions between the outsiders and inhabitants, latent in Tourneur's film, would be easily translated in this new location, but new details were added to Costa's creative resources that necessitated changes to the initial script and the storyline structure of *I Walked with a Zombie*. Costa's perception of the place and the increasing familiarity with the local participants in the film (first during the location scouting and then during the shooting itself) also made him reconsider his initial ideas. As filmmaker explains, the plot contained in the script was dynamically changed to adapt to 'the land, the people, who contributed with their own stories, pointing to ways that the film could follow'.<sup>19</sup> On location, Costa abandoned the initial script in order to express a deeper consideration of the

---

<sup>19</sup> Costa qtd. in Jacques Lemière, 'Terra a Terra: O Portugal e o Cabo Verde de Pedro Costa', in *Cem mil cigarros: os filmes de Pedro Costa*, ed. by Ricardo Matos Cabo (Lisbon: Orfeu Negro, 2009), 100.

local environment the filmmaker found so appealing, increasing the difficulties in an already problematic filming process.

A look at the film's production constraints is important in this analysis, as it allows an understanding of its dynamics and how Costa adapted the second version of the script to the issues raised during the difficult process of filming. While Costa, helped by the suggestions of Paulo Branco, discovered in Cape Verde the ideal location for his film (preferring this new location to the initial possibility of filming in the Azores Islands), the necessity of transportation all the technical material, non-existent in such a remote location, made the production of the film expensive. Such technical arrangements also reveal the economic conditions that Branco focused on when producing this film. In 1992 funding from the IPC was granted, complementing other financial resources obtained from France (through the Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée, henceforth CNC) and a later grant by RTP in 1994. The production roles were shared between Portuguese and a French teams; similarly, the cast included not just Medeiros, Hestnes, and Scob, but also Ivorian-French actor Isaach De Bankolé, and several Cape Verdean inhabitants (among others, Raúl Andrade, Sandra do Canto Brandão, João Gomes Pina, and Cristiano Andrade Alves), all of whom had no previous acting experience.

The production logistics associated with filming on location in Cape Verde became particularly difficult, and added to the complexity of the co-financed project. In the early 1990s, Cape Verde offered limited filming conditions, and all equipment brought from Europe had to be transported between islands on large rafts, at times

during adverse weather conditions.<sup>20</sup> Simultaneously, the cast and crew had to adapt to the rough conditions and the isolation of the location, often with adverse effects. Furthermore, the shooting was beset by constant personal conflicts and numerous incidents on the set. As Costa recalls:

people fell ill [...], half of the team had been dismissed; I had a fight with a member of the cast. [...] And there were [conflicts] between the Portuguese and French crew members, Paulo [Branco] would be constantly ringing [to mediate issues]. [...] [*Casa de Lava's* shooting] was a troubled process, mostly because of the location, but also because I pushed the situation to the limit. I always said [to the crew] that we needed to film near the [Fogo Island] volcano, but we had to take all the equipment up there... to the production crew that was very problematic... the road, the stones, the heat and the cold, the [lack] of water. [...] and then, all the [personal] conflicts and incidents...<sup>21</sup>

While reflecting the conditions on location, these problems also reflected Costa's decision to abandon the script in order to accommodate his constantly varying perceptions of the location and local participants. As the filmmaker became more familiar with the local participants, he steered away from the script's guidelines and started a process marked by constant improvisation.<sup>22</sup> This new working method was matched by a proportional increase in the visibility of the local actors. De Bankolé's role in particular became less active than previously planned in the script. As disclosed by Costa, De Bankolé was not fully aware that his character would spend a considerable part of the film 'in [a] coma', and Costa decided to 'extend the coma

---

<sup>20</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> As explained by Costa in Peranson, 'Pedro Costa: An introduction', 135.

[scenes] while [De Bankolé] wanted to wake up [laughs].<sup>23</sup> This fact contributed to some of the personal tensions during the film's shooting.

The script changes are visible in the final cut of the film, in which the narrative becomes less attached to a storyline and noticeably more fragmented towards the second half of the film, contributing yet again to a distancing of its referencing to *I Walked with a Zombie*. A comparative analysis between the script treatment titled *Down to Earth* and the final cut of *Casa de Lava* helps clarify some of the changes Costa made to the script during the shooting. The storyline described in *Down to Earth* develops over six days, during which a nurse, Mariana (Medeiros) sits at a hospital in Cape Verde taking care of Leão, a Cape Verdean construction worker (De Bankolé) in coma after a work accident at a construction site in Lisbon.

With Leão still comatose, Mariana tries to find his family and soon she meets Edite (a former nurse and widow of a political prisoner who died in the Tarrafal prison camp, played by Scob) and her son (played by Hestnes). Together they relate the story of their suffering under the former Portuguese colonial presence. When Leão wakes from his coma (on the fourth day after arriving), tensions grow between Edite and Mariana (both amorously involved with Leão), which adds to the already tense relationship between Mariana and some of the locals. The plot described in *Down to Earth* ends with the tragic deaths of two local teenagers whom Mariana befriended, and her attempt to escape the island, running in the direction of the airport runway (closely pursued by Leão).

---

<sup>23</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).



While one can still recognise similarities between this storyline and character development and those portrayed in *I Walked with a Zombie* and initially scripted in *Quando Ninguém*, there are important identifiable changes. The introduction to the *Down to Earth* film treatment reveals that the zombie-like condition is transposed to many of the characters. Thus, Leão's (De Bankolé) zombie-like state changes in the middle of the storyline when he wakes from his coma. The characters of Scob and Hestnes are also characterised as mentally unstable, often lapsing into zombie-like, apathetic condition. Analysis of *Casa de Lava* shows that these changes were included in the film, making it less similar to the original planned storyline and distancing it from overt references to *I Walked with a Zombie*, which was centred solely on a female zombie character.

Furthermore, a comparative reading of *Down to Earth* and *Casa de Lava* makes it clear that some entire scenes were left out of the final version of the film. For example, the scene featuring the deaths of the two characters Mariana seems to rely upon (two teenagers who wander near the hospital where Leão resides), another which includes an attempted murder of Mariana by Edite's son, and finally, a third scene depicting Mariana's final escape. These changes and omissions confirm the working process of the film on location, which Costa characterised as an 'open structure', revealing the script-free daily improvisation carried during the shooting of the film.<sup>24</sup>

As already pointed out, this script-free shooting allowed Costa to incorporate more of his interest in the local environment and cast. The main narrative plot is

---

<sup>24</sup> Costa qtd. in Peranson, 'Pedro Costa: An introduction', 135.

dealt with in the first 30 minutes of the film, and soon after the film starts to diverge into multiple subplots, all converging for an ambiguous open ending. These changes fractured the narrative of *Casa de Lava* into two distinctive parts. The first part introduces the narrative and the characters, and can be understood as being faithful to the early narrative of the script presented in *Down to Earth*. The second part of the film reveals more deeply the changes to the script, and displays a far more fragmented and subjective narrative, mostly centred on the local inhabitants of the islands. In this second part, the narrative accompanies the rambling walks of Mariana, observing the inhabitants daily life. These two narrative moments observed in *Casa de Lava* highlight the mixture between the fictional storyline and the parallel documentary-like action of the film, textual and narrative characteristics that Costa refined in his following films.

### Re-contextualising location

Concerning filmic style, the narrative mechanisms in *Casa de Lava* contribute to a hypothetical reading of the film as being closer to Rossellini's neo-realism as presented in *Stromboli*, a reading discussed in Rosenbaum's arguments presented earlier in this chapter. However, it can also be pointed out that this combination of fiction and documentary-like styles arguably highlights the influence of António Reis. Additionally, this influence allows for a discussion of the role of location as a central feature in Costa's works. As discussed in Chapter Three, Reis was an influential figure on Costa during his formative years, through both his teachings and his film oeuvre. *Casa de Lava* retains a stylistic negotiation between fictionalised and documentary narratives of Reis' cinema, but also displays a fascination with the location being filmed, as observed in Reis and Cordeiro's films *Trás-os-Montes* or

*Ana*. In a similar fashion to these two films – shot in Portugal’s isolated north-eastern region of Trás-os-Montes – Costa’s film location became not just scenery to the filmic fiction being represented, but also part of the narratives taking shape through the location’s quotidian realities.

This preoccupation with location correlates with the adaptation process observed in the film. The depiction of a visually striking and historically charged location reveals textual and stylistic qualities that contribute to the film with its own contextual narrative. In this sense, the location of *Casa de Lava* mediates between the properties of a film setting and the narrative character of the landscape. As Martin Lefebvre argues, ‘setting’ inform a narrative process, establishing the filmic narrative action, while ‘landscape’ summons dissimilar qualities, freed by (filmic) narration.<sup>25</sup> However, as Lefebvre also argues, this supposed division remains ambiguous since even freed from filmic narrative action, ‘filmic landscape’ also carries its own narrative – what Lefebvre designates ‘as a *doubly temporalized landscape*’.<sup>26</sup> Cape Verde’s filmic landscape, as represented in *Casa de Lava*, is depicted as arid and without resources, underdeveloped and sparsely populated. This genuine expression tries to detach the landscape from any depiction of the touristic picturesqueness that this group of islands (which is also a tourist destination) has

---

<sup>25</sup> Martin Lefebvre, ‘Between Setting and Landscape in the Cinema’, in *Landscape and Film*, edited by Martin Lefebvre (London: Routledge, 2006), 21-3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 (emphasis in original). For further consideration on the double qualities of filmic location (as both film setting and historical charged location) see the discussion carried in Jacques Aumont, ‘The Invention of Place: Daniele Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub’s *Moses and Aaron*’, in *Landscape and Film*, 2ff. For considerations on landscape as an element of film’s discursive structure see Paul Willemen ‘An Avant-Garde for the 90s’, in *Looks And Frictions: Essays In Cultural Studies And Film Theory* (London: Indiana University Press, 1994), 141-2.

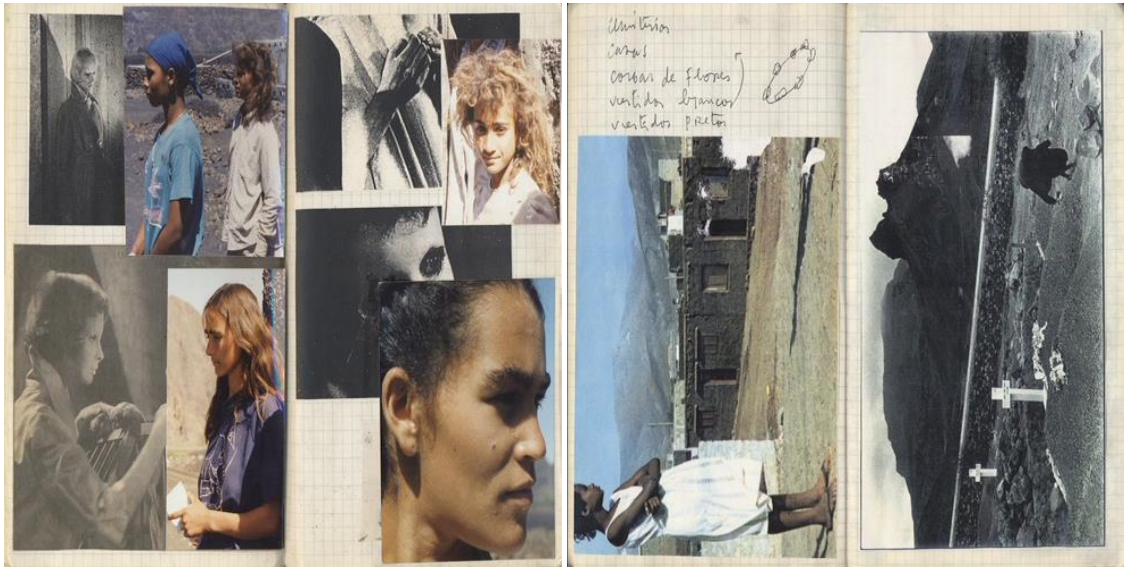
been associated with. One can easily associate such a depiction of landscape as one clearly shaped by an understanding of its colonial role and postcolonial constraints, which in itself serves as a political statement. This depiction is ambiguous, however, even if unintentionally, since it also expresses the open fascination Costa had towards Cape Verde (and its population), which serves to make these elements appear mysterious.

The original fieldwork notebook used by Costa during the location scouting and shooting process provides other clues on these mediations with location, revealing its overlapping qualities.<sup>27</sup> The notebook consists in a collection of different visual elements, including images taken from *I Walked with a Zombie* and *Les Yeux Sans Visage*, several newspaper clippings, images related to the Portuguese colonial presence in Cape Verde, and photos taken by Costa, featuring locations and inhabitants, some of whom would later be part of the film's cast. These different elements allow an understanding of how the initial storyline and aspects inherent to the location were mediated. While presenting visual elements related with *I walked with a Zombie*, the notebook also documents political issues both past and present in Cape Verde, providing possible readings between Tourneur's film and the political and social aspects of this location – which are both marked by colonial tensions. Some of the newspaper clippings draw attention not just to a colonial past, but also to the contemporary postcolonial relations between Portugal and its former colonies – articles about the Tarrafal prison camp, and about the use of out-of-date vaccines

---

<sup>27</sup> This fieldwork notebook was reproduced in at least two DVD editions of the film (as an extra feature), and is currently available commercially as a facsimile edition, published in Portugal by Pierre von Kleist (in 2013) and previously in Japan by Cinematrix (in 2010).

exported from Portugal to African countries, illustrate these continuous problematic relations tied to this location.



Figures 4 and 5: Pages from the *Casa de Lava* notebook.

The issues related to the setting of *Casa de Lava* were amplified by the critical position Costa assumed at the time of the film's release. As Costa pointed out, *Casa de Lava* was a vehicle for the 'disgust' the filmmaker felt towards the Portuguese political situation and society at the time,<sup>28</sup> considerably influenced by the new economic values brought by Portugal's joining of the European Union, and the official discourses constantly invoking the legacy of the Portuguese 'Discoveries' – the Portuguese sea expansion started in the 15th century which culminated in a colonial presence in several parts of the world. Reflecting on Costa's resentment, Jacques Lemièrè points out that such criticism expresses a reaction to benign discourses of the Portuguese society as 'tolerant' to the figure of the once-colonised

---

<sup>28</sup> Costa qtd. in Lemièrè, 'Terra a Terra', 104.

‘other’ – discourses that express problematic notions of colonial ‘togetherness’, while candidly ignoring ‘slavery’ and the ‘colonial brutality rule’.<sup>29</sup>

Ironically, although the shooting location of the Cape Verde more closely matches the scenery of Tourneur’s film, *Casa de Lava*’s representation of these settings shies away from the narrative mechanics of its source, as already discussed, but also from its shadowy ambience. *Casa de Lava*’s cinematography uses mostly natural light and mixes diegetic sound with Portuguese and Creole dialogue, imprinting a realistic aesthetic onto the film. This aim for realistic representation made *Casa de Lava* distinct from the narrative ambience of *I Walked with a Zombie*, bringing a far more explicit focus, even if oftentimes ambiguous, to postcolonial issues only ever latent in Tourneur’s film. Through this process of approximation of the location, Costa was able (even if at times problematically) to evolve his authorship process, moving away from a film style with accentuated cinephile inflections.

Mediations between authorial agency and shooting location constitute also a central characteristic of the making of Costa’s following feature film, *Bones*. The filmmaker’s third feature film carries the political and social context developed during the making of *Casa de Lava*. Furthermore, it develops Costa’s search for a representation rooted in a realistic depiction of the location, re-enforcing the connection between cinematic representation and the reality of the subjects portrayed. Soon after returning from Cape Verde, Costa visited several of Lisbon’s urban fringes and suburbs, and developed an attachment to Fontainhas.

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 101. See also Jorge, ‘Thinking of Portugal’, 45-7.

Responding to the requests of several of the local participants in *Casa de Lava*, Costa returned from Cape Verde with a considerable number of gifts and letters destined to Cape Verdean family members and who migrated to Lisbon and surrounding urban areas. As Costa recalls,

During the last day of [*Casa de Lava*'s] shooting, doing those close shots of women featured in the beginning of the film, they came to us with bags full of things – letters, presents, coffee, tobacco – for [the film crew] to carry [to Lisbon]. The [delivery] addresses were mostly [...] in Fontainhas, Benfica, Damaia, Estrela de África, Cova da Moura. [...] I've acted as a mail carrier, and to me it was obvious already [the beginning of a film] script, [delivering letters] with a film written inside. [...] [Sometimes] I was accompanied by other participants [in *Casa de Lava*]. [...] At that time [around 1995-6] these neighbourhoods were problematic [but] we went there and were very well received [...] since then [...] I've never left [the Fontainhas].<sup>30</sup>

These visits allowed Costa a privileged entry into neighbourhoods usually averse to outsiders. Placed along the boundaries that divide Lisbon and Amadora municipalities, these neighbourhoods were at the time out-of-bounds socially, sustained (to some extent) by a drug-related economy, and commonly featured in the Portuguese news media as associated with some of Lisbon's violent crime. Like some of surrounding neighbourhoods, the population of Fontainhas rose clandestinely by successive waves of work migrants coming to Lisbon (during the city's infrastructure expansion during the 1960s and early 1970s), housing a considerable number of immigrants from Portuguese former colonies – with a high

---

<sup>30</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

percentage of Cape Verdeans.<sup>31</sup>

The idea of making a film drawing on these immigrant letters (expressed in Costa's observations transcribed above) would be abandoned in *Bones* – re-emerging later and more insistently in *Colossal Youth* (analysed in Chapter 6) and *Horse Money*.<sup>32</sup> Costa was, nevertheless, influenced by the social characteristics of a neighbourhood marked by the living conditions of the immigrant workers. However, while manifestations of immigrant culture are perceptible in *Bones*, the film portrays a far more fragmented social milieu not exclusively related with migrants. *Bones* documents the reality of non-contract, low paid employees (cleaners, construction builders), social drop-outs, drug addicts and prostitutes. While some of the film's characters belong to immigrant groups, their foreignness is indebted to the film's shooting location.

This relation with location takes a form of 'double occupancy', a territory placed inside geographical borders but completely outside a homogenized social

---

<sup>31</sup> See Rita do Carmo Figueirinhas, *Bairro, identidade, interação: Um olhar etnográfico sobre o Centro Social do Bairro 6 de Maio*, unpublished master thesis (ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, 2011), 15.

<sup>32</sup> Many of *Colossal Youth*'s scenes present an adaptation of the Robert Desnos poem *Lettre a Youki*, which is recited by the film's main actor, Ventura. The poem appears as a letter, assumed to be from an immigrant in Lisbon who left his loved one in Cape Verde, and invokes a sense of imprisonment and loss, while creating a (make-believe) list of presents that the payment of the hard work in Lisbon could (eventually) make possible. A similar re-working of the same letter is also present in *Casa de Lava* (in a letter appropriated by Medeiros' character), offering an intertextual connection between the two films. *Lettre a Youki*, written to Desnos' lover soon after his arrest by the Nazis in 1944 is reproduced in *Robert Desnos* (Pierre Berger, Paris: Seghers, 1949). An English translation of the version used in *Colossal Youth* is reproduced in the catalogue of the retrospective of Pedro Costa's work at the Jeonju International Film Festival (Jeonju: JIFF, 2010), 376.



context and with different overlapping social and national constituencies.<sup>33</sup> Costa describes the Fontainhas as

not completely outside of Lisbon, but let's say it was on the border of Lisbon. It was a big shanty town, very dark, organized in architecture, space and colour like an African or even Arab medina – the old town. There was a very secret way in and way out. They even had guards. It was really like a fortress, a castle. I had no reason to go there before and really no one would walk in there unless they wanted to buy or sell something – often drugs.<sup>34</sup>

Commenting on *Bones*' filmic settings, Fernando Arenas argues that audiences experience 'a sense of the uncanny [...] combined with claustrophobia, spatial disorientation and cultural and linguistic deterritorialization'.<sup>35</sup> The inaccessibility of the neighbourhood to the outsider viewer made the area also, in representation terms, outside any recognizable area of Lisbon. Arenas' description reflects the nature a contemporary urban Portugal, still considerably influenced by the social and cultural formations emerging from its former colonial presence, but also by the successive social changes brought about under democracy.

Participating in a form of thematic expression common to many examples of contemporary Portuguese cinema (discussed in Chapter Two), *Bones* is centred in social and economic inequalities emerging in Portugal during the 1990s, representing the realities of characters that, while somehow participating in the urban everyday

---

<sup>33</sup> Elsaesser, *European cinema*, 109.

<sup>34</sup> Patrick McGilligan, "'Letters from Fontainhas': interview with Pedro Costa", in *Film International*, vol. 8 no. 3 (2010), 82-3.

<sup>35</sup> Arenas, *Lusophone Africa*, 57.

routine, are commonly cast outside of the social fabric of that urban space. Moreover, and while depicting Lisbon's social specificities, *Bones* also relates, thematically and to some extent stylistically, to representations of social inequality depicted by a considerable corpus of European art films. The depiction of the lives of deprived characters at the fringes of European society – characters that Thomas Elsaesser designate as 'abject heroes [or] heroines' – came to define the body of films directed by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, Bruno Dumont and Matthieu Kassowitz.<sup>36</sup> Drawing on Manuel Castells' vision of Europe as a network society, Elsaesser portrays these characters as unable or unwilling to 'participate in any of the circuits of redistribution and networks of exchange – of goods, services, affective labor or needs', and destined to 'drop out of the human race'.<sup>37</sup> Tentatively, these thematic approximations in contemporary European art cinema reveal a close dialogue between national and European forms of cultural expression, contributing to the intercultural nature of European art cinema (see Chapter One), while reflecting problematic forms of European multiculturalism and fragmented notions of nationality and citizenship.<sup>38</sup>

## Mediating between location and filmmaking

Discussing the deterritorialised realities of contemporary European urbanity, *Bones* does, nevertheless, revert its observation of the social specifics presented to Costa

---

<sup>36</sup> Elsaesser, *European Cinema*, 124-5. Elsaesser extends comprehensively this list to include, for example, R.W. Fassbinder, Aki Kaurismäki, Catherine Breillat, or films such as Agnès Varda's *Sans Toit ni loi* (1985), Mike Leigh's *Naked* (1993), or Fatih Akin's *Head-On* (2004).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>38</sup> See *Ibid.*, 67.

when starting to visit Fontainhas. Deepening his relationship with the neighbourhood through successive visits, Costa spent approximately nine months observing its everyday life while writing the script of *Bones*.<sup>39</sup> From this process emerged the film's main plot, revolving around the lives of an unemployed young couple (an unnamed man [Nuno Vaz] and Tina [Mariya Lipkina]) and their new-born baby, and Tina's friend Clotilde (Vanda Duarte), who struggles to make a living as a house cleaner. As the father tries to sell the baby, first to a nurse, Eduarda (Isabel Ruth), and later to a prostitute (Inês de Medeiros), Clotilde tried to save her friend's baby and plans to take revenge against its father.

As in *Casa de Lava*, this central plot is mixed with subplots serving to observe the location and daily lives of its inhabitants, and to portray the everyday lives of the characters in their working or vagrancy routines. This dialogue between representation and reality transpires mostly in the depiction of many background characters that do not seem to participate in the narrative, yet are considerably visible through the film. As pointed out by Canadian photographer Jeff Wall, in his video essay included in the Criterion DVD edition of *Bones*,

Costa found a way of [...] express that fact that aspects of the story, aspects of these people's lives, aspects of the life of the neighbourhood, [...] would never be encapsulated [...] or expressed in [the] film, but would be present in their mode of escaping from it.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> As explained in Rodrigues da Silva, 'Malhas que o Império Tece(u)', in *JL: Jornal de Letras e Ideias* (5 November 1997), 28.

<sup>40</sup> See Jeff Wall, 'Video Essay', in See *Letters From Fontainhas*, DVD supplements of *Ossos* (Criterion, 2010).

As is implicit in Wall's observation, the influence of the location in Costa's artistic agency re-instates many of the aesthetic preoccupations carried out in *Casa de Lava*, adding to the relation between the filmmaker's authorship process and his association with Fontainhas.

Arguably, *Bones*' narrative mechanisms and filmic style allow for productive readings connecting Costa's authorial agency to forms of filmic appropriation, as observed in his two previous works. The most commented on of these appropriations is the approximation of film's image poetics and narrative to the ascetic filmic style of Robert Bresson, particularly *L'argent* (1983, on which the *Bones* cinematographer, Emmanuel Machuel, also collaborated) or to the narrative mechanics of Charlie Chaplin's first feature film *The Kid* (1921).<sup>41</sup> While textual similarities between these films and *Bones* can be pointed out, I argue that these readings also observe common forms of thematic expression between all the three films that, even if in distinct ways, transmit forms of social inequality that acquire universal contours. While reflecting Costa's attachment to some films and filmmakers that may inform the authorial intent that shapes the narrative and themes portrayed in *Bones*, these influences are just one facet of an authorial process which came to be more and more defined by the film's settings and production arrangements, as had previously happened during the production of *Casa de Lava*.

---

<sup>41</sup> For examples of this readings connecting *Bones* with Bresson see, for example, António Cabrita, 'A força dos elementos', in *Expresso* (15 November 1997), 8; Sung-nam Hong, 'Ossos: Being exhausted by wandering around in a labyrinth', in *Pedro Costa* (Jeonju: Jeonju International Film Festival, 2010), 208; Jeff Wall, 'Video Essay', in *Letters From Fontainhas*. For comparisons with *The Kid* see, for example, Luc Sante 'The Space Between', in *Letters from Fontainhas*, DVD Booklet (Criterion, 2010), 23. Costa himself also points out Chaplin's film as an influence, in the comments reproduced in the programme booklet of the retrospective *Still Lives – The Films of Pedro Costa* (New York: Anthology Film Archives, 2007), np.

Looking firstly to the production context of *Bones*, it is notable that the initial planning of the film was free from any financial and production issues, a contrast to the funding and pre-production process of *Casa de Lava*. As Costa pointed out in my interview with him from 2012, the initial production process was eased considerably by the interest of Zentropa in collaborating in the film, probably in line with the company's initiatives under the *Dogme 95* manifesto.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, this collaboration may have allowed for an increased freedom in the casting process. As in *Casa de Lava*, *Bones* features a mixed cast of professional (Lipkina, Ruth and de Medeiros) and non-professional actors (such as leading actor Nuno Vaz, but also Vanda Duarte and Zita Duarte). Recruited mostly from Fontainhas and the surrounding neighbourhoods, these non-professional actors lived in the midst of the social issues and widespread drug dependency, which impacted in the shooting process. While observing these particularities, it should be pointed out that the production of *Bones* still retains some characteristics inherent to the coproduction model. Most of the international image and sound technical crew who worked on *Bones* had also worked on *House of Lava*, including cinematographer Emmanuel Machuel and sound technician Henri Maïkoff, whose professional artistry had a considerable impact on the aesthetic of the film.

The shooting of *Bones* took approximately eight weeks,<sup>43</sup> divided between the scenes filmed in central Lisbon (which took around two weeks) and those shot at

---

<sup>42</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012). See also Costa's interview to António A. Rodrigues, 'Histórias de sobrevivência', in *Semanário* (15 November 1997), 16.

<sup>43</sup> As mentioned in da Silva, 'Malhas que o Império Tece(u)', 28. According to this article, the shooting process took place between November 1996 and February 1997.

Fontainhas. The latter revealed considerable constraints imposed by the nature of the location and of the routines of its inhabitants. As Costa points out, beforehand, the production team sought out the support of the community centre, while simultaneously ‘negotiating’ with key figures connected with the local informal economies.<sup>44</sup> Adapting to the limits imposed by the drug trafficking routine, the film crew had to negotiate their position on the location. As cinematographer Emmanuel Machuel explains: ‘we respected the somewhat tacit rules: “No filming on X day at X time.” We didn’t go where we weren’t supposed to be’.<sup>45</sup> These constraints imposed by the location – a film set that was also a space of everyday life – influenced the filmmaking techniques used for *Bones*.

Equally, Fontainhas’s maze of narrow streets and dark alleys posed numerous technical issues for the transportation of filming apparatus. As Costa comments, ‘the production planning didn’t match the neighbourhood, the [equipment] trucks couldn’t pass [the narrow streets]’.<sup>46</sup> These logistical challenges imposed by the location became part of the film’s daily routine, requiring the constant reworking of pre-established schedules.<sup>47</sup> Understandably, these spatial constrictions also impacted the shooting itself. As can clearly be observed in the film, many of the scenes draw attention to architectural elements such as windows and doors; elements that, while contributing to a stylistic reading of the film, nevertheless reveal the technical mediations between the large and unwieldy filmmaking apparatuses and the

---

<sup>44</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012); also Emmanuel Machuel, ‘Interview’, in *Letters From Fontainhas*, DVD supplements of *Bones* (Criterion, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> Emmanuel Machuel, ‘Interview’, in *Letters From Fontainhas*.

<sup>46</sup> Pedro Costa et al, *Um Melro Dourado*, 36.

<sup>47</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012); see also Machuel, ‘Interview’.

restricted space of the improvised shooting locations. These architectural elements became components used to frame many of the scenes shot in small rooms, with the film crew operating the apparatus in difficult conditions – in some cases shooting interior scenes from the streets and through windows (see Figure 6).



**Figure 6: Spatial divisions in *Bones* (1997).**

The constraints presented by the shooting location are even more noticeable when discussing the cinematography and soundtrack of the film. Raising issues between the inhabitants and the crew, mostly stemming from the impact of the heavy-duty cinema lighting during night time, impacted decisively on the filmic aspect of *Bones*. Needing to reduce the use of lighting, Emmanuel Machuel developed techniques that enhanced the colours of the interiors while, simultaneously, darkening the aspect of the Fontainhas' narrow streets. Likewise, there was constant and persistent work on stage design, placing objects in

predominant places on the set, in order to create filmic textures, and diminishing the lack of typical artificial light sources.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, the sound technicians had to mediate between the everyday life at Fontainhas and the typical techniques of sound recording, mediations that contributed to the prominent role played by *Bones*' diegetic soundscapes. Jeff Wall's observations are once again pertinent in this discussion since, as the photographer notes, the nature of the soundtrack of *Bones* are shaped by

the insistent sounds coming from somewhere outside of the space where the picture was being made: dogs barking, other people talking, clatter of people going by, automobiles and so on, which penetrates all the little rooms and spaces of the neighbourhood where most of the action takes place.<sup>49</sup>

The incorporation of these sound elements, subtly reworked and incorporated in the film's soundtrack, inscribe a sense of spatial presence, mediating between the narrative fiction being portrayed and the real occurrences of the neighbourhood.

These mediations between location and filmmaking informs Costa's evolving authorial process, shaped by his increasingly in-depth perception of Fontainhas and also by both professional and informal collaboration between the film's crew and the location's inhabitants. Reminding us of the industrial nature of (any) filmmaking process, Machuel point out that authorship is (also) a process of technical negotiations:

---

<sup>48</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012). It can be argue that these cinematography techniques were developed further by Costa in *In Vanda's Room*, analysed in the next chapter.

<sup>49</sup> Wall, 'Video Essay'.



[t]he director has his vision, and we light it and frame it, but we also play a role in interpreting it as cinematographers. To use a musical analogy, there's the score, which is the script, and the performers, who interpret it in front of a camera. But one mustn't minimize the role we technicians play, whether in sound, image, or set design, for we also perform, discreetly, behind the camera.<sup>50</sup>

Even if read as obvious, Machuel's observations defy some possible understandings of authorship as a process solely indebted to the creative agency of the filmmaker, while giving evidence of the multiple aspects of artistry expression in film.

The impact of the different technical roles in the production of *Bones* emphasise the nature of contemporary art cinema authorship; the filmmaker, while the central figure equipped with a creative vision informed by authorial intent, serves effectively to mediate efforts in film artistry. Understanding authorship as a process rooted in a collaborative environment, the making of *Bones* is tied to authorial elements that extended not just to the filmmaker's vision and technicians' different roles, but also included the contributions to the narrative mechanics of the non-professional actors and, to larger extend, to the location and its inhabitants.<sup>51</sup>

## Conclusion

The dynamics of authorship and ever-changing forms of reference observed in *Casa de Lava* and *Bones*, offer a re-engagement through cinematic references that feeds a

---

<sup>50</sup> Machuel, 'Interview'.

<sup>51</sup> During my personal interview with Costa in July 2012, the filmmaker pointed out the significance of non-professional actor Nuno Vaz in giving plot and character definition to some of the film's scenes. Similar statements are also included in Costa's descriptions of the working process with Vanda Duarte in Costa et al, *Um Melro Dourado*, 41-2.

constant search for the cinematic image's meaning, and between reality and fiction representations. This dynamic process reveals aesthetic and political enquiries, shaped by Costa's perception of the contemporary contexts that both referential material and location occupies. This process contributes to the dynamic process of authorship; on the one hand it suggests an increasing distancing from Costa's early influences, so visible in *Blood*, and the preoccupation with cinematic meaning in reworking classical forms of film narrative into contemporary modes of filmmaking. On the other hand, the prominent place given to the location in the making of *Casa de Lava* and *Bones* gives insight into Costa's narrative of production, in which aesthetic negotiations are shaped by dynamics of collective artistry and production constraints.

The political inflection of these locations became central to understand Costa's authorial positions, not just in both these films but also in his subsequent works. Through his use of Cape Verde and Fontainhas Costa developed a form of authorship that takes into consideration the social realities observed *in situ*, while also reworking this context as part of the filmmaking process. The making of *Bones* illustrates this process further, mediating authorial expression and the constraints of producing a film in a difficult location – both in geographical and social terms. It is notable that this political inflexion had, even if in different ways, repercussions also in their domestic reception. The statements Costa made about the situation in Cape Verde in interviews given in the leadup to the domestic release of *Casa de Lava*

generated some controversy in the Portuguese media.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, *Bones* also generated some ‘puerile controversies’, maintained in newspapers by government officials and political figures.<sup>53</sup> Both films came to symbolise the ambiguities of the country’s contemporary economic and social development throughout the 1990s, contradicting the optimistic social, cultural and political discourses pushed by official sources following the 1998 Lisbon World Exposition.<sup>54</sup>

While the emphasis on the location in both films contributed to readings of Portuguese (and to some extent European) historical contingencies and contemporary realities, the films’ settings reflect specifically filmmaking concerns. Location impacted significantly on both the representation of particular realities and on the successive artistic and technical decisions which came to shape both films’ fictionalised and documentary narrative plots. The close relationship with location and its inhabitants, and the forms of film artistry and technical improvisation Costa brought to bear during the filmmaking process of both films announced characteristics that would soon define the filmmaker's authorship and filmmaking practices. Costa’s dissatisfaction with *Casa de Lava* and *Bones*’ filmmaking processes instilled in the filmmaker the necessity of making an ‘other cinema’, a

---

<sup>52</sup> While Costa’s criticism is surely pertinent, it can also be read as potentially ambiguous. Reviewing *Casa de Lava* soon after its domestic premiere, film critic Manuel Cintra Ferreira understands Costa’s criticism and subsequent mild controversy as part of the ‘necessary’ mechanisms of the film’s marketing campaign. See Manuel Cintra Ferreira, ‘Sob as Cinzas’, in *Expresso* (11.02.1995), 15.

<sup>53</sup> As Costa explains in Costa et al, *Um Melro Dourado*, 45.

<sup>54</sup> *Bones* was released in Portugal on November 1997, approximately six months before the 1998 Lisbon World Exposition. It can be noted that soon after the end of this event Teresa Villaverde’s *Os Mutantes* (also centred in themes concerning social inequality) generated similar debates, re-enforcing the contrasts between the country’s economic development and some of the harshest social realities observed in Portugal during the 1990s.

form of filmmaking less conditioned by the heavy presence of the cinema apparatus and production structures.<sup>55</sup> From this necessity emerged yet another stage in Costa's narrative of production which marks the making of *In Vanda's Room*, which will be explored in the following chapter.

---

<sup>55</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Digital Filmmaking at the Interstices

Pedro Costa does not like the words ‘action’ and ‘cut’ anymore. But still likes cinema.

João Miguel Tavares<sup>1</sup>

You don’t need the big bucks and the big trucks to make a film. [...] Stay a bit longer in a place. Stay with the person you are filming a bit longer, and refuse the kind of military raid which cinema has transformed itself into: coming to a location, conquering it, shooting it and then running away – that’s how a film crew operates nowadays.

Pedro Costa<sup>2</sup>

Writing in 1935, amateur film enthusiast and home movie educator D. Charles Ottley unreservedly asserted that: ‘[t]he future of the Commercial Cinema is doubtful. The password of the box-office is [technological] “novelty.” [...] The future of the Artistic Cinema is boundless; furthermore it is almost completely in the hands of the amateur’.<sup>3</sup> Ottley’s claim was made during a period popularly considered the heyday of amateur film culture, and which was marked by the emergence of discourses which sought to reclaim the artistry and technological experimentation of early cinema.<sup>4</sup> Within this context, he suggests that small-scale, non-professional films

---

<sup>1</sup> João Miguel Tavares, ‘Relato de um mundo em queda’, in *Diário de Notícias* (2 March 2001), 42.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Guarneri, ‘Pedro Costa: Documentary, realism, and life on the margins.’ (Interview), in *BOMB – Artists in Conversation*, 16 July 2015. Online: <http://bombmagazine.org/article/5506714/pedro-costa> [accessed: 07.08.2015].

<sup>3</sup> D. Charles Ottley, *Making Home Movies* (London: George Newnes, 1935), xi.

<sup>4</sup> See, Charles Tepperman’s comprehensive study on the rise of amateur cinema’s film culture, *Amateur Cinema 1923-1960* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 44-5; See also Patricia R. Zimmermann, *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 64-5 and 81ff. It

represented the greatest possibilities for an artistic freedom that could not be observed in the professional film practices of the time, particularly in Hollywood. Furthermore, Ottley's formulation is rooted in an understanding of the relationship between filmmaking and technology that defines a type of filmmaking which is positioned between art and commerce; the increasing dependence on financial investment and constant technological progress in commercial cinema were seen by Ottley as being opposed to a self-reliant and passionate posture carried out by amateurs. This posture, Ottley argues, allowed for a director to have a further and deeper involvement with the process of cinematic creation – even when considering the necessary financial wealth and technical know-how needed to sustain amateur filmmaking during the 1930s.

This claim can be read as being deeply influenced by Ottley's fervent belief in the potential of amateur filmmaking, troubled by his possible misunderstanding of artistic cross-pollination between amateur and professional filmmaking that shaped cinema history, and particularly art cinema. Equally, this prediction was made before the drastic changes in cinematic technology which has taken place during subsequent decades, similarly defined by a constant dialogue between artistic expression and technological progress, and serving to support a multitude of (professional and non-professional) industrial formations. Yet, Ottley's prediction implicitly anticipates a predicament which still troubles professional filmmaking, since it raises questions

---

needs to be pointed out that, in the context of this chapter, the word 'amateur' is not used in its pejorative and biased form, but as an expression of small-scale non-professional filmmaking activities taking part in a specific film culture, with technical, aesthetic ability and expertise bringing together the same qualities that can be found in semi-professional or even professional technicians.

about how filmmakers negotiate between technology and artistic expression while being, inevitably, embedded into industrial formations that necessarily obey normative economic processes. This relation came to decisively define modes of filmmaking (both professional and amateur) that use digital technology as a form of avoiding or minimising industrial, creative or commercial constraints.

In the case of Pedro Costa, the filmmaker's dissatisfaction with the production routines and filmic apparatus used in his earlier films compelled him to adopt practices detached from industrial filmmaking processes. Costa came to rely on working methods that do not strictly conform to typical divisions of labour, professional hierarchies and typical technical apparatus. Instead of these practices, the shooting process used during the filming of *In Vanda's Room* deployed reduced (and in some cases, intermittent) film crews and small budgets, and dispensed with typical professional routines related to, for example, film script planning or shooting schedules. Understandably, this shooting process – with its artisanal contours – relied heavily on the use of affordable digital video technology, supporting a partial detachment from industrial pressures and production strictures.<sup>5</sup>

Increasing his professional and personal interest in Fontainhas, Costa went back to the shooting location of *Bones* equipped with only a consumer-grade digital

---

<sup>5</sup> Within academic discussions, the term 'artisanal' has come to characterise distinct film practices such as those which can be observed in forms of experimental film and video or in the technical procedures used by particular avant-garde filmmakers. The term also relates to amateur film practices, particularly those associated with small gauge filmmaking. See Patricia R. Zimmermann, *Reel Families*, 62 and 130; David E. James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde*, 388; P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 431; or Michael Mazière, 'The Solitude of a System', in *The Undercut Reader: Critical Writings on Artists' Film and Video*, ed. by Nina Danino and Michael Mazière (London: Wallflower Press, 2003), 6.

video camera and other inexpensive portable equipment, and recorded the routines of the neighbourhood in collaboration with the Fontainhas inhabitants who acted in the film. However, this working method was not completely outside a typical relationship with the film industry and its different stages of funding, production, post-production and distribution. While the shooting of *In Vanda's Room* combined an artisanal ethos with a small budget and low-tech filming apparatus, the film's different stages of the production still relied on technical staff, the undertaking of administrative decisions, and financial negotiations with public and private institutions. Similarly, while terminating his professional relationship with producer Paulo Branco, Costa came to rely on another producer, Francisco Villa-Lobos (through the Portuguese production company Contracosta Produções), who provided logistical, financial, production and post-production support to the project, in line with processes commonly observed in (European) art cinema.

The shooting and production characteristics of *In Vanda's Room* described above raise questions about the nature of Costa's mediations between, on one hand, a creative agency which is supported by self-sustaining practices and the use of specific technology and, on the other hand, the industrial and commercial formations that inform not just contemporary Portuguese film but to some extent global art cinema. Thus this chapter addresses an interstitial mode of filmmaking which assists mediations between artisanal and industrial modes of production, placed not just in a national cinema level but also discussing its place in transnational cinema



formations.<sup>6</sup> Interrogating the relationship between film technology, production and artistic expression under an interstitial filmmaking, this chapter discusses the making of *In Vanda's Room*, as the film that drastically re-negotiated Costa's narrative of production.

In order to explain the different aspects that informed the making of Costa's film, this chapter first contextualises digital video technology and industrial formations. Looking at the characteristics that can be observed in both global and Portuguese art cinema, this first part of the chapter establishes some of the dichotomies within digital cinema, as a paradigmatic industrial formation. Secondly, this chapter looks into the implications of digital video for filmic style. Noting that filmic slowness defines Costa's oeuvre, I argue that this quality originated in the technical possibilities offered by digital filmmaking. Discussing slowness further, this chapter then goes on to analyse the protracted shooting process of the film, emphasising that slowness is not just an aesthetic strategy, but also a result of a (slow) mode of film production.

Understanding how these qualities, which were generated by the use of digital video, are placed in contemporary art cinema industrial formations, the last part of the chapter traces Costa film's financial processes, which sustained its production practices. It scrutinises how a film produced under a low-budget framework and mediating between professional and personal involvement, nevertheless participated in the economic and industrial dynamics of contemporary

---

<sup>6</sup> See Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, 48; Higbee, Will and Song Hwee Lim "Concepts of transnational cinema: towards a critical transnationalism in film studies" in *Transnational Cinemas*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2010), 9-11.

art cinema. Looking into all these aspects concerning the production of *In Vanda's Room*, this chapter demonstrates how the film's interstitial filmmaking negotiates between a protracted and artisanal filmmaking and normative industrial processes.

### Digital cinema as a paradigm

While understanding that any cinematic practice is a technological process of some sort, filmmaking negotiates forms of artistic expression through arbitrations with industrial settings: these negotiations can be revealed through examinations of systems of financial and/or technological scale (e.g. small-, medium- or high-budget), collective efforts (e.g. non-technical and participatory, artistry- or expertise-based, industrially-integrated) or productivity aims confined to and supported by artistic and/or industrial formations (e.g. artistic and non-artistic forms of amateur film practices, professional and artistic, commercial and industrial practices).

Similarly, these negotiations between film technology and artistic expression are not just industrial, but are also express relational and discursive formations (e.g. artisanal versus industrial, art versus commerce and/or art versus industry). In framing this dialogue between film technology and artistic expression in contemporary art cinema, it is necessary to point out that both the industrial settings and discursive formations presented above are not sharply defined. Both take part not just in discussions between film technology and artistic manifestations, but also in broader discussions related to cinema institutions, modes of production, and forms of authorship (see Chapter One). These discussions are further complicated by historical, political and social-cultural contexts, as exemplified by the discussions in Chapter Two.

The use of digital video in contemporary art cinema has previously been framed as part of cinema's continuous technological development, linked to discussions of the indexicality of the medium.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the use of digital film in art cinema is tied to the accessibility of this technology and how it propels forms of independent filmmaking – a dialogue in which industrial formations (whatever format it may take) remain constant.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the use of the digital has elicited several discussions about artistic freedom, renewing possibilities for directing and producing cinema independently of (or in conjunction with) established institutions within the film industry. The work by numerous film practitioners who have resorted to digital equipment due to its low-budget properties clearly attests to this relationship between aesthetics and independence. One needs only to remember the work of filmmakers initially associated with the manifesto-driven *Dogme 95* (Thomas Vinterberg, Lars Von Trier), or the work of several East and Southeast Asian filmmakers (e.g. Jia Zhangke and Apichatpong Weerasethakul) who have developed a body of work

---

<sup>7</sup> It can be observed that the use of digital video in contemporary cinema potentiates further discussions about the indexicality of the medium, which can be seen in the current fascination for technological-enhancement of the cinematic spectacle (e.g. special effects and display formats), or in the mediations between technology and its relationship with cinematic realism. See, for example, Lúcia Nagib, *World Cinema and the Ethics of Realism* (London: Continuum, 2011), 6-7; Bruce Bennett et al, 'Introduction' , in *Cinema and technology: Cultures, Theories, Practices*, ed. by Bruce Bennett et al (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 2-3, 6-7; Tom Gunning, 'Moving Away from the Index', in *Screen Dynamics: Mapping the Borders of Cinema*, ed. by Gertrud Koch et al (Vienna: Österreichisches Filmmuseum, 2012), 46-9; Thomas Elsaesser, 'World Cinema: Realism, Evidence, Presence', in *Realism and the Audiovisual Media*, ed. by Lúcia Nagib and Cecília Mello (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 3-8.

<sup>8</sup> A clear example that illustrates this dialogue is discussed by Adrian Martin in his analysis of the use of digital video in contemporary Australian low-budget cinema, in which the merits and disadvantages of the medium are discussed considering their technological possibilities, industrial formations and cultural discourses. See Adrian Martin, 'Kind of a Revolution, and Kind of Not: Digital Low-Budget Cinema in Australia Today', in *Scan*, vol. 3, no 2 (October, 2006), 1-5.

characterised by production and aesthetic practices often at odds with those of their own national cinema industries.

Academic discussions concerned with national and regional examples of this relationship between technology and industry have flourished in recent years. Geoff King addresses this relationship in contemporary American independent filmmaking;<sup>9</sup> similarly, Maria San Filippo emphasises the importance of this dialogue in the *mumblecore* sub-genre.<sup>10</sup> Chris Berry et al,<sup>11</sup> as well as Luke Robinson,<sup>12</sup> have argued that the rise of the independent Chinese documentary film is, to great extent, tied to digital video; May Adadol Ingawanij and Benjamin McKay discuss similar technology inflections in filmmaking practices in Southeast Asia.<sup>13</sup> These discussions indicate the complexities of low budget filmmaking and its relationship to the use of digital video, which manifest as dichotomies such as ‘individual’ versus ‘professional’ agency,<sup>14</sup> ‘artisanal practices’ versus ‘negotiated dependencies’,<sup>15</sup> and industrial and economic dialogues between ‘pared-down production mode[s]’ and

---

<sup>9</sup> Geoff King, *Indie 2.0: change and continuity in contemporary American indie film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Maria San Filippo, ‘A Cinema Of Recession: Micro-Budgeting, Micro-Drama, and the "Mumblecore" Movement’, in *Cineaction*, no. 85 (2011). Online: <http://www.cineaction.ca/old/issue85sample.htm> [accessed: 30.09.2014].

<sup>11</sup> Chris Berry et al (eds), *The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement: For the Public Record* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> Luke Robinson, *Independent Chinese Documentary: from the Studio to the Street* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> May Adadol Ingawanij and Benjamin McKay (eds), *Glimpses of Freedom: Independent Cinema in Southeast Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Robinson, *Independent Chinese Documentary*, 21-22.

<sup>15</sup> Ingawanij and McKay, *Glimpses of Freedom*, 4.

‘alternative forms of distribution’.<sup>16</sup> These terms underlie our understanding of forms of filmmaking that deviate (to varying degrees) from mainstream production practices and divisions of labour which have hitherto been understood as intrinsic to medium- and high-budget art cinema.

As analysed in Chapter One, these discussions reflect to some degree interstitial production practices that, as Hamid Naficy argues, sustain a mode of filmmaking dependent on small pockets of public and private funding and on the ‘multiplication or accumulation’ of different filmmaking technical roles in film production.<sup>17</sup> This production at the interstices of artisanal and industrial practices, on one hand, negotiate artistic freedom (i.e. processes related with shooting); on the other, a production sustainability by alternating between personal labour and financial investment and public and private funding, which support different stages of the production and post-production processes.

This interstitial framework gains particular relevance when we look at the constraints and dynamisms present in Portuguese art cinema. As discussed in Chapter Two, Portugal’s art cinema is supported by small-scale production models vulnerable to financial (and political) changes, and with limited domestic exhibition and circulation. Portuguese art cinema remains largely dependent on institutional support and international funding and reliant on the exposure and cultural legitimisation created by international circulation circuits. In this scenario, forms of filmmaking marked by an artisanal ethos has been commonly positioned against

---

<sup>16</sup> San Filippo, ‘A Cinema Of Recession’.

<sup>17</sup> Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, 48.

mainstream cinema in established artistic discourses, while also being sustained by production formations that tie it to a national and international art film industry; in other words, this art cinema is maintained by an interstitial production that not just sustain it industrially but also allow it to maintain an artisanal disposition.<sup>18</sup>

In contemporary Portuguese cinema this production at the interstices gains further relevance, given the possibilities offered by digital video. As Daniel Ribas notes, digital video became part of a ‘production paradigm’ that helped ease film costs, which in turn propagated a multiplicity of film formats (e.g. short film, documentary).<sup>19</sup> Inevitably, however, digital filmmaking is not just a matter of choice, it is also a necessity. While allowing substantial freedom from industrial and budgetary restrictions, the use of digital video reflects the struggles filmmakers face within the context of industrial and financial limitations of national industries, characterised by difficulties filmmakers experience in accessing the means of production and the recent governmental disinvestment in the sector.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, this artisanal ethos can be framed, for example, in auteur undercurrents visible throughout the 1970s and 1980s. A clear example of this kind of artisanal filmmaking is the ‘humble’ filmmaking of António Reis and Margarida Cordeiro; see Costa qtd. in *António Reis e Margarida Cordeiro*, 67-8 and also Lim, ‘Under the Influence’. Other examples of this artisanal ethos in Portuguese art cinema can be contextualised in the militant dissidence of some filmmakers commonly categorised under the so-called ‘Portuguese School’; See Baptista, ‘Nationally Correct’, 12; Grilo, *O Cinema da Não-ilusão*, 37ff.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Ribas, ‘Nova Geração?: a geração curtas chega às longas’, in *Cinema em Português: Actas das II Jornadas, Covilhã*, ed. by Frederico Lopes (Livros Labcom, 2009), 95. See also Baptista, ‘Nationally Correct’, 15.

<sup>20</sup> An example of the discussions concerning the ambiguous relationship between technology and industry in the Portuguese context is visible in João Viana’s documentary *Ó Marquês, anda cá abaixo outra vez!* (2012). In a markedly manifesto-driven tone, several Portuguese filmmakers (including Cláudia Varejão, João Pedro Rodrigues, João Salaviza and Leonor Noivo, to name just a few), pose pertinent questions about self-sufficiency and the necessity of both industrial and institutional support in the country’s recessionary climate.

## A digital aesthetic of slowness

In spite of its dependence on the production and industrial mediations observed above, the rise of digital video has re-configured the range of artistic options in filmmaking. Digital technology precipitated the rise in the visibility of a cinematic expression rooted in real time, cinematic deceleration and filmic duration. Digital video has enabled (even if only hypothetically) a ‘one-to-one correspondence between real time and represented time’, allowing the recording of much lengthier periods of time (when compared with the length of analogue film reels) while avoiding the cost of photochemical film stock.<sup>21</sup>

Different practitioners have forged and sustained filmmaking practices that reflect an aesthetic preoccupation with shooting longer, slower and more extended (and distended) narratives. Among others, the work of different filmmakers such as Naomi Kawase, Alexander Sokurov, Albert Serra, Wang Bing or James Benning (as well as Weerasethakul and Zhangke, already mentioned) reflect this filmic deceleration. This characteristic has become the central criterion in the grouping many of the filmmakers mentioned above, as well as Costa, under the moniker of ‘slow cinema’ – a term further examined in the next chapter. In this chapter, technology and cinematic modes of production will be examined through the prism of slowness. While not proposing that all forms of aesthetic slowness in contemporary art cinema spring from the relation between production and recording processes, slowness can be understood as both an aesthetic proposition and as a

---

<sup>21</sup> Nicholas Rombes, *Cinema in the Digital Age* (London: Wallflower Press, 2009), 25. Similar considerations are included in Matthew Flanagan, *‘Slow Cinema’: Temporality and Style in Contemporary Art and Experimental Film*, unpublished PhD thesis (University of Exeter, 2012), 201-5.

mode of filmmaking resulting from patient working methods and from the use of digital video.

The use of digital video in *In Vanda's Room* facilitated the consolidation of aesthetic preoccupations already present in Costa's work. As explained in the previous chapter, both *Casa de Lava* and *Bones* are indebted to a creative process that combined fiction and documentary styles. We can observe this same realistic impulse in *In Vanda's Room*, reflected in the depiction of the routines of Fontainhas and in the way the film was shot. As Jonathan Romney points out, the film is 'an engrossing but gruellingly unadorned semi-documentary study' of Fontainhas.<sup>22</sup> Being Costa's first film to rely on a cast of exclusively non-professional actors, *In Vanda's Room* documents the everyday life of a group of young adults with considerable drug-addiction problems, living in or occupying the derelict neighbourhood, which at the time was in the process of being demolished.

The film is centred on Vanda Duarte (who had previously participated in *Bones*) together with her close family and friends. The film's narrative primarily shows Vanda's repetitious daily routines. These routines are, in turn, punctuated by activities involving drug consumption (alone or accompanied by her sister, Zita Duarte, who also participated in *Bones*) and by interactions with several local residents. Vanda's precarious residence (and specifically the small room that she shares with her sisters) functions as the film's visual and thematic epicentre, where this group of characters pass through and/or stop by. Parallel to Vanda's routines, other scenes present the life of other members of the community, mostly male and

---

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Romney, 'Exile and the kingdom', in *Sight & Sound*, 17:6 (June 2008), 46.



also with drug-dependence issues, who squat in a nearby house. These two groups of scenes mark the division between the universe of the ‘girls’ and the universe of the ‘boys’ that is significant in terms of the film’s structural composition.<sup>23</sup> Complementing these two groups of scenes, which are mostly filmed in interior locations, *In Vanda’s Room* documents the surrounding streets of the area, bringing into full view the neighbourhood’s daily routines: the preparation of the communal spaces and the street fires used to cook, the drug-addicts’ incessant goings-on, children playing in the streets, Vanda’s wanderings through the neighbourhood selling vegetables – all of which take place against the visual and audible background of the demolition of Fontainhas.

This stylistic slowness in Costa’s film is enabled to great extent by his deployment of digital video and by the shooting process. Writing on Costa’s work shot at Fontainhas, Àngel Quintana proposes that these films convey a ‘stylised’ and ‘static’ depiction of the real, onto which ‘the digital [...] bestow[s] a new plasticity’ – qualities that contribute to what Quintana understands as a possible ‘aesthetic of poverty’, which is defined by an undramatic and unflinching style that attests to the filmmaker’s ‘clear personal involvement’.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, Volker Pantenburg argues that Costa’s use of digital video challenges (and perhaps replaces) previously accepted aesthetic assumptions about the inherent indexical nature of cinema ‘by an attempt to locate different forms of realism at different points of the production and reception of

---

<sup>23</sup> As explained by Costa in Costa et al, *Um Melro Dourado*, 52-7.

<sup>24</sup> Àngel Quintana, ‘Hacia un hiperrealismo de la imagen digital’, in *Cahiers du Cinéma España*, special edition, nr. 6 (May 2009), 24-25.

movies'.<sup>25</sup> Pantenburg proposes that Costa's work with digital video is formed by a closed-joined relation between production process, technology and aesthetics, manifested in four main characteristics:

1. [a digital realism] explicitly bound to an intimate and collective production process that guarantees a proximity and forms of collaboration that would not be conceivable without a small camera and practically unlimited stock. [...] (2) [In] Costa's Fontainhas films the ontological doubt that has infested discussions about the potential manipulations of digital images does not really carry weight; it is more than compensated for by the testimonial powers of the lens and the optical apparatus. [...] (3) The time that [Costa's films] depict does not follow narrative concerns. The fixed shots tend to sink in and persist, not flow. [The depictions of Vanda's activities] inject a strong sense of contingency and bodily presence that rigorously insists on just being there. [...] (4) [R]ealism is a temporal form of experience that needs a certain extension in time. This realism relies on duration and patient observation, on the side of the director as well as on that of the spectator.<sup>26</sup>

Deploying Pantenburg's term, Costa's 'digital realism' attests to a filmmaking practice that is bound to the particular visual quality of low-budget digital video, as well as to its constraints and freedoms. Furthermore, these constraints and freedoms contribute extensively to the filmmaking and post-production processes of *In Vanda's Room*, as will be analysed later in this chapter.

Looking firstly at the visual aesthetic of digital video, the camera used by Costa, a Panasonic DX100 (at the time a new, middle-range camera) inevitably

---

<sup>25</sup> Pantenburg, 'Realism, not Reality'.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

conferred specific visual qualities on the footage related to the depth of field, image density, and the brightness and saturation of colour. According to Costa, the ‘green and blurred’ colour-processing of this camera (which contrasts with the ‘blue’ and sharper images produced by other digital cameras available on the market) visually match the ‘tatty’ colours of the Fontainhas.<sup>27</sup> These visual characteristics significantly mark the cinematography of the film (also credited to Costa), which was achieved through the use of key-light sourced from small windows or small lamps, and was supplemented by improvised reflectors made of polystyrene sheets or domestic mirrors.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Costa’s camerawork reflects a preoccupation with the constraints of the equipment. As he stated during an interview with the magazine *Sight & Sound* in 2009, he shot *In Vanda’s Room* with ‘exactly the same gentleness and care and precision’ as when filming in 35mm, even while struggling with the greater mobility of the digital camera.<sup>29</sup>

This shooting process is translated into a sense of aesthetic stillness whereby the actions of the residents of Fontainhas are patiently observed and in which Costa resourcefully explores the constricted possibilities of shooting in cramped spaces with no camera movement – the most perceptible example being the confined room inhabited by Vanda. These prolonged and stationary shots may have been a strategy to alleviate the limitations of digital video such as pixellation. Yet the minimal compositions of *In Vanda’s Room*, while recalling the tonality of a painted still-life,

---

<sup>27</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

<sup>28</sup> These lighting techniques are already present, to some extent, in *Bones*, revealing a technical process previously started, I argue, under the professional supervision of cinematographer Emmanuel Machuel.

<sup>29</sup> Kieron Corless, ‘Crossing the Threshold: Interview with Pedro Costa’, in *Sight & Sound*, 19:10 (October 2009), 30.

are ‘animated’ by the aura-like light around the actors and the unstable pixels reflected in the walls of Vanda’s room, which reveal the unmistakably digital texture of this film (see Figure 7). Thus the digital slowness observed in *In Vanda’s Room* can be understood as an aesthetic mode, a stylistic strategy generated by the observation of a particular setting. However, this slowness is also, and foremost, a result of a distinctively slow mode of production.



Figure 7: Still of *In Vanda's Room* (2000).

### Recording the everyday

These considerations tying aesthetics and technology together in *In Vanda's Room* can be further extended to the ways in which Costa opted to shoot the film, sharply contrasting with the shooting of *Bones*. As Cyril Neyrat describes, the shooting process of *Bones*, was a ‘traditional’ production, ‘shot in 35mm, with tracks, floodlights, and assistants. Costa was a professional, a part of the Portuguese film

industry. The shoot proceeded with everyone doing his [*sic*] job, following the routine of the European art film'.<sup>30</sup> As previously mentioned, and in contrast to the mode of shooting described by Neyrat, the production of *In Vanda's Room* dispensed with the traditional logistics and technical paraphernalia normally associated with recording processes in industrial cinema.

Similarly, and as Costa himself has noted on several occasions, digital technology allowed him to have the 'luxury of time' in a production process characterised by unscheduled and improvised location shooting, and accordingly freed from any economic and technological constraints in terms of the amount of material recorded.<sup>31</sup> Reformulating his professional agency and aiming at working without industrial strictures and recording constraints, Costa answered the invitation of Vanda Duarte to do a film about Fontainhas, this time without the intrusive and heavy industrial framework used in his previous project.<sup>32</sup> The filmmaker did not rely on a script or a shooting schedule, nor did he resort to employing a film crew or heavy filmic apparatus, a self-sufficient and inexpensive shooting style only achieved thanks to the use of digital equipment.

The initial shooting process of *In Vanda's Room* was largely based on an organic, repetitious and laborious daily routine carried on for an estimated period of

---

<sup>30</sup> Cyril Neyrat, 'Rooms for the Living and the Dead', in *Letters from Fontainhas*, DVD booklet (The Criterion Collection, 2010), 11.

<sup>31</sup> See Corless, 'Crossing the Threshold', 30; see also Martin Paradelo, and Xiana Arias "'Eu acho que há cineastas que não têm a coragem de não fazer filmes'" in *Cineclube de Compostela* (06 December 2012). Online: <http://cineclubedecompostela.blogaliza.org/files/2012/12/entrevista-Costa.pdf> [accessed: 13.01.2015].

<sup>32</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012); see also João Bénard da Costa, 'Os filmes que nos veem / os olhos que nos filmam', in *O Independente* (02 March 2001), 56.

almost two years. Costa was able to shoot a considerable amount of material mostly by himself, only occasionally relying on a small number of film professionals.<sup>33</sup> By the same token, Costa was able to both maintain and gradually strengthen a prolonged and close relationship with his cast of non-professional actors, while enjoying considerable mobility in the space-restrictive locations within Fontainhas thanks to the portability of the digital camera. The slow, spontaneous and extensive shooting process of *In Vanda's Room* stands in stark contrast to the conditions under which Costa first filmed in the community while shooting *Bones* for the period of approximately six weeks – a comparatively limited period that did not allow him to forge any substantial links with the local residents. It was only after a protracted stay at Fontainhas that Costa was able to find the real ethos of a community that, in his words, became his ‘extended family’.<sup>34</sup>

Establishing a work method that reformulates the standardisation observed in normative processes of filmmaking, the shooting of *In Vanda's Room* was thus directly conditioned by the everyday routines of the non-professional actors who appear in the film. As Costa points out, the location was marked by ‘drug [routines], idleness’, a neighbourhood ‘which is a place where people are attracted to and [stay] without doing anything, [while something] is always happening [in the background]’.<sup>35</sup> Costa elaborated further on his daily professional routine in the

---

<sup>33</sup> See Peranson, ‘Pedro Costa: An introduction’, 140. Different sources indicate a different number of hours shot. Newspaper articles, at the time of the film’s release, commonly mentioned between 120 and 130 hours; in the interview to Peranson, Costa mentions 140 hours of material; in a personal communication with the film’s editor, Patrícia Saramago mentions that the material available to be edited ran to approximately 200 hours.

<sup>34</sup> Costa, personal interview (2 July 2012).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

documentary *Tout refleurit: Pedro Costa, cinéaste* (*All Blossoms Again: Pedro Costa, Director*, dir. Aurélien Gerbault, 2006). In one scene of the documentary, shot in an open field surrounded by the ruins where Vanda's house used to be, Costa recalls:

I would take the No. 58 bus. I'd come in there [pointing], one of the entrances to the Fontainhas neighbourhood. Or I would walk and come in over there [pointing]. In the morning – There were two bars: one over there [pointing], another there [pointing]. I'd have some coffee. I'd come back through there... to Vanda's house. ... Vanda and Zita would be asleep. Knock knock. No answer. I go inside. [...] I'd set up my things [...]. And if she woke up, I'd film a bit of what took place. If she didn't wake up, I'd take the camera... and go out. ... [...] I'd go to Pango's house, who lived over there, with someone else called Paulo who had crutches. [T]hen I'd go that way [pointing] ... out in the middle. I'd simply wait there with my camera. I'd film. Someone would come speak to me. I'd go back to the girls' house.<sup>36</sup>

From this rapport between the neighbourhood's own rhythms and Costa's shooting routine, two distinct filming approaches emerge, both of which remain in the final cut of the film. The first concerns the purely observational images shot outside, in the actual streets of Fontainhas, and which mostly register, in documentary mode, the inhabitants' street routines and the area's gradual demolition. The other type of images show the daily realities of the film's participants, predominantly shot inside and punctuated by daily-life occurrences: family meals, extensive conversations, and house-cleaning chores. In particular, interspersed with these events are long scenes showing the local residents engaged in drug consumption as well as under its effects,

---

<sup>36</sup> *Tout refleurit: Pedro Costa, cinéaste*. This citation uses the English subtitles of the documentary, included in 2010 Criterion boxset *Letters from Fontainhas*.

the latter being thus granted the same everyday status within the film's structure as the events going on outside.

While shooting during extensive periods alone, and mostly relying on the non-professional collaborators at the location, Costa nevertheless enjoyed intermittent professional support during some periods of the film's shooting. One of the professionals supporting Costa at Fontainhas was filmmaker Cláudia Tomaz, who at the time was researching the potential of digital video, later used in her first feature film *Noites* (*Nights*, 2001). Tomaz recalls that the people involved in the process were 'not the normal film crew at all', with Costa doing the camera work while a small number of people would assist him, even in activities outside the typical remit of filmmaking.<sup>37</sup> This collaboration also extended to, for example, sound technician Philippe Morel, who would join the production team intermittently during work breaks from other productions.<sup>38</sup>

Either alone or accompanied with a small group of other film professionals, Costa kept to a shooting method that privilege the rhythms of the neighbourhood daily life. As Tomaz recalls, Costa would spend most of the time inside Vanda's room or household and, 'depending on what was happening in people's lives or in the neighbourhood' elsewhere, other activities would be incorporated into this daily shooting routine, such as 'a demolition, men playing cards, someone making lunch

---

<sup>37</sup> Cláudia Tomaz, email interview (20 May 2013).

<sup>38</sup> See Costa et al, *Um Melro Dourado*, 104. This professional support was extensive to the production team from Contracosta, as pointed out by producer Francisco Villa-Lobos in a personal interview (Cascais, 11 February 2013).



or someone waiting for an ambulance...'.<sup>39</sup> While these events testify, to an extent, to actions normally categorised under the rubric of the everyday, these routines were nevertheless situated within the context of harsh lifestyles, due to the issue of drug dependency faced by many of the non-professional actors. As Tomaz notes,

The conditions were physically and humanly difficult, it was cold, people lived in extreme poverty, some people were becoming homeless and displaced, there was the drugs routine... [...] We had to keep up with it all and try to film it on a daily basis the best we could, sometimes it was challenging to be just an observer/filmmaker.<sup>40</sup>

Tomaz's observations reveal the ambiguous relations between professional agency and personal involvement in shooting *In Vanda's Room*, and in the difficulty in keeping the necessary detachment from the realities observed.

This ambiguity became visible in the narrative style of the film. While the film's realistic tone accounts for an approximation to a documentary style, many of the scenes were mostly acted under Costa's supervision and resulting from the rapport between Costa and the locals maintained by a slow shooting routine. This routine allowed for a representation of the everyday that is not dependent on immediacy but which instead came into being through observation and a careful re-working of the realities observed on location. Indeed, this protracted filmmaking process enabled the film's slow-paced cinematic style. As Neyrat goes on to note, Costa's 'slowness'

---

<sup>39</sup> Tomaz, email interview (20 May 2013).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

is no longer the old question of the relationship between subject and form but one of a daily work ethic endowing each decision regarding the frame and the lighting, and searching every face or word, with the same emotional gravity, the same seriousness, so that the film's rhythm is perfectly attuned to the rhythm of life.<sup>41</sup>

Neyrat's observations thus shed light on a mode of filmmaking whereby filmic style negotiates everyday rhythms and cinematic fabrication. Significantly, many of the scenes shot, and particularly the ones in the Duarte sisters' room, were not simply recorded by Costa's camera. Instead, they were staged by the participants as they recreated certain stories that they had previously told the filmmaker. These were shot in successive and repeated takes without interruption, allowing the actors to improvise during filming without the need to stop the camera.<sup>42</sup>

From this group of scenes emerge some of the most evocative moments of the film, such as the scene dealing with the childhood memories of Vanda and Zita (a bittersweet recalling of the environment before drug trafficking activities overtook Fontainhas); the scene acted at the 'boys' house, as they compare wounds provoked by the use of heroin (using narrative mechanisms common to comedy); the scene where both Zita and Vanda recall the period in which the latter was admitted to a hospital; reminiscences of deceased ones (such as the event of Geny's death, recalled by Vanda and Pedro Lanban). This method of recalling fragmented memories from the film's participants allowed Costa to bring back to life realities lying dormant in the non-professional actors' minds – what the filmmaker calls a 'redefinition of the

---

<sup>41</sup> Neyrat, 'Rooms for the Living and the Dead', 10.

<sup>42</sup> Costa et al, *Um Melro Dourado*, 61.

present', a reality of a community constantly mutating due to successive absences and its gradual demolition.<sup>43</sup> These realities and memories, while contributing to the narrative of the film, also present further dialogue between the professional agency and personal involvement of the film's participants; while part of the memories of the Fontainhas inhabitants, these became, as Costa notes, the life of the filmmaker at the location.<sup>44</sup>

### Producing at the Interstices

To some extent, the shooting process of *In Vanda's Room* represents a filmmaking disconnected from normative technological and industrial norms. The discussions above allow for a greater understanding of a shooting routine characterised by aspects of artisanal filmmaking, with proficiency in low-tech and low-budget methods, considerable merging of individual and professional agency, and a reformulation of standard professional methods and roles. However, as film critic Emmanuel Burdeau observes in a *Cahiers du Cinéma* article describing his visit to the film's set, *In Vanda's Room* is a 'film "like the others" [even if] without the normal [filmmaking] apparatus'.<sup>45</sup> While participating in a 'desacralisation' of the cinema's processes (as termed by Burdeau), *In Vanda's Room* is still confined by procedures comparable to other practices common in art cinema co-productions.

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> See Ibid., 69.

<sup>45</sup> Emmanuel Burdeau, 'Seul le cinéma – Pedro Costa tourne dans la Chambre de Vanda', in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, 536 (June 1999), 62.

As producer Francisco Villa-Lobos argues, while Costa's discourse of self-sufficiency and personal agency should be taken into consideration, *In Vanda's Room* also depended on 'paid professionals' and relied partially on normative production processes that, ultimately, could not have been sustained by personal relations alone.<sup>46</sup> As already explained, during the long shooting process, the filmmaker came to later rely intermittently on a small number of other professionals, who occasionally assisted Costa on location. Similarly, and while enjoying generous creative leeway, the film production was still dependent on particular procedures, such as an initial script treatment (not used during the shooting), required for the negotiation of the early funding support needed to start the shooting process.<sup>47</sup> These procedures highlight the interstitial qualities of Costa's filmmaking; while the shooting of *In Vanda's Room* negotiates artisanal film practices by merging personal and professional agency at the location, it was, nevertheless, a film tied to norms concerning funding and production.

These interstitial qualities extend to the financial processes of the film, which have much in common with other examples of European art cinema produced under the coproduction model, and on the post-production procedures, equally standard in contemporary art cinema. Both financial arrangements and post-production processes observed in the production of *In Vanda's Room* reflect the 'convergent' interests of the 'variegated film industries' present in European cinema, which form a network

---

<sup>46</sup> Villa-Lobos, personal interview (11 February 2013).

<sup>47</sup> Costa points out the existence of this document that was produced in order to apply to the IPC funding. See Costa qtd. in David Robert, 'O Lugar de Pedro', in *Porto 2001: Ciclo de Cinema, Instalação e Performance*, ed. by Dário Oliveira (Porto: Porto 2001, 2001), 90; this same document is also mentioned by Villa-Lobos, in the personal interview already cited.

composed of small-scale production, and post-production, units and pan-European, national and regional public institutions and funding initiatives.<sup>48</sup> These formations attest to a mode of filmmaking that Thomas Elsaesser calls ‘European post-Fordism’, which he describes as a process sustained by ‘small-scale production units, cooperating with television as well as commercial partners, and made up of creative teams around a producer and a director’.<sup>49</sup> Revealing these convergent financial and production formations, the funding process of the film took into consideration particular technical tasks, negotiated individually by the film producer with the different funding institutions, which then allocated resources to particular production and post-production processes.

Similarly to Costa’s previous works, *In Vanda’s Room* enjoyed financial support of the IPC and from different institutions and producers from Germany, Switzerland and Italy. The initial funding was provided by IPC in 1997, via a funding scheme for the production of documentary films.<sup>50</sup> With IPC funding covering part of the shooting process, Villa-Lobos negotiated other sources of financing that could support further stages of production. Later funding came in 1998 from the German television channel ZDF, under the financing scheme of the

---

<sup>48</sup> Jäckel, *European film industries*, 25.

<sup>49</sup> Elsaesser, *European Cinema*, 69.

<sup>50</sup> According to Villa-Lobos, the amount provided was the equivalent of approximately €50,000 (personal interview, 11 February, 2013). The total funding coming from Portugal was approximately ‘25% of the financing’, as the producer declared in Susana Martins, ‘No Palco da Vida’, in *JL: Jornal de Letras e Ideias* (March, 7, 2001), 9. This amount consisted of the initial IPC funding and other financial support which was raised later in the process (once again coming from the IPC and from a financial agreement to distribute the film domestically via Paulo Branco’s companies). In the article cited above, Villa-Lobos declares that the total budget of *In Vanda’s Room* was approximately €450.000.

programme *Das Kleine Fernsehspiel* (DKF, henceforth).<sup>51</sup> According to ZDF producer, Jörg Schneider, the low budget characteristics of the project were in accordance with the ethos of the programme and DKF contributed the ‘usual budget for international co-productions’, retaining exhibition rights for eight years.<sup>52</sup>

Convergent interests can also be observed in the film’s post-production stages. Aiming for a carefully assisted post-production process, other arrangements were made by Villa-Lobos in order to assure the post-production of the film. As pointed out by Patrícia Saramago, who edited *In Vanda’s Room* with Dominique Auvray, while the shooting of the film was defined by the use of an affordable video camera, the post-production process highlighted the careful filmic artistry which characterises all Costa’s oeuvre; this process allowed the filmmaker to enhance ‘the formal image and sound’ aspect of the film, which minimised the deficiencies inherent to the technology used.<sup>53</sup> The image post-production and subsequent sound editing took approximately nine months – a period that, as Saramago notes, was substantially longer than the ‘2 or 3 months’ commonly allocated to other film

---

<sup>51</sup> Since its creation in 1963, *Das Kleine Fernsehspiel* (‘the little teleplay’) became a successful development workshop supporting low budget fictional and documentary works. The programme supported directors such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Jim Jarmusch, Theo Angelopoulos or Agnès Varda. More recently it supported the initial works of internationally critically acclaimed German filmmakers including Christian Petzold, Fatih Akin or Angela Schanelec, among others. Concerning the role of the DKF in European art cinema, see Margit Grieb and Will Lehman, ‘Screen Wars: German National Cinema in the Age of Television’, in *European Cinema in the Television Age*, edited by Dorota Ostrowska and Graham Roberts (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 71-86.

<sup>52</sup> As explained by Jörg Schneider, in an email communication (26 July 2013). The amount indicated by Schneider is of 100.000<sup>DM</sup> (approximately €50,000).

<sup>53</sup> Saramago, email interview (23 July 2013).

productions.<sup>54</sup> This part of the post-production process was financially covered by arrangements between Contracosta and Karl Baumgartner (Pandora Films). Baumgartner initially provided the Avid editing system, used to edit the film (in Lisbon); subsequently, Pandora Films also supported the sound editing and foley sound mixing (done by Waldir Xavier and Jean Dubreuil), this time at the Konken Studios (Hamburg), in order to use German regional funding made available to Baumgartner.<sup>55</sup>

These convergent industrial and financial configurations (forming a conflation of national, international and regional modes of production) can be expanded further by looking into the post-production processes related to the film's colour correction and conversion to 35mm film exhibition format. Aiming to include *In Vanda's Room* in film festival competitions, the production team tried to cover the costs of these final post-production processes in collaboration with the Swiss/Italian production company Ventura Films (eventually these processes were produced by the Zurich-based company Swiss Effects). According to Villa-Lobos, this arrangement had the direct endorsement of Marco Müller (at the time artistic director of the Locarno International Film Festival, where the film premiered in 2000), which facilitated these last stages of the film's post-production.<sup>56</sup>

The financial process described above illustrates the contours of interstitial filmmaking and production operations observed in *In Vanda's Room*. The successive

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> As explained in Villa-Lobos, personal interview (11 February 2013). The German regional funding provided was related with the initiatives of the Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

partnerships covering the different stages of the film's production and post-production processes outline the convergent interests that shape the economy of contemporary art cinema, perpetrating its commercial and industrial dynamics, while easing costs. As Villa-Lobos explains:

participating with small amounts of money in a film is many times more interesting than [investing] larges amounts. It's less risky and at the time it was particularly easy to find these amounts (nowadays is less so). [...] It wasn't risky at all. [...]

[The amount invested by Karl Baumgartner] was a very small portion of what he had available for the whole of his projects. At the end, it was a way for him [...] to have one more film in competition [at the film festivals].<sup>57</sup>

Enjoying the possibilities in this financial availability, the production process of *In Vanda's Room* negotiated between artisanal practices, maintained during the shooting of the film, and the normative production and post-production processes in order to generate a final product fulfilling necessary standards for circulation. As Costa himself remarked, this was a film that 'started with zero and ended with everything paid', including a well-executed post-production.<sup>58</sup> This form of filmmaking allows for an observation of an interstitial process, which was shaped by industrial, technical and financial operations. This intersection between artisanal and industrial practices allowed for the management of different task-based funding, forms of collaboration and compliance with institutional bodies. Perhaps more

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Costa, personal interview (02 September 2012).



importantly, it allowed to fulfil the expectations of all the professionals and financial backers involved in the film's chain of production.

## Conclusion

The different stages in the making of *In Vanda's Room* allow for an observation of how artistic agency, technological possibilities and industrial formations can be negotiated under a low-budget economic model placed at the interstices. As presented in the discussions above, stylistic formations such as filmic slowness are understood as not just an aesthetic proposition, but also as a result of interactions between modes of production and the corresponding available technology. The depiction of Fontainhas and its inhabitants found in *In Vanda's Room* was achieved through a laborious production and recording process, mediating between personal affection and professionalism, between spontaneity and artificiality. As Costa notes, this process was more extensive than would be expected for a 'normal' shoot, becoming ultimately a form of 'job routine', in which professional and personal commitments became ambiguously and complexly entangled.<sup>59</sup>

However, more than aesthetic formulations or shooting practices, *In Vanda's Room* illustrates a filmmaking practice related to economic and technological imperatives. The making of *In Vanda's Room* illustrates a new stage in Costa's narrative of production, following his films produced by Paulo Branco. The film's production is marked by protracted shooting schedules, the re-formulation of professional roles and personal involvement. Yet, it also allows us to observe the

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.; See also Burdeau, 'Seul le cinéma', 61.

dynamics of production and financing contemporary art cinema. The convergent interests of public institutions and private film producers contributed to the different stages of production of a film that, while produced under a restrictive budget, nevertheless reveals the permutations commonly observed in the European co-production model. Through these conditions, producer Francisco Villa-Lobos was able to negotiate financial support to the film, phased through the different stages of production.

Highlighting the relationship between economic and technological imperatives, the post-production processes of *In Vanda's Room* allow for a further discussion of the constraints and freedoms of the use of digital video. While surely easing the filmmaking process and financial support in the earlier stages of the production, such as the film's artisanal shooting process, the technology used was also the main concern during the final stages of completion. The emphasis placed on a gradual post-production process, as well as its financial backing, reveal a filmmaking process that increasingly relies on back-end technological processes. The relationship between film technology and artistic expression accounts for the freedoms generated by digital video, but also for the industrial character of digital filmmaking.

From *In Vanda's Room* interstitial digital filmmaking practice emerges as a less demanding, but equally effective, production framework. While still defined by its constraints, Pedro Costa's subsequent feature film *Colossal Youth* and the short films that followed it came to rely on less extreme shooting conditions, enabled by a fixed yet small shooting unit and having more options in terms of filming equipment and financial support. The next three chapters analyse how this new stage of Costa's

narrative of production partakes also in discussions concerning reception, exhibition and circulation.

### Part III: Consumption and Costa's Global Reputation

## CHAPTER SIX

# Critical Reception and the International Film Festival

[The] value of an object, or a person, is the meaning they take on by being assigned a place in some larger system of categories.

David Graeber<sup>1</sup>

The need which consumption feels for the object is created by the perception of it. The object of art – like every other product – creates a public which is sensitive to art and enjoys beauty. Production thus not only creates an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object.

Karl Marx<sup>2</sup>

In an article defending cinephile elitism, Adrian Martin suggests that the term ‘cult’, once used to mediate taste formations such as prestige and exclusivity, has become commonly overused by both film industries and film critics in order to create a constant frisson in burgeoning audiences looking for easily available niche products. Claiming that this classification is currently first and foremost a form of commercial value, Martin asks if there are movies that, due to particular aesthetic characteristics, ‘manage to resist’ marketable aspects of the term.<sup>3</sup> Pointing to examples including Costa’s *Colossal Youth* or Philippe Garrel’s *Frontier of Dawn* (2008), Martin proposes that only films whose reception divides critical opinion can ‘reclaim’ the term’s symbolic currency.<sup>4</sup> Martin’s position is centred in the fact that

---

<sup>1</sup> David Graeber, *Towards an Anthropological Theory of Value* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 41.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 92.

<sup>3</sup> Adrian Martin ‘What’s Cult Got To Do With It?: In Defense of Cinephile Elitism’, in *Cineaste* (Winter, 2008), 42.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

these films manage to remain difficult to watch, because they present forms of aesthetic expression that have the potential to alienate possible target audiences, but also because these films do not participate in market mechanisms that could make them broadly available in mainstream networks of exhibition and circulation.

Martin's argument raises further questions about how market value – both symbolic and economic – is negotiated by both film audiences and the film industry.

Characterising *Colossal Youth* in these terms, Martin argues that

Pedro Costa's [film] has offered a bracing example of a hard-line *art povera* in the Straub-Huillet tradition that is not easy recuperated – and, not surprisingly, a rallying point for cinephiles who want to keep their severe passion from attaining an easy-to-afford market price.<sup>5</sup>

This statement describes several different forms of value, which Martin reads as factors of 'resistance'. The first characteristic is dependent on the aesthetic characterisation of *Colossal Youth*, which has been described as a 'difficult' film by film critics, and has as a result been placed into a stylistic lineage (or 'tradition') with other equally challenging films by Garrel and Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet; the second is the characterisation of cinephiles' role in expressing an active film culture which Martin classifies as 'severe passion'; a third characteristic, perhaps somewhat dependent on the dialogue between the first two, is the recognition of a potential market value in films which oscillate between a state of exclusivity and an oppositional 'easy-to-afford' state.

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

As discussed in Chapter One, the qualities implicit in these three characteristics, and the dialogues and permutations among them, reveal dynamics of reception that characterise many discussions of art cinema. Notions concerning film style sustain discursive notions of artistic authenticity and economic ‘disinterestedness’ (to use Bourdieu’s term),<sup>6</sup> which are intrinsic to the disavowal of economic capital in favour of symbolic capital within the cultural market. Concurrently, these discursive notions are formed and maintained by both interested communities that seek to imprint cultural exclusiveness onto films or broader filmic aesthetic classifications,<sup>7</sup> and by institutional formations that negotiate between ‘exclusiveness and inclusiveness’ in order to sustain activities that are engrained in both symbolic and economic value transactions.<sup>8</sup> Arguments about the accessibility of Costa’s films reveal dialogues inherent to an economy in which art cinema institutions, film critics and audiences play important roles. Central to these negotiations of value are the ways in which films are accessed, the methods by which critical reception is formed and the various ways in which consumption is conducted.

The international film festival circuit takes centre stage in the attribution of both symbolic and economic value. Costa’s cinema maintains an awareness of its position in this milieu, participating not just in its exhibition and circulation, but also in the acquisition of forms of symbolic and economic currency through the agency of different actors who shape the consumption and production of art cinema. As Dina Jordanova argues, the film festival circuit is a consumption stage in which

---

<sup>6</sup> Bourdieu, ‘The production of belief’, 261.

<sup>7</sup> See Harbord, *Film Cultures*, 54.

<sup>8</sup> Wilinsky, *Sure Seaters*, 103; see also Bourdieu, ‘The production of belief’, 262, 278.

a small film from an obscure source can be picked up by a succession of festivals and show consecutively in various localities, thus getting truly global exposure. This is not 'distribution', and the exposure may not bring along measurable financial gains. Yet the value-added aspect of flow through the festival chain cannot be ignored.<sup>9</sup>

Noting specifically the case of Costa's films, Iordanova expands this characterisation of the film festival as a site of exhibition, arguing that, although not as far-reaching as some mainstream forms of distribution, the 'global exposure' in this context is effective in creating an exhibition circuit for particular works, even if it is an impermanent and closed environment.<sup>10</sup> Considering the possible notions of value found in Martin's article and the role of the film festival as a network of flow formed by different agents, this chapter centres its analysis in how Costa's work acquires value through reception, and what forms of capital create that value within the milieu of the film festival. This working proposition interrogates how inclusion in the stylistic lineages of art cinema and participation in the film festival circuit affect the symbolic capital that Costa is able to accrue, and how this inclusion and participation is revealing of the mechanisms of inclusiveness and exclusiveness present in contemporary art cinema.

In order to address these queries, this chapter looks into the mediation of different levels of value in Costa's work, centring the debate on the symbolic and economic transactions within the international festival circuit. In particular, this discussion will take Costa's fifth feature, *Colossal Youth*, as its central case study.

---

<sup>9</sup> Dina Iordanova, 'The Film Festival Circuit', in *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*, ed. by Dina Iordanova and Ragan Rhyne (St. Andrews: St Andrews Film Studies, 2009), 24.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-5.



Firstly, this chapter looks into the critical formations present at the film festival, a complex network formed from social, economic and cultural relationships, in which transactions between its different participants generate taxonomic classifications through critical reception. Looking at these classificatory practices, the first part of this chapter examines the critical debate surrounding Costa's work, identifying how the reception of *Colossal Youth* was problematically marked by discussions about its cinematic aesthetics.

In order to address these practices of classification in more detail, this chapter moves on to analyse scholarly and journalistic discourses on classifications of filmic style. It begins by tracing out the formation and deployment of classificatory terms dependent on stylistic lineages and relational readings within the traditions of film scholarship. As pointed out in the previous chapter, Costa's works shot at Fontainhas have been described as an example of slow cinema, a term commonly used in the context of past and contemporary art film. Slowness in Costa's work from the late 1990s onwards can be framed not just as an aesthetic proposition but also, and more importantly, as a filmmaking practice. However, the inclusion of Costa's work under such a label by film critics allows for an exploration of how film style characteristics, and especially their classification, contribute to the formation of symbolic currency at the reception stage.

The last part of this chapter adds supplemental readings of these formations of symbolic capital within Costa's work. As Martin's argument illustrates, critical opinion and the induction of Costa's work into specific stylistic lineages help to define the nature of transactions of symbolic value, positioning specific films and filmmakers as more or less difficult to apprehend. Drawing on an understanding that these critical constructions are not just symbolic but also economic transactions, the

last part of this chapter examines the role of the film festival in maintaining relationships between different kinds of value. While the debates within the first and second part of the chapter concentrate on the symbolic value which is created by film criticism, this last part of the chapter looks not just at the formation of symbolic value but also considers other variables related to the film festival economy.

Following the discussions concerning symbolic and economic value in Chapters One and Two, and partially reflecting on the production values of Costa's work examined in the previous chapter, this chapter interrogates how different aspects of symbolic and economic value are negotiated by the various agents present at the film festival. Ultimately, this chapter will draw out how certain tendencies within the reception of films and other cultural forms also affect Costa's narrative of production, tying his films to both economic and symbolic currency. Furthermore, the chapter offers a re-contextualisation of the filmmaker's niche appeal, which shapes the consumption of his films in other networks of circulation, which will be analysed in Chapters Seven and Eight.

### Value formation and the film festival

While maintaining a closed economy mediating between economic and symbolic value, film festivals offer a cultural arena in which different participants' positions contribute to the formation of capital via reception.<sup>11</sup> As Cindy Wong has discussed, film festivals 'showcase a complex world of films, international, historical, and especially contemporary', in which 'varied sections, retrospectives, and discussions,

---

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Elsaesser, *European Cinema*, 88; Stringer, 'Global Cities', 138-9.

provide both wide viewing and scholarship to *canonize* individual films, auteurs, and national cinematic canons'.<sup>12</sup> As Wong notes, Pedro Costa enjoyed the recognition offered by the festival circuit that, along with the filmmaker's acceptance by other institutions and forms of cultural legitimation (e.g. visits to universities and scholarly discussion in specialised journals), endorsed the inclusion of the filmmaker's work in an ever-expanding network of 'world film knowledge'.<sup>13</sup> Understandably, Costa's works are tied to this circulation network since all of his feature films have premiered in European film festivals;<sup>14</sup> furthermore, the filmmaker himself partakes in the dynamic relationship between the two tiers of the international film festival system, a system in which films presented at major festivals 'go on to appear at an entire series of medium- and smaller-sized' events composing the film festival circuit.<sup>15</sup>

The inclusion of Costa's work in the festival circuit facilitates the circulation and reception of the filmmaker's work, positioning it within broader and multiple traditions of world cinema. However, this inclusion *per se* does not suffice for an attribution of canonical stature, as Wong suggests. Possible canonical constructions arising at the film festival is revealing of the agency several players enjoy when negotiating inclusion and exclusion under different stylistic lineages. Bourdieu's

---

<sup>12</sup> Cindy Wong, *Film Festivals: Culture, people, and Power on the global Screen* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 14 (Emphasis added).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-5.

<sup>14</sup> *Blood and Bones* in Venice 1989 and 1997 (respectively), *Casa de Lava* in Thessaloniki 1994, *In Vanda's Room* and *Horse Money* in Locarno 2000 and 2014 (respectively), *Colossal Youth* and *Change Nothing* in Cannes 2006 and 2009 (respectively).

<sup>15</sup> See de Valck, *Film Festivals*, 106.

notion of ‘habitus’ is relevant to this discussion, since it theorises the existence of an individual agency which is mediated by the social, cultural and economic environment in which that same agency operates, and which propitiates not just attributions of value, but also offers constant value attribution among its different participants. Bourdieu argues that habitus consists of a negotiation between the agents that participate in a particular field, depending on the ‘positions’ these agents occupy and ‘their will to transform or conserve’ practices of classification; these agents have ‘the capacity to produce classifiable practices and works, and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products’.<sup>16</sup> Put it simply, the film festival is a field in which film professionals, cinema fans, scholars, film critics and institutional agents create classificatory practices which lead to the creation of forms of symbolic currency.

This notion of an active milieu composed of interdependent and/or co-dependent agents with variegated interests contributes to dynamic relations within various sites of cultural consumption. While, as Bourdieu argues, sites of consumption serve to qualify ‘the product consumed, helping to give it rarity or vulgarity’,<sup>17</sup> this qualification depends on dialogues that not just include and exclude texts, but also create associations among texts.<sup>18</sup> In this sense, mechanisms of canonical formation depend on the inclusion, discussion and comparative analysis of texts. A discussion which is placed into dialogue with a broader group of works –

---

<sup>16</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 165-6.

<sup>17</sup> Bourdieu, ‘The production of belief’, 278.

<sup>18</sup> Still according to Bourdieu, this ‘production of distinctiveness’ takes in account social properties and ‘image’ attached to particular works and their relation with economic and class factors (see Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 8-11).

what John Guillory calls an ‘*imaginary* totality of works.’<sup>19</sup> While the aim of this chapter is not to discuss the formation of filmic canons *per se*, it is relevant to the discussion of Costa's work that will be presented here to point out that value transactions between film critics acquire similar contours, with different agents of a particular milieu drawing comparative relations between past filmic traditions, as well as categorising texts or filmmakers under their own critical formations.

As understood by Martin's description, *Colossal Youth* recalls the work of the aesthetically difficult filmmakers Straub and Huillet, creating comparative stylistic readings in dialogue with an established oeuvre that has already acquired canonical characteristics.<sup>20</sup> This relationship has become more visible through the collaboration between Costa and these two filmmakers in the documentary *Où gît votre sourire enfoui?* (‘Where Does Your Hidden Smile Lie?’, 2001, which documents one of the editing sessions of their film *Sicily!* [1999]), which was commissioned by French-German television channel ARTE for *Cinéma, de notre temps* (1988-).<sup>21</sup> This approach is highlighted in promotional photos of the documentary, such as the one taken by Richard Dumas during a photographic session for the *Libération* (Figure 8), in which the three filmmakers are presented in ‘family’ pose. This linkage to Straub and Huillet is one of the facets of Costa's work that makes it resistant to assimilation to use Martin's term. This association allows a drawing of a stylistic lineage within

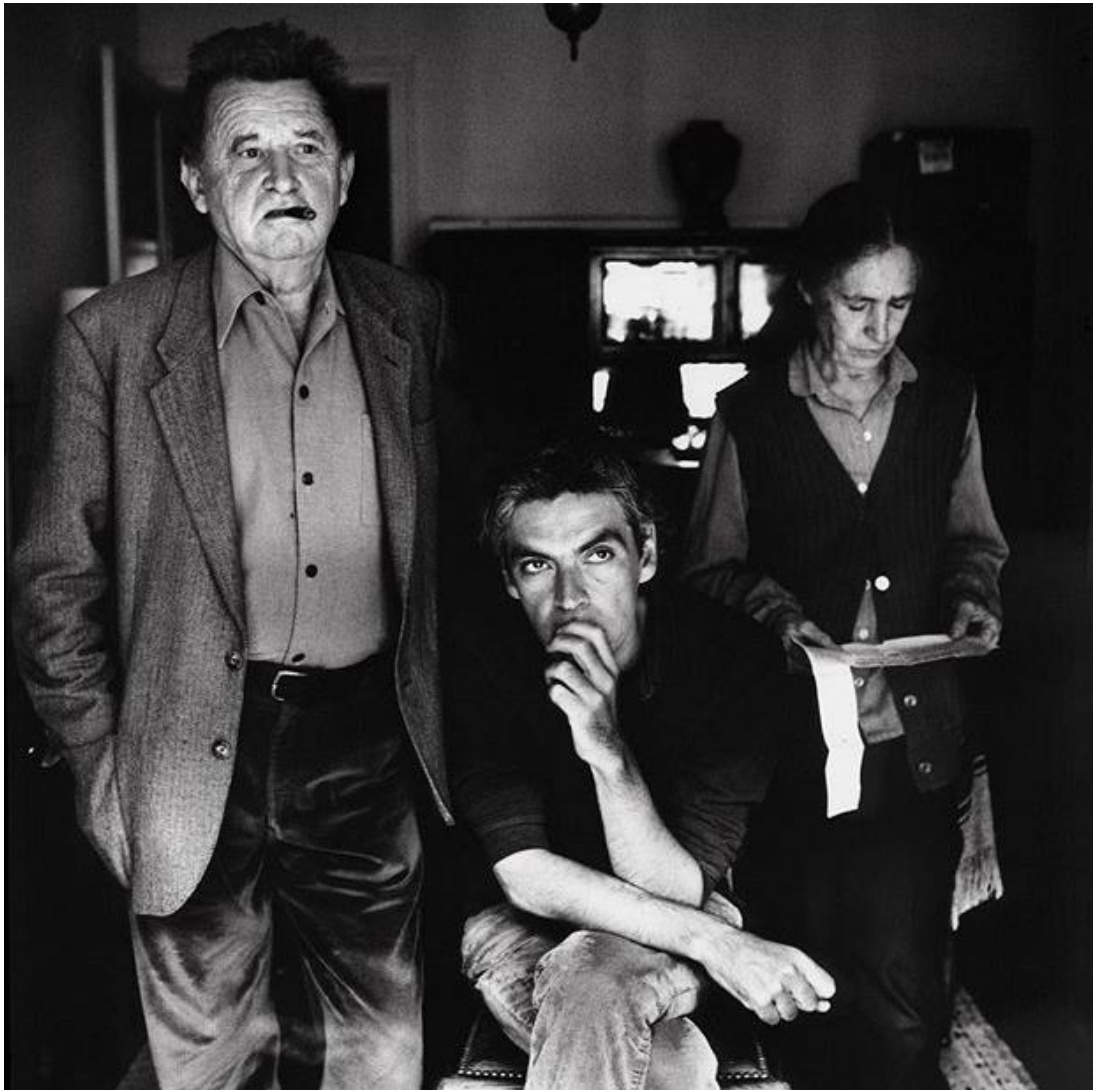
---

<sup>19</sup> John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 30 (emphasis in original).

<sup>20</sup> Tag Gallagher has discussed Costa's work in these terms, drawing textual comparisons between *Colossal Youth* and Straub and Huillet's films. See ‘Straub Anti-Straub’, in *Senses of Cinema*, no. 43 (May 2007). Online: <http://sensesofcinema.com/2007/feature-articles/costa-straub-huillet/> [accessed: 25.05.2015].

<sup>21</sup> For further considerations on the making of this documentary, see *ibid.*

the form of the ‘difficult art film’ at the film festival, which drives some readings concerned with categorising canonical contours.



**Figure 8: Jean-Marie Straub, Pedro Costa, and Danièle Huillet. Copyright: Richard Dumas, 2001.**

Yet these negotiations of value also occur in the way in which Costa’s work acquires a divided, and at times divergent, critical reception among the value-dispensing agents of the film festival circuit. This lack of consensus in the reception of Costa’s work also offers a form of classificatory process, one in which critical disputes can generate symbolic currency. As Barbara Herrnstein Smith argues, in a ‘particular community, the tastes and preferences of subjects will sometimes be

conspicuously divergent or indeed idiosyncratic<sup>22</sup> – resulting in a dynamic dialogue between divergence and convergence on critical reception that, in itself, creates symbolic value. The reception of *Colossal Youth*'s premiere at the 2006 Cannes International Film Festival illustrates these divergent critical responses. Accepted for the competition category that year, the film's press screening was marked by a 'steady stream' of cinema critics and journalists leaving the room, reinforcing the idea that Costa's work is not 'uniformly loved by world-cinema tastemakers'.<sup>23</sup> In an *Artforum* article, James Quandt points out a similarly divisive quality among critical responses to the film, when he observes that 'Cannes' (meaning the community composed by film critics, jury and members of the audience, one assumes) is 'increasingly inimical' to films such as *Colossal Youth*, even when 'much else at the festival was pandering and blandishment'.<sup>24</sup> This unfavourable reception of Costa's film extended to the festival's jury, which was chaired by Wong Kar-Wai. According to *LA Weekly* film critic Scott Foundas, *Colossal Youth*'s aesthetics 'bitterly' divided the jury, which eventually did not grant any award to the film.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), 39.

<sup>23</sup> Dennis Lim, 'Director's Quest for Truth Among the Downtrodden', in *The New York Times* (29 July 2007). Online: [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/29/movies/29lim.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/29/movies/29lim.html?_r=0) [accessed: 15.01.2014].

<sup>24</sup> James Quandt, 'Still lives: the films of Pedro Costa', in *Artforum International*, no.45 (01 September 2006), 354.

<sup>25</sup> Scott Foundas, '2006 Toronto Film Festival: Vote for Pedro (and Larry)', in *LA Weekly Blog* (16 September 2006). Online: [blogs.laweekly.com/foundas/2006/09/vote\\_for\\_pedro\\_and\\_larry.php](http://blogs.laweekly.com/foundas/2006/09/vote_for_pedro_and_larry.php) [accessed: 31.05.2012]. According to both Costa and Villa-Lobos, this disagreement between members of the 2006 Cannes International Film Festival jury had similar contours to a falling out at the 2000 Locarno Film Festival, in which *In Vanda's Room* was included in the competition category. As both the filmmaker and the producer stated in personal interviews (on 2 July 2012 and 11 February 2013, respectively) that the Locarno jury members quarrelled among themselves and, subsequently decided to not attribute any award to the film.

Yet, despite these (critical) walkouts, *Colossal Youth* found fans among cinephiles favourable to the trend toward more difficult contemporary art cinema. As Quandt point out, Costa's supporters 'have long been sneered at as glum cultists, po-faced devotees of his particular brand of Lusitanian pornomiseria'.<sup>26</sup> Press articles trying to explain the critical context of Costa's work commonly point out reputable members of this fan base, who are associated with discourses of cinephilia that favour aesthetically difficult art films. Dennis Lim, for example, points out that Straub and Huillet count themselves among the defenders of Costa's works, as well as the equally stylistically difficult director Jacques Rivette.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, Costa's films became commonly linked to those of other contemporary filmmakers who gained similarly divisive prestige at film festivals. According to Quandt, for some critics Costa is a key member of a 'pan-European band of miserabilists that includes Hungary's Bela Tarr, Germany's Fred Kelemen, and Lithuania's Sharunas Bartas' who are all regulars on the film festival circuit.<sup>28</sup> This subsumption extends to include Costa's image. As Lim proposes, Costa has been identified mostly as a niche filmmaker, with the 'forbidding air of high-art Spartan', commonly associated with the role of an inflexible film festival auteur.<sup>29</sup> In a similar vein, Peter Bradshaw labels Costa the 'Samuel Beckett of cinema', drawing an image of the filmmaker as 'a cult-master, a figure who is widely

---

<sup>26</sup> Quandt, 'Still lives', 354.

<sup>27</sup> See Lim, 'Director's Quest'.

<sup>28</sup> Quandt, 'Still lives', 354.

<sup>29</sup> Lim, 'Director's Quest'.



considered on the festival circuit to be for hardcore auteur followers only'.<sup>30</sup> Far from receiving universal or even consistent praise, Costa's work has received a form of critical celebration that, through repeated connections to other difficult filmmakers, reveals the idiosyncratic networks of critical opinion that supports the symbolic capital of the modern international film festival.

This conflicted, yet positive, reception of Costa extends to the responses of some film critics, who have been outspoken about the filmmaker's works. There has been a generally positive critical response to the austere aesthetics of Costa's work, with many critics advocating its merits as part of a resistant expression of cinephilia. Articles by Jonathan Romney<sup>31</sup> and Cyril Neyrat<sup>32</sup> praise the obstinate aesthetic austerity of Costa and his work, as do Thom Andersen, Tag Gallagher and Mark Peranson.<sup>33</sup> Celebrated French philosopher Jacques Rancière has also written on Costa's austere aesthetics, highlighting the possible paradox between the situations of misery set in Fontainhas and its aesthetic possibilities.<sup>34</sup> Rancière's works on Costa's cinema created further kudos in contemporary academic fields of cultural and art theory. Furthermore, and to some extent, Rancière's discussion of the validity of this austere aesthetic as a form of political expression, responds to some of the

---

<sup>30</sup> Peter Bradshaw, 'Pedro Costa, the Samuel Beckett of cinema', in *The Guardian film blog* (17 September 2009). Online: [www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2009/sep/17/pedro-costa-tate-retrospective](http://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2009/sep/17/pedro-costa-tate-retrospective) [accessed: 09.04.2015].

<sup>31</sup> Romney, 'Exile and the kingdom', 46-7.

<sup>32</sup> See Cyril Neyrat, 'Pas de géant', in *Cahiers du Cinéma* (February, 2008), 24-6; Neyrat, 'Rooms for the Living and the Dead', 10-7.

<sup>33</sup> As pointed out in Rosenbaum, 'Cinema of the Future', 204.

<sup>34</sup> See Rancière, 'The Politics of Pedro Costa', np; also Rancière, 'Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community', 51-82.

arguments presented by most vocal critics against Costa's films, such as the American cultural critic Armond White, who considers the films set at Fontainhas as a form of fetishizing misery as 'art-cinema etudes.'<sup>35</sup>

In some cases, this predisposition among film critics results in open expressions of sympathy with cinephilic fan discourses. A clear example of this kind of expression can be seen in *Cinema Scope's* 'Vote for Pedro' campaign, which was promoted by the magazine's editor, film critic and associate programmer of the Vancouver and Locarno film festivals, Mark Peranson. Specifically targeting critics and audiences at the 2006 Toronto film festival, this campaign supported the screening of *Colossal Youth* at the 2006 Toronto film festival by producing t-shirts parodying the ones used in *Napoleon Dynamite* (dir. Jared Hess, 2004); the t-shirts featured the inscription 'Vote for Pedro (Pedro Costa, that is)' and were worn by Peranson and other supporters of Costa's film during the festival.<sup>36</sup> This dramatic endorsement illustrates that discussions of symbolic value can acquire overlapping qualities, with important players from the film community demonstrating an ability to act on both professional and personal interests simultaneously.

The dialogue between different interest groups within the film community illustrates some of the conditions contributing to the creation and distribution of symbolic value. On one hand, some critics challenge what they see as the artistic assumptions and pretentious elitism in some of the arguments expressed by Costa's supporters. On the other hand, supporters of Costa's work question the lack of

---

<sup>35</sup> Armond White, 'Portrait of a Black Man', in *New York Press*, 13 April 2010. Online: <http://nypress.com/portrait-of-a-black-man/> [accessed: 17.01.2014].

<sup>36</sup> See Foundas, '2006 Toronto Film Festival'.

appreciation for the difficult art films among these critics and point to what they describe as an anti-intellectual bias in some contemporary film criticism. The expressions of derision for or (at times fervent) endorsements of Costa's work, explored above reveal the (sometimes bitterly oppositional) dialogues that exist among different agents participating in the field of the film festival. These dialogues inform the practice of contemporary film criticism, serving to mediate and control the distribution of symbolic value. These practices are used not just to highlight what they see as the inherent qualities within Costa's work, but also to help to draw comparisons between the filmmaker's work and that of other similarly divergent filmmakers. These discussions form stylistic lineages that help situate Costa's contentious work within this milieu, assisting evaluative contexts.

### Tracing stylistic lineages

Critics label cultural products not just to classify practices and works, but also to convey positions of critical appreciation or depreciation, according to the dynamics of their particular habitus. The formation and deployment of categories and aesthetic lineages define the attribution of symbolic value in art cinema criticism, revealing the factors of differentiation that affects its aesthetic and political discussions. In his consideration of the multitude of cinematic traditions and practices on offer in the international film festival, Mark Betz argues that it is in this milieu that the 'high-water mark of [art cinema's] most "difficult" and ambitious formal guise' finds its inherent environment – what he calls the 'contemporary parametric' film.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Betz, 'Beyond Europe', 31.

The term parametric art film came to define post-World War II art cinema's 'parametric narration' techniques analysed by David Bordwell, which draw upon classifications initially formulated by Noël Burch.<sup>38</sup> Analysing the work of filmmakers including Alain Resnais, Bresson or Ozu, Bordwell formulates a set of aesthetic parameters including, among others, narrative redundancy forming what Bordwell calls 'patterned reiterations', and the insistence on long takes and minimal montage – all of which contributed to a 'sparse' or 'ascetic' filmic style.<sup>39</sup> Drawing on Bordwell's parametric narrative, Betz observes that many contemporary filmmakers continue this 'manifestation of modernist art cinema' as part of an 'international style' visible at the film festival.<sup>40</sup>

Presenting an extensive list of contemporary filmmakers, Betz notes that this parametric style can be observed in works of European filmmakers including Costa, or the already mentioned Garrel and Tarr, but also filmmakers from further afield, including from Latin America (e.g. Lisandro Alonso, Carlos Reygadas), Japan (e.g. Hirokazu Kore-eda), China (e.g. Jia Zhangke), Taiwan (e.g. Hou Hsiao-hsien), or Thailand (e.g. Apichatpong Weerasethakul), among others.<sup>41</sup> This manifestation of contemporary parametric art cinema is discussed both as part of a lineage, and as an aesthetic movement that it is not confined to geographical demarcations, but instead belongs to a stylistic constituency formed by the international film festival circuit.

---

<sup>38</sup> Bordwell, *Narration in the fiction film*.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 284-5.

<sup>40</sup> Betz, 'Beyond Europe', 31-2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

Pedro Costa's works shot at Fontainhas invoke characteristics that brings together many of the characteristics of parametric art film characteristics theorised by Bordwell. As I argue in Chapters Four and Five, *Bones* and *In Vanda's Room* are characterised by minimal camera movement and long takes, and with narrative fragmentation. *Colossal Youth* is characterised by similar (parametric) features, with a narrative shaped by repeated patterns and an ascetic filmic style. It refines the docufictional style of *In Vanda's Room* through a studied stillness which sustains the monotone acting of the film. Its characters are framed in almost-still studied compositions that recall the tonality, dramatic lighting, and composition values of the still-life artistic tradition.<sup>42</sup>

Making a thematic link to *Casa de Lava*, the narrative of *Colossal Youth* combines the personal story of Ventura, a retired builder from Cape Verde who worked in Lisbon's construction sites during the 1970s and whose life was dramatically affected by the 1974 Revolution and its immediate aftermath. According to Costa, Ventura was 'one of the pioneers, who built the first shacks' at Fontainhas, and soon after 'was involved in a terrible accident at work', which left him handicapped 'when still very young'.<sup>43</sup> The film's monotone style suits the biographical aspects of the narrative, illustrating the individual and idiosyncratic perspective of the main character, who wanders between Fontainhas (as it is being demolished) and the new estate of Casal da Boba (in the municipality of Amadora), to which some Fontainhas former residents are being relocated.

---

<sup>42</sup> See Romney, 'Exile and the kingdom', 46; also Jacques Rancière, 'The Politics of Pedro Costa', np.

<sup>43</sup> See Francisco Ferreira, 'Guarda a minha fala para sempre', in *Expresso*, (25 November 2006), 14; Kieron Corless, 'Ace Ventura: King of the Quarter', in *Sight & Sound*, vol.18, no. 5 (May 2008), 12.

Moving between these two locations, Ventura claims to be making a final effort to gather all his ‘sons and daughters’, so they can join him in a new apartment situated in the new estate. Throughout the film, Ventura visits several of his ‘children’, many of them characters that also populated *In Vanda’s Room*. These visits reveal that Ventura’s ‘offspring’ are not his direct (biological) kin, but the whole of Fontainhas; as the film’s Portuguese title *Juventude em Marcha* (‘marching youth’) bitterly and ironically points out, this community was an extended multicultural family that once, animated by the promise of freedom, tried to escape the limitations of their past, only to get stopped by the social inequity created by Portugal’s recent history. These biographical and historical facts are used as part of the narrative, with flashbacks alternating between the (historical) past of sometime near 1974, and the present, focussing on the everyday lives of Ventura and other disfranchised Fontainhas characters. As Costa points out, ‘there are two parts in this film, a past and a present at Fontainhas, [two parts that] coincide with the before and after the 25<sup>th</sup> of April [Revolution]’.<sup>44</sup>

Related to these two dimensions, Ventura’s wanderings between the ruins of Fontainhas and the new buildings at Casal da Boba become not only physical, but also chronological. The film shows numerous unexplained flashbacks of Ventura and his friend Lento (played by Alberto Barros), revealing the fragmented, traumatic memories of Ventura. These subjective representations of Ventura’s memories span the time from his arrival with Lento in Lisbon and the immediate aftermath of the 1974 revolution, tracing the ordeals and problems involved in adapting to the city, as

---

<sup>44</sup> Costa quoted in Ferreira, ‘Guarda a minha fala para sempre’, 16.

well as the hard toil and back breaking work Ventura undertook on building sites. Towards the end of the film, the confusion caused by the events following the revolution is also made apparent. In contrast to the common sense of happiness and euphoria connected with this event, these flashbacks show Ventura and Lento barricaded in their shack in Fontainhas, fearing the violence that was inflicted on the African population of Lisbon.

The stylistic and thematic qualities of *Colossal Youth* explained above, can be contextualised within Costa's developing personal filmic style, a development that was explored in the previous chapters. However, and while partaking in some characteristics of contemporary parametric art film, Costa's style has also been grouped together with the works of several distinct filmmakers circulating in the film festival circuit and subsumed under the label 'slow cinema'.<sup>45</sup>

### Critical discussions under the film festival economy

Particularly when deployed in the context of the film festival milieu, the term 'slow cinema' (or alternatively, contemporary contemplative film)<sup>46</sup> emerged with some insistence in British and US film criticism from the beginning of the last decade onwards. The term has come to define similar social and cultural ideas in 'slow

---

<sup>45</sup> It needs to be pointed out at this point that Betz's article offers a comprehensive definition of the stylistic markers associated with slow cinema, and lists many filmmakers commonly associated with this term, but without making explicit reference to the term.

<sup>46</sup> The acronym CCC, standing for 'contemporary contemplative cinema' was coined by Harry Tuttle, the curator of the blog *Unspoken Cinema*, as a reaction to the possible pejorative connotations carried by the term slow cinema. See Harry Tuttle 'Slow films, easy life (Sight&Sound)' Online: <http://unspokencinema.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/slow-films-easy-life-sight.html> [accessed: 06.09.2012].

food,<sup>47</sup> and other movements sharing the same prefix, such as slow media, slow fashion, slow travel or slow money – terms that define practices of consumption but also describe a production ethos defined by a resistance to mass-market industrial processes.<sup>48</sup>

In this context, the relationship of slow cinema to these practices has become ambiguous; on the one hand, the term's deployment is not dependent on any structural proclamation made by the several filmmakers commonly associated with the term by academics and film critics, even considering protracted filmmaking practices such as the ones analysed in the previous chapter. Yet, on the other hand, as with the other cultural practices subsumed under auspices of the 'slow' prefix, slow cinema suggests practices of consumption that are tied to exclusive circuits – the film festival, the gallery space or multi-disciplinary events such as the AV Festival<sup>49</sup> – placing it in a position of alterity to a mainstream cinema which deploys narratives

---

<sup>47</sup> See Carlo Petriani, *Slow food: the Case for Taste* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). Considering slow movement discourses applied to cinema see Dennis Rothermel, 'Slow Food, Slow Film', in *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, Vol. 26, no 4 (2009), 265-79, and Song Hwee Lim, *Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness* (Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 2-5;

<sup>48</sup> Concerning the nature of these practices see, respectively: Jennifer Rauch, 'The Origin of Slow Media: Early Diffusion of a Cultural Innovation through Popular and Press Discourse, 2002-2010', in *Transformations*, no 20 (2011). Online: [http://www.transformationsjournal.org/journal/issue\\_20/article\\_01.shtml](http://www.transformationsjournal.org/journal/issue_20/article_01.shtml) [accessed: 12.05.2014]; Lucy Siegle, *To Die For: Is Fashion Wearing out the World?* (London: Fourth Estate, 2008); Anon., 'What is slow travel?', in *Slow Movement*. Online: [http://www.slowmovement.com/slow\\_travel.php](http://www.slowmovement.com/slow_travel.php) [accessed: 31.08.2015]; Woody Tasch, *Inquiries into the Nature of Slow Money: Investing as If Food, Farms and Fertility Mattered* (Chelsea Green, 2010).

<sup>49</sup> The AV Festival is a British festival of art, technology, music and film, sited in several locations in England. Its 2012 edition was conducted under the motto 'As Slow as Possible' (offering an opposition to the London 2012 Olympics motto 'Faster, Higher, Stronger'). The 2012 edition of the festival presented a slow cinema cycle as part of a diverse programme of non-mainstream artistic practices under the slow aesthetic.



with ‘intensified continuity,’ and which privileges fast editing and visual stress.<sup>50</sup> As Matthew Flanagan argues, this decelerated filmic aesthetic is sustained by the use of ‘(often extremely) long takes, de-centred and understated modes of storytelling, and a pronounced emphasis on quietude and the everyday’.<sup>51</sup> Framed as oppositional to mainstream cinematic entertainment, many of the works that have been labelled slow cinema deploy an ‘aesthetic of slowness’ with a markedly observational pace.

Since the emergence of the term in the early 2000s, slow cinema has come to be understood as a cultural formation which resists acceleration, endemic to contemporary society and culture. Observing the increasing visibility of cinematic deceleration and an increasing suspicion of film formulas in art cinema, critics and academics argue that an increasing number of films convey a slow cinematic aesthetic which responds to anxieties in contemporary society.<sup>52</sup> As Thomas Elsaesser argues,

the “cinema of slow” sees itself as a reaction to ‘accelerated continuity’, where slowness – however expressed or represented – becomes an act of organized resistance: just as ‘slow food’ is a reaction to both the convenience and uniformity of fast food, appealing to locally grown ingredients, traditional modes of manufacture and community values. No longer along the lines of ‘art versus commerce’, or ‘realism versus illusionism’, slow cinema [...] counters the blockbuster’s over-investment

---

<sup>50</sup> See David Bordwell, ‘Intensified Continuity: Visual Style in Contemporary American Film’, in *Film Quarterly*, Vol. no. 55, Issue no. 3 (2002), 24.

<sup>51</sup> Matthew Flanagan ‘Towards an Aesthetic of Slow in Contemporary Cinema’. In *I6-9*, nr 29 (November 2008). Online: [http://www.16-9.dk/2008-11/side11\\_inenglish.htm](http://www.16-9.dk/2008-11/side11_inenglish.htm) [accessed: 13.02.2014]. See also Flanagan’s compressive PhD thesis on slow cinema, submitted to the University of Exeter in 2012.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Flanagan ‘Towards an Aesthetic of Slow’; Jonathan Romney, ‘In search of the lost time’, in *Sight & Sound*, no. 2 (February 2010), 44; Michel Ciment ‘The State of Cinema’ (San Francisco Film Society, 2003). On-line: <http://www.siff.org/fest03/special/state.html> [accessed: 21.10.2011].

in physical action, spectacle and violence with long takes, quiet observation, an attention to detail, to inner stirrings rather than to outward restlessness, highlighting the deliberate or hesitant gesture, rather than the protagonist's drive or determination – reminding one, however remotely, of the 'go-slow' of industrial protest, but also the 'organic' pace of the vegetal realm.<sup>53</sup>

The dichotomies pointed out by Elsaesser are central to the discussion of slow cinema carried by film journalism and academics since the turn of the millennium. As pointed out by Jonathan Romney in a *Guardian* article from 2000, the 'dissident' and 'slow' cinematic style of Andrei Tarkovsky and Miklós Jancsó has reappeared in the work of numerous 'rejected but vital castaway directors' such as Costa and the already mentioned Béla Tarr, Fred Kelemen, as well as the Russian filmmaker Aleksandr Sokurov and the French director Bruno Dumont; more than just a European movement, Romney notes, this cinematic slowness has been 'reinvented' globally (echoing Betz argument concerning the contemporary parametric art film).<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, film critic Michel Ciment, speaking in the role of guest programmer of the 2003 San Francisco International Film Festival, suggests a similar reappearance of cinematic slowness, when he argues that several international 'directors have reacted' to the acceleration of commercially-dominant forms of cinema, deploying instead a 'cinema of slowness, as if they wanted to live again the sensuous experience of a moment revealed in its authenticity'.<sup>55</sup> Both Romney's

---

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, 'Stop/Motion', in *Between Stillness and Movement: Film Photography Algorithms*, edited by Eivind Rossack (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 117.

<sup>54</sup> Jonathan Romney, 'Are you sitting comfortably?', in *The Guardian* (07 October 2000). Online: [www.theguardian.com/film/2000/oct/07/books.guardianreview](http://www.theguardian.com/film/2000/oct/07/books.guardianreview) [accessed: 13.05.2014].

<sup>55</sup> Ciment 'The State of Cinema', np.

article and Ciment's public address reveal a discourse that positions slow/parametric film practices as part of a resistance to cinematic speed, and as a sign of (authentic) cinephilic experience. While these discussions regarding slowness are contrasted with ideas about the constant acceleration found in mainstream entertainment, slow cinema also contrasts with other stylistic and narrative conventions circulating in the contemporary film festival milieu.<sup>56</sup>

This inclusion of Costa in the category slow cinema is a grouping contested by the filmmaker, who considers a 'slow' aesthetic irrelevant to his own formal preoccupations.<sup>57</sup> However, the rigorous style characterised by static camerawork, long takes and understated narratives which can be seen in *In Vanda's Room* and *Colossal Youth* caused Costa's work to be included in many of the discussions concerning slow cinema. In the February 2010 edition of *Sight & Sound*, which was dedicated to the predominant cinema trends of the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century, Romney again enthusiastically praises the aesthetic virtues of 'Slow Cinema'.<sup>58</sup> According to Romney, films such as *Colossal Youth*, *Silent Night* (Carlos Reygadas, 2007), *Birdsong* (Albert Serra, 2008) or the works of Lisandro Alonso (to name just a few listed), participate in the

increasing demand among cinephiles for films that are slow, poetic, contemplative – cinema that downplays event in favour of mood,

---

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, the discussion of commercially successful world cinema formulae such as 'art cinema "light"' in Elsaesser, *European Cinema*, 509.

<sup>57</sup> Pedro Costa, personal interview (Lisbon, 22 February 2013). Similarly, Costa criticises the use of long stationary shots in contemporary art cinema in the documentary *Finding the Criminal* (dir. Craig Keller, 2010, included in the 2011 UK DVD edition of *Colossal Youth* by Eureka!/ Masters of Cinema).

<sup>58</sup> Romney, 'In search of the lost time', 43.

evocativeness and an intensified sense of temporality. Such films highlight the viewing process itself as a real-time experience in which, ideally, [the spectator] become acutely aware of every minute, every second spent watching.<sup>59</sup>

The demand among cinephiles for slow film pointed out by Romney indicates a form of consumption that positions itself in opposition to mainstream entertainment, a form of consumption which became central in the ongoing dialogue between supporters and detractors of the term.

These debates came to a head in 2010 due to two opinion articles which questioned the assumptions made about the artistic merit of slow cinema, and the pretentiousness of many of the filmmakers whose work had been included under the term. In April 2010, Nick James' *Sight & Sound* editorial questioned the 'critical orthodoxy' around slow films, which was being maintained by film critics and festival programmers:

some of [slow films] offer an easy life for critics and programmers. After all, the festivals themselves commission many of these productions and such films are easy to remember and discuss in detail because details are few.<sup>60</sup>

James identifies the 'passive-aggressive' quality of some slow films that, according to him, impose 'boredom' and feelings of 'philistin[ism]' in audiences who failed to see the merit of these 'slow' films.<sup>61</sup> James' editorial generated lengthy discussions among cinephiles online. Among others, the curator of the blog *Unspoken Cinema*,

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Nick James, 'Passive Aggressive', in *Sight & Sound* (April 2010), 5.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

Harry Tuttle, came to question the professional receptivity of some film critics (James in particular) in engaging with slow film aesthetics due to an ‘anti-intellectual, pro-entertainment inclination’.<sup>62</sup> This response was discussed at length in several other personal blogs including – among others, the ones curated by Vadim Rizov and Steven Shaviro.<sup>63</sup> Shaviro, for example, raises questions about the validity of forms of contemporary filmic expression rooted in past (parametric) art cinema, describing contemporary slow cinema as ‘profoundly nostalgic and regressive’.<sup>64</sup> In the context of this chapter, Shaviro’s comments signal the contested symbolic value of the work of some contemporary slow filmmakers (e.g. Dumont or Reygadas) whom, according to him, cannot sustain an artistic value carried by earlier, already canonized directors Michelangelo Antonioni, Chantal Akerman, Miklós Jancsó or Andrei Tarkovsky.

Similar debates among film critics were generated by an opinion article by film critic Dan Kois in the *New York Times* in 2011. In this article Kois confesses his philistine ‘guilt’ and ‘cultural fatigue’ when having to withstand contemporary slow films such as *Meek’s Cutoff* (dir. Kelly Reichardt, 2010) or *Three Times* (dir. Hou Hsiao-Hsien, 2005), or art-house classics such as *Solaris* (dir. Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972) among others – films that the critic labelled ‘cultural vegetables’.<sup>65</sup> As with

---

<sup>62</sup> Harry Tuttle, ‘Slow films, easy life’.

<sup>63</sup> Respectively: Vadim Rizov, ‘Slow Cinema Backlash.’, in *Fix* (12 May 2010), online: <http://www.ifc.com/fix/2010/05/slow-cinema-backlash>; Steve Shaviro, ‘Slow Cinema Vs Fast Films’, in *The Pinocchio Theory* (12 May 2010), online: <http://www.shaviro.com/Blog/?p=891> [both accessed: 06.09.2012].

<sup>64</sup> Shaviro, ‘Slow Cinema Vs Fast Films’.

<sup>65</sup> Dan Kois, ‘Eating Your Cultural Vegetables’, in *The New York Times* (29 April 2011). Online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/01/magazine/mag-01Riff-t.html> [accessed: 06.09.2012].

James' editorial, Kois' article produced a string of articles and blog posts. Among others, Richard Brody questioned Kois' professionalism;<sup>66</sup> Manohla Dargis and A.O. Scott (*New York Times*) compared the fatigue expressed by Kois to the lethargy caused by 'boring' and 'repetitive' contemporary Hollywood comedies such as *The Hangover Part II* (dir. Todd Phillips, 2011).<sup>67</sup> In a later article co-signed by Dargis, Scott and Kois, Kois reinforced his lack of engagement with slow films and questions the artistic value and transcendental qualities of Pedro Costa's work.<sup>68</sup>

Both the James' 'passive-aggressive' and Kois' 'cultural vegetables' articles (as well as subsequent articles on both sides of this argument, which served to feed these controversies), reveal tense dialogues among critics and cinephiles which seek to negotiate symbolic value of a filmic expression that is categorised as the contemporary parametric/slow art film.<sup>69</sup> This dialogue highlights the mechanisms which seek to theorise slow art film as part of canonising strategies, but which also

---

<sup>66</sup> Richard Brody, 'The pleasure Principle', in *The New Yorker* (01 May 2011). Online: <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/movies/2011/05/the-pleasure-principle.html> [accessed: 06 September 2012].

<sup>67</sup> Manohla Dargis and A. O. Scott, 'In Defense of the Slow and the Boring', in *The New York Times* (03 June 2011). Online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/05/movies/films-in-defense-of-slow-and-boring.html> [accessed: 06.09.2012]. Several blog posts also commented on Kois article. Among others, see Jim Emerson, 'Into the Great Big Boring', in *Scanners* (09 June 2011), online: [www.rogerebert.com/scanners/into-the-great-big-boring](http://www.rogerebert.com/scanners/into-the-great-big-boring); David Bordwell, 'Good and good for you', in *Observations on film art* online: [www.davidbordwell.net/blog/2011/07/10/good-and-good-for-you/](http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/2011/07/10/good-and-good-for-you/) [both accessed: 06.09.2012].

<sup>68</sup> A. O. Scott, Manohla Dargis and Dan Kois, 'Sometimes a Vegetable Is Just a Vegetable', in *The New York Times* (17 July 2011), online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/19/movies/critics-discuss-cinema-thats-good-for-you.html> [accessed: 06.09.2012].

<sup>69</sup> The discussion of these controversies extended to academic literature. For academic debates raised by James and Kois' articles see Karl Schoonover, 'Wastrels of Time: Slow Cinema's Laboring Body, the Political Spectator, and the Queer', in *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, vol. 53, no. 1 (Spring 2012), 65-78; Lim, *Tsai Ming-liang*, 17, 37; Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge, 'Introduction', in *Slow Cinema* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, forthcoming 2015), 2-3.

aim to control the attribution of the symbolic capital that endows the contemporary art film with aesthetic significance. These critical discussions emphasise the categorisation inherent in its intervening agents' roles. Yet, these discussions also reveal aspects closely related to the economy of the film festival, and the interactions between institutions and the positions taken by different agents within this milieu. If we follow James' argument that slow cinema is an aesthetic formulation that allows the agents of the film festival to make 'easy' decisions, the intrusion into this milieu of the difficult art film – understood both as part of the scholarly discussions concerning the parametric film and the critical debate around slow cinema itself – reflects the structural qualities of the economy of prestige.

The film festival presents competitive practices catering to different audiences, responding to the needs of industries and businesses of different commercial scales. However, and as Betz argues, it is also in this milieu that difficult art films find their native environment, forming an 'international style authorized and promoted via the global film festival circuit – less visibly and concretely articulated than Dogme95, for example, but perhaps equally programmatically'.<sup>70</sup> Consequently, festival programming forms an 'international networks of exchange', which potentially binds filmmakers to 'a marketplace that cannot but have an effect on the stylistic choices that they make'.<sup>71</sup> This relation between filmic style and the marketplace is further reflected in world cinema funds that currently provide a major part of the economic support by larger film festivals, a commercial effort that

---

<sup>70</sup> Betz, 'Beyond Europe', 31-2.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

contributes to the festivals' image.<sup>72</sup> Thus, stylistic lineages impact the institutional interests that compose the economy of the film festival.

However, this same economy also shapes the individual performance of the different agents that make up the field.<sup>73</sup> As observed by Francisco Villa-Lobos, the producer on *Colossal Youth*, choices in film festival programming rely on direct dealings between programmers, producers and directors, and on relationships based on individual prestige. According to Villa-Lobos, contemporary cinematic styles have a 'superficial' and 'temporary' impact on the decisions made by programmers:

people are not so fixated in styles such as 'slow cinema'. [The influence of slow cinema in film festivals] is a myth ... the name [of a filmmaker] is more important than the label connected to that same name... festivals work that way! There is a level of interest which has to do with the film itself, and another level formed by the names of people [directors and/or producers] which have their films [to be included] in the festivals.<sup>74</sup>

Significantly, the observations by Villa-Lobos may contradict the claims made by James and the arguments presented by Betz. Though contradictory, these readings of the dynamics of the field of the film festival are informative of the inherent ambiguities in the formation of symbolic and economic value. The production initiatives associated with major film festivals, such as Rotterdam's Hubert Bals Fund (HBF), have had a significant impact on the way films with an austere (and significantly slow) style have been able to gain predominance on the circuit. This is a

---

<sup>72</sup> As discussed in Chapter One. See also Peranson, 'First You Get the Power', 34-5.

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, the analysis of the multiplicity of participants' 'performances' at stake in the film festival, in de Valck, *Film Festivals*, 32-3.

<sup>74</sup> Villa-Lobos, personal interview (11 February 2013).



significant development, as it ties a particular film aesthetic to mechanisms mediating the distribution of prestige and access to financial support. However, these funding (and subsequently programming) initiatives do not extend to all the filmmakers whose work is commonly labelled as slow cinema as, for example, the HBF fund only supports filmmakers of non-European origins.

Due to this uneven distribution of economic support, filmmakers such as Costa have been obliged to rely on different mechanisms of support in order to participate in these mediations of value. In line with Villas-Lobos' argument, the different levels of interest in a particular film or filmmaker are tied to agreements in which films and filmmakers participate directly. Thus, considerations of production processes need to be considered alongside the dialogue between different agents within the field of the film festival. As explained in the previous chapter, the post-production process of *In Vanda's Room* was financed through the agency of Marco Müller, at the time the artistic director of Locarno festival. These negotiations between the production of Costa's film and the economic aspects of the film festival circuit become even more visible within Costa's current production framework. While impacting on its overall reception, discussions concerning filmic style are subordinated to production frameworks and the centrality of the Costa's agency, both of which require further investigation.

Carrying the framework initially observed in *In Vanda's Room* still further, *Colossal Youth* relied on similar small-scale shooting process and successive agreements in order to complete its production and post-production. A text included in *Colossal Youth* promotional leaflet, signed by Costa, provides details on the film's shooting process:

We tried to overcome obstacles without resorting to the classical tools of filmmaking. We had no lighting, no cables, no makeup, no [electricity] generators, no catering. [...] We often filmed in locations without any electricity. We used only eight or nine mirrors, some [light] reflectors, polystyrene sheets, everything that could help increase use of available light. [...]

I used a digital camera, DAT for sound, one or two microphones and some tripods. [...] All in all, I shot 320 one-hour DVcam cassettes. The shoot lasted 15 months, six days per week, practically all day long, shooting sometimes 20 or 30 takes per scene.<sup>75</sup>

While similar to *In Vanda's Room*, *Colossal Youth* shooting process, however, relied from the beginning on a larger and more consistent group of film professionals (such as Leonardo Simões on cinematography and Olivier Blanc on sound). These arrangements have marked Costa's narrative of production just during with his partnership with Contracosta (until 2006), but also in the filmmaker's latest works, such as *Horse Money* (2015).<sup>76</sup> The process used in *Colossal Youth*, relying on small teams and inexpensive equipment, subsequently opened other possibilities for Costa to participate in commissioned works such as the 2007 short films *Tarrafal* (2007, included in the omnibus film *State of the World*, produced for the Gulbenkian Foundation) or *Sweet Exorcism* (2012, made on a commission for Guimarães 2012 European capital of culture).<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Pedro Costa, 'Juventude em Marcha', promotional leaflet (nd), np.

<sup>76</sup> As explained by Saramago, email interview (23 July 2013).

<sup>77</sup> Apart from these short films produced on commissions, Costa also directed *Ne Change Rien* (2007, later extended to a feature film in 2009) and *O Nosso Homem* (2010), as well as several video installations, discussed in the next chapter.

Soon after the completion of *Colossal Youth*, Costa directed and *A Caça ao Coelho com Pau* (aka *The Rabbit Hunters*; henceforth *Rabbit Hunters*), a commission included in the Jeonju Digital Project (JDP), a section of the Jeonju International Film Festival (JIFF). This participation in international commissions highlights Costa's approach to building a production framework, since the JDP commissions support only works produced with digital equipment and a small production budget.<sup>78</sup> Costa's participation in the JDP initiative ties the filmmaker to other short films directed by 'slow' filmmakers under this initiative, including include Jia Zhangke and Tsai Ming-liang (in 2001), Weerasethakul (in 2005), Diaz and Naomi Kawase (in 2009), or James Benning (in 2010), among others. However, Costa's involvement in these schemes can also be understood as an example of the significance of the personal agency of the filmmaker in searching additional funding and exhibition via the film festival circuit. Thus, while a filmic slow style may unite filmmakers under critical monikers, in financial terms, Costa's participation in particular events tied to the film festival economy are revealing of the role of the personal agency and filmmaking practices of individual filmmakers in dealing with low-budget production frameworks and the use of digital technology.

Assumptions concerning filmic style facilitate not only the programming of film festivals but also the funding initiatives that rely on them to establish symbolic value through a network of personal relations rooted in a system of prestige which, still, aims to generate economic capital. However, and taking Villa-Lobos'

---

<sup>78</sup> According to Villa-Lobos (personal interview, 11 February 2013), the budget offered by the JDP was approximately 50.000 dollars.

observations concerning slow cinema further, the different levels of interest shed light on the intricacies of festival programming. Austere filmic formulae and possible stylistic lineages may lie at the heart of discussions of the dynamics of festival programming (as Betz argues), but the roles carried by its different participants are also relevant to this form of selection – opening up a discussion of the different levels of interest that come into play in a prestige-based economy.

## Conclusion

As I have argued across this chapter, the critical reception of Pedro Costa's work, particularly *Colossal Youth*, participates in critical dialogues about film aesthetics, the formation of stylistic lineages and debates around filmmakers' personal agency. These reception mechanisms reveal, on the one hand, negotiations which endow films such as *Colossal Youth* with a divergent form of symbolic capital. I argue that this contested capital is one of the most visible characteristics of an economy of prestige, a capital which mediates between different types of artistic recognition and consecration. However, on the other hand, possible symbolic value formations within these dialogues are complicated by the economic aspects of the film festival. A critical appreciation of the relationships between the roles of filmmakers, producers and distribution networks operating in this field offer new readings of the operation of the film festival, distinct from those resulting from the enclosed world of traditional film criticism.

Circulation and consecration within the field of the film festival is also tied to the agency of filmmakers such as Costa, who are active agents contributing to aspects of production and circulation, and thus participants in the mediation between symbolic currency and an economic value. *Colossal Youth* resists some forms of

critical and economic assimilation, as pointed out by Martin, yet equally, the inclusion of Costa's film in debates around slow cinema highlights forms of critical reception and consumption that have generated some currency. While these assumptions align with Costa's agency as a filmmaker, the symbolic capital bestowed on *Colossal Youth* is also formed by expectations of the agents connected with the circulation and consumption of art cinema. Thus, Pedro Costa's work becomes a vehicle for different constructions of value, but also serves as a case study of how contemporary art films rely on the filmmaker as a commercial agent. The following chapter carries this argument further by examining Costa's presence in the art gallery circuit, an arena in which these value constructions have also acquired visibility.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Between the Black Box and the White Cube

I'm not a video artist, I'm a filmmaker.

Pedro Costa<sup>1</sup>

Yes, movies are about getting the biggest audiences possible. And some art almost goes the other way. [...] The fewer who like it, the more it becomes a fetish.

Pipilotti Rist<sup>2</sup>

In an editorial published in the Spanish edition of the May 2009 issue of the *Cahiers du Cinéma*, which was dedicated to Pedro Costa, Carlos Heredero explores the current state of the distribution and exhibition of the filmmaker's work in Spain. Heredero points out that, while Costa's 'films are [exhibited] in museums, in some [film] festivals, and [circulate] on DVD', there is still a notable absence of his works in the theatrical circuit.<sup>3</sup> A possible reading of Heredero's observations is that the 'need' of Pedro Costa in cinemas (using Heredero's term) reveals assumptions about the role of theatrical distribution as the primary form with which art cinema needs to engage to find an official release.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jan van Eyck Video Weekend, 'From black box to white cube', round-table discussion with Pedro Costa, Catherine David and Chris Dercon (moderator), (26 May 2007). Online: [http://archived.janvaneyck.nl/0\\_4\\_6\\_text\\_files/David\\_Dercon\\_Costa.html](http://archived.janvaneyck.nl/0_4_6_text_files/David_Dercon_Costa.html) [accessed: 16.07.2014].

<sup>2</sup> Segment of the dialogue between the artist and a curator from the New York Museum of Modern Art, in the documentary *The Colour of Your Socks - A Year with Pipilotti Rist* (dir. Michael Hegglin, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Carlos F. Heredero, 'Necesidad de Pedro Costa', in *Cahiers du Cinéma* (España), nr. 6 (May, 2009), 5. The edition of this number of the *Cahiers du Cinéma España* coincided with the 2009 edition of *PhotoEspaña*, the international festival of photography and visual arts. Included in the programme was a Costa retrospective held at the *Filmoteca Española* (Madrid).

Herederó's quote above expresses his understanding that the art-house circuit is still the main stage for Costa's cinema. However, it also reveals a tension between the different presentational modes in which contemporary art cinema is currently situated. While the dark and immersive setting of the film theatre is understood as the traditional environment of any form of cinematic consumption, other presentational modes have come to challenge its importance in the consumption of art cinema, and the multifaceted position contemporary art filmmakers occupy in different and complementary exhibition circuits. Difficult to access via theatrical distribution, Costa's work has been circulating not just in art-house or the film festival circuits (as discussed in the previous chapter), but also participating in different presentational modes. Currently, Costa's work being is shown in several international retrospectives promoted by different cinema and academic institutions and by a broader and more inclusive global distribution on DVD (both discussed in the next chapter), and in the format of art installations, exhibited in museums and galleries.

Since 2003, Costa has been engaged in prolific spate of activity creating works commissioned specifically for the art exhibition circuit. Similar to the circulation of his films on the film festival circuit, Costa's gallery installations have moved within a network of art galleries, negotiating symbolic value as well as different possibilities for exhibition and circulation. Aesthetically, these commissioned video installations continue the textual and thematic universe created in Costa's features, as well as numerous short films. Costa's works for the gallery spaces have also created new forms of artistic agency, allowing access to financial support and the different forms of consumption offered by this non-theatrical distribution circuit.

Analysing Costa's presence in the gallery's 'white cube', and the possible dialogues with his cinema 'black box' works, this chapter interrogates what potentiated this connection to the gallery space, and how these video installations enter into a dialogue with his feature films, not just in thematic and stylistic terms, but also as part of the narrative of production created by the filmmaker. Focusing on these three different fields of enquiry – the institutional contexts of the exhibition, aesthetic dialogues between works intended for different modes of presentation, and processes of artistic production – this chapter analyses Costa's filmmaking in the context of the art exhibition circuit. It considers the dialogue between Costa's twin roles of filmmaker and artist, as well as the processes of production and the institutional mechanisms that govern the presence of art cinema on the white cube.

In order to carry out this discussion, this chapter firstly contextualises the factors that contribute to the increasing visibility of a cinematic language in contemporary art galleries and the growing presence of filmmakers in this circuit. While also accounting for the historical formation of this field, this chapter discusses three central factors: the presentational mode of the gallery, to which filmmakers adapt their works; the institutional exhibition context, which mediates between the works of multimedia artists and filmmakers; and the processes of production and technological progress that has allowed the connection between film and art at the gallery circuit.

The second part of this chapter analyses Pedro Costa's inclusion in the international art circuit. It analyses Costa's approach to the white cube in comparison to the stylistic and production characteristics already present in the filmmaker's theatrically released works, which were analysed in the previous chapters. The chapter then moves on to discuss how these characteristics found production and



financial support in an expanding international gallery circuit, while negotiating between professional processes rooted in filmmaking and creative techniques commonly adopted by artists working within a cinematic tradition. Acknowledging possible ambiguities in Costa's relationship with the white cube, the final part of this chapter interrogates the divisions between filmmaker and artist, and the negotiation of these roles in the gallery milieu.

This chapter proposes a way to understand emerging trends in the circulation of contemporary art cinema, outside the confined spaces of theatrical circulation. Costa's gallery installations illuminate many aspects of the current dialogue between cinema and art, while highlighting practices that overlap the worlds of filmmaking and artistic practices. This approach is concerned not just with aesthetic aspects mediated through artistic practices in the white cube, but is also informative of how Costa's narrative of production gains further relevance through a discussion of his gallery works.

### The Cinematic at the gallery

Costa's video installations typify the increased visibility many contemporary art filmmakers have acquired through the art exhibition circuit, highlighting the connection between artistic practices and cinema observed in the last two decades. Exhibitions such as *Le Mouvement des Images* (displayed at the Centre Pompidou in 2006), demonstrate a tendency in the art gallery circuit for drawing historical and contemporary readings that connects cinema and visual arts. Other exhibitions, such as *Notorious – Alfred Hitchcock and Contemporary Art* (displayed at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford in 1999), express these correlations between film and art, while contributing to the increasing museumification of cinema. In both these

examples, cinema at the gallery space reveals mediations on what Volker Pantenburg calls ‘different image-systems’, which he characterises as systems that convey aesthetic mutations that the moving image has acquired in contemporary art.<sup>4</sup> Successive editions of the Documenta biennial (originally started in 1955 in Kassel, and expanded to several other international locations since 2002), further illustrate the cohabitation of these different image-systems, offering multiscreen viewing experiences which privilege moving image installations placed in gallery darkened spaces.<sup>5</sup>

This correlation has historical implications, which frame the relationship between art exhibitions in a museum and gallery space and filmmaking practices rooted in experimentation at the art gallery. Scholarly analysis of cinematic language in the art exhibition circuit commonly highlights the ongoing dialogue between different presentational modes that have sustained the film-related practices of several generations of artists throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chrissie Iles, in the catalogue of the 2001 Whitney Museum exhibition ‘Into the Light: the Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977’, offers an historical reading of artistic manifestations that ties together 20<sup>th</sup> century conceptual art and experimental cinema, which she argues share common concerns about the hybridity of the projected image.<sup>6</sup> In similar terms, Chris Dercon suggests genealogical formations that have sustained the correlations between visual arts and cinema as discussing a presence in

---

<sup>4</sup> Volker Pantenburg, ‘“Post Cinema?” Movies, Museums, Mutations’, in *Site Magazine*, nr. 24 (2008), 4.

<sup>5</sup> See Margot Lovejoy, *Digital Currents: Art in the Electronic Age* (London: Routledge, 2004), 142-3.

<sup>6</sup> See Chrissie Iles, ‘Between the Still and the Moving Image’ in *Into the Light: the Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977* (New York: Whitney Museum of Art, 2001), 35-9.

the museum and gallery space. According to Dercon's genealogy, 'the experiments of film's avant-garde artists such as [Kenneth] Anger, [Bruce] Connor, [Maya] Deren, [Paul] Sharits and [Michael] Snow' broke initial ground on a path that was soon followed by the 'video installations of the 'artistic avant-garde' during the 1970s.<sup>7</sup>

While taking these genealogy origins into consideration, Dercon argues that the work of contemporary visual artist 'show[s] a radical difference from what has gone before', with artists placing their practices in direct dialogue with cinema aesthetic and film production processes. As Dercon points out:

[f]ilm or video pieces by young artists such as Pierre Huyghe, Douglas Gordon, Sharon Lockhart, Pierre Bismuth, Mark Lewis, Georgina Starr, Matthew Barney, Stan Douglas or Sam Taylor-Wood are primarily imitations of the cinema or of its mode of production. These works consume the whole of cinema [...]; they do not distinguish between high and low art, nor are they concerned with cinephilia. [The work of these artists] are perfect examples of the strategies of imitation inherent in the way young artists from all over the world produce art in general. They imitate a wide range of western visual expression, avant-garde techniques and, inevitably, the cinema. They look for disciplines which are readily available to anyone, anywhere. Of all the arts, it is the cinema which functions as a really global medium. That cinema which is globally popular did not and does not seem to be bound by different cultural characteristics and art was looking for that. Significantly, many young artists are responding to existing forms of mimesis in cinema itself.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Chris Dercon, 'Gleaning the Future', in *Vertigo*, Vol. 2 nr. 2 (Spring 2002). Online: [www.closeupfilmcentre.com/vertigo\\_magazine/volume-2-issue-2-spring-2002/gleaning-the-future/](http://www.closeupfilmcentre.com/vertigo_magazine/volume-2-issue-2-spring-2002/gleaning-the-future/) [accessed: 05.08.2014].

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Expanding on Dercon's observations, the cinematic appropriations pointed out above can be read as mostly aesthetic, participating in what Catherine Elwes call the 'fetishisation of Hollywood' by contemporary artists.<sup>9</sup> However, these practices also deploy particular modes of production that have been shared between artists and filmmakers, or that are commonly understood as inherent to industrial filmmaking. As discussed by Erika Balsom, the work of Sharon Lockhart using 16mm film – a format that presents a solid historical presence in experimental film, documentary and low budget art cinema – propitiates an 'analogue aura' that ties this artist to not just aesthetic but also production processes in filmmaking.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Matthew Barney's *Cremaster* cycle (1994-2002), with its cinema production crews and feature film budget, shares modes of production commonly understood as being part of commercial filmmaking. Furthermore, many artists have transcended the gallery space and made their works available in theatrical circuits, as feature films by Douglas Gordon, Steve McQueen and Barney illustrate.<sup>11</sup>

The presence of cinematic language and the deployment of filmmaking frameworks within contemporary artistic practices correspond to the approach of filmmakers to the art gallery circuit. Raymond Bellour argues that this approach to the white cube is intertwined with the evolution of the exhibition of cinema itself, together with technological possibilities offered by digital video.<sup>12</sup> Bellour also

---

<sup>9</sup> See Catherine Elwes, *Video Art a Guided Tour* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 169-71.

<sup>10</sup> See Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013) 103-4.

<sup>11</sup> See Elwes, *Video Art*, 171.

<sup>12</sup> Raymond Bellour, *La Querelle des Dispositifs: Cinéma, Installations, Expositions* (Paris: Éditions P.O.L., 2012), 29.

argues that forms of filmic deceleration have contributed to the favourable reception of art film by gallery curators.<sup>13</sup> Discussing the work of filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul, who maintains a prolific presence in both art-house and gallery circuits, Jihoon Kim argues that many contemporary art filmmakers ‘translate’ their works into art installations, or ‘conceived new works only accessible in the darkened space of the gallery, while continuing to produce films for traditional theatrical release’.<sup>14</sup> This dual circulation of the work of filmmakers such as Weerasethakul or Costa (as well as Abbas Kiarostami, Chantal Akerman, Atom Egoyan, Aleksandr Sokurov, Victor Erice, Raul Ruiz and Jean-Luc Godard, to name a few), place contemporary art cinema in a similar position to that of artists deploying cinema formats and practices in their works. Thus, as Dercon proposes, current contextual mediations between art and film emphasise the question ‘where is cinema?’, reformulating André Bazin’s interrogation – what is cinema? – as part of the dialogue between different presentational modes.<sup>15</sup>

The factors explained above contribute to the current tendency toward a visible presence of the *cinematic* in the gallery. This tendency is understood as an artistic practice carried out by both multimedia artists and filmmakers, one which deploys filmic style and film production frameworks to produce works for exhibition in the art exhibition circuit. The developing cinematic trend within the art gallery circuit is tied to contextual factors that are pertinent to the discussions conducted in

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Jihoon Kim, ‘Between Auditorium and Gallery: Perception in Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s Films and Installations’, in *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories*, ed. by Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 125-6.

<sup>15</sup> Dercon, ‘Gleaning the Future’.

this chapter. Firstly, cinematic practice within the gallery presents an aesthetic re-formulation of cinema's language that is tied to the qualities of the gallery as a presentational mode. Secondly, while cinematic practices are deployed by filmmakers and artists who belong to different disciplines, both form of cinematic practice are included in the same exhibition and circulation context and, more importantly, bound within the same cultural economy. Thirdly, production and technological processes bring together artists and filmmakers within this shared cultural economy in order to produce many of the art installations that convey cinematic language.

Examining the first aspect, the presence of cinematic practices within the art exhibition circuit allows for an observation of the oppositional contrast created by the juxtaposition of theatrical exhibition and gallery spaces. As Chrissie Iles argues, these distinct models of exhibition allow for an examination of the difference between passive reception of theatrical exhibition and the potentialities of spectator participation and movement offered by the gallery space.<sup>16</sup> When positioned in the white cube, cinema negotiate preconceived modes of consumption within the theatrical setting – a dark room in which audiences sit in order to watch a film with a pre-determined length. To these preconceived notions of the cinema setting, the (occasional darkened) space of the gallery presents different properties of consumption, in which viewers follow different trajectories and 'modalities of perception, editing and temporality'.<sup>17</sup> While this binary reading between theatrical

---

<sup>16</sup> Iles, 'Between the Still and the Moving Image', 33.

<sup>17</sup> André Parente and Victa de Carvalho, 'Cinema as *dispositif*: Between Cinema and Contemporary Art', in *Cinémas*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2008), 50.

and gallery exhibition has been challenged,<sup>18</sup> these different exhibition models nevertheless effectively demonstrate not just spatial dissimilarities but also different viewing models.

As Thomas Elsaesser observes, the different level of time commitment required for the audiences of gallery rather than theatrical works, or as Elsaesser terms them, the ‘time economies’ of the different settings, makes possible different narrative constructions. The temporal extension of many cinematic installations (often of several hours or even days) allow viewers only to ‘sample’ parts of a particular work, not just because of its duration but also because it is placed in relation with other works that compete for the gallery visitor’s attention.<sup>19</sup> Examining this tension between temporal extension and the visitor’s time-economy, Elsaesser interrogates this viewing experience in the following terms:

[How] do I, as viewer when confronted with such overlong works, manage my anxiety of missing the key moment, and balance it against my sense of surfeit and saturation, as the minutes tick away and no end is in sight? Some of these extended works, in confronting viewers with their own temporality (and thus, mortality) are no doubt also a filmmaker’s way of actively ‘resisting’ the quick glance and the rapid appropriation by the casual museum visitor: regret or a bad conscience on the part of the viewer being the artist’s sole consolation or revenge.<sup>20</sup>

Elsaesser’s interrogations foreground considerations of the narrative mechanisms that, while historically present in cinematic language (common to both film and art

---

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Pantenburg, ‘Post Cinema?’, 4-5.

<sup>19</sup> Elsaesser, ‘Stop/Motion’, 111.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

installation), have gain visibility in current mediations between the white cube and the dark room. Historically, and as David Campany argues, narrative mechanisms such as duration and deceleration have been an artistic approach, ‘typified by [Andy] Warhol’s movies and the enquiries of Structuralist and Materialist filmmakers’, during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>21</sup> Many of these film practitioners have successfully negotiated a presence between theatrical and art gallery spaces, by combining the roles of artist and filmmaker – an overlapping that becomes even more visible in the work of later filmmakers and experimental artists such as Harun Farocki, James Benning and, more recently, Ben Rivers.

In contemporary terms, these previous avant-garde filmic approaches listed by Campany have been translated into the use of the long take and minimal narrative mechanisms. Warhol’s *Empire* (1964) and Michael Snow’s *Wavelength* (1967), and *La Région Centrale* (1971) are seminal works that offer an aesthetic lineage for the slow narratives of artists such as Douglas Gordon, Steve McQueen and Sharon Lockhart, amongst others.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, and as discussed in the previous chapter, critical and scholarly formations such as the contemporary parametric art film or slow cinema have brought critical attention to slowness in filmic practices which are understood as being rooted in the art-house and film festival (theatrical) circuits. As studied in the previous chapter, discussions about slowness in the theatrical setting have been particularly marked by controversy. To some extent, the art gallery offers a contrast to this troubled reception. Even if problematic in terms of consumption, as

---

<sup>21</sup> David Campany, *Photography and Cinema* (London: Reaktion, 2008), 37.

<sup>22</sup> See *ibid.*, 37-9.



Elsaesser's quote above points out, the white cube has become a setting receptive to contemporary filmic slowness, since it allows for the development of a time-economy distinct from that found within the traditional black box.

Looking at the second aspect concerning the cinematic in the gallery setting, the connection between artists and filmmakers is understood not just as a part of a presentational mode, but also as a product of the institutional milieu in which this approach operates. As Erika Balsom observes, the gallery space is not just a 'neutral, protective container for the moving image', but also informs 'a new cinematic dispositif through its discourse and institutional framing and the various practices associated with it'.<sup>23</sup> In this sense, the term 'dispositif' employed by Balsom comes to define an exhibition practice that is connected not only to the mechanisms of consumption operating under a particular presentational praxis, but also to the ideological discourses that mark that praxis.<sup>24</sup> Concerning the presence of art filmmakers in the gallery setting, this relocation not only creates new exhibition practices, but also reveals the symbolic and economic currency of art cinema under non-theatrical institutional framing.

As Elsaesser notes, while the presence of cinema in the 'white cube' circuit offers insight into the museumification of cinema, this institutional formation is different from its 'black box' counterpart, in which

[d]ifferent actor-agents, different power-relations and policy agendas, different competences, egos and sensibilities, different elements of the

---

<sup>23</sup> Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema*, 40 (emphasis in original).

<sup>24</sup> For a conceptual discussion of the term *dispositif*, reflecting scholar debates taken by Jean-Louis Baudry, Christian Metz and Michel Foucault among others, see Parente and de Carvalho, 'Cinema as *dispositif*', 40-2.

complex puzzle that is the contemporary art world and its commercial counterpart inevitably come into play. In short, from a historical point of view, the museum and the motion picture are antagonists, each with its own institutional pedigree, and during the past century, often fairly contemptuous of the other.<sup>25</sup>

Although bringing together different historical, cultural and taste formations, as Elsaesser argues, different contextual changes in the last two decades have linked these institutions in economic and in organisational terms. Looking specifically to art cinema institutions, film festival funding initiatives (e.g. Rotterdam's HBF, Jeonju's JIFF or the World Cinema Fund, associated with Berlin International Film Festival) reveal identical commission-based institutional relations with filmmakers, as they had previously maintained with those artists commissioned to produce works specifically to premiere in the international circuit composed of museums, galleries and art centres.

Taking this comparison between the gallery and the film festival circuits further, the large-scale international exhibitions which have proliferated since the 1990s bear similarities to the film festival's network of circulation and production. The interest invested in the cinematic in the white cube by networks of museums and art centres have expanded from fringe avant-garde gallery exhibition to the current international mega-exhibitions such as Documenta and Manifesta (European Biennial of Contemporary Art, 1996- ), and burgeoning network of international biennials shaped as the Venice Biennale, held in Berlin, Dakar, New Delhi, Taipei,

---

<sup>25</sup> Elsaesser, 'Stop/Motion', 109.

São Paulo, New York, Seville, and Prague, among other cities.<sup>26</sup> As Elena Filipovic argues, while offering a multitude of political, cultural and regional contexts, these large-scale international exhibitions ‘have an explicit ambition both to represent their region, host city, or nation and to display a decidedly international panorama of contemporary production, an ambition that influences the scale and general circumstance attached to [these events]’.<sup>27</sup> Filipovic’s characterisation of these large-scale international events presents a web of institutional circulation which is formed by social, cultural and political discourses, and inflected by geographical and economic interests that partially reflect the characterisation of the film festival circuit, as discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Six.

This network of large-scale international exhibitions (what Filipovic terms ‘the global white cube’), combined with smaller-scale art circuits, partially sustained by regional or national public funding bodies forming an infrastructure supporting independent film practitioners. This complex circuit offers new forms of funding and exhibition to variegated forms of cinematic practices – either the ones positioned in a direct lineage with past historical avant-garde film or video installations, or those drawing on contemporary film by artists and filmmakers.<sup>28</sup> Once again, Elsaesser offers a pertinent reflection on the financial and exhibition support offered to filmmakers by the white cube, pointing out that the art installation created

---

<sup>26</sup> See Elena Filipovic, ‘The Global White Cube’, in *The Manifesta Decade*, edited by Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), 68; Maeve Connolly, *The place of Artists’ Cinema: Space Site and Screen* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), 166.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, the analysis of the relation between galleries and the young British artists working in film in Elwes, *Video Art*, 168-9.

possibilities for an alternative to the art-house, a circuit which became ‘increasing reluctant to take risks’ and partially substitutes the financial and exhibition support once offered by public television.<sup>29</sup> While Elsaesser’s analysis is placed in the context of experimental cinema in contemporary Germany, these financial and exhibition conditions are also available to many filmmakers whose niche practices are not easily recuperated – both in commercial and aesthetic terms.

Bringing together aesthetic formulations and their associated institutional practices, the cinematic art installation negotiates a third way with regards to its production and technological processes. Central to this negotiation is the importance that digital technology has acquired in both art and filmmaking practices. As discussed in Chapter Five, digital filmmaking eased production costs and restrictions, as well as constraints on creative ambition and circulation. These characteristics can also be observed in the creative practices of multimedia artists, allowing considerable creative freedom, and the convergence of production, editing and exhibition under less-constrained budgets.

As Chris Meigh-Andrews argues, the advent of digital technology brought with it an extensive set of technological tools; among others, ‘reliable inexpensive production equipment, the availability of DVD playback, high-resolution projection’, which decisively impacted on ‘artistic expression’, as well as becoming a standard

---

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, ‘The Future of “Art” and “Work” in the age of Vision Machines: Harun Farocki’, in *After the Avant-Garde: Contemporary German and Austrian Experimental Film*, ed. by Randall Halle and Reinhild Steingröver (New York: Camden House, 2008), 31.

‘gallery display format’.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, digital video facilitates dialogues between different artistic disciplines – dialogues far more complex those once offered by (analogue) video art. Digital video has contributed to the blurring of the boundaries between cinema and artistic practices situated in the white cube, allowing filmmakers to participate in a crossover of practices that mediate between film (aesthetics and production) and the art installation.

In what follows, these different aspects of the cinematic at the gallery setting explained above – film aesthetic under the white cube presentational mode, inclusion in exhibition and circulation art circuits, and film production and technological processes shared by different practitioners – are scrutinised by analysing Pedro Costa’s works for the white cube. In this presentational mode, Costa’s work carries further the filmic style present in his feature films, as well as extending the thematic universe of his feature films. Similarly, these works also illustrate Costa’s narrative of production, allowing for an observation of how the production and circulation of his work are discussed in this milieu.

### Pedro Costa’s video installations

In January 2015, Costa was invited by the Portuguese Cinematheque to curate a series of film screenings and debates which included several Portuguese artists and academics.<sup>31</sup> On the session of January the 15<sup>th</sup>, Costa and Portuguese sculptor Rui Chafes discussed with the audience the relationship between contemporary arts and

---

<sup>30</sup> Chris Meigh-Andrews, *A History of Video Art: The Development of Form and Function* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), 277. For discussions regarding digital video as part of the ‘post-medium’ formulations in artistic practices see Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema*, 70-5.

filmmaking. Pointing out possible similarities between different artistic practices, Costa argues that contemporary filmmaking needs to engage with the ‘artists’ economy’, considering scaled-down forms of production, planning and work relations in order to leave behind financial and production limitations.<sup>32</sup>

Comparing filmmaking and artistic practices, Costa argues that,

cinema lives from an excessive amount of money. [...] Jean-Marie Straub, citing Luis Buñuel, used to say that every new film made had to be more expensive than the previous one, or else you won’t [be considered] a filmmaker. Nowadays, that is clearer than ever before. [...] I think filmmakers need to be more close to the economy of a painter, a photographer... closer not to their art [practice], but their economy, meaning [...] not just the money, but how time is deployed. Personally I feel more affinity to the [artist’s] economy [than to the schedules, work crews and budgets in filmmaking].<sup>33</sup>

As discussed in Chapter Five, this small-scale approach to production came to define Costa’s filmmaking during the production of *In Vanda’s Room*, and was continued, even if with different nuances, throughout the filmmaker’s subsequent work. Costa’s work between 2000 and 2006 is characterised by this narrative of production, combining financial conditions related to the coproduction model and commissions

---

<sup>31</sup> This series of events were included in the ‘invited director’ programme initiative hosted by the Portuguese Cinematheque, in which filmmakers are invited to present a program of events and hold conversations with the audience and guests. Spanning a period of three weeks, Costa’s programme included the screening of his feature and short films, as well as works by Tourneur, Warhol, Rivette, Straub and Huillet, Renoir and Chaplin (among others). These film sessions were complemented by conversations with guests invited by Costa, including the architect José Neves, artists João Queiroz and Rui Chafes, photographer Paulo Nozolino and Costa’s collaborators Leonardo Simões (cinematographer) and Olivier Blanc (sound director).

<sup>32</sup> Pedro Costa and Rui Chafes in conversation, Portuguese Cinematheque, 15 of January 2015. Online: <http://youtu.be/KaYxUlgzSQg> [accessed: 30.04.2015].

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

with working practices supported by a lightweight shooting apparatus and protracted schedules.

This period, which corresponds mostly to Costa's partnership with the Portuguese production company Contracosta, was also marked by Costa's efforts to find other ways of producing and exhibiting his work. The versatility of filming with digital video allowed for a significant amount of material to be shot for both feature films, material partially reused in Costa's video art installations. The first of these installations drew on material from *In Vanda's Room* (aka *Untitled*, 2002, *In Vanda's Room* henceforth), which used approximately two hours of material shot for and incorporated in the feature film, which was displayed on two screens placed side by side. This installation was included in the exhibition *based upon TRUE STORIES* (January-March 2003, *True Stories* henceforth).<sup>34</sup>

Subsequently, this installation was re-worked, with additional footage from *Colossal Youth*, and presented as *Minino macho, minino Fêmea* (*Little Boy Male, Little Girl Female* [2005], *Little Boy Male* henceforth [Figure 9]). *Little Boy Male* was included in a group of four installations by Costa, which were positioned in dialogue with sculptures of Portuguese artist Rui Chafes in the exhibition *Fora!!/Out!* (*Fora!* henceforth) held at the Fundação de Serralves (Porto, October 2005- January 2006). The other three installations at this exhibition – *Benfica*, *Colina do Sol e Pontinha*, *Casal da Boba*, and *Fontainhas* – were also composed of material shot for *In Vanda's Room* and *Colossal Youth*. The works that Costa and Chafes presented in

---

<sup>34</sup> See João Niza, 'Do Filme À Exposição: As Instalações Vídeio de Pedro Costa', in *Cem mil cigarros - Os Filmes de Pedro Costa*, ed. by Ricardo Matos Cabo (Lisbon, Orfeu Negro, 2009), 308. As João Niza points out, this installation was initially presented at the *Biennale d'Art Contemporain* at Lyon (2001).

*Fora!* were later exhibited (with new art works) in other museums, including the recent exhibition *MU* ('Nothing', 2012-2013, Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan [figure 10]).<sup>35</sup> During the same period, and using material not directly sourced from the material of his feature films, Costa also directed *The End of a Love Affair* (2003) in collaboration with Portuguese choreographer João Fiadeiro for the performing arts exhibition *Temps D'images* (Lisbon, 25 September – 5 October 2003).



**Figure 9:** Still from *Little Boy Male, Little Girl Female* (2005), included in the DVD extras of *Letters from Fontainhas* (Criterion, 2010).

---

<sup>35</sup> The title of the exhibition itself reveals yet another cinephile connection to the ones which can be seen in Costa's work, as it shares its title with the inscription on Ozu Yasujiro's gravestone. See Nuno Crespo 'O fascínio de Pedro Costa explicado pelos japoneses ao mundo', in *Público* (21 December 2012), online: <http://www.publico.pt/n1578285> [accessed: 04.08.2014].





**Figure 10: Some of Costa and Chafes' installations presented in *MU*, at the Hara Museum of Contemporary art, Japan (2012-2013).**

According to Costa, his entry into the international art exhibition circuit was facilitated by curator Catherine David's interest in the feature film *In Vanda's Room*.<sup>36</sup> With extensive work as a museum programmer, and with a vested interest in the multidisciplinary dialogues between cinema and other visual arts, David was the curator of Documenta X (June 21 – September 28, 1997) and responsible for the film and video programme of the XXIV Biennial of São Paulo (1999). In 2002, David became the director of the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art (Rotterdam) and invited Costa to participate in *True Stories*, an exhibition focused on documentary film in contemporary visual arts, and part of the special program of the International Film Festival Rotterdam.<sup>37</sup> David invited the filmmaker to review the

---

<sup>36</sup> Costa, personal interview (22 February 2013).

<sup>37</sup> As explained in the exhibition official website. This event was later presented in São Paulo (Brazil), between April 29 and June 1, 2003. See Witte de With - *based upon TRUE STORIES*, online: <http://www.wdw.nl/event/based-upon-true-stories/> [accessed: 30.04.2015].

material shot during *In Vanda's Room* and to choose footage not included in the feature film to produce an installation for the exhibition. As Costa explains, this process precipitated a re-evaluation of all the material available, during which he decided to use some scenes already included in the feature film (preferring it to other non-included material), which were presented in its extended cut and without any of the edits made for the feature film.<sup>38</sup>

This initial experience in art installation introduced Costa's work to different exhibition circuits, allowing him to start a working process that, since then, has been incorporated into his established working routines. However, more than just a parallel production practice that generates works conceived for a different presentational mode and placed within a different exhibition circuit, this transition of Costa to the white cube still maintains the work process and filmmaking economy of his feature films. Commenting on the financial and production models of many filmmakers participating in the white cube, Catherine David argues that film practitioners 'can work the way they want and to some extent invent their own way. [...] The issue is simply where to get the money and where and how to distribute [their films]'.<sup>39</sup> In the economic and financial sense, as David argues, the museum can be seen as not an alternative exhibition space, separated from other presentational modes but, instead, 'one more space of exhibition,' which consequently also allows 'one more source of financing' for many filmmakers

---

<sup>38</sup> Costa, personal interview (22 February 2013).

<sup>39</sup> David in Jan van Eyck, 'From black box to white cube'.

working independently.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the professional ethos of artists and filmmakers who are engaging with filmmaking modes of production and the receptivity to practices supported by art circuit commissions, allows a coexistence of an artistic agency that participates in the economy of different circuits of circulation.

These practices match Costa's agency within different circulation circuits, maintaining an economic independence that the filmmaker appears eager to sustain. Costa occupies a pertinent position in understanding this connection between artistic practices, not just in terms of exhibition, but also how such approach reflects a specific position of art cinema filmmakers in accommodating the expectations of the gallery circuit. As Costa observes:

I happen to belong to that group of filmmakers who are invited to enter the game of contemporary art. Such filmmakers are considered to be more 'pictorial' or more 'plastic' or whatever [...] I only allow myself to enter this game because I have this manner of making films. I have already constituted, if you like, my own archive, my own little museum. I only allow myself to enter the museum because I have already acquired the habit, or method, to film every day and [...] to lose things every day. It is this state of daily loss that gives me this right of freedom.<sup>41</sup>

Costa's statement reflects the qualities that generated interest from art curators and facilitated his inclusion in a group of filmmakers presenting their works as part of the cinematic at the white cube. On the one hand, Costa discusses his working method, which is constituted by professional routines that are nevertheless part of filmmaking

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> 'Conversation between Rui Chafes, Pedro Costa, Catherine David and João Fernandes', in *Fora!* exhibition catalogue (Porto: Fundação de Serralves, 2007), 65.

processes, as a factor in his successful inclusion to the art circuit. On the other hand, Costa understands that the aesthetics of his works arouses the interest of art curators. While drawing attention to his production conditions – under the artists’ economy mentioned above – Costa also demonstrates an awareness of the filmic or stylistic qualities favoured by these circulation agents. Elaborating further on this dialogue between filmic style, circulation and financing aspects, Costa argues that

[filmmakers] are pushed into the museums, the art galleries. Normally, decisions or choices are made by curators or critics who point out the aesthetical, pictorial qualities of the work of some filmmakers. It’s more or less accepted now, this separation between commercial, mainstream filmmakers whose work is shown in multiplexes around the world, and the ‘artistic’ filmmakers who are judged as ‘almost painters,’ closer to the beaux-arts. [...] [It] also had to do with the cliché that we have a more distant, detached relation to money. In fact, it’s about the absolute opposite, we must think about it all the time because of the simple fact that we don’t have it.<sup>42</sup>

As Costa argues, these different aspects of niche art filmmaking practice connect to the economy of the white cube, in which financial but also symbolic capital are prioritised. Many aspects of the economy of prestige present the institutions of art cinema (as previously discussed in Chapters One and Six) also apply to the field of the art gallery circuit. Thus, Costa (like many other contemporary art filmmakers) participates in similar transactions of symbolic capital (mediating prestige and

---

<sup>42</sup> Costa in Jan van Eyck, ‘From black box to white cube’.

artistic status) in both fields, while maintaining an awareness of the forms of financial support that accommodate these ‘artistic’ filmmaking practices.<sup>43</sup>

Further analysing the aesthetic qualities that connect Costa’s work to the white cube, this presentational mode becomes a favourable setting for a contemporary art cinema that ‘shares strong similarities with the visual arts’, bringing together an ‘elasticity of time’ and ‘different modalities of perception, editing and temporality’, which are opposed to the presentational mode offered by the black box.<sup>44</sup> These presentational qualities relate closely with Costa’s work for theatrical exhibition which, from *In Vanda’s Room* onwards, is marked by the stillness, the use of long takes and narrative fragmentation, as I discussed in the previous chapters. Costa’s works for the white cube illustrate these same aesthetic characteristics, while operating under a different time economy.

An example of the relationship between film aesthetic and time economy is presented by the eight hour installation *Casal da Boba*, which was included in the exhibition *Fora!*. Using scenes filmed in Vanda Duarte’s new room in the Casal da Boba estate (which were included soon after in *Colossal Youth*), this video installation was designed to run during the whole period of the Serralves Museum’s opening hours, inviting the public to remain for any amount of time or to circulate inside the room or out of it.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, *Little Boy Male*, relies on the visitor’s engagement with the long take sequences presented on its two screens to construct

---

<sup>43</sup> As examined in Chapter One, concerning Bourdieu’s ‘disavowal economy’ that permeates the symbolic and economic practices of the cultural industries. See Bourdieu, ‘The production of belief’, 261-2.

<sup>44</sup> Parente and de Carvalho, ‘Cinema as *dispositif*’, 50.

<sup>45</sup> See Nisa, ‘Do Filme À Exposição’, 310.

narrative bridges between the footage of the left-hand screen (showing scenes from the streets of Fontainhas) and the right-hand screen (showing interior sequences).

According to Costa, *Little Boy Male* aims to present Fontainhas as a space in which ‘the exteriors and interiors confound each other’, while opening ways to reinterpret a location that at the time had already been demolished.<sup>46</sup> This installation allowed Costa to present an alternative version of the narrative of his feature film; freed from the ‘editing as [commonly] made in cinema’, this presentational mode, ‘allowed the public to make their own editing... [the visitor] could look at both screens and make their own choices [in order to generate] a story’.<sup>47</sup> The narrative potential of this installation complements the textual qualities and narrative lineages present in the filmmaker’s feature film. More than parallel to Costa’s filmic works for theatrical release, Costa’s work for the white cube is in direct dialogue with his oeuvre for the black box. Aware of the contextual dialogue linking theatrical and gallery works, Costa points out that these installations are still presented as film works: ‘I’m not a video artist, I am a filmmaker and a film is a construction. [...] You may find me a bit reactionary but I think cinema can never forget its narrative foundations’.<sup>48</sup> Costa’s observation reminds us that, while included in a gallery space shared by artists and filmmakers, these works still address forms of artistry that concern filmmaking processes.

---

<sup>46</sup> Costa, personal interview (22 February 2013).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. See also considerations of the textual characteristics of this installation in Raymond Bellour, ‘Concerning “the Photographic”’, in *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography*, ed. by Karen Beckman and Jean Ma (London: Duke University Press, 2008), 263.

<sup>48</sup> Costa in Jan van Eyck, ‘From black box to white cube’.

Looking at creative techniques relating to the cinematic, Erika Balsom conceives of artistic practices as consisting of forms of appropriation and remaking. Balsom identifies four major ‘operations’ within these practices: the ‘reenactment’ of cinematic objects, which recreate segments of popular films; the ‘interview’, in which artists interrogate the cinema context by interviewing individuals related with the film industry; the ‘recycling’ of existing film footage, continuing the tradition of the found object with the increasing technological potential of the digital; and finally, a process of ‘translation’, transforming cinematic objects, either digitally or manually, in order to create artefacts that call the attention to the medium’s particularities.<sup>49</sup>

These four operations cover a substantial number of the cinematic practices used in the white cube, but Balsom’s four operations leave space for further discussion of the operations carried out by filmmakers that, like Costa, resituate or repurpose their work at the gallery space. This repurposing process acquires characteristics commonly observed in the process of digital remediation. As Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin argue, this process is a defining characteristic of new digital media, as it remediates pre-digital technologies, incorporating these into digital formats.<sup>50</sup> It is argued that a similar process of remediation is also present in the repurposing of contents initially produced for the black box. Belonging initially to this specific sphere of production and consumption, Costa’s filmic material is

---

<sup>49</sup> Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema*, 116-21.

<sup>50</sup> See Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Massachusetts: the MIT Press, 2000), 5-6, 73-4.

remediated into forms of exhibition belonging to the white cube, while still tied to its initial production and financial stages rooted in filmmaking processes.

Furthermore, these works present textual and artistic qualities in dialogue with overarching exhibition and circulation dialogue between formats (theatrical, gallery, home viewing). This dialogue extends textual and narrative characteristics that characterise the filmmaker's feature-film works, while mediating between material already present in the feature film format and the surplus created by Costa's filmmaking practices. Thus Costa's video installations repurpose the filmmaker's released work and his personal archive. The repurposing deployed in Costa's works for the white cube presents similarities with practices commonly deployed by visual artists. While the material composing these video installations was initially part of a filmmaking shooting and editing process, Costa's attitude concerning these processes has been reformulated to avoid the logistical hurdles observed in industrial filmmaking. Working with an interstitial approach since *In Vanda's Room* (as discussed in Chapter Five), Costa's working methods allow him to maintain a comfortable distance from some norms of industrial filmmaking, while negotiating production, post-production and financial norms. This interstitial filmmaking process created a framework that facilitates Costa's inclusion in the gallery circuit, but also foregrounds an artistic agency that crosses the roles of filmmaker and artist.<sup>51</sup>

While not comfortable in an exclusive role as an artist, Costa's presence at the white cube does at times merge with his filmmaker persona. A clear example of

---

<sup>51</sup> Concerning similar examples of this crossover role between filmmaker and artist see the analysis of Harun Farocki's work in Elsaesser, 'The Future of "Art" and "Work"', 31-49.



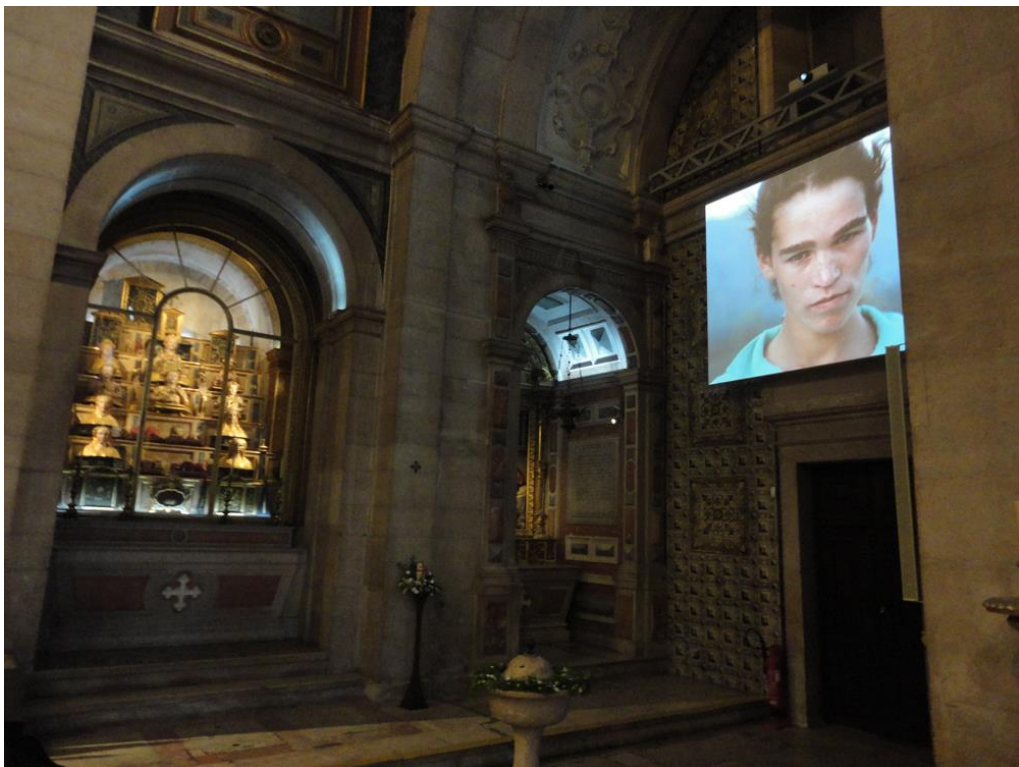
this ambiguity was the invitation issued to Costa by the Portuguese Secretary of State for Culture to represent the country at the 2009 Venice Biennale, an invitation the filmmaker refused.<sup>52</sup> Offering a similar reading of the overlapping roles of filmmaker and artist (and with added irony considering the refused invitation in 2009), Costa and Chafes were among the fifteen international artists included in the Cuban pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennale.

As discussed above, Costa is a figure that invokes considerable discussion of the potential crossover between these two exhibition circuits. Yet the presentational modes adopted by the cinematic in the art gallery have crossed over to other spaces. One of Costa's most recent two-screen video installation, *Filhas do Fogo* (2013-4 produced with footage from *Casa de Lava*), was exhibited at the São Roque church in Lisbon. Costa's installation was part of the exhibition *Visitação: O Arquivo Como Memória e Promessa*, held by the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, Lisbon, between June and November 2014. The exhibition presented archival material related with this Portuguese charity, in dialogue with contemporary works produced by Portuguese photographer Daniel Blaufuks. Taking place in a baroque church, and in direct dialogue with the religious sculpture and other liturgical objects in this space of religious worship, *Filhas do Fogo* links the textual and political messages of Costa's film with possibilities of a contextual reading that connects film to artistic objects. Moreover, the inclusion of *Filhas do Fogo* in this space draws attention to not just

---

<sup>52</sup> According to Costa (personal interview, 22 February 2013), the short deadline presented in order to work on this project made him decline the invitation. This invitation followed several rumours that the controversial Portuguese visual artist Joana Vasconcelos was the early favourite candidate to represent the country at the Venice Biennale that year. Although never officially announced, news of the invitation extended to Costa soon appeared in Portuguese newspapers, generating some controversy among Portuguese opinion-makers.

the consumption of, but also the musealization – or even sacralisation – once granted to this location’s religious fetish objects (Figures 12 and 13).



Figures 11 and 12: Costa’s video installation *Filhas do Fogo* (2013-2014) at the São Roque Church.

## Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, different contextual characteristics precipitate the approach of contemporary art filmmakers to the gallery and museum circuit. The multidisciplinary practices of artists situated (mostly) in the white cube generate a close dialogue between film aesthetics and production frameworks, supported by the technological possibilities of digital video. This form of cinematic practice has found a receptive environment in an institutional milieu which has experienced considerable expansion during the last few decades. The international presence of the white cube (composed of a network of local venues and mega-exhibitions and international biennials) propitiated a privileged stage in which the cinematic has flourished.

Responding to the increased interest of curators and other key players in this circuit, the international white cube expands options for filmmakers to finance, produce, and circulate their works. This connection between art filmmakers and the white cube takes in account artistic manifestations, such as the previously-discussed filmic language marked by deceleration and the long take, which offers an contextual connection with the (contemporary but also historical) artistic practices. However, in contemporary terms, this approach presents other factors. As analysed during the second part of this chapter, Costa's practices in the white cube are tied to financial and production factors he developed from the late-1990s onwards, factors which considerably impacted the works he presented in the gallery space. More than just placed in parallel to his filmmaking practice for the black box, Costa's agency brings to bear an economic framework also evident in the production of his white cube works.

This working process allows Costa to cross over between two exhibition circuits even if, as I argue above, his agency is still subject to several constraints. In terms of exhibition, the white cube prolongs the existence of the film object alongside its existence in the theatrical circuit, but also interrogates the real consumption potential of, for example, an eight hour installation such as *Casal da Boba*. Similarly, Costa's financial and production framework potentiates a blurring between the role of filmmaker and artist. As I have also discussed, this ambiguous overlapping reinforces the idea that Costa's presence in the white cube brings forth productive but also complex discussions concerning the symbolic currency he has acquired in cinema and art institutions. Nevertheless, Costa's works for the white cube participates thematically, as well as in production terms, in an oeuvre that has been repurposed under different settings. The next chapter analyses other repurposing facets in Costa's work, by analysing the filmmaker's involvement in retrospectives of his works, and the recent editions on DVD.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Renegotiating circulation: retrospectives and DVD releases

Everyone agrees that film, even of the most artistic kind, is a commodity. Some believe that this does not harm it, that it is only incidentally a commodity, that the commodity form is only the form in which it circulates in the market and on no account must necessarily define it entirely. [...] Those who believe this have no idea about the modificatory power of the commodity form.

Bertolt Brecht<sup>1</sup>

I'm the owner of my films, I live of them... it's an ugly phrase, but I live of its exploitation.

Pedro Costa<sup>2</sup>

In July 2010, a press release from the British film distributor Second Run announced the DVD release of *Casa de Lava*. This release was aimed at increasing the exposure of Costa's earlier films in the international market, a process which was already underway thanks to the company's 2009 DVD release of *Blood* and the Criterion DVD box set *Letters from Fontainhas* (2010),<sup>3</sup> as well as several retrospectives of filmmaker's work in the UK and US. Second Run's announcement soon spread to several online film discussion forums, generating an enthusiastic response among

---

<sup>1</sup> Bertolt Brecht, 'The Threepenny Lawsuit', in *Brecht On Film and Radio*, edited by Marc Silberman (London: Methuen, 2000), 168.

<sup>2</sup> Costa, personal interview (22 February 2013).

<sup>3</sup> This DVD box set contains *Bones*, *In Vanda's Room* and *Colossal Youth*, as well as the short films *Tarrafal* and *The Rabbit Hunters* and the video installation *Little Boy Male*, *Little Girl Female*, as well as numerous extras.

Costa's resilient fan base.<sup>4</sup> However, *Casa de Lava* DVD's release was postponed for approximately two years, a delay that created a surge of speculation among fans. Responding to queries, Second Run representatives explained that the successive postponements of its release were caused by delays in obtaining an approved master copy from Costa.<sup>5</sup> Second Run's edition of *Casa de Lava* was finally released in September 2012.

These discussions among fans, which included representatives of Second Run, reveal two factors which currently characterise the circulation of Costa's works. Firstly, these exchanges reveal a demand among international fans of Costa's earlier works, works which at the time still had a geographically restricted circulation (both in terms of theatrical and DVD releases). Secondly, and as the information released by Second Run indicates, Costa was directly involved in the process of re-mastering the film for DVD, revealing that the working ethos that characterises his films' production carries through to its circulation. By the same token, this participation by Costa in the circulation of his work is not just confined to this example but, as I discuss in this chapter, also extends to all the other DVD editions mentioned above, as well as to the numerous retrospectives and special screenings dedicated to his works.

---

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the Criterion Forum page dedicated to *Casa de Lava*, at <http://criterionforum.org/forum/viewtopic.php?f=18&t=10884> and similar page in Mubi discussion forum at <http://mubi.com/topics/casa-de-lavasecond-run-dvd-update> [both accessed 25.07.2014].

<sup>5</sup> As indicated in the email communication posted by one of the participants in the discussion page at the Mubi discussion forum, and expressed in the dialogues between fans and the company representatives at the Criterion Forum page.

This direct participation of a filmmaker in the circulation of his or her work reveals the role of the author as a figure of commerce, personally participating in marketing activities or in branding a product which aims to address, directly, his or her audience (as discussed in Chapter One). In the context of this study, these circulation practices offer further context to Costa's narrative of production. As discussed in the previous chapters, Costa's professional ethos has impacted considerably on the ways his works are shot and produced. Costa's circulation practices carry this same ethos, extending the filmmaker's agency into aspects of his work's consumption. Both in DVD releases and in special screenings, Costa's direct participation was explicitly made clear; all these DVD releases carry marketing information concerning Costa's intervention in the process of re-mastering and re-releasing his films, while his participation in special screening events and an ongoing commitment to direct participation assured Costa's presence at numerous Q&A sessions held after screenings.

In this chapter I discuss how Costa's agency exists in these circulation events and products. I seek to interrogate the processes of consumption of Costa's works, considering how the filmmaker works as an authorial figure within the circulation processes outside the film festival and commercial theatrical exhibition. Analysing these characteristics, I first look into the different facets of Costa as an agent of circulation, placing the filmmaker into commercial processes that answer to the circulation demands of his films. Understanding the role of the filmmaker as an agent of circulation who adds value to circulation products and events, in the second part of this chapter I further investigate the problematic negotiations between Costa and the producers of his works, and how these negotiations shapes the filmmaker's

current approach to museums and university-related spaces of exhibition, as receptive settings for many of the retrospectives of his oeuvre.

In the last part of this chapter I carry out further analysis on Costa's authorial activities, particularly looking into the remastering process of some of the DVD releases of Costa's films. While existing as commodities, these products transmit a history that is directly tied to the editing processes and forms of personal mediation these films have undergone. Explaining the production process of some DVD releases of Costa's films, with particular emphasis on the releases for the UK and US markets, this chapter concludes with a discussion of how Costa's narrative of production is revealed in these forms of circulation. Supplementing the discussions presented in the previous two chapters, this final chapter of the dissertation contributes to a broader understanding of Costa's professional ethos as a factor impacting in the dynamics of the distribution and exhibition of his work, dynamics that respond to commercial expectations of contemporary art cinema.

### Authorship as a circulation category

As I argue in previous chapters, Costa's agency as a filmmaker can be contextualised as both partaking in processes of authorship that reflect not just personal arrangements that affect artistic and production processes, but that are also the circulation of his works. As Catherine Grant argues, this form of agency can be considered part of contemporary discourses related with 'auteurist awareness'



obeying to ‘supply and demand’ mechanisms shaping contemporary cinema consumption.<sup>6</sup> As Grant argues, this awareness

comprises a complex series of interrelated film production, marketing, and reception practices and discourses which are all underpinned by a shared belief in the specific capability of an individual agent—the director—to marshal and synthesize the multiple, and usually collective, elements of filmmaking for the purposes of individual expression, or to convey in some way a personal or, at least, ‘personalized’ vision.<sup>7</sup>

The emphasis placed on the role of the filmmaker, as an author of an artistic product that announces his or her presence in several stages of commodification, summons notions of authorial presence. This presence can be manifested both physically (with the presence of the filmmaker in circulation events) or mediated through specific personal processes concerning the product such as marketing documents or ancillary products that carry some form of identification concerning the process of authorship.

As already pointed out, Costa’s agency engages with these two facets of contemporary authorship, maintaining a close dialogue between personal expression (reflected not just in creative terms, but also in production processes) and commercial demands. Indeed, since 2006 Costa has actively engaged in the distribution of his oeuvre, situating himself in practices such as special screenings and retrospectives or directly supervising the remastering of his films for the DVD market. These practices can be contextualised within current trends that inform processes of circulation. As Dina Iordanova argues, in a global digital economy,

---

<sup>6</sup> Catherine Grant, ‘Auteur Machines? Auteursism and the DVD’, in *Film and Television after DVD*, ed. by Tom Brown (London: Routledge, 2008), 101.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

direct access to content has minimised (in some cases rendered obsolete) the role of intermediaries present in traditional distribution channels.<sup>8</sup> This ‘disintermediation’ process implies a re-definition of the circulation lifespan of cultural products (in which access can be simultaneous, instead of in previously pre-defined sequential release).<sup>9</sup> This process of disintermediated circulation found further relevance in contemporary consumption practices which are marked by an expectation of ubiquitous presence of filmic products, even among niche markets. As Alejandro Pardo argues, digitalisation has brought new possibilities but also new demands in terms of consumer culture. These possibilities reflect audiences’ increasing desire for immediate access to products, but also an increasing desire to participate in social practices of consumption.<sup>10</sup> Thus, a product once tied to a local market placed in specific cultural, industrial and circulation contexts, can gain renewed consumption through a global digital economy with cosmopolitan consumption practices.

This process of disintermediation is further reflected in new business models that renegotiate ownership. As Iordanova also argues, many artists ‘opt to keep the copyright to their works and engage in dissemination strategies over which they have direct control’, legally qualifying the artist as a ‘content creator to handle both

---

<sup>8</sup> Dina Iordanova, ‘Digital Disruption: Technological Innovation and Global Film Circulation’, in *Digital Disruption: Cinema Moves On-line*, ed. by Dina Iordanova and Stuart Cunningham (St Andrews: St Andrews Film Studies, 2012), 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>10</sup> Alejandro Pardo, ‘From the Big Screen to the Small Ones: how Digitalisation is transforming the Distribution, Exhibition and Consumption of Movies’, in *Besides the Screen: Moving Images Through Distribution, Promotion and Curation*, ed. by Virginia Crisp and Gabriel Menotti Gonring (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 24-5.

production and dissemination'.<sup>11</sup> Placed in a global market, this dissemination model allows the artist the flexibility to engage directly in circulation practices. This model does not just facilitate the processes of commodification of a work, but also allows a first-hand ownership that conforms to contemporary discourses concerning artistic authenticity, distinctiveness and economic disavowal. A mass-produced object such as a DVD holding marks of personal signature can invoke the direct and personal intervention of an author. Similarly, a collective and public event (such as a theatrical film screening) can become a unique experience with the physical presence of a filmmaker. Both these two instances of circulation create the perception of a filmmaker directly addressing an audience and confer to the work an extratextual knowledge that impacts in its consumption.

As Arjun Appadurai argues, commodities present 'complex social forms and distributions of knowledge', tied not just to their production but also to ways in which they are consumed:

In the first place, and crudely, such knowledge can be of two sorts: the knowledge (technical, social, aesthetic, and so forth) that goes into the production of the commodity; and the knowledge that goes into appropriately consuming the commodity. [...] Knowledge at both poles has technical, mythological, and evaluative components, and the two poles are susceptible to mutual and dialectical interaction.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Iordanova, 'Digital Disruption', 12.

<sup>12</sup> Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction: commodities and the politics of value', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 41.

This interaction between forms of knowledge situated at these two poles, contributes to the formation of an ‘idiosyncratic biography’ of the production of a particular commodity, and informs the way in which that commodity is consumed.<sup>13</sup> In this sense, the author becomes part of the history of a particular product, a presence that provides further context to consumption. Thus, this presence responds to the expectations of the contemporary consumer, in which not just access to cultural products but also social activities are valued, and in which the (direct or indirect) presence of the author becomes an additional source to create and maintain discourses around specific products.

The contemporary cinema author, a figure potentiating several forms of knowledge, has been placed in line with a cinephilic expression which privileges closer contact with filmic works and multiple forms of production and consumption. As Malte Hagener and Marijke de Valck argue, contemporary cinephiles – what the authors call a ‘third wave of cinephilia’ – enjoy multifaceted forms of exposure to cinema and maintain several activities that create immersion in the work of particular filmmakers.<sup>14</sup> As they explain,

The proponents of the third wave of cinephilia frequent film festivals, but also watch DVDs, they download rare films from the Internet, and communicate via blogs. This third generation of cinephilia is only now fully emerging as they discover one another among the various IMDb discussion boards, dedicated fan sites where the intricacies of the latest

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 42-3.

<sup>14</sup> Malte Hagener and Marijke de Valck, ‘Cinephilia in Transition’, in *Mind the Screen: Media Concepts According to Thomas Elsaesser*, edited by J. Kooijman et al (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 23.

Tarantino, Fincher, and Lynch movies are discussed, or in the *blogosphere*.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, contemporary cinephilia is placed in a continuum with social practices which mediate between arenas belonging to individual consumption and collective practices maintained through different digital constituencies. On the one hand, these practices maintain an interest in providing access to products; as Hager and de Valck point out, access and availability has become one of the central characteristics of the ‘post-classical cinephilia’ that the current generation of cinephiles enjoy, as opposed to the more limited forms of engagement available to ‘classical’ cinephiles, particularly constrained by programming and limited choice.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, these cinephile activities engage in forms of contextualising particular films and/or filmmakers, enriching the experience of consumption. This context (or ‘knowledge’), creates an interaction between the processes of production and consumption;<sup>17</sup> activities which are tied to the agency of a filmmaker, as an agent of circulation, and allow further mediation between films and their context. Enquiring into ways in which a filmmaker’s presence inflects the consumption of his work, this chapter now investigates Pedro Costa’s agency as a criterion for circulation.

### Filmmaker’s presence as a circulation strategy

Costa’s active approach to involving himself in the circulation of his work has developed through the same approach the filmmaker has taken in the production of

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., emphasis in original.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>17</sup> See Appadurai, ‘commodities and the politics of value’, 41-2.

his films since *In Vanda's Room*. Since 2000, Costa, in partnership with Contracosta, directed *Where Does Your Hidden Smile Lie?* and *Colossal Youth*, several video installations (examined in the previous chapter), as well as the shorts *Tarrafal*, and *Ne change rien* (2005). The latest, a short film documenting a backstage rehearsal of French actress singer and Jeanne Balibar's band, was later expanded to a feature film (*Change Nothing*) released in 2009. These works were produced under a particular framework that privileged a protracted and small-scale shooting process and editing and post-editing phases employing interstitial production and financial support.

This body of work was created thanks to the collaborative relationship between director and producer, even if the process did reveal some particular tensions between Costa and Villa-Lobos. By the end of the post-production process and commercial distribution of *Colossal Youth* in 2005, disputes between Costa and Villa-Lobos surfaced, precipitating the end of their partnership. Central to these disagreements were Costa's attitudes towards production and distribution. As Villa-Lobos explains, Costa was averse to the idea that 'the works that he directed were also objects placed in the [film] market, products'.<sup>18</sup> According to Villa-Lobos, this attitude affected the French commercial distribution of *Colossal Youth*, with Costa 'boycotting' the negotiations conducted by Contracosta.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Costa admits that his agency as filmmaker also includes an active role in distribution and exhibition. Echoing Villa-Lobos' comments, Costa states that his attitude has been

---

<sup>18</sup> Villa-Lobos, personal interview (11 February 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. As the producer explained during the interview, even with Costa's objections the film did eventually receive theatrical distribution in the French market, through *Équation* (currently *Swift Productions*), while Costa was still dealing directly with Portuguese companies to negotiate the film's distribution in the Portuguese market.

constantly marked by deliberately ‘boycotting’ negotiations with producers in order to be able to work on his own terms.<sup>20</sup> While this statement mostly relates with filmmaking, it acquires further contours when placed in the context of Costa’s current practices of circulation and distribution.

During the distribution of *Colossal Youth*, Costa investigated alternative ways to show his work. As noted by Villa-Lobos, the increasing animosity toward agreements that would allow wider commercial circulation of *Colossal Youth* compelled Costa to ‘do something of a more alternative [distribution], connected with the gallery and universities circuits’.<sup>21</sup> Reflecting on this impulse to engage in other types of distribution and exhibition, Costa points out that such arrangements reflect his greater distance from ‘work relations’ with producers, which have generated unsatisfactory work routines in the past.<sup>22</sup> Costa’s works after *Colossal Youth* have been produced in partnership with the Portuguese company Sociedade Óptica Técnica OPTEC (henceforth OPTEC), which provides technical support for his work. This partnership marks a new phase in Costa’s changing relationship with the artistic and production processes of film authorship. His more recent works, such as the short films *O Nosso Homem* (2010) and *Sweet Exorcism* (2012) deployed a production paradigm centred on the importance of several technological advances inherent to digital filmmaking, while limiting the role of processes commonly attributed to the producer. Similarly, Costa’s most recent feature film, *Horse Money*,

---

<sup>20</sup> As stated by Pedro Costa during the masterclass at the Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image, Birkbeck, University of London, 6 January 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Villa-Lobos, personal interview (11 February 2013).

<sup>22</sup> Costa, personal interview (22 February 2013).

was produced outside the customary coproduction model of finance, revealing a possible model for a self-sustaining framework of production.

These efforts to create a self-sustaining framework are also reflected in the circulation of Costa's oeuvre. Examples of this agency can be observed in the numerous retrospectives of Costa's work that have allowed the discovery of or further exposure to his past and recent work among international audiences. Costa's initiative concerning circulation is rooted in his already established presence in the art cinema circuit. Before 2006, Costa's works had sustained a presence in the film festival circuit, as well as in theatrical distribution and television exhibition in, for example, Portugal, Germany and France. These works enjoyed the dynamics of the European art house circuit throughout the 1990s and 2000s, and were subsequently exhibited theatrically via special screenings in other European countries. Similarly, both Costa's features and some short films enjoyed worldwide festival exhibition.

It is uncertain whether Costa's distancing of himself from producers has created further exhibition and distribution opportunities. The films produced by Contracosta did enjoy some theatrical release and good run on the film festival circuit, as did Costa's earlier films previously produced by Paulo Branco. However, other circulation initiatives have come to complement these forms of circulation. Costa's complete retrospective at the Sendai Mediatheque in 2005 (preceded by an intensive course in filmmaking delivered by Costa at the Tokyo Film School in 2004) reveals an approach by Costa to the university-related circulation network, creating a presence that has expanded considerably since 2004. This approach became yet more visible in *Still Lives: The Films of Pedro Costa* (2007-8, henceforth *Still Lives*), a touring retrospective of Costa's films in cinemathèques and university-related venues. Organised and curated by Ricardo Matos Cabo, this retrospective was



exhibited in eleven cities in Canada and the United States, with Costa present at both film screenings and in parallel activities including lectures, masterclasses and debates.<sup>23</sup>

These exhibition-related activities were followed by similar initiatives such as the two complete retrospectives in 2009, held at the *Filmoteca Española* (Madrid, as part of PhotoEspaña), and at Tate Modern, the later exhibitions held the next year which were promoted by the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil (in São Paulo, Brasília, Rio de Janeiro, and Belo Horizonte, in 2010) and Costa's three-day masterclass held at Birkbeck, University of London, in 2014. These cinematheque, museum and academic-related events complemented further activities Costa undertook which were connected with the film festival circuit. In this sense, retrospectives at the International Film Festival of Marseille in 2007 or at the Jeonju International Film Festival in 2010 also participate in this retrospective circulation, even if happening within film festival settings.

These numerous events highlight the circulation potential of art cinema, with Costa deploying a strategy which navigates between a contracting art house circuit, the film festival and other alternative institutions, such as museums and universities. Included in an economy of prestige, these institutions demonstrate receptivity to particular niche art film practices. As an article by Portuguese film critic Luís Miguel Oliveira (which coincided with the retrospective at the Tate Modern) demonstrates,

---

<sup>23</sup> This retrospective was presented at Toronto's Cinematheque Ontario, Vancouver International Film Center, Manhattan's Anthology Film Archives, the REDCAT in Los Angeles, the Harvard Film Archive, the Cleveland Museum of Art, Chicago's Gene Siskel Film Center, Seattle's Northwest Film Forum, Rochester's George Eastman House, the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio, and finished at the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, California.

these institutions are now particularly important to the circulation of Costa's cinema. As the film critic remarks, Costa's works are 'immediately labelled as festival films, reserved to an elite of cinephiles, and tendentially pushed to the space of the museum', while cinema institutions such as the British Film Institute 'seem far more busy with a Penélope Cruz retrospective'.<sup>24</sup> Remarks aside, it can be observed that these institutions mediate a circulation presence that positions them as central to the symbolic capital transmitted by the 'difficult art film', propelling further the understanding of the mediations of symbolic value that informs the reception of Costa's work.

Even if perhaps amplifying readings concerning the possibly elitist contours of the consumption of art film, these venues allow Costa to gain access to further spaces of theatrical exhibition, and to maintain a direct connection to his (potential) audiences. According to Costa, the art-house and film festival circuits currently offer less space for discussing cinema, and the cinephile community in the art cinema circuits has changed considerably:

film festivals changed a lot [...] the [film] critics, other colleagues... the ones who I appreciated in the past, I have no idea where they are now. [...] and the people that replaced them [at the film festivals] don't have the same stature. [...] And [before] there were opportunities for discussing cinema, with the cine-clubs and such... the festivals were less [numerous]... nowadays the films are less seen, there are more films than previously.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Luís M. Oliveira, 'Uma pequena avalanche', in *Público* (Ípsilon), (25 September 2009), 9.

<sup>25</sup> Costa, personal interview (22 February 2013).

As Costa also points out, the consumption and discussion of cinema has become considerably more visible online, substituting the physicality of the direct contact with audiences: ‘[before] there was something tangible, films were watched on the [theatrical] screen, there were [physical film] copies’.<sup>26</sup> Initiatives such as international retrospectives and masterclasses have responded to this lack of tangible access to and discussion of cinema. These events have created conditions for not just presenting Costa’s films, but also allowing him to establish a direct dialogue with his audiences.

*Still Lives* and similar retrospectives helped to promote Costa’s work in the theatrical exhibition setting, reaching a variety of different art house aficionados, either already fans or those still not aware of his work. Present at the film screenings, and engaging in dialogue with the audiences during Q&A sessions, Costa imprinted these events with a mark of distinction, setting them apart from conventional commercial theatrical circulation or the screenings facilitated at film festivals, which are commonly constrained by tight and busy schedules. More importantly, these events give audiences further knowledge of Costa’s films and the filmmaker who directed them. These events created the opportunity to gain first-hand information about Costa’s artistic practice and production methods, with their discussions about stylistic features and details of the films’ settings, characters and actors, and Costa’s explanations of the idiosyncrasies of the films’ production.<sup>27</sup> These social events not

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> This possibility of providing contextual facts concerning Costa’s films was observed during the Q&A session after the special screening of *In Vanda’s Room* in Cambridge (a screening included in the conference ‘Filming Transnational Interiors’ at Trinity College, University of Cambridge, 27 - 29 September 2012). During this

only provide further information about the particularities of Costa's film practice, but also generate knowledge concerning his films. This is a form of paratextual construction that combines authorship, production processes and possible textual interpretations to help spread the reception and consumption of Costa's work.

### Authorship as commodity

The circulation initiatives explained above illustrate first-person forums for the discussion of Costa's films and filmmaking practices. Similar to these screening and academic events, the release of several of Costa's films on DVD format allowed the filmmaker to increase his visibility in international terms, while further negotiating his presence among fans. Furthermore, the process of creating DVD editions of his films gave Costa the opportunity to re-affirm his stance on the authorship ethos that impacted in his film's production and circulation.

While moving away from producers and sales agents, Costa has nevertheless been receptive to his work's release on DVD, privileging opportunities in which he could have direct interventions. Successive international editions of Costa's work in this medium were released in France (*Casa de Lava* and *Bones*, in 2005 and *In Vanda's Room*, in 2008), and in Spain (a DVD box set that includes *In Vanda's Room*, *Colossal Youth* and *Where Does Your Hidden Smile Lie?*, and the book *Un Mirlo Dorado, Un Ramo De Flores Y Una Cuchara De Plata*, released by

---

session, some members of the audience were particularly interested in understanding how the shooting process of the film was conducted, and in details related to Fontainhas and the actors participating in the film. Costa explained in detail many of the methods behind the making of the film, which generated an extensive dialogue between the filmmaker and some members of the audience.

Intermedio in 2011). Similarly, from 2004 onwards, Costa's films were also released for the Japanese market by the distribution company Cinematrix. As the company spokesperson, Kazuyuki Yano explains, *In Vanda's Room* had both theatrical and DVD releases in Japan in 2004, followed by Japanese DVD releases of *Blood*, *Casa de Lava* and *Bones* (all in 2008). Japanese DVD releases of *Colossal Youth* and *Change Nothing* followed in 2009 and 2011, both of which were preceded by theatrical releases (in 2008 and 2010, respectively).<sup>28</sup>

In Portugal, distributor Midas Filmes started to release most of Costa's work on DVD, aiming, as the company founder and director, Pedro Borges pointed out, to fill a visible gap in this domestic art film market.<sup>29</sup> *Blood* and *Where Does Your Hidden Smile Lie?* were released in 2009, followed by *Change Nothing* in 2010 and, more recently, a special edition of *In Vanda's Room* in 2013, which included the Portuguese edition of the book initially released by Intermedio in Spain.<sup>30</sup> These numerous international DVD releases have tended, however, to cover particular localised niches, such as the Francophone, Spanish, Lusophone and Japanese markets (the latter with a small but particularly resilient fan base for Costa's work). As both Pedro Borges and Kazuyuki Yano point out, the Portuguese and Japanese DVD releases catered mostly to domestic audiences in these countries, even if available for purchase online.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> As explained by Kazuyuki Yano, in an email interview (1 August 2014).

<sup>29</sup> Pedro Borges, email interview (29 July 2014).

<sup>30</sup> Retitled as *Um Melro Dourado, Um Ramo de Flores, Uma Colher de Prata*.

<sup>31</sup> Borges, email interview (29 July 2014); Yano, email interview (01 August 2014).

The international access to Costa's work on DVD was greatly expanded from 2009 onwards, with successive editions for the English-speaking market. The UK release by Second Run of *Blood* in 2009 renewed awareness of the filmmaker's work, not just among British cinephiles but also, incrementally, in global terms. As Chris Barwick, Second Run's frontman, points out, this release helped to garner the attention of cinephile audiences:

I think Pedro [Costa] already had a great reputation amongst critics, and yet no-one (at the time we released *Blood*) had released any of his films in the UK (*Colossal Youth* had a small festival run at the ICA) so our releases certainly brought him to the attention of more writers, critics and a wider viewing audience.<sup>32</sup>

As Barwick also points out, this release was timed to coincide with the complete retrospective of Costa's work at the Tate Modern, creating further visibility for the film among critics and audiences.<sup>33</sup> In the following year, US distributor Criterion released *Letters from Fontainhas*, a box set of the three feature films shot in the derelict neighbourhood along with several additional pieces of original multimedia content. Due to the prestige of this distribution company amongst global cinephiles, and the fact that this edition was released in an international *lingua franca*, this release not just consolidated the presence of Costa's work in the American art cinema distribution, but also propelled its visibility worldwide.

Similarly, the 2011 UK edition of *Colossal Youth* in the Eureka! 'Masters of Cinema' series (henceforth MoC) provided further distribution for Costa's work in

---

<sup>32</sup> Chris Barwick, personal email conversation (27 May 2014).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

the global market. As Craig Keller, one of MoC curators, argues, while Costa's film still 'hasn't yet percolated to the level occupied by [the] "canonical classics"' released under this collection (including works by Carl T. Dreyer, Shôhei Imamura, Fritz Lang, F. W. Murnau, and Pier Paolo Pasolini, to name just a few), its release was a considerable success.<sup>34</sup> The critical success and positive reception of these three releases among art house audiences generated further interest in the release of more of Costa's work in the Anglophone market. As pointed out in this chapter's introduction, in 2012 Second Run released *Casa de Lava* on DVD; according to Costa, all three companies are now discussing other editions of his films on DVD.<sup>35</sup>

As with the special screening events, these DVD releases featured Costa's active involvement, which allows for a further discussion of the processes of disintermediation and the forms of ownership of contemporary art cinema. Two main factors are central in discussing this direct involvement. The first is the filmmaker's engagement in an informal network that began the process that culminated in the DVD releases of his films. The second relates to the copyright status of Costa's films, and his mediation between different copyright holders and distribution companies. Analysing the first factor, the film festivals became not just a vehicle to discover Costa's work, but also creates what Iordanova defines as 'efficient systems of flow',<sup>36</sup> providing a favourable setting for dialogues between the filmmaker and potential distribution companies. The potential of this network is acknowledged by

---

<sup>34</sup> Craig Keller, personal email conversation (17 April 2014). While pointing out the sales success of *Colossal Youth* DVD, Keller could not comment on specific sales numbers.

<sup>35</sup> As pointed out by Costa, personal interview (22 February 2013). Also Craig Keller and Chris Barkwick pointed out this possibility, in the respective personal interviews already cited.

<sup>36</sup> Iordanova, 'The Film Festival Circuit', 24.

Yano Kazuyuki, who first saw *In Vanda's Room* at the festival Cinéma du Réel (Paris) in 2001 and later that same year had the opportunity to approach the filmmaker after the screening of the same film at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival.<sup>37</sup> Equally, MoC's Craig Keller points to the importance of the screening of *Colossal Youth* (and its divided critical reception) at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival, as the event that propelled the interest of the company in releasing the film to the UK market.<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, the process that culminated in the UK editions of Costa's work, reveal that both director and production companies benefited from the exchange of contacts in the informal network surrounding the film festival, which includes film critics, cinephiles and directors. Both Barwick and Keller point to this exchange as being an important part of the initial process of releasing Costa's films. While already aware of Costa's work, Barwick recalls that his first contact with Costa was facilitated by Apichatpong Weerasethakul, whose films *Blissfully Yours* (2002) and *Tropical Malady* (2004) had been already distributed in the UK by Second Run, in 2006 and 2008 respectively.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, Craig Keller was introduced to Costa by the film critic (and Costa's fan) Andy Rector, who collaborated in the informal talks that led to the agreement to release *Colossal Youth* through MoC.<sup>40</sup>

This informal network is not just centred in systems of flow congregated around and transcending the film festival, but also extends to Costa's early contacts

---

<sup>37</sup> Yano, email interview (01 August 2014).

<sup>38</sup> Keller, email interview (17 April 2014).

<sup>39</sup> Barkwick, email interview (27 May 2014).

<sup>40</sup> Keller, email interview (17 April 2014).



with the film industry; the professional relationship between Costa and Pedro Borges predates the creation of Midas Filmes in 2006, when the latter was head of distribution and marketing at Atalanta Filmes, which distributed *Blood* and *Casa de Lava* theatrically in the domestic and international markets.<sup>41</sup> The impact of this informal network is also reflected in many of the contents included in these DVD releases. Costa's appreciative fan base also participate in the authoring of contents for these releases, as exemplified by the video essay by artist Jeff Wall or the audio commentary provided by critic Cyril Neyrat. Similarly, Jacques Rancière and Jonathan Rosenbaum contributed to essays that were included in DVD releases of *Blood* and *Casa de Lava* respectively. Another example of these authoring activities is the video interview *Finding the Criminal* (2010), which was produced and directed by Andy Rector and Keller, and included in the extras of the *Colossal Youth* MoC release.

While these mediations between different agents in an informal cinephile network have considerable impact on the authoring and release of these DVD editions, as products, these releases are tied to copyright agreements. Hence, the second decisive factor in Costa's active role in distribution deals relates to the copyright status of his films. Costa currently holds the copyright of *Blood* (produced by Trópico Filmes), as well as having access to the rights of the feature and short films produced by Contracosta. According to Villa-Lobos, the copyright of all these works was sold to the IPC soon after the end of the partnership with the filmmaker.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Borges, email interview (29 July 2014).

<sup>42</sup> Villa-Lobos, personal interview (11 February 2013). Although it is not clear how Midas Filmes obtained distribution rights for the DVD editions in Portugal, Villa-Lobos suggests in the same interview that surely

Although the details of this sale are not publicly documented, this action gave Costa some form of access to copyright of the works produced by Contracosta, allowing the filmmaker to grant distribution rights to the different DVD companies.

The only exceptions to this access to copyright are the films produced by Paulo Branco. The copyright for both *Casa de Lava* and *Bones* is currently held by the media and communications conglomerate and cinema distributor NOS (formerly ZON Lusomundo, Lusomundo hereafter). In 2005 Lusomundo acquired (via PT Multimédia, currently part of the conglomerate) the copyright for approximately ninety films previously held by Branco's distribution company Madragoa Filmes, including works by João César Monteiro and Manoel de Oliveira.<sup>43</sup> The problematic access to the rights of these films is explained by Pedro Borges:

[all] these films [including *Casa de Lava* and *Bones*] are [...] in the hands of the [conglomerate] companies that succeeded the PT/Lusomundo; companies that do nothing to [distribute] these films, unless required to do so. In Portugal, these films are not even [...] available on DVD.<sup>44</sup>

In order to include *Bones* in *Letters from Fontainhas*, Costa had to help mediate the distribution rights agreement between the Criterion editorial team and representatives at Lusomundo.<sup>45</sup> As for the UK edition of *Casa de Lava*, Costa once again helped to

---

there was an agreement between Costa and the Portuguese Ministry of Culture, in order to facilitate copyright access to *In Vanda's Room* and *Colossal Youth*.

<sup>43</sup> This acquisition was made during a period when Paulo Branco's companies had run into financial difficulties. The transaction of assets formerly belonging to the Madragoa Filmes portfolio further illustrates the problematic dynamics of the exhibition circuit, which is limited to a small exhibition market dominated by conglomerates, as discussed in Chapter Two.

<sup>44</sup> Borges, email interview (29 July 2014).

<sup>45</sup> Costa, personal interview (22 February 2013).

forge an agreement between Lusomundo and Second Run, which resulted in a standard rights agreement, with a fee for the UK rights held by Lusomundo.<sup>46</sup>

More than just mediating between different copyright holders, Costa also had direct involvement in the remastering for all these DVD releases, supervising the materials used. The MoC edition of *Colossal Youth* was supervised and approved by Costa, who also provided the film masters of two of the three short films for inclusion in the extras and the printed materials packaged with the DVD.<sup>47</sup> As for the Second Run releases, the company used new high definition masters, with the technical work directly supervised by Costa. Unhappy with the existing master copy, Costa supervised the new film master of *Blood* at the Portuguese Tobis in Lisbon (which was also used in the Midas Filmes release), and provided new English subtitles. In a similar way, and as already pointed out, *Casa de Lava* was subjected to a lengthy process of remastering which delayed the release for approximately two years. As explained by Barwick, the remastering of the film

went through several versions – some ‘too dark’, some ‘too grainy’. This took some time as grading a film like this, where much is shot in natural light and with deeply dark night scenes. [Costa] wanted to retain the correct look of the film as it would be projected in a cinema. [...]

This is why it took so long between [...] announcing that we would be releasing the film to actually putting it out. Pedro [Costa] is a perfectionist and is aware of every imperfection, so he was careful to produce something he was 100% happy with. We in turn would not want to have

---

<sup>46</sup> Barkwick, email interview (27 may 2014).

<sup>47</sup> The three short films included in the MoC release are *Tarrafal*, *O Nosso Homem* and *The Rabbit Hunters*. The master of the latter was provided by Jeonju International Film Festival.

released anything Pedro was not personally happy with, which is why we were content to let Pedro work on it until he was happy and we would postpone our release until materials were fully approved.<sup>48</sup>

This attentive remastering process is in line with commercial practices of companies catering for cinephile audiences.<sup>49</sup> Yet, and in the context of this study, it also reveals the careful filmic artistry that marks Costa's working process.

This careful process of remastering extended to the MoC re-release of *Colossal Youth*. Soon after agreeing to release the film, Costa and representatives from the company faced technical issues posed by the existing copy, which generated a long process of remastering. As Craig Keller explains:

[There] were a lot of logistical issues: [...] *Colossal Youth* [master was] PAL Digibeta, and thus run at 25fps in their real-time unreeling; that said, Pedro's favorite way for those films to be seen was on 35mm, which indeed is their 'native projection format' [...]. [Therefore, Costa] is very happy with the textural effect that came from the DV format of the original 'source' being transferred to celluloid emulsion [used in this release].<sup>50</sup>

Costa's engagement in the remastering of the MoC and Second Run releases of his films corresponds to the expectations of cinephiles, eager not just to consume Costa's films but also to have a personal mark of the filmmaker imprinted on these releases. These activities are consonant with Costa's narrative of production, placed

---

<sup>48</sup> Barkwick, email interview (27 May 2014).

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, Barbara Klinger, 'The Contemporary Cinephile: Film Collecting in the Post-Video Era', in *Hollywood Spectatorship: Changing Perceptions of Cinema Audiences*, ed. by Stokes, Melvyn and Richard Maltby (London: British Film Institute, 2001), 138-9; also Grant, 'Auteur Machines?', 103-4, 112.

<sup>50</sup> Keller, email interview (17 April 2014). The remaster of *Colossal Youth* used in this release offers a different image quality to the one included in the Criterion boxset, which was remastered from the digital camera originals, to which Keller refers to in the quote.

in the overall work being managed by the filmmaker. As Costa explains, the effort involved in participating actively in the release of his films includes a ‘considerable amount of [administrative] work’ in which ‘is necessary to have the [film master] copies, to review and watch them, to package and send them [to distributors]’, creating a work flow centred on his ‘past’ films, a working method that runs parallel with his present-day filmmaking routines.<sup>51</sup>

Costa’s agency with the circulation of his work is also transmitted through the marketing of all these DVD releases. These products provide information about the product’s history, making cinephiles aware that they are acquiring a product approved by, worked on and provided by Costa himself. In both Second Run releases, phrases such as ‘approved by the director’ (in the case of *Blood*) or ‘supervised by the director, especially of this DVD release’ (in *Casa de Lava*) are included on both the packaging of the DVDs themselves and in the official information available on the company website. The Criterion edition resorts to similar expressions of authenticity, extensively listing the contents of the box set, adding a ‘director approved’ sticker featuring a reproduction of Costa’s handwritten signature to the external packaging. A feature commonly used by this company, this signature sticker responds to a demand for quality by cinephiles concerned with the relationship between the aesthetic value of the films and the quality of the consumable object. These DVD releases are commodities, presentations of filmic products that also circulate in a theatrical format. Yet, these consumable objects also manifest traits revealing Costa’s presence. These reveal a history of manufacture that

---

<sup>51</sup> Costa, personal interview (22 February 2013).

contributes to the understanding of the filmmaker's authorship, including processes involving circulation.

Responding to the contemporary cinephiles that sustain the niche market in which Costa's films are often placed, this personal involvement enhances the marketing practices carried out by these companies. Particularly looking at the releases by Second Run, Barwick points out that

[as] a tiny distributor with limited budget, [Second Run is] often unable to advertise in the traditional way (ie, through print ads or web banners etc) as our budgets don't allow it. We tend to rely almost purely on the strength of positive notices and good reviews and try to spread that via forums and social media.<sup>52</sup>

Placed in dialogue with the other forms of circulation, these releases take part in a series of multi-layered circulation events directly maintained by Costa or with Costa's presence. Complementing these practices, Costa participated in several public events, film screenings and interviews, in order to promote these releases. As Barwick describes:

We were fortunate that Pedro [Costa] is so supportive of us and of his films and he came over to the UK to help promote both releases – in September 2009 we had a sold-out special screening of *Blood* ([with Costa's] own 35mm print) at the Curzon Cinema Soho followed by a Q&A with Pedro [Costa]. [Costa] also did several print interviews with *Sight & Sound*, *Little White Lies* and *Dazed & Confused* and a radio interview with BBC's *Film Programme*. For *Casa de Lava* [...] we had a special screening event (again sold-out) at ICA Cinema in September 2010 with

---

<sup>52</sup> Barwick, email interview (27 May 2014).

[Costa] presenting his own 35mm print and doing a Q&A session afterwards.<sup>53</sup>

These public events mediate the author's figure, responding to commercial expectations and establishing modes of identification with audiences.<sup>54</sup> The commercial clout of Costa's image is exemplified further by the events carried by Cinematrix in Japan. The company held several retrospectives of Costa's work, timed to coincide with the DVD releases of his films while supporting other activities through partnerships with other companies. These have included presentations of Costa's video installations,<sup>55</sup> a concert with Jeanne Balibar (coinciding with the release of *Change Nothing*), and the re-release of the *Casa De Lava* notebook.<sup>56</sup> These different events rely on Costa's presence as part of the consumption experience. Even if occupying a niche within the larger market of DVD consumption, these products and events reveal the multiple possibilities of art cinema circulation, as well as the increasing fluidity of a global digital economy catering for multiple communities of interest.

## Conclusion

Costa's films have always taken part (even if with different degrees of exposure) in the dynamics of international commercial theatrical exhibition and distribution circuits, inherent to the art-house and film festival. Yet, the circulation activities

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> See Corrigan, *A Cinema Without Walls*, 109.

<sup>55</sup> In 2004, Cinematrix curated exhibitions of the video installations and collaborated in Costa's and Rui Chafes's exhibition *MU* (discussed in the previous chapter), among other activities.

<sup>56</sup> The contents of this notebook are discussed in Chapter Four.

discussed in this chapter have acquired particular significance in the consumption of Costa's work. Since 2005 Costa has been involved in processes of disintermediation that have negotiated circulation through the support of an active network with expanded setups, while reinforcing further his distance from producers and sales agents.

The activities around retrospectives of Costa's films have facilitated a return to theatrical exhibition of his earlier works, previously less consistently exposed within international circuits. Film retrospectives, special screenings and related events become central to the international consumption of Costa's work, partially surpassing the lack of opportunities offered to Costa by the theatrical commercial circuit, and prolonging the short-length exhibition offered by film festivals. Recent complete retrospectives of Costa's work, such as the one promoted by the Taipei Film Festival (Taiwan, June and July 2015) and *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: The Films of Pedro Costa*, held at the Film Society of Lincoln Center (New York, July 2015), reveal that these events are now part of the filmmaker's circulation routine, placed alongside his presence at film festivals and the theatrical release of his most recent feature film, *Horse Money*. In equal terms, the DVD releases of Costa's films provide global exposure to his oeuvre and have responded to the forms of consumption favoured by contemporary cinephiles, while opening possibilities to technically enhance his previous works. In this context, these DVD releases are not just ancillary or post-theatrical formats of circulation; they can also, among Costa's international fans, be the only source of engagement with his films, resolving the physical and geographical constraints presented by theatrical exhibition.

These different forms of circulation are supported by Costa's authorial agency, either through his direct presence or in the production process of his DVD



releases. This agency added product knowledge to these films, providing further context in the interactions between production and consumption thus potentially affecting the way in which these cinematic products are consumed. Creating different forms of engagement, the international circulation of Pedro Costa's work offers further clues in understanding how contemporary art cinema is exhibited, distributed and consumed. These circulation practices inform us about not just the consumption of Costa's films but also his activities as a filmmaker. Retrospectives and DVD releases are not just a sequential part of his films' theatrical afterlife. These forms of circulation constitute a central part of his work's lifecycle and allow for further understanding Costa's different facets of authorial presence and activities inserted in an ongoing narrative of production.

## Conclusion

In May 2015, restored copies of Paulo Rocha's first two feature films, *Verdes Anos* and *Mudar de Vida* (both briefly discussed in Chapters One and Three) were re-released theatrically in the Portuguese commercial cinema circuit, to accompany the release of Rocha's posthumous feature film *Se Eu Fosse Ladrão... Roubava* (2013, henceforth *Se Eu Fosse Ladrão...*).<sup>1</sup> Released domestically only ten days after Manoel de Oliveira's 'confessional' documentary *Visita ou Memórias e Confissões* (directed in 1982 but only released commercially after the filmmaker's death),<sup>2</sup> *Se Eu Fosse Ladrão...* is part of possible trend in Portuguese art cinema for films that connect filmmakers' personal memories (expressed either through archival footage or re-enacted) to historical reflections on Portuguese politics and culture.<sup>3</sup>

The timing of the re-release of Rocha's two first feature films to coincide with the release of *Se Eu Fosse Ladrão...* may help further this effort to commemorate and discover the fragments of a national filmography that, both in historical and contemporary terms, has had a troubled relationship with domestic distribution and exhibition circuits (as well as with domestic audiences, as discussed in Chapter Two). In the particular context of this study, the re-release of these two works is also revealing of Pedro Costa's current agency as a filmmaker. Costa

---

<sup>1</sup> The film was concluded only months before Rocha's death on 29 December 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Following Oliveira's wish, the film could only be released after his death. It was premiered at Porto on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2015, approximately one month after his death.

<sup>3</sup> Other examples of this possible trend are Oliveira's *Porto da Minha Infância* (2001), Miguel Gomes' *Inventário de Natal* (*Christmas Inventory*, 2000), or more recently Joaquim Pinto's *E Agora? Lembra-me* (*What Now? Remind Me*, 2013).

collaborated in the restoration of these films at the Portuguese Cinematheque, concluding a process initiated by Rocha.<sup>4</sup> Costa's involvement in the restoration of Rocha's films illustrates a curatorial facet of Costa's working methods, which expands on the recuperation processes that *Blood* and *Casa de Lava* have previously enjoyed. Previously, these curatorial activities were also manifested in the active role Costa played in the recuperation, restoration and exhibition of *Numéro Zéro*, Jean Eustache's obscure work initially filmed in 1971 but not exhibited in commercial theatrical circuits until 2003.<sup>5</sup>

Complementing these recent curation undertakings, in recent years Costa's professional activities have also expand to encompass roles in academia. As explained in Chapter Eight, Costa successfully maintains regular activities in university-related venues, integrated in exhibition and circulation events. Some of these events integrate educational activities, such as masterclasses and filmmaking courses. Costa's integration in the academic circuit became further visible in 2013, with the launch of the Film.Factory intensive doctoral level (DLA) programme, a high education initiative developed by Hungarian filmmaker Béla Tarr in

---

<sup>4</sup> Costa's participation in Rocha's films is extended to its circulation. Costa also participated in the world premiere of *Se Eu Fosse Ladrão...* at the 2013 Locarno International Film Festival, in which Rocha's two first feature films were also exhibited. These screenings at Locarno were accompanied by a press conference held on 14<sup>th</sup> of August, with Pedro Costa, *Verdes Anos* actress Isabel Ruth and Portuguese Cinematheque director José Manuel Costa.

<sup>5</sup> According to Costa, the existence of Eustache's film was firstly mentioned to him by Jean-Marie Straub in 2001. With the help of filmmaker and producer Thierry Lounas, Costa was able to contact Eustache's son, and recovered a working print of the film, which was later restored at the Portuguese Cinematheque. Details (and anecdotes) concerning the finding of *Numéro Zéro* have circulated the specialised press. See, for example, Jean-Baptiste Morain, 'Inedit Jean Eustache: Numéro zéro', in *Les Inrockuptibles* (01 January 2003). Online: <http://www.lesinrocks.com/cinema/films-a-l-affiche/inedit-jean-eustache-numero-zero/> [accessed: 21.05.2015].

collaboration with the University Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, and as part of the Sarajevo Film Academy. As invited lecturer, Costa participated in a curriculum which include both theoretical and practical modules, and which was delivered by several international artists, directors, theorists and film historians such as Tilda Swinton, Gael García Bernal, Fred Kelemen, Carlos Reygadas, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Jonathan Rosenbaum and Jean-Michel Frodon, to name a few.<sup>6</sup>

These curatorial and educational activities offer yet another layer to Costa's multifaceted working practices. As discussed across this dissertation, Costa's agency extends to roles as varied as filmmaker, director, author and artist, roles that are positioned him in different formal and informal practices, adding further layers to the manifold production and consumption contexts occupied by Costa. While multifaceted, these different roles are, first and foremost, acts of production. As I have explained across this thesis, Costa's attitude concerning his filmmaking activities allows, on the one hand, the development of a production blueprint used to support particular aesthetic preoccupations while, on the other, mediating authorial processes operated between disparate network nodes belonging to different but interconnected circles of cinematic production and circulation. Forming a narrative of production, the practices assisting Costa's agency reveal a constellation of different, yet complementary, filmmaking activities.

As this dissertation has shown, Costa's earlier works were tied to the production, financial and circulation constraints of the Portuguese film industry.

---

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the Film.Factory programme see <http://ff.filmfactory.ba/static-page/about-filmfactory> and <http://ff.filmfactory.ba/static-page/dla-programme> [both accessed 17.02.2016].

However, as discussed in Chapter Four, Costa's transition from young Portuguese filmmaker to European art film director, propelled other forms of symbolic and economic transactions tied to the European art cinema co-production model, revealing further how his authorial agency has been part of the processes of production. This transition also elucidates how authorship becomes not just part of the agency of the filmmaker but also a collaborative practice, established through creative and technical processes that answer to the constrictions of the (professional, social and geographical) settings.

While reflecting artistic, financial and technological independence and an austere filmmaking style, Costa's filmmaking since *In Vanda's Room* does nevertheless negotiate particular dependencies related with normative processes observed in industrial filmmaking production. The interstitial filmmaking process explained in Chapter Five mediate between industrial practices (at the production and post-production stages) and different synergies between film technology, filmic style and creative agency. While benefiting from the freedoms created by digital video, which expanded the creative and shooting processes, Costa also had to rely on intricate technical and financial procedures and technical expertise during post-production stages – something that reinforces further the multifaceted aspects of filming at the interstices. Successively placed in different contexts such as a Portuguese film industry, European industrial co-production or 'interstitial' global art filmmaking, Costa's cinema is dependent on a constellation of interrelated factors that inevitably lead to relations of production: personal and professional formation, collaborative practices under variegated networks and communities of interest, adaptation to creative and filmmaking technological processes, as well as collaboration under economic and technological norms that mediate between formal

and informal, and personal and professional activities. Thus, the films analysed in this thesis benefitted of contingencies that negotiate both its authorship and production.

Inevitably, this close dialogue between authorship and production is not just observed in Costa's filmmaking, but is extensive to forms of circulation, exhibition and consumption of his oeuvre. As discussed in the second part of this thesis, critical and academic discussions have approximate Costa's filmmaking to different strata of art cinema categories, under terms such as 'difficult art cinema', 'contemporary parametric film' or 'slow cinema'. Emphasising the role of circuits such as the film festival and the gallery, and considering the exhibition and circulation mechanisms present at retrospectives and DVD releases, Costa's cinema elucidates the different stages in which contemporary art cinema discusses its symbolic value. However, these critical attributions not just reveal aspects connected to symbolic capital created and maintained by mechanisms of consumption, but also expose the transactions of production operated under different cultural economies.

These processes of consumption expose variegated practices that contribute to the understanding of nuances concerning authorship in contemporary art film. Costa's creative practices negotiate not just textual, contextual and intertextual forms of filmmaking (in theatrical and gallery spaces) but also discuss how forms of circulation dependent on the filmmaker's direct agency and presence. This active participation in circulation discusses authorship, either as a form of creation or as part of commercial activities. Indeed, the processes of disintermediation explained in Chapter Eight exposes the problematics of ownership mediation, re-edition and remediation, processes that are intrinsic to Costa's production ethos; more than just normative facets concerning film exhibition, circulation and consumption, these

activities are also part of Costa's narrative of production, intrinsic tangled with processes concerning the creation and production of his films.

As part of its main discussion of Pedro Costa's processes of production and consumption, this study further highlights the multifaceted practices that can be seen in the production of contemporary art film. Partaking in manifold institutional formations that negotiate a cultural economy transacting symbolic and economic value, Costa's agency elucidates the multiple forms in which specific film practices and forms of consumption are sustained by both cultural discourses and industrial and commercial processes. Some of the evidence presented in this study suggests a need for a reformulation of the established understanding of forms of cultural prestige that underpin many historical perspectives and theoretical characteristics of scholarly discussions concerning art cinema. However, this study also unpacks several cultural, social and political contexts that may expand the current understanding of different national, regional and global production and circulation practices co-habituating under the term art cinema.

Understandably, this study examines current forms of filmmaking that can be extended to further explore the nuances presented by art film production and consumption. Concerning Costa's work, this dissertation provides hints for further discussion of the filmmaker's on-going and perhaps future practices of production and circulation. It should be pointed out that Costa's latest feature film, *Horse Money*, adds new characteristics to the production blueprint that previously made *In Vanda's Room* and *Colossal Youth* possible. With the exception of his first feature film, *Horse Money* is the only of Costa's feature films that does not have a financial support rooted in a coproduction model. Furthermore, Costa's latest feature film is currently enjoying an international exhibition and circulation exposure which is

considerably greater than his previous works. Only time will tell whether these characteristics mark a new step in the filmmaker's narrative of production, or constitute an isolated case in Costa's on-going pragmatic filmmaking agency.

More than just related to Costa and his work, this possible line of enquiry contribute to the development of further scholarly understanding of other film practices also situated in a global digital economy, and to the understanding of the rich and complex dialogue between filmmakers and niche cultures. This thesis has thus aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the filmmaking practices of Pedro Costa, as one example of the variegated contexts in which art film may be produced and consumed. Yet it is important to understand that this line of enquiry is just a fraction of a far more complex and expansive circle encompassing the fluid and ever-changing practices that can be observed when looking at contemporary art cinema.



## Bibliography

- Alves, Laurinda, 'Pedro e o Segredo', in *O Independente*, supplement *Vida3* (30 November 1990), 28-9
- Andersen, Thom, 'Ghost Stories', in *The cinema of Pedro Costa* (Jeonju: Jeonju International Film Festival, 2010), 246-54
- Andrews, David, 'Towards an Inclusive, Exclusive Approach to Art Cinema', in *Global art cinema: new theories and histories*, ed. by Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 62-74
- Anon., 'What is slow travel?', in *Slow Movement*. Online:  
[http://www.slowmovement.com/slow\\_travel.php](http://www.slowmovement.com/slow_travel.php) [accessed: 31.08.2015]
- Antunes, João, 'Os Filmes da Prateleira', in *Sete* (11 October 1990), 15
- Appadurai, Arjun, 'Introduction: commodities and the politics of value', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3-63
- Areal, Leonor, *Cinema Português - Um país imaginado* (Lisbon: Edições 70, 2011)
- Arenas, Fernando, *Lusophone Africa: Beyond Independence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010)
- Atalanta Filmes, 'O Sangue', press release (1990), np
- Aumont, Jacques, 'The Invention of Place: Daniele Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub's *Moses and Aaron*', in *Landscape and Film*, ed. by Martin Lefebvre (London: Routledge, 2006), 1-18
- Balsom, Erika, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013)
- Baptista, Cristina 'Ecrãs de Porta Fechada', in *Sete* (10 January 1990), 48
- Baptista, Tiago (2010), 'Nationally Correct: The Invention of Portuguese Cinema', in *P: Portuguese Cultural Studies*, 3 (Spring 2010), 3-18
- Baptista, Tiago, *A Invenção do Cinema Português* (Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2008)
- Barkwick, Chris, email interview, 27 May 2014
- Bello, Maria Do Rosário L., 'A Implosão do Cinema Português: Duas Faces de uma Mesma Moeda', in *P: Portuguese Cultural Studies*, 3 (Spring 2010), 19-32
- Bellour, Raymond, 'Concerning "the Photographic"', in *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography*, ed. by Karen Beckman and Jean Ma (London: Duke University Press, 2008), 253-276
- Bellour, Raymond, *La Querelle des Dispositifs: Cinéma, Installations, Expositions* (Paris: Éditions P.O.L., 2012)

- Bergala, Alain, 'La Réminiscence (Pierrot Avec Monika)', in *Pour un Cinéma Comparé: Influences et Répétitions*, ed. by Jacques Aumont (Paris: Cinémathèque Française, 1996), 51-68
- Berry, Chris, Lu Xinyu, and Lisa Rofel (eds), *The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement: For the Public Record* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010)
- Bennett, Bruce, Marc Furstenau and Adrian Mackenzie, 'Introduction', in *Cinema and Technology: Cultures, Theories, Practices*, ed. by Bruce Bennett, Marc Furstenau and Adrian Mackenzie (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 1-18
- Betz, Mark, 'Art, exploitation, underground', in *Defining Cult Movies: The Cultural Politics of Oppositional Taste*, ed. by Mark Jancovich, et al. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 202-222
- Betz, Mark, 'Beyond Europe: On Parametric Transcendence', in *Global Art Cinema: New theories and Histories*, ed. by Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 31-47
- Bishop, Kyle W. *American Zombie Gothic: The Rise and Fall (and Rise) of the Walking Dead in Popular Culture* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2010)
- Bolter, Jay David and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Massachusetts: the MIT Press, 2000)
- Bordwell, David, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (London: Routledge, 1985)
- Bordwell, David, 'The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice', in *The European Cinema Reader*, ed. by Catherine Fowler (London: Routledge, 2002), 94-102
- Bordwell, David, 'Intensified Continuity: Visual Style in Contemporary American Film', in *Film Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 3 (Spring 2002), pp 16-28
- Bordwell, David, 'Good and good for you', in *Observations on film art* (10 July 2011), online: [www.davidbordwell.net/blog/2011/07/10/good-and-good-for-you](http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/2011/07/10/good-and-good-for-you) [accessed: 06.09.2012]
- Boozer, Jack, 'The Screenplay and Authorship in Adaptation', in *Authorship in Film Adaptation*, ed. by Jack Boozer (Austin: University of Texas, 2008) 1-30
- Borges, Pedro, email interview, 29 July 2014
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 'The production of belief: contribution to an economy of symbolic goods', in *Media Culture Society*, 2 (1980), 261-293
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 'The market of symbolic goods', in *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 112-41
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 'The Field of Economic Production, or: The Economic World Reversed', in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 3-44

- Bourdieu, Pierre, 'The Emergence of a Dualistic Structure', in *The Rules of Art* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 121-25
- Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*, trans. by Richard Nice (London: Routledge, 2010)
- Bradshaw, Peter, 'Pedro Costa, the Samuel Beckett of cinema', in *The Guardian film blog* (17 September 2009). Online:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2009/sep/17/pedro-costa-tate-retrospective>  
 [accessed: 09.04.2015]
- Brás, António, 'Não é vermelho, é sangue' in *A Grande Ilusão* (December 1990), 51-2
- Brecht, Bertolt, 'The Threepenny Lawsuit', in *Brecht On Film and Radio*, edited by Marc Silberman (London: Methuen, 2000), 147-99
- Brody, Richard, 'The pleasure Principle', in *The New Yorker* (01 May 2011). Online:  
<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/movies/2011/05/the-pleasure-principle.html>  
 [accessed: 06.09.2012]
- Burdeau, Emmanuel, 'Seul le cinéma – Pedro Costa tourney *Dans la Chambre de Vanda*', in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, 536 (June 1999), 60-62
- Cabrita, António, 'Evocação do Pedagogo', in *Expresso* (21 September 1991), 17
- Cabrita, António, 'A força dos elementos', in *Expresso* (15 November 1997), 8
- Câmara, Vasco, 'Passagem para a terra dos mortos', in *Público* (21 May 1994), 26
- Câmara, Vasco. 'Convalescer na ilha dos mortos', in *Público* (10 February 1995), 2-4
- Company, David, *Photography and Cinema* (London: Reaktion, 2008)
- Cardoso, Joana Amaral, 'Estes são os 20 filmes portugueses mais vistos em 40 anos e O Pátio das Cantigas está no topo', in *Público* (25 August 2015), online:  
<http://www.publico.pt/n1705929> [accessed: 25.08.2015]
- Carmo, Teresa et al, 'A Primeira Vez', in *Sete*, 9 May 1991, 25-29
- Ciment, Michel, 'The State of Cinema', address at the 46<sup>th</sup> San Francisco International Film Festival (San Francisco Film Society, 2003). Online:  
<http://web.archive.org/web/20040325130014/http://www.sfiff.org/fest03/special/state.html>  
 [accessed: 21.10.2011]
- Cinemateca Portuguesa, 'Encontro com Pedro e Rui Chafes' (Lisbon, 15 of January 2015).  
 Online: <http://youtu.be/KaYxUlzSQg> [accessed: 30.04.2015].
- Coelho, Eduardo Prado, *Vinte anos de cinema português: 1962-1982* (Lisbon: Instituto de Cultura e Língua Portuguesa, 1983)
- Collins, Jim. 'Genericity in the 90s: Eclectic Irony and the New Sincerity', in *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, ed. by Collins, Jim, Hilary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins (New York: Routledge 1993), 242-63

- Connolly, Maeve, *The place of Artists' Cinema: Space Site and Screen* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009)
- Corless, Kieron 'Crossing the Threshold: Interview with Pedro Costa', in *Sight & Sound*, 19:10 (October 2009), 28-33
- Corless, Kieron, 'Ace Ventura: King of the Quarter', in *Sight & Sound*, vol.18 no. 5, (May 2008), 12
- Costa, Pedro, 'Down to Earth (sinopse, argumento e biofilmografia do realizador), Unpublish film treatment, n.d.
- Costa, Pedro, 'Juventude em Marcha' (promotional leaflet), nd, np
- Costa, Pedro, 'Depoimento', in *António Reis e Margarida Cordeiro: A Poesia da Terra*, ed. Anabela Moutinho et al (Faro: Cineclube de Faro, 1997), 67
- Costa, Pedro, personal interview (Lisbon, 2 July 2012)
- Costa, Pedro, Cyril Neyrat and Andy Rector, *Um Melro Dourado, um Ramo de Flores, uma Colher de Prata. Conversa com Pedro Costa* (Lisbon: Midas Filmes/Orfeu Negro, 2012)
- Costa, Pedro, personal interview (Lisbon, 22 February 2013)
- Costa, Pedro, *Casa de Lava – Caderno* (Lisbon: Pierre von Kleist editions, 2013)
- Costa, Pedro, Masterclass (day one), Laura Mulvey (moderator) Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image, Birkbeck, University of London, 6 January 2014
- Crespo, Nuno, 'O fascínio de Pedro Costa explicado pelos japoneses ao mundo', in *Público* (21 December 2012). Online: <http://www.publico.pt/n1578285> [accessed: 04.08.2014]
- Corrigan, Timothy, *A cinema without walls: movies and culture after Vietnam* (London: Routledge, 1991)
- Coutinho, Isabel, 'Pedro, Inês e os fantasmas', in *Público*, supplement Ípsilon (25 September 2009), 9-11
- da Costa, João Bénard, 'Sangue antigo e sangue novo', in *Revista K* (November, 1990), 117.
- da Costa, João Bénard, *O Cinema Português Nunca Existiu* (Lisbon: CTT, 1996)
- da Costa, João Benard, 'Os filmes que nos veem / os olhos que nos filmam', in *O Independente* (02 March 2001), 56
- da Costa, João Bénard, *Cinema Português: Anos Gulbenkian* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2007)
- da Costa, João Bénard, 'O Negro é uma Cor ou o cinema de Pedro Costa', in *Cem mil cigarros - Os Filmes de Pedro Costa*, ed. by Ricardo Matos Cabo (Lisbon, Orfeu Negro, 2009), 16-28
- Dargis, Manohla and A. O. Scott, 'In Defense of the Slow and the Boring', in *The New York Times* (03 June 2011). Online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/05/movies/films-in-defense-of-slow-and-boring.html> [accessed: 06.09.2012]

- da Silva, Rodrigues, 'O Rosto dos Verdes Anos: entrevista com Pedro Hestnes', in *Jornal de Letras e Ideias* (01 March 1995), 5-7
- da Silva, Rodrigues, 'Públicos: o direito à diferença', in *Jornal de Letras* (15 March 1995), 15
- da Silva, Rodrigues, 'Malhas que o Império Tece(u)', in *JL: Jornal de Letras e Ideias* (05 November 1997), 28
- Del-Negro, Daniel, email interview (28 July 2012)
- de Luca, Tiago and Nuno Barradas Jorge, 'Introduction', in *Slow Cinema* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, forthcoming 2015), 1-21
- de Pina, Luís *História do Cinema Português* (Mem Martins: Publicações Europa-América, 1986)
- Dercon, Chris, 'Gleaning the Future', in *Vertigo*, Vol. 2 nr. 2 (Spring 2002). Online: [http://www.closeupfilmcentre.com/vertigo\\_magazine/volume-2-issue-2-spring-2002/gleaning-the-future/](http://www.closeupfilmcentre.com/vertigo_magazine/volume-2-issue-2-spring-2002/gleaning-the-future/) [accessed 05 August 2014]
- de Valck, Marijke, *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007)
- Dickie, George, 'The New Institutional Theory of Art', in *The Philosophy of Art*, ed. by Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley (Boston: McGraw Hill, 1995)
- Elsaesser, Thomas, *New German cinema: a history* (London: BFI, 1989)
- Elsaesser, Thomas, *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005)
- Elsaesser, Thomas, 'The Future of "Art" and "Work" in the age of Vision Machines: Harun Farocki', in *After the Avant-Garde: Contemporary German and Austrian Experimental Film*, ed. by Randall Halle and Reinhild Steingröver (New York: Camden House, 2008), 31-49
- Elsaesser, Thomas, 'World Cinema: Realism, Evidence, Presence', in *Realism and the Audiovisual Media*, ed. by Lúcia Nagib and Cecília Mello (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 3-19
- Elsaesser, Thomas, 'Stop/Motion', in *Between Stillness and Movement: Film Photography Algorithms* ed. by Eivind Rossack (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 109-122
- Elwes, Catherine, *Video Art a Guided Tour* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004)
- Emerson, Jim, 'Into the Great Big Boring', in *Scanners* (09 June 2011), online: [www.rogerebert.com/scanners/into-the-great-big-boring](http://www.rogerebert.com/scanners/into-the-great-big-boring) [accessed: 06 September 2012]
- English, James F., *The economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 2005)

- Ferreira, Francisco, 'Guarda a minha fala para sempre', in *Expresso* (25 November 2006), 14-17
- Ferreira, Manuel Cintra, 'Sob as Cinzas', in *Expresso*, (11 February 1995), 15
- Fiant, Antony, *Pour un cinéma contemporain soustractif* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2014)
- Figueirinhas, Rita do Carmo, *Bairro, identidade, interacção: Um olhar etnográfico sobre o Centro Social do Bairro 6 de Maio*, unpublished Master thesis (ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, 2011)
- Filipovic, Elena, 'The Global White Cube', in *The Manifesta Decade*, ed. by Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), 63-84
- Flanagan, Matthew, 'Towards an Aesthetic of Slow in Contemporary Cinema'. In *16-9*, no 29 (November 2008). Online: [http://www.16-9.dk/2008-11/side11\\_inenglish.htm](http://www.16-9.dk/2008-11/side11_inenglish.htm) [accessed 13.02.2014]
- Flanagan, Matthew, 'Slow Cinema': Temporality and Style in Contemporary Art and Experimental Film. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Exeter, 2012
- Foucault, Michel, 'What Is an Author?' [1969], in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: selected essays and interviews*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 113-38
- Foundas, Scott (2006), '2006 Toronto Film Festival: Vote for Pedro (and Larry)', in *LA Weekly Blog* (16 September 2006). Online: [blogs.laweekly.com/foundas/2006/09/vote\\_for\\_pedro\\_and\\_larry.php](http://blogs.laweekly.com/foundas/2006/09/vote_for_pedro_and_larry.php) [accessed: 31.05.2012]
- Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 'Informações sobre o financiamento do filme "O Sangue" de Pedro Costa', email communication (03 August 2012)
- Furtado, José Afonso, 'Regresso e Chegada', in *Público*, 10 February 1995, 6
- Fundação de Serralves, 'Conversation between Rui Chafes, Pedro Costa, Catherine David and João Fernandes', in *Fora!*, exhibition catalogue (Porto: Fundação de Serralves, 2007), 49-69
- Gallagher, Mark, *Another Steven Soderbergh Experience: Authorship and Contemporary Hollywood* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013)
- Gallagher, Tag, 'Straub Anti-Straub', in *Senses of Cinema* Issue 43 (May 2007). Online: <http://sensesofcinema.com/2007/feature-articles/costa-straub-huillet/> [accessed: 25.05.2014]
- Gandolfi, Loretta, 'Lights Off On Pedro Costa', in *Take One*, 23 March 2013. Online: <http://www.takeonecff.com/2013/lamour-nexiste-pas-lights-off-on-pedro-costa> [accessed: 09.02.2015]

- Gomes, Rui Telmo, Teresa Duarte Martinho and Vanda Lourenço, 'Professional Careers in Cinema Production in Portugal: Different Contexts, Generations and Gender', in *Culture-Biz* (Bonn: ERICarts, 2005). Online: [http://www.gender-research.net/web/files/53/en/CB\\_FP\\_Portugal.pdf](http://www.gender-research.net/web/files/53/en/CB_FP_Portugal.pdf) [Accessed 19.01.2015]
- Graeber, David, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: the False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (New York: Palgrave, 2001)
- Grainge, Paul, *Monochrome Memories: Nostalgia and Style in Retro America* (Westport: Praeger Press, 2002)
- Granja, Paulo 'Paulo Rocha Os Verdes Anos (1962) and The New Portuguese Cinema' in *P: Portuguese Cultural Studies*, 3 (Spring 2010), 61-68
- Grant, Catherine 'Auteur Machines? Auteurism and the DVD', in *Film and Television after DVD*, ed. by Tom Brown (London: Routledge, 2008), 101-15
- Grieb, Margit and Will Lehman, 'Screen Wars: German National Cinema in the Age of Television', in *European Cinema in the Television Age*, ed. by Dorota Ostrowska and Graham Roberts (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 71-86
- Grilo, João Mário, *O Cinema da Não-ilusão* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2006)
- Guarneri, Michael, 'Pedro Costa: Documentary, realism, and life on the margins.' (Interview), in *BOMB – Artists in Conversation* (16 July 2015). Online: <http://bombmagazine.org/article/5506714/pedro-costa> [accessed: 07.08.2015]
- Guillory, John, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993)
- Gunning, Tom, 'Moving Away from the Index', in *Screen Dynamics: Mapping the Borders of Cinema*, ed. by Gertrud Koch et al (Vienna: Österreichisches Filmmuseum, 2012), 42-60
- Hagener, Malte and Marijke de Valck, 'Cinephilia in Transition', in *Mind the Screen: Media Concepts According to Thomas Elsaesser*, ed. by Jaap Kooijman, Patricia Pisters, and Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 19-31
- Harbord, Janet, *Film Cultures* (London: Sage, 2002)
- Herederó, Carlos F., 'Necesidad de Pedro Costa', in *Cahiers du Cinéma* (España), nr. 6 (May, 2009), 5
- Higbee, Will and Song Hwee Lim "Concepts of transnational cinema: towards a critical transnationalism in film studies" in *Transnational Cinemas*, nol. 1, no. 1 (2010), 7-21.
- Higson, Andrew, 'The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema', in *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*, ed. by Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (London: Routledge, 2006), 15-25

- Hjort, Mette, 'On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalism', in *World cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Nataša Ďurovičová and Kathleen Newman (New York; London: Routledge, 2010), 12-33
- Hong, Sung-nam, 'Ossos: Being exhausted by wandering around in a labyrinth', in *Pedro Costa* (Jeonju: Jeonju International Film Festival, 2010), 208-12
- Iles, Chrissie, 'Between the Still and the Moving Image', in *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2001), 33-69
- Ingawanij, Adadol and Benjamin McKay (eds), *Glimpses of Freedom: Independent Cinema in Southeast Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2012)
- Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual, 'Informações sobre o financiamento de filmes do Pedro Costa', email communication (27 July 2012)
- Iordanova, Dina 'The Film Festival Circuit', in *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*, ed. by Dina Iordanova and Ragan Rhyne (St. Andrews: St Andrews Film Studies, 2009), 23-39
- Iordanova, Dina, 'Digital Disruption: Technological Innovation and Global Film Circulation', in *Digital Disruption: Cinema Moves On-line*, edited by Dina Iordanova and Stuart Cunningham (St Andrews: St Andrews Film Studies, 2012), 1-31
- Jäckel, Anne, *European film industries* (London: British Film Institute, 2003)
- James, David E., *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005)
- James, Nick, 'Passive Aggressive', in *Sight & Sound* (April 2010), 5
- Jaffe, Ira, *Slow Movies: Countering the Cinema of Action* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2014)
- Johnson, David. T., 'The "Flashing Glimpse" of Cinephilia: What an Unusual Methodology Might Offer Adaptation Studies', *Adaptation*, no. 1 (September, 2012), 25-42
- Jan van Eyck Video Weekend, 'From black box to white cube', round-table discussion with Pedro Costa, Catherine David and Chris Dercon (moderator), (26 May 2007). Online: [http://archived.janvaneyck.nl /0\\_4\\_6\\_text\\_files/David\\_Dercon\\_Costa.html](http://archived.janvaneyck.nl /0_4_6_text_files/David_Dercon_Costa.html) [accessed: 16.07.2014]
- Jorge, Nuno Barradas, 'Thinking of Portugal, Looking at Cape Verde: Notes on Representation of Immigrants in the Films of Pedro Costa', in *Migration in Lusophone Cinema*, ed. by Cacilda Rêgo and Marcus Brasileiro (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 41-57
- Keller, Craig, email interview (17 April 2014)



- Kim, Jihoon, 'Between Auditorium and Gallery: Perception in Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Films and Installations', in *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories*, ed. by Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 125-41
- King, Geoff, *Indie 2.0: change and continuity in contemporary American indie film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014)
- Klinger, Barbara, 'The Contemporary Cinephile: Film Collecting in the Post-Video Era', in *Hollywood Spectatorship: Changing Perceptions of Cinema Audiences*, ed. by Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby (London: British Film Institute, 2001), 132-151
- Koehler, Robert 'Cinephilia and Film Festivals', in *Dekalog 3: On film Festivals*, ed. by Richard Porton (London/New York: Wallflower Press, 2009), 81-97
- Kois, Dan, 'Eating Your Cultural Vegetables', in *The New York Times* (29 April 2011).  
Online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/01/magazine/mag-01Riff-t.html> [accessed: 06.09. 2012]
- Kovács, András Bálint, *Screening Modernism: European Art Cinema, 1950-1980* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007)
- Lefebvre, Martin, 'Between Setting and Landscape in the Cinema', in *Landscape and Film*, edited by Martin Lefebvre (London: Routledge, 2006), 19-59
- Lemièrre, Jacques, "'Um centro na margem": o caso do cinema português', in *Análise Social*, vol. XLI, nr.180 (2006), 731-65
- Lemièrre, Jacques, 'Terra a Terra: O Portugal e o Cabo Verde de Pedro Costa', in *Cem mil cigarros: Os Filmes de Pedro Costa*, ed. by Ricardo Matos Cabo (Lisbon: Orfeu Negro, 2009), 99-111
- Lev, Peter, *The Euro-American Cinema* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993)
- Lim, Dennis 'Under the Influence', in *Artforum* (Summer 2012). Online: <https://artforum.com/inprint/issue=201206&id=31085> [accessed: 02.02.2015].
- Lim, Dennis, 'Director's Quest for Truth Among the Downtrodden', in *The New York Times* (29 July 2007). Online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/29/movies/29lim.html> [accessed: 15.01.2014]
- Lim, Song Hwee, *Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness* (Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014)
- Lovejoy, Margot, *Digital Currents: Art in the Electronic Age* (London: Routledge, 2004)
- Luz, Nuno H., 'De Pedro Costa', in *Revista Semanário* (December, 1990), 28-9.
- Luz, Nuno H., 'Estou desgostado com Portugal', in *Diário de Notícias* (22 May 1994), 29
- Madragoa Filmes, *Quando Ninguém Olhar Por Mim, de Pedro Costa*. Unpublished film treatment, 1991
- Martin, Adrian, 'Kind of a Revolution, and Kind of Not: Digital Low-Budget Cinema in Australia Today', in *Scan*, vol. 3, no 2 (October, 2006), 1-5

- Martin, Adrian, 'What's Cult Got To Do With It?: In Defense of Cinephile Elitism', in *Cineaste*, (Winter 2008), 39-42
- Martin, Adrian 'The Inner Life of a Film', in *Blood* DVD booklet (London: Second Run, 2009), 3-7
- Martins, Maria João, 'Noites Apaixonadas', in *JL: Jornal de Letras e Ideias* (11 December 1990), 20-1
- Martins, Maria João, 'Cinema com Chamas', in *Sete* (13 December 1990), 14
- Martins, Susana, 'No Palco da Vida', in *JL: Jornal de Letras e Ideias* (07 March 2001), 9
- Marx, Karl, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy* (London: Penguin Books, 1993)
- Maule, Rosanna, *Beyond Auteurism: New Directions in Authorial Film Practices in France, Italy and Spain since the 1980s* (Bristol: Intellect, 2008)
- Mazière, Michael 'The Solitude of a System', in *The Undercut Reader: Critical Writings on Artists' Film and Video*, ed. by Nina Danino and Michael Mazière (London: Wallflower Press, 2003), 4-8
- McGilligan, Patrick, "'Letters from Fontainhas": interview with Pedro Costa', in *Film International*, vol. 8 no. 3 (2010), 82-6
- Meigh-Andrews, Chris, *A History of Video Art: The Development of Form and Function* (Oxford: Berg, 2006)
- Meintel, Deirdre, *Race, Culture, and Portuguese colonialism in Cabo Verde*. Foreign and Comparative Studies/African Series, no. 41 (Syracuse: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1984)
- Melo, António 'Unanimidade, nunca!', in *O Público* (10 December 1990), 32
- Monteiro, João César, *Morituri te Salutant: Os que Vão Morrer Saúdam-te*, (Lisbon: &etc., 1974)
- Monteiro, Paulo Filipe. 'Autos da Alma: os guiões de ficção do cinema português entre 1961 e 1990', unpublished PhD thesis, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1995
- Morain, Jean-Baptiste, 'Inedit Jean Eustache : Numéro zéro', in *Les Inrockuptibles* (01 January 2003). Online: <http://www.lesinrocks.com/cinema/films-a-l-affiche/inedit-jean-eustache-numero-zero/> [accessed: 21.05.2015]
- Mourinha, Jorge, 'Geração Perdida', in *Público*, supplement *Ípsilon* (25 September 2009), 11-12
- Moutinho, Anabela, and Maria da Graça Lobo (eds), *António Reis e Margarida Cordeiro: A Poesia da Terra* (Faro: Cineclube de Faro, 1997)
- Naficy, Hamid, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic filmmaking* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001)
- Nagib, Lúcia, *World Cinema and the Ethics of Realism* (London: Continuum, 2011)

- Neale, Steve, 'Art Cinema as Institution', *Screen*, 22:1 (Spring 1981), 11-39
- Neyrat, Cyril, 'Pas de géant', in *Cahiers du Cinéma* (February, 2008), 24-6
- Neyrat, Cyril, 'Rooms for the Living and the Dead', in *Letters from Fontainhas*, DVD booklet (The Criterion Collection, 2010), 10-7
- Nichols, Bill, 'Discovering Form, Inferring Meaning: New Cinemas and the Film Festival Circuit', in *Film Quarterly*, 3 (1994), 16-30
- Niza, João, 'Do Filme À Exposição: As Instalações Vídeo de Pedro Costa', in *Cem mil cigarros - Os Filmes de Pedro Costa*, ed. by Ricardo Matos Cabo (Lisbon, Orfeu Negro, 2009), 301-13
- Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey 'Radio On', in *Screen*, 3-4 (Winter 1979), 29-39
- Oliveira, Luís M., 'Uma pequena avalanche', in *Público*, supplement *Ípsilon* (25 September 2009), 8-9
- Os bons da fita: depoimentos inéditos de realizadores portugueses* (Faro: Cineclube de Faro, INATEL, 1996)
- Ostrowska, Dorota, 'France: Cinematic Television or Televisual Cinema: INA and Canal+', in *European Cinema in the Television Age*, ed. by Dorota Ostrowska and Graham Roberts (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 25-40
- Ottley, D. Charles, *Making Home Movies* (London: George Newnes, 1935)
- Pantenburg, Volker, 'Realism, not Reality: Pedro Costa's Digital Testimonies', in *Afterall*, Nr. 24, (Summer 2010). Online: <http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.24/realism-not-reality-pedro-costa-s-digital-testimonies> [accessed: 21.01.2014]
- Pantenburg, Volker, "'Post Cinema?' Movies, Museums, Mutations", in *Site Magazine*, nr. 24 (2008), 4-5
- Paradelo, Martin and Xiana Arias "'Eu acho que há cineastas que não têm a coragem de não fazer filmes'" in *Cineclube de Compostela* (06 December 2012) Online: <http://cineclubedecompostela.blogaliza.org/files/2012/12/entrevista-Costa.pdf> [accessed: 13.01.2015]
- Pardo, Alejandro 'From the Big Screen to the Small Ones: how Digitalisation is transforming the Distribution, Exhibition and Consumption of Movies', in *Besides the Screen: Moving Images Through Distribution, Promotion and Curation*, ed. by Virginia Crisp and Gabriel Menotti Gonring (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 23-45
- Parente, André, and Victa de Carvalho, 'Cinema as *dispositif*: Between Cinema and Contemporary Art', in *Cinémas*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2008), 37-55
- Peranson, Mark, 'First You Get the Power, Then you Get the Money: Two Models of Film Festivals', in *Dekalog 3: On film Festivals*, ed. by Richard Porton (London/New York: Wallflower Press, 2009), 23-37

- Peranson, Mark, 'Pedro Costa: An introduction' in *The Cinema of Pedro Costa* (Jeonju: Jeonju International Film Festival, 2010), 125-46
- Pereira, José Vaz, 'A sangrar', in *Sete* (01 December 1990), 11
- Petrini, Carlo, *Slow food: the case for taste* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003)
- Quandt, James, 'Still lives: the films of Pedro Costa', in *The cinema of Pedro Costa* (Jeonju: Jeonju International Film Festival, 2010), 21-4. Previously published in *Artforum International*, no.45, (September 2006), 354-6
- Quarteto: Um Quarto do Século XX*, (Lisbon: Contemporânea editora, 2000)
- Quintana, Àngel, 'Hacia un hiperrealismo de la imagen digital', in *Cahiers du Cinéma España*, special edition nr. 6 (May 2009), 24-25
- Ramos, Jorge Leitão, 'Tentação, Jorge Leitão de Barros (1997)', in *O Cinema Português Através dos Seus Filmes*, ed. by Carolin Overhoff Ferreira (Porto: Campo de Letras, 2007), 215-222
- Rancière, Jacques, 'The Politics of Pedro Costa', in *Retrospective Pedro Costa*, booklet (Tate Modern, 2009), np
- Rancière, Jacques, 'Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community', in *The Emancipated Spectator* (London: Verso, 2011), 51-82
- Rauch, Jennifer, 'The Origin of Slow Media: Early Diffusion of a Cultural Innovation through Popular and Press Discourse, 2002-2010', in *Transformations*, no 20 (2011). Online: [http://www.transformationsjournal.org/journal/issue\\_20/article\\_01.shtml](http://www.transformationsjournal.org/journal/issue_20/article_01.shtml) [accessed: 12.05.2014]
- Rentschler, Eric, *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices* (New York; London: Holmes and Meier, 1988)
- Ribas, Daniel, 'Nova Geração?: a geração curtas chega às longas', in *Cinema em Português: Actas das II Jornadas, Covilhã*, ed. by Frederico Lopes (Livros Labcom, 2009), 93-101
- Rivi, Luisa, *European cinema after 1989: Cultural Identity and Transnational Production* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)
- Rizov, Vadim, 'Slow Cinema Backlash.', in *Fix* (12 May 2010). Online: <http://www.ifc.com/fix/2010/05/slow-cinema-backlash> [accessed 06.09.2012]
- Robert, David, 'O Lugar de Pedro', in *Porto 2001: Ciclo de Cinema, Instalação e Performance*, ed. by Dário Oliveira (Porto: Porto 2001, 2001), 90-2
- Robinson, Luke, *Independent Chinese Documentary: from the Studio to the Street* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)
- Rodrigues, António A., 'Histórias de sobrevivência', in *Semanário* (15 November 1997), 16-7
- Rombes, Nicholas, *Cinema in the Digital Age* (London: Wallflower Press, 2009)

- Romney, Jonathan, 'Are you sitting comfortably?', in *The Guardian* (07 October 2000).  
Online: [www.theguardian.com/film/2000/oct/07/books.guardianreview](http://www.theguardian.com/film/2000/oct/07/books.guardianreview) [accessed: 13.05.2014]
- Romney, Jonathan, 'Exile and the kingdom', in *Sight & Sound*, 17: 6 (June 2008), 46-7
- Romney, Jonathan, 'In search of the lost time', in *Sight & Sound*, Vol. 20:2 (February 2010), 43-4
- Rhodes, John David 'Belabored: Style as Work', *Framework*, 53 (Spring 2012), 47-64
- Rosado, Pedro Garcia, 'Anemia Ficcional' in *JL: Jornal de Letras e Ideias* (December 11, 1990), 22
- Rosenbaum, Jonathan, 'Cinema of the Future: Still Lives, the Films of Pedro Costa', in Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Goodbye Cinema, Hello Cinephilia: Film Culture in Transition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 204-6
- Rosenbaum, Jonathan 'Finding Oneself in the Dark: The Mysterious Cinema of Pedro Costa', in *The cinema of Pedro Costa* (Jeonju: Jeonju International Film Festival, 2010), 189-200
- Rosenbaum, Jonathan, 'Eruptions and Disruptions in the House of Lava', in *Casa de Lava* DVD booklet (London: Second Run, 2012), 3-8
- Ross, Miriam, 'The Film Festival as Producer: Latin American Films and the Rotterdam's Hubert Bals Fund', in *Screen*, 52:2 (Summer 2011), 261-267
- Rothermel, Dennis, 'Slow Food, Slow Film', in *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, Vol. 26, no 4 (2009), 265-79
- San Filippo, Maria, 'A Cinema Of Recession: Micro-Budgeting, Micro-Drama, and The "Mumblecore" Movement', in *Cineaction*, no. 85 (2011). Online: <http://www.cineaction.ca/old/issue85sample.htm> [accessed: 30.09.2014]
- Sante, Luc 'The Space Between', in *Letters from Fontainhas*, DVD Booklet (Criterion, 2010), 22-5
- Saramago, Patrícia, email interview (23 July 2013)
- Schaefer, Eric, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True! A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1999)
- Schneider, Jörg, email interview (26 July 2013)
- Schober, Anna, *The Cinema Makers* (Bristol: Intellect, 2013)
- Schoonover, Karl, 'Wastrels of Time: Slow Cinema's Laboring Body, the Political Spectator, and the Queer', in *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, vol. 53, no. 1 (Spring 2012), 65-78
- Sconce, Jeffrey, "'Trashing the academy": taste, excess, and the emerging politics of cinematic style', in *Screen*, 36.4 (Winter 1995), 371-93

- Scott, A. O., Manohla Dargis and Dan Kois, 'Sometimes a Vegetable Is Just a Vegetable', in *The New York Times* (17 July 2011). Online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/19/movies/critics-discuss-cinema-thats-good-for-you.html> [accessed: 02.05.2015]
- Seabra, Augusto M., 'Exibidores precisam-se', in *Expresso* (31 October 1987), 130
- Seabra, Augusto M., 'Verdes Anos', in *Público* (01 December 1990), 18
- Shaviro, Steve 'Slow Cinema Vs Fast Films', in *The Pinocchio Theory* (12 May 2010). Online: <http://www.shaviro.com/Blog/?p=891> [accessed 06.09.2012]
- Shaw, Lisa 'A Aldeia da Roupas Brancas, Chianca de Garcia, 1938', in *O Cinema Português Através dos Seus Filmes*, ed. by Carolin Overhoff Ferreira (Porto: Campo de Letras, 2007), 47-51
- Siegle, Lucy, *To Die For: Is Fashion Wearing out the World?* (London: Fourth Estate, 2008)
- Sitney, P. Adams, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)
- Smith, Barbara Herrnstein, *Contingencies of Value* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991)
- Staiger, Janet, 'Authorship approaches', in *Authorship and film*, ed. by David A. Gerstner and Janet Staiger (New York; London: Routledge, 2003), 27-57
- Stanbrook, Alan, 'Hard Times for Portuguese Cinema', in *Sight and Sound*, 2 (1989), 118-121
- Still Lives – The Films of Pedro Costa* (New York: Anthology Film Archives, 2007), np
- Stringer, Julian, 'Global Cities and the International Film Festival Economy', in *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, ed. by Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 134-44
- Tasch, Woody, *Inquiries into the Nature of Slow Money: Investing as If Food, Farms and Fertility Mattered* (Chelsea Green, 2010)
- Tavares, João Miguel, 'Relato de um mundo em queda', in *Diário de Notícias* (2 March 2001), 42
- Tepperman, Charles, *Amateur Cinema 1923-1960* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015)
- Timothy Corrigan, *A Cinema Without Walls: Movies and Culture After Vietnam* (London: Routledge, 1991)
- Tomaz, Cláudia, email interview (20 May 2013)
- Tuttle, Harry, 'Slow films, easy life (Sight&Sound)' (12 May 2010), in *Unspoken Cinema*. Online: <http://unspokencinema.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/slow-films-easy-life-sight.html> [accessed: 06.09.2012]
- Villas-Lobos, Francisco, Personal interview (Cascais, 11 February 2013)

- Villaverde, Teresa, personal interview (Lisbon, 28 of June 2012)
- Walton, Kendall L., 'Style and the Products and Processes of Art', in *The Concept of Style*, ed. by Berel Lang (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 72-103
- White, Armond, 'Portrait of a Black Man', in *New York Press* (13 April 2010). Online: <http://nypress.com/portrait-of-a-black-man/> [accessed: 17.01.2014]
- Wilinsky, Barbara, *Sure Seaters: The Emergence of Art House Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001)
- Willemsen, Paul, 'An Avant-Garde for the 90s', in *Looks And Frictions: Essays In Cultural Studies And Film Theory* (London: Indiana University Press, 1994), 141-61
- Wollen, Peter 'The Two Avant-Gardes' [1975], in *Readings and Writings* (London: Verso, 1997), 92-104
- Wong, Cindy Hing-Yuk, *Film Festivals: Culture, people, and Power on the global Screen* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2011)
- Yano, Kazuyuki, email interview (01 August 2014)
- Zimmermann, Patricia R., *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995)

## Pedro Costa's Filmography

### As Director

'As Cartas da Júlia' (TV Series)

6 of 12 short films for television, commissioned by RTP

Portugal, 1984. Short films, 16mm, colour, approx.10 min. each.

*O Sangue / Blood*

Portugal, 1989. Feature film, 35mm, b&w, 95 min.

*Casa de Lava (aka Down to Earth)*

Portugal, France, Germany, 1994. Feature film, 35mm, colour, 110 min.

*Ossos / Bones*

Portugal, France, Denmark, 1997. Feature film, 35mm, colour, 94 min.

*No Quarto da Vanda / In Vanda's Room*

Portugal, Germany, Switzerland, 2000. Feature film, DV, colour, 170 min.

'Danièle Huillet/Jean-Marie Straub: Où gît votre sourire enfoui?'

Included in the TV series 'Cinéma, de notre temps' (1988-), La Sept-Arte.

France, 2001. Television documentary, DV, colour, 72 min.

*Où gît votre sourire enfoui? / Where Does Your Hidden Smile Lie?*

Portugal, France 2001.

Documentary, DV, colour, 104 min.

*6 Bagatelas*

Outtakes from *Where Does Your Hidden Smile Lie?*

Portugal, France, 2001.

Documentary short, DV, colour, 18 min.

*Ne Change Rien*

Portugal, 2005.

Short documentary, HD DV, b&w, 12 min.



*Juventude em Marcha / Colossal Youth*  
Portugal, France, Switzerland, 2000.  
Feature film, HD DV, colour, 155 min.

*Tarrafal*  
Included in the omnibus film *State of the World*.  
Portugal, 2007.  
Short film, HD DV, colour, 16 min.

*A Caça ao Coelho com Pau / The Rabbit Hunters*  
Included in the omnibus film *Memories*.  
South Korea, 2007.  
Short film, HD DV, colour, 22 min.

*Ne Change Rien / Change Nothing*  
Portugal, France, 2009.  
Documentary, HD DV, b&w, 100 min.

*O Nosso Homem*  
Portugal, 2010.  
Short film, HD DV, colour, 23 min.

*Sweet Exorcism*  
Included in the omnibus film *Centro Histórico*.  
Portugal, 2012.  
Short film, HD DV, colour, 23 min.

*Cavalo Dinheiro / Horse Money*  
Portugal, 2010.  
Feature film, HD DV, colour, 103 min.

## As production assistant

*Arábia*  
Directed by Rosa Coutinho Cabral.  
Portugal, 1982. Short film, 16mm, 35 min.

*Duma Vez por Todas*

Directed by Joaquim Leitão.

Portugal, 1987. Feature film, 35mm, 99 min.

## As assistant director

*Do outro lado do espelho* (aka *Atlântida*)

Directed by Daniel Del-Negro.

Portugal, 1985. Feature film, 16mm, 100 min.

*Uma Rapariga no Verão*

Directed by Vítor Gonçalves.

Portugal, 1986. Feature film, 16mm, 80 min.

*Um Adeus Português / A Portuguese Farewell*

Directed by João Botelho

Portugal, 1986. Feature film, 35mm, colour, 85 min.

*Agosto / August*

Directed by Jorge Silva Melo.

Portugal, France, 1988. Feature film, 35mm, colour, 97 min.

## Video installations and Multimedia works

*In Vanda's Room* (aka *Untitled*, 2001, 2002)

*The End of a Love Affair* (2003)

*Minino Macho, Minino Fêmea / Little Boy Male, Little Girl Female* (2005)

*Benfica, Colina do Sol e Pontinha* (2005)

*Casal da Boba* (2005)

*Fontaínhas* (2005)

*Filhas do Fogo / Daughters of Fire* (2013, 2014)