

MEIA

"Among Dreams" | Directed by Joaquim Pavão



First of all, congratulations for your remarkable and Finalist short film! How'd you get into cinematography?

Thank you. Since my childhood, I have a great passion for images, for building structures in my head and stay there. Put me in an abstract shape is a way to be in a certain reality. It's funny because I studied music and my approach to it was never through sound. It was through images. I start my relationship with the film industry composing music for movies. I always felt a sort

of envious of the life in the set. Music is a very lonely art; filming is not about you, your language, and your world. It is a about a group of people dreaming together with a common project. Together. It is an unbelievably beautiful thing. I started filming because I need all these inputs: people, friends, ideas, visions, dreams. Aging is an extraordinarily complex process, so I try to work in a musician kind of method in film projects. I guess it was my need be part of a team. It's also a political thing, a way to demonstrate that democracy is about commitment to a greater wealth. If our life is all about you and your "art", is an empty experience. And you got only one. I get into cinematography because I need some sort of freedom.

How would you define your personal experience with cinema as a filmmaker?

It is like breathing. You can't think about it. Just do it, what your brain is capable of doing it; or you can learn how doing it more efficiently. I always choose the team very carefully. I like to



have a group of people that love what they are doing. It must be passion first-hand. If you have a strong team with you, it is all about pushing boundaries, achieving better results, and you are open to all sorts of strange solutions. But to build this, you need to have a good script, a good storyboard. A way to involve the others. From my personal view, the most challenge thing is to have a good project. Working on a subject, an idea, a text. Without that there is nothing. The challenge is not to reproduce a schematic three-part tragedy. The challenge is to create a world, where everything and everyone counts. The theatre has a stage and a live pressure. The film is a multi-dimension. It has layers and layers, there are objects that are so far away from our daily reality that you must create that reality yourself through your imagination and expression.

Your movie has a great reflexive approach. How did the idea of carrying out the project come about?

It all starts with an invitation by the curator Álvaro Moreira of the International Museum of Contemporary Sculpture (MIEC) in Santo Tirso, Portugal. The goal was to do a film with the amazing collection of sculptures using a 7-movement music score by Oscar Flecha. The project was built in order to gather the popular cinematic storytelling, video art and experimental film into a same artistic level. The public that goes to a museum and a cinema is different. The public that goes to a shopping mall cinema and a city cinema is different. The public that sees video art is mostly composed by other artists and businessmen. From a production view, I was interested to work on a project like an octopus, with variations of the same world, tentacles that link to all these different publics.

From the object's point of view, I was thinking about extreme realities. Imagine yourself in a world where you have all the solutions. It is a complex situation. Where are you going? How do you dream? Who are you? Sometimes I forced myself to wake in a middle of the night to remember the best way I could the image editions of my dreams. To have a glimpse of how we organize the story in different layers. In "Among Dreams", the edition is some brain writing approach. It is like a live performance, with a claustrophobic view. When we dream, our focus is well established. There is no escape from the point of view that you decided. The project has the feature film "Dreams", which is a movie-installation for the museum and for cinema distribution. We are now working in the third film of this project: "SCULP". This one is a more "traditional" narrative approach to this same fictional world, that will be released for cinemas in 2023 (we hope!). In the end, these various objects compose a vision of a dystopic future, revealing some philosophical questions like: What is free will? How far can we go on controlling our lives for a believed "common wealth"? Does it make sense to replace free will with a common "right will"?

Do you have another project in mind with a similar approach?



Right now, with this pandemic going on, all the projects are in a strange limbo. I'm working on a script with Isabel Fernandes Pinto that is based on historical facts that happened in Portugal before and after the 1974's revolution. I'm also preparing a film concert called "Dentre". These projects will be hugely different. Every project as a unique voice. Let us hope that this health situation stabilizes. It is necessary to heal the wounds. Our work is difficult. We work for the garbage can (laughs). What I mean is that most of

our work is not good, until the garbage can is so big, that we know what we have is the best of ourselves. With this pandemic, the art world, has a chance to look in the mirror. I believe we must look for honesty to reach to the public. It's urgent to deliver something that has an identity, some sort of individuality that allows each person to identify himself with the object or to reject it. It's always an act of free will.



What industry figure do you feel identified with, what have your influences been?

No one in special, I guess. I love a huge group of artists. But I try to reject all influences. It is an impossibility, I know. We are the mixtures of the knowledge we can absorb. But I try not to think about it. Sometimes I write music that is on my mind and later I realize that I am singing another composer music. We must be aware. I try to know what people are doing. Tracking a lot of work from other artists and different kinds. I follow advertising, kitsch stores and things sometimes not art related. The way that news are presented, design boards, and so on. Everything is beating a rhythm. A reality rhythm that must be present at the start of our work, to get lost in the next moment.



Tell us about the backstage. What were the most complex or difficult things you had to solve during filming (technically and/or emotionally)?

For a project like this, rehearsals were fundamentals. I needed to work confidence, to get actors to trust in the team. Part of the project was shot during night for 10 days in a row, because I wanted a particular look in the photography. It was too cold, too harsh. This was especially important for the spirit of the group. We lived most of the time with artificial lights, at night, eating the same thing, in the same restaurant, transforming the reality that we're shooting in the reality we're living. I think, for them and for me, it was a very cathartic experience. Not in a shallow way. We lived it. Every actor created a mechanism of defence and overcoming. The director of photography José Oliveira has shot in a way that he was not comfortable. The costume designer team was working on an incredibly stressful timetable. Some of the suits were delivered minutes before location rehearsal. The crew did not sleep more than 4-5 hours during these 10 days. The list goes on. All of this was thinking to put the team on the edge and having to depend on the other. We were a family and end up like one. This was particularly important. I think that is important to work with the tools that the actor have. Not forcing. Give him the freedom to walk by himself. When we shoot the "aquarium" scenes, dealing with water, breathing with it, balancing the weight to achieve peace in this environment, required to listen each one of them. You must be the first to give the example. The shooting on this muddy beach was frightful, so I entered before the actors. Then, all of them relied and got at ease. They got to play with it like children, so that this scary place transformed into a playground where everything was possible.

Your film has achieved amazing results in the competition! Do you plan to make a full-length film?

We do have a full-length film called "Dreams", that is composed by 7 oneiric moments corresponding to 7 sculptures of the MIEC and introduce the main philosophical questions approached with this project. Now we are working on "SCULP", that is the final full-length film for this project, where this dystopia is developed in a more conventional narrative way.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak with you! We will be attentive to your next jobs!

**Susan F.
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