

# N O C T U R N F O R

 Locarno Official Selection  
Pardi di domani

# A

A film by  
Catarina Vasconcelos

# F O R E S T



# N O C T U R N F O R A F O R E S T

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Catarina Vasconcelos

Premiere  
76º Locarno Film Festival  
Pardi di Domani  
Corto d'Autore

Produced by  
Primeira Idade

Distribution  
Portugal Film - Portuguese  
Film Agency

For centuries, the entry of women into the Bussaco forest was prohibited. At its entrance, the inscription signed by Pope Gregory XV made clear that any woman who trespassed the walls would be excommunicated. On this side of the wall, the women could only see the tops of the trees. However, one woman was allowed in. Perhaps not her, but that of her gaze: Josefa D'Óbidos painted the "Sagrada Familia" that for years would inhabit a small chapel at the Bussaco forest. In the painting, Our Lady presents herself with a naked breast. In 2014, the souls of those who were always invisible and who lived in the shadow of the wall, will forever transform the destiny of Josefa's painting.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I have always doubted the existence of God. But when I lost the first person to the world of the non-living, I started trusting the dead blindly. From that moment on I have believed that, on this Earth, the number of the dead surpasses that of the living and I often ask them their opinions about life. I feel that since then a pact has been forged between us and a quest for that language spoken by the dead was born: what do the dead think when we surrender ourselves to sleep and they can exist more freely?

In 2021, together with a group of artists, I was invited by the Aderno Cultural Association to join an art residency in the Bussaco forest. My memories of Bussaco dated back to my childhood and I remember being particularly impressed with the amount of crosses found in the forest. Since I didn't have a religious upbringing I must have thought: "What is the point of so many crosses in one place? Wouldn't one be enough?" I returned to Bussaco almost 30 years after this memory. The second time I understood more about this mountain in the center of Portugal. A mountain that captured the devout hearts of the Carmelite monks who came from Spain to Portugal in search of a place to settle. I realized that in their pockets they had brought seeds. And that they had tried to bring every species of trees, plants and flowers from around the world so as to form a forest capable of invoking God. I realized

that the trees could enter, but not the women. I discovered that there had been a Pope with a burning hatred towards women, who accused them of being witches and sentenced them to be burned at the stake. And the Pope was about to die. In Bussaco the monks created a wall that separated them from the world. Especially from women. The dying Pope still found the strength to send an order that was later engraved on the wall built by the monks. On it, we can still read in Latin: “Women cannot enter.”

But a woman did enter. Or her eyes. In the 15th century, with the walls already up, *The Holy Family*, painted by the Portuguese painter Josefa d’Óbidos entered the Bussaco convent. It became its most valuable artwork. In 2014, in one of the chapels of the Carmelite convent, *The Holy Family* caught fire. Only the painting burned. Nothing else around it was harmed by the raging flames. A mystery.

The first time I saw a Josefa d’Óbidos painting it didn’t occur to me that it had been painted by a woman. At the Faculty of Fine Arts in Lisbon I was used to seeing art made only by men. The seminal book of art history, E.H. Gombrich’s *The Story of Art*, 650 pages-long and covering a period from the so-called pre-history to 20th-century modernism, only features a woman artist. Women cannot enter E.H. Gombrich’s art histo-

ry. Therefore, women artists were not made to be remembered but to disappear, consumed by the flames of oblivion, forever on the other side of the wall, as if they had never existed. Or as Virginia Woolf put it, “For most of History, anonymous was a woman”.

But the word “anonymous” is losing ground and women can no longer be silenced. Even the dead ones, wherever they are now, troubled by all that time when they didn’t have a voice, rise, as ghosts in search for justice. At night they talk to the living. In Ancient Egypt, the word for “sculptor” could be translated as “the one who keeps alive”. If cinema had existed at the time, maybe the word for “director” would have been “the one who wants to speak to the dead”.

Catarina Vasconcelos

















# CATARINA VASCONCELOS

Catarina Vasconcelos was born in Lisbon in 1986. She graduated at the Faculdade de Belas Artes de Lisboa, after which she did a post-graduation in Visual Anthropology at ISCTE-IUL. She did her MA at the Royal College of Art, London, UK, where her final project was her first short film “Metaphor or Sadness Inside Out” (2014) . The film had its premiere at the Cinema du Réel festival in Paris, where it was awarded the prize for best short film. The film was in several festivals, including RIDM - Montreal International Documentary Festival (Best international mediumlength award), DokLeipzig or Doclisboa. Her first documentary feature, “The Metamorphosis of the Birds” had its world premiere in the Encounters of the 70th Berlinale in 2020 where it won the FIPRESCI award. After its premiere the film integrated the competitive sections of several festivals and received, among others, the award for best film of the Zabaltegi-Tabakalera section at the San Sebastian-Donostia Film Festival. In 2021, “Unfinished Painting”, the feature film she is currently developing, was selected for the Torino ScriptLab at the Torino Film Festival where it won the CNC award for best film. Her short film “Nocturn for a forest” is scheduled to premiere this year at the 76th Locarno International Film Festival in the section Pardi di Domani - Corto d’Autore. Since 2022, Catarina Vasconcelos is a tutor at EQZE - Elias Querejeta Zine Escuela in San Sebastian.

# PRIMEIRA

# IDADE

PRIMEIRA IDADE, meaning FIRST AGE in Portuguese, is a platform dedicated exclusively to film production. Under the belief that each film asks for a unique production apparatus, it was designed as a space of permanent research on different ways of making films. New approaches to the craft of cinema converge with the rediscovery of the best practices of the past. The company produced “The Metamorphosis of Birds”, written and directed by Catarina Vasconcelos, currently available on Netflix worldwide and voted the official Portuguese entry for the Oscars in 2021. Distinguished at the Berlinale Encounters with the FIPRESCI Prize for Best Film, as well as the Zabaltegi-Tabalera award for Best Film at the San Sebastian IFF and the Grand Prix of the New Horizons Film Festival, in a total of 40 international distinctions. PRIMEIRA IDADE has produced short and documentary films premiered in Cannes, Berlin, Locarno, Rotterdam, Visions du Réel, Jihlava, among others.



## CREW

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED **Catarina Vasconcelos**  
VOICE OVER **Paula Guedes**  
WITH **José Aguiar, Mariana Veloso**  
CINEMATOGRAPHY / COLOR CORRECTION **Paulo Menezes**  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR **Mariana Veloso**  
EDITING **Francisco Moreira**  
SOUND DESIGN **Miguel Martins, Miguel Diogo**  
SOUND MIX **Miguel Martins**  
VOICE OFF RECORDING **João Azevedo**  
TRANSLATION **Ana Macedo**  
DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION **Leonor Lloret**  
PRODUCED **Pedro Fernandes Duarte**  
PRODUCTION COMPANY **Primeira Idade**  
FINANCIAL SUPPORT **Fundação Mata do Bussaco,**  
**Adero Associação Cultural**  
DISTRIBUTION **Portugal Film - Portuguese Film Agency**

## CONTACTS

### PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION COMPANY

**Primeira Idade**

PRODUCTION CONTACTS

[cinema@primeira-idade.pt](mailto:cinema@primeira-idade.pt)

00 351 9165 8888 9

### SALES

SALES COMPANY

**Portugal Film**

SALES CONTACTS

[dir@portugalfilm.org](mailto:dir@portugalfilm.org)

00351 213 466 172

[www.portugalfilm.org](http://www.portugalfilm.org)

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

SCREENING FORMAT: DCP

SOUND: 5.1

LENGTH: 16'

LANGUAGE: PORTUGUESE

COUNTRY: PORTUGAL

YEAR: 2023

WORLD PREMIERE: LOCARNO FILM FESTIVAL  
PARDI DI DOMANI: CONCORSO CORTI D'AUTORE



**mata do bussaco**  
fundação

**PORTUGAL**  
FILM 