

“...The film brings powerful metaphors of life and death in these images of the destructive force of nature.

No grief is ruling the people on this island, but deep understanding and acceptance of what life is and finding the beauty and art within the black.

...a very contemporary understanding of how to use the documentary form to combine poetry and reality and discover through this strategy a bigger picture of it all.”

*Vano Arsenishvili, Maine Mia Höhne and Dorota Kobiela
from the jury statement, DOK Leipzig 2017*

“I went to Chã das Caldeiras on the first rain season after the last tragic eruption of its volcano Pico do Fogo. Though nobody died, two villages disappeared almost entirely, as well as most of the belongings and farm land of its inhabitants.

The Ashes Remain Warm does not revolve around the spectacularity of a volcanic eruption, and is in fact not trying to show facts or irrefutable evidences about a real event. Rather the opposite, focusing on subjective points of view, both from the author as from the inhabitants and all other things that should be disregarded from any trustworthy report.

The reason why nobody died, according to the inhabitants of the volcano, is that the volcano is their friend. So, he would not kill them.

The inhabitants’s personalisation of the volcano, their dependency and identification with it, the imposing nature of the landscape, the sculpturality of the housebreaking lava, the strength and freedom in the act of dancing over the remains of one’s house and the beauty within a tragedy are not less true than facts.

In **SORTES**, the ground is swallowing the houses of a community as well, of the people living scattered around Serra de Serpa. In this film there is not one single event one could blame for all problems, actually not much happens around there anyways. But many things are pushing the people living there to move away, die away, to forget or be forgotten.

The result is the clay houses sinking back to the same earth they were made of, pretending they had never been there.

It seems as if they had never seen countless ploughing, seeding and harvests, drought and hunger.

The dictatorship, the resistance and the communists. Every nine years, the cork harvest.

Emigration, and lately, the elderly.

A tale told through the voices of the subjects, remaining popular poets that are also a farmer (half a hectare of melons), a peddler (roaming the deserted villages of the region) and a shepherd (of goats, all named). Through the rhythms of the seasons of the year and the work in the fields SORTES becomes a portrait of those who are still there and a requiem for those who are not.

It’s because things are as they are, and in their multiplicity exceed anything I could imagine, that I developed a working method unearthing what is already there. Both in time based as is my sculptural practice, I look for materials, places, people and traditions on the shadow of a fast, efficient and all-encompassing society. Fortunately, life insists to exist in other inconspicuous manners.”

Mónica Martins Nunes



The Ashes Remain Warm
21min



Sortes
39 min