

ANGULAR PHOENIX

Synopsis

Angular Phoenix proposes a speculative meeting between the Baron of Água Izé, the first nobleman in the Portuguese colonies of the 1800s who was of mixed European and African ancestry, and Maria Correia, the Black Princess of Príncipe's Island in the 1700s. Reanimating them through the bodies of contemporary artists, the film uses dance, poetry and music to weave profound threads between the past and the present. Transcending space, time and language, their encounter wrestles with questions of culpability, power and the exploitation of both land and Black bodies.



Brief Introduction

What links the Ribeira Izé plantation on the island of Príncipe to the Água Izé plantation on the island of São Tomé? What would the first cocoa tree planted in the whole country, in Ribeira Izé, on the island of Príncipe, say to all the other trees that have made these islands the biggest exporters of this raw material since the beginning of the 19th century? What is the relationship between the fortune of João Maria de Sousa e Almeida, the 1st Baron of Água Izé - the first black/miscegenated man to own a plantation in São Tomé (Roça Água Izé) - and Maria Correia Salema Ferreira, considered the Black Princess - the first black/miscegenated woman to own two plantations in Príncipe (Roça Simalô and Roça Ribeira Izé) some 40 years earlier? And what would thousands of enslaved people exploited, imprisoned, tortured and traded in this archipelago say about this?

Finally, what would Maria Correia, considered by some to be the country's first (and only) Black Princess, say to her first husband's godson, the Baron of Água Izé, about the claim for a historic debt which, after being taken to court, was approved by passing his land on to his name? What do these questions tell us about the historical presence of corruption and pacification on these islands, and the manipulation of history with a colonial, patriarchal and capitalist bias that continues to this day? What scenarios, dialogues and narratives can we imagine in order to delve into themes that are past but persist in the present and determine the future?

by Raquel Lima

Director's Statement

We were at the BBC, the new gastro-cultural space on Av. Marginal de S. Tomé, created by the famous Mr João Carlos Silva, when in the middle of a conversation someone mentioned a "cultural lobby". It was probably Dário Paraíso. The conversation continued, involving powerful and committed artists such as Ângelo Torres, Dário himself, Enerlid Franca, Raquel Lima, among others. Raquel Lima asked the following question: "What is the relationship between the fortune of João Maria de Sousa e Almeida, the 1st Baron of Água Izé - the first black/mixed man to own a farm in São Tomé (Roça Água Izé) - and Maria Correia Salema Ferreira, considered the Black Princess - the first black/mixed woman to own two farms in Príncipe (Roça Simalô and Roça Ribeira Izé) around 40 years earlier?"

From that moment on, my attention turned to the living presence of the historical characters invoked by Raquel Lima, there "reincarnated" in the presences of Raquel herself and the veteran Ângelo Torres. In this retro-contemporary conjugation, we are synergistically suggested to create something, some film, some intervention-performance, that could recreate an unlikely encounter between Princess Maria Correia and the Baron of Água Izé.

The persistence of the idea of creating a film developed over the course of a week, and materialised over a meagre three days of filming in different locations under the aegis of a cinema of self-representation, as I theorise in my book 'Corpo Periférico' (2022).

'Latitude Fénix' is the name I chose because I believe it is in keeping with the scenic experimentalism the film aims to achieve, but also because it moves us towards a spatial-geographical notion that is a constant in the logic of being in the equatorial region. The ashes, the sea, in short, the atmospheric and spiritual elements, are summoned to be visible and sensitive in the film, because the meeting of the central characters didn't really happen - at least, not as it should have been. That's why this is a film that uses dialogue as an aggregating element, made up of a multiplicity of dialectical visions that are entangled in the words of Raquel Lima, Ângelo Torres and my own reflections.

In the film, I establish a timeless relationship between the characters and the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, but we also try to bring a transmutational atmosphere by adding the figure of the Ebony Princess as a girl, bringing the symbolic figures of Fogo (Cheila Trindade) and Cinza into the story. Quilombismo, Afro-folklorism, Afrofuturism, Afro-syncretism, Afropolitanism, transversality, animism and mysticism are all concepts that make up a film narratively centred on the black Afro-diasporic body in transit, simultaneously in time and space.

by Welket Bungué

There is also a legend about Maria Correia. Some say that in the ruins of the church in Ribeira Izé, which she had built, dark and unusual rituals take place after dark and on the full moon, and that people should beware of the Black Princess.



It was said that she had a great appetite for men, but that her reputation was not tarnished and that no one was informed... she had them killed after the encounter. These aspects have been more valued than the fact that she was a powerful, enterprising, beautiful, generous and extravagant black woman.

Premiere status:

World Premiere
31st Sheffield DocFest
Sheffield - United Kingdom
June 12, 2024
Official Selection - International Short Film Competition

Portuguese/European Premiere
20th FEST - New Directors | New Film Festival
Espinho - Portugal
June 24, 2024
Official Selection - Grande Prémio Nacional

(To be Announced)
Philadelphia - United States
August 1, 2024
North American Premiere
Official Selection

About the Director

Welket Bungué is a Berlin-based actor, born in Guinea-Bissau in 1988. His cross-cultural education from Africa, Europe, and Brazil made him into a cross-national, multi-talented artist.

He is co-founder of the production company KUSSA, holds a degree in Theater Acting (ESTC / Lisbon) and a postgraduate degree in Performance Art (UniRio / Brazil). In 2023 Welket was an ambassador for the Face to Face with German Films Campaign as a filmmaker and actor.

As an actor, Welket has been featured in over 40 films and series, including Marcelo Caetano's highly acclaimed coming-of-age drama *Body Electric*, Marcelo Gomes' historical drama *Joaquim*, and Laís Bodanzky's *Pedro, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. Welket starred alongside actors Viggo Mortensen, Léa Seydoux, and Kristen Stewart in David Cronenberg's film *Crimes of the Future*, which debuted at the Cannes Film Festival in 2022.

In 2020, Welket starred in Burhan Qurbani's new version of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, where his performance earned him a "Silver Bear" nomination at the Berlin International Film Festival, a "Best Lead Actor" nomination at the LOLA Awards of the German Film Academy (equivalent to the OSCARS), and the Aluminum Horse Award for "Best Actor" at the Stockholm International Film Festival.

In 2022, he took part of the International Jury of Ghent IFF, chaired by the British director Clio Barnard (*The Selfish Giant*) amongst Daniel Hart (*A Ghost Story*, *The Green Knight*), Georgian director Alexandre Koberidze (*What Do We See When We Look At The Sky*), Nico Leunen (*Ad Astra*, *Beautiful Boy*, *The Broken Circle Breakdown*). He also took part of the International Jury of São Paulo IFF 2023, chaired by the Serbian director Emir Kusturica, amongst the Berlinale Artistic Director Mariëtte Rissenbeek, Lenny Abrahamson (*Frank*, *Room*, *Normal People*) and Enrica Fico Antonioni.

Welket's artistry is influenced by anti-colonial and Afrocentric perspectives, leveraging one's natural skills to inspire human growth and potential. His films compose an ecosystem of creative freedom, an invitation to cast off from old hardened narratives and into a space of thinking, resilience, and cross-border identity. Like a body in transit, his commitment to the storytelling art holds the belief of a future in which we can dialogue and find one another. Welket is an artist featured by the Arsenal - Institute for Film and Video Art (Berlin), and since 2021 his films are part of the institution's collection.

Welket's films have circulated internationally through numerous film festivals such as Berlinale, ABFF (USA), Africlap (France), Zanzibar IFF, Afrikamera (Berlin), BFI London and Sheffield DocFest (UK), IndieLisboa, DocLisboa, Curta Cinema IFF (RJ, Brazil), as well as the Stockholm Dansfilmfestival. Welket repertoire on filmmaking reunites more than 25 creations, including the short film titles *Calling Cabral*, *Mudança*, *Jah Intervention*, *I am Not Pilatus*, *Arriaga*, and *Bastien*.

In June 2022, Welket released his first book '*Corpo Periférico*' on the Amazon platform, it's an autobiographical essay on auteur filmmaking based on the eponymous concept of "self-portraying cinema".

About the Producer

Enerlid Franca is a trained architect who made his debut as a producer in 2017 with the short film "Destination Africa - Sao Tome and Principe", by Ghanaian director Steve Ababio. He was production director on the short film "Mina Kia", a film that won the CURTAS PALOP/TL 2017 award, by the Santomean director Katya Aragão. The following year he produced "Going Home" by Jamaican singer Jah Bouks. In 2019 he was production director for the 8-episode mini-series "Nas nossas Mãos". In 2022 he was assistant director on the film "Banzo" by Portuguese director Margarida Cardozo and co-produced "Agudás" by Brazilian director Fábio Martins.



Raquel Lima representing THE PRINCESS MARIA CORREIA

The 1st Baron of Água Izé was simultaneously a poet, a farmer and a trafficker in enslaved people. I found the combination of these three "trades" interesting.



Ângelo Torres representing *THE BARON OF AGUA IZÉ*

There is a legend about the Baron of Agua Izé that has come down to the present day and is shrouded in the fear that he emanated in the people around him. As well as mistreating and punishing labourers, the baron was known for his supposed supernatural abilities. Even today, it is said that he used to enter Boca do Inferno on horseback, near Roça de Água Izé, and leave a few moments later near Cascais, in the other Boca de Inferno that is located there.

The Artists

Raquel Lima is an Afro-Brazilian poet with roots in Angola, São Tomé, Senegal and Brazil. Poet, performer and art educator, she has a degree in Art Studies in Lisbon and is studying for a PhD in Post-Colonial Studies in Coimbra and São Tomé, with her research focused on orature, slavery and Afro-diasporic movements. In 2019 she co-organised the AfroEuropeans Conference - Black In/Visibilities Contested, and launched her first book and audio-book of poetry *Ingenuidade Inocência Ignorância* (BOCA and Animal Sentimental). He has presented his poetic, artistic and academic work in Europe, South America and Africa.

Ângelo Torres was born in Equatorial Guinea in 1966. He is the son of São Toméan parents. He lived in Spain and graduated in Thermodynamic Engineering from the Lázaro Cardenas Institute in Cuba. He studied Performing Arts at the Escola Profissional de Artes e Ofícios do Espetáculo, known as Chapiô. In the cinema, his participation in Flora Gomes' 'Nha Fala' and Jorge António's 'A Ilha dos Cães', among others, stand out. interlocutor of the social, economic and cultural differences he discovers and gets to know. Between small photographic interventions and collaborations in the field, Dário Paraíso seeks to reveal through his gaze the simplicity of urban and rural daily life, the movements and energies of his surroundings. He directed a short fiction film, 'Kunta', an independent production, in co-production with Cinemate, and a documentary, 'Mionga ki Obô', with LX Filmes. In 2022 he will play the iconic figure of Amílcar Cabral in the solo show 'Amílcar Geração', written and directed by Guilherme Mendonça.

Dário Paraíso is from São Tomé, an independent photographer and videographer. A self-taught professional, he began using photography in 2014 as an interlocutor for the social, economic and cultural differences he discovers and gets to know. Between small photographic interventions and collaborations in the field, Dário Paraíso seeks to reveal through his gaze the simplicity of urban and rural daily life, the movements and energies of his surroundings.

Leonardo Mouramateus (Fortaleza, 1991) Master in Art-Multimedia from the University of Lisbon, graduated in Cinema and Audiovisual from the Federal University of Ceará, maintaining permanent contact with the performing arts and dance dramaturgy. He has written and directed films screened at numerous festivals, including Locarno, Viennale, IDFA, Cinéma du Réel and Bafici. Retrospectives of his filmography have been shown in Portugal, France, Colombia and most recently at the Rotterdam International Film Festival. "Life is Two Days", his second feature film, received an honourable mention from the jury of the FIDMarseille international competition.

Vagné L. (Salvador - Bahia - Brazil) is an experimental music producer, multimedia artist, multi-instrumentalist, composer, designer and web developer. His art incorporates soundscapes, meditations, percussions, Afro-Indian musicality, ambient music, minimalism, dub, concrete music, noise and Afrofuturism. He uses the reuse of discarded technology and algorithmic interactivity to create immersive audiovisual environments and ancestral reconnections.



Everything changes, everything transforms and everything ends. Hearts grow old, the wind blows and passes. And time takes everything new. It transforms the old into the new. And makes the old forget. And you, love, you were born with the world and you strive to always be new and unknown.

Welket Bungué performing THE SHAMAN NARRATOR

Technical List

Angular Phoenix // Experimental Fiction, Color, B&W, Portuguese, 15min, Sound, 16:9 São Tomé, Guinea-Bissau, Portugal, 2023

Screenplay and Director

Welket Bungué

Raquel Lima

Princess Maria Correia

Ângelo Torres

Baron of Água Izé

Nayrama Fernandes

Little Princess Maria Correia

Cheila Luís Trindade

Fire

Fábio Rodrigues

Ash

Welket Bungué

Shaman Narrator

Assistant Director

Elton Guadalupe

Producer

Enerlid Franca

Welket Bungué

Executive Producer

Enerlid Franca

Production Manager

Enerlid Franca

Production Assistant

Paloma Monteiro

Joy Monteiro

Marty Pereira

Sound Director

Dário Pequeno Paraíso

Sound Assistant

Carla Rebelo

Cinematographer

Dário Pequeno Paraíso

Image Assistant

Carla Rebelo

Kristin Bethge

Colorization

Sara K. Camilo

Texts

Raquel Lima

Ângelo Torres

Welket Bungué

Opening Quote

Paulo Tambá Bungué

In Cabaró, Djito Tem!

Editor

Leonardo Mouramateus

Editor Assistant

Duarte Lima

Sound Research and Music

Vagné Lima

Sound Design and Mixing

Acácia Lima

Scene Photography

Kristin Bethge

Carla Rebelo

Art Direction

Welket Bungué

Makeup and Characterisation

Cleusa Aurélio

Wardrobe

Mengai Glavi

Drivers

Lan Atai Seng (Lau)

Jorsimar Diogo (Duda)

Catering

Soares Family

Production Base

National Museum - Fort S. Sebastião

Facilitator

Manuel Lizarda (Director of the National Museum)

Special Thanks

Soares Family, Espaço CACAU, Muziek Mutantti NetLabel, Raphael Medeiros, Marina Bland

Media Partner
BANTUMEN

Associate Producers

Welket Bungué, Kristin Bethge, Raquel Lima, Enerlid Franca, Miryan Cassandra,
Luís Ceita, Ângelo Torres

Producers

KUSSA Productions and On Time Entertainment

KUSSA Productions

www.kussaproductions.com

On Time Entertainment

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FESTIVALS . SCREENINGS . AWARDS

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