
Heritales: the Film Festival that Brings Heritage to the Urban Environment

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Abstract

The International Heritage Film Festival “Heritales” took place in the city of Évora, during the 30th anniversary of its declaration of World Heritage site by UNESCO. It was developed especially for this symbolic event, during the months of its commemoration: between September and October 2016. The festival was born with the purpose of disseminating narratives of filmic, digital and graphic nature that deal with Cultural Heritage. Its objectives were to project cinema in public spaces, as well as within the cultural facilities of the city such as churches and cultural associations. This aspect, framed in a community outreach strategy, have brought a stage of exchange and sharing between the academia, the local community and the international visitors to the city of Evora. The program had different forms of action: screening sessions with subsequent debates with the presence of the directors, parallel activities such as workshops, conferences, and other type of narrative forms through exhibitions and historical table games.

Keywords:

Cultural Heritage, Festival, Cinema, Urban Projection, Community, Storytelling

1. Heritales, a New Vision of the Academia

The first Heritales – International Heritage Film Festival – was formally inaugurated on the 30th of September 2016 in Évora (Portugal). The place chosen was the main hall of the 16th Century Palace of the University of Évora so-called Palacio Vimioso, that hosts the CIDEHUS (Interdisciplinary Center for History, Culture and Societies). The festival was organized by an international team of researchers of this center: Nicola Schiavottello (Italy), María Zozaya (Spain), Sonia Bombico (Portugal) and Armando Quintas (Portugal). The opening of the conference was led by Prof. Ana Cardoso de Matos, the codirector of the festival María Zozaya and José Luís Santos, the author of the photographic exhibition “Rota da Seda” (Fig. 1). To spread the urban philosophy of the festival, the event took place in different public spaces of the city: The Palace “Palacio Vimioso”, the church “Igreja de São Vicente” (Fig. 2), the Association “Sociedade Harmonia Eborense” (Fig. 3), the old religious house “Auditório Soror Mariana” (Fig. 4), the old convent “Convento dos Remédios” (Fig. 5) and the ancient building that hosted the Moitebar (Fig. 6). Different local and international institutions were involved alongside the organizations that supported the festival, these were: the town hall of Évora, “Câmara Municipal de Évora” (CME), CIDEHUS-UE, UNESCO-UE Chair and the “Regional Cultural Head of Alentejo” (DRCA).

The festival had a worldwide breadth with a local focus: more than 20 guests were invited between filmmakers, exhibitors, professors and other specialists, animating debates of great interest in various fields related to know-how, material culture and musical sociability. Although the festival was especially represented by authors from the Iberian Peninsula and Portuguese speaking countries, it also included stories from the Check Republic, United Kingdom, Italy and Middle East and Eastern Asia. Different topics were explored during all the sessions of the festival ranging from historically based ethnological and anthropological documentaries to archaeology and popular culture. Various communication styles were presented, from more traditional media to new digital visualization techniques of archaeological sites in three dimensions.

The main event was concentrated in a long weekend (30 September to 1st of October), however different parallel sessions took place over a month before and after the festival, and provided film projection and debate with the

presence of the authors of the films. These moments of conversation turned out to be particularly engaging, and enriched the whole festival experience. For example, the projection of “Flamenco de Raíz” by Vicente Pérez Herrero, in the “Igreja de São Vicente”, had a very good response and the solemn atmosphere of the church in contrast with the chosen topic turned the event into an emotional learning moment about the real roots of the Flamenco dance (Fig. 7). Another very intense moment was the screening and debate in the presence of the author of the documentary “O Pão e o Vinho”, Ricardo Costa (Fig. 8). It showed the ways to make wine and bread in the region, ways of living linked to the songs of the peasants, “Cante Alentejano”, and the oral culture, “Poetas Repentistas”, recorded in 1980 just after the fall of the Salazar dictatorship.

Other significant screenings proposed during the parallel sessions that took place between the “Auditório Sórór Mariana” and the “Igreja de São Vicente” were: “Barokni Opera”, from circus creators sons of Milos Forman that recovered an opera of puppets of XVIIIth C. from Karel Loos, by Forman Brothers; “Vacas”, recreating a particular view of Spanish civil wars from the countryside in the Basc Country, between 1875 and 1936, by Julio Medem; “A Construção”, showing the construction of a dam which changed the culture of a village, by Gonçalo Mota; “O Tourneiro da Mouraria”, the last wood craftsman of Évora who made door knobs, by Takis & André Birken (Fig. 9); the presentation of the film “Abrolho’s” by Janaina Gonçalves Rios Barros, with Prof. Joao Brigola, who opened the session. Finally, a short film by Carla Magro Dias, “Vladimir”, featured a puppet made in Russia which came to the magic fingers of Manel Dias Trulé. This artist of the know-how culture brought “Vladimir” itself to the session to magically answer the questions of the public in the room.

Particularly outstanding was the presentation by Luis Guadaño, from Old Dominion University, entitled “Edwin Rousby, the pioneer of cinema in Portugal that stopped being one.” Guadaño explained the fascinating ways that this Hungarian entrepreneur brought his cinematography technique – with his orchestra and other spectacles associated with the origins of cinema – on a tour from Hungary, Portugal, and America. It took place at the XVI Century Library of the University of Évora, the old Former Room of the Civil Government (Fig. 10). The great atmosphere of the debate was complemented by the excellent wine sponsored

by the house of “Carmim” of Regengos de Monsaraz (Évora), which gave the perfect blend within a friendly conversation.

Conclusion

Overall, the main event had a great success especially on the Saturday afternoon. This was the session hosted by the Sociedade Harmonia Eborensis, a club founded in 1849, situated in a XVI Century palace of the main square of Évora (Fig. 11). The variety of activities within the same space were the “urban receipt” for an interesting cocktail between an academic and a public cultural experience. These were for example: the exploration of an archaeological excavation in Virtual Reality by Ricardo Cabral and Martino Correia (Fig. 12); the digital art exhibition “Alchimia” by Pedro Alves Da Veiga with a live platform that morphed the image of the participants into the faces of different ethnic groups (Fig. 13); “Esperpentos”, a film by the Spanish director José Luis García Sánchez (Gona Producer), that narrates the story of the “esperpéntico” characters from Valle Inclán within the scenario of the flying circus, the theatre, and the cinema (Fig. 14). Finally, the touching presentation of the entrepreneur Ginés Haro, “Yassuní, Green Gold” that raised awareness of the tribes living in the Amazonian forest and its environmental problems (Fig. 15).

This cultural cocktail particularly represented the strength of the festival and meant that the public enjoyed the diversification of the day, with people from France, India, Hungary, Spain and Portugal exploring the stimulating performances within the different rooms of this emblematic building. Although the main objective of the festival was to capture the non-specialist public, such as the ones on the Saturday event, some of the activities were planned to reach a more specific audience, such as the sessions at

the “Convento dos Remedios”. This was the case of the opening session that was dedicated to new emerging filmmakers in the field of anthropological and archaeological documentaries such as Hugo Morango, Diogo Vilhena and Antonio Campos, Carlos Carpetudo and Gonçalo Lopes, and Rui Pedro Lamy, who kindly donated to the festival’s image, the teaser of their new upcoming work “Imago”. The closing session was on a Sunday morning and it was dedicated to children (Fig. 16). This was an opportunity to show exceptional short animated films by Nuno Beato (Sardinha Em Lata), by Wesley Rodriguez (Armoriastudio) and by Ana Cardoso (Lusofona University); and lastly a series of instructional archaeological animated narration by Magoga Piñas Azpitarte (MAN, National Archaeological Museum of Spain). These were accompanied by first person interpretation of Takis Panatainies, archaeologist of the Camara Municipal of Évora and Nicola Schiavottello researcher at the CIDEHUS.

In conclusion, blending urban spaces with cultural screenings from around the world allowed us to show new facades of the city and new faces of the public, creating a different way to exchange cinema experiences. The festival has the potential to become an icon of Cultural Heritage communication and dissemination in the South of Portugal when more parties may come forward to support the festival.

Heritales 2016 was funded by:

Cátedra UNESCO-UÉ & CIDEHUS-University of Évora (Fundos FEDER, Programa COMPETE e FCT, «CIDEHUS-UID/ HIS/00057/2013» and «POCI-01-0145-FEDER-007702»). Also, Heritales 2017 edition was possible thanks to the support of: FCT, FACC: Ref^a. 440.02, proc: 17/1/227; Fórum FEA, DRCA; CME.



Fig. 1: Opening of the festival at the *Palacio Vimioso* (21 Sept. 2016).



Fig. 2: Desacralised church *Igreja de São Vicente* (Coleção B).



Fig. 3: Historical Club *Sociedade Harmonia Eborense* (building of XVI-XVIIIth Cent.). Photo: Archive ACME.



Fig. 4: Exterior of old Convent *Auditorio Soror Mariana* (Cinema Fora dos Leões)



Fig. 5: Building of *Convento dos Remedios* (XVII Cent.)



Fig. 6: Terrace of *Moi-te Bar* (old Palace)



Fig. 7: Screening and debate of “*Flamenco de Raiz*” Vicente Pérez Herrero



Fig. 8: Screening and debate of “*O Pão e o Vinho*” by Ricardo Costa at the *Igreja de São Vicente*



Fig. 9: Screening and debate of “*O Torneiro da Mouraria*” by Takis Panas & André Birken at the *Auditório Soror Mariana*.



Fig. 10: Luis Guadaño, “*Edwin Rousby, the pioneer of cinema in Portugal that stopped being one*”, within Library of the University of Évora, former room of the Civil Government



Fig. 11: Public sessions at the *Sociedade Harmonia Eborensis* on Saturday afternoon



Fig. 12: Exploring an archaeological excavation in Virtual Reality by Ricardo Cabral and Martino Correia.



Fig. 13: Exhibition by Pedro Alves Da Veiga.



Fig. 14: Screening of Esperpentos a film by the Spanish director José Luis García Sánchez



Fig. 15: Presentation of Yassuní, Green Gold by Ginés Haro, at the Sociedade Harmonia Hebreense.



Fig. 16: Kids session at the Convento dos Remedios.