

Fiction merged with documentary and the film was permeated by that urgency of capturing what was happening, by the feeling that all was fleeting, like youth, or hope, or the construction of the subway, which was heading for completion and had to be caught on film then or never. Cinema and the moment, Carla Bolito's face, her life, the way the character was portrayed, it all converges to that moment of the shooting and that moment of the city and of the country, the moment of light, the moment in which we are all alive. Life as conflict, as tension, as crisis.

JACK 2

JACK

Journal on Architecture and Cinema Fall 2018

2



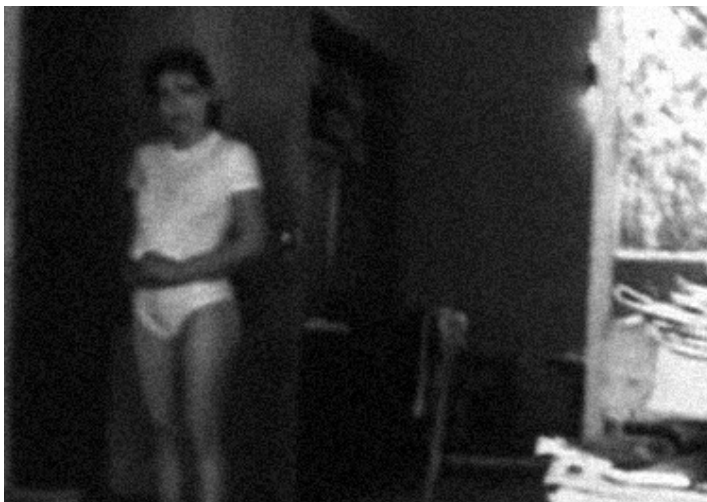
JACK
BACK
PACK



ESSAYS	lost in translation — reality as fake, image as reality Francisco Ferreira	2
	architectures in the same shot — construction of the filmic space Jorge Gorostiza	12
	make-believe america: wim wenders's dream Pedro Aires	20
REVIEWS	moving pictures, changing cultures — on the book <i>fast cars, clean bodies</i> Francisco Ferreira	30
	haus tugendhat — from the film by dieter reifarth Pedro Bandeira	36
	looking forward JACK	44
DOSSIER	verdes anos 90 Jorge Leitão Ramos	50
	a not that special day A. Roma Torres	52
	what happened to me after corte de cabelo?... Joaquim Sapinho	56
	corte de cabelo — how soon is now? Francisco Ferreira	64
	nothing but the girl Luis Urbano	76
POSTER	corte de cabelo, today Carlos Corais	
INTERVIEW	contradictions and complexities An interview with Manuel Graça Dias	81
ARCHITECTURE FICTION	fallen angels, wong kar-wai 1995 Filipe Silva	97

corte de cabelo how soon is now?

by Francisco Ferreira



Corte de Cabelo, Joaquim Sapinho,
(Rosa Filmes, 1995)

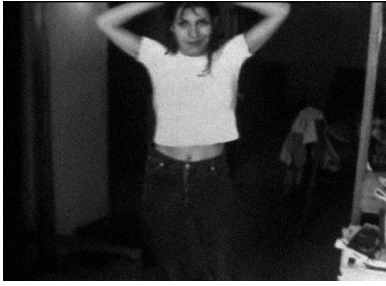
Corte de Cabelo starts as a distant memory, one that you can suddenly inhabit... the images of Rita in that homemade footage, as someone simultaneously showing off while shyly acknowledging that they caught someone else's eye, set off the tone of the film, one of haunting familiarity — with time, with space — as if reclaiming an empathy with the idea of being there, with the moment we didn't know we'd lost...

In *Corte de Cabelo*, the narrative is built around the characters' impulses — because impulses are what the film is about — which are like emotional spasms, sudden movements that not only make up and tell, at each moment, a story, but that also end up defining the very spaces they are happening in. As if inhabiting a space were, for these characters, inventing that space, and saying again what had already been said but in a new way, free from all historic or cultural tethers. The paradigmatic scene of this invention is the moment the mattress arrives at the newlyweds' flat. Excited, Rita and Paulo get intimate inside the mattress's plastic cover, turning it into a sort of cocoon. Inside of it the perception of the outside becomes diffuse, almost inexistent, and on the brink of asphyxia, the couple seems to want, at the same time, to forge and to question their domesticity, their place, their intimacy. Like a second skin, this love bubble replaces the surrounding flat, the surrounding city, and transforms — much like the experiences of the architectural vanguards of the 1960s and 1970s — into an environment that is both relativized and totalizing: *All are architects, everything is Architecture*, Hans Hollein stated in 1968². Unlike the Amoreiras,

(...) there is, instead, as much an uncompromising and fascinated as an exploratory and determined way to be, and if there is a statement to be made, it is that of a recognition of the spontaneity of everyday life, of an identity in perpetual (re)construction.

where Rita works, unlike its (even if not immediately apparent) exuberance and joyfulness, the space created in that split second, inside that ever-changing and fragile wrapping film, defines what is perhaps the moment of maximum awareness of the couple, and maybe also of the political, social and geographical context in which the film operates and positions itself. Without any measurable or recognizable references, in that moment, there is only warmth and touch. In that sense, it is a conjunctural, intuitive film, made as if there were no alternatives to those shots, to that editing. Because, in *Corte de Cabelo*, there is no desire for vanguard or refoundation; there is, instead, as much an uncompromising and fascinated as an exploratory and determined way to be, and if there is a statement to be made, it is that of a recognition of the spontaneity of everyday life, of an identity in perpetual (re)construction. The *encounter* between Rita and Paulo in the mattress also seems like a distant reverberation — if even only a formal one — of Thomas's meeting with the two aspiring models in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow Up*. Wrapped up in each other in much the same way — only not in a plastic bag but in a roll of backdrop paper — Antonioni's trio does not seek, however, any relational meaning and therefore does not define a space or confinement; where *Blow Up* tears away through superficiality, *Corte de Cabelo* cuts deep into dedication and surrender, like an act of faith.

¹ *How Soon is Now*, in *Hatful of Hollow*, Rough Trade, 1994
² Hans Hollein, *Bau 1/2*, 1968



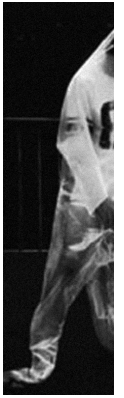
Corte de Cabelo, Joaquim Sapinho, (Rosa Filmes,1995)







Corte de Cabelo, Joaquim Sapinho,
(Rosa Filmes, 1995)



gesture that seems to want to be defined as an inner portrait of a decade, a time that the film — maybe inadvertently — ends up transforming into a before and an after. In 1996, Jorge Leitão Ramos called it *a Portuguese film of this time, the Green Years (Verdes Anos) of the 1990s*³. That likens it — or, at least, acknowledges the affiliation — to *Os Verdes Anos*, by Paulo Rocha. But, if *Corte de Cabelo* is a Portuguese film of its time that is because it is, above all, a European film — a quality that was, indeed, recognized by Olivier Seguret when he wrote that the *family* of *Corte de Cabelo* is, first and foremost, the family of *urban European cinema*⁴. So, even if *Corte de Cabelo* still portrays — or perhaps, epitomises, in that moment — some degree of disorientation, it does it in a more hopeful and adventurous note than *Os Verdes Anos*; so adventurous, in fact, that it places all of its narrative strength on the outcomes of an action — Rita's haircut — which, despite its triviality, rocks the foundations of her romance with Paulo as it also brings out the frailty of her own self-confidence. Unlike in *Os Verdes Anos*, the crime that takes place in *Corte de Cabelo* is quite harmless and does not bring the story to an end — it does not end a time that is still of imbalance —, but rather begins the present and therefore gives presence to that beginning. In that sense, the film embraces and is, indeed, based upon the impossibility of combining the construction of an identity with the eagerness of turning everything — time, place, love — into purely emotional, open, frontal, authentic space. And Europe is the spectre of that identity, permeating the film through its characters and the spaces they live in — or, better yet, that they reveal —, in

³ Jorge Leitão Ramos, *Verdes Anos 90*, *Expresso*, 2 Março 1996

⁴ Olivier Seguret, "Coupé court" *décoiffe le ciné portugais*, *Libération*, 5 Setembro 1996/1/2, 1968

a Lisbon that comes across as not very picturesque, but is instead trying to bring forth its more cosmopolitan and spontaneous side. A Lisbon as real as it is invented, with the Amoreiras showcasing it as a scenic device that appears to overshadow the enveloping city — not accidentally, the viewer is actually already inside that device, that building, by the time the film begins, watching as Rita arrives (and therefore anticipating the beginning of the story), as she comes out of the blinding white backlight. The remainder of the urban space is built always from the wanderings of the characters, from their moving through space, taking us along through the physical reality that paradoxically surrounds and constrains them. Between Alcântara and Belém, through the underground construction site for the new subway line, across the city at night — as peaceful and laid back as it is suddenly threatening — to the flat the couple will be living in after their wedding *ceremony* at the register office, Lisbon is a city in subtle spatial (but also social) convulsion that seems to embody both a reaction to and a consequence of the optimistic pull of the European project. This means that the disorientation of the characters is also a realization that the present (that present) is still a time of uncertainty wrapped in positivistic expectations. Joaquim Sapinho pinpointed the underlying bitterness in that optimism, that expectation, he understood that delicate balance the country was struggling with, in its process of hedonistic transformation. The haircut, then, is a cut with a legacy, a comfortableness. Like Portugal, Rita and Paulo — but mainly Rita, who I like to think of as a sort of impulsive, yet assertive statement — test the feelings of belonging and togetherness, from the premise of a freedom of action, of an unexpected move, of a leap



Inflatable suit-home, Archigram
(David Greene), 1968



Blow-Up, Michelangelo Antonioni
(Carlo Ponti Production, 1966)

into a void where there may be, at least, a promise of stability or progress that might counter the tensions that the film sets in motion — through the relationship between the main characters but also through other diverse and relatively scattered scenes, such as the initial love *attack* on Rita, at the Amoreiras, or the night escape from the skinheads.

That leap will prompt the characters' sense of expectation, which then becomes voluntary. This is the premise upon which Rita and Paulo become equally enchanted and disenchanted — although in a slightly desynchronized way — throughout the film, throughout the day the film takes to run its course. Paulo responds to Rita's whim with the aggressiveness of someone who is just trying to keep up with it, of someone who is pushing himself to, in fact, start over. Because Rita's impulse is nothing more than the radical image of *Corte de Cabelo's* central theme, which is to begin, or to become aware of that beginning, which comes across in the film as a sort of movement of rupture, heavy with fondness and diffuse memories.

In that respect, *Corte de Cabelo* is an absolutely modern work immersed in an irrevocably post-modern context that, in a fascinating way — and therein lies a substantial part of its relevance —, does not create a paradox but rather refers us viewers to an enactment made reality. Rita enters the Amoreiras shopping mall to the sound of Bonney M; light floods the screen but its intensity dims as she comes closer, so that the scene, i.e. reality, is recognized from that presence. In a similar, almost symmetrical way, that blinding light will return, at the end of the film, reflected on the glass that separates Rita and Paulo, as if to stop the viewer's voyeuristic gaze into that relationship.

There is, then, no need to *show* the Amoreiras in its linguistic and symbolic exhibitionism, which is replaced by the rawness of the characters' actions, by the proximity with which the camera lingers on them. Their presence *inhabits* the Amoreiras, establishing it scenographically as urban space. So it is of no consequence if we are inside or outside the building; the goal is to turn it into an element of continuity, into environmental extension, more than narrative intention. The same goes for when, later, we are taken into the subway construction site, to underground Lisbon, in that instance more generic than ever. Or still when, before, in the terrace of the apartment building they will be living in, Rita tries to position herself in relation to the river, or to the Amoreiras, her workplace. The impossibility of locating and visualizing these urban elements just brings out the intricate character of the contemporary city, its ability to prevail over more traditional identification strategies. Without those elements — and although it is debatable whether the Amoreiras already was a *Lisbon building* — the city becomes almost indifferent, thus mirroring most of urban Europe. Such reasoning reminds us of that sequence, in Godard's *deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*, in which Marina Vlady, surrounded by modernist buildings, states that an (urban) landscape *is like a face — we are tempted to say we see only one face, with a particular expression. But that does not mean that it is an extraordinary expression*, she adds, *nor that we should attempt to describe it*. Obstructed by vegetation or in the confrontation with the proximity of neighbouring buildings, Rita's vision of the city becomes interrogative, as if the will to locate in space was not only the will to recognize herself as an individual, but especially to connect to *her* landscape. As Mari-



Corte de Cabelo, Joaquim Sapinho,
(Rosa Filmes, 1995)



na Vlady also says — *I had a strange feeling. I spent all day thinking about it. A feeling about my connection to the world. Suddenly I had the feeling that I was the world; and that the world was me.*

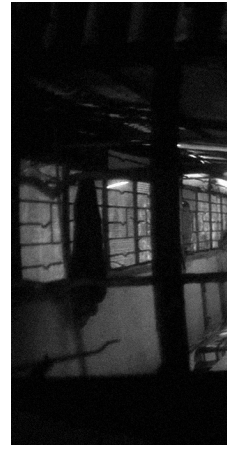
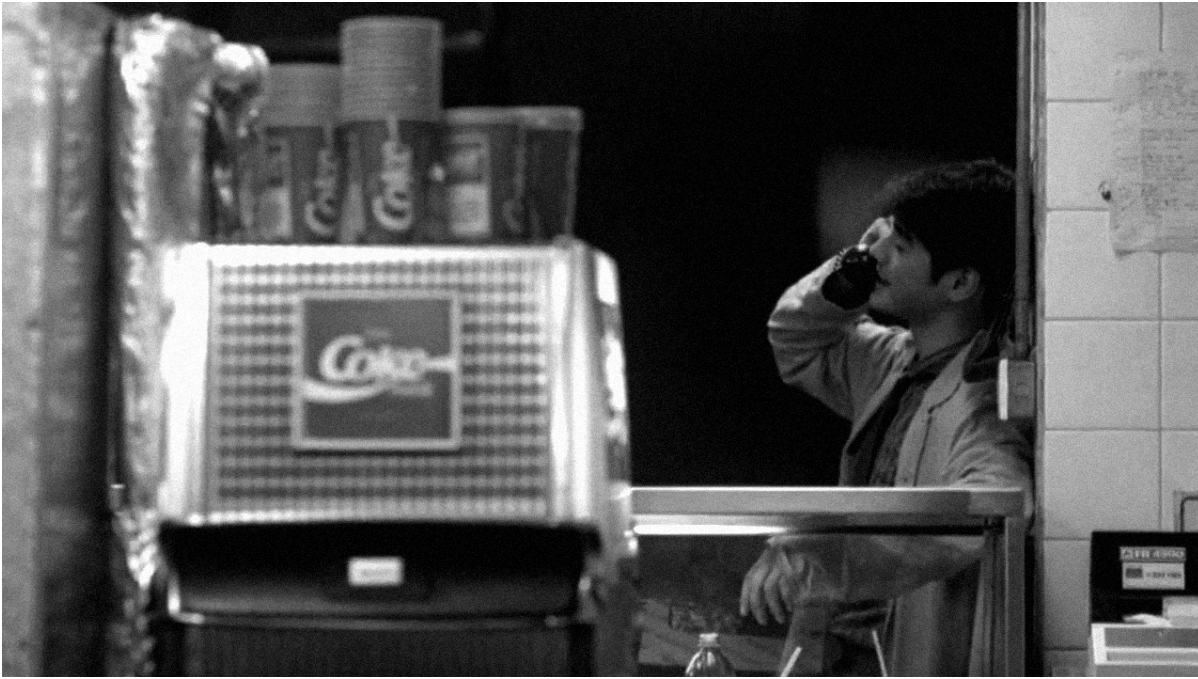
There is one other film where we can find an interesting and complementary resonance to *Corte de Cabelo*'s relation to space, to its coherent but somewhat fractured narrative, to its paradoxical desire for centrality and encounter, as it is built from successive tangencies of more or less calculated, more or less risky, deviations, actions and gazes. In Wong Kar-Wai's *Chungking Express*, which is contemporary with *Corte de Cabelo*, there are two distinct stories, umbilically connected by a small eatery, where two lovelorn policemen — one in each story — deal with their broken hearts, with their dependence and frailty in the face of relations that were built and destroyed. The city — in this case, Hong Kong — is filmed of a sudden, as if it were impossible to understand it, or consciously represent it. That is also how the leading characters of each of the stories that make the film cross each other, unknowingly, never realizing their presence in the *story* of others. Wong Kar-Wai seems to want to counter the fleetingness and generic quality of the spaces with a kind of permanence and definition of the characters — *since when did everything happen to have an expiration date?* — agent 223 asks after being abandoned by May. In that sense, in Wong Kar-Wai's film, the characters seem to resist the flow of images, which are external to them; conversely, in *Corte de Cabelo*, it is from the characters that the images of their context are created and that the representation of space — and of its apparent instability — reflects that of the characters, who centre in themselves, in their interlocution, the true *locus* of the film. In

Chungking Express, the characters are not, despite all, central nor do they centre the narrative, because there is really no narrative, purpose, beginning or end. There is a logic of transience and continuity, which articulate the relationship between the spaces that contain the stories — urban interstices and domestic meanders that forgo the stereotyped imagery of the city skyline — and the characters' interiority and routine, their emotional survival more than their potential adaptability to the environment. With Sapinho, it is the characters who construct a spatial *marginality*, a marginality that, however, requalifies the urban space of Lisbon as a place of many places, not as iconic or identifiable. Obviously, Lisbon is not, nor will it ever be, Hong Kong, with its skyscraper profile resembling a bar graph, as Michael Sorkin puts it, with a real estate growth based on an architecture of *extraction or pure production of extension*⁵. However, the crudeness and closeness with which Joaquim Sapinho's camera films and captures Lisbon, without a mediated concern to *show it or frame it*, equates with the existential autonomy of Wong Kar-Wai's characters, their resistance and their resilience. That is also why the space created in the mattress scene reminds us of the poor and anonymous structure of Wong Kar-Wai's subsequent film, *Fallen Angels*, the refuge of a hitman, the epicentre of the emotional tension that characterizes the missed relationship between the killer and his agent, a *central* space in the story in the way it seems to *survive* urban indifference. Like the plastic wrapping of the mattress in *Corte de Cabelo*, the shack of

⁵Michael Sorkin, *Instrumental Cities, in Some Assembly Required*, University of Minnesota Press, 2001, pp.38-44.



Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle,
Jean-Luc Godard (Argos Films, 1967)



Chungking Express, Wong Kar-Wai
(Jet Tone Production, 1994)



Fallen Angels, Wong Kar-Wai
(Jet Tone Production, 1995)

therefore, is only relevant there. We can, perhaps, imagine that it is within these places that the reality of these films is designed, that it is from this *invention* that fictional plausibility is drawn, reflecting a way of being, a time, a possibility of existence.

Corte de Cabelo therefore invents a mixed process of discovery and deconstruction of happiness, not as a pure state of unconditional joy or of luminous spaces, but as a device that always defines the present moment as a new start. The scene with the mattress plastic wrapping is the nuclear part of this artifice, of this *cinematography*, where the whole of this invention is condensed, perfectly complementing Rita's scene of joy when she spins and screams under the bridge in Alcântara, just after her wedding to Paul — *we are married* ...

In 1996, during the promotion of *Corte de Cabelo*, Joaquim Sapinho visited Bosnia and Herzegovina and found a place and time *autres*. The film that followed this visit presented a raw and disheartened perspective of a reality impossible to fiction, impossible to invent. The optimism at the end of *Corte de Cabelo*, in that promise that everything will be alright with Rita and Paulo, fades in *Diários da Bósnia*, more particularly and definitely in the darkness of the tunnels that connect the villages of Sunji and Bradina, in the desperate story of that man with no future, as he is called by Joaquim Sapinho⁶ (but also, with no present, say we), the story of the massacre of the neighbouring village, heard by us, viewers, with the children in the background, playing. From the Lisbon of Paulo and Rita, we plunge, led by the same filmmaker, into the incredulity and heavy silence of the post-war Balkans, the post-war of contemporary Europe; and in this plunge we move from the invention of the present to the invention of its conscience, to the disappearance of time as a sequential thing. In *Diários da Bósnia* time becomes atmospheric, like a haze that refuses to dissipate. The before and the after are merged without any apparent criterion, history becomes abruptly fixed and inert in that territory, all-present in those facades blasted by bullets, in those photographs left behind. There is no progression, no perspective, places appear as closed spaces where the sensation of barbarism is contained, and architecture is a mere image of this containment. The double representation that Sapinho sets in motion — two intertwined periods, images from two visits, two years apart — does not even establish an opposition between the before and the after. With the exception of the distinct colour and temperature of the images of each visit, melancholy and forbearance cross the film almost untouched, a film of a *vanished world*, as Sapinho describes Srebrenitza. However, there is a scene that redeems that reality: that girl from Sunji — the village of the man with no future — who wraps her head in a red hijab and ploughs through the cold and the snow on her way to school, takes us to a specific moment, focusing us on that route, on that day. In that scene, at that moment, there is no wandering or crystallization; there is, in fact, again, a *now*. And a sudden coincidence comes to mind, between the girl's face, wrapped in the red hijab,



Diários da Bósnia, Joaquim Sapinho
(Rosa Filmes, 2005)

Like the plastic wrapping of the mattress in *Corte de Cabelo*, the shack of *Fallen Angels* is an existential capsule, a narrative enclave that is mainly thought of as a cinematographic place, and that, therefore, is only relevant there.

⁶ *Por outro Lado*, RTP2, Entrevista de Ana Sousa Dias a Joaquim Sapinho, 1 Agosto 2006



Corte de Cabelo, Joaquim Sapinho,
(Rosa Filmes, 1995)



and Rita's face, wrapped in the red hood of her coat when she wanders through Lisbon, at night, first on the run, then in search of Paulo. I like to imagine that the existence of that brave girl who Joaquim Sapinho met and filmed with such restraint and respect, had already been anticipated in that fiction that was Rita, a few years before his first trip to Bosnia; I like to think that Rita's impulsiveness, her belief in the present and the idea of beginning, already represented the natural attitude of that little girl, who seems to rediscover the world and the joy of happenstance. The whole sequence of that journey means, in this sense, the repositioning of time as movement, which gives an extraordinary narrative relevance to the journey of the girl in the red hijab, one that reveals, in the end, the disciplinary relevance of cinema; particularly if we voluntarily return — right after the sun reflection on the glass at the end of *Corte de Cabelo* — to the start of the film, to that homemade footage, to that moment... —