

# Troia 2000

By Ron Holloway

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## THE 16th TROIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2000

In his "Image Nation" essay, published in the "Brazilian Cinema Now" booklet handed out at Cannes, critic Jose Carlos Avellar has this to say about last year's Golden Bear winner at the Berlinale: "The story in *Central do Brasil* may also be seen -- even though not so intended -- as a metaphor for the process of reinventing Brazilian cinema in the 1990s. The film passes across landscapes and through characters that made their mark on the films of the 1960s -- the Northeast, the hinterlands, the migrants, the pilgrims, the average worker from the outskirts of the big city -- following the path of a woman who, gradually, by turning into writing what is said to her, undergoes a process of *resensitization*. This expression used by Walter Salles is a perfect definition of Dora's experience and, by extension, that of Brazilian cinema in recent years."

Over the past half-decade, New Brazilian Cinema has benefited from a new government (following the impeachment of the president in 1995), a new film law that encourages both home production and international co-productions, and the fruits of the 500th anniversary of the accidental discovery of Brazil by Pedro Cabral in 1500. Put all these facts altogether, and nothing could be more opportune than a 24-film retrospective tribute to Brazilian Cinema at the 16th Troia International Film Festival in Setúbal, Portugal (1-10 June 2000). Moreover, the key film in this retro was the box-office hit that also drew its inspiration from another historical windfall: Carlos Diegues's *Orfeu*, a remake of Vinicius de Moraes's play *Orfeu de carnaval*, the same source used by Marcel Camus for his *Orfeu negro* (*Black Orpheus*), the Golden Palm winner at the 1959 Cannes festival.

By the same token, Portuguese cinema is becoming the talk of the festivals. At one end of the spectrum is the eminent nonagenarian director Manoel de Oliveira, whose *A Carta* (*The Letter*) was awarded the Special Jury Prize at last year's Cannes festival -- indeed, his finesse in combining sumptuous photography with elegant leading ladies will assure his popularity on the arthouse circuit for as long as he chooses to direct.

Also, there was the auspicious start at this year's Cannes of talented singer-actress-director Maria de Medeiros, whose *Capitães de abril* (*Captains of April*) premiered in the Certain Regard. Reckoned as Portugal's most expensive project to date, costing an estimated \$5 million with an extra input from a French co-producer, it focuses on the revolutionary events that took place in the night of 24-25 April 1974, when a military coup broke the country's ties with the colonial past and launched Portugal towards a modern-day partnership with the European Community.

Lastly, Portuguese producer Paulo Branco is a name to be reckoned with: his Paris-based Gemini Films graced Cannes with back-to-back screen adaptations of Marcel Proust classic *A la recherche du temps perdu* (*Remembrance of Things Past*): Raoul Ruiz's *Le Temps retrouvé* (*Time Regained*), presented in the Competition last year, and Chantal Akerman's *The Captive*, based loosely on *La prisonnière* (*The Prisoner*), programmed in the Directors Fortnight.

This year's Troia-Setúbal festival was a veritable feast for *cinéastes*. Not only were there four separate competitions -- International Program, First Works, American Independents, and "Man and His Environment" section -- but there was also a rich lineup of sidebar events: a 14-film retrospective homage to Berlin producer Regina Ziegler, a program of New Danish Cinema, and the aforementioned Brazilian showcase subdivided into Afro-Brazilian Cinema, Recent Portuguese Cinema, and the "Caravana Farkas" retrospective honouring Portuguese documentarist Thomaz Farkas. Furthermore, festival director Maria Ventura and Fernanda Silva have become specialists in so-called "video-beam-titling," a computerized subtitling system that guarantees Portuguese-language subtitles for each and every film programmed at the festival.

The International Jury, with Spanish director Juan Bardem as president, awarded the Golden Dolphin to Olli Saarela's *Rukajarven tie* (*Ambush*, Finland), a tale of love and revenge set on the Finnish-Russian border during the first days of the Second World War. Other highlights in the Competition were Paul Cox's impressive *Molokai* -- *The Story of Father Damien* (Belgium), shot on the island of Molokai in the Pacific

archipelago; Frigyes Godros's *Glamour* (Hungary), winner of the International Critics Prize at the Budapest festival; Arik Kaplun's *Hachaverim shel Yana* (*Yana's Friends*, Israel), Grand Prix winner at last year's Karlovy Vary festival; Saša Gedeon's *Návrat idiota* (*Return of the Idiot*, Czech Republic), loosely based on Dostoevsky's classic *The Idiot*; and Yusuf Razykov's *Voiz* (*Orator*, Uzbekistan), a remarkable tragicomedy about a typical Moslem everyman hurled headlong into the maelstrom of the 1917 Revolution.

Tucked away in the "Man and His Environment" Competition were two short films by young directors who will surely be heard from again in the future. Srdjan Vuleti's *Hop, Skip and Jump* (Bosnia) follows the fate of a couple -- from a tearful parting during the Winter Olympics to the siege of Sarajevo to a furtive meeting in a tram after the war -- the twist being that she for a time was a Serb sniper and he an intended victim. And Javier Rebollo's *El equipaje abierto* (*The Open Luggage*, Spain) tells the same story of love-death-chance in the context of a melodrama. When Amanda, an impoverished prostitute, can't make ends meet with a sole client, she turns to stealing luggage from unsuspecting people at a railway station. One day, she finds out from letters that she has inadvertently caused the death of an elderly man who was about to be reunited with a long-lost love. Pained at what she has done, Amanda changes her life and sets out to find the "other woman" in the letters in hopes of at least returning the lost luggage -- only to find that the spectre of death, once again, had arrived at her destination but a few days before her.

## References

### AWARDS

**Golden Dolphin** (Grand Prize): Olli Saarela's *Rukajarven tie* (*Ambush*, Finland)

### Silver Dolphins

Special Jury Prize: Frigyes Godros's *Glamour* (Hungary)

Best Director: Olli Saarela, *Rukajarven tie* (*Ambush*) (Finland)

Best Actress: Bodil Jorgensen, *Fruen pa Hamre* (*The Lady of Hamre*, Denmark), director Katrine Wiedemann

Best Actor: Salvador del Solar, *Pantaleon y las visitadoras* (*Captain Pantoja and the Special Service*, Peru), director Francisco J. Lombardi

Best Screenplay: Ventura Pons, *Morir (o no) -- To Die (Or Not)* (Spain/Catalonia), director Ventura Pons

Best Photography: Morten Soborg, *Fruen pa Hamre* (*The Lady of Hamre*, Denmark), director Katrine Wiedemann

### FIPRESCI Award

Saša Gedeon's *Návrat idiota* (*Return of the Idiot*, Czech Republic)

### OCIC (Catholic) Award

Ventura Pons's *Morir (o no)* [*To Die -- (Or Not)*] (Spain/Catalonia)

### Setúbal Award, American Independents Section

Ed Radtke's *The Dream Catcher* (USA)

### Troia Award, First Works Section

Pip Karmel's *Me Myself I -- La chance de ma vie* (France)

### Costa Azul Award, Man and His Environment Section

Michael Hammon and Jacqueline Gorgen's *Hillbrow Kids* (Germany)

## Author Information

Ron HOLLOWAY (1933-2009) was an American critic, film historian, filmmaker and correspondent who adopted Europe as his home in the early fifties and spent much of his life in Berlin. He was an expert on the study of German cinema and against all odds produced, with his wife Dorothea, the journal *German Film*, keeping us up-to-date with the work of directors, producers and writers and the showing of German films around the world.

In 2007, Ron Holloway and his wife were awarded the Berlinale Camera Award. Ron also received the Bundesverdienstkreuz (German Cross of Merit), Polish Rings, Cannes Gold Medaille, the American Cinema Foundation Award, the Diploma for Support of Russian Cinema and an honorary award from the German Film Critics' Association.

Ron was also a valued contributor to *Kinema* for the past fifteen years.