

Portuguese cinema and Revolution (1974-1982)

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The Portuguese Revolution, known as the Carnation Revolution, started on 25 April 1974 and has also rolled out in cinematographic institutions and in the alternative production of films known as “intervention” films. Cooperatives are the basic structures of this cinematographic production, mostly revolving around documentaries. Filmmakers would get together in different cooperatives (Cinequipa, Cinequanon, Grupo Zero) through ties of friendships or because of political affinity, where they would share their skills and equipment. These cooperatives of filmmakers produced more than a hundred films and programs for both cinema and television, up until the end of the 1970s. Focusing on this short and liberating time of the recent Portuguese history, this work aims to establish that the idea of revolution, understood as a process, but also as an event and a rupture, has provoked a specific film production. The chronological area thus corresponds to the years of the Portuguese Revolution of 1974-1975 and its upheavals until 1982.

To grasp this singular moment in all its complexity, cinema and politics are analysed in their interplay with the balance of power existing between regime, institutions, and cinema world. The first part is dedicated to the history of the New Portuguese Cinema of the 1960s, highlighting both the existing dynamics between different generations of filmmakers and the roles played by the cinema industry and the State in the debates for a new legislation of Portuguese cinema. The process started in 1974, and thus appears both as a continuation – the power was somehow already taken by the filmmakers before 1974 – and as a rupture: films are different, and filmmakers choose various strategies. Conflicts and power issues track the urge for a revolutionary cinema able to follow the radical changes in society. Filmmakers would then question the possibilities of creation in that context: experiences of collective production, alternative distribution, and new practices of militant cinema are all examples of different creative opportunities.

The study of various films, and the confrontation of cinema with the revolution, offer many creative potentials: from anticapitalistic movies, which try to take part

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in the process by provoking the audience, to the uses of Direct cinema, which was the main strategy used by the cooperatives for television. At that time, specific attention was paid to the countryside, especially during the Land Reform, and some movies were relevant examples of an “ethno-militant” cinema combining the ambitions of both ethnographic and militant cinemas. The social movements that occurred in revolutionary Portugal were also interesting material for some filmmakers, who made the meeting between cinema and feminism, or cinema and queer movement easier. Finally, the success of *Good Portuguese People* (*Bom Povo Português*, 1981) by Rui Simões, marks an aesthetical rupture in response to political change.

This dissertation has a double ambition: first, it is important to shed light on this underestimated part of Portuguese cinema, which remains unknown, with the help of testimonies of filmmaker and producers from that period. Then, by observing the practical and visual exchanges between historical process and aesthetics, the paths explored here aim to contribute to enriching the history of engaged cinema.