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WAITING FOR THE **CARNIVAL**

A FILM BY **MARCELO GOMES**



BRAZIL - 2018 - 86 MIN



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LOGLINE

A small village in the Brazilian outback is considered the nation's capital of jeans. It's also a microcosm that depicts modern day capitalism and its transgressions.

SYNOPSIS

The small village of Toritama is a microcosm of relentless capitalism. Each year, more than 20-million pairs of jeans are produced in make-shift factories. The locals work non-stop hours, proud to be the masters of their own time. During Carnival - the only leisure moment of the year -, they transgress the logic of accumulation of goods, sell their belongings without regret and flee to the beaches in search of ephemeral happiness. When Ash Wednesday arrives, a new work cycle begins.

ORIGINAL TITLE

Estou me guardando para quando o carnaval chegar

ENGLISH TITLE

Waiting for the Carnival

RUNNING TIME

86 min

FORMAT

DCP

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

Portuguese

DIRECTOR

Marcelo Gomes

SCREENPLAY

Marcelo Gomes

PRODUCERS

**Nara Aragão
João Vieira Jr.**

CO-PRODUCER

Ernesto Soto

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Pedro Andrade

EDITING

Karen Harley

SOUND DESIGNER

Nicolau Domingues

SOUND

**Pedro Moreira
Moabe Filho**

MUSIC

O Grivo

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Karina Nobre

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Gustavo Campos

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Luna Gomides

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

João Vieira Jr.

PRODUCTION COMPANIES

**Carnaval Filmes
Misti Filmes
REC Produtores Associados**

WORLD SALES

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GERMAN AND INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Claudia Tomassini + Associates



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Marcelo Gomes' debut feature film *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, a road movie set in the hinterlands, gathered great media attention in 2005 at Cannes Film Festival (Un Certain Regard official selection) where it won France's National Education Award.

In 2009 he presented at Venice Film Festival *I Travel Because I Have To, I Come Back Because I Love You* - one of his most studied works. Co-directed with Karim Ainouz, the film blurs the line between fiction and documentary and has obtained enormous attention from film critics and art curators. The film won awards at festivals in Toulouse, Havana and Paris, among others.

In 2012 Gomes presented his third feature film: *Once upon a time was I, Veronica*, a reflection upon the existential yearn of young people in urban metropolitan cities of Brazil. It premiered at Toronto International Film Festival and won awards at festivals such as San Sebastian, Brasilia, Manaus (Brazil), Havana and Guadalajara (Mexico).

Gomes has developed long time collaborations with other artists such as Cao Guimarães - one of Brazil's most revered visual artists. They co-directed the feature film *The Man of The Crowd* which they presented together at Berlin Film Festival's Panorama selection in 2014. The film won awards at festivals in Rio de Janeiro, Guadalajara (Mexico) and Toulouse (France).

Gomes' most recent feature film *Joaquim*, was selected for the Competition at the 67th Berlinale in 2017. This unconventional biography of the Brazilian XVIII-century martyr Tiradentes is a co-production between Brazil, Portugal and Spain. It has won prizes in the Havana Film Festival and Fenix Latin American Awards.



CARNAVAL FILMES

Founded by experienced producers João Vieira Jr. and Nara Aragão, Carnaval Filmes is focused in original content and arthouse films. In partnership with creative minds, we are currently releasing the documentaries *Waiting for the Carnival*, by Marcelo Gomes and *Casa*, by Letícia Simões, the feature *Greta*, by Armando Praça and the animated TV series *Bia Draws*. Their next releases will be the features *Paloma's Wedding*, by Marcelo Gomes and *Party Over*, by Hilton Lacerda.



INTERVIEW WITH MARCELO GOMES

Where does your interest in Toritama come from?

My family comes from a rural area of Pernambuco called the Agreste. My parents migrated in the 1960s to the region's capital, Recife, with 5 children and I was born there. Our family's memories were always related to this region. In Recife, I lived on the same street as my grandparents, who had also migrated to the capital. We constantly housed relatives and friends coming in from that region. Our street was a little piece of the Agreste: the stories they told, the food, the traditions. In my mind, I constructed a mythical version of that region. As a child, I made frequent visits to the Agreste to visit relatives. In addition to that, my father's business trips - he worked as a civil servant in charge of tax collections - brought him often to the region and sometimes he brought me along as well. My father passed away more than 25 years ago, but I always kept the desire to return and make a film in this region.

A few years ago, while attending a film festival in North Taquaritinga, I passed once again through the region. What struck me the most was the nearby city of Toritama. The place had gone through a wild transformation and I was mesmerized by the madness of the landscape: all surrounded by outrageous outdoors. Someone then told me a story about the people of Toritama: they were crazy about having a holiday during carnival. He recalled that it was known in the region that they would sell their electronic appliances or many other goods earned along the year in order to celebrate carnival in the nearby beaches. I thought it was powerful transgression to get rid of one's own goods, -even the most basic ones- just because of the carnival. I tried to imagine the intensity of their work routines and how it led to such a transgression. Since I tend to do cinema to learn about things I do not know, I thought that this could be a subject for a movie. And coincidentally, I accomplished a long-time desire of having an immersion back into the region.

What is the relation of the film to the recent Brazilian labor reform and the extinction of the Ministry of Labor?

When I arrived in Toritama, I was surprised by a fact: the working conditions in the factories (backyard factories) reminded me of England in the 19th century --in the midst of industrialization. But I would soon discover that they represented the future and not only the past.

Even though many cities in the Agreste have undergone hypertrophic unplanned development during three decades of industrialization, I believe that none of them has gone through such radical changes as Toritama.

What interests me the most is not the change of the urban landscape, but the human landscape. I wanted to understand how the memories and cultural references of these people had changed. In the 1980s the city had a library, a music orchestra, religious festivities. And that no longer exists. I really wanted to understand what these people think about life, what they dream with, what they want? And it was a shock to me when they mentioned that their working conditions were good and that they were satisfied with the autonomy that jeans production brings for them. Neoliberalism has been very efficient in that sense: it manages to sell its dogmas very well. We are living one of the most complex moments of capitalism. In none of the conversations I had people regarded themselves as victims in any way. So we had to respect that in the construction of the film. It would probably be easier to make a film that would put them in a victim's place, but the reality proved to be much more complex. I expect that being confronted with a situation as radical as the one seen in Toritama might trigger in the viewers a reflection about their own relationship with work and consumption. The current logic in which life is not determined by what you "must do", but of what you "can do": "I can do such and such pants to earn more".

I see the city of Toritama as a bridge between the past and the future: in some way it represents the concretization of a neoliberal project that wishes to implant its view throughout the country. In the future, we will all be living in a gigantic Toritama: even though apparently free and able to use our time as we wish, we will be induced to some sort of self-enslavement. The false dream of autonomy provided by a system of induced desires and non-stop consumption.

Despite the harsh reality presented, the film is not difficult to watch. On the contrary, it is fluid and warm. Was there a conscious attempt in the editing process to mitigate the harshness of the subject?

I spent more than five months working in the editing room with Karen Harley, a long-time collaborator. We had ten possible films in our footage and it was difficult to let go the other nine in order to make this story come out.

The first challenge was to balance the images of labor, being careful not to water down their force either. If we focused too much in the machines -with those mechanical movements and terrifying noises- that reality would create at the end a very unattractive film.

The next challenge with an arid subject as labor was to strike a balance between the power of the images and the human stories. That balance was brought in by the characters. We realized that we needed to humanize the story. Every time we stopped to analyze the editing, I decided to look in the original footage for more characters. We needed to bring in people speaking their hearts out, in order to escape from that apparent harshness.

It was at this moment when we realized that I should step in as a narrator: my memory would serve to accentuate the humanity of the film. In addition to the memories I keep from the Agreste, we decided to put the sensations of what we felt watching the images into my character. When we thought we needed a break, the narrator would say he needed to take a breath. When we got tired of the repetitive mechanical movement and decided to put a song, the narrator suggested a song. Finally, we perceived that in these small details that we discovered along the editing process there was an interesting narrative line. One, that could make the film more provocative for the audiences. We had the intention of building a Trojan horse: attract the audience with powerful images and induce them to have a reflection about that complex reality.

Had you thought about putting yourself so directly into the movie as a character from the beginning?

I had a desire to appear in the film, for all the relationship I had with the region. But I did not know exactly how. In the editing room we discovered that the best path would be to narrate the emotional experiences I had in that place. For me, the synthesis of that is tangible when I speak of the afternoon sunset, which came down and brought melancholic feelings, just as the radios started to play the Angelus. One day while we were there in research, at 6pm someone started playing the [funk band] Racionais MC and that really touched me. Just as in my previous film *I travel because I need to, I go back because I love you*, which registers a cultural crossroad in the Brazilian outback during the turn of the century, I also wanted to register in Toritama a moment of changes in values. And to confront memory and affection: present and past. I was embroidering these the emotions that I felt. That is the reason why the narrator reminds me the character in *I travel because I have to...*, where we also intended to present a character dealing with strong emotions hidden under the surface. In any case, I cannot think of a film were the director's experience is not present. I am present in all my other movies as well. I find it impossible to make movies in any other way.

Even if in other projects you already bring a documentary approach, as in *I travel because I have to*. *Waiting for the Carnival* is the first feature work in which you immerse yourself in the language of the documentary. Was it a gratifying experience to get away from fiction?

I think that all my works have documentary influence. First, by my training: I studied film in England and was very influenced by Mike Leigh and Ken Loach, who emphasize a relationship with reality in the construction of fiction. Second, by my own professional career: before I started writing and filming fiction, I worked for many years making documentaries for

television. These two factors influence all of my work.

With *Waiting for the Carnival* I was excited about the possibility of diving into a documentary making process. I allowed myself to try different styles and that is what I was looking for. We started off as an observational documentary, then moved on to an interview format. At a certain point we flirted with meta-documentary and finally we played with a device-documentary format. I believe the film itself demanded these interactions, and we were just following the demands of our object of investigation. I really enjoy combining several languages and I have been fortunate enough to work in projects that allow me to do that. When we were filming production lines, for example, Pedro Andrade -director of photography- and I discussed science fiction references. These exchanges interest me a lot.

The decision to incorporate a device appears in the film from the moment you delegate to the characters the function of filming the carnival by themselves. You, as a narrator, explain: "we film the work, they will film the leisure". Why create this separation?

We spent more than two years in the process of research and filming, which was shot in six different stages. We visited the big, small and medium factories and we met a lot of different people. But we soon identified that our focus should be in the essence of the contradictions. That is how I became interested in investigating the "factions" or backyard workshops. When we began to visit these places, people were very receptive, allowed to film and talked with ease. But they just did not want to stop working in order to answer my questions. Which was great for us: we filmed them responding to interviews and working at the same time. Obviously, I could not ask for anything else. I would only listen, watch and understand what they had to say. Throughout the process we realized that we had never filmed anyone at home, only when the house was also a workplace. Everyone we filmed was in a working situation. Then, how could we invade their intimacy during Carnival? There was an ethical question at stake: a crew of filmmakers could spoil the moment of celebration and joy that carnival represented for them. Work already takes their lives in an absolute way. During their only moment of transgression of this logic, our presence could ruin exactly what we wanted to record. Thinking about these issues, we came up with the solution of distributing cameras among them so that each one could register their own carnival in the way he or she desired. Throughout the editing process, Leo came standing out among the other characters and became almost a protagonist. He is a natural philosopher who synthesizes very well the thoughts of several of our characters. Since the images he produced at the carnival did not differ much from the others, we decided to stay with his experience alone. This way of presenting the carnival seemed to me a natural development of my attitude towards the characters. During the process, I tried to listen, understand their thoughts and reflect about their feelings in the most honest way possible.

INTERNATIONAL PRESS

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