

Terratreme and Laranja Azul present

ASTRAKAN 79

2 Outubro de 1979
Queridos pais e irmãos,
A Universidade tem um
grande parque a volta das
novas instalações, um deles relva
e pista de atletismo com
tartan! Na entrada principal
há uma estátua de Lenin
e muitas edifícios grandes.
Ainda não está frio, ali
tem algum calor e muitos
mopositos à noite, aqui
há corvos por todo o lado.
Um grande abraço já tenho
algumas saudades. Martin

Um abraço
do 2º, 3º ano
Campolide, Lisboa
Portugal - МОРТИС
МАРТИН
ТАШЧЕВА
УМБЕРТИ
АСТРАХАН
СССР

5 de Março de 1980
Queridos Pais e irmãos
Obrigado pelo vosso
Aqui está tudo a
bem. As aulas são
com os estudos aqui
mais avançados do
em Portugal. Já
a umas festas dos
onde se dança muito
disco sound!!! Já
mais gente daqui
entre os estudantes
Um abraço. Ma

a film by Catarina Mourão





ASTRAKAN 79

Portugal - 2023 - 64' - 16 mm, HD - 4:3
a Terratrema Filmes and Laranja Azul production

CREW AND CAST

director CATARINA MOURÃO

photography and color grading PAULO MENEZES aip

sound ARMANDA CARVALHO

editing PEDRO MATEUS DUARTE

production coordinator JOÃO GUSMÃO

first assistant director VASCO COSTA, FRANCISCA ALARCÃO

production manager ANASTASSIA KORTSINSKAJA

sound design HUGO LEITÃO

design FRANCISCA ALARCÃO

with MARTIM SANTA RITA, MASARI, MATEUS M SANTA RITA

voices LOURENÇO ALARCÃO, CATARINA MOURÃO



SYNOPSIS

Martim recalls today, at the age of 58, his one and a half year stay in the Soviet Union in 1979. Martin was 15 years old and an innocent-looking kid. His parents, Communist Party militants, thought he was going to a safe place, a society that lived up to all their ideals. Martin traveled to Moscow, crossed the Volga delta by train to Astrakan. This was an initiatory journey for Martin. He fell in love several times, dropped out of school, slept in street benches and sold all his records and blue jeans. The communist ideal instilled by his parents was lost along the way. Forty years later, in this film, Martin decides to tell his story to his son for the first time, a story that has been a family taboo until today.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film is a natural sequel to my previous film "A Toca do Lobo" (*The Wolf's Lair* 2015). We are no longer in the period of the Fascist dictatorship, but in the euphoric moment after the revolution. Like "A Toca do Lobo", "Astrakan 79" continues to explore the theme of family secrets and taboos that go through generations, in this case reflecting the Portuguese political context from 1974 to the present day .

"*Astrakan 79*" is a film about ideological education and its failure, and how the convictions of parents are instilled in their children, who end up questioning them in the present. I want to continue exploring issues related to the passing of memory between generations and the verbalization of affection between parents and children.

There were many young people who went to study in the Soviet Union after the revolution. This is just one story among many. However, it especially moved me by the fact that Martim was only 15 years old when he left Portugal. The fact that this adventure became a taboo, and the circumstances that led to Martim's silence, also contributed to my interest.

Why was this adventure still a taboo in the family after so many years? Did Martim think it would be a bad example to share with his son? Did he want to protect his parents from his disappointment with the communist regime? Martim confesses he is no

longer a communist and how difficult it was to let go. His parents never questioned the communist ideology, not even after Perestroika.

This is a family story, in a specific political context, that seeks to explore how we live in the present, the memories of that period. It is a film about the construction of memory and about all the fictions that we inevitably build to make sense of the narratives of the past. This constructed dimension is acknowledged in the film which blurs the boundaries between documentary and fiction.

From the formal point of view, the film does not limit itself to telling a past story through a register between documentary and fiction. In the second act we meet Martim today in a room that I call "the memory room", where he will confide with his son Masari (an acronym for Martim Santa Rita, father and son share the same name). In this conversation we hear them reflecting on the story we have just learned, but in between the lines there are clues to a new revelation. Martim isn't the only one sharing a secret.

The ball unravels and one story becomes another. In this way we add thickness to memories that unfold in the present.

"*Astrakan 79*" helps us reflect on a period in our recent history, the Portuguese post-revolutionary period. This period is still shrouded in a certain opacity, many families still don't speak about this

moment freely and it has never been the subject of cinematographic treatment.

Catarina Mourão





CATARINA MOURÃO

Catarina Mourão studied Music, Law and Film in Bristol and Edinburgh. In 1998 she founded AporDOC, Portuguese Documentary Association. Since 1998 she has been teaching Film and Documentary in many BA and MA courses. With Catarina Alves Costa she started Laranja Azul in 2000, an independent production company for creative documentary and visual arts in Lisbon where she has directed many awarded films. In 2016 she obtained her PhD in Film by the University of Edinburgh. Her PhD film “A Toca do Lobo” (The Wolf’s Lair) was released theatrically all over Portugal and premiered at Rotterdam Int. Film Festival. Her main areas of research are creative documentary; realism; memory, dream and archives. She is currently teaching film at the MA of Arts and Multimedia at Lisbon’s Fine Art School.

[2023] Astrakan 79
[2020] Ana and Maurizio
[2019] The Hissing of Summer Sands (short)
[2015] The Wolf's Lair
[2010] Through Shadows
[2009] Mother and Daughter (short)
[2006] On Edge
[2006] My Village Doesn't Live Here Anymore
[2004] Love Me, Love Me Not
[2002] Restless
[2001] Next Stop (short)
[1998] The Lady of Chandor
[1997] Out of Water (short)
[1996] The Port (short)
[1994] Mecca Before I Die (short)

CONTACTS

DISTRIBUTION AND SALES

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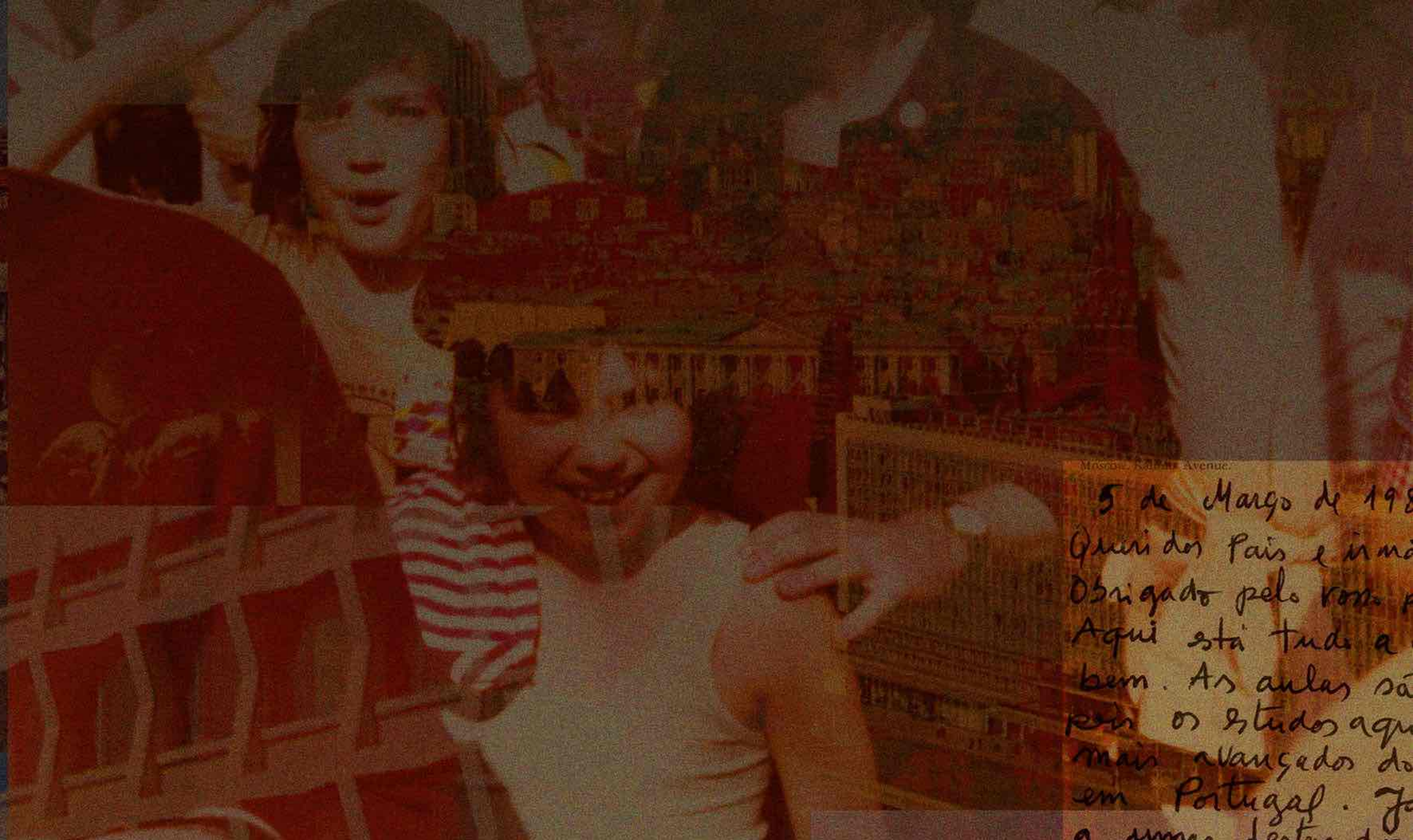
www.laranja-azul.com



PORTUGAL
FILM







Moscow, Kuznetsk Avenue.

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