

Júlia Ruivo Ausenda Vital José Coelho Graça Bastos voice Rita Durão  
Acácio Salvador Carlos Vilhena Maria Fátima Pinto André Valente João Vilhena

# MY GRANDMA TRÊLOTÔTÔ

a film by Catarina Ruivo



*cinematographer* João Ribeiro, Catarina Ruivo, Irmã Lúcia *sound* António Pedro Figueiredo, Nuno Carvalho *production director* Sílvia da Rocha,  
Momade Capurchande, Henrique Espírito Santo *produced by* trabalhos de casa *financial support* Grupo João Ferreira dos Santos

ICA INSTITUTO DO CINEMA  
E DO AUDIOVISUAL

REPÚBLICA  
PORTUGUESA

TRABALHOS + CASA

*My grandma Trelotótó* directed by Catarina Ruivo was premiered at IndieLisboa international film festival, where it won the Award for Best Portuguese Feature Film.

A visual journey mixing documentary and fiction *My Grandma Trelotótó* recreates the world of the director's gran, and by embarking with her on this path we will rediscover something of our own family experiences.

" When my gran died I wanted to save her and filming her seemed to me to be the only solution. I began by filming her daily routine and I rediscovered the ways of the countryside, where people still make bread at home and time has a different duration.

In the attic of her house I found a trunk full of letters from when she lived in Mozambique in 1946/57. I discovered a new intimacy with my gran, I got to know her fears and desires, I lived in her world.

Through her letters I caught a glimpse of colonial Mozambique. I went to Africa to film the places where my gran had been happy. Not out of a hankering for the past, but to film the unstoppable life force that is constantly changing and regenerating itself. I wanted to show how places are both spaces of memory and of transformation.

This is Catarina's fourth feature film. 'André Valente', her first feature film, was premiered at the Locarno Festival, where it won the FICC/IFFS's Don Quixote award, before going on to win a number of prizes at other festivals.



## Synopsis

My grandmother had a strength and a love of life so great that they led me to believe that some of us are able to escape death and become immortal.

When she died I wanted to save her. I decided to film her and I wasn't going to let the lack of a body hold me back. I filmed a ghost so that I could then return her to the realm of the living, as Orpheus wished to do with Eurydice. Arming myself with every tool I could find, I created a world in which she continued to live. It is a world, a film, made of many different times and registers. Making it was like constructing a timepiece – a timepiece built from love.

This film was a journey towards resurrection and is my way of giving my grandmother the immortality that I believe is rightfully hers.



## Director's Note

When my gran died I wanted to save her and filming her seemed to me to be the only solution. My starting point was the belief that cinema creates an illusion of reality so strong, that by filming the absence of a body and making visible the space it had occupied, I would be able not only to show the sorrow of that absence, but also to create a physical being, to bring a ghost back to life.

I began by filming her daily routine and I rediscovered the ways of the countryside, where people still make bread at home and time has a different duration.

In the attic of her house I found a trunk full of letters from when she lived in Mozambique in 1946/57. I discovered a new intimacy with my gran, I got to know her fears and desires, I lived in her world.

Through her letters I caught a glimpse of colonial Mozambique, then a paradise for its white settlers. Yet this paradise was hell or purgatory for others. Since my grandparents were left-wing, I did not find in these letters the brutal racism we know existed of black servants being sent to sepoys to be punished, but an

everyday racism 'served up' with tea and toast, '...among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me'<sup>1</sup>, inscribed in language and social organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, by T.S. Eliot



**DIRECTOR** CATARINA RUIVO

**CAST** RITA DURÃO, JÚLIA RUIVO, AUSENDA VITAL  
JOSÉ COELHO, GRAÇA BASTOS

**CINEMATOGRAPHY BY** JOÃO RIBEIRO, CATARINA RUIVO, IRMÃ LUCIA

**SOUND** ANTÓNIO PEDRO FIGUEIREDO, VASCO PIMENTEL  
NUNO CARVALHO

**PRODUCED BY** TRABALHOS DE CASA

**APOIO FINANCEIRO** ICA - INSTITUTO DO CINEMA E DO AUDIOVISUAL  
GRUPO JOÃO FERREIRA DOS SANTOS

**AWARDS** MELHOR LONGA-METRAGEM PORTUGUESA  
FESTIVAL INDIELISBOA 2019

MENÇÃO HONROSA, PRÉMIO ARVORE DA VIDA  
FESTIVAL INDIELISBOA 2019

**PORTUGAL, 2018, 1.33:1 , DCP, 173 MIN**

## Catarina Ruivo: Bio-filmography



Born in 1971 in Coimbra, Portugal, Catarina Ruivo studied at the Lisbon Theatre and Film School in 1995/1996, where she specialised in editing. She worked as an editor on a number of films, including 'Mal' (Venice Film Festival competition 1999) and 'The Girl with the Dead Hand' (Short Super-Short section of the 2005 Venice Film Festival), both by Alberto Seixas Santos, and 'The Policewoman', by Joaquim Sapinho (Panorama, Berlin International Film Festival, 2003).

Her first venture into filmmaking as a director was in 1998 with the short 'A Kind of Blue', which was selected for the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival. In 2004 she made her first feature film, 'André Valente'. The film was premiered at the Locarno Festival, where it won the FICC/IFFS's Don Quixote award, before going on to win a number of prizes at other festivals.

### Filmography

**2025** " Como é que te aguentas" ["Facing the Days"] feature film in post-production

Writer, director and editor

**2020/2021** "Boa Noite" ["Sleep Tight"] short film, 20 min

Writer, director and editor.

Premiere IndieLisboa International film festival, 2021.

Oberhausen international short film festival, International competition 2022



**2018** 'A Minha Avó Trelotótó' ['My Grandmother Trelotótó'] feature film, 174 min

Writer, director and editor

Premiere IndieLisboa international film festival, 2019 - **Award** for Best Portuguese Feature Film.

**2012** 'Em Segunda-Mão' ['Second Hand'] feature film, drama, 114 min

Writer, director and editor

Premiere IndieLisboa international film festival, 2012

Awarded the 2014 Sophia Prize by the Academia Portuguesa de Cinema for Best Actor in a Leading Role (Pedro Hestnes) and Best Actress in a Leading Role (Rita Durão)  
Globos de Ouro 2014 for Best Actor (Pedro Hestnes)

Nominated by the Sociedade Portuguesa de Autores for Best Film, Best Script and Best Actor

São Paulo International Film Festival, Brazil, 2012

Lima Film Festival, Peru, 2013

Sguardi Altrove Film Festival, Milan, Italy, 2014

Festival Peliculatina, Belgium, 2014

Lisbon & Estoril Film Festival, Portugal, 2015

Seoul Art Cinema, Portuguese Film Festival, South Korea, 2017

Commercial release 2013 in Lisbon and Porto

**2007** 'Daqui p'rá frente' ['From Now On'] feature film, drama, 97 min

Writer, director and editor

Rio de Janeiro Film Festival, Brazil, 2007 – Perspectiva Section –

Istanbul Internacional Meeting of Cinema & History Film Festival, Turkey - International Competition

Caminhos do Cinema Português, 2008, Portugal - **Award** for Best Film

Co-produced by Unité Fictions Arte, France

Screened on Arte France and Germany TV

Commercial release 2008 in Portugal

**2004** 'André Valente', feature film, drama, 71 min

Writer, director and editor

Locarno Festival, Switzerland, 2004 – International Competition - **FICC/IFFS Don Quixote award**

Gwangju International Film Festival, South Korea, 2004 – **Critics Award** and 'Young Cinema Jury Award'



Infinity Festival, Italy, 2005 – Official Selection – **Alba Cinema Award** for Best Director and **Signis Award** for Best Film

Belfort Entrevues International Film Festival, France, 2004 – Official Selection Competition

Festival d'Angers, France, 2005 – Premiers Plans – Official Selection

Montreal International Festival of New Cinema and New Media, 2004 – Official Selection

Viennale – Vienna International Film Festival, Austria, 2004

Torino Film Festival, Italy, 2005

European Film Festival, Warsaw, Poland, 2005

International Women's Film Festival, Rehovot, Israel, 2005

Released in Portugal in 2004

Released in France in 2005

Screened on Cinecinema (France)

**1998** 'Uma cerveja no Inverno' ['A Kind of Blue'], short film

Director and editor

Premiere at Vila do Conde Short Film Festival, Portugal

Selected for the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival, Germany.