



65th Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Forum

JOAQUIM PINTO / NUNO LEONEL

RABO

DE

*Director's
Cut*

PEIXE

A young fisherman struggles to carry on as decisive shifts in the oceans cause problems in his Azorean village, where fishing has long been a tradition and an essential livelihood.

PRESENTE



Rabo de Peixe

Synopsis

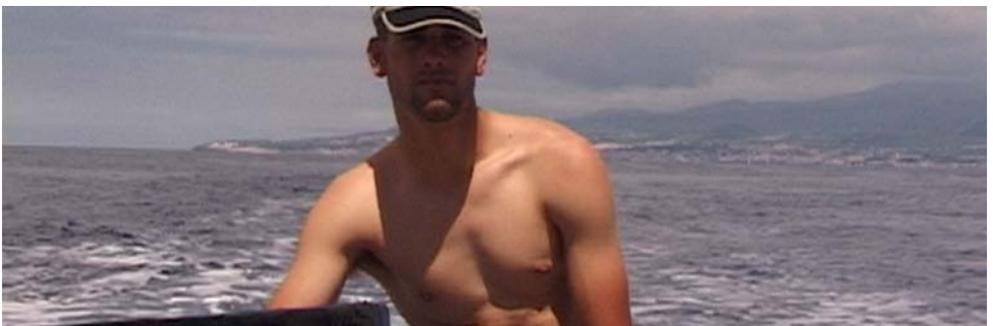
Global industrial overfishing has caused significant problems in the village of Rabo de Peixe in the Azores, where small-scale fishing has long provided a livelihood. This situation plunges Pedro, a young master fisherman, with a crisis in his professional life, over and above the inherent dangers of working at sea. Shot between 1999 and 2001, the film follows Pedro and his crew over a full year, chronicling their determination to remain free.

Director's note

Footage was originally shot with support of a public broadcaster in co-operation with fishing associations who were looking for a record of disappearing small-scale fishing methods and skills. Our approach was not well received and were asked to remove all scenes that according to them "gave a bad image of fishermen and fishing communities", as well as specific references to particular characters. A 55-minute version was then produced and broadcasted once by the Portuguese public television.

14 years later, industrial methods have replaced traditional fishing tackle, standardized labor relations have superseded the old communal organization of work and countless small open boats have given way to a small number of large, modern boats with electronic equipment. Even the topography has changed: Rabo de Peixe's small port has been destroyed and a huge structure intended for industrial fishing has been built with EU funding.

The scale of these changes made us want to re-edit the movie according to our original plan. Our new feature version is designed to do justice to the bravery of the young men depicted and their struggle to maintain a cherished tradition. Since filming, many have given up the sea, unwilling or unable to adapt to predatory industrial practices. Some have joined the ranks of the unemployed. Others have emigrated to America. A few are keeping up the fight for sustainable fishing.





In order to understand the framework of our shared experience with these fishermen, we quote a small text we wrote in 2000, before starting the yearlong shooting:

GENERAL OUTLINE

The recent United Nations report PACE (Pilot Analysis of Global Ecosystems), which is the result of the most ambitious project ever undertaken in relation to global ecosystems, discloses to an alarming extent how close we are to the breakdown of the various ecosystems.

Coastal/maritime ecosystems are deeply affected: fishing fleets exceed the oceans' sustained production capacity by 40%; trawling destroys large areas of the ocean bed. The declining volume in fisheries relating to more than one third of fish species will lead to very grave economic consequences for more than a billion people world wide.



CLOSE UP ON - THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

One of the threatened species is the Atlantic swordfish. In the sixties, the introduction of single lines of up to 60 kilometers in length, equipped with thousands of hooks at the depth of the sword-fish feeding grounds, taken together with highly sophisticated methods of fish detection are in large part responsible for this situation.



CLOSE UP ON - THE AZORES

Since 1960 the population of the Azores has been in decline, reaching the current figure of about 240,000. São Miguel, the largest island of the archipelago, is 65 Km long and 16 Km wide. The island is made up of two volcanic massifs separated by a central low altitude chain.

CLOSE UP ON - RABO DE PEIXE

The parish of Rabo de Peixe (meaning "Fish Tail") is situated on the island's northern coast. Its inhabitants' main activity is small-scale fishing, which is still carried on with the use of traditional methods. The lack of any harbor means that all boats must be beached. This involves hoisting them on to land after the working day. These open crafts have not been subject to much change during the last decades. The only improvement was abandoning sail in favor of motor engines some 20 years ago.

Rabo de Peixe's entire population involuntarily feels the huge effects of the drop in of Atlantic fish stocks, the causes of which are so clearly explained today. However full awareness of the situation continues confused, probably the result of lack of information. We regularly hear the blame for successive lean years' catches being attributed to simple bad luck.



English Title: **FISH TAIL**

Year: 2015

Country: Portugal

Language: Portuguese (English subtitles)

Duration 1h 43m

Format: DCP SMPTE

Language: Portuguese

Cinematography, sound, editing: Joaquim Pinto, Nuno Leonel

Production Presente Lda.



Filmography, biographies

Fim de Citação / End of Quote

89 minutes - 2013

O Novo Testamento de Jesus Cristo Segundo João The new Testament of Jesus Christ according to John

129 minutes - 2013

E Agora? Lembra-me / What now? Remind-me

156 minutes - 2013

Porca Miséria / Pig of a Story

4 minutes - 2007

Sol Menor

8 minutes - 2007

Com Cuspo e com Jeito se bota no cu do Sujeito

21 minutes - 1998

Entrevista com / Interview with Yvonne Bezerra de Mello

33 minutes - 1998

Surfavela / Surfavela

38 minutes - 1996

Schizophrenia (Nuno Leonel)

16 minutes - 1995

Para cá dos Montes (Joaquim Pinto)

26 minutes - 1993

Santa Maria (Nuno Leonel)

8 minutes - 1992

Das Tripas Coração / Twin Flames (Joaquim Pinto)

66 minutes - 1992

Onde Bate o Sol / Where the Sun Beats (Joaquim Pinto)

89 minutes - 1989

Uma Pedra no Bolso / Tall Stories (Joaquim Pinto)

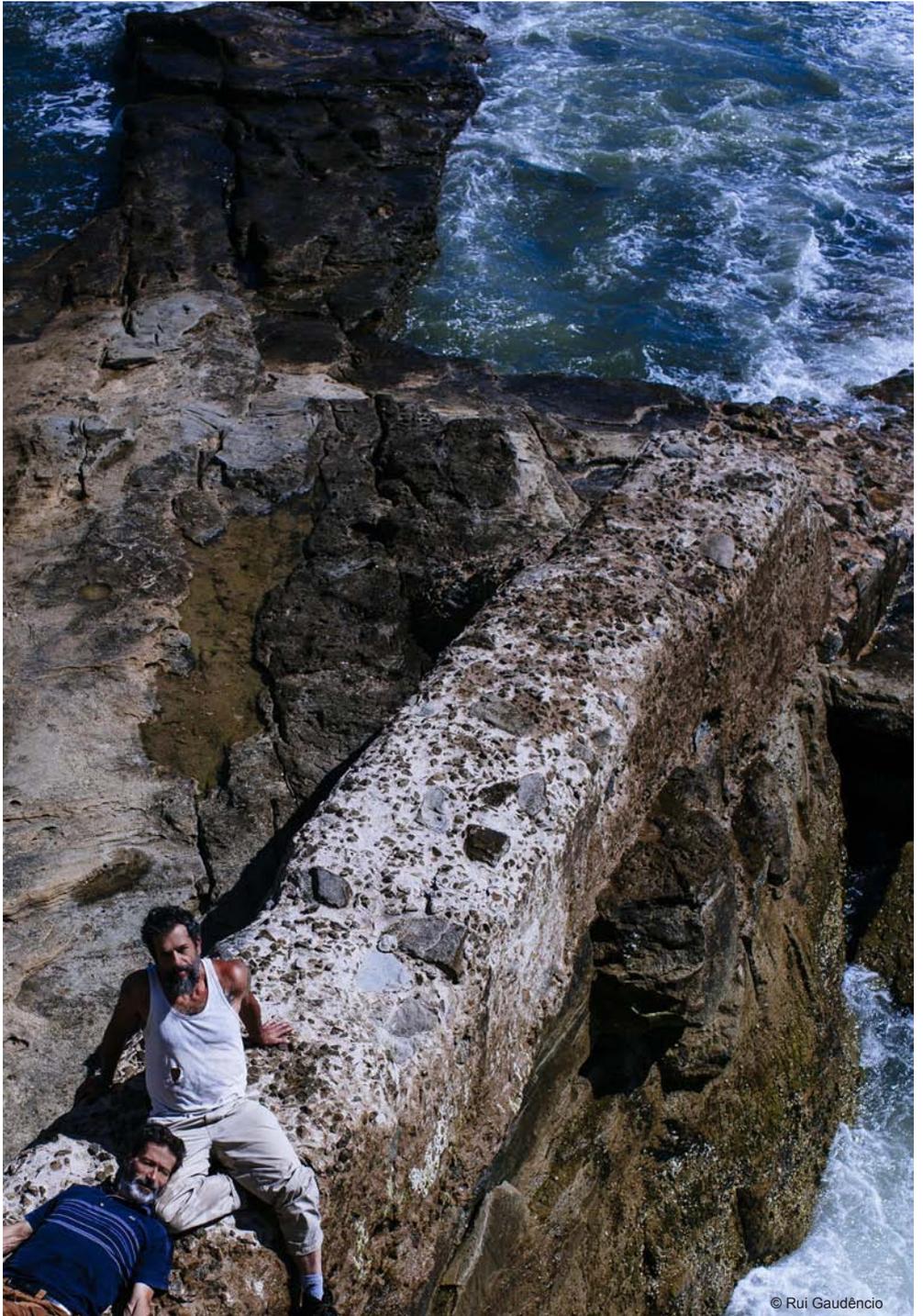
91 minutes - 1988

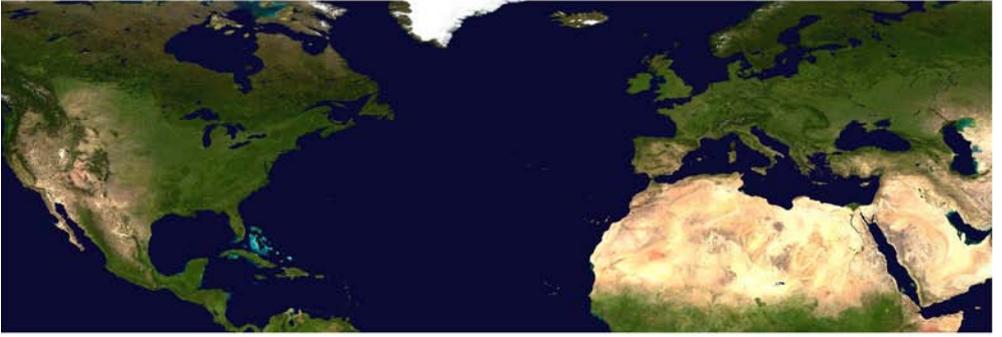


Joaquim Pinto was born in Porto, Portugal in 1957. He was sound mixer in more than 100 films in which he worked with directors such as Manoel de Oliveira, Raul Ruiz, Werner Schroeter and André Techiné. Between 1987 and 1996 he produced around 30 films, namely João César Monteiro's "Recollections of the Yellow House" and "God's Comedy", both awarded at the Venice Film Festival..

Nuno Leonel was born in Lisbon, Portugal in 1969. He did not attend film or art schools, but he started early at the age of 16 in film, and has worked as animator, rostrum operator, set designer, sound recordist and editor, electrician, actor, grip assistant and cinematographer.

Both have been making films together since 1996. Their recent film, "What now? Remind-me" (Special Jury Prize, Fipresci Prize, Locarno 2013), was screened in 34 countries. They also run an independent publishing company.





It is clear enough that one kind of work differs substantially from another by reason of something which has nothing to do with welfare, or leisure, or security, and yet which claims each man's devotion; a fisherman battling against wind and waves in his little boat, although he suffers from cold, fatigue, lack of leisure and even of sleep, danger and a primitive level of existence, has a more enviable lot than the manual worker on a production-line, who is nevertheless better off as regards nearly all these matters. That is because his work resembles far more the work of a free man, despite the fact that routine and blind improvisation sometimes play a fairly large part in it.

Simone Weil, Oppression and Liberty



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