

BERGAMO FILM MEETING

International Film Festival

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Animation cinema: *Gerações X\Y*

An overview of trends in Portuguese animation, through the eyes of some of the representatives of the new generations of animators.

Gerações X\Y is the title of the section dedicated to animation cinema at the 42nd edition of Bergamo Film Meeting. Unlike in previous years, this is not a retrospective on a single author but an overview of trends in Portuguese animation through the eyes of some of the representatives of the new generations of animators (Generations X and Y) whose complete filmographies will be featured. The valuable collaboration with Agência - Curtas Metragens C.R.L. has led to the identification of 6 authors who have been awarded at the Cannes, Annecy, Clermont-Ferrand, Zagreb and Busan festivals and who have received significant honours such as the Annie Award and the Academy Award. We are talking about **Marta Monteiro** (1973), the duo **Vasco Sá** (1979) and **David Doutel** (1983), **Alexandra Ramires** (1987), **Laura Gonçalves** (1988) and **João Gonzalez** (1996). Vasco Sá (1979) and David Doutel will be attending the Festival.

Since the early twentieth century, Portugal has been a point of reference for animation cinema, not only for the number of films produced but primarily because of the pioneering ability of its authors to exploit the versatility of language and explore the most innovative techniques: cut-out silhouettes, multiplanes, sand animation, up to the more recent experiments undertaken by authors such as Regina Pessoa, who was honoured by BFM in 2011. BFM offers an overview of the complexity and research carried out by young contemporary filmmakers: a tendency to combine the most disparate methods and materials that almost seem to be part of their very DNA. Mindful of an extremely heterogeneous past, they have pushed boundaries by also taking advantage of the possibilities offered by technological advancement.

But technique is not these authors' only strong point. What also emerges from their films is a consistency in composition and writing, always original and sometimes unpredictable, that keeps them engaging even after multiple views. Such concentrations of depth and skill have brought Portuguese animation to international recognition: *Ice Merchants* by João Gonzalez, for example. Among the youngest directors (28 years old) featured this year, in 2022 Gonzales was the first Portuguese animator to receive an award at the Cannes Film Festival. With an Oscar nomination the same year, he cemented the reputation of Portuguese animated cinema worldwide.

The resolution of these filmmakers is also noticeable in the emergence of collectives such as BAP - Animation Studio, founded and carried out by Vasco Sá, David Doutel, Laura Gonçalves and Alexandra Ramires (Xá): a group supporting the collective development of animation projects, and contributing to further diversity and innovation in the Portuguese film scene.

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The filmmakers

Marta Monteiro - (Portugal, 1973) graduated in Design from ESAP (1994), then in Fine Arts - Sculpture from FBAUP in 1999. Subsequently, she attended the Norwich University of the Arts as an Erasmus student, participating in workshops in animation, printmaking techniques and communication design. She has received many awards for illustration, including the Society of Illustrators of New York Gold Medal for the illustrated series *Little People* in 2014. Her approach to animation was self-taught, and her first animated short *Independência de Espírito (Independent Mind, 2011)* won the Audience Award at the Mostra Animation Festival in Lisbon in 2012 and the Honourable Mention (Premio António Gaio) at Espinho's Cinanima in 2011. Her latest film, *Cold Soup (2023)*, won the Grand Prix at the Vila do Conde International Short Film Festival in 2023.

Vasco Sá - (Porto, Portugal, 1979) spent the first eighteen years of his life in Trás-os-Montes (literally "Behind-the-Mountains"), developing a strong connection to his roots, before moving to Porto, where he earned a master's degree in Sound and Image from the School of Arts (UCP). There he met David Doutel, with whom he shared several award-winning projects nationally and internationally, most notably directing the short films *O Sapateiro (The Shoemaker, 2011)* and *Garrano (2022)* - which also won two nominations for Best Short Film at the Annecy Animation Festival in 2011 and 2022 - and *Agouro (Augur, 2018)*, which won the Grand Prize for Best Film at the Busan International Short Film Festival in 2019. In 2011, he began an ongoing collaboration with the production company Bando à Parte, both as producer and animator. He is one of the founders of BAP - Animation Studio, where he works as director and producer together with David Doutel. Currently, both are working on their first animated feature film, *UNA*.

David Doutel - (Porto, Portugal, 1983) graduated in Sound and Image from the School of Arts (UCP), specialising in Animation. Over the past ten years, he has intensified his work as a director, animator and production manager, collaborating both creatively and as a producer in the development of several short films that have been selected and awarded at international festivals. He pursued his career together with Vasco Sá, with whom he shares the direction of several animated short films, including *Fuligem (Soot, 2014)*, nominated for the Wooden Wolf Grand Prize at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival in 2014, and *Garrano (2022)*, nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival in 2023. He has been working with Bando à Parte since 2011 and, together with Vasco Sá, is the production manager and executive producer for several BAP - Animation Studio short films.

Alexandra Ramires (Xá) - (Portugal, 1987) graduated in 2010 from the Academy of Fine Arts in Lisbon. Her first foray into animation filmmaking was in 2009 for the production company Sardinha em Lata. In 2013, he moved to Porto to work within the animation studio of the production company Bando à Parte, where she is credited both in an artistic and technical capacity in several films by other authors. She is also a founding member of the BAP - Animation Studio collective, where she currently works on individual and collaborative projects. Co-directed with Laura Gonçalves, *Água Mole (Drop By Drop, 2017)* is her first film, which won the Gold Hugo at the Chicago International Film Festival in 2017. *Elo (Tie, 2020)* was Ramires' official directorial debut, which earned her the Gold Hugo in 2020 and the Sophia Awards for Best Animated Short in 2021.

Laura Gonçalves - (Belmonte, Portugal, 1988) completed the Art and Multimedia course at the Faculdade de Belas-Artes in Lisbon in 2009, and dipped her toes into animation as final artist and animator at the Sardinha em Lata studio. In 2012, she directed her first animated short film *Três Semanas em Dezembro (Three Weeks in December)* while completing her master's degree in Animation at the Arts University Bournemouth in Poole, UK. In 2013, she moved to Porto, where she began working at Bando à Parte as an animator and illustrator. In 2015, she co-directed the short film *Nossa Senhora Da Apresentação (Our Lady Of The Apresentação)* with Abi Feijó, Alice Guimarães and Daniela Duarte, produced by Curtas Metragens C.R.L. In 2017, together with Alexandra Ramires (Xá), she co-directed the animated short film *Água Mole (Drop By Drop)*. She currently works at BAP - Animation Studio, of which she is a founding member: here she directed her most recent animated short film, *O Homem Do Lixo (The Garbage Man, 2022)*, produced by Bando à Parte, nominated for Best Short Film at the Annecy Film Festival and winner of the Grand Prize at the Zagreb World Festival of Animated Films in 2022.

João Gonzalez - (Portugal, 1996) is a Portuguese filmmaker, animator, illustrator and musician with classical training in piano. A scholarship recipient from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, he earned a master's degree from the Royal College of Art in the United Kingdom after graduating from the Escola Superior de Media Artes e Design (ESMAD) in Portugal. Gonzales made two films here, *The Voyager* (2017) and *Nestor* (2019). In 2022, with the film *Ice Merchants*, he became the first Portuguese director of animated films to be honoured at the Cannes Film Festival, winning the award for Best Short Film in competition at La Semaine de la Critique. His most successful title so far, *Ice Merchants* also earned a nomination for the Oscar in the Best Animated Short category, as well as an Annie Award. In his filmography, Gonzales often combines his personal musical background with authorial animation, always taking on the role of composer and sometimes instrumentalist, occasionally accompanying his films with live performances.

Films of the section

Independência De Espírito/Independent Mind by Marta Monteiro, Portugal, 2011, 10'31"

O Sapateiro/The Shoemaker by David Doutel and Vasco Sá, Spain, Portugal, 2011, 12'02"

Três Semanas em Dezembro/Three Weeks In December by Laura Gonçalves, Portugal, 2013, 6'14"

Fuligem/Soot by David Doutel and Vasco Sá, Portugal, 2014, 13'40"

Nossa Senhora Da Apresentação/Our Lady Of The Apresentação by Laura Gonçalves, Portugal, 2015, 6'46"

Água Mole/Drop By Drop by Laura Gonçalves and Alexandra Ramires, Portugal, 2017, 9'44"

A Sonolenta/Sleepy by Marta Monteiro, Portugal, 2017, 10'13"

The Voyager by João Gonzalez, Portugal, 2017, 4'37"

Agouro/Augur by David Doutel and Vasco Sá, Portugal, France, 2018, 15'16"

Nestor by João Gonzalez, Portugal, United Kingdom, 2019, 6'

Elo/Tie by Alexandra Ramires, Portugal, France, 2020, 11'39"

Garrano by David Doutel and Vasco Sá, Portugal, Lithuania, 2022, 14'08"

Ice Merchants by João Gonzalez, Portugal, France, United Kingdom, 2022, 14'33"

O Homem Do Lixo/The Garbage Man by Laura Gonçalves, Portugal, 2022, 11'45"

Sopa Fria/Cold Soup by Marta Monteiro, Portugal, France, 2023, 9'51"

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