

SYNOPSIS

Life in a middle-class neighbourhood in present day Recife, Brazil, takes an unexpected turn after the arrival of an independent private security firm. The presence of these men brings a sense of safety and a good deal of anxiety to a culture which runs on fear. Meanwhile, Bia, married and mother of two, must find a way to deal with the constant barking and howling of her neighbour's dog. A slice of 'Braziliana', a reflection on history, violence and noise.

DOLBY
DIGITAL
Desenho Especial

TechniScope

Kodak
MOTION PICTURE FILM

estúdios
Quanta

MEGA

production

CinemaScópio

funding

FUNDECULTURA

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FUNDAÇÃO CULTURAL
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PAÍS RICO E PAÍS SEM POBREZA



TIGER AWARDS COMPETITION

INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM

2012

O SOM AO REDOR (NEIGHBOURING SOUNDS)

A FILM BY KLEBER MENDONÇA FILHO

Brazil / 124' / Colour / 2.35 Scope / 35mm & DCP / 2012

PRODUCTION

CinemaScópio
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CREW

DIRECTOR, SCREENWRITER	Kleber Mendonça Filho
PRODUCER	Emilie Lesclaux
CINEMATOGRAPHY & CAMERA	Pedro Sotero & Fabricio Tadeu
ART DIRECTOR	Juliano Dornelles
EDITORS	Kleber Mendonça Filho & João Maria
SOUND DESIGN	Kleber Mendonça Filho & Pablo Lamar
SOUND RECORDING	Nicolas Hallet & Simone Dourado
SOUNDTRACK	Dj Dolores
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	Clara Linhart
PRODUCTION MANAGERS	Brenda Da Mata & Renato Pimentel
CASTING	Daniel Aragão
ACTING COACHES	Amanda Gabriel, Leonardo Lacca
MAKE UP	Marcos Freire
COSTUME DESIGN	Ingrid Mata

CAST

IRANDHIR SANTOS	Clodoaldo
GUSTAVO JAHN	João
MAEVE JINKINGS	Bia
W.J. SOLHA	Francisco
IRMA BROWN	Sofia
LULA TERRA	Anco
YURI HOLANDA	Dinho
CLÉBIA SOUZA	Luciene
ALBERT TENÓRIO	Ronaldo
NIVALDO NASCIMENTO	Fernando
FELIPE BANDEIRA	Nelson
CLARA PINHEIRO DE OLIVEIRA	Fernanda
SEBASTIÃO FORMIGA	Claudio
MAURICÉIA CONCEIÇÃO	Mariá

O SOM AO REDOR

(NEIGHBOURING SOUNDS)

THE DIRECTOR

Kleber Mendonça Filho was born in 1968 in Recife, northeastern Brazil. He graduated in journalism and has worked extensively as a film critic and also as a film programmer in Recife's top alternative cinema, Cinema da Fundação Joaquim Nabuco. In the 90s, he made documentaries, experimental films and fiction as a videomaker. Over the last decade, his short films *A Menina do Algodão* (The Little Cotton Girl, 2003), *Vinil Verde* (Green Vinyl, 2004), *Eletrodoméstica* (2005), *Noite de Sexta Manhã de Sábado* (Friday Night Saturday Morning, 2006) and *Recife Frio* (Cold Tropics, 2009) have won over 100 awards in Brazil and abroad, with selections in Karlovy-Vary, BAFICI, Rotterdam (where a retrospective of his films was part of the 2007 programme), Rencontres Cinémas d'Amérique Latine de Toulouse, Indie Lisboa, Clermont-Ferrand and Cannes (Director's Fortnight). His first feature, the documentary *Crítico* (2008), focused on the troubled relationship between filmmakers and critics through a personal series of interviews recorded over a period of eight years. *O Som ao Redor* (Neighbouring Sounds) is his first fiction feature.

Filmography

Enjaulado (Caged In, 1997, Betacam, 33')
A Menina do Algodão (The Little Cotton Girl, 2003, Mini DV / 35mm, 6')
Vinil Verde (Green Vinyl, 2004, stills / 35mm, 16')
Eletrodoméstica (2005, 35mm, 22')
Noite de Sexta, Manhã de Sábado (2006, Friday Night, Saturday Morning, Mini DV / 35mm, 14')
Crítico (2008, Mini DV / 35mm, documentary, 75')
Luz Industrial Mágica (2009, HD, 10')
Recife Frio (Cold Tropics, 2010, HD / 35mm, 25')

ABOUT CINEMASCÓPIO

CinemaScópio is an independent production company from Recife, Brazil, originally created to produce Kleber Mendonça Filho's own films - the short films *A Menina do Algodão* (The Little Cotton Girl), *Vinil Verde* (Green Vinyl), *Eletrodoméstica*, *Noite de Sexta Manhã de Sábado* (Friday Night Saturday Morning), *Recife Frio* (Cold Tropics) and *Crítico*, a feature documentary. It has since become one of the most active production companies in Recife, working with several young and very talented local filmmakers, such as Leonardo Sette (*Ocidente, Confessionário*), Tião (*Muro* / Wall - award winning film at the Director's Fortnight - Cannes Film Festival), Daniel Bandeira (*Amigos de Risco* / Peer Pressure), Juliano Dornelles (*Mens Sana in Corpore Sano*, award winning short film in Locarno 2011) and Leonardo Lacca, whose first feature *Permanência* is currently in pre-production.

Emilie Lesclaux is a partner at CinemaScópio, where she has been working since 2005 as a producer and editor. She has worked on several award-winning short films like *Eletrodoméstica* and *Recife Frio* (Cold Tropics), by Kleber Mendonça Filho, *Muro*, by Tião, *Ocidente* and *Confessionário*, by Leonardo Sette. In 2008, she edited and produced a feature length documentary, *Crítico*, by Kleber Mendonça Filho, and in 2010, produced *O Som ao Redor* (Neighbouring Sounds). She is currently working on the feature project *Permanência*, by Leonardo Lacca.

She is also Head Producer and co-director of the Recife International Film Festival *Janela Internacional de Cinema do Recife*, one of the youngest, and already most respected film festivals in Brazil, championing independent, auteur cinema.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Recife, in the state of Pernambuco, is Brazil's fifth largest city, and it shares most of the problems common to large urban areas in the country, or in Latin America. Setúbal is the younger, quieter neighbour of Boa Viagem, the city's most expensive real state, an area now taken over by tall buildings of all shapes and sizes. Setúbal is a smaller, more family oriented urban neighbourhood. It is now the natural destination of developments in the new booming economy which don't find any room left for building in Boa Viagem. These are coastal neighbourhoods, benefiting from a good-looking urban beach, but a seaside cursed since the early 90s by a series of deadly shark attacks. Setúbal is the setting of *Neighbouring Sounds*.

Most of this film comes from notes on life happening just across the street, or right outside my window, or on the neighbour's roof. The peculiar tensions which make Brazilian society tick are also reflected in the weight and look of local architecture, which is chaotically eclectic.

The film has an underlining idea of straight lines and right angles on a widescreen 2.35:1 frame which limits characters and their movements as much as walls, gates, grates and doors do. To allow room for breathing, I opened up the shots generously.

This approach to filming architecture both as friend and enemy is present in some of my short films, especially 2005's *Eletrodoméstica*. In this film, one might be able to notice the tropical brightness of cement and concrete sharing screen space with the characters. In 2009's *Cold Tropics (Recife Frio)*, a completely different approach was taken (the film is a mockumentary) to address urban planning (or the lack of) in a city that, for all practical purposes, is becoming cold and impersonal. Architecture gone wrong is a nuisance, but extremely photogenic.

Neighbouring Sounds finds its heart in the human element as it tries to deal with everyday life in such an environment. We have a group of characters, men, women and children with their own inner and outer tensions. They are also part of a social landscape of masters and servants which may even look modern, but its very foundations are not.

These class relations are addressed not only in the way servants gain restricted access to the property of the masters (cars, houses, apartments), but also in the way the rich live out a paranoid life through the crippling fear of urban violence.

Fear is once again expressed as architecture, be it on the ugly designs of steel grates, gates, electric fences and high perimeter walls, or on remnants of a local history marked by late 19th century slavery which finds in the "quartos de empregada" (maid's room, still part of modern architectural design) an obvious sign of racism as hot, windowless traps.

As a final note, the sound. The very organic nature of life in such an environment seems to have so many different layers of sound at any time of day. They are not only cues to people living their lives in private, but also information about loneliness, joy, neurosis, happiness or fear, no matter how noisy a place can be, or how quiet.

Kleber Mendonça Filho

INTERVIEW

Excerpts from an interview conducted by Leonardo Sette with Kleber Mendonça Filho and published in www.revistacinetica.com.br. Translated from the original Portuguese version. April 2011.

How much of the script is autobiographical?

I think *Neighbouring Sounds* is about a certain state of mind, maybe a set of mood swings, which means it was hard to come up with a formal synopsis. My previous films might be divided into two categories, the ones that bring personal experiences (*Green Vinyl, Friday Night Saturday Morning*) and others which bring personal observations (*The Little Cotton Girl, Cold Tropics, Crítico*). In the end, it's actually the same thing, something impossible to separate so neatly. This mix of scenes I actually lived, or witnessed, or re-imagined through experience usually gives me a certain feeling of safety. The other day, a 70 plus year old friend said she only crosses the street these days holding hands with the traffic clown (ed: actors dressed up as clowns who educate pedestrians and drivers on the streets of Recife). I thought that was kind of funny, and so true to Recife, where car culture has reached an all time high with the booming economy. It's something I would probably use in a film.

These experiences are applied in the film to the idea of built spaces, places where you live in or places you'd rather not be, architecture as both a friend and enemy. It all leads, of course, to an idea of spaces as signs of a political struggle. I am not really sure, but I suspect the film probably comes from a certain political climate in Brazil over the last 10 years or so, and, consequently, in Pernambuco state. In a way, I believe that some of my films come as a sort of response to something that is bothering me. It has nothing to do with changing the world, but the opportunity to exercise a point of view.

I am very much interested in the perception that the idea of "rich" and "poor" is probably changing in my country, even if traces of the age old tensions in Brazilian society are still very much intact. Contempt and fear, muted anger and resignation through lack of education and Catholicism, or through the amazing mix of beliefs and religious practices that are so ingrained in Brazilian society.

How did writing the script come about?

It came fast. There was some expectation as to when I would stop making shorts and try making a feature. I was amused by these questions because I always worked hard making my films, and I did not particularly feel a feature length project would be a radically different experience. In fact, some of these themes had already come up in my short films, and it so happened that one day in 2008, I realised there was a deadline coming up for the script fund at the Brazilian Ministry of Culture for low budget features. I would have a week to write the script and send it away, and I did. The script poured out and I sent it. The best thing about the process was actually having those pieces of paper as a document, the plans for my film. It made it official, in a way. That first draft did not win, but I had some good feedback on it, kept adding details over the course of the following year and sent it again, and it won.

There was some expectation that you finally made a feature, wasn't there?

Yes. Like I said, there is always someone pushing you in a way. When I did video in the 1990s, people would ask "when are you going to do a real short film, in 35mm?". Then I did my 35mm short films and people would ask, "when are you going to do a feature?". Then I did *Crítico*, a documentary feature. "When are you going to do a real feature, like fiction?". I just think the feature came naturally, it took its time.

Would you describe the film as realistic?

I am interested in the intersection of a certain idea of "Cinema" and "the mundane". *Neighbouring Sounds* probably is "realistic", but at the same time, I would not be interested in making a realistic film for realism's sake. People's kitchens, living rooms and service areas, for instance, are very normal settings in people's lives, so I am not sure they should be shot, you know, "realistically". Maybe they deserve a "movie-movie" quality which, of course, is very hard to achieve. I love this aspect of films, and a lot of "realistic" films, to me, miss the point completely, because they seem to be so proud of shoving reality in your face, shaking the camera as if it was the first ever documentary hand-held shot shaken by Man, faking an idea of realism. I am not into that at all. My main point is to be truthful to an idea of reality, but to also shoot it like in the cinema, whatever that means. Sometimes, the classic cinema, sometimes, a genre cinema, but in a way that you will always recognize where you are. I like the idea of slapping reality around a little bit, kicking it in the teeth every now and then. I grew up, like most cinephiles of my generation, watching films by Joe Dante or John Carpenter on VHS, who shot very realistic genre films, often set in family houses and neighbourhoods. I find that very attractive, though *Neighbouring Sounds* could never claim to be anything remotely like their films.

You have been a critic and film programmer for more than ten years. Does that help you to envision where Neighbouring Sounds would be within current Brazilian cinema?

I could never really answer that question. My mind set right now is that of a filmmaker, and it is impossible to be objective about something that came out of intuition. Films are organic, alive. If this one is alive, it will walk with its own feet without much help from myself, except for all the hard work involved in making it, or maybe answering questions about it. Right now, I am in the position of not knowing much about my own film and its relation to the outside world. This is both amazing and terrifying.