

WITH FILMS CAME FREEDOM: *CINEGROUND*, MEMORY OF A PORTUGUESE QUEER CINEMATOGRAPHY FROM THE 1970^S

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ABSTRACT

Cineground (1975-78) was a Portuguese amateur film producer, founded during PREC (Ongoing Revolutionary Period) by artist Óscar Alves and filmmaker João Paulo Ferreira. Also revolutionary due to the approach of sexualities still criminalized in the 1970's, this project has shown that the true liberation of society would require the liberation of the individual body. This cinematography produced in Super-8, and characteristic of the particular social conditions of the format, addressed for the first time in Portuguese cinema gay, with the representation of the double life of homosexuals and the issue of coming out, and also *queer* subjects, due to the constant presence of the transvestite character. I suggest a discussion around transvestite performance as a possibility of transgression and denaturalization of normative norms of gender and identity, and a critique on the representation and visibility of LGBT people in cinema, which in the particular case of *Cineground*, becomes their vehicle of existence.

KEYWORDS

Amateur cinema; transvestite
performance; queer theory;
LGBT rights; *Cineground*.

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution, the independent and nonprofessional film producer *Cineground*, founded by plastic artist Óscar Alves and filmmaker João Paulo Ferreira (who died in 1995) did not respect the classic models of cinematography and much less the normative models of sexuality, showing that the true liberation of society would require the liberation of the individual body. Produced in Super-8, this filmography derives from the particular social conditions of a circuit of reduced economies, film societies (aka *cineclubs*) and creative solidarities, as well as the generalized spirit of direct civic action in the years following the April 25th 1974. An underground cinema at its core, it was limited to small entertainment halls in the capital (bars and nightclubs), places as marginal as the clandestine community it portrayed. With scarce means of production and a reduced technical team, *Cineground* was able to produce 9 known titles: *O Charme Indiscreto de Epifânia Sacadura* (1975), *Solidão Povoada* (1975) *Fatucha Super Star-Ópera Rock...Bufa* (1976), *Os Demónios da Liberdade* (1976), *Goodbye Chicago* (1978), *As aventuras e desventuras de Julieta Pipi ou o Processo Intrínseco Global Kafkiano de uma vedeta não analisado por Freud* (1978), and also *Trauma* (1976), *Tempo Vazio* (1977) e *Ruínas* (1978)), 3 movies from João Paulo Ferreira that are not available in any of the existing *Cineground's* archives and are believed to have been donated by the author to the Russian Cinematheque (neither Óscar Alves nor the two institutions who have the films from the producer, Cinemateca Portuguesa and Queer Lisboa Festival, have them in any format). The films portray sexualities classified in the 1970s as still deviant, and in the language employed, there is an appropriation of the negative stereotypes that would be attributed to them. While some of the titles seem politically engaged, in the case of João Paulo Ferreira's, others raise questions for reflection, in the case of Óscar Alves', which address the dual life of Portuguese homosexuals, the "coming out of the closet issue" and the social marginality that came along with it. *Cineground* reflects the ambiance and the era in a "unique and unrecognizable way for the mainstream" and portrays a gay and lesbian *milieu* that had been built in Lisbon since the previous decade and which was becoming more expressive in the country, as well as its popular circuit of bars and shows, especially in the geography of Bairro Alto and Príncipe Real. The bars *Bric a Brac*, the *Classico ma non troppo*, *Travestol* and *Scarllatty Club*, where the transvestite show begins to assert itself, were amongst the most famous places (Cascais 2007, 152). Thanks to *Cineground*, gay and *queer* lifestyles were first introduced to Portuguese cinema. The queer subject is present in the ever ambivalent representation of sexuality by the transvestite character, a distinctive landmark of this cinematography (*Cineground* starred famous transvestite celebrities of the day such as Belle Dominique, Guida Scarllatty and Lydia Barloff, and amongst the 6 available titles, there

is only one of them which does not include transvestite performances. The naturalization of gender and sex as a form of political control and social organization was particularly felt in the previous decades of dictatorial repression, where institutions were in the realm of state ideology. Family as a natural institution and especially the church, became the target of “fake morality”, mostly visible in *Fatucha Superstar*, which insists on “unmasking” the fallacies of the Catholic Church and to show how social conventions became the norm. Although Portuguese society was under ideological construction and there was a predisposition to novelty in the context of post-April 25th / PREC, the criminalization of non-normative sexualities remained unquestioned. *Cineground’s* films are the product of a restricted circle, expressions of the existing and possible culture of an invisible community and their marginalized experiences.¹ The presence of transvestism, justified by the filmmakers as a trend of the time, becomes a possibility of transgression because the transvestite enjoyed a public freedom that a gay man did not have.

This essay is a reflection on the body as a component of visual culture, and the processes of identification around gay culture and the transvestite body present in the work of *Cineground*. The resources used in the “ethnographic reconstruction” of the film producer were filmography, film reviews and articles taken from press documentation of the time, and interviews with its agents² using the methodology of photo-elicitation³ with film frames. Judith Butler’s Queer Theory and Performativity Theory was the theoretical basis chosen for this study, as a place for challenging hegemonic forms of thinking and power and its rigid models of existence, whilst also recognizing the involvement of subjects in the processes of power which affect them, and thus allowing “to turn power against itself in order to produce alternative forms of power” (Butler 1993, 241).

1. See in this regard João de Pina Cabral (1996, 2000), *A difusão do limiar: margens, hegemónias e contradições na antropologia contemporânea*, and Susana Pereira Bastos, *O Estado Novo e os Seus Vadios* (1997, 136), on the social representation of marginals during Estado Novo. In this title, the author surveyed the “established criteria” that would lead marginals to be considered a social danger, and that as a result of the “elites” speech, would be confined in specific spaces for their status (prostitutes, homosexuals, beggars and the mentally ill). The July 1912 Criminal Code Act defined a category of “vagrant” that applied to homosexuals. The “strategy of detachment” shows the part of elites “in the construction of deviant identities”. (in *Revista Antropológicas*, n°1, 1997).

2. Interviews were conducted with the following agents: producer Óscar Alves, and actors Domingos Machado, Domingos Oliveira and Carlos Ferreira; and Antonio Fernando Cascais, an academic, who conducted the first study and dissemination of *Cineground’s* estate through its introduction in the Queer Lisboa Festival.

3. See Annex B for movie frames.

GENDER PERFORMATIVITY AND TRANSVESTITE PERFORMANCE

According to P. Raposo, performance can be described in a generic way as a “way of communicating whose essence demarcates an act of expression (meaning / meaning and form)”, requiring the “awareness of it and its doers”) and the existence of “an audience” (Raposo 2010, 78). It has, like other human activities, a “place” and a social and / or cultural function (Ibid., 79). The “situation of performance” provides a sense of freedom that Durkheim describes as “collective effervescence” and exemplifies with the production of new symbols and meanings through public action. In this frame of thought, behaviors and actions once considered contaminated or promiscuous, become the focus of postmodern analytical attention (Turner 1987, 6 e 7). Turner adds that while social life obeys an order that tends to be reinforced by ritual, symbolic frames operate simultaneously with areas of ambiguity and indeterminacy, amenable to manipulation, the “cultural imperatives” themselves require adjustments and interpretations. Turner sees man as a “self-performative” animal, in the sense that being his performances reflexive, he reveals himself through performance in two different ways: the “actor” can get to know himself better through representation or performance, just as a group of human beings can get to know each other better by observing or participating in performances produced by other groups; performances can also distinguish themselves between social (including social dramas) and cultural performances (including “aesthetic or stage dramas”) (Ibid., 10). In some cultural practices we may find spaces of power re-articulation, either racial or sexual, where appropriation of hegemonic forms of power occurs and fails to repeat the “loyalty” to these hegemonies, producing, instead, new possibilities of signification that go against their original discriminatory purposes (Turner 1987, 140). With *Gender Trouble* (1990) Judith Butler ushered a new era in gender studies. Defending a discontinuity between sex and gender, and questioning the sexual categories of “man” and “woman,” the author shook identity politics at the genesis of the feminist movement and laid the foundations for the construction of the queer theory. Butler’s greatest innovation lies in the notion that normative sexuality, defined by the biological sex, also strengthens gender normativity and that it is precisely in sexual practice that one finds the power to destabilize gender (Butler 1990/2017, 22). The most fracturing idea of this work is the theory of gender performativity, according to which gender operates as an “anticipation” of an inner essence whose construction happens as a “revelation”, expected and authorized by social norms (Ibid.). Gender is performative because what we take as the inner essence is actually “fabricated” through a set of bodily acts that through repetition and ritual lead to gender naturalization (Ibid.) The transvestite and drag shows are the example that the author uses to explain this constructed and performative dimension of gender, in which before a man dressed as

a woman, the perception is that “man” is the reality of gender, lacking reality to the gender introduced by comparison, the woman (Ibid., 36). Drag may look like a pretense reality and be easily taken as mere artifice (Ibid.) However, the meaning of this “gender reality” is less evident when one thinks about trans bodies, and it is here that the destabilization of norms occurs because our cultural or decorous perceptions are not sufficient to perceive the bodies we see (Ibid., 37). This consciousness about the limits of the naturalized gender knowledge opens room for questioning and transforming the idea of “gender reality”, leading us to think about its possibilities. Although drag performance does not hold a subversive quality in itself, the way in which it deconstructs “on stage” common assumptions of gender and sexuality, attributing them originality, reveals the performative nature of the “original acquired”, heterosexual model. Parody can be interpreted as a resistance strategy to prove that gender and sexuality are not organized in terms of “original” and “imitation”, but rather that both exist, as possibilities of performance (even if regulated). Years later, in *Bodies that Matter*, Butler (1993, 123) develops the idea that it is precisely the production of the terms sex, gender, and identity in the context of power regimes that makes it imperative to repeat them in “languages” and directions that relocate their original (normative) goals. According to the author, political agency cannot be isolated from the power dynamics in which it is forged. Performativity – Butler explains – becomes, by its iterative quality, a “theory of agency” in which power is a condition of its very existence (Butler 1990/2017, 39). In a similar way, the enactment of female identity through traditional stereotypes with the aim of subverting and parodying, typical of transvestite shows, also shows resistance to / appropriation of / the “language imprisonment” (in regards to the available speeches) (Amaral, Macedo and Freitas 2012, 11). By exposing the categories of sex, gender, and desire as effects of a specific power formation, Butler approaches Foucault’s critique, which the author calls “genealogy” (Ibid., 45). The genealogical critique analyzes what is politically at stake when organizing categories of identity as a source and cause, when they are in fact, in the author’s opinion, the effects of institutions, practices and discourses (Ibid., 46). Foucault rejects the construction of sex as univocal (sex makes a person) and elaborates a theory around sexuality in which sex is seen as an effect rather than the origin (Ibid., 202). Sexuality is presented as an open and complex historical system of power discourses in which the term sex is produced as part of a strategy that hides and perpetuates power relations (Ibid.).

Foucault’s “discursive construction of the subject” originated in Althusser’s doctrine of interpellation, according to which the social subject would be produced through the language conveyed by the Ideological

State Apparatuses (ISA)⁴ (Althusser 1971, 46 e 47). In Althusser, as in Foucault, subjection is part of the process of construction of the social subject, it happens in the recognition and acceptance of the language of authority, that results from the indoctrination by the ISA. Butler's critique of the first author focuses on the absence of the reasons that lead individuals to accept the subordination and normalization that this authoritarian state discourse presupposes, suggesting that "the theory of interpellation may need a theory of consciousness" (Butler 1997, 5). This idea is illustrated by law enforcement: by alerting the subject he becomes aware of his situation of transgression, and the reprimand not only works to repress or control the individual, but also contributes to their social and legal formation (Butler 1993, 121). Through this process of rebuke, the subject not only acquires visibility within the social structure, but when transferred to a possible external and questionable state, comes into existence in discourse (Ibid.). This process leads the author to question other ways of "being constituted by law" without it implying obedience and an interdependence between the power of rebuke and the power of recognition. Seeking to overcome Althusser's concept of "bad subjects", Butler explains that interpellation can lead to disobedience, where the law is not only rejected but fractured, forcing a re-articulation of the law (Ibid., 122). The expected uniformity and conformity of the subject may give rise to a refusal of the law in the form of "parodic coexistence of conformity" that will question the legitimacy of the established order (Ibid.). The result will be a re-articulation of the same law against the authority of the one who decrees it, a repetition (Ibid.). After being given "a name" that situates him in discourse and over which he had no choice, the subject builds his own through the questioning of others, and cannot be extracted from the historicity of the current that was built around him by others. The subject's agency then occurs in this belonging to the power relations to which he tries to oppose. In short, and still regarding the relationship between drag performance and subversion, the drag-triggered space of ambivalence allows us to reflect on the implication of individuals in the power regimes that constitute them and to which they (simultaneously) oppose. Drag is subversive in the sense it allows us to contemplate the imitative structure upon which sexual production itself depends and to question the claim to the naturalness and originality of heterosexuality (Butler 1993, 125).

4. "What distinguishes the ISA from the (repressive) State Apparatus is the following fundamental difference: the Repressive State Apparatus "works through violence", while the ISA function [...] in a massively prevalent way through ideology, while functioning secondarily through repression, and this is greatly attenuated, concealed or even symbolic (there are no purely ideological apparatuses). Thus the school and the churches "educate" by the appropriate methods of sanctions, exclusions, selections, etc., not only their officiators, but also their sheep. Thus the Family... Thus the ideological cultural apparatus (censorship, for instance), etc (Althusser 1971, 46 e 47).

When it comes to body depictions, the symbolic hierarchies that exist in societies, are also reflected in cinema, through a selection of what can and cannot be seen (MacDougall 2006, 19). This explains why the most varied bodily experiences are absent or treated with extreme discretion and the functional (or transgressing) body systematically “sanitized”, as determined by cultural and social practices (Ibid.). The first appearances of LGBT characters in cinema come from the early twentieth century, in which sexuality would not be yet assumed but rather suggested through performance. One exception was the private recording of Austrian director Richard Oswald, *Anders als die Andern* (Unlike Others) (1929), considered to be one of the first gay-themed films in film history and deemed destroyed by Nazi censorship (Bessa 2007, 280). Featuring the contribution of sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, the film was intended to challenge *Paragraph 175* of the German penal code which criminalized homosexual relations, by offering a portrait of homoerotic sociability during the Weimar Republic (Ibid.). In the aftermath of World War I, governments throughout the western world began to develop mechanisms for policing public morality that extended to cinema (Nowell-Smith 2017, 75). While national censorship commissions were widespread in European countries, in the US the large scale film industry attempted to self-regulate through what became known as the Hays Code (1934-1962) (Ibid., 76). The approach to LGBT characters was subliminal or “derogatory” as this was a time of censorship and “moral commitment”.⁵ Due to this scrutiny, sexuality in cinema, especially during the 1930s-50s, would be “more suggested than assumed”, a scenario that would only change with the social revolution of the 1960s (Rocha and Santos 2014, 1). From this decade onwards, the previously forbidden or veiled social themes start taking part of the narrative in the most varied filmographies, where LGBT characters and their lifestyles have been displayed as part of complex structures, along with issues of class, ethnicity or religion. On mainstream culture it’s Pedro Almodóvar’s cinematography that, since the 1980s, has attracted the most attention, with its intricate plots that often revolve around LGBT identities (Ibid., 10). The 1990s bring new conflicts and a greater variety of representations in the field of sexuality. There is a proliferation of gay, lesbian and also LGBT film festivals (the first edition of an LGBT festival would happen in 1977, the *Frameline Film Festival* in San Francisco (Bessa 2007, 257), and in the 2000s there was a definite “come out” for a multitude of commercial and independent filmographies that took

5. Developed by Will Hays, a republican politician founder of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA) (and supported by religious institutions and other civil society organizations), this document was intended to “protect” American society from the negative effects of cinema through the censorship of content such as nudity, adultery, drug use, among others, that were considered as “morally repugnant”. In addition to those themes that could still be “masked”, a ban was applied to any depictions of racial miscegenation, homosexuality, or parody of religious figures (Rocha and Santos 2014, 2).

into account the different identities and the complexity of existing subjectivities (Rocha and Santos 2014, 13). In contemporary cinema, especially since the 1970s, the transvestite has become a commonplace for both drag and queer cultures, and the usual distinction between “queer and straight representations” was no longer easily cataloged as negative or positive. Alongside mainstream cinema and before the advent of the new queer cinema, cult and avant-garde films also offered some audiences, often selective and / or marginal, similarly to *Cineground’s* case, less socially and sexually veiled views of the transvestite and drag characters, in which cross-dressing was seen more as a lifestyle than as a pathology (Grossman 2015, 4).⁶ In this genre there is Ed Wood’s autobiographical *Glen or Glenda* (1953), or John Waters’ controversial underground classic *Flaming Creatures* (1963), a filmography that was banned from the mainstream cinema circuits and is responsible, along with Andy Warhol’s factory, for publicizing numerous transvestite and drag-queen characters, including the popular *Divine*, Waters cult figure starring in titles such as *Multiple Maniacs* (1970), *Pink Flamingos* (1972) or *Female Trouble* (1974). Transvestism became, in this context, not only a synonymous for *camp*⁷ culture, but a true embodiment and celebration of deviance and political marginality (Ibid. 4). It is also in this underground cinematography that *Cineground*, as the name itself implies, is most inspired and with which it identifies more, what seems visible in its aesthetic and also (in a certain way) political identity. A *queer* reading proposes repositioning the “narratives” outside the boundaries of normativity, as defined by the basic premises of *queer theory* (that challenges narrow categories of gender and sexuality) (Dhaenens, Van Bauwel and Biltreyst 2008, 335 and 336).

The shift of focus from individuals to the social and political context within gender and sexuality studies, derived from the social constructionism paradigm, also had its impact on film studies, in particular with the work of some feminist critics who began, from the 1970s onwards, deconstructing the “masculine look” in visual arts (Laura Mulvey (1975) and Teresa De Lauretis (1984; 1987) stand out among the most significant contributors. Studies on queer representation also began to consider the role of the audience in constructing the meaning of the argument, where before textual determinism predominated in film theory in general. The contribution of cultural studies argued that the viewers would have an active and transformative action, and that the

6. Some of the films featuring transvestite characters between 1900 and 1960 include: Harold Lloyd in *Spitball Sadie* (1915), Charlie Chaplin in *Busy Day* (1919), *The Masquerader* (1914), *Perfect Lady* (1913); Fay Tincher in *Rowdy Ann* (1919) or Billy Wilder in *Some Like it Hot* (1959) (Grossman 2015, 1).

7. See Susan Sontag (1966/2018, 1), *Notes on “Camp”*, in which the author presents a reflection on the concept of camp, “It is not a natural mode of sensibility, if there is any such. Indeed the nature of Camp is its love for the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration”.

order within the film, regardless of a specific meaning of identity, class, sex, ethnicity or nationality, could be perceived in a different “textual order” by different viewers, matching the plurality of interpretations with the plurality of the audience (Dhaenens, Van Bauwel and Biltereyst 2008, 339). As MacDougall (2006, 16) points out about the place of the body in cinema, “representations of experience immediately create new experiences in their own right”. Also reflecting on the place of sensory experience in cinema, author Laura U. Marks (2000, 138) proposes a form of cinematic representation that relates the world of mimesis / imitation with the world of symbolic representation. Through the process of mimesis, a relationship created between the viewer and the object allows a coexistence between the experience of reality and the forms of symbolic representation that result from the production of signs about that reality (Ibid., 139). The processes of identifying that result from this production of signs or symbolic representation are, in turn, invoked in queer cinema studies, which explore how representations can limit the possibilities of existence, but also constitute a locus of agency. Although not all individuals identify themselves with the available identity categories, no one lives outside society and the network of representations in which they find themselves, allow them to act on the circumstances of their social representation and react to the negative images that limit them (Dyer 1993, 3). A central characteristic in the representation of LGBT people is that their sexual identity is “not visible”, there is rather a set of signs, behaviors and iconographies that are associated with them (Ibid., 20). This is the only way to “make the invisible visible”, that is, the basis for the representation and visual recognition of the LGBT people, which on the other hand requires a typification, which being limiting, is also necessary for the representation of LGBT individuals in social, political, practical and textual domains (Ibid.).

In recent decades, concerns about categorization in human societies has shown that sexual categories are historically specific and new. At a political level, these categories have been redefined by the LGBT community itself, and it is common to see an attempt to depathologize non-normative sexualities, shifting the category of homosexual from people to acts (Ibid., 21). Since typification takes place in the realm of available definitions, the creation of gay and queer subcultures (which were the basis of the early movements) emerged as a way of resisting the negative implications of categories, as a way of life that could be recognized in the context of a total culture. What is considered the most important result in this typification is the semiotic identification, the possibility of meeting amongst members of a group. In cinema, the representation of homosexual desire is translated into the production of cultural texts that facilitate the recognition of LGBT characters (Ibid., 22). As a style, sexual comedy is one of the artistic forms (alongside with

the horror genre), where ambivalence about male sexuality is more common, as an “authorized” form of expression to explore dubious and difficult aspects of social life (Dyer 1993, 114). Its potential lies in the fact that by seeking to become popular, it pays attention to the contradictory nature of human attitudes and behaviors, appealing to a wide range of audiences and preferences (Ibid.). In the case of the transvestite character, the fact that there is a man in women’s clothing elicits an immediate comic effect because it is “incongruous” with gender roles. This is a formula used to elicit laughter from Shakespeare’s plays to modern cinema (examples are *Some Like it Hot* (1959), *Tootsie* (1982) or *Mrs. Doubtfire* (1993)). While the “demotion” of the male performer undergoes in cross-dressing allowing for a controlled show of superiority, the performance opens up a possibility for gender role scripts to be re-defined. In short, the dichotomous gender policing by the ruling order is maintained in these films, but the transvestite offers, nonetheless, a liberating quality, when the disguise with which it appropriates and manipulates gender conventions is intended to break with these same conventions, giving the viewer conflicting information about sexual identification and the rules of sexual determination.

CINEGROUND (1975-1978)

The Super-8 circuit, in which *Cineground* fits, would not intersect with large scale cinema in Portugal, and *Cineground*’s own production conditions mirror the particular social characteristics of this type of cinema. This format, still used today by some filmmakers especially due to aesthetic and technical preference, gave rise to a first moment of “democratization and massification” of filmmaking in the 1960s, as it offered the ordinary citizen an “affordable” way to make cinema (albeit always expensive, and with users mostly from upper and middle class) (Neves 2007, 1). The 9mm film and the central perforation was followed by the 8mm, and with Super-8⁸ the distribution of small cameras also came to Portugal. The path of possibilities and the transformation of mentalities achieved with the Revolution has brought a generation of new talents, with greater cinematic and interventional concern. The development of structures alongside the “democratization of images and words” attracted more enthusiasts and by the end of the 1970s the FPCA (Portuguese Amateur Film Federation, now the Portuguese Film and Audiovisual Federation) would have over 70 registered film societies (Ibid.). *Cineground* would take part, in the words of journalist, writer and filmmaker António Loja Neves, “in the memorial collection of our lands and on the development of our society” (Ibid., 7). This way of looking at Super-8 as a “professional” film format was embraced by João Paulo Ferreira, author

8. Technical detail: The film is 8mm wide, exactly the same as the old standard 8mm, and has also single-sided perforations, but its perforations are smaller, allowing for an increased exposure of the film, and therefore a better image quality.

and collaborator of *Cineground*, who remained in the making until the late 1980s (becoming, in the meantime a prominent director of this format in Portugal), and by Óscar Alves, visual artist and his production partner. Jean Cocteau's staging and Andy Warhol's cinematography, in particular because of his use of transvestite characters in *Flesh* (1968),⁹ are cited as the main inspirations, along with their common fascination for the seventh art. Broadcasted by the National Radio-Television network, RTP1, in 1975, Warhol's filmography featured unusual content for Portuguese television at the time. The type of cinema, as its name implies, was also inspired by this author's underground style:

It was the Post-April 25th, censorship was over, the police didn't know what to do, the Church tried to get involved [unsuccessfully, as Óscar would explain later]. We started the company and started writing and making the movies. [...] João Paulo wanted to make a line of films for the left, for Russia, Eastern countries... I never wanted to be a politician... Not that I was right-winged, I have always been a leftist but I'm not interested in any political affiliation... The themes were decided individually, but we respected each other choices.¹⁰

The creation of the producer resulted naturally from the coexistence and convergence of interests of a group of friends:

I had a famous restaurant at the time, me and others, called *Guess who's coming for dinner* and we'd always meet there. In Alcântara, where Herman's restaurants are today, Herman [a well-known Portuguese TV celebrity] bought the place later. One of my partners had a garage next door and we used the garage as a studio. It was very hard... Even today I look back and it seems impossible for me the way we sorted things out... with amateur projectors, we crafted everything, with everything to serve [...] We built the scenarios, the props, wardrobe... Let's say it was mostly I who built everything. J. P. Ferreira had no way for that kind of task, poor guy [...] he did the editing, sound though [...] He had a way with that, although it was as rudimentary as possible. We bought the stuff, spent a lot of money, it costs a lot of money to make movies, it was very hard! It was the only portable format, there was no other. I still have those cameras stored somewhere. But God forbid, it was expensive! Already at the time, we ran out of savings.¹¹

9. Although the argument was discussed by Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey, Warhol's collaborating filmmaker and studio, The Factory, *habitué*, the film was made solely by Morrissey (who made the story into a trilogy: *Flesh*, followed by *Trash* (1970) and *Heat* (1972)). Inspired by real-life characters and events, the story unfolds around a bisexual prostitute played by Joe Dallessandro, and marks the cinematic debut of "marginal characters" who would be a regular cast in Warhol's filmmaking, such as transvestites Candy Darling and Jackie Curtis and stripper Geri Miller. In: Gary Comenas (2002/2015). warholstars.org.

10. Personal interview with Óscar Alves, 28th March 2014.

11. Personal interview with Óscar Alves, 28th March 2014.

João Paulo Ferreira was in charge of post-production, sound, assembly and editing. According to Óscar Alves calculations, during its active years *Cineground* had no more than 40 collaborators (among “technical staff” and actors), 50% of which have passed away already.

They were my friends. I was like, “Do you want to star in the movie?” “Ah! Of course!”. Then a group started to gather. There was a goodwill back then, a goodwill that I think would be hard to find today... No one got a penny, you know? There was a small revenue from a movie that I distributed to all of them. But it was a ridiculous thing, two or three cents each.¹²

Domingos Machado (Belle Dominique) explains that his first contact with *Cineground* was made through his fellow-soldier Domingos Oliveira (another actor) during the Colonial War in Angola.¹³ Domingos Oliveira was an acquaintance of director Óscar Alves, who suggested the collaboration of Domingos Machado in the second title of the producer, *Solidão Povoada*, 1976. The “goodwill” that characterized this medium is a common observation in the reports of the producer’s various actors: the cast was formed among friends, the filming locations were often “someone’s place”, the scenarios were made from recycled materials, all taking into account their limited resources, alike other projects that were being made in this format. Filmmaker Vítor Silva, a professional colleague of João Paulo Ferreira’s, says that this way of working would make one think about a certain “collectivism”, a “teamwork promoted by Super-8, which did not happen with 8mm, whose crafting was more individualistic” (Loja Neves 2007, 15). During conversations with *Cineground* agents, it was common to reference J. P. Ferreira’s filmography as “politically engaged” and “technically audacious”. This opinion seems to be shared by António Cunha, also a filmmaker and co-worker of J. P. Ferreira:

He did not want to make films “for cinema” [...] He was a *cinophile* above all. He was able to subvert all this tendency of seriousness which characterized filmmaking back then. Soon after April 25th, he and a group of friends, mainly Óscar Alves and Domingos Oliveira, formed *Cineground*. They would make films with unthinkable subjects for their time: transvestites, homosexuals, extremely interesting and important films where these subjects were approached with great humor. In *Fatucha Superstar...* we could see the Holy Mary hanging from an olive tree, wearing boots and a plastic suit preaching: “This is where I will start my fight. I’m going down there and I’ll be a whore!” They were very homosexuality-oriented films, made with great seriousness. There was no commitment with “lowliness,”... although, for me, they used it remarkably and with a great sense of humor (Loja Neves 2007, 16).

12. *Ibid.*

13. Although there is no room to explore the subject in this article, I think it is important to note that the first public appearance of Domingos Machado as a transvestite took place in the army, in 1973’s Luanda, in the context of a military barrack Christmas party, during the Colonial War

Regarding *Cineground's* screening locations, Óscar Alves refers to the bar *Classico ma non troppo* as the “great host” of his filmography, inside of which some scenes from the first feature film, *Solidão Povoada* (1976) were shot, in particular this one scene when transvestite Belle Dominique sings a French song. The owner of the place, a friend of the filmmakers’ went as far as to “buying a screen for *Cineground's* creations and to broadcast them continuously”. In a review from critic Lauro António in the magazine *Isto é Espectáculo*, from September 1976 issue, there is the following piece about this first work of the producer:

Cineground is similar to *underground*. The cameras are super eight but the schemes and purposes move away from the amateur cinema that is usual to see in the festivals regularly organized by these collectives... Facing the taboos and taking them courageously, this is what seems to appear in S. P. which addresses the issue of homosexuality. Addressing the issue of homosexuality is in itself an act of courage when the trivial thing to do is to relegate the case to the list of traumas, forbidden subjects, pious forgetfulness. And yet homosexuality does exist... S. P. merely tells a love story... Marginalized by society but still a love story (António 1976, 66).

Another critic, José de Matos-Cruz (1982, 100), leaves only a small review to this production, in an edition of the *Portuguese Institute of Cinema* about the *April Years in Portuguese Cinema*: “The homosexual tendencies of a certain bourgeoisie, and the commitment with society”. For O. Alves, *Solidão Povoada* (title taken from a poem by Pablo Neruda) was a symbolic work, a “statement” and an “achievement”:

I was making a protest [...] The film depicts several cross-relations, aiming to criticize the... I don't mean heterosexuality, but the family institution! The lack of tolerance even coming from women, who had a hard time accepting this reality back in the day...¹⁴

Also in this production, there is the first scene of full rear nudity ever recorded in Portuguese cinema, played by the amateur actor Domingos Oliveira, a youngster newly arrived in the capital after the Colonial War:

We have a scene with Domingos sitting naked on a rock, we had nowhere to shoot and we went to Monsanto [a park near Lisbon]. All of a sudden there was a platoon from G.N.R. (National Republican Guard) coming to arrest us. But in what grounds? We were free to do whatever we wanted... so they left.¹⁵ [Domingos Oliveira intervenes] No, actually the team stayed there until the end! I got off the rock completely naked, I don't know how to react to danger. What one of the guards said was that they had received a complaint about prostitution and pornographic films... but the police didn't know what to do...¹⁶

14. Personal interview with Óscar Alves, 28th March 2014.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Personal interview with Domingos Oliveira, 28th March 2014.

Domingos Machado states that *Cineground's* project is inseparable from a particular moment in Portuguese society, when the widespread disposition for novelty was allied with a “certain ingenuity”:

This was 1975-76-77, during PREC... I remember that when I came back from Luanda and resumed my professional life and studies, I found myself very confused with the post-April 25th Lisbon I landed in which had nothing to do with the city in the time I left for the war overseas... to make transvestite shows was unthinkable before April 25th, Estado Novo would not allow such a thing... transvestite characters were performed sporadically by theater actors... Portuguese society was thirsty for new things and *Cineground*, in the domain of amateur cinema, was an attempt, and a very funny one too [to bring novelty] because let's not forget that it was amateur cinema, “they” filmed with one camera only! We had to frame a shot and then the counter-shot... with only one camera, there were never two of them... if there were it was very exceptional... [...] it was a lot of work, I recall it used to take us hours to shoot...¹⁷

Cineground's filmography acquired popularity in Lisbon's nightlife and the audience of *Classico ma non troppo* began to diversify, as the producer notes:

It was mainly frequented by homosexuals, 70-80% by middle class customers, there was not a big mix, people of a certain class. Intellectuals of the time, artists. Then people started to go there just to watch the movies, and it was a big mess, they started to tell and tell.. that's when the Church intervened, I don't know how the church became aware of us. We had a table to register the viewers that grew steadily, the information went mouth to mouth and people started going to the bar just to watch the movies. I think mainly out of curiosity.¹⁸

The Church's “interference” would not prevent *Cineground* from keeping to broadcast their work, not even when J. P. Ferreira produced the second feature film, *Fatucha Superstar- Ópera Rock... Bufa* in 1976, regarding which his partner O. Alves still manifests a certain “moral discomfort”:

The Church wrote to me and J. P. Ferreira... We received a letter from the episcopate of “I do not know where” to tell us that we should think before screening homosexual films because it was condemned by the Church, etc... We ignored them, of course. I think the Church later tried to boycott us, I don't remember how. There was no use, there was no authority, it was just a psychological boycott [...] He made the popular *Fatucha*... [...] He wanted to put the Holy Mary in a big hurly-burly, deconstruct the image of the saint and I never agreed with that, I was born a Catholic, you know? And to do such a thing... well it was painful. But I sure did it. I did all the scenarios, the wardrobe,

17. Personal interview with Domingos Machado (Belle Dominique), 3rd April 2014.

18. Personal interview with Óscar Alves, 28th March 2014.

everything [...]. But the Church attacked us big time on that one, you have no idea.¹⁹

Fatucha would become the most mediatic (because most transgressive) title of the producer, described by Mário Damas Nunes in a review of the magazine *Isto é Espectáculo*, in April 1976 as:

A filmography [...] that advances recklessly (for now only in Super-8) in (still) taboo subjects. And if the theme of the first movie, S.P., was difficult to approach (a homosexual encounter) in a way that it seemed that it stopped somehow on the way, the same cannot be said of this “Fatucha”, a transvestite in updated costumes of Isadora Duncan. Paulo Ferreira made an attempt to descent into the true “hell” of Fatima, of the pilgrims and the commercial exploitation that proliferates around it.

Cineground's only “revenue” at the time, and indeed during much of its activity, was being able to see their work broadcasted as they did not charge box office and consumer's revenue reverted to the location that accepted the screenings. At least two titles from J. P. Ferreira authorship would be awarded in international film festivals,²⁰ what according to Domingos Oliveira allowed him to pay the actors for the first time. Regarding the other productions, the press materials of the time are practically nonexistent. In the years of 1976 and 1977, the films were continuously screened at *Classico ma non troppo*, and *Cineground's* productions would only be moved to *Scarlatty Club* when the first bar closed. *Scarlatty Club* was a much celebrated space of Lisbon's nightlife, both directors and also several of their collaborators were customers there. The owner Carlos Ferreira (transvestite Guida Scarlatty) would collaborate with *Cineground* in two titles (*As Aventuras e Desaventuras de Julieta Pipi* and *Goodbye Chicago*, both produced in 1978), some of the shooting would also take place within this space. These last 2 films starred the national transvestite show celebrities, Guida Scarlatty and Belle Dominique. *Goodbye Chicago* gathered the entire transvestite cast of *Scarlatty Club's* homonymous music-hall and was screened as an introduction to the show. According to O. Alves this work was “commissioned” by Carlos Ferreira himself to *Cineground*. These titles would be described as “amusing movies” in *Cineground's* production notes that were sent to the newsroom of the magazine *Isto É Cinema* (António 1978, 14). Other than the clubs and bars circuit, the shooting and broadcasting locations outside the studio where the group met came mostly from their network of acquaintances:

19. *Ibid.*

20. The short film *Demónios da Liberdade*, directed by J. P. Ferreira in 1976, was sold to foreign countries, namely Belgium and Azerbaijan (still in the period of Communist leadership), after its release at an international festival. This information, transmitted from memory by Domingos Oliveira, who was part of the cast, is not included in the existing documentation about the producer. The title *Tempo Vazio* (1977), by the same author but unavailable in the national archives that hold *Cineground's* work, would have also earned actress Carmen Mendes the Best Female Interpretation Award at the Costa Brava Film Festival, in 1982 (Lusa 2003).

A farm in Caparica, that was lent to us and our friend's places in general, a house in Rua da Madalena... a fancy house in Espírito Santo... We had nowhere to be, we had no income. [...] At the time there were gay beaches in Caparica, 19 Beach and others. The beach had the sand we needed [for the scenery]. There were the gay bars... there was *Clássico*, *Bric*... [*Bric à Brac*, currently *Trumps*, in *Príncipe Real*].²¹

Due to its nature this filmography was always to be confined to small spaces and broadcasted to a restricted audience, a characteristic pointed out not only by O. Alves but also by the film critics of the time, as noted by Mário Damas Nunes (1976, 25):

Cineground is a name to bear in mind for the future. Fortunately, we had the opportunity to get in touch with such productions and make them known to our readers, who otherwise would not have heard of this underground cinema [...]. It is the wish of our team that they keep going [with the making of their films]. And always on this path of provocation, of invention, of escape from the pre-established canons. Hoping that cinema would progress as well.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM *CINEGROUND'S* MEMORY?

The short history of mobilization around sexual rights in Portugal seems to be a reflection of almost half a century of dictatorship, which has resulted in the stunting of the democratic mechanisms of expression for social indignation (Santos 2005, 115). In European and North American metropolises, the emergence of LGBT enclaves contributed to the proliferation of an alternative to medicalized discourses, especially in political, literary and artistic spheres, which legitimized other ways of life, giving visibility to these marginal representations (Brandão 2008, 11). In Portugal, this libertarian universe reached the well-travelled urban elites and universities, especially on the form of political democratization. Individual rights are eventually encompassed in a general plan of struggle by university students and political elites, into an agenda marked by antifascism, anti-colonialism, Marxism and anti-capitalism (Cascais 2006, 111).

Following April 25th, leftist parties as well as the unionized left, especially the communist party, have been endowed with an organized structure that have allowed them to quickly deploy and gain influence in society. However, according to the model of historical materialism of the class struggle that leads the agenda of these political parties, the "homosexual issue" remains marginal: "the struggle of homosexuals is regarded as essentially demobilizing, ultra-minoritarian and without repercussions or profit for broader struggles of general social and political value, a *petit bourgeoisie* illusion" (Ibid., 112). Additionally, in the years following the Revolution, the stereotypical image of homosexuals that prevailed in political circles, civil

21. Personal interview with Óscar Alves, 28th March 2014.

society and academia (gender, gay, LGBT, queer studies, would only reach Portuguese universities much later), did not favor the receptivity of the first activism. The decriminalization of homosexuality in Portuguese law was only decided in 1982, and effectuated in 1983. LGBT association and militancy in Portugal would only consolidate in the mid-1990s, resulting on one hand from socioeconomic factors such as Portugal's membership to the European Economic Community (EEC), which in addition to the expectation of economic development, brought to gay and lesbian communities "the expectation of cultural and legal legitimacy", through the importation of a more advanced legislation into ours (Santos 2005, 145 and 176; Cascais 2006, 116) and on the other hand, with the HIV / AIDS epidemic, which spreading since the 1980s fostered a network of activism that would find its source of political intervention in queer theory, showing "new ways of doing sexual politics "and understanding identities" (Vale de Almeida 2004a, 97). It is possible to identify in this subculture, alike other examples in history, the duplicity undertaken by marginal groups for the conquest of public space, in which performance, due to its spectacular dimension, emerges as a form of negotiation with a speech (external and hegemonic) that does not recognize their existence. It is a humorous cinema that is still, as Bessa (2007, 267) says about the diffusion of queer cinema in recent decades, a "self-representation of the struggles waged against homophobia and the hypocrisy of society", a critique of heterosexuality as the norm and an appropriation of what stereotypes ridiculed, such as transvestites and their visual exaggerations. Although the widespread "climate of liberation" of the time, while in the fine arts (example are Pornex, an exhibition of erotic art organized at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the New University of Lisbon, FCSH-UNL, in theater (Comuna, Barraca, Teatro Aberto, even though the homosexual theme in theatre only sees a real expansion in the 1990s) and in literature (with the lifting of censorship over national and foreign authors that address these themes) (Cascais, 2001), sexuality has become a common theme of intervention in post-April 25th, in the mainstream film production it remains a veiled subject, and it took Portuguese cinema 10 years to feature the first sex scene in a nationally produced film, with *O Lugar do Morto* (1984), from the authorship of António Pedro Vasconcelos, and more than 25 years to "recover the gay theme", introduced by *Cineground's* independent filmography, with *O Fantasma* (2000) from João Pedro Rodrigues.²²

Cineground maintained, to a certain extent, the role that film societies had assumed the decade before the end of the dictatorship, an "activity behind closed doors" that "showed the films that no one could watch",

22. I would like to point out that the identities represented in this cinema do not include lesbians and bisexuals, and although LGBT film festivals (such as Queer Lisboa, Rama em Flor Festival and Lisbon and Porto Feminist Festivals) have brought them some visibility, they remain mostly absent from national film productions.

made of “allegories and metaphors” (Loja Neves 2007, 17). In the post-April 25th, the associations in the midst of amateur cinema sought to answer questions that seemed urgent for the Portuguese society at the time, such as neighborhood associations, and small film societies and groups began to lose visibility (Ibid.). The difficulties began to increase for *Cineground* which, in addition to surviving with a reduced economy of means, expressed, according to A. F. Cascais, and as mentioned before, a culture in this gay and queer cinema that was also “politically marginal, antagonized and opposed by the prevailing conceptions of the political culture of the time“, which was partly manifested in the progressive separation of the two producers.²³ Even J. P. Ferreira, whose leftist militancy he tried to express through his filmography, could not find representation in the political class, which did not accept the homosexual subject and “rejected this filmography and the culture of Lisbon’s gay ghetto alike”.²⁴

The historical conditions under which the films were produced and screened make up for a significant part of their conditions of existence (Bessa 2007, 262). The films produce and describe an affective and political territoriality that inadvertently subverts and dialogues with the prevailing norms of sex and gender in our country. *Cineground’s* estate, although being part of the historical and cultural heritage of LGBT communities at the time and now (though not inclusive of all these identities, it is still considered a cultural heritage of the struggle for recognition of LGBT rights in the Portuguese society), was sentenced to oblivion “to the point of becoming a complete surprise to those who rediscover it” (Cascais 2007, 153). In the opinion of Oscar Alves, at that time there was more of a sense of community, people would address these subjects openly (within the existing community): “well, they thought they were free...”.²⁵ This idea is shared by A. F. Cascais, “it was simply: exist and organize yourselves autonomously”.²⁶

The “localization” of *Cineground’s* work at a pre-mobilization moment in Portuguese history allowed me to read it in the light of Judith Butler’s queer and gender performativity theory. The author criticizes the founding principle of identity politics, which presupposes the need for fixed identities to claim their agency and hence guarantee their interests and desired political claims (Butler 1990, 142). Parodic practices, which she also refers to as “politics of despair”, in the sense that they symbolize the inevitable exclusion of marginal genders (Ibid., 146), also expose the “illusion” of gender identity as an essence (Ibid.). Butler’s suggestion to feminist theory is a new conceptualization of identity as an effect, produced by gender performance, in order to increase the possibilities

23. Personal interview with Fernando Cascais, 29th April 2014.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Personal interview with Óscar Alves, 28th March 2014.

26. Personal interview with Fernando Cascais, 29th April 2014.

of existence and agency of individuals without the limitations of fixed identity categories (Ibid., 147). This proposal does not aim to discredit the available identity categories, but to identify in the same process of construction of these identities, the practices of subversive repetition that will allow individuals to challenge them (Ibid.).

The initial step would be the questioning of the body as a pre-discursive or pre-cultural entity, an idea that lies at the heart of the naturalization of sex and bodies. This idea comes close to U. Marks's (2000, 164) concept of "haptic visuality", which argues that sensory experience produces knowledge about what is observed. According to this author, and as mentioned previously in the essay, a true knowledge of the world should not be reduced to the domain of vision but to be based on a bridge between the world of mimesis and symbolic representation (Ibid., 138). Using contemporary philosophers Merleau-Ponty (1973) and Derrida (1974), the author explains that language, being founded on the body, cannot precede it, whether this is the body of a speaker or of a performer. In the case of cinema, representation is inalienable of its corporeality (Ibid., 142). The possibilities of theoretical approximation about the body between Marks and Butler's work expands through Marks's concept of "intercultural cinema", referring to the global cultural flows of film and video production in the western metropolises of the 1980s and 1990s (Tollof 2001, 293). If for Butler deconstruction of identity is a way of turning political the terms that constitute identity itself and thereby questioning a hierarchy of power based on binary sexuality (giving rise to new configurations of power and representation) (Butler 1990, 148), Marks resorts to "intercultural cinema" as the vehicle of agency for minority populations, giving them a history and memory through the "power of artifice" in the absence of real narratives (Ibid., 295). The political importance of the "power of artifice" can be compared to the one invoked by Butler in the "politics of despair" of parodic gender norms, as it creates conditions for social transformation through the invention of a space in a de-territorialized context where minority cultures may exist (Ibid.). The transformative quality of cinema, as a vehicle of agency, postulated by Marks, seems to be in line with *Cineground's* cinematography, in the sense that it establishes a dialogue between the dominant culture and the minority culture that this cinema represents. Even if not politically engaged this cinema makes room for a form of micropolitics, a concept endogenous to queer theory that rests ultimately on the individual's inalienable power to counteract the norm (Mascarenhas 2012, 68). *Cineground* is the product of a particular era in the history of Portuguese society (post-April 25th, PREC) when the LGBT community's sexual and civic rights were not recognized in legislation nor in public opinion and before the emergence of civic militancy for minority rights. I am uncertain if it is correct to assume that these films are intended

to claim visibility for the unauthorized lifestyles they depict but I believe they negotiate their possibilities of existence through the power of agency provided by cinema. The visualization of these films demands a “sensorial translation” within the existing cultural knowledge / information, which may bring possibilities of transformation at political and social spheres, such as processes of identification, the construction of social alliances, and ultimately, offering current audiences the access to a material memory that, if nothing else, attests for their existence (Ibid., 293), even if we must “see it to believe it.”

This is an episode of resistance that, alike many others around the world (and with no necessary connection to the intellectual identity movements consecrated in Western societies in recent decades) has contributed to the construction of a different story through acts and ways of thinking that differed from a predominant system. Thus the question asked by J.P. Ferreira to conclude his introductory note for the catalog for *Cinema à Margem Film Festival*, organized by the Center for Independent Filmmakers, of which he was the director in the years of 1980-1981: “Should this absolutely bold and engaged cinema really keep being marginalized?”

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ANNEX A

SYNOPSIS OF THE FILMS BY JOÃO FERREIRA, QUEER LISBOA ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, QUEER LISBOA FESTIVAL (2007, 2008)

CHARME INDISCRETO DE EPIFÂNEA SACADURA (1975)

Óscar Alves / Short Film: 27 min. / Fiction

In his first short film, Óscar Alves experiments with the flashback-based narrative structure and the theme that would be further explored in his later work *Aventuras e Desventuras* de Julieta Pipi, filmed with greater means. Shot with no dialogues or sound effects, the film relies on intertitles to convey the essence of the dialogues, and it requires greater rhythm and expressivity from its actors; to this end, Alves recreates the expressionist aesthetics of silent cinema. The time and setting of the action are revealed immediately: 1930, the Chalé das Águas Correntes (Chalet of Running Waters). Epifânea Sacadura (Fefa Putollini), actress, welcomes us with a "Hello, Boys!"; lounging on her chaise longue in a languid pose; she even fondles herself on occasion. Epifânea is clearly bent on seducing the boys. The actress speaks of her career; she tells the story of the making of a film, in which we see her character receive the visit of a gentleman that turns out to be a vampire. A situation she resolves by immobilising him through a "Bottled Fart" she had handy. She then produces a king-size hammer and stake to get the job done. Epifânea confesses that life in the movies has made her into "a drunk, glutton, and neurotic", and then recounts one more recollection: the filming of "Última Valsa em Cucu" ("Last Waltz in Booboo"). A beach stands in for the desert that serves as the backdrop for an exotic story; the actress, in a shell bikini, crawls into the arms of the leading man. On set, the actor turns out to be a real gentleman, helps Epifânea when she is bitten by a spider, and even gives her a manicure. The actor only loses his stride when Epifânea pulls his tunic up, and screams, "Not in the ass!" The film ends with a commercial for the "Vaqueiro" brand of margarine - "Even in

the desert, a little “Vaqueiro” comes in handy” -, in a sequence that is a clear reference to Bernardo Bertolucci’s *Last Tango in Paris* (1972). The actress then, still reclining on her *chaise longue*, recounts her discovery at 18. We learn of her peasant origins, and how director Lauren-tis Kommecús discovered her while climbing a tree and shooting away a butterfly that had landed on her behind. Kommecús instructs his refined producer to school Epifânea in how to eat, apply makeup, and walk on heels, so that he may turn her into a star. The conclusion, as foreseeable from the director’s artistic name, the photos of Epifânea’s first filmic efforts are revealed: a porn flick.

SOLIDÃO POVOADA (1976)

Óscar Alves / Feature Film: 45 min. / Fiction

Solidão Povoada, the first feature-length film by Óscar Alves, and the only melodrama in his brief directorial career, is a legitimate heir of the visual aesthetics of the Cinema Novo, whose main reference is *Verdes Anos* (1963), by Paulo Rocha. Set in Lisbon after the revolution of 25th April 1974, a city that aspires to be cosmopolitan, the film portrays two middle-class couples, played by Domingos Oliveira, Carla Tuly, Fernando Silva, and Isabel Wolmar. In the first scene, we are introduced to the relationship between the main character (whose name we will never learn), and Fernando. We are in the former’s apartment in the Amoreiras area, and Fernando calls him from a phone booth. In the car, driving towards Monsanto, the protagonist recalls his break-up with former girlfriend (Carla Tuly), in a flashback where the two are seen, in a theatrical setting among the ruins of the Carmo convent, going their separate ways. In another flashback, he recalls how he met Fernando, on the day he visited the glass factory the latter manages with his wife (Isabel Wolmar), to place an order. The main character seems to have already accepted his homosexuality: before dining alone with Fernando for the first time, he takes leave of the transvestite (Belle Dominique), in the latter’s dressing room. He tells her that he cannot attend her show, thus stating the end of a relationship that despite being “necessary” had no future, since he actually despises the world she inhabits. After their first romantic dinner, the two men sleep together. At Fernando’s, his wife awaits long into the night for his arrival, upon which she embraces him and the two make love. In a voiceover, we hear Fernando comment, “All this is a farce”, while remembering his male lover, naked, sitting on a rock in Monsanto. This flashback suggests that the relationship has progressed, and that the two did not just share the one night after the dinner; they have been lovers for a while. *Solidão Povoada* seems to aspire to signal the growing divergence between pre revolutionary Portugal, and a new rising frame of mind. In a meeting at an antiquarian, the main character and his former girlfriend go shopping together, as friends, and her words express tolerance towards his sexuality. Fernando, on the other hand, remains in his marriage. In the final sequence, we see images of Lisbon, full of anonymous passers-by, while each of the four main characters walks alone; they eventually meet, but do not know (or recognize?) each other. Four realities that crossed in a Lisbon under transformation.

GOOD-BYE, CHICAGO (1978)

Óscar Alves / Short film: 16 min. / Fiction

The last film directed by Óscar Alves, *Good-Bye, Chicago* was devised to open the show of the same name at the Scarllaty Club in 1978. The film is therefore the fictional version of the perilous events of the weeks that preceded it, events that resulted in the show which the audience was about to see live on stage. Filmed with no sound, *Good-Bye, Chicago* opens with the landing of a private plane at Tires airport, in Cascais; its three passengers, acclaimed by a multitude of fans and many photographers who invade the landing strip, are three divas. The three vie for the attention of the photographers, striking various poses, and even resorting to physical aggression in order to gain the spotlight. The diva played by Guida Scarllaty receives luxury treatment: she is whisked off towards Lisbon in her own convertible, with her puppy and a bottle of champagne in hand. When her car breaks down, she is forced to accept a ride from her “rivals”; the three squeeze in the back of a much more modest car, with their legs and wigs sticking out of the car windows during the trip. The following sequence, showing a fireman’s car and a body lying on the road, suggests what is soon confirmed by the insert of a newspaper headline, announcing the death of the divas in an accident. Except for the character played by Scarllaty... Soon returning to work, she organises a casting session for the show *Good-Bye, Chicago*. Several female

transvestites and a male one (Tony, played by Maria José, who was also part of the show's cast), receive an invitation in the most unexpected circumstances: while shooting a film, during a moment of intimacy, or even on the operating table, while undergoing surgery. For this specific segment, Óscar Alves also used a sequence which parodies the theatre play *A Verdadeira História de Jack, o Estripador* (1977), playing in Lisbon at the time and starring Ana Zanatti and Zita Duarte. In the final sequence, all are reunited at the Scarlatty Club; the film ends, and *Good-Bye, Chicago* begins.

AVENTURAS E DESVENTURAS DE JULIETA PIPÍ (1978)

Óscar Alves / Feature Film: 44 min. / Fiction

The opening sequence of *Adventures and Misadventures of Julieta Pipí* clearly trumpets the film's theme. Images of 1970s Los Angeles, and a departure from LAX, give way to Lisbon airport, where internationally famous actress Julieta Pipí (Belle Dominique) has just arrived. Miss Pipí gets ready for a tense press conference, to take place in her palace on the outskirts of town. Faced with questions that are at times political, others intellectual, and even frankly and inquisitively sexual, Pipí defends herself in her Italian accent (a leftover from her latest film, shot in Italy) from all provocations, and even skirts the impertinent questions on her acting background. With the press conference as its backbone, the film delves into Pipí's career and past glories through a series of flashbacks.

FATUCHA SUPERSTAR: ÓPERA ROCK... BUFA (1976)

João Paulo Ferreira / Feature Film: 43 min. / Fiction

The oeuvre of João Paulo Ferreira, which began in 1975, generally had a strong focus on social and political issues, he directed this singular work, *Fatucha Superstar*, in a musical style inspired by Andrew Lloyd Webber's production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. With the Portuguese revolution of 1974 still fresh, Ferreira deconstructed one of the greatest pillars of the dictatorial Estado Novo regime: the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima. If, on the one hand, *Fatucha Superstar* is faithful to the hippie aesthetic of Webber's musical – and to a Portuguese generation of the time – on the other, Fatima, or Fatucha, is a sophisticated transvestite that appears to the three little shepherds in dark glasses and a convertible. The film begins with images of pilgrims in Fatima. But, in spite of this documentary style introduction, João Paulo Ferreira asks us to revisit the myth, revealing to us his own truth about it. In an open, deserted field, the three little shepherds, Lúcia, Jacinta and Francisco dance with unfettered gaiety, until Jacinta (with a hairy moustache) has a premonition. But it's to Francisco that Fatucha appears. The boy immediately calls his sisters so they can also witness the strange phenomenon. Fatucha sings to the little shepherds, promising them fame and success in the future. But Francisco, more than inebriated by these promises, falls in love with this fascinating woman, to whom he dedicates, in bucolic ecstasy, this song: "I feel my head turning around, / the bosom, corset, / I can't forget that broad, / she is hot as hell..." Then comes Fatucha again, also in a solo, promising to begin her struggle, not without consulting first with God, who thus reacts to her proposal: "What debauchery..." When Fatucha appears again to the little shepherds, the miracle begins, in the form of magician's tricks. She makes a table appear, takes objects out a top hat, makes orange juice appear to quench their thirst, and transforms Jacinta into an appealing woman. But something goes wrong when she makes Jacinta disappear, leading her siblings to chase her away. Fatucha runs to her car and tragedy looms. As a new Isadora Duncan, her veil gets caught in the car wheel. Fatucha seems to have left us. Halfway into his reinterpretation of the apparitions, João Paulo Ferreira interrupts the narrative with an insert – announced by psychedelic lighting effects –, that brings us to the present. On a dance floor, angels, nuns, and God dance without shame. The characters in this fable give themselves up to the most earthly and carnal desires. On an altar in the background, instead of a religious figure, there is that other, rather more pagan, cult object: an enormous phallus. At the end of the film, there is a new return to the present time. A group of friends celebrates Fatucha. She isn't dead after all. In a final homage, they sing in unison: "Oh Fatucha Superstar, why are you fooling the people. / Oh Fatucha Superstar, beware that they will screw you in the end".

DEMÔNIOS DA LIBERDADE (1976)

João Paulo Ferreira / Short film: 20 min. / Fiction

At the heart of an upper-middle class family resides a bizarre love triangle. Two men, one woman. A couple, and a stranger to the family. The stranger is hitchhiking by the road and a man invites him into his car. A hand on a thigh speaks volumes. She is waiting for them at home, a sumptuous villa. An essay on the various possibilities and rituals of recent freedom, *Os Demônios da Liberdade* is also a manifest of sexual freedom. But the demons are still around. The lover who breathes fresh air into this couple's life is himself chased by the ghosts of morality and by a past still too present, duly identified by a swastika on his forehead. A very effective musical score, together with especially careful editing and a great cinematographic sensitivity in the set-up, shooting and time management, make this short film a singular object for its time. And, thirty years after its making, we can but think about some aspects and behaviours of our society today, where strong signs of lack of freedom still seem to prevail.

ANNEX B

FRAMES OF CINEGROUND'S FILMS (1975-78) USED IN THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE PRODUCER, THROUGH THE METHODOLOGY OF PHOTO-ELICITATION

Solidão Povoada, 1975

O Charme Indiscreto de Epifânia Sacadura, 1975

Fatucha Superstar: Ópera Rock... Bufa, 1976

Demônios da Liberdade, 1976

Goodbye Chicago, 1978

As aventuras e desventuras de Julieta Pipi, 1978

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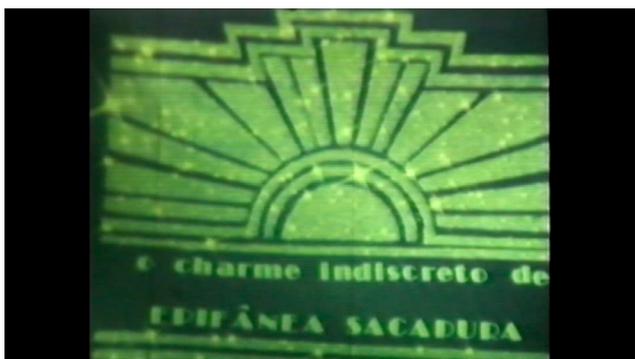
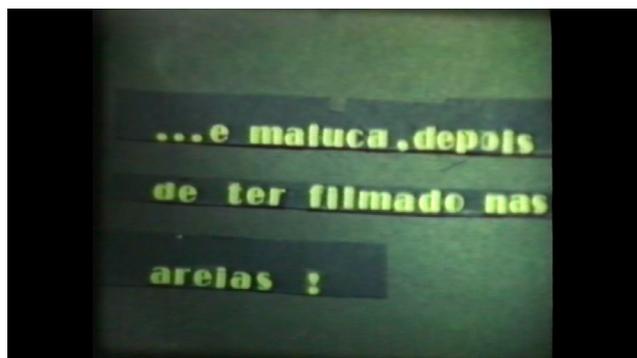
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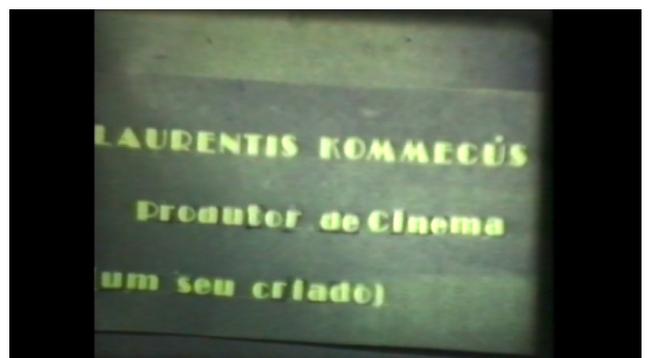
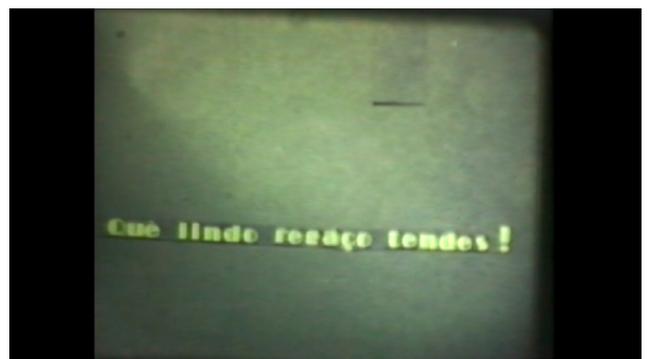
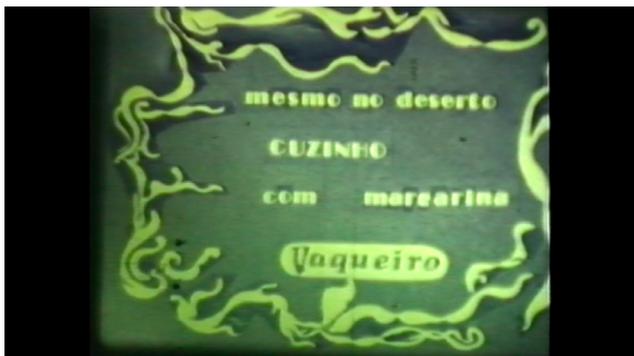
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O Charme Indiscreto de Epifânia Sacadura, 1975

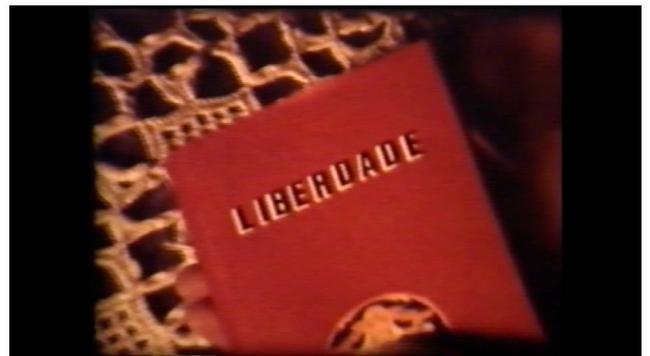


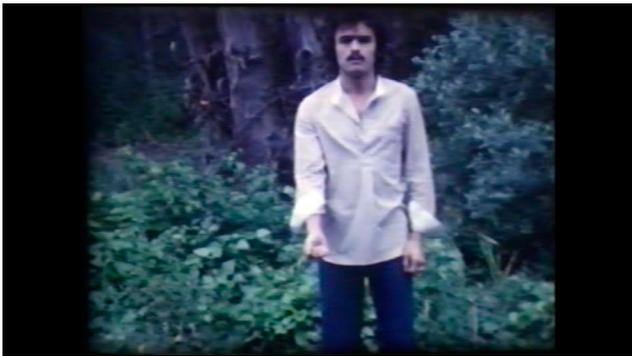


Fatucha Superstar: Ópera Rock... Bufa, 1976













As aventuras e desventuras de Julieta Pipi, 1978

