

written and directed by Pedro de Filippis

E ENQUADRAMENTO PRODUÇÕES

Here and Elsewhere

morethan







PERSPECTIVE LOG NO. PRO



POINTS NORTH



the gotham



4 SYNOPSIS

6
MINAS GERAIS
AND MINING

8
THE HISTORICAL DAM
FAILURES OF MARIANA (2015)
AND BRUMADINHO (2019)

11 DAM TERRORISM 14
THE NEW WAYS
OF COLONIZING

18
INTERVIEW WITH PEDRO
DE FILIPPIS, DIRECTOR
OF REJEITO

25
DIRECTOR'S
MINIBIO

26
ENQUADRAMENTO'S
PROFILE

27
HERE AND ELSEWHERE'S PROFILE

28
TARSILA NAKAMURA
PROFILE

29 WITH

30 CREW

31
SALES & CONTACT

After the largest mining dam breaks in history, further dam collapses threaten millions in Brazil. A state counselor confronts the modus operandi of the government, while dam refugees resist mining companies' abuses in their threatened communities.

SYNOPSIS

In recent years, two mining tailings dams broke in the state of Minas Gerais, causing Brazil's worst-ever socio-environmental disasters. Hundreds were killed, millions were affected. Communities were displaced and two main rivers became mud, flooding the Atlantic Ocean with rejeito or tailings - the waste material of the mining process; toxic mud that is stored in massive dams over years.

The shocking images of both disasters were explored to exhaustion by mainstream media. Rejeito points to the backstage and beyond by following Teca (61), the sole citizen representative on the state environmental council. She voted against the certification of the dams which collapsed. As such, she was thrust into the media spotlight in the aftermath of the disasters. Her constant presence in both the media and the council allows us to move seamlessly among these ostensibly unrelated arenas while revealing the degree to which both are influenced by the power of the mining company.

Both dams that collapsed were certified safe by the state, which is home to another 354 highly precarious dams. Millions live below these time bombs. João (52) climbs his backyard fence to photograph the dam located 30 meters from his house. For 20 years he has denounced the mining company's suspicious activities with his album of photos of the neighbouring dam. João lives in front of the riskiest urban dam in the country. Its rupture could bury 14,000 lives in 8 seconds. In despair of information, João joins a "self-rescue simulation" held by the state and mining companies.

A few days after the dam collapse, State and mining companies altered the Certificates of Stability of eight rejeito dams from stable to imminent risk of breakout. This resulted in the removal of eight communities under dams considered at-risk. All removed communities were located in mining-interested areas.

Socorro is one of them. Since 2006, the community has been the main impediment to the second-largest iron ore mine project in the world, the Project Apolo. Three years have passed since the removal and the dam remains intact. Its decommissioning to make way for the return of the community has been postponed from 2023 to 2029. Unable to afford life in the nearby city, the community has sold 90% of its properties to Vale. After more than a decade, Project Apolo was reactivated in the stock market. Élida (35) leads the reoccupation of the abandoned community in protest.

Navigating between the experiences of the film's characters, while incorporating the bureaucratic and media interactions, we come to understand the ways in which these multinational mining companies and the State seek to propagate and indeed expand their reckless practices, while subtly dissecting the mechanics of a post-colonial machine.



Pressbook p. 4

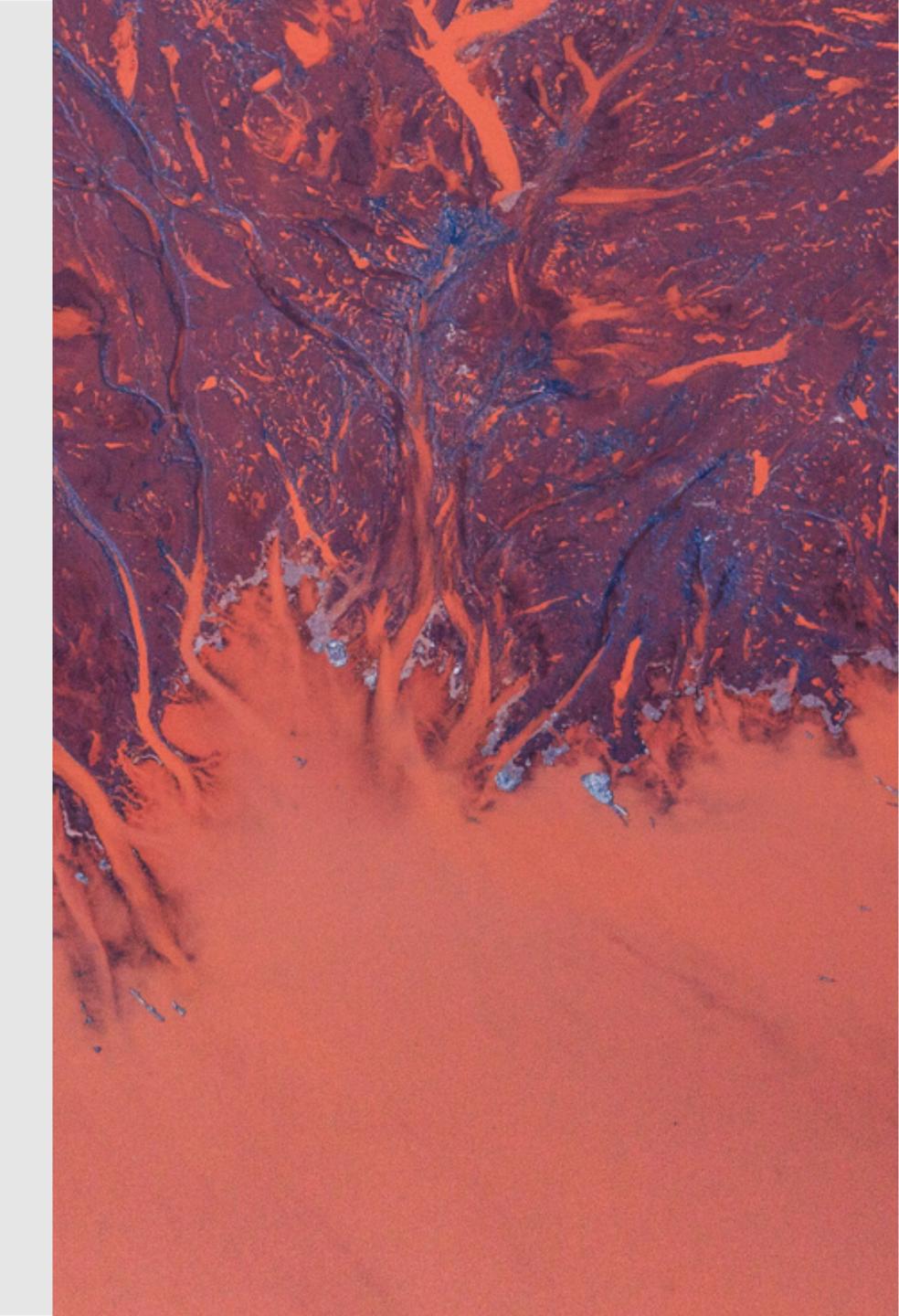


MINAS GERAIS AND MINING

Minas Gerais is a well-known mining state in Brazil which accounts for 82% of iron reserves in the country. Overlaid above these deposits are large aquifers which feed into the main river basins in the state. About half of them are found in the region known as Quadrilátero Ferrífero Aquífero.

Regarding production, Minas Gerais also accounts for approximately 61% of raw iron ore in Brazil, around 320 million tons which yielded a 15-billion-dollar turnover in 2021. The state currently has around 620 operating mines, a third of them located in this region.

"Rejeito" means "waste" or, in this case, "tailings". It is the residual material resulting from the iron ore extraction process. This residue is composed, among other things, of other minerals and heavy metals, taking the form of a toxic sludge that is stored in tailings dams. Dams play an essential role in the mining process and its cleaning. In turn, tailings are used to build the dams. This technique is the weakest and by far the cheapest solution available. Brazil is one of the few countries in the world that still allows this dangerous practice. In the eyes of the two largest mining companies in for iron ore extraction. The cities of Mariana, Bru-the world, Vale S.A. and the Anglo-Australian mulmadinho and Itabira, all portrayed in Rejeito, are tinational BHP Billiton, this precarious cost-benefit ratio is acceptable.







THE HISTORICAL DAM FAILURES OF MARIANA (2015) AND BRUMADINHO (2019)

Throughout the history of Minas Gerais, several tailings dam collapses have been recorded, but two of the most recent were the ones that had a broader media repercussion and, ironically, a significant impact on the loosening of licensing rules for new mining exploration projects.

One of them occurred in November 2015. The Fundão dam in the city of Mariana broke and approximately 45 million m3 of toxic sludge were dumped into the Rio Doce Basin, burying within minutes the village of Bento Rodrigues located 2.5 km from the dam. In addition, the dam's tailings caused the death of dozens of people and left a 600 km trail of destruction before reaching ity' projects. In practice, this new sector began the Atlantic Ocean. This was the biggest environ- to provide environmental licenses much more

mental disaster in the history of Brazil and the biggest in the world involving tailings dams. The company responsible for the tailings dam that collapsed, Samarco Mineração, is a joint venture formed by Vale S.A. and Anglo-Australian mining company BHP Billiton.

The following year, in 2016, while civil society movements were fighting to tighten legislation, changes were approved that significantly weakened the legal rite of licensing processes and mining activities permits. Among them, the most relevant was the creation of a department responsible for the evaluation of so-called 'priorquickly, synthesizing in just one step the old processes that were previously approved after three different phases, regardless of their size or degree of risk offered to the surrounding communities and the environment.

This loosening in the stages of environmental licensing and inspection of structures for containing mining tailings was decisive for the disaster that would happen shortly afterwards.

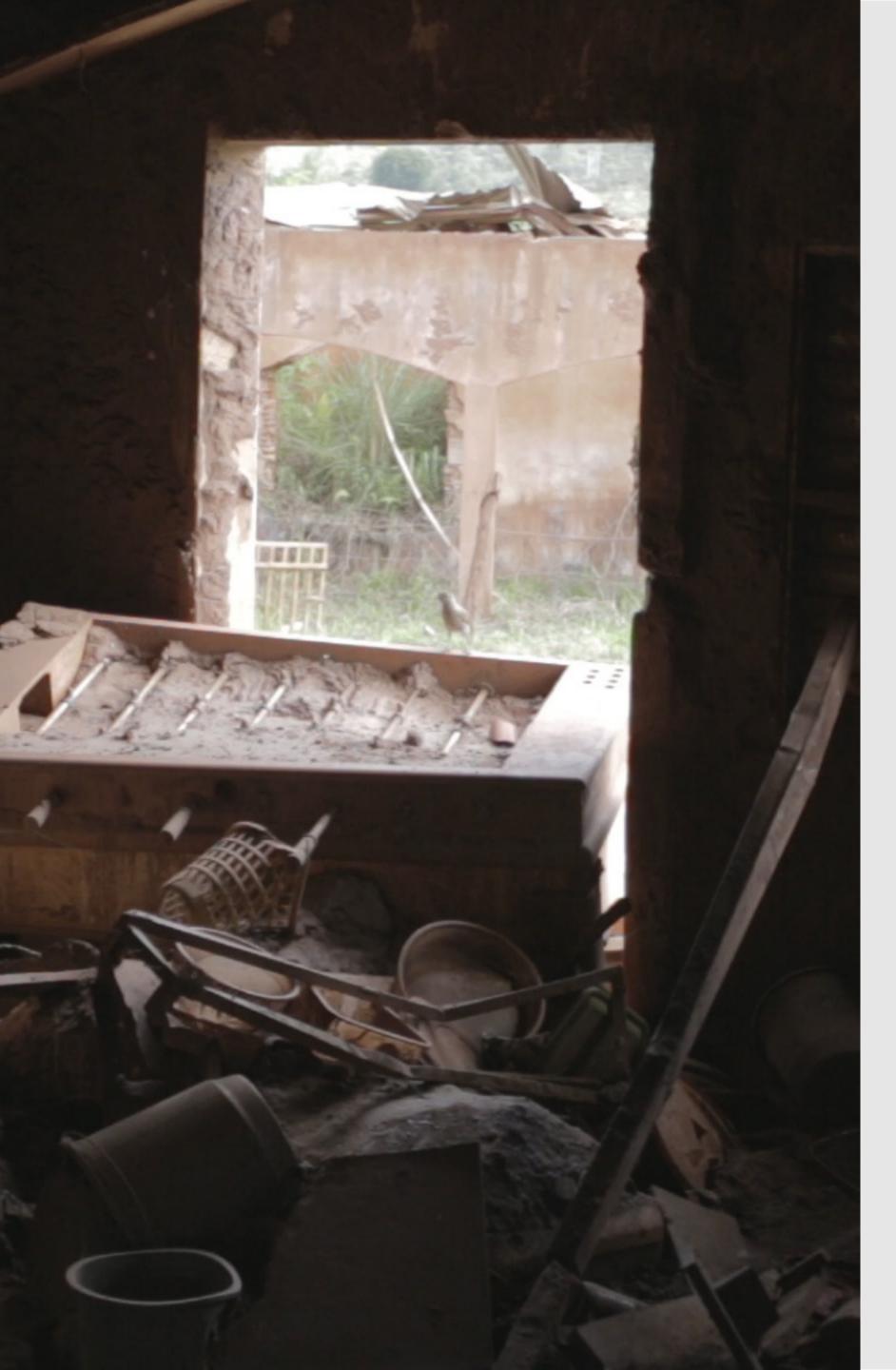
Just over three years after the dam break in Mariana, in January 2019, a new dam collapsed in the

city of Brumadinho, at the Córrego do Feijão mine, owned by Vale S.A. On that occasion, 12 million m3 of iron ore tailings reached the Paraopeba River, affecting a significant part of the São Francisco River Basin, the second largest in the country, destroying communities and villages that were in the path of the mud, including areas occupied by Indigenous villages Pataxó and Krenak. 272 people lost their lives, eleven bodies have not, to this day, been found. This disaster became the largest in the world in terms of the number of victims from mining activities.



Pressbook 2023 p. 9





DAM **TERRORISM**

It is precisely at this moment that the term 'dam terrorism' appears.

As a result of the panic caused by the breaches of the tailings dams in Mariana and Brumadin- were declared risk level 3 – the highest level in ho, the iron mining sector (led by Vale S.A, in agreement with the Brazilian National Mining Agency and the state government) began to de- With the alleged imminence of collapsing, takclare that several dams, similar to those of Mar- ing advantage of the terror caused by a possible iana and Brumadinho, were unable to have their structures deemed as stable. It is important to highlight: the dams were not declared unsafe or everything they had: personal belongings, docunstable; but there were no certifying compa- uments, photographs, pets and livestock, etc. nies willing to provide reports attesting to the stability of the dam structures.

Without certificates of stability, a loophole was immediately claimed by the mining companies: in several territories where there were large prior mining interests, dams (without reports) the scale, meaning that the dam would be in a situation of progressive or imminent failure. next disaster, thousands of people were hastily removed from their homes, leaving behind They left their homes with only clothes on their backs, in the middle of the night, as portrayed

sides Socorro, four other communities living in villages (Piteiras, Tabuleiro, Macacos and Itatiaiuçu) went through the same panic. However, to this date these dams have not broken.

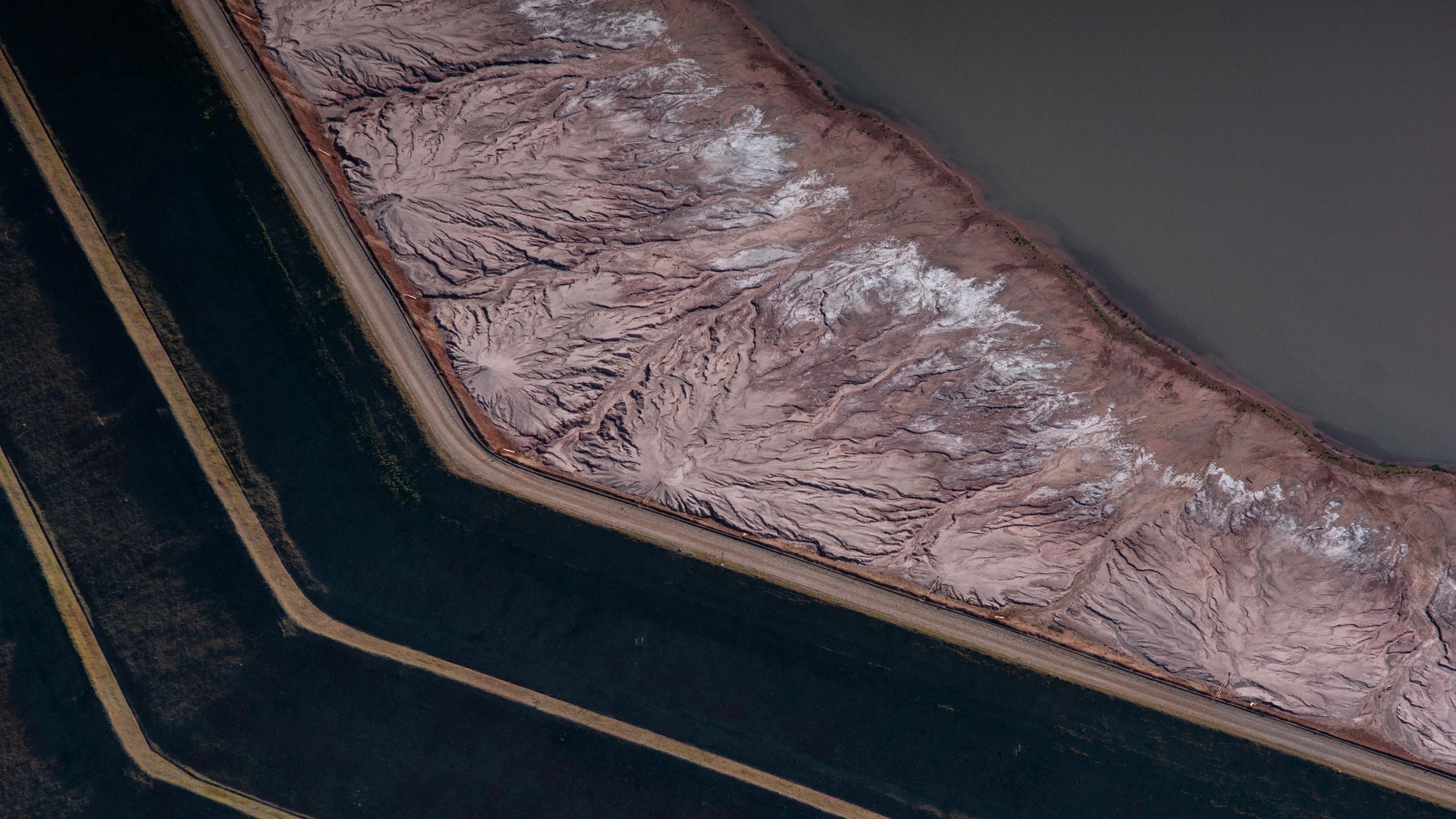
With the legal uncertainty forced by this scenario, in 2019, strong evidence had already begun to emerge showing that all those communities' removals were associated with strategic plans for the acquisition of territories by, mainly, Vale.

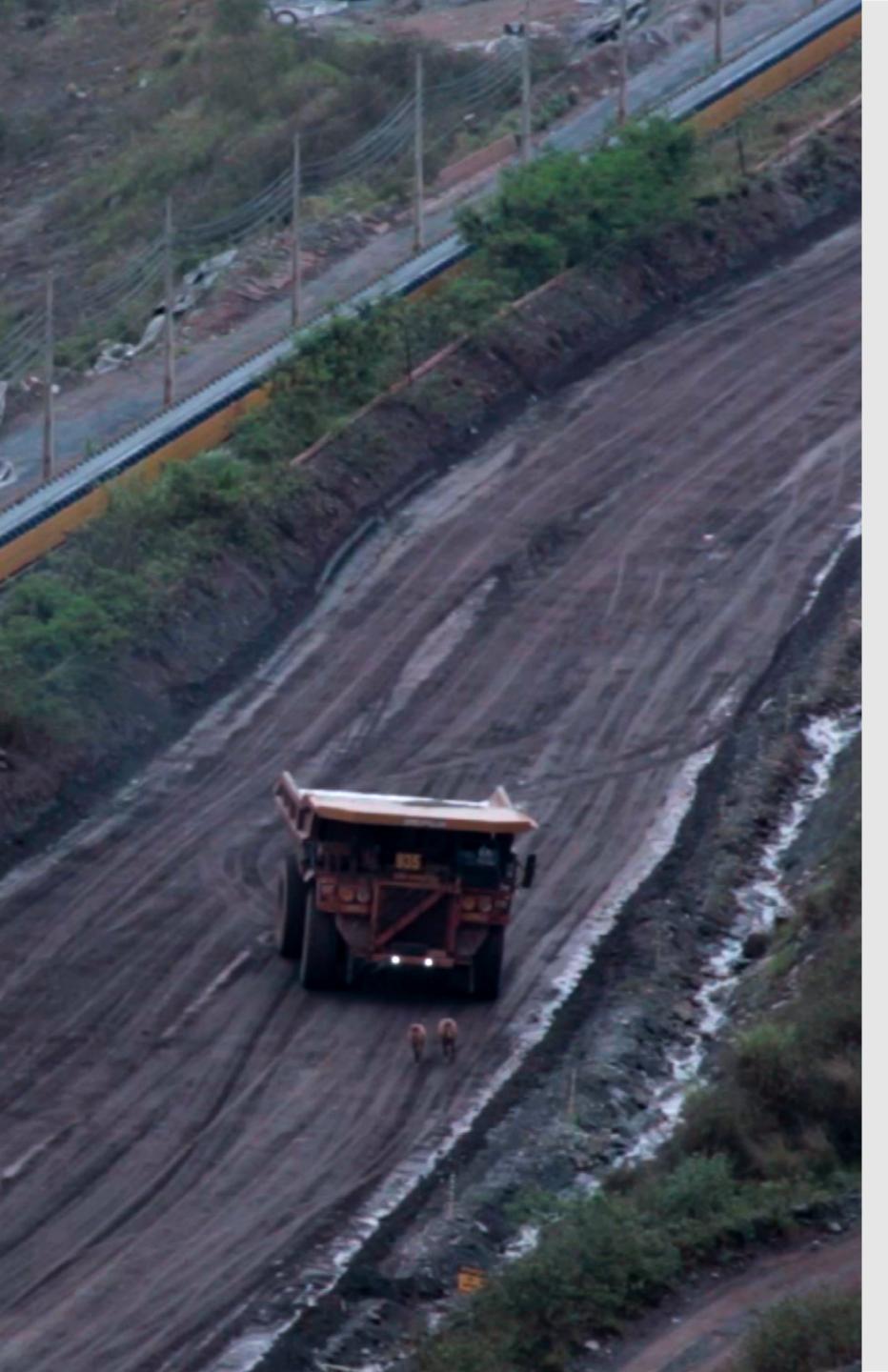
This is the case of Project Apolo, an ambitious mining project that the company had been trying to implement for two decades and which had been prevented by the local population's strong

in the film with the community of Socorro. Be- mobilization. However, through the terror that forced the removal of the families that inhabited the area, this mining project is being enabled since 90% of the families were convinced to sell their properties located in this area; one of great interest by the mining industry.

> The same 'dam terrorism' strategy has been repeated continuously since then: in 2020 this strategy was implemented to promote the forced removal of people in Antônio Pereira (District of Ouro Preto, portrayed in the evacuation simulation shown in the film) and Itabira, where João (character portrayed in Rejeito) lives 30 meters from the Pontal dam, suddenly classified as 'at risk'.







THE NEW WAYS **OF COLONIZING**

Four years after the start of filming Rejeito, in March 2023, the capitalist action of large mining corporations, whose capital is concentrated in the global North, is still intense. Samarco, the same company that caused the disaster in the city of Mariana in 2015, presented a grand plan to expand its activities exactly on top of the districts that it helped remove from the map with the mud from the Fundão dam, in Brumadinho, in 2019.

These companies aim to guarantee the expanded accumulation of capital at the expense of mineral exploration in countries taken by the "curse" of natural resources. Every arrangement shown here represents a current accumulation strategy that is as old as capitalism itself, whose origins can be found in the invasion and loot- say in Brazil, "save yourself as you can". ing of Latin American iron ores, extracted with the blood of the enslaved bodies of people up- Although Brazil has gone through several political rooted from Africa.

Evicted from their homes, their lands, their origins, the people who inhabit these regions experience on a daily basis the zeroth law of capitalism, greater and even more important than the 'sacred' law of private property, which is the law of the strongest. As Horacio Machado Araoz said, living under the "phenomenology of horror" promoted by extractivism, these people lose complete control over their destinies and that of their children. They are obliged to sleep and wake up in a "self-rescue zone", in which they were placed without ever having left their lands. The company arrives and warns: "Now you live in an area with a high risk of death where no one can save you. In case of rupture, take the escape route, head to the meeting point and..." as we

changes – from colony to monarchy to republic;

Rejeito The new ways of colonizing

although abolition of slavery, universal suffrage and democracy reveal the reaching of some level of advancement in civility, mining continues to guarantee extractive exploitation that the countries of the global North impose on the countries of the South. Like in the case of the Andean silver and Brazilian gold in the past, iron today is the main element in permanent conflict situations, where people are killed, suddenly buried or slowly poisoned, whether by air, water or soul.

Nature insists on alerting us with increasingly severe climate changes. However, rulers continue to participate in pompous global meetings, signing protocols on top of protocols and cli-four years. mate agreements that are never fulfilled. The world capitalist class that today controls the main mining companies in the world remains—saint of the same name, which means 'help'.

unscathed, organizing plans to perpetuate their average profit rates at any cost.

Depending on when you watch Rejeito, Bento Rodrigues, that ghost district that appears in the film, will probably have been removed by a pit or buried under a pile of tailings. The deadline for deactivating the dam so that families could return to their homes in Socorro was initially February 2022. After an agreement with the prosecutor's office, at Vale's request, this deadline was extended to 2035. At the time of release of the film, the dam had been at the maximum emergency level, that is, in a state of rupture, for

The name 'Socorro' is a tribute to a Catholic Church

text by Daniel Neri



p. 15 Pressbook 2023







What was your main catalyst to develop the film Rejeito?

It was the identification of abandonment in the place I grew up. The same mountains that surround Belo Horizonte hide dozens of mines of the Quadrilátero Ferrífero Aquífero, a region in the state of Minas Gerais. Faded into the social structure, the impacts of the postcolonial mining model are barely visible in the capital city of Minas Gerais. When I started traveling across the state with a critical eye on these issues, still as a teenager, I started to understand the invisible impacts on the capital city and realize that there refers to the abdication of any power or jurisdic- source of expression.

tion. The white man's occupation in Minas Gerais was based on extractivism and so it continues. The mineiro, Portuguese word for 'miner' and also the demonym for people born in the state of Minas Gerais was historically driven to abdicate any form of empowerment. Mining activity founded the state and named its own people after itself, so that they would never forget their purpose in that territory and never dare to occupy it otherwise. Without utopias or new horizons, people from Minas Gerais became the waste of their own occupation. I believe abandonment is a commonplace idea, on a subconscious level, for those who live there, and I am no exception. is a situation of abandonment based on extrac- Turning this discomfort into a film is the obvious tivism. The etymology of the word 'abandonment' path for those to whom filmmaking is the main

In what way do you speak of abandonment when approaching the issues that shape Rejeito?

When I speak of abandonment, I think of a place that lacks care, a place designed to be abandoned. The basic principle of extractivism is to take, to remove something, so the result is the emptying of somewhere. Mining extracts the iron ore and produces tailings. The iron ore is shipped elsewhere. The tailings remain. The tailings are the waste produced by mining activities. The film depicts a context where people are treated as such waste. We highlight what is being rejected. In the aftermath of the dam collapse in Brumadinho, the film is not interested in what is surrounded by the isolation tapes, we do not seek appealing images of the destruction and bodies in the mud. We are driven towards things that happen behind-the-scenes and beyond, always in search of what was being rejected, of the sociopolitical complexities that culminate in an abandoned state.

During this process, at what point did you decide to actually go film the consequences of the dam breaks in Minas Gerais state?

I started filming the day after the Samarco dam collapsed in Mariana in 2015. I filmed there for a few days, Maria Teresa was also present, but I did not have a point of view, and so I found myself surrounded with meaningless supplemental footage. I met Magnum Soares, a dancer from Mariana living in Lisbon, in 2018. He chose the Mariana dam collapse as the theme of his first solo and invited me to do the dramaturgy. At that moment, it hit me: a film on the invisible impacts of the dam collapse. Magnum had emigrated to Portugal after seeing his hometown suffer the numerous consequences of the dam collapse. He was 19 years old and lived in Cabanas, the city's lowest-income neighborhood, where Samarco's 'pawns' used to live. In September 2018, I started filming Maria Teresa at the COPAM (State Council for Environmental Policy) meetings and my search for what is being 'rejected' was reassured by that preposterous, bureaucratic environment. In January 2019, Vale's dam in Brumadinho collapsed. We started shooting the next day, bearing in mind what we were looking for and not knowing what we were going to find.

The mainstream media treated the dams breaks as isolated disasters, as if they were independent from postcolonial politics. The uncertainty as to



Pressbook 2023 p. 19



the stability of other 354 tailings dams across the state caused many communities living in villages to break the silence imposed by the resilience discourse and to question the status quo. For the first time I saw people from Minas Gerais questioning the mining industry, questioning them- Dam Terrorism - Community of Socorro selves. My reaction was to take these questions to the next level by searching beyond past col- What all three characters have in common is lapses and exposing the layers that perpetuate an ongoing disaster.

Rejeito intertwines information with the subjectivity of several characters. How did you develop this way of recording what you wanted?

It was a discovery I made as I was shooting the film. The film wasn't born with me sitting on a chair, it was born between field research and the writing. The characters emerged during the field oped in writing. Rejeito's structure is divided in three chapters, and each one is represented by a different character:

Chapter 1:

Past Collapses - Maria Teresa

Chapter 2:

Imminent Collapses - João Batista Carlos

Chapter 3:

their will to resist. The three of them resist in different ways.

The fact that Maria Teresa, Teca - with whom I had been working for over ten years -, became a State Counselor, and how much she stressed the political insanity that took place in the governmental environment, reassured me that there was a bigger film to be unraveled. Although I do not like to force any particular way of filmmaking upon what I find, observational cinema is what attracts me most instinctively. Maria Teresa or research, but served a purpose previously devel- Teca – as most people know her – is a character who allows us, through observation, to add concrete information about the context of the other characters because of her political position both

as State Counselor and as an environmentalist of a number of social movements. We also observe how the media reacts to the events portrayed in the film, as we see the journalistic interventions from beginning to end, the behind-the-scenes, and not just the final story or interview that was aired. The entire universe of Teca and the journalism production allowed the film, at the same time, to have an aesthetic that was coherent with its characters and to include lines with a more technical approach and contextualization.

When I searched through the environment of the State Council with Teca, I understood that the film that was emerging did not center around past disasters, but on an ongoing disaster, legitimized by the state, on the postcolony, on abandonment. I understood that it would be important to include something about the colonial past of Minas Gerais that could reflect such abandonment portrayed in the film. Since the observational way of shooting is restricted to the present, the film includes a re-interpretation of an American film shot in Minas Gerais in 1949. The 1949 film contextualizes Minas Gerais during colonial times and allows us to transition to the second part of

our film, in which we portray the same territories from a postcolonial, critical perspective.

The hundreds of unstable dams scattered around Minas Gerais state have become my next field of research, where I had literally millions of possibilities to create the characters. That's when I started writing fictional characters of people living below a dam and who would fill the narrative in an interesting way. After this exercise, I went to meet reality. In Itabira, I met João Batista Carlos, who lives 20 meters from one of the largest dams in the country's urban area and who speaks out, through his photographs, against the terror caused by Vale, the mining company in the region. João's geographic relation to the dams said it all. We leave the words to the bureaucratic environment surrounding Teca, the silence of imminent threat to João and to the communities and villages that experience the evacuation simulations.

of shooting is restricted to the present, the film
includes a re-interpretation of an American film
shot in Minas Gerais in 1949. The 1949 film contextualizes Minas Gerais during colonial times
and allows us to transition to the second part of

The film is a witness to a process of discovery. As it unfolds, situations prove to be more complex and interconnected. We filmed for four years, during which we were able to better elaborate on what was happening to the community of



Pressbook 2023 p. 21



Socorro and to several other communities that lage of a rural area. André do Mato Dentro is a were being evacuated by the government. The term "Dam Terrorism" gained enough traction to be the film's arrival point, and a terrifying expression of abandonment. We filmed several scenes with the community of Socorro during those four years, but it was the re-occupation that proved to be the strongest resistance movement. Among the various obstacles imposed by COVID-19, we attempted to further develop a central charac- screened a presentation that brought big news ter who could represent the community of Socorro, but the film seemed to refuse it somehow. We accepted that the presence of the community would only make sense if it was portrayed as a whole, without leaders, in an anarchic movement the ore, and the tailings would be discarded in a of resistance to the four years of illegitimate eviction, and so that is what we made.

Did you already have an interest, workrelated or not, in the impacts of mining activities in Minas Gerais?

At the age of 16 I created close bonds with a few families that worked in beekeeping in a vil-

centuries-old village near Socorro located in Serra da Gandarela, a region full of waterfalls and dense forests where honey production is the main local economic activity. In 2008, a helicopter landed on the village, which did not have paved streets. Engineers came out for a meeting with the community. A projector was set up on the white wall of the square church, and it to the community: the arrival of 2,000 men who would come to work on a new mining project in the region, the Apolo Project. The river would be diverted, the water would be used to clean dam to be built above the village. The fifty trucks that would pass every hour on the village's only street would produce an amount of dust that would make honey production impossible. The villagers' main occupation would be replaced with jobs in the mine. The company would build a new football field and do a make-over of the church. After the meeting, the film "The Ice Age" was projected. The popcorn was free.

al conflict involving mining activities. At that moment, the need to understand what being born in Minas Gerais really meant and the need to talk about it emerged in me. In 2009, I made my first film about the Apolo Project's licensing attempt in that village. I met Teca in this context, in mid-2008, when I also began to collaborate with social movements. In 2016 I had the opportunity to represent Minas Gerais at OCMAL, a conference that brought together 12 Latin American countries in El Salvador to share their experiences on conflicts involving the mining industry in their territories. Since then, I have continued to research and produce materials on mining activities, many of which were used by social movements themselves.

What is it like to look back at the process of directing Rejeito, now you see the film is winning the world and that it is seen at festivals by a number of different audiences?

That was my first direct contact with a territori- I realized that you need to choose a path, understand what serves you at the moment and understand what you are not ready to talk about yet. I found several film possibilities until I came up with Rejeito. The mining conflicts in Minas Gerais are numerous and complex. In addition to that, the film process took place as we went through the entire Covid-19 pandemic, including its worst stages, which had a direct impact in the making of the film, shot in three different cities. I wanted to make a film that felt more intimate and close to the characters. I didn't see any of the characters for a year, which forced us to adapt to the new conditions.

> After all, the film is a reflection of the treatment that is given to all these issues. In order to make the film, I had to let go of perfectionism, impositions and assumptions. I didn't find any recipes, but I tore several ones, and for that I am grateful.

> > interview conducted by Marcelo Miranda



p. 23 Pressbook 2023



Rejeito Director's Minibio



DIRECTOR'S MINIBIO

Pedro de Filippis is a Brazilian filmmaker. In 2009, his debut short film "Os Pêssegos da Cornicha" about the arrival of a mining project in a small rural community, won the Best Documentary award both at the Mostra Minas and Cinecipó festivals and was also screened in Mexico and Argentina. In 2016, he was selected for the Doc Nomads Masters Program, for which he directed eight films in Portugal, Hungary, and Belgium during the two years of the program, and received tutorship from film theorists such as Bill Nichols, J.P. Sniadecki, and Marta Andreu. In 2021 he was nominated for the Global Emerging Filmmaker Award from Netflix and IDA.



Rejeito Enquadramento's Profile



ENQUADRAMENTO'S PROFILE

Enquadramento Produções is a Brazilian independent film production company based in Sao Paulo, founded by producer Leonardo Mecchi, focused on developing and producing cultural and cinematographic projects, mainly first and second feature films from promising filmmakers. Among its productions are works selected for some of the most important national and international festivals, such as Cannes (Los Silencios, by Beatriz Seigner), Berlin (The Intrusion, by Flora Dias and Juruna Mallon), Locarno (The Fever, by Maya Da-Rin), and Rotterdam (Death Inhabits at Night, by Eduardo Morotó, and Sultry, by Marina Meliande), among others.



Rejeito Here and Elsewhere's Profile



HERE AND ELSEWHERE'S PROFILE

Here and Elsewhere Films was founded in 2019 by Bronte Stahl with the intention to elevate emerging international voices in non-fiction cinema by working closely with the directors it supports and integrating US and European funding strategies. The first two feature films are supported by partners such as the Sundance Institute, DocSociety, Arte "La Lucarne" and the British Film Institute and have been presented at EURODOC, IDFA Project Space, Sheffield Meet/Market, Gotham Week, Points North Forum, Dok Leipzig Co-Pro Market, Open City Assembly Lab, and DOC SP, among others.



Rejeito Enquadramento's Profile



TARSILA NAKAMURA PROFILE

Tarsila Nakamura is a Brazilian independent producer and film-maker. She is the co-founder of Elefante Factory, a collective audiovisual agency dedicated to enhancing the potential of audiovisual projects through creative and practical developments. She is part of the documentary filmmakers network DocNomads Joint Masters, which brought her to live, study, produce, and direct documentary films in Belgium, Portugal, and Hungary. Tarsila has been accumulating experiences in several Latin American and European countries working on projects with different cultural intersections, teams and urgent topics. Among the projects she worked on are Blue Box (by M. Weits; Hot Docs 2021), Jules & I (A. Ballon; Dok Leipzig 2021) and T(w)o work (doc series 6x52min by A. Verbeke plus 6 directors, 2023).



With



Rejeito



Amaraí Paulo Morais Maria Tereza Viana de Freitas Corujo

João Batista Carlos

Élida Geralda Couto

José Elza de Paula

Maurício Pinto Coelho

Sheila Pinto Coelho

Maria José Araújo

José Augusto Botelho

Leonardo Rocha

Taiane Clarissa Rodrigues Couto

Eliana Maria Gonçalves Rodrigues

Gracimeire da Conceição Pinto Coelho

Renata Aparecida Pinto Coelho Paula

Ana Rita de Souza Rodrigues

Elizangela Rodrigues Couto

Aparecida de Paula Oliveira

Amaraí Paulo Morais

Tião Elza de Paula

Francisco (Chico)

Greison José Pinto Coelho

José Marques

Rejeito Crew





Aerial images and credits from

scape" de Júlia Pontes

"Minas Gerais | Our Land, My Land-

Image Post-Production
Sem Rumo - Projetos Audiovisuais

Color correction and finalization
João Gabriel Riveres

Post-production technician
Giordano Lima

Intern
Marina Marques

Editing Assistant

Thiago Carvalhaes

