Bigger than life, or stranger: Pedro Costa’s Vitalina Varela: Part I

Vitalina Varela (2019) is the seventh feature film by the Portuguese director Pedro Costa. It tells the true story of a woman from Cape Verde who travels to Lisbon to attend the funeral of her estranged husband but arrives too late, and her attempts to cope with her grief and anger at the man who abandoned her decades before. The film won the Golden Leopard for best film at the Locarno film festival, where Vitalina Varela, who plays herself in a version of events that happened six years previously, also won the best actress award. Catherine Breillat, president of the jury at Locarno, has described the film as “a major film in the history of cinema from here on out [...] a film that will enter the heritage of world cinema”.

This is the first section of an extended, tripartite article on the film. The subsequent pieces will be published in issues 101 and 102.

1: Introduction

Four minutes into Vitalina Varela, a man returns home. It is night, and the sounds of the Cova da Moura neighbourhood are quieter than in the day. As he unlocks his door, back turned to the static camera, he stands in a small pool of light. In the foreground, rubbish and empty wine bottles cluster against a low, grimy wall. Further right, and farther away from the camera, an illuminated television screen shines out in a room of dark orange. The tiny screen shows a Black woman’s face. A square of light in the surrounding dark, framed through the radiating pattern of a window grille, the image looks for a moment like a religious icon. (This is the first image of a woman to appear in the film, and anticipates the arrival in Lisbon of Vitalina Varela herself, two scenes hence.) (See Figure 1.) The striking aesthetic qualities of this shot – fixed camera, painstaking composition, staging in depth, the use of deep blacks and patches of luminous colour to achieve a rich chiaroscuro effect — stand in contrast to the evident poverty of the setting. This visual disjuncture, and the representation of iconic protagonists played by non-professional actors like Vitalina Varela, have become defining characteristics in Pedro Costa’s work of the past two decades.
"The problem is not to make political films, but to make films politically." Jean-Luc Godard's celebrated aphorism has become something of a cliche, hollowed out through overuse. But it undoubtedly applies to the mature work of Costa. Since No Quarto Da Vanda / In Vanda's Room (2000), Costa's films about the members of a marginalised community in Lisbon have been characterised by three interlocking and mutually supporting systems: mode of production, aesthetics and politics. This oeuvre, to which Vitalina Varela is the latest addition, cannot be fully understood without a sense of its collaborative production methods. The films eschew both an extractive relationship with their subjects and the miserabilist excesses of (some) social realism, in order to present the stories, memories and relationships of their disenfranchised and materially impoverished participants. In the process, Costa and his collaborators create monumental characters and incandescent moments of beauty that are always grounded in, rather than in flight from, the quotidian. How they achieve this while avoiding the pitfalls of empty formalism or the prettification of poverty is a question that lies at the heart of this inquiry, and opens out on to vital issues of film style and politics, authorship and responsibility, and the power of the image.

2: Digital video and embedded production

Costa's features In Vanda's Room, Juventude em Marcha / Colossal Youth (2006), Cavalo Dinheiro / Horse Money (2014), and Vitalina Varela, along with several shorts including A Caza ao Coelho com Pau / The Rabbit Hunters (2007), Tarrafal (2007), and O Nosso Homem (2010), were shot on digital video and produced in collaboration with members of the Cape Verdean diaspora, and a handful of white neighbours, living in poverty on the periphery of the capital of the old Portuguese empire.

Their stories and recollections are often shaped by memories of their homeland and subsequent displacement to Lisbon in search of work or family members. To this extent the films share some key characteristics with Hamid Naficy's concept of 'accented cinema', even while Costa himself, a self-declared 'white middle-class guy from Lisbon' and the son of writer, journalist and filmmaker Luís Filipe Costa, is of neither a diasporic nor an under-privileged background. The films themselves also manifest significant differences from Naficy's model. Naficy identifies "smallness and imperfection" as characteristic elements of this postcolonial mode. However, while remaining small in terms of budgets, production crew (usually no more than four or five), the number of actors, and the locations used, Costa's films crucially enlarge the scope of their stories and characters, making them "bigger than life" without losing their social specificity. He notes of Ventura, the lead actor in Colossal Youth and Horse Money, who also has a key role in Vitalina Varela: "He likes what he sees of himself [on screen] - or the work at least. The way he does some things very well. He's bigger than life, or nicer, or stranger." The title of this piece borrows Costa's phrase in an attempt to capture something of the dialectical combination of engagement with, and enlargement from, the everyday that is evident in both Vitalina Varela and its predecessors.

While Costa's films include images of staggering beauty, composed, lit and framed with precision, his work is always embedded in the social reality of the non-professional performers' lives, as evident in details of mise en scene, as well as the stories and memories that they recount. Alongside this attention to the quotidian, the films present a particularly foregrounded sense of artifice. Costa's painterly aesthetic, developed with cinematographer Leonardo Simões since Colossal Youth, offers a stark contrast to the verisimilitudinous social realism of his contemporaries such as the Dardenne brothers, Ken Loach or Stéphane Brizé, and is a striking riposte to the persistent iconophobia that still dogs much critical discourse on film, both fiction and documentary. It also confounds associations of digital video with immediacy, authenticity and the truth claims of 'imperfect' imagery caught on the run. Instead, what digital video offers for Costa is the opportunity to spend time with his collaborators, and to minimise the intrusion of the production apparatus into the process of filming:
The people I'm working with are bricklayers, masons, cleaning ladies, junkies, unemployed, people that are, if you put them in this kind of situation [with a large crew] ... it destroys what we are trying to do.\[^{12}\]

Digital video has afforded Costa more time for research and allowed him to adopt an extended shooting schedule more akin to documentary production.\[^{11}\] But, as he has noted, it is also attended by aesthetic risks. In 2008 Costa recalled how he abandoned 35mm after Ossos (1997), and learned to shoot on digital video instead:

\textit{I had to dis-invent that thing [shooting on 35mm with a large crew] [...]

The challenge was to do as rich as [...] a Griffith film or a Straehly film [...] in a sense of having the same detail, the same even grandeur [...] I never thought a small camera like this could do things that were in my head, in my ambition, and then slowly [...] it happened, because I decided to change a lot of my ways of producing, because I had [...] time to see and hear, and to be calm with certain things (you are never calm, you are never relaxed in a normal film set). I saw a lot of things that I didn't see before. [...]\[^{14}\]

I wanted to achieve a certain strangeness [...] beautiful strangeness, it could be beautiful in another sense, not just a beautiful image, it could be rich, could have some power, and feeling, because it's rare when a video thing has [...] feelings coming through it.\[^{12}\]

Such power and affective impact is not just a question of an authorial ‘stylistic signature’ that is manifest in the content and texture of the films. While the output of Costa and his regular collaborators certainly has recognisable and recurrent elements such as settings, visual style, use of soundtrack, thematic preoccupations, and even some overlapping stories and characters, its form and content are individually imbicated with a distinct artisanat mode of production. This practice, embodied in the neighbourhoods of Fontainhas, Casa da Bamba and, with Vitalina Varela, Cova da Moura, and developed through extensive filmed rehearsals and multiple takes in contained spaces lasting months and even years, is explicitly inscribed into the fabric of the films. Moreover, it is repeatedly emphasised in the scores of promotional interviews and appearances which Costa has made about his work, and which have helped secure his authorial reputation and persona. I have made use of many such interviews and appearances here, including DVD extras, post-screening conversations available on YouTube, and material in film magazines and websites. Of course, the topics which Costa and his interlocutors choose to discuss in these settings are neither inevitable nor accidental. Rather, they play an important role in the ongoing construction of his reputation.\[^{13}\] Costa's mixed fortunes at film festivals, including walkouts and jury splits at Locarno and Cannes over, respectively, \textit{In Vanda's Room} and \textit{Colossal Youth}, have also added to his cult status.\[^{15}\]

Costa’s oeuvre is without a doubt self-consciously cinematic, and even cinephilic,\[^{13}\] but by retaining an abiding focus on the real lives of his non-professional actors, it never collapses into the solipsism evident in some quarters of European art cinema, which have shown little interest in breaking out from a circle of self-reflexivity.\[^{13}\] In his own words:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Art is not about anything else than reality.}\[^{12}\]
  \item \textit{Cinema is not about the artist. It's about being in the world, our world [...] I believe that, if cinema goes beyond its realistic borders, it loses all of its powers.}\[^{18}\]
\end{itemize}

Equally, Costa’s project refuses the debatable truth claims and promises of empowerment assumed by interventionist documentary, in which “disenfranchised humanity is repeatedly enlisted and commodified to corroborate documentary’s privileged connection to the real”.\[^{13}\] The films may offer details of ethnographic value (most evident in the bodies of the actors, their recollections, and the urban locations), but these are always situated within a framework of subjective memories, fantasies and fabulations, co-authored by Costa and his actors. In this way, to borrow Lesley Stern’s terminology, their work from \textit{In Vanda’s Room} onwards is simultaneously quotidian and historicist, in that it combines both mimetic and performative modes. Thus, a film like \textit{Colossal Youth}, \textit{Horse Money}, or \textit{Vitalina Varela} “demonstrates its own cinematic performativity at the same time as it draws from thequotidian world of things.”\[^{22}\] (The things that inhabit the mise en scene of \textit{Vitalina Varela} include scratched metal front doors and chipped furniture, an old black and white photograph, a construction worker’s hard hat and high-visor glasses, wine bottles, etc.)

Indexicality and fabulation, the real and the irreal are indivisible: each bleeds into the other.\[^{21}\] Their dynamic tension generates the dialectic at the centre of Costa’s mature work.

Moreover, the films offer a double validation of their participants, as both workers in a production and characters and story-tellers in a collective (self-) representation. They are not only centred on images of the existing and former inhabitants of the Fontainhas neighbourhood, but are crucially shaped by Costa’s longitudinal collaboration with them, which has extended over many years. The films could be considered assertions of what Gerald Vizenor, in a different context, has termed ‘survivance’. Vizenor’s neologism, developed as a paradigm for understanding native American cultures, is a conflation of survival and resistance. Even allowing for significant differences between first nation peoples and the Cape Verdean diaspora, Vizenor’s characterisation of survivance as “an active sense of presence over absence, deracination and oblivion” that presents “renunciation of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry” is applicable to Costa’s DV works.\[^{24}\]

Costa likes to tell “that old gag” about the cumbersome and inflexible process of filming in 35mm, the format he used for his first three features. A crew is shooting a scene when the director sees a ray of sunlight on a tree or flower beyond the frame and wants to film that, but the DP says there is no time to move things around, and due to this hesitation the moment is lost.\[^{24}\] By contrast, shooting on digital video with a tiny crew offers Costa both greater responsiveness on location and the ability to spend much longer with his actors, filming multiple takes across weeks and months, because the shoot is much cheaper to run.\[^{24}\] For example, the production budget on \textit{Vitalina Varela}, which took nine months to film, six days a week, was 600,000 Euros.\[^{24}\] Its predecessor \textit{Horse Money} is listed on imdb with a budget of only 100,000 Euros.\[^{24}\] Costa explains:
[Vitalina Varela] was funded in its totality with Portuguese money, mainly with the support of the Portuguese Film Institute, an aid from the Lisbon City Council, a participation of Portuguese Public Television, and a small grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation. That would make a total of around 600,000 Euros. But I must stress that we managed to get part of the funding for Vitalina Varela while we were still working on Horse Money, a film for which we had only 90,000 Euros. This means that we did the two films for around 700,000 Euros! 350,000 Euros each. [...] Anyway, our general idea is to secure a budget that will allow us to pay the salaries of the crew and the actors, for at least one year. Monthly wages. We own most of the equipment we use: the camera, the lenses, some lighting, some accessories. My partner in production, Abel Chaves, is the very same man who once sold me the small DVX100 Panasonic that I used on In Vanda’s Room.\textsuperscript{22}

In interviews Costa has repeatedly emphasized the collective nature of the project, and how, by combining “film / life, life / film”,\textsuperscript{28} it occupies a liminal zone between propinquity and distance, between traditional notions of documentary and fiction. On the one hand, he states: “I never claim to be able to understand anyone else. I think that’s impossible. Especially if you like them, which is the case for me.”\textsuperscript{22} But he also asserts his films’ archival function:

\begin{quote}
I’m proud of the work we all did. The way it shines, this kind of archival material we captured, that surprises me. Vitalina, Vanda, and Ventura [...] Later, someone can put all these films together, and they’ll show or reflect a certain humanity.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

Costa has also acknowledged the influence of documentary photographers such as Jacob Riis, Walker Evans and Eugene Smith on his films.\textsuperscript{21} In a discussion of the impact of Riis on Costa’s work, Max Nelson notes: “The camera may not be the social weapon for Costa as it was for Riis [100 years previously], but it still has power as a device for a more modest kind of ministration: that of looking at people with ‘attention and care’.”\textsuperscript{22} Nelson concludes: “One of Costa’s debts to his pantheon of citizen-photographers is his impulse to call our attention to the fact that his characters have an independent existence outside the films they inhabit. It’s this gesture, you sense, that Costa counts on to absolve his films for whatever thefts or exploitations they make.”\textsuperscript{22}

Moreover, in their attention to “film / life, life / film” the digital video shoots are always open to the contingent, in terms of both process and content, even while they are shot relatively slowly using multiple takes, rather than on the fly. For instance, they are far more interruptible than a larger production would be, as Costa suggests:

\begin{quote}
[...] life goes on [...]. everything can be suspended, we can be doing a shot and some junkie guy can come on and put his hand over the lens [...] ‘I listen I have to talk to you’ [...] he knows it’s not a ‘masterpiece’ [...] and he has the power to break it [...] Those are things I couldn’t imagine before, and today it doesn’t bother me at all.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

For me, there’s much more than just the shooting or the editing: there’s Ventura’s health, there’s Vitalina’s papers, all the waiting rooms and court houses and infirmaries and corridors that they have to walk through. I think cinema is also there for them not to walk alone. Sometimes I wonder if it was just a film, would I bother?\textsuperscript{22}

Nevertheless, Costa retains final cut. David McDougall comments on the process of making In Vanda’s Room:

\begin{quote}
One scene details the reactions of Vanda and another character to the death of Geny, who lived in the neighborhood. The first take, shot on the day of the event, was too emotional, full of too many tears. [...] The take used in the film was shot 6 months after the event. (The take used was emotionally understated, and Vanda was unhappy with it; she preferred the more emotional first take.)\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

I will consider performance style in more detail below. Crucially, McDougall suggests, “Costa is allowed these liberties because he has integrated himself into the community. The neighborhood is, in a way, his office, where he goes every day to work.”\textsuperscript{32}

To an extent, Costa’s characters may be taken as representatives of the larger community of the Fontainhas slum (many of whom were relocated to Casal da Boba when the slum was demolished), but the films neither stand in moral judgement on them nor pity them as victims worthy of audience sympathy. Their cinema avoids both the “corrective delirium” of re-enactment films that “provide idealized, exemplary models”\textsuperscript{28} for audiences to follow, and a melodramatic mode that yokes victimhood to moral superiority and “allows the underdog to have a moral upper hand [particularly] when a wounded or marginalized subjectivity is the object of representation”.\textsuperscript{22} The logics that the films sustain are political and aesthetic, not moralising. For instance, in Colossal Youth, Horse Money and Vitalina Varela, Ventura has functioned as both a representative of the migrant community and a powerful, increasingly iconic screen presence. A former bricklayer who became an alcoholic following his injury in a knife fight in 1975, Ventura’s poor health led to enforced retirement in his 20s, followed by years of treatment and a diagnosis of schizophrenia.\textsuperscript{51} Many years later, he had two heart attacks during the filming of Vitalina Varela.\textsuperscript{31} Costa recalls showing Colossal Youth in Fontainhas, before the slum was fully demolished. “Afterwards, one of the more politically active neighbourhood boys raised his glass and said, ‘Ventura, every day I see you in the ghetto, and you’re dirty or you’re crazy or drunk or half asleep – now I see you up on screen, and you’re all of us.”\textsuperscript{32}
Around half an hour into Colossal Youth, Ventura visits Vanda in her new social housing apartment in Casal da Bopa. She sits on the bed, telling him about how she gave birth to her daughter Beatriz in hospital. The scene is shot from a corner of the room with a fixed camera in one unbroken take of 10 minutes. Twenty seconds from the end of Vanda's lengthy account, Ventura asks her: “Are you off drugs, Zita – I mean – Vanda?” (See Figure 2). Ventura’s mistake and self-correction here, and Costa’s decision to use this take, foreground the film’s means of construction and make manifest the labour of acting that is typically obfuscated in Hollywood and much of art cinema. Labour of the dispossessed supplies an electric charge of urgency and immediacy in humanitarian documentary images”. Rangan, Immediations, p. 20.) Later in Colossal Youth, the museum security guard Nhurro appears to be reading his lines from a script hidden in the shadows of the shot before delivering them facing the camera.

![Image](http://www.sensesofcinema.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Austin-Part-4-Image-2-Ventura-and-Vanda-rotated.jpg)

**Colossal Youth**

Such instances chime with the ostensive style of the films, which repeatedly manifest artifice in their composition, blocking, framing, and lighting, even while remaining anchored in the everyday life of the (ex)inhabitants of Fontainhas. But these are not simply moments of self-reflexivity and performativity deployed to signal the ‘sophistication’ of the filmmaker and his implied audience. Instead, they acknowledge that performance is labour, a job for which, crucially, Costa pays his impoverished collaborators. Of course, it is not as physically dangerous as construction work (how Ventura’s nephew Benvindo was injured in a fall), and does not demand the deracination and relocation that he and his compatriots (including Vitalina’s husband Joaquim) endured in moving from Cape Verde to Lisbon to find employment. Nevertheless, acting requires practice and the accumulation of experience, much as any other job. In a rare interview after winning the best actress award at the 2019 Locarno film festival, Vitalina Varela stated: “It may not seem so to the viewers, but it was a lot, a lot of work.” Costa elaborates:

> this kind of work, which happens to be cinema, occupies people. [...] What’s good for these people is the occupation. What Ventura doesn’t have is a project, a horizon. It’s hard to live without a project. [...] So of course it’s very good when they’re making films with me. But they give to me, too. [...] I really like it when you see the effort on screen. [...] We’re attempting, like Beckett or Céline used to say, to get it to the skin and bone. When it’s naked, very raw, it’s harder of course.

In addition to their acknowledged labour in performance, the actors also contributed material to Colossal Youth and other films (Vitalina Varela is credited as co-writer of the film of the same name), including stories, songs, memories, and letters. Costa recounts the making of Colossal Youth:

> when these young guys started making their scenes [...] they were [off] drugs, they were working, they had jobs, they had girlfriends, they had a new life, they had these apartments, and what they brought were very, very sad, and problematic words. I was not expecting that. [...] Now, in this film, they are much more actors, and actors in the sense that they wrote the text, they memorised the text, and sometimes [...] they even staged themselves as they felt they should. [...] and for me that’s priceless [...] when you have this kind of thing [...] for me, now making a film has a lot do with this, with this studio collective spirit.
Scenarios are not scripted by Costa, but are instead created from interactions with the actors, and then honed across multiple takes. (He estimates that around 80% of dialogue is usually in Kriol, Cape Verdean creole, and the remaining 20% in Portuguese.) It is worth quoting at some length Costa’s accounts of the process:

I don’t know what the film will be when we start out and I don’t know if there will be fifty scenes, if he will take the bus, if he will sing – I just don’t know. I depend on the actors’ text and their proposals, as everything comes from their experience. Sometimes I don’t know if it’s a truthful experience, as in something that really happened or not. If it’s interesting I don’t care. [...] So we work from within each moment, always present and perceptive and not from a script or a screenplay.

If you see us shooting [...] there is a moment when everybody functions [...] and sometimes function as fast, as efficient, as practical as a good film crew, [...] I had to show them that I worked a lot [...] I have this firm belief [...] that it’s about working, like making shoes or tables, and I of course learned that from the people I love.

Time is not our enemy. [...] I’m a great believer in Chaplin’s method of “rehearsal on film.” You know that he used to film all his work, everything he did, and that included all the rehearsals with the actors, with himself. It was his method of clearing the way or discovering things just by studying the details and variations from one take to another. He could do it because he was the richest, most powerful director in the world, the boss of his own studio. I started doing it in In Vanda’s Room because I was recording MiniDV tapes, it was more than affordable. [...] Anyway, yes, we keep filming because of Vitalina, Ventura, Vanda—we continue so that they might keep their tension on the highest possible level, to see where they can take their performance.

Rather than rely only upon “characters and situations found in the objective world as a given, and therefore resistant to representation”, Costa recruits collaborators who actively participate in their own construction as characters, as he makes clear in this exchange:

NOTEBOOK; There’s this collision between Vitalina’s true story and Ventura’s fictional character [as a priest], to put it in the simplest terms. This is a new construction for you.

COSTA; Well, not really, in every film there has always been some sort of fantasy serving some sort of reality.

It’s the example of Ventura working this delirium and bringing it closer to his own experience, to Vitalina’s and to that of the whole community of immigrants. You could say there’s a big part of irresponsibility working this way, but, at least, if I’m true to Vitalina, if I follow her guidance, memories, feelings, we will be safe. Shooting like we do, for a whole year or more, the routine sets in quite differently than that of a conventional seven week shoot; the practical, daily work gets in charge of the intellect and of the hesitations and the most profound doubts. It’s priceless.

In the making of Vitalina Varela, he also worked to condense the protagonist’s monologues:

We wrote the screenplay together. Actually, she wrote more of the screenplay than I did; she didn’t write it by hand, but she memorized it. You see ten or five or one minute of dialogue or monologue, in the beginning it was ten or 20 minutes. My work is to contain, to compress, to organize, divide, and build the movie.

Costa’s authorship is thus partly shared with his actor-collaborators, Vanda, Ventura, Vitalina Varela and others. While he certainly remains the most privileged participant, in terms of technical ability and institutional power as well as class and race, he is not simply ventriloquising their experience. But these complex power relations, and how they play out in the finished films, call for further investigation, which I pursue in the next issue.

Endnotes

3. Costa has also made the documentaries Ou git votre sourire enfoui? / Where Does Your Hidden Smile Lie?, (2001), on the filmmakers Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, and Ne Change Rien (Change Nothing, 2009), on the singer Jeanne Balibar, both shot on digital video. Before 2000, he directed three fiction films on 35mm: O Sangue (Blood, 1989), Casa de Lava (1994) and Óssos (Bones, 1997). The latter two are discussed briefly below.
7. Costa interviewed for the New York Film Festival, September-October, 2019, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=5TqgWF4OueM (https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=5TqgWF4OueM)
15. See also his repeated references in interviews and appearances to a wide range of filmmakers, from classical Hollywood to art cinema to counter cinema. In conversation with Craig Keller, he mentions films as diverse as Straub and Huillet’s Trep Tôô Trep Tard (Too Early Too Late, 1981), and Joseph H. Lewis’ TERROR IN A TEXAS TOWN (1958) in almost the same breath. Keller, Finding the Criminal.
17. Costa in Finding the Criminal.
23. He tells slightly different versions in filmed conversations with Craig Keller (2008, ed., Finding the Criminal in 2010), and Laura Mulvey (Pedro Costa and Laura Mulvey in conversation, at the ICA, London, 2015, available on the DVD of Horse Money (Second Run)).
34. Costa in conversation with Hillis.
35. Costa in Kasman, “Cinema Must Be a Ritual.”

37. McDougall, “Two or Three Things I Know About Fontainhas”.


40. Romney, “Pedro Costa”.

41. See Costa in Kasman. Costa told Jordan Cronk: “So we adapted ourselves to shoot most of Ventura’s scenes in this huge abandoned cinema that we found in the suburbs and adapted into our own film studio. We tried to make it a bit soundproof so that we could record direct sound. We had heaters and everything to make Ventura as comfortable as possible.” Jordan Cronk, “House of the Spirits” Film Comment (January-February 2020), https://www.filmcomment.com/article/house-of-the-spirits-pedro-costa-interview-vitalina-varela/

42. Costa quoted in Romney, “Pedro Costa”.

43. Vanda, who is now on methadone, replies, “Absolutely, it’s been almost two years.” Zita is the name of Vanda’s sister, whose death is referred to obliquely in Colossal Youth. In Vanda’s Room shows them both smoking heroin.

44. Rangan notes a similar dematerialisation of labour in documentary: “the unacknowledged”.

45. Costa speaking at the International Film Festival, Rotterdam in 2020. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X42r8vB4tZE

46. Vitalina Varela in “The Heart of Vitalina”, video, August 20, 2019, at: https://www.filmfestivals.com/blog/locarno_dailies/video_vitalina_varela_locarno_best_actress_in_tears_expressing_her_gratitude


49. Costa in conversation with Hills.


51. Costa in Finding the Criminal in 2010. He is referring to classical Hollywood filmmakers like Chaplin and John Ford.

52. Costa in Kasman, “Cinema Must Be a Ritual”,


54. Costa in Kasman, “Cinema Must Be a Ritual”.

55. Costa in Haden Gest and Mark Peranson, “I see a darkness: Pedro Costa on Vitalina Varela”, Cinemascopc, 80, nd., at: https://cinemascop.com/cinema-scope-magazine/i-see-a-darkness-pedro-costa-on-vitalina-varela/

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