



LANDS

directed by Maya Da-Rin

“A gorgeous work of art. (...) Maya Da-Rin’s
Lands marks the addition of another strong voice
to the roster of Brazilian nonfiction filmmakers.”

Robert Koehler, *Variety*

Synopsis

On the triple frontier between Brazil, Colombia and Peru, the twin towns of Leticia and Tabatinga form an urban island surrounded by the Amazon rain-forest. Following the ordinary events and the constant come and go of people along the border, *Lands* portrays the presence and the influence of the frontier on the lives of its inhabitants.



“Brazil has been dislocated to the Amazon. Everything happens there, drug trafficking goes through there, economic interests are there, a lot of capital is flowing that way, as well as concerns regarding ecology, the world’s viewpoint, the paranoia and the illusion about paradise, everything is there or turned in that direction. For better or worse, the Amazon has become the place of all places, and a great cultural melting pot is brewing over there, and from down here we have no idea what’s going on.”
Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, in interview to *Azougue* magazine

The film

The Amazon rarely conjures up urban images in those who do not know it. Maybe for this reason the first contact with the twin cities Tabatinga (Brazil) and Leticia (Colombia), and the village Santa Rosa (Peru) is so surprising. Cut-off from the economic centers of its respective countries by the forest and the distance, this triple border is characterized by the constant transit of people and exchange of goods, the incessant sound of motorcycles and radios, the mixture of traditional and technological knowledge and the coexistence of different cultures and ethnicities.

Lands proposes a reflection about some of the borders’ manifestations through encounters with some of its inhabitants.

Manoel works at the Tabatinga port and takes passengers and goods back and forth between Brazil and Peru in his motorboat. Willian, Raul and Carlos are taxi drivers who

daily transport the population across the border that separates the twin cities. Basilia belongs to the Bora Colombian people and frequently visits relatives in villages situated in the three countries, questioning the notion of nationality and territorial limits imposed by the borders. Irene, Basilia's cousin, lives in the forest in the outskirts of Leticia and every Saturday walks along the 20 km between her house and the city, taking *pupunha* fruit to be sold in the market. Florentino, a Tikuna bilingual teacher in the Umariáçu village, battles an intense transformation process due to the proximity of the indigenous area and the city of Tabatinga. Francisco gives new meaning to traditional curing rites. Along with his wife, Celina, he receives patients for the rituals he conducts using the *Ayahuasca* plant in the backyard of his house in Tabatinga.

Lands slowly reveals the various daily rhythms in Tabatinga, Leticia and Santa Rosa: the currents of the Solimões river observed from Manoel's boat; the immense forest that reveals itself before Basilia's fast pace; the hammock rocking to the rhythm of the Christian hymn sung in Tikuna by Florentino's children; the concentration and silence of Francisco's patients while taking their *Ayahuasca* doses, preparing themselves to cross a spiritual border instead of a concrete one.

The film maps out the demarcations that, although not always visible, are present in people's daily lives. The main character in *Lands* is the border itself, multiple, complex and indefinable by a singular point of view. The borders, after all, are everywhere and nowhere in this region, at the same time preventing and promoting circulation.





The border

Situated side by side, on the same riverbank of the Solimões, Tabatinga and Leticia are integrated although belonging to different national territories. The twin cities have close economic ties and are connected by a single avenue. A post with two flags signals the place where Amizade avenue (Brazil) becomes Internacional avenue (Colombia). On the other bank of the river, at a few minutes distance by boat, is Santa Rosa village, in Peruvian territory.

Different from Tabatinga, which is practically unknown by Brazilians from other regions, Leticia is the capital of the Amazonas state, in Colombia. Both cities are home to many Peruvian immigrants and Colombian *desplazados* that are fleeing from the Farc guerrilla armed conflicts. Indigenous people of different ethnicities that live in villages or reserves around also circulate in the markets and ports.

There is a constant exchange of goods, languages and knowledge, not only between the two cities, but also between the different countries, the city and the forest, the indigenous lands and the national territories. The triple border is a place of confluence and contact, which reveals both the similarities and the differences between three South American countries.

Research

Lands started to be developed in 2004. The initial phases of research were carried out in collaboration with Luiza Leite, Daniel Bueno, Pedro Cesarino and Geraldo Pereira. In July 2005, Maya Da-Rin travelled to the border. She lived in Leticia for two months and travelled through the region.

This first trip allowed the director to become familiar with some aspects of the border that would later be implicated in the choices made during the shoot.

Shooting

The shoot started in November 2006 and took six weeks. Its duration allowed the wait and observation that were crucial for the making of *Lands*.

There was no shooting script, but narrative options that gave direction to the crew's work. In *Lands*, the intention was to think the concept of border beyond its concrete manifestations. The film portrays some of the more subtle aspects of the triple border: the maps drawn by the lichen on the bark of the trees, the facial traits of people from different origins, the sound of various languages mixed together and the musical rhythms from each country blaring from bars and restaurants.

Editing

The script was developed during the editing by Karen Akerman, Maya Da-Rin and Joaquim Castro. Its structure is centered on the encounters with some of the border's inhabitants and their daily transit.

The territorial border is a starting point for the portrayal of issues such as the relationship between the cities and the Amazon rainforest today, the contact between traditional indigenous cultures and contemporary modes of life, and the exchange between three South American countries.

Sound design

The soundtrack, created by musician Edson Secco by using local sounds, dialogues with the geographical spaces presented in the film. It was elaborated upon the transformation and fusion of ambient sound recorded during the shoot and musical harmonies composed in studio. The creation of the musical themes was intrinsic to the sound design and conceived together and simultaneously with it.

Approach according to Maya Da-Rin

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“*Lands* was born out of the desire to shoot transition spaces. It is a film about fissures, gaps and also confluences. When I arrived at the border, I saw a multiple reality, where ancestral and contemporary cultures mutually influence one another. The land, which is usually perceived as a material possession and a political territory, has a spiritual connotation to many indigenous peoples. The film gradually reveals that the border as well as the land are present in different ways in its region’s geography – the city, the forest and the river – and the people’s daily movement through these spaces.

The *traveling* takes allude to the sensation of flow and transit, so common in the border. The fixed camera takes emphasize belonging and the relationship of the people with the territory. The sound, rhythm, texture and colors of the film compose a personal approach through which I attempt to get closer to a region both distant and familiar to me.”





Maya Da-Rin director

Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1979, Maya Da-Rin works as film director and editor. In 2005 she participated in the workshops of Documentary and Actor's Direction at the International School of Film and Television in San Antônio de los Baños, Cuba. Her work as a filmmaker includes the documentaries *E agora José?* and *Margem*, both awarded by the Itaú Cultural Institute.

Her films were programmed and awarded at several film festivals worldwide, as the 63rd Film Festival Locarno, Switzerland; 52nd Leipzig Film Festival, Germany; 19^e Rencontres Cinémas d'Amérique Latine de Toulouse, France; 25th Guadalajara International Festival, Mexico; 33rd São Paulo International Film Festival, Brazil; and 29th Festival Del Nuevo Cine Latino Americano, Cuba. *Lands* is her first feature-length film.

Cineluz producing company

Founded in 1992, Cineluz has attained recognition in the Brazilian cinematographic market for its prize-winning documentaries and feature films.

The company has produced more than ten documentary films, among which, *Kids' War*, prize winner at the Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival, Havana and Gramado Festival; and *Meninas*, programmed at the Berlin Film Festival.

Amongst the fiction films produced by Cineluz are *Stolen Dreams*, awarded best film by the popular jury at Rio Film Festival; *Cazuza*, *Time Doesn't Stop*, the biggest Brazilian box office hit in 2004; *Possible Loves*, a Sundance (2001) and Miami Film Festival (2001) prize winner; and *Little Book of Love*, the company's first feature length fiction film.

Awards

Cameras on Diversity Award, 25th Guadalajara
International Film Festival, Mexico, 2010

Best Film, ABCV Jury, 6th Panorama Internacional
Coisa de Cinema, Brazil, 2010

Jury Special Award, 6th Panorama Internacional
Coisa de Cinema, Brasil, 2010

Best Film, 9th Filme Livre Festival, Brazil, 2010

Nominated for Dirk Vandersypen Award,
Belgium, 2010

Screenings

2009

62nd International Film Festival Locarno, Switzerland,

33rd São Paulo International Film Festival, Brazil

52nd International Leipzig Festival, Germany

2010

13th Tiradentes Film Festival, Brazil

25th Guadalajara International Film Festival, Mexico

9th Filme Livre Festival, Brazil

10th Cinelatino, Germany

9th Tekfestival, Rome, Italy, 2010

3rd Human Rights International Film Festival, Mexico

6th Panorama Internacional Coisa de Cinema, Brazil

8th Femina, Brazil

20th Cine Ceará, Brazil

8th Premiere Brazil NY, MoMA, United States

3rd Wassermusik Festival, Berlin, Germany

8th Vancouver Latin American Film Festival, Canada

4th Novocine, Madrid, Spain



Fact sheet

Brazil, 2009

75 min, 35 mm, color,

Dolby Digital

director

Maya Da-Rin

producer

Sandra Werneck

assistant director

Luiza Leite

*photography and
camera*

Pedro Urano

sound recording

Bruno Vasconcelos

Altyr Pereira

editor

Karen Akerman

Maya Da-Rin

Joaquim Castro

sound design and

original music

Edson Secco

executive producer

Maya Da-Rin

production director

Mara Junqueira

research

Daniel Bueno

Geraldo Pereira

Luiza Leite

Maya Da-Rin

Pedro Cesarino

producing company

Cineluz

co-production

Synapse

SB TV Programming

associate producers

Labocine

Alice Filmes

support

CTAv

Quanta

Centro de Trabalho Indigenista

Prefeitura de Tabatinga

Rico Linhas Aéreas

Bureau Cinema e Vídeo



Maya Da-Rin

tel +55 21 2512 1770

mob +55 21 9649 5892

mwdarin@uol.com.br

www.cineluz.com.br