



A TROPICAL  
MELODRAMA  
BY KARIM AÏNOUZ

# THE INVISIBLE LIFE

OF EURÍDICE GUSMÃO



FESTIVAL DE CANNES  
UN CERTAIN REGARD  
2019 OFFICIAL SELECTION





# SHORT

**R**io de Janeiro, 1950. Eurídice, 18, and Guida, 20, are two inseparable sisters living at home with their conservative parents. Although immersed in a traditional life, each one nourishes a dream: Eurídice of becoming a renowned pianist, Guida of finding true love. In a dramatic turn, they are separated by their father and forced to live apart. They take control of their separate destinies, while never giving up hope of being finding each other. A tropical melodrama from the director of *Madame Satã*.

# SYNOPSIS



A woman with dark hair, wearing a teal sleeveless dress and brown shoes, stands in front of a weathered wall with a blue double door. The scene is set outdoors, with a wooden fence and some foliage visible on the left. The title 'SYNOPSIS' is overlaid in large orange letters, and 'LONG' is in white letters to the right.

# SYNOPSIS

## LONG

**R**io de Janeiro, 1950. In the conservative Portuguese household of the Gusmão family, Eurídice, 18, and Guida, 20, are two inseparable sisters who find in each other a safe space for their hopes and aspirations. While Guida has in her little sister a trustful confidante for her romantic adventures, Eurídice finds in her spirited older sister the encouragement she needs to pursue her dream of becoming a professional pianist.

Until one day, fed up with living under the strict rules of their father, Manoel, Guida embarks on a whirlwind romance with a handsome sailor and elopes to Greece. When she returns months later, pregnant

and single, Manoel brutally banishes her from the home and tells her that Eurídice has left to study music in Vienna and doesn't want any further contact with her. In order to protect his family's honor, Manuel keeps the now married Eurídice in the dark about her sister's whereabouts.

Guida and Eurídice try to take control of their separate destinies, while never giving up hope of someday being reunited. While Guida fights all odds to live a dignified life as a single mother, Eurídice struggles to be both the perfect housewife and a professional musician. But, without each other, the sisters will have to find alone the resilience to overcome the obstacles that prevent them from becoming the women they could have been. Among the daily hardships, the greatest battle is against the fate that separated them. Will they find each other in time to overcome the oppression that suffocates them?



# WRITER-DIRECTOR

# KARIM AÏNOUZ

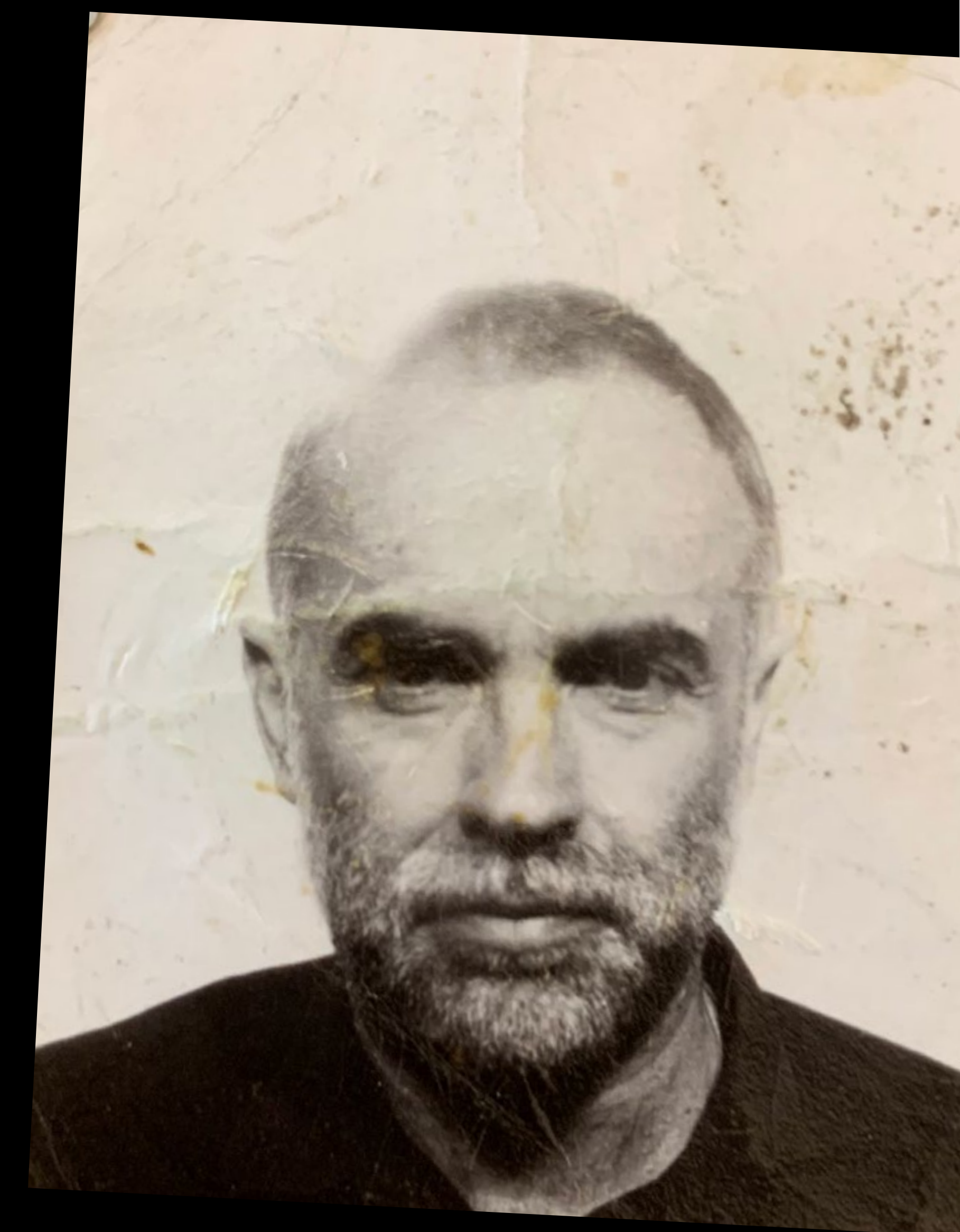
**Karim Aïnouz is an award-winning film director, screenwriter and visual artist.**

His first feature, *Madame Satã*, premiered in Cannes Un Certain Regard in 2002. He also directed *Love for Sale*, 2006 (Venice Orizzonti), *I Travel Because I Have To, I Come Back Because I Love You*, 2009 (Venice Orizzonti), and *The Silver Cliff*, 2011 (Cannes Directors' Fortnight). In 2014 *Futuro Beach* screened in the Berlinale Competition. The documentary *Central Airport THF* premiered at the 68th Berlinale (Panorama) and won the Amnesty International Prize. *The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão* is his seventh feature.

Aïnouz has directed, with Sergio Machado, the TV series *Alice* for HBO Latin America. His installations and collaborative projects as a visual artist have been part of events such as Sharjah, São Paulo and Whitney Museum Biennials. He is also a screenwriting tutor at the Porto Iracema das Artes in Fortaleza, Brazil.

## Filmography

- 2019 *The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão* (A Vida Invisível de Eurídice Gusmão)
- 2017 *Central Airport THF* (Zentralflughafen THF)
- 2014 *Futuro Beach* (Praia do Futuro)
- 2011 *Silver Cliff* (O Abismo Prateado)
- 2009 *I Travel Because I Have To, I Come Back Because I Love You* (Viajo Porque Preciso, Volto Porque te Amo, co-directed with Marcelo Gomes)
- 2006 *Love For Sale* (O Céu de Suely)
- 2002 *Madame Satã* (Madam Satan)





# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

**The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão is inspired by the 2015 novel of the same name by Martha Batalha.**

**I** was deeply moved when I discovered the book. It triggered vivid memories of my own life. I was raised in the conservative Brazilian Northeast in the 60's, in a family with a majority of women – a matriarchal family in a hyper machista context. The men were either gone or often absent. In a patriarchal culture, I had the great chance of being part of a family where women ran the show – they had the leading roles.

What drove me to adapt “The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão” was the desire to render visible many invisible lives, like those of my mother, my grandmother, my aunts, and so many other women from that time. Their stories have not been told enough, neither in novels, history books nor cinema. How did a woman in the 50's

react when she had sex for the first time with her new husband? How was it to not want to get pregnant before the advent of contraceptive methods? How could a single mother raise a child in an environment that excluded her so horribly? We cannot take these questions for granted. The challenge was to tackle them from an intimate standpoint – and that is what the novel does so with such brilliance.

Melodrama has become diluted and made precarious in Brazilian television with telenovelas. However, they move millions of viewers every day, proving melodrama can be very powerful. Here I sought to celebrate melodrama as a radical aesthetic strategy to draw a social critique of our times, one that is visually splendid and tragic, grand and raw. I wanted to craft a story that sheds light on an invisible chapter of women's history.

I was determined to tell a tale of solidarity, a story that underlines the fact that we are much stronger together than we are alone, no matter how different we might be. With The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão, I imagined a movie with very saturated colours, with a camera close to the characters, pulsating with them. I imagined a film full of sensuality, of music, of drama, tears, sweat and mascara, but also a movie pregnant with cruelty, violence and sex; a movie that didn't fear being sentimental, bigger than life – a film that beats with my two beloved protagonists' hearts: Guida and Eurídice.

— Karim Aïnouz







# INTERVIEW WITH KARIM AÏNOUZ

## What inspired you to begin work on this film?

**I**t started from something personal. I lost my mother in 2015. She was 85. She was a single mother, and it was never easy for her. I felt that her story and the stories of many women of her generation had not been told enough – they were somewhat invisible.

It was at that time that my producer and friend, Rodrigo Teixeira, gave me the manuscript for “The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão”. I read it and I immediately felt very close to the story. The characters reminded me a lot of my mother and her sister, and also of a lot of women in my family.



It was also like going back to my first film, which was a portrait of my grandmother and her four sisters. It was a story that celebrated these women, a documentary about their joy and their pain, and about the solidarity between them. I felt it was time to portray them again, but this time not in a documentary register but as a melodrama.

I had always wanted to make a melodrama, but one that could be relevant to our times. How could I engage with that genre but somehow make it contemporary? That’s how I jumped into the adventure of making the movie. And how would I craft a film that was moving and big like an opera, in saturated fluorescent colours, larger than life? How would I use the genre but on my own terms? I wanted to make a tropical melodrama.



## INTERVIEW WITH KARIM AÏNOUZ

### Please describe your working method and the atmosphere on set.

I do not know if this could be called a working method, but there are some processes, just a way of working that you devise after making a few films.

One of them has to do with my routine on the set. The first thing that came to my mind is my obsession with arriving early on the set and staying there alone, figuring out, imagining the scene, and sensing the space before everyone arrives. This moment of being alone in the set has often been crucial for me in order to move forward and lead the way, with precision.

Another thing that comes to mind is the fact that I like to call my actors by the names of the characters. It helps to keep a certain magic and allows me to dive into the film and it keep a sense of isolation from the “real” world out there – as if it were me and the characters that are there, playing together – and no one else.

The use of mobile phones is absolutely forbidden from the beginning to the end of the day. We ask for everyone from the crew and cast to leave their phones off – only production can use their mobiles. It breaks the spell and it destroys the concentration.

And talking about concentration, this was the trademark of working with the cinematographer Helene Louvart. It was the first time we collaborated and it was a wonderful exchange.









## INTERVIEW WITH KARIM AÏNOUZ

### Please share a few words about your actors.

**I** worked with a wonderful ensemble of actresses and actors. They were all very different, from different generations, different acting registers – and the challenge was to achieve the same tone, the same vibration.

It took me a long time to find them but once I did, we started to rehearse like a theater ensemble. Initially, we didn't really rehearse the scenes but what happened before or after the scenes. It was very physical.

And then we would improvise the scenes. I would take notes and adjust the dialogue accordingly. It was a very strong experience, not only throughout the preparation but also on the set. You need to be alert and take in happenstance, mistakes; you need to be very present, and attentive to what your actors do, what they propose, and then you need to be precise and choose what feels right for the scene. You need to be there with them and only them. It should always feel alive.

My two lead actresses, Julia Stockler and Carol Duarte, were young, full of energy, and very open to taking risks, to experiment with different possibilities of playing the same scene. They were very generous. I always begin from a place where I am not sure and then by trying things out we get to the right tone – it is a lot about searching, about not knowing and improvising.

I also had the incredible opportunity to work with one of the most brilliant, or perhaps the most brilliant, Brazilian actress of all times, Fernanda Montenegro. It was not only a dream come true but also a wonderful learning experience and a challenge. Fernanda is 90 but she has more energy than any 18-year-old. It was a lot of fun to work with her – she was never afraid and she was also always searching.

But I guess, in short, it is all about trust and experimentation – and following your intuition about tone and rhythm. We have to trust one another, the actors and I, as we go on the journey of exploration. It is like composing music I guess.





## INTERVIEW WITH KARIM AÏNOUZ

### What did you learn during the course of making this film?

**E**very film for me is a new learning experience, a new adventure, like a new love affair. I think it is crucial to be open and to understand that with every film you are learning something new. It is crucial to never feel like you know too much.

I think for me the biggest lesson on this film was to make peace with narrative. I always had a very conflicted relationship with storytelling – I was attracted to it as a viewer but I was also doubtful of it as a maker. It often seemed like a straight-jacket. Its rules and its parameters always felt like domestication – as if our imagination was more savage and abstract than story. And I still do feel this way. But here I decided to engage with a classic format and to try to disturb it from within. I wanted to respect it but to also intoxicate it a bit – with music, colour, with a non-naturalistic approach to acting and performing. You can never behave well with story. Even if you decide to accept it you must always question it.



How could I seduce the audience through story, through an almost epic narrative and yet avoid the traps of predictability? I wanted to plunge into a world that was real but also artificial, excessive. These were the main challenges with this film. They were new challenges for me and I learned an incredible amount in the process – it was a lot of pleasure. When you work with melodrama there is always a degree of manipulating the viewers' feelings and sensations; there is a desire to move them, make them cry and relate to characters in a visceral way – and doing that is always delicate. It is a fine line.







## INTERVIEW WITH KARIM AÏNOUZ

### What inspired you to become a filmmaker? What were the sources of your inspiration?

**A**t first I had never thought of becoming a filmmaker. It was not in my horizon at all, particularly in my financial horizon, despite the fact that I loved going to the cinema. I grew up in the time of the military dictatorship in Brazil and when I was a teenager I thought I needed to do something practical, both in order to make a living and in order to resist in that kind of oppressive political climate. Cinema at that point was not my first option.

I got a degree in architecture and I worked as an urban planner for a bit – but somehow it seemed very bureaucratic. It was great but I felt it took ages to get things done. I was young and very impatient (I still am). On the side I started to do photography, and video, and Super 8 – it was a way of getting things out faster. I was 22. I really wish I could have been a painter, but I had no talent for that.





## INTERVIEW WITH KARIM AÏNOUZ

And then I made some experimental films, shorts, essay films, small documentaries. I shot a lot on VHS, on Super 8 – everything was very homemade with no budget. And then I made a portrait of my maternal grandmother and that seemed to touch people, to really get to people. That seemed to matter and to make an impact somehow – it felt good, it felt right.

I remember watching a short film from Todd Haynes called Superstar. It was 1988 in New York City, at a small cine club called Millennium. I was blown away. It was all made with Barbie dolls and archival footage, and it was brilliant and sexy and it didn't cost a lot to make. So I thought maybe I could try to make films. That film was so pivotal for me. It was so raw, artisanal and potent.

And I remember seeing, at the same time, a film from the 70's, Iracema - Uma Transa Amazonica (1975) by Jorge Bodansky, and how it worked on the border between documentary and fiction, and improvisation. That film made a huge imprint on me as well.

I slowly understood the power of making films and the effect they could have on the world. It was never my plan to make movies but it became an obsession. And it stopped seeming so far from my horizon.

But since then, more than two decades ago, I couldn't stop anymore. Little did I know that making films would take much longer to work on than urban planning projects.









## INTERVIEW WITH KARIM AÏNOUZ

### What are your views on the state of the film industry in your country?

**F**or about 15 years, since the first mandate of Lula (our greatest president ever!), the Brazilian film industry has undergone major change – it has blossomed in a way like never before. And I had the great chance to be part of that renaissance. But that time seems to be coming to a fierce halt.

We are going through a very critical, not to say tragic, moment in the history of the Brazilian film industry. It is a wretched coincidence that the day our film and another Brazilian film were invited to the Official Selection, all the activities of the National Film Agency (ANCINE) were callously discontinued. It is also the very first time in two decades when Brazilian films are invited to be at an A-list festival that there was no mention whatsoever of it in any official government media outlet. It was like it didn't happen.





## INTERVIEW WITH KARIM AÏNOUZ

We are undergoing a lethal blow to the industry and to cinema. We maintain hope and we are fighting to revert the situation, but we are facing the huge danger of the quick implosion of the sector. However, it is not surprising coming from a recently elected government that has been treating culture and the public support of culture in the worst way possible. But instead of just complaining about the violent manner that we are being treated as cultural producers, I prefer to look at the future and to fight for it, with blood in our eyes.

The fact that we have three films representing Brazil in Cannes this year, one of them being a first film by a wonderful female director, Alice Furtado, is real proof that the public policies for supporting cinema, developed



in the past years under previous governments, have been a massive success – and that if things change in the wrong direction we will experience a great loss.

And the world should be watching and be attentive to it. We need the solidarity of countries like France, where cinema is a national patrimony, in order to continue alive as a vital cinema, and to resist extinction.







# MAIN CAST

## BIOGRAPHIES

**C**arol Duarte started in the theater, where she acted in more than 20 plays such as A Visita da Velha Senhora, directed by Celso Frateschi (2015), and O Alvo by Pedro Garrafa (2015). In 2017, she was cast in A Força do Querer – a great public success – where she played Ivana Garcia, a young woman who is discovered to be transgender. She will premier her first leading role in a feature film in Cannes with The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão.



**J**ulia Stockler is an actress, writer and director. She graduated in acting and film studies in Rio de Janeiro. She received best actress awards for her roles in the short films Sobe Sofia by André Mielnik and for Gaydar by Felipe Cabral. She also appeared in the feature films Amazônia Caruana by Tizuka Yamasaki and Mate-me por favor by Anita Rocha da Silveira. Julia is also a writer and wrote the plays O que acontece quando a coisa acaba, Vem Meteoro and Boa noite, Professor. Currently, she is teaching at O Tablado acting school. The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão marks her first leading role in a feature film.







## MAIN CAST

### BIOGRAPHIES

**Gregorio Duvivier:** An actor, writer and screenwriter, Gregorio Duvivier is one of the founders of the entertainment company Porta dos Fundos. He began his theater studies at the age of 9 at O Tablado in Rio de Janeiro. On film, he acted in many Brazilian movies. He is the author of numerous books and was a columnist for the newspaper Folha de S.Paulo until June of 2018. In 2017, he created a political humor talk show for HBO called Greg News com Gregorio Duvivier, which has recently launched its third season.



**Fernanda Montenegro** was born in 1929 in Rio de Janeiro. She is Brazil's most recognized actress. In the early 60's she started her career on stage and also in television. More successful soap operas and plays followed over time and she received many prizes. In 1998, Central do Brasil (Central Station) captured the world's attention. Another nominee for the Academy Awards, the film was one of Fernanda Montenegro's career highpoints, since she was nominated in the Best Actress category. She also received a Silver Bear (Berlinale) for Best Actress for the film and was nominated for the Golden Globes. After that, she continued working intensively in television and cinema until recently.



## MAIN CAST

### BIOGRAPHIES

**Bárbara Santos:** Actress, theater director, writer and researcher, Bárbara Santos is the artistic director of KURINGA, a theater space in Berlin, and founder of the Teatro de las Oprimidas, a theater network composed of feminist groups from Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia. She is a member of ITI-Germany (German Centre of the International Theatre Institute) and author of the books “Roots and Wings: a Theory of the Praxis” (published in multiple languages) and "Aesthetic Paths – Original Approaches on Theatre of the Oppressed" (published in Portuguese). She has developed innovative lines of aesthetic investigation focused on gender as a social construction and race as a social organization through a feminist perspective.









# MAIN CAST

**Carol Duarte:** Eurídice

**Julia Stockler:** Guida

**Gregorio Duvivier:** Antenor

**Bárbara Santos:** Filomena

**Flávia Gusmão:** Ana

**Maria Manoella:** Zélia

**António Fonseca:** Manuel

**Cristina Pereira:** Cecilia

**Gillray Coutinho:** Afonso

With a special appearance by

**Fernanda Montenegro:** Eurídice

# TECHNICAL DETAILS

**Original title:** A Vida Invisível de Eurídice Gusmão

**International title:** The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão

**Duration:** 139 min

**Aspect Ratio:** 2.39:1

**Format:** 2K

**Sound:** 5.1

**Year:** 2019

**Original Language:** Portuguese

**Countries of Production:** Brazil and Germany

**Production Companies:** RT Features

**Co-production companies:** Pola Pandora, Canal Brasil, Sony Pictures, Naymar

**With support of:** FSA/BRDE – ANCINE, Medienboard

# MAIN CREW

**Directed by:** Karim Aïnouz

**Produced by:** Rodrigo Teixeira, Michael Weber and Viola Fügen

**Production Companies:** RT Features, Pola Pandora, Sony Pictures, and Canal Brasil

**Executive Producers:** Camilo Cavalcanti, Mariana Coelho, Viviane Mendonça, Cécile Tollu-Polonowski, André Novis

**Associate Producer:** Michel Merkt

**Funds:** FSA/BRDE Ancine (BRA), Medienboard (GER)

**Written by:** Murilo Hauser

**Co-written by:** Inés Bortagaray, Karim Aïnouz

**Based on the book by** Martha Batalha

**Director of Photography:** Hélène Louvart (AFC)

**Production Designer:** Rodrigo Martirena

**Costume Designer:** Marina Franco

**Makeup Artist:** Rosemary Paiva

**Assistant Director:** Nina Kopko

**Film Editing:** Heike Parplies (BFS)

**Sound Designer:** Waldir Xavier

**Sound Operator:** Laura Zimmerman

**Music:** Benedikt Schiefer

**Re-recording Mixer:** Björn Wiese

PRODUCTION:  RT  
FEATURES

COPRODUCTION:  POLA  
PANDORA

 SONY  
PICTURES

CANAL  
 BRASIL

 NAYMAR

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER:  UNO  
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