IN MADAGASCAR, WE SAY: 'THE SOUL MAKES THE MAN'

ADY GASY
The Malagasy Way

A DOCUMENTARY BY LOVA NANTENAINA
ENDEMIKA FILMS presents

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2014 / France - Madagascar / 84’ / Couleur/ 1:85 / 4.0 & stereo
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Produced by AUTANTIC FILMS, LATERIT PRODUCTIONS and ENDEMIKA FILMS
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SYNOPSIS

Despite adversity and daily struggles, the Malagasy way of life is a mix of inventiveness, music, joie de vivre, fraternal support, and above all, a sense of creative recycling.

In a world of consumerism and suproduction, “The Chinese make things, the Malagasy fix them.”

Just for the time of a film, let’s have fun reversing roles...

Let’s imagine it isn’t for the economists anymore to demonstrate their growth model, but for the farmers, artists, craftsmen, and streetwise sellers of all kinds to showcase their skills and unique reality to apply during a time of economic crisis.

Welcome to Madagascar, the island where we prefer picturesque speech rather than graphics and equations.

With proverbs, Blandine and Rado elaborate their speech. From used cans, Jao makes maracas, while others make toys and oil lamps. With zebu bones from the dump, some make soap and medication.
Interview with Nantenaina LOVA

Why this film?

Politicians in my country, along with most international economic experts consider that being poor or rich is based on the arbitrary thresholds they have put in place. Throughout the film, I wanted to tell them how more complicated things are in everyday life because everything is not measurable. And above all, solidarity that can exist between people.

If I offer something I manufactured or cultivated myself, it won’t be recorded in the GDP. Yet, it is by these means that we survive. I remember after the cyclone Geralda ravaged crops, I heard my mother, lending a kilo of rice to her neighbour, saying, «trano Atsimy sy Avaratra, izay tsy mahalena hialofana» which can be translated as «Between two houses North and South, in case of bad weather, you seek the best shelter.»

By continually repeating to the Malagasy people that they are poor, with supporting figures, numbers, and world rankings, we have come to accept the idea of poverty and inferiority. It seems to me more dangerous than material poverty because it attacks the image that the people have of themselves and their ability to find adequate solutions when facing hardship.

People tend to think that the poor have nothing interesting to say. That’s why the sequence in the scavengers market starts in silence. This silence is the one in which these people are kept. Yet we need to hear them; they are not fooled by the corrupt system who put them where they are.

The print house scene is very important to me, as it may be the best metaphor of ADY GASY in the context of globalization. In that sequence, a mechanical process gets stuck, as in Charlie Chalpin’s Modern Times. It is the adaptation and DIY ability that provide a solution. Our world that depends on machines and faith in the money God can get jammed at anytime...

I started this film thinking that if that happened one day, Madagascar would cope better with the situation than the Western countries, as the Malagasy can still act by themselves by cultivating the land, recycling, and saving resources.

The irresistible desire for money is «the evil that currently eats us alive» as Jao says.
I did not have much trouble coming across and filming the DIY (do it yourself) people, because 90% of the population in Madagascar work in the informal sector. When I explained to them my project, what I wanted to value and show in the film, they collaborated with a big deal of enthusiasm because most of the time, they are subjected to pity and despise, rather than consideration.

Conforming to the tradition, I have appointed artists to be my spokespeople: Blandine, Fred and Sily from the band RAEDISAMIMANANA, Rado the speaker, Vahömbey and his musicians, and Jao, the lead vocal of the band. Jao had been working with me on the music for this film project since 2010; way before the writing was done. Since the first time we met, we felt that we had the same view on our country.

As for the other artists, I met them just before the shooting although I had been scouting for a year. At that moment I met Blandine. She did not want to be alone during the artist's workshop because she has always worked on her oratory writings with her brothers, Fred and Sily. These two young men enriched the show with a traditional choreography that I had not originally thought of.

Having a woman in charge of the KABARY (the epitome of a traditional discourse) seems to be a strong symbol which has both surprised and pleased the audience. Mixing music from the South and dances from the Central Highlands had the same effect on the audience; a proof that the Malagasy society is able to evolve without denying some of its traditions.
THE WHEELBARROW MAKERS OF 67 HA
GABY AND HIS FAMILY

OIL LAMP MAKERS OF TANJOMBATO
RANJA, ODILLE AND THEIR FAMILY

BLACK SOAP MAKERS OF ANDRALANITRA
AIME, KRISY AND THEIR FAMILY

TIRE SHOEMAKERS OF ANOSIBE
DADA NAIVO AND HIS BIG FAMILY
The film lingers at the heart of the informal sector with these undesirable people getting chased because of their carts and goods that are littering the streets and sidewalks of the capital. To those who are prevented from selling their products when they occupy the sidewalks of the city. I want to give life on the screen to those who are left behind, these artisans, the quiet peasants, this world of perpetual creativity and adaptation.

We discover in close shots the nimble fingers of rubber stamps manufacturers, of tyre shoe-makers, of a retired officer that makes wheelbarrows from scratch, of a family that turns bones collected from the dump into soap... these portraits are no exceptions, the whole country functions thanks to ADY GASY.

"Some show off with their suitcase and economic theories, our speakers here can’t wait to meet them."

Without seeking to deny the suffering caused by poverty, the film wants to be a bittersweet satire system of global overproduction and overconsumption.

It is a mirror where we oppose insistent and well-functioning speeches of some development agents to other discourses, those of Malagasy speakers. Whereas the defenders of the market economy have enough opportunities to spread their numbers and their rhetoric, the film does not question their point of view, but it rather focuses on the words and deeds of courage that African people could answer to them.

In this film are set into frames the Malagasy cultural codes but their words and know-how certainly affect everyone which are too often mocked for their inability to integrate into a ultra-competitive world.
With this first feature length film, Lova Nantenaina wants to represent poverty the way he experienced it as a child: a daily life where difficulties and joie de vivre are intermingled.

Born in 1977, he grew up in Antananarivo at the time when there was rationing by the Socialist regime. An unforeseen and random series of events led him to leave his country in 1999 to undertake sociology and humanitarian studies in France. In 2001, he was an association's director for a development project in Madagascar and he became aware that outside counsel was often unwelcome. Indeed, it is organized from the perspective of economic development rather than cultural and ancestral teaching. «Better lose money than FIHAVANANA», a concept that can be translated as the 'preservation of the harmony of relationships with people close to you' or 'brotherhood'.

When he returned to Madagascar from 2003 to 2005, he became a newspaper journalist. He continued his studies and completed a Masters degree in Information and Communication in Réunion Island in 2005. He then joined the ESAV film school in Toulouse, where he obtained his Masters degree with honors. The short films he directed and produced himself are rooted in the culture and daily life of the Malagasy.

He worked on the feature-length documentary by Guy Chapouillie Une raison de vivre as an assistant director and second cameraman and was recently hired as an editor by a French production company for two Malagasy 26-minute documentary films, Les enfants de la périphérie of Gilde Razafitsihadinoina and Todisoa et les pierres noires of Michaël Andrianaly.

His 'Endemika Films' production company is co-managed by Eva Lova, trained in France. Endemika films is currently developing the production of films by other Malagasy directors who participate in a new boom of independent Malagasy cinema.

As well, the film is structured as a kabary, the Malagasy traditional oratory with is highlighted here. To elaborate a persuasive kabary, you need proverbs. To create proverbs, you must learn to observe your environment.

Traditional musicians and speakers have always been inspired by the lives of modest people. The film will echo in, assuming the judgmental scope of Jao, a musician from the South of the Island, and Rado and Blandine, traditional speakers.

Elizabeth Lequeret says there is in African cinema «this inability to imagine the world otherwise than as a whole, a certainly non homogenous assembling, but of which the diverse elements can come into contact at any time». The Malagasy way fits into this philosophy, this view of the world of creativity.

Tsy misy mafy toy ny vato fa tsy miteny rehefa hangerezan'ny vorona.
There is nothing more resistant than the rock but it says nothing when birds poop on it.
2014 « With Almost Nothing... » documentary, 52’. Audience prize at the «Festival international du film insulaire de Groix» and selection at the «Etats généraux du film documentaire de Lussas».


2009 « Red Heaven » fiction, 18’30”. for “Regards d’Afrique 2009” at the Clermont-Ferrand Festival, selected for Ciné Sud 2011 and bought by the CIRTEF (TV5monde).

2008 « Petits Hommes » documentary, 35’. Selected for “Regards d’Afrique 2008” at Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival.


2008 « L’envers du décor - lettre à mon frère », documentary, 17’. Selected for “Regards d’Afrique 2010 at the Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival.”
Endemika Films was created in 2008 by Nantenaina LOVA to produce his short films. It is now a Malagasy audiovisual production company, co-managed by Eva and Nantenaina LOVA, and produces Malagasy author films.

Endemika Films contributes to have a forum to express themselves in their own countries where the economy of cinema is still in its infancy, and the most part of cinematography is by foreigners.

Work in progress

« Ginger boyz » by Lova Nantenaina and Fifaliana Nantenaina, documentary.

Avotra, a Malagasy young boy, dreams to be an astronaut or a pilot. To finance his studies, he decided to start a dodo-dancers band with his friends. Will he fulfill his dreams in this world of easy money?

« ZANAKA » by Lova Nantenaina, documentary, coproduced with Laterit Productions.

I encounter children from different social backgrounds, I make discover their work, games, beliefs, hopes and those of their families. The title proposal reflects an essential notion of this film: the one of transmission. «Zanaka» means child, more precisely descendant. All names are meaningful in my country. Mine can be translated as «heritage hoped».

« Madagascar 1947, the sound of silence» by Marie-Clémence Paes, documentary, 90 min, coproduced with Laterit Productions.

“Le Mikea” by Alain Rakotomaroa, documentary, 52 min, a French coproduction.

“Prisonniers du temps» by Jonattan Rabarijaona, documentary, 52 min, coproduced with Les Films de la pluie (France).

“Le mystère des Ntaolo » by Mamy Rakotonirina, documentary, 26 min, coproduced with Sanosi Productions (France) as part of a collection of 6 projects by malagasy directors.

Laterit Productions is an independent production company created in May 1988 by filmmakers Marie-Clémence and Cesar Paes. Our aim is to produce ambitious films that highlight a better cross cultural understanding. We are also committed in distributing films (narrative and documentary) from the Indian Ocean, Africa and the Caribbean. An approach that we develop today on different media : cinema, television, DVD, VoD, CD, books.

Our new projet : « Madagascar 1947, the sound of silence » by Marie-Clémence Paes. Interweaving historical archives and direct testimonies, the film questions how and why Malagasy soldiers back from Europe rebelled in 1947 against French colonial authorities, and will do so from a Malagasy point of view.

Productions

«An opera from the Indian Ocean» by Marie-Clémence & Cesar Paes - 2012 – 96min
Theatrical release France 2012. KIMIFÊTE AWARD for the “most human film” - Festival Int. de Groix.

«Night scenes» cine-performance by Raharimanana/Tao Ravao/Paes - 2010 - 31min
Première at Rotterdam int. Film festival

«Maraina, opéra in 4 acts» performance recording by Cesar Paes - 2010 – 88min
Opera in 4 acts by JL Trulès & E. Genvrin on the first inhabitants of Réunion island

«Mahaleo - Live at the Olympia» live recording by Cesar Paes - 2007 - (52min+150min)
Broadcast : TV5 (Monde), RFO, TV Ravenala (Madagascar), Longbox DVD+CD release 2008

«Batuque» by Julio Silvão Tavares – 2006 - 52min
FIGRA 2007 (Le Touquet), AFRIQUE TAILLE XL (Brussels), RADIO FRANCE Festival (Montpellier)
co-production

«Mahaleo» by Paes & Rajaonarivelolo – 2005 – 97min theatrical release: France, USA, Belgium, Madagascar. AUDIENCE AWARDS & ILE D’ARGENT – Festival Int. du Film Insulaire de Groix (France), ETOILE SCAM 2007


in distribution

MADAGASCAR : «I want my share of land: Madagascar” by JM. Pernelle & F. Lambolez (52min) "Animated window on Madagascar" (4 animated short films) by Jiva & Fabrice Razafindralambo «Hazo Mena, the red wood men” by Federico Varrasso (52min) «Raketa Mena» by Hery Rasolo (52 min)


BURKINA-FASO : “I make my balafon” by Julie Courel (54min)

MAURITIUS : “The Children of Troumaron” by Harrikrisna & Sharvan Anenden (90min)