



SLUIZER FILMS AND STONERAFT FILMS B.V. IN COLLABORATION WITH EYE FILM MUSEUM AND HAGHEFILM DIGITAL PRESENT:

JOÃO AND THE KNIFE

A film by George Sluizer (1971, 95 min)

WORLD DISTRIBUTION:

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PLOT SUMMARY:

Based on a Brazilian poem by Odylo Costa Filho and set in the Amazonian and Northeast hinterlands of Brazil, "João and the Knife" is a hauntingly strange and visually stunning picture. A poor and elderly hunter and cattle ranger falls in love with Maria a beautiful 19-year old shy girl from another village. He marries her against logic and advice. As he cannot give his young bride children, he travels to the Amazonian forest, the green hell, to make money collecting rubber. He wants to give her the life of a rich woman as compensation of the childlessness of their marriage. Four years later, on his return as a rich man, he finds Maria carrying a three-year old little girl who strangely resembles her. João, a simple man who has never lied in his life, doubts about the fidelity of his wife. He buys a knife and says he will use it to kill Maria. Frightened Maria seeks help from the police and a priest, but in vain. They then begin a long journey back to their village. Will João be able to refrain from hurting the one he loves so much?

RESTORATION:

The digital restoration of the long feature JOÃO is the result of a close cooperation between Stoneraft Film b.v, EYE Filmmuseum and Haghefilm Digital. A full 4K restoration of the original 35mm Techniscope camera negative shot by Jan de Bont was made. By bypassing the originally required analogue blow up to Cinemascope, this digital restoration presents a direct-from-negative colour richness and image sharpness never seen before.

Running time 95 minutes
Language Brazilian (subtitles Eng./Fr)
Original format 35 mm Techniscope
Sound Optical mono

SLUIZER  FILMS BV

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 HAGHEFILM DIGITAAL

CREDITS

Based on the novel "A Faca e o Rio" by Odylo Costa Filho

Screenplay	George Sluizer
Produced by	Anne Sluizer-Lordon & George Sluizer for Sluizer Films b.v.

Crew

Director of Photography	Jan de Bont
Music by	Heitor Villa-Lobos
Editor	Jan Dop
Art director	Virgilio Costa
Sound recording	Juarez Dagoberto Costa, Tom Tholen
Production manager	Chris Rodrigues
Production advisor	Pim de la Parra

Main cast

João	Joffre Soares
Maria	Ana Maria Miranda
The Judge	João-Augusto Azevedo
Zeferino	Douglas Santos
Deodato	João Batista
Dona Ana	Aurea Souza Campos



AWARDS AND HONOURS FOR JOÃO

- ★ Best actor, Joffre Soares
Santos Festival
- ★ Best script, George Sluizer
xxx
- ★ Best Brazilian actor, Joffre Soares
Festival Rio de Janeiro
- ★ Quality Prize 1974
Festival Rio de Janeiro
- ★ Best Photography, Jan de Bont
Kodak Prize
- ★ Brazilian entry for Best Foreign Film
Academy Awards 1973
- ★ Official competition
Berlin Film Festival
- ★ Official competition
Edinburgh Festival

ABOUT THE FILM

Director George Sluizer travelled in the Nordeste of Brazil with Odylo Costa Filho the writer of the book which inspired the script of JOÃO. Travelling George, so inspired by what he saw, lived a few months in Marahnão and first made four documentaries. He learned to know the people, their way of life and the landscapes of the "sertao" locations of his future film. This first experience helped a lot when realising JOÃO and also saved the production a great deal of money.

George Sluizer who was his own scriptwriter, decided also to produce the film with the little Amsterdam company, Sluizer Films he was running with his French wife Anne Lordon, with a Brazilian co-producer to fill up Dutch financing. In the fall of 1970, on the point of leaving for Brazil, the office of the company in the old Amsterdam, burned out completely and the whole Brazilian documentation was gone. By miracle, one still readable copy of the script was found in the ashes.

Finally, beginning summer 1971, the small Dutch crew of 5 people left for Rio where a surprise was waiting for them. The Brazilian co-producer could not participate because of problems with the tax authorities! Nevertheless, it was decided to go on and once the Brazilian crew was gathered, everybody, including main actors Ana Maria Miranda (Maria) and Ruy Polanah (João), left for São Luis de Marahnão. After a week of shooting, Ruy Polanah had to stop definitively, victim of a lung infarct. George and line producer Chris Rodrigues rushed away to Rio, searching for another João and, miracle again, Joffre Soares well-known actor of Cinema Novo, happened to be free and enthusiastic for the project.

Let's not forget the generosity of Mrs Arminda Villa-Lobos, the widow of composer Heitor Villa Lobos who gave George the authorisation to use any pieces of the composed music by her husband.

Of course, it was a great adventure in 1971, shooting in the primitive Nordeste, in the Amazon jungle and Manaus, no telephone, only communication possible via radio amateurs. There was very little money but we got wonderful help from the local people and from the fantastic non-professional actors and actresses. Realising this film had been impossible without the participation of the Brazilian masters of improvisation!

The Brazilians loved and totally adopted JOÃO, this so Brazilian "Dutch" film. And proudly, Brazil sent JOÃO as their national entry for best foreign film at the Academy Awards/Oscars in 1973. From The Dutch side, JOÃO was in competition at the Berlinale in 1973 and the Edinburg Film Festival.

PRESS QUOTES

New York Times:

... a powerful story, a very beautiful film.

Variety:

... here is a hauntingly strange and visually stunning picture, all location lensing being specially standout.

Globo Brazil:

... the most authentic film about Brazilian life in the interior I have ever seen. A very rewarding experience.

Jornal da Tarde Brazil:

"A Faca e o Rio" deserves an Oscar and more then that. But no trophy is big enough to honour such a pure, authentic and sensitive work.

Haagse Courant The Netherlands:

João is a film of extraordinary beauty and it gives a penetrating image of the people's lives in the Northeast of Brazil.

Elsevier The Netherlands :

... Brazil inspired George Sluizer to a masterpiece.

SHORT CV'S



Joffre Soares was born in 1918 in Palmeira dos Índios, Alagoas, as José Joffre Soares. He was a Brazilian film and theatre actor, known to work with the directors of Cinema Novo. His most known films are "Vidas Secas" (1963) directed by Nelson Pereira dos Santos, "Terra em Transe" (1967) directed by Glauber Rocha, "Bye Bye Brasil" (1979) directed by Carlos Diegues, and his last film "Mr. Abrakadabra!" (1996) directed by José Araripe Jr. Joffre Soares died in 1996 in São Paulo.

Ana Maria Miranda was born in 1951 in Fortaleza Brazil. In the seventies she worked as an actress and one of her first main part was in "JOÃO". Later she did "Love, Carnival and Dream" (1972) and "O principio do Prazer" (1979). Later, she moved her career to writing and is well known in Brazil as a novelist and poet. Her novel DESMUNDO was translated in many languages and adapted to cinema by the director Alain Fresnot in 2002.



George Sluizer director, screenwriter and producer (www.georgesluizer.com) is originally Dutch, but considers himself a "world citizen". After many documentaries, he wrote, produced and directed his first long feature in 1971 in Brazil, "JOÃO and the knife", followed by "TWICE A WOMAN" with Bibi Andersson and Anthony Perkins. With the long feature "SPOORLOOS" (The Vanishing) he got international recognition and won many awards. The Dutch Film Industry sent "Sporloos" to the Oscars in 1989. One year later he directed the remake of "Sporloos" for 20th Century Fox with also as title "THE VANISHING". Main actors were Jeff Bridges, Kiefer Sutherland and Sandra Bullock. Then, George Sluizer directed many international productions as "UTZ" with Armin Mueller-Stahl, which won the Jury Prize at the Berlinale 1992 and was awarded with a silver bear for best actor. In 1993, he was directing the film "DARK BLOOD" which could not be finished because of the sudden and unfortunate death of River Phoenix, ten days before the end of shooting. He then directed "CRIMETIME" with Pete Postlewaite and Steven Baldwin, "THE COMMISSIONER" with John Hurt, Armin Mueller-Stahl and Rosanna Pastor. In 2000, George directed "THE STONERAFT" based on the book by Nobel Prize winner for literature José Saramago. When George Sluizer after an aneurism, faced death himself, he decided in 2012 to finish the "unfinished" film DARK BLOOD that was in the official program, out of competition, at the Berlinale in 2013. During his career, George Sluizer alternated features and documentaries, directed in six different languages and saw himself as an international filmmaker. He passed away in September 2014.



Anne Lordon is born and raised in Paris where she studied French and English. There she met George Sluizer, Dutch student at the IDHEC film institute. They got married and moved to Amsterdam where they created their first production company Sluizer Films B.V. They first produced documentaries and in 1971 their first feature film JOÃO (and the knife) and not the easiest (for a European woman to shoot in the Nordeste of Brazil in 1971). It was a good learning school. As a twosome, Anne and George realised a prodigious oeuvre and had a special talent to develop international projects. Many films abroad directed by George but they produced as well first features for other directors. It was a busy life of 50 years, full of travels until the last film "DARK BLOOD" and George's death in 2014. Anne and her children are presently working on restoration and digitising for an Oeuvre DVD Box, in collaboration with the EYE Filmmuseum and Haghefilm Digital, to safeguard George's legacy.

Jan De Bont born in 1943 in Eindhoven in the Netherlands, often worked with director Paul Verhoeven when they both lived in Holland. In the seventies, Jan de Bont moved to the United States where he specialized his cinematographic work on big action movies as "Die Hard", "Lethal Weapon 3" or "Flat liners". Then he worked again with Paul Verhoeven in 1992 on "Basic Instinct". After a career as cinematographer, Jan de Bont started directing and created as well a production company. He directed and produced "Speed", "Speed 2", "Control" and "The Cradle of Life".

STONERAFT FILMS B.V WANTS TO THANK

EYE FILM MUSEUM & EYE FILM INTERNATIONAL, HAGHEFILM DIGITAL, DUTCH FILM FUND, SANDRA DEN HAMER, CANNES CLASSICS AND MANY OTHERS.
