

STOP, LISTEN, LOOK

PARE, ESCUTE, OLHE | PT 2009 | Doc 100' | Directed by Jorge Pelicano | Produced by Paulo Trancoso – Costa do Castelo Films & SIC Televisão | Awards: DocLisboa 2009 – Best Portuguese Documentary, Best Editing | Cine Eco 2009 – Grand Prix Environnement, Lusofonia Award.

“It is in the Portuguese Alto Douro Wine Region now recognized World Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, halfway between the Spanish-Portuguese border and the Atlantic Ocean, where lies the valley of Tua. Very collected and wild, this valley is dominated by a magnificent historic railway: The Tua Line. Previously, one of the largest in the Upper Douro, the railway runs close about 50 km on the river Tua. Impressive work of engineering, it is with dynamite that engineers from the late 19th century have paved a path through the crags...”

Source: jmf-photo.net/expo-tua-jmf-en.htm

The Tua Line was opened in 1887, to connect the village Tua to Bragança, in the North of Portugal. The 133,8 Km that formed the Tua Line have progressively been reduced by way of closing of various stations, due to accidents or lack of passengers. The final blow is the Foz-Tua dam project, already approved by the Portuguese government, but source of great dispute.

PARE, ESCUTE, OLHE is a *requiem* for that train line, but also a reflection on the desertification of the Portuguese inland villages, because, as director Jorge Pelicano says, “when you close train lines, it’s because there are no people to use them anymore”.

From January 2007 to August 2008, with his small crew and a budget of 27.000 Euros from the Portuguese Institute of Cinema (ICA), Jorge Pelicano made his cinema debut, which granted him the “Best Documentary” Award in the 2009 Lisbon Documentary Festival, DocLisboa. This award opened cinema rooms to his documentary but, most importantly, “made this theme an object of debate”.

For now, a petition “For the Tua Line” is in circulation (7700 signatures), there is a civic movement and graffiti all over the Portuguese capital. **PARE, ESCUTE, OLHE** was the trigger and the director doesn’t shy away from it: “I wasn’t worried about being impartial. It’s good that this documentary is seen by a great number of unsatisfied people looking for answers”.

Source: ionline.pt (8th April 2010 - translated, abridged and adapted by Vera Peixoto)