

Olhos Azuis:

a multi-cultural tale of redemption

Film stocks

KODAK VISION2 500T 7218, KODAK VISION2 50D 7201 and KODAK VISION2 250D 7205

José Joffily's contributions to international cinema as a writer, director, and producer have garnered awards and critical recognition around the world. His credits as a director include *Vocação do Poder*, *Achados e Perdidos (Lost and Found)*, *Dois Perdidos Numa Noite Suja (Two Lost in a Dirty Night)*, *O Chamado de Deus* and *Quem Matou Pixote? (Who Killed Pixote?)*.

As a young man, Joffily earned a law degree from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, but he chose a different path, opting to travel, take still photographs and work as a journalist. In the late 1970s, he directed his first short film, and then organized the production company Coevos Films in 1981.

Joffily is credited with helping the Brazilian cinema industry survive a difficult financial and political era in the early 1990s, in part by making *A Maldição do Sanpaku (Sanpaku's Curse)* on a shoestring budget. The film earned prizes at an array of festivals, including a best cinematography prize for director of photography Nonato Estrela at the Brasília Festival.

Joffily and Estrela have collaborated on many projects. Their most recent co-venture is titled *Olhos Azuis (Blue Eyes)*. The script, written by Paolo Halm, centers on a prejudiced United States customs official whose hatred leads to an accidental shooting and the death of an innocent man. Wracked with guilt and struck by a terminal illness, the hard-drinking man travels to Brazil hoping to apologize to the dead man's family and find redemption.

The customs officer is played by David Rasche. Cristina Lago plays the beautiful Brazilian who serves as his guide to the foreign culture. The international cast includes actors from Brazil, Argentina and the United States, and the multilingual soundtrack emphasizes the film's cultural diversity.

"The film is about arrogance," says Joffily. "It also deals with memories and how painful they can be."

Two different worlds

Joffily and Estrela developed two primary visual signatures for the film. The first conveys the cramped airport spaces where the customs official works and interrogates suspects. "For these interior spaces, we used cold, diffused light," says Joffily. "The framing was tight and the camera was handheld. The other setting is north-eastern Brazil, which the

characters cross by car. The weather is hot and dry and the landscape is harsh. We used longer lenses with the camera always on a tripod. It's a simple approach that creates a contrast separating the two different worlds."

They chose to produce *Olhos Azuis* in the Super 16mm film format. For the cold airport interior scenes, they photographed images using KODAK VISION2 500T 7218 film. They used KODAK VISION2 50D 7201 film for the majority of the day exteriors in the Brazilian countryside. For large landscapes, especially towards sunset or sunrise, they used KODAK VISION2 250D 7205 film.

Joffily says he never considered using a digital video format. "I don't like the results, and I would rather not rely on those cameras when shooting so far away under adverse conditions," he says. "I prefer to work with the Super 16mm format, following a digital post-production path and then transferring to 35mm intermediate film. The costs are the same, and while the audience might not know it was shot on film, they notice the difference."

Olhos Azuis was produced by Joffily and Heloísa Rezende, who plan to take the film on the international festival circuit.



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