



# TAKE



# 100



**The Future of Film**

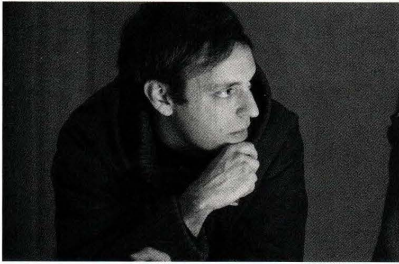


**100 New Directors**

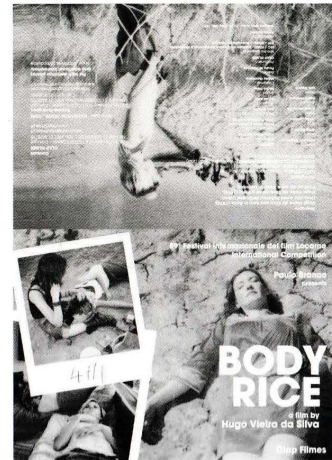


PHAIDON



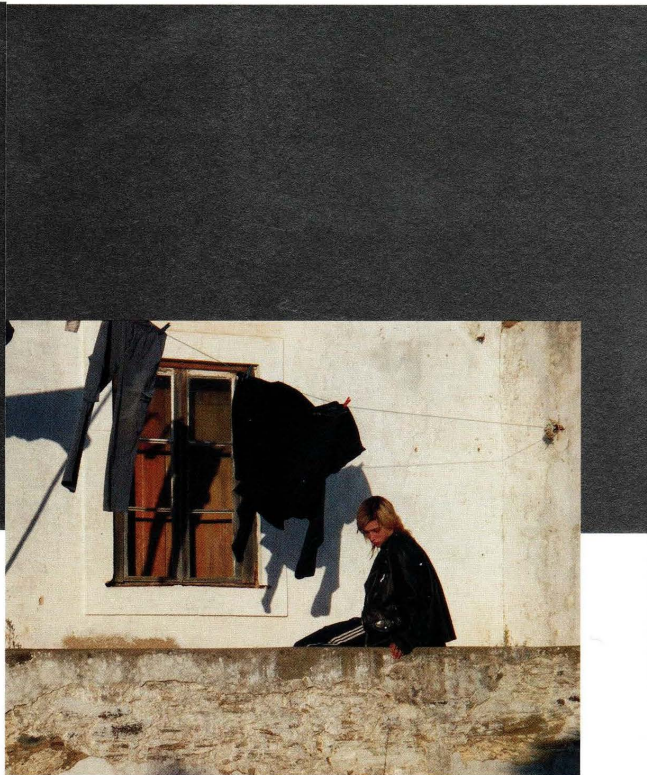


Since 1980, German institutions have been sending teenagers to the south of Portugal as part of several experimental projects of social re-education. Katrin (Sylta Fee Wegmann) comes to Alentejo within this context. She does not establish a relationship with her environment, a situation heightened by the harshness of the landscape and the void of a socially barren region. Katrin, Julia (Alice Dwyer), and Pedro (Luís Guerra) form an enclave in a no-man's land—a physical and mental desert.

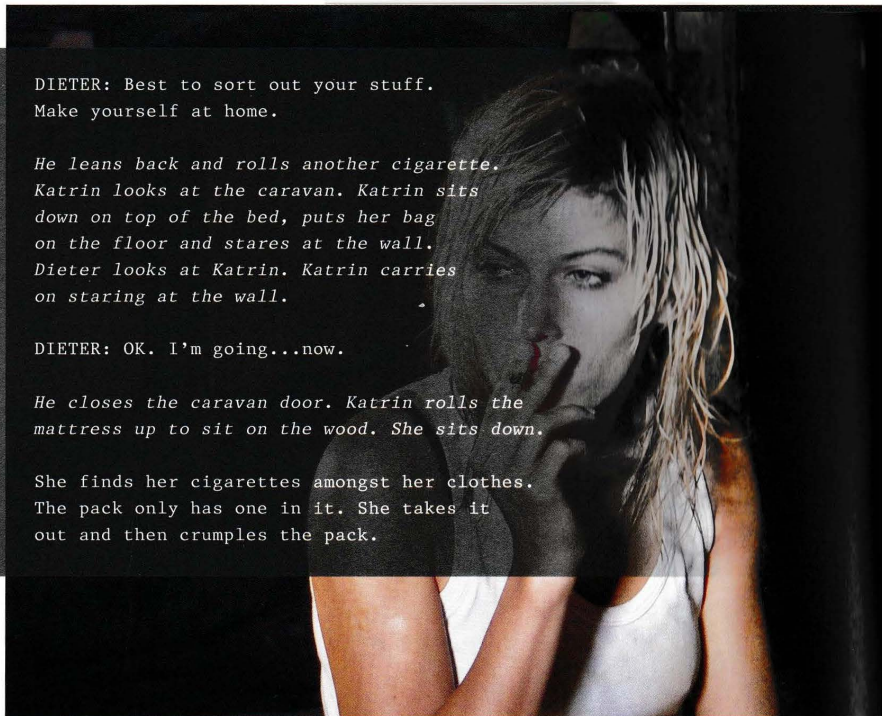


# HUGO VIEIRA DA SILVA

## BODY RICE



Katrin rests outside of a home upon arriving in Alentejo.



DIETER: Best to sort out your stuff.  
Make yourself at home.

*He leans back and rolls another cigarette. Katrin looks at the caravan. Katrin sits down on top of the bed, puts her bag on the floor and stares at the wall. Dieter looks at Katrin. Katrin carries on staring at the wall.*

DIETER: OK. I'm going...now.

*He closes the caravan door. Katrin rolls the mattress up to sit on the wood. She sits down.*

*She finds her cigarettes amongst her clothes. The pack only has one in it. She takes it out and then crumples the pack.*

Katrin smokes a cigarette in the caravan.



Hugo Vieira da Silva was born in 1974 in Porto, where he studied law before enrolling at Lisbon's Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema. In 2001, he made the documentary, *Grupo Puzzle* (2001), about a leading 1970s Portuguese artists' collective.

*Body Rice* (2006), Vieira da Silva's first fictional feature film, produced by Paulo Branco, was entered in competition at the 2006 Locarno International Film Festival, and worldwide distribution followed. In 2009 he was invited by Cannes' L'Atelier program to complete his new film, *Red Cross* (2009), whose subject is the taboo surrounding death.

He then moved to Berlin, a city he's drawn to because of his interest in contemporary dance, the visual arts, photography, and poetry. And, above all, this young director is interested in offering the public different kinds of stories than those being told every day. As he says, "I want to make problems, to provoke questions, and not to provide solutions. Otherwise, we'd be forever saying the same thing."

For *Body Rice*, Vieira da Silva took his inspiration from a world he had been curious about for a long time: the "social rehabilitation" centers run by German agencies in Portugal. Making the film was a way for somebody wearing the two hats of ethnologist-documentarian and image-thief to address the theme of adolescence head-on, without pulling any punches.

Katrin, a young German offender, has been sent to one of these rehab programs in Portugal. Dragging her feelings of alienation across the dry plains of Alentejo, she meets Julia, who has also been placed

by social workers, and Pedro, who lives in the region and is as lost and marginalized as Katrin is. The confrontations these youngsters seek are constantly thwarted and the bonds they form are inevitably destroyed, because they cannot break free from their feelings of lethargy and isolation.

The training program does nothing to change the nihilism and selfishness of Katrin's existence. The more she wanders through the countryside surrounding the barrack-like center, the more lost and removed from reality she becomes. She has no enthusiasm, no hope, no particular desire, except, perhaps, to go back to Germany, or to concentrate on her situation and the people around her long enough to serve as a momentary distraction before falling back into the blackness.

*Body Rice* is like a jigsaw puzzle in the sense that it features many pieces that look like they can be assembled in countless ways, but, as always, comes together in the end. The film's pieces (re)compose themselves from the moments of brute emotion that punctuate it, and the bursts of music that make up its multilayered, harrowing, mind-blowing soundtrack.

The film's ashy, washed-out images signify the feeling of flatness and indifference that marks the everyday lives of these young people—a lost generation, heirs of the "no future" of the 1980s. *Body Rice* rests on a risky but extremely original strategy, focusing on moments of contemplation and waiting, on what is unsaid. This intense, engrossing, "reading between the lines" allows us to enter the world of these characters, bringing us very close to their disenchantment, echoed

in the dryness of the setting. Their existence, always on the verge of eruption, extreme violence, or even death, forms the heart of a film that is constantly on razor's edge, a tragic vision of the contemporary world.

"My characters are shadows," says Vieira da Silva. "We'll never get to know everything about them, in the same way that we never get to know everything about anyone. I wanted to film their bodies peripherally—their surfaces and their skin. Formally, I did exactly the same thing: events are suggested rather than made explicit. I am interested most in what is not shown . . . An idea took shape when I first worked with some of these young people: nothing would come to a clear end, all would be fragmented, and my (our) job would be to continually build, reconstruct, and lose everything anew . . . These feelings invade and infect the film; the sensation of fullness or love is not achievable . . . An action is started, halted, and forgotten, like a silent, irreversible catastrophe that slowly develops like a disease. And it's this development that becomes the film's sole subject, which in order to be observed calls for a suspension of time."



A rave party in Alentejo, Portugal.