

press book



# VIEIRARPAD

directed by João Mário Grilo

based on *Escrita íntima*, an edition of the correspondence between the couple Maria Helena Vieira da Silva and Arpad Szenes organized by Fundação Arpad Szenes - Vieira da Silva.



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### **VIEIRARPAD - ESCRITA ÍNTIMA**

The unveiling of the tenderest and most secret corners of a beautiful relationship between these two artists is provided by the extensive research, survey, selection and organization of materials carried out by Fundação Arpad Szenes - Vieira da Silva, which culminates in the publication of the book *Escrita íntima*. The book is the origin of reflections proposed with a latent potentiality for cinematographic language, which here merges the force of the written/spoken word and the visual/plastic record.

# film description

The film focuses on the correspondence exchanged by the couple Maria Helena Vieira da Silva and Arpad Szènes, between 1932 and 1961. In this snippet of a documentary record, the letters and the intimacy of their words are a pretext for the exploration and restoration of an intimate and powerful visuality, where the memory of the 20th century - and the many exiles and isolations that marked it - is articulated with the visual work of Vieira and Arpad, dotted with iconographic elements of their own lives and audiovisual material of the time.

Filmed in Lisbon, Paris, Lyon, Dijón, Yèvre-le-Châtel and Rio de Janeiro, VIEIRARPAD composes an audiovisual braid in which memory, poetry and intimacy sought to rescue, in the proximity of images, sounds and montage, the intimate landscapes that the violence of the century episodically tore apart. The narrative is presented in flashback: the film begins in the cemetery of Yèvre-le-Châtel, next to the common grave of Vieira and Arpad, who enter the film as beings from another world, inviting us to follow their story, the geographies, real and imaginary experiences that have crossed paths, their mutual love and their shared passion for art.



A memorial and a monument, the film is conceived as a restoring operation on time and History, in which desire and love were the engines of resistance fed by the fuel of an indefeasible union. An union that precisely for this reason can be further understood and celebrated here in its artistic and political repercussions. Through cinema and its articulations, the film sets on to fulfill the final destination of this exceptionally valuable correspondence, which is also an ode to a simple and admirable happiness.



PORTUGAL • FRANCE • BRAZIL  
89 min | HD 1080p | Cor e P/B | 16:9 | 5.1 | DCP  
LANGUAGES PORTUGUESE AND FRENCH  
SUBTITLES • PT, FR, EN

CREDITS

DIRECTED BY  
*JOÃO MÁRIO GRILO*

SCREENPLAY BY  
*JOÃO MÁRIO GRILO E INÊS BELEZA BARREIROS*

PRODUCED BY  
*ZULFILMES*

CO-PRODUCTION  
*GULLANE (BRASIL)*

PRODUCED BY  
*FERNANDO CENTEIO, FABIANO GULLANE E CAIO GULLANE*

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER  
*FERNANDO CENTEIO*

DIRECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
*JOÃO RIBEIRO (AIP) E ACÁCIO DE ALMEIDA (AIP)*

SOUND DIRECTION  
*CYRIL SANTOS, LUÍS FIGUEIREDO E FILIPE GOULART*

EDITED BY  
*LUCA ALVERDI E JOÃO MÁRIO GRILO*

IMAGE POST-PRODUCTION  
*PAULO AMÉRICO*

SOUND POST-PRODUCTION  
*ANTÓNIO PORÉM PIRES E BERNARDO GOES*

GRAPHIC DESIGN  
*JOÃO CARDOSO RIBEIRO E NUNO MOURA SEMEDO*

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março, 1947

VIEIRARPAD

*Drága* querida Bichinha,  
  
que irritante e triste é ser  
solteiro, a todo o momento  
parece-me ouvir-te e estou  
sempre à espera de ver  
  
o teu adorável focinho.

Arpad Szenes [Carta], [1947] março 8, [Pensão Internacional, Santa Teresa, Rio de Janeiro] [a] Vieira da Silva, [no navio Compaço, com destino a Marselha]. [Autógrafo.]  
Escrito íntimo, edição de correspondência entre o casal Maria Helena Vieira da Silva e Arpad Szenes organizado pela Fundação Arpad Szenes - Vieira da Silva.





## VIEIRARPAD

emerges from the correspondence exchanged by the couple Maria Helena Vieira da Silva and Arpad Szènes, between 1932 and 1961. The letters and the intimacy of their words are the pretext for an exploration of the equally intimate visual journey, where the memory of the 20th century is intertwined with the work of Vieira and Arpad, along with the iconographic elements of their lives several audiovisual archives from different times and geographies, in addition to relevant testimonies.

S I N O P S I S



abril, 1955

VIEIRARPAD

Lamento cada dia que não estás comigo. Abraço-te e vou para a cama.

Vieira da Silva. [Carta]. [1955, abril, Basileia], [a] Arpad Szenes. [51, Boulevard Saint-Jacques, Paris]. [Autógrafo.]  
Escrita íntima, edição de correspondência entre o casal Maria Helena Vieira da Silva e Arpad Szenes organizada pela Fundação Arpad Szenes - Vieira da Silva.

The “thing” we called VIEIRARPAD could already be seen, in truth, in “Ma Femme Chamada Bicho”, a beautiful film that José Álvaro de Moraes directed between 1976 and 1978. Filmed while the couple Maria Helena Vieira da Silva / Arpad Szenes was alive, it is a film that is still fully part of the device by which the couple built their life and their love, as essential components of their own work, opening it to a performative field that, given the disparity of materials, could only be truly rescued through cinema and editing.

Well, it is in this “performative” context that the publication of the correspondence between the two - exchanged in the brief periods when they were forced to live far from each other -, as well as the iconography of the couple, which was abundantly photographed throughout their entire life - even in a photo-novel! -, in addition, of course, to the many “biographical” drawings and paintings that they produced between them, sheds light on this love scene as a true meeting point and fusion between the works of both, in a reciprocal and interminable mise en scène.

director's note



Thus, for VIEIRARPAD's initial project, these materials have survived time to carry out a mission: to make visible the particularity of a totally significant life in common, and that it was sought to take the form of a last legacy of the couple in the film.

A last work, then, but which is, at the same time, the most initial and the most radical of all works: the construction of one (two lives), in the form of a work of art. For me, everything already was there, just waiting to be filmed and assembled! And cinema, the art of ghosts par excellence, was for me, at the same time, the language and hope for this ultimate human and artistic revelation. Looking to perpetuate this happy frugality into something truly exemplary.

# about João Mário Grilo

Born in 1958. Directing since 1978. His commitment to cinema has always been defined by the connection and passages between real, fiction and imaginary and, for that reason, his filmography includes fiction titles inspired by real events, such as *O Processo do Rei*, *O Fim do Mundo*, *Os Olhos da Asia*, *Longe da Vista*, and documentaries devoted to the relationship between cinema and the “fictions” of other arts: *Saramago-Documentos*, *Prova de Contacto*, *O Tapete Voador*, *A Vossa Casa*, *A Vossa Terra*.

*VIEIRARPAD* is the latest in this list. Directed by João Mário Grilo, at the invitation of the Arpad Szenes Vieira da Silva Foundation, following the exhibition *Escrita íntima* and book of the same name (2014) which brought forth the private correspondence between Vieira and Arpad from 1932 to 1961. JMG's gaze, very close to painting and fascinated by cultural interaction, holds its focus on the art of the two painters and the unusual love story that kept them together for five and a half decades.

The letters they wrote to each other in the few periods when only geography separated them, are a guiding thread in which the fusional nature of the relationship between Vieira and Arpad is revealed, in a passionate osmosis that crosses their exiles and reaches, at times, the dissolution of their gender. The detail with which the couple weaved their joint legacy for a posterity - reconciled with Portugal - gave life to this film which, “in the sense of staging memory, building the future”, in the director's words, “was already done” .







CAST

WITH THE VOICES OF  
*Luís Lucas, Suzana Borges e Fernanda Lapa.*

FEATURING

*Jean-François Jaeger, Virginie Duval, Raquel Henriques da Silva, Fábio Koifman, Paulo Herkenhoff, Frederico Morais, Marina Bairrão Ruivo.*





# production note

The letters exchanged between the couple Maria Helena Vieira da Silva and Arpad Szenes, over more than 40 years, are, in this documentary film, the gateway to the lives and imagination of the two artists, the essence of their plastic vision of the world.

In cinema, there are antecedents. To recall some recent titles, we point out the cases of Pollock (by Ed Harris, on the painter Jackson Pollock), The Girl with a Pearl Earring (by Marcus Webber, on Vermeer) or Frida (by Julie Taymor), the latter an example in closeness because it is also a film about a couple of artists, in this case, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera.

With VIEIRARPAD it was intended to portray the dimension of this *exchange* of letters, after all, the most important word when we talk about art, since the work of art can be seen as a call to the spectator to socialize, in the closest and most intimate dimension possible: that of Art and the feelings it is capable of arousing.

Cinema can do a lot to ignite this feeling of intimacy, which is what links a work of art to the artist who created it and the collector who owns it. It is difficult for museums – with the abundance and diversity of works they have – to provide the unique range of feelings and pleasures that a work of art carries with it. So, with VIEIRARPAD we want to provide a way of accessing this magical dimension, through the works and life of Vieira and Arpad.

Founded in April 2010 by producer Fernando Centeio, ZulFilmes is a film production company that works in the development of ideas and projects, from their conceptualisation, to the production, post-production, distribution and sales.

Dedicating its activity with relevance to the documentary film genre in Portugal, ZulFilmes was born with the ambition to work with directors, authors and screenwriters, who can develop an original and provocative cinematographic language in their approach to themes, environments and universes sometimes inspired by other disciplines and arts.

*O Tapete Voador, (João Mário Grilo, 2008), Ruy Belo, Era Uma Vez - based on the poetic work of the author (Fernando Centeio and Nuno Costa Santos, 2015) - and VIERARPAD, are some of the feature films that cross unique lives and works and bring the articulation between research and creativity to the big screen.*

a b o u t z u l f i l m e s



Our feature films were premiered in festivals all over the world, in cities such as Lisbon, Madrid, Paris, Iran, New York, Copenhagen, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Santiago de Chile, Belo Horizonte and Curitiba, at the same time. that we have expanded our activities through international co-productions in Spain, Chile, Brazil, France and Costa Rica.

Collaborating assiduously with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, for which it produced several documentary films, Zulfilmes has several types of projects in its catalog – fiction and documentary, as well as film cycles.

We broaden new horizons and possibilities, as much as new projects and visions challenge us.

dezembro, 1947

VIEIRARPAD

B i c h i n h a ,  
meu amor querido,  
sol e alegria da minha alma,  
como a minha vida seria  
triste sem ti.  
Sozinha sinto-me perdida.

Vieira da Silva. [Carta], [1947], dezembro 24-26. [R. Andrade Corvo, Lisboa]. [a] Arpad Szenes. [61, Boulevard Saint-Jacques, Paris]. [Autógrafo.]  
Escrita íntima, edição de correspondência entre o casal Maria Helena Vieira da Silva e Arpad Szenes organizada pela Fundação Arpad Szenes - Vieira da Silva.

DIRECTED BY *JOÃO MÁRIO GRILO*  
SCREENPLAY BY *JOÃO MÁRIO GRILO E INÊS  
BELEZA BARREIROS*

PRODUCTION *ZULFILMES*

CO-PRODUCTION *GULLANE*

WITH *LUÍS LUCAS, SUZANA BORGES  
E FERNANDA LAPA*

FEATURING *JEAN-FRANÇOIS JAEGER, VIRGINIE DUVAL,  
RAQUEL HENRIQUES DA SILVA,  
FÁBIO KOIFMAN, PAULO HERKENHOFF,  
FREDERICO MORAIS  
E MARINA BAIRRÃO RUIVO*

PRODUCED BY *FERNANDO CENTEIO,  
FABIANO GULLANE E CAIO GULLANE*

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER *FERNANDO CENTEIO*

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY *JOÃO RIBEIRO (AIP) E ACÁCIO DE ALMEIDA (AIP)*

SOUND DIRECTOR *CYRIL SANTOS, LUÍS FIGUEIREDO  
E FILIPE GOULART*

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IMAGE POST-PRODUCTION *PAULO AMÉRICO*

SOUND POST-PRODUCTION *ANTÓNIO PORÉM PIRES E BERNARDO GOES*

IMAGE POST-PRODUCTION AND FINISHING *WALLA POST-PRODUCTION COLLECTIVE E BIKINI*

SOUND POST-PRODUCTION AND FINISHING *WALLA POST-PRODUCTION COLLECTIVE E  
ETS SOUND VISION*

GRAPHIC DESIGN *JOÃO CARDOSO RIBEIRO E NUNO MOURA SEMEDO*

WITH THE SUPPORT OF *ICA I.P., BRDE, FSA, ANCINE, CML,  
LISBOA FILM COMMISSION,  
FUNDAÇÃO CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN,  
RTP, INSTITUTO CAMÕES,  
LUSOSCOPIE,  
CINEMATECA PORTUGUESA MUSEU DO CINEMA*

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT *FUNDAÇÃO ARPAD SZENES-VIEIRA DA SILVA  
FUNDAÇÃO CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN,  
GALERIE JEANNE BUCHER JAEGER,  
COMITÉ ARPAD SZENES-VIEIRA DA SILVA*

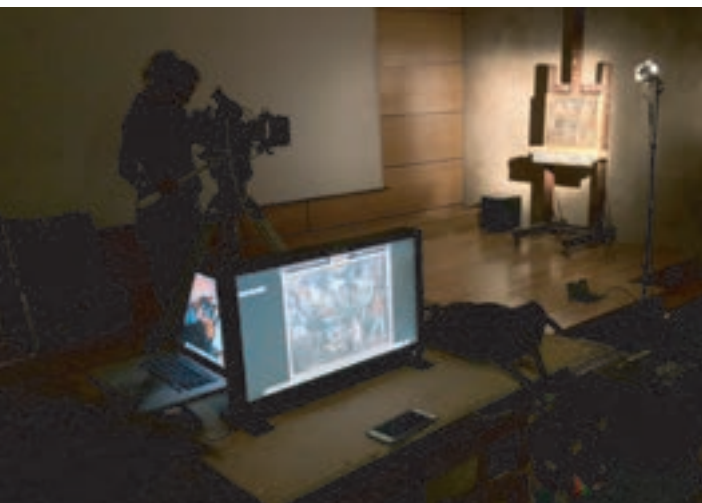
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# SCREENINGS

Cinema City Alvalade (Lisboa)  
UCI El Corte Inglés (Lisboa)  
Cinema Nimas (Lisboa)  
Cinema Trindade (Porto)  
UCI Arrábida (Porto)  
Cinemax Penafiel (Porto)  
Cineclube do Porto  
O Cinema da Villa (Cascais)  
Cinema City Leiria  
Cinema City Setúbal  
Cine Clube de Viseu  
Cine Clube de Faro  
Cinema Vida (Ovar)  
Cinemalua (São Brás de Alportel)  
Casa do Cinema de Coimbra  
Cine-Teatro Avenida (Castelo Branco)  
Centro de Artes do Espetáculo (Figueira da Foz)  
Cineclube do Porto  
Cineclube de Santarém  
Cineclube Torres Novas  
Cine-Teatro de Estarreja  
Lucky Star - Cineclube de Braga

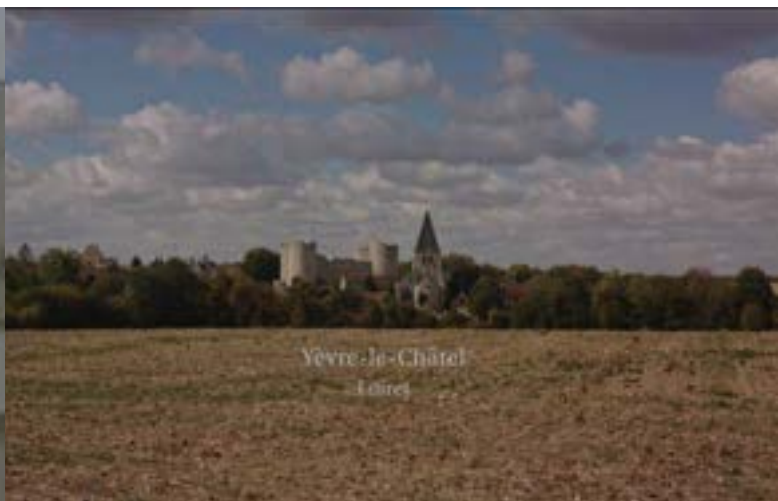
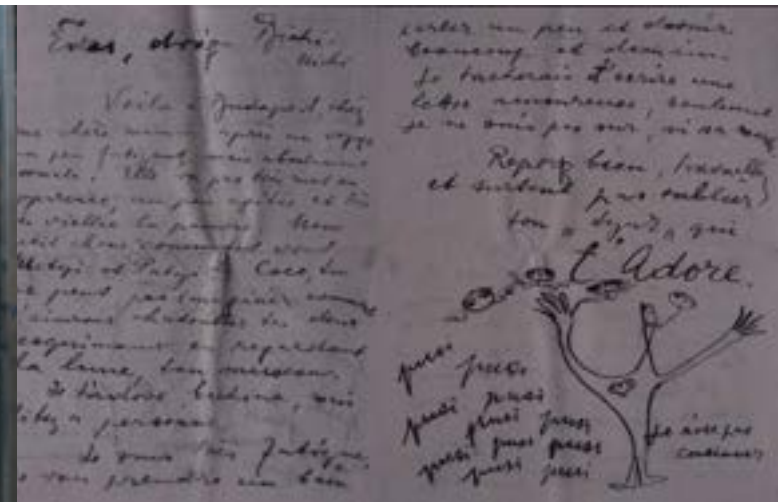
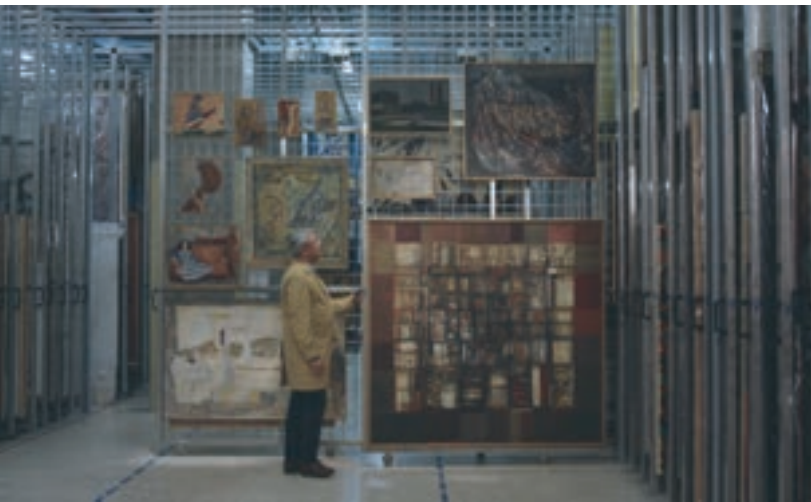






m a k i n g   o f

# visuals





1951

VIEIRARPAD

Sempre que dou  
uma dentada  
em coisas boas  
p e n s o  
em ti.

Vieira da Silva. [Carta], [c. 1951, R. Andrade Corvo, Lisboa], [a] Arpad Szenes, [51, Boulevard Saint-Jacques, Paris]. [Autógrafo.]  
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