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## ACCLAIMED FILMMAKER PEDRO COSTA TO VISIT WEXNER CENTER IN FEBRUARY AS PART OF MONTHLONG RETROSPECTIVE OF HIS WORK

**"To watch the films of Pedro Costa is to behold a cinema at once ineffably modern yet unassailably classical, and that is but one of their glorious paradoxes."**—Scott Foundas, *LA Weekly*

In February, the Wexner Center presents [\*Still Lives: The Films of Pedro Costa\*](#), a monthlong, six-film retrospective of the work of the celebrated Portuguese filmmaker. **Costa will visit on February 8** to introduce the local premiere of his latest film, the much-talked-about [\*Colossal Youth\*](#) (recently picked by *The New York Times* film critic Manohla Dargis as one of the best films of the last year). The series also includes a selection of his short films.



**Pictured: Pedro Costa**  
at the Wexner Center on February 8

Praised at international film festivals and in such publications as *Artforum*, *Film Comment*, and *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Costa is virtually unknown to American audiences. The Palme d'Or-nominated *Colossal Youth* was one of the most discussed—and divisive—films at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival but brought him to the attention of a growing body of critics. Costa is mainly identified with his films depicting the lives of poor migrants in the slums of Lisbon: intimate portraits marked by precise editing and beautiful imagery. Although it may not be immediately apparent on first exposure to his rigorous and experimental filmmaking, Costa displays a deep affinity for classical filmmakers as disparate as John Ford, Robert Bresson, Charlie Chaplin, and Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet.

Notes Dave Filipi, a curator in the Wexner Center's media arts department: "Pedro Costa is one of the great figures of contemporary world cinema. We're truly excited to be able to share his challenging and unique body of work with Columbus audiences."

The series begins Thursday, February 7. Tickets for each night of the series are \$7 general public; \$5 members, students, and senior citizens; \$3 children under 12. All films will be screened in the center's state-of-the-art Film/Video Theater, 1871 N. High St. inside the Wexner Center. More information: 614 292-3535 or [www.wexarts.org](http://www.wexarts.org).

Convenient parking is available in Ohio State's [Ohio Union Garage](#) and [Arps Garage](#), both with entrances from North High Street and College Road. Parking is also available nearby at the South Campus Gateway Garage, located one block east of North Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

### **The schedule follows.**

## **STILL LIVES: THE FILMS OF PEDRO COSTA**

### **Thursday, February 7**

#### **DOUBLE FEATURE**

7 pm: *O Sangue* (1989). 95 mins.

8:45 pm: *Ossos* (1997). 94 mins.

*O Sangue* (*The Blood*), Costa's debut film, is the tale of two young brothers on the run from underworld figures and a vindictive uncle after the mysterious death of their father. Lush, stylized (shot in inky black-and-white), and at times romantic, the film is quite unlike Costa's later work. Like the Dardenne brothers' recent *L'Enfant*, *Ossos* (*Bones*) depicts the lives of impoverished young parents, here a distraught mother and a father who uses the infant as a prop for street begging. The first of a trilogy that explores life in the Lisbon shantytown of Las Fontainhas, the film is notable for the first appearance of Costa's muse, Vanda Duarte.

### **Friday, February 8**

#### **INTRODUCED BY PEDRO COSTA**

7 pm: *Colossal Youth* (2006). 155 mins.

*Colossal Youth*, the final film in Costa's Fontainhas trilogy, straddles the line between ethnographic documentary and austere avant-garde filmmaking. Its story follows an unemployed man, Ventura, who is relocated from his dilapidated neighborhood to a low-cost housing complex after his longtime wife leaves him. Costa culled his film from over 300 hours of footage, and the result is a humanist epic comprising Ventura's encounters with the lost souls in his new neighborhood. *The New York Times* called it "beguiling...looks and sounds as if it were made on another planet. And in some respects, it was."

### **Friday, February 15**

7 pm: *In Vanda's Room* (2000). 178 mins.

The second film in the Fontainhas trilogy, *In Vanda's Room* features Vanda Duarte and her sister Lena (both playing themselves) as crack-addicted sisters who resort to scraping residue from the pages of a book for their high while the shantytown in which they live is being demolished. Despite the grim subject-matter, Costa infuses his film with humor and his characters with dignity and humanity.

### **Thursday, February 21**

7 pm: *Casa de Lava* (1994) . 110 mins.

Preceded by *Ne Change Rien* (2005) & *Tarrafal* (2007)

Inspired by Jacques Tourneur's *I Walked with a Zombie*, *Casa de Lava* (also known as *Down to Earth*) follows a young nurse charged with bringing a young worker, comatose after an accident, from Lisbon to his home on the volcanic island of Fogo. Once there, she tries to piece together the circumstances of his life discovering more and more mystery the deeper she probes. (110 mins., 35mm) *Ne Change Rien* (13 mins.) features Jeanne Balibar (a favorite of Olivier Assayas) singing (13 mins, video). *Tarrafal* (16 mins.) is Costa's examination of a prison for political dissidents on Fogo

### **Thursday, February 28**

7 pm: *Where Does Your Hidden Smile Lie?* (2001).

Preceded by *6 Bagatelas* (2001)

Hailed by many as the best film about filmmaking ever made, *Hidden Smile* is Costa's portrait of the filmmaking team of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet—perhaps the most profound influence on Costa's own work. It shows the pair contemplating and battling over every cut as they reedit their film *Sicilia!*. The six-minute long *6 Bagatelas* offers a collection of unused scenes from *Hidden Smile*.

**Calendar Information for *Still Lives: The Films of Pedro Costa*:** A six-film retrospective (February 7-28) of the work of this acclaimed Portuguese filmmaker. Tickets for each evening are \$7 general public; \$5 members, students, and senior citizens; \$3 children under 12. Wexner Center Film/Video Theater, 1871 N. High St. Tel: (614) 292-3535. More information: [www.wexarts.org/fv](http://www.wexarts.org/fv).

**Media contacts:** Karen Simonian, Wexner Center, [ksimonian@wexarts.org](mailto:ksimonian@wexarts.org) or 614 292-9923; or Erik Pepple, [epepple@wexarts.org](mailto:epepple@wexarts.org) or 614 688-3261.

#### **SEASON AND EVENT SUPPORT**

Thanks to Ricardo Matos Cabo for organizing this retrospective.

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