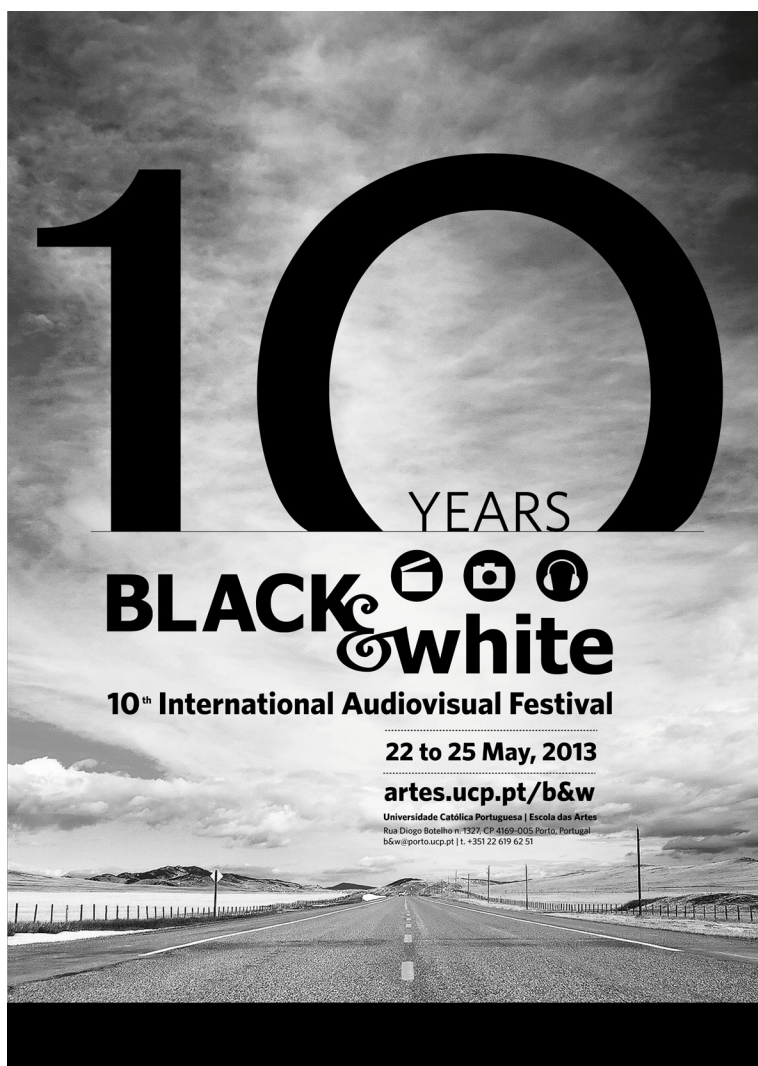


A DECADE OF “BLACK & WHITE”

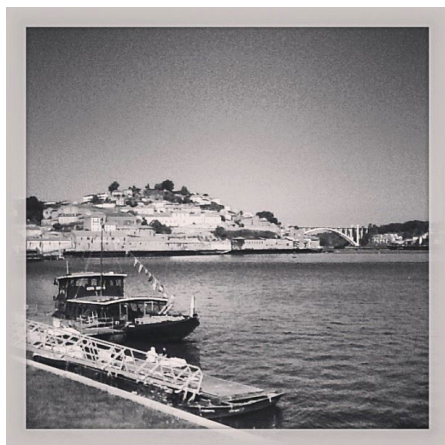
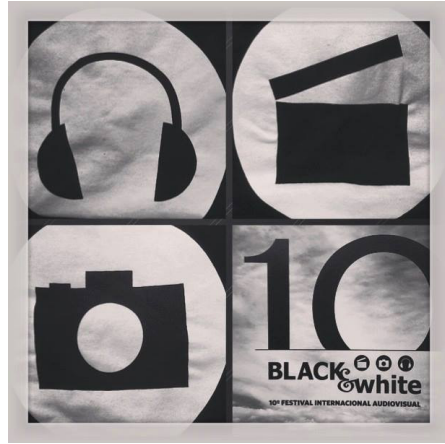
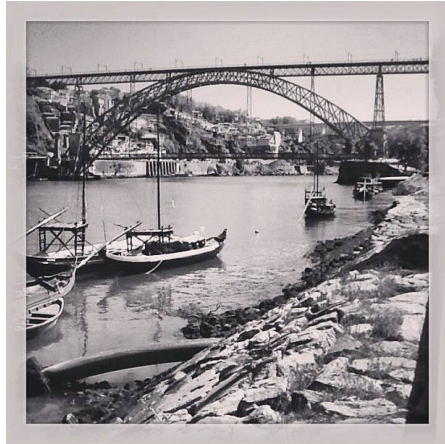


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towards a monochromatic aesthetic
after Technicolor”*



BLACK & white



With its first edition taking place in 2004, the “Black & White — International Audiovisual Festival” emerged in the context of the School of the Arts of the Portuguese Catholic University with a very specific goal: to promote and demystify the aesthetic of black and white cinema. This demystification is understood in the sense of clarifying that the choice of black and white as a medium should not only not be considered old-fashioned or nostalgic, but can rather, in some cases, be labelled as avant-garde. This regards black and white as an aesthetic choice, as a form of communication, of reflection, of telling stories and of portraying the world around us.

It is a festival with prestige and rigor, spawned in an academic environment but projecting itself beyond the walls of the university. It is an international festival that distinguishes itself because of its specificity and scope. It is a festival that is able to bridge the gap between established artists and beginners, and between those and an interested audience. Because its aim is not to be a festival similar to others and mainly not wanting to intrude into the space already occupied by other festivals of known impact and scale such as “Fantasporto” or “Curtas Vila do Conde — International Film Festival”, “Black & White” always affirmed itself as a festival with specific and differentiating characteristics. In 2004 it occupied a space as yet unexplored by other film festivals, contemplating rigorously and

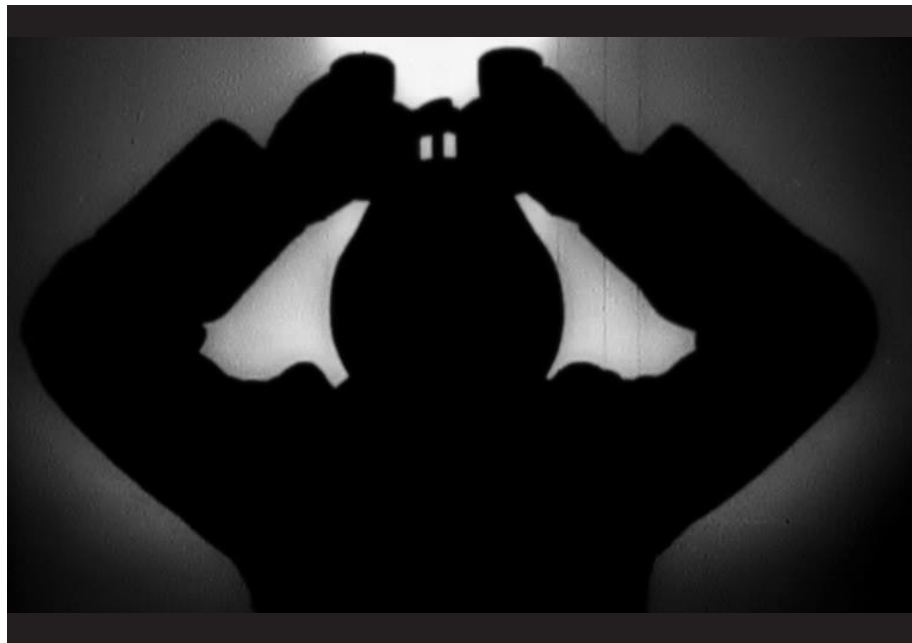
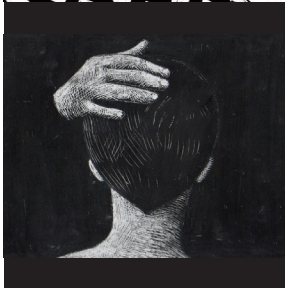
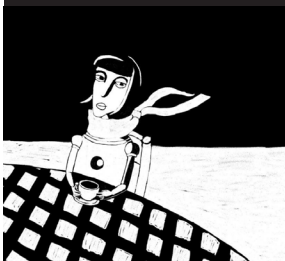
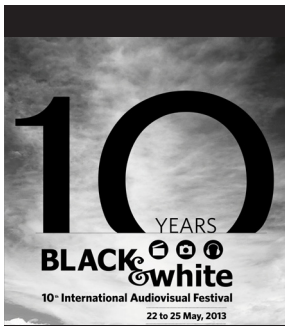




exclusively monochromatic approaches in the areas of cinema and photography, as well as in audio, where annually it searches for aural solutions that remit the listener to black and white universes. The festival has sought and continues to seek to stimulate competitive spirit as well as the sharing of opinions and knowledge between all those who during four days accept the challenge of thinking and creating without using colour. This process allows for focus on the essential, on the interplay of contrast, on the richness of light and on the mystery of shadows.

Currently, "Black & White" is a nationally and internationally recognized and highly visible festival. This stems from the festival's strategy of democratization and decentralization, which allows it to be geographically accessible to an increasing number of people. During a decade, "Black & White" has always invested in partnerships with cineclubs and cultural institutions as a means to create extensions of the festival. That allowed for the festival's black and white aesthetic to reach a wide range of geographic locations besides Portugal, such as Europe, North America and Africa. It has been a decade marked by an increased approach to similarly specific festivals. Also, an effort was made to exchange programming, create networks, capture new audiences and increase visibility of the festival. During ten years "Black & White" has celebrated partnerships with festivals such as: "One Take Film Festival" (Zagreb - Croatia), "Play-Doc - Festival Internacional de Documentais" (Tui - Spain), "15 Second Film Festival" (Belfast, Northern Ireland), "Tricky Women - Animation Festival" (Vienna, Austria), "Festival de Cans" (Cans, Spain), "Up & Coming Film Festival" (Hannover, Germany), "Era New Horizons" (Warsaw, Poland) e "Cinerail - International Festival Train & Metro on Film" (Paris, France).

Besides several showings, artist talks and retrospectives, during a decade of "Black & White" a total of 312 short



films, 162 photographic sequences, and 84 audio works, representing a total of 47 countries were presented in competition. Alongside with Germany, Spain, United Kingdom and France, Portugal is part of the group of countries with the largest number of works selected for competition. There is also strong representation of Eastern European countries, such as Russia and Bielorrussia. Furthermore, the geographic variety of the festival is also guaranteed by submissions from countries such as Angola, Japan, Colombia, Faroe Islands, Iran, Mexico, New Zealand and India. Reflecting upon the past ten years, based on the experience of "Black & White", one can claim that gradually prejudice towards black and white has started to decrease. Naturally, for a more uncurious audience formatted by audiovisual pyrotechnics that are imposed upon it (whether while turning on the TV or visiting a commercial cinema) the exercise of imagining colour and painting scenarios in which the eye only registers black and white can be an uncomfortable and sometimes even frustrating process. However, one can also see that gradually and increasingly a larger and younger part of the audience sees the experience of confronting itself

with black and white as just that - an experience, a possibility of blazing new trails.

From the standpoint of the creators, who are naturally also spectators, it has been possible to observe that throughout the ten years of the festival they have increasingly submitted first works. This is relevant, as it shows the effect that this aesthetic (for many a new and revolutionary and even "underground" one) has had on a new generation of artists. For many established artists, producing films in black and white even if only sporadically, is used as proof of maturity and an exercise of style.

Ten years do not represent an accomplished goal, but rather another successfully concluded stage. New challenges arise. The "Black & White Audiovisual Festival" will continue to propagate the monochromatic aesthetic. Year after year it will remain faithful to the principles at the origin of its creation, affirming itself as the black and white festival. It will continue to be a showcase for those who dare to see and hear way beyond that (in black and white) which is shown.

Is there really no colour in black and white?