

East Timor's first feature film

BEATRIZ'S WAR **(A GUERRA DA BEATRIZ)**

PRESS KIT



A love story written in blood.

www.aguerradabeatriz.com

BEATRIZ'S WAR

A country's first film

This astonishing first film from East Timor was made guerrilla style by the men and women who fought in the armed resistance and the clandestine movement during the small country's twenty-four year long war with Indonesia.

The film is the story of one woman's passion for independence and justice, both for her nation and for her soul.

Beatriz's husband Tomas is arrested after the Timorese resistance attacks Indonesian troops in the village of Kraras.



In retribution for the attack the Indonesians massacre the entire male population of Kraras. Tomas disappears during the massacre but his body is not found. Beatriz then takes command of the 'village of widows' and holds on desperately to the hope that her husband is alive.

BEATRIZ'S WAR

Beatriz becomes a leader and organises clandestine activities against the Indonesian soldiers that live in the village and run it like a prison camp, forcing Timorese women to live as comfort wives or face brutal retribution against their children or family.

Following East Timor's historic vote for independence Beatriz inspires the other women in the village to move on with their lives, to shed their grief and their mourning clothes. But Beatriz continues to wear black and refuses to let go of the past or to put to rest the horrors of the war and her husband Tomas' disappearance.

Tomas' sudden return unsettles Beatriz, and the other women's attempts to rebuild their lives. He is not the same man that disappeared sixteen years earlier. War has changed him. The mysterious stranger presents a powerful metaphor for the unresolved struggles and passions that challenge a new nation's independence.

Through the character of Beatriz this epic film tells the story of East Timor's heroic and tireless struggle for independence from Indonesia, an occupation that left over a quarter of the population dead, the highest per capita genocide in history.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

INFORMATION

Technical Information

Country of Production	East Timor
Year of Production	2013
Running Time	105 minutes (24fps) 101 minutes (25fps)
Format	DCP
Ratio	1.78 (16:9)
Sound	5.1 Cinema Mix
Language	Tetun & Indonesian
Subtitles	English

Production Information

Production Company	Dili Film Works In association with FairTrade Films Pty Ltd
Directors	Bety Reis & Luigi Acquisto
Producers	Stella Zammataro & Lurdes Pires
Co-producers	José da Costa & Nicholas Calpakhjian
Screenplay	Luigi Acquisto & Irim Tolentino
Director of Photography	Valeriu Campan
Editor	Nicholas Calpakhjian
Original Music	Osme Gonçalves Danny Da Silva Lopes Jamie Saxe
Line Producer	Gaspar Sarmento

BEATRIZ'S WAR

INFORMATION Cont'd

Cast

Beatriz	Irim Tolentino
Teresa	Augusta Soares
Tomas	José da Costa
Fr. Nicolau	Osme Gonçalves
Captain Sumitro	Gaspar Sarmiento

Australian Distribution

FairTrade Films

fairtradefilms@abrafilms.com

East Timor Distribution

Dili Film Works

dilifilmworks@gmail.com

International Sales

Media Luna

info@medialuna.biz

Awards & Festival Selections

Adelaide International Film Festival 2013.

Official Competition

Best Film Award (Golden Peacock) - 44th International Film Festival of India 2013
Goa, India.

Byron Bay International Film Festival 2014

Official Competition.

Big Picture Film Festival 2014

Official Selection.

Festroia International Film Festival, Setubal, Portugal 2014

Official Competition.

Seoul Art Film Festival 2014

Official Selection.

Australian Cinematography Award 2013 (ACS) - The Gold Award for cinema feature
& The Judges' Choice Award for the best cinematography in all categories.

BEATRIZ'S WAR

SYNOPSIS

Taglines

East Timor's first film. A love story written in blood.

One Line Synopsis

Beatriz's young husband disappears during a brutal massacre by occupying Indonesian forces, sixteen years later she is troubled by his return; is this mysterious stranger her husband or an impostor?

One Paragraph Synopsis

East Timor's award winning first feature film, *Beatriz's War (A Guerra da Beatriz)*, is the haunting, passionate story of one woman's conviction to remain true to the man she loves and the country for which she fought. It is a bold reworking of the 16th century French 'Martin Guerre' story. In this adaptation the original story is transposed to Portuguese Timor during the Indonesian occupation of the small colony. Beatriz's young husband disappears during a brutal massacre by occupying Indonesian forces, sixteen years later she is troubled by his return; is this mysterious stranger her husband or an impostor?



BEATRIZ'S WAR

Full Synopsis

East Timor's historic first feature film, *A Guerra da Beatriz*, is the haunting, passionate story of one woman's conviction to remain true to the man she loves and the country for which she fought. It is a bold reworking of the 16th century French 'Martin Guerre' story. In this adaptation the original story is transposed to Portuguese Timor during the 1975 Indonesian occupation of the small colony.

A Guerra da Beatriz starts in 1975 with the wedding of two eleven-year old children, Beatriz and Tomas, in a small mountain village in the heart of Timor. The families are determined to fight the invading Indonesian army and decide to combine their strengths; their money, rifles and soldiers, through the marriage of the two young children.

When the village is attacked Beatriz and Tomas flee to the mountains and live and fight with the resistance. In 1983 Beatriz is pregnant, there is a ceasefire, and she feels it is safe to surrender. Beatriz and Tomas move to the village of Kraras, an Indonesian prison camp, confident that the war will end soon. But then Beatriz is raped by Captain Sumitro, the Indonesian who runs the camp. The rape is intended to provoke the resistance to break the ceasefire, which it does. They attack and kill many of the Indonesian soldiers in the camp.

This attack threatens the life of Beatriz's newborn son and she sends him back to the resistance for safety. Beatriz, weak from giving birth, stays in the camp. The Indonesian military retaliates by massacring every male in the village, over two hundred men and children, and Kraras becomes known as the 'village of widows'. During the massacre Tomas is arrested and disappears. Beatriz is unable to find his body and desperately holds onto the hope that her husband has somehow escaped and will return.

For the next 16 years Beatriz becomes a clandestine leader, often brutally forcing the other women to 'marry' Indonesian soldiers so as to collect intelligence and to 'grow an army' that will one day fight the occupiers. In 1999, following East Timor's independence, Tomas returns. After the massacre he'd fled and fought with the resistance. The couple's reunion is troubled, but also passionate and moving. Beatriz discovers a different man to the boy who'd left her years earlier. Tomas is now wiser, confident, and brave, something he never was as a child or a young man. He has learnt much from life as a soldier.

But as time passes, Beatriz makes a chilling discovery. She becomes convinced that Tomas is an impostor, that she has mistaken a stranger for her husband. Who is this man? Why has he taken on a new identity? Tomas's sister and family accuse Beatriz of treachery, of madness. But she is determined to discover the truth.

BEATRIZ'S WAR

BIOGRAPHIES

BETY REIS

Co-director & Actor

Bety is Timor-Leste's leading filmmaker. In the years following Timor's independence Bety worked in theatre as an actor, writer, and director. In 2010 she co-founded Dili Film Works, East Timor's first film & television production house. She is the director of Dili Film Works and is in development on two other feature films, a comedy and a drama.

Dili Film Works ran two historic filmmaking workshops that provided the training for a future generation of filmmakers. Bety made three short films during this period: The Cockfight, Vagabond, and Nit Picking. She produced three others. These films have been screened at the Brisbane International Film Festival, The Pune Short Film Festival, and extensively throughout East Timor and Australia.

Beatriz's War, is Bety's, and East Timor's, first feature film. She co-directed the film with Luigi Acquisto, and also plays the role of young Beatriz's mother. Bety's first film has been accepted into several festivals and has screened to many thousands of people in the districts of East Timor, and premiered recently in Dili to packed houses.

Bety lives in Dili with her two daughters.



Photo – Richard Jones

BEATRIZ'S WAR

BIOGRAPHIES Cont'd.

LUIGI ACQUISTO Co-director & Co-writer

Luigi Acquisto has worked as a filmmaker for over 25 years, producing groundbreaking films which explore social and political themes. His work is committed to exploring confronting social justice issues in an original and cinematic way. It is often groundbreaking. Acquisto's first film, **Spaventapasseri**, was one of the first of a new wave of films made in the 1980's that explored post war migration from Europe. **Trafficked** was the first Australian film to deal with sex slavery in Australia. **East Timor: Birth of a Nation** (2002) was the first longitudinal documentary series tracking the emergence of a new nation.

In 2006 Luigi returned to East Timor in the midst of the political violence that threatened to tear the new nation apart. He returned to search for missing friends and naturally started filming. This became **Rosa's Journey**, the third part of **East Timor: Birth of a Nation**. In 2010 Acquisto organized a series of workshops to train East Timor's first generation of filmmakers. This led to the development of **Beatriz's War**, East Timor's first feature film. Acquisto co-wrote **Beatriz's War** with the film's lead actor Irim Tolentino and co-directed with Bety Reis.

Since the mid 1980's Acquisto has produced over thirty short films and directed many drama and documentary productions. He has lectured at the Swinburne Film & TV School, the VCA, Melbourne University and AFTRS. He has also been published in the Age newspaper, co-hosted the ABC Drive show and reported regularly for radio during the political crisis in East Timor in 2006. He established FairTrade Films with producer Stella Zammataro in 2010.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

BIOGRAPHIES Cont'd.

LURDES PIRES

Producer

Lurdes Pires and her family fled East Timor in 1975 during the Indonesian invasion and settled in Darwin, Australia. She became a member of the Darwin branch of the Fretilin Committee and for the next twenty-four years fought for East Timor's independence. In the 1975 she helped with the transmissions and monitoring of the resistance's radio, Radio Maubere, which transmitted from Darwin to East Timor. The radio was shut down by the Australian government in 1978.

Lurdes returned to East Timor in 1999 to help with the historic referendum for independence. After the referendum she worked with UN peacekeepers as a liaison officer and interpreter and assisted the Serious Crimes Unit to investigate the crimes committed by militia and the Indonesian military in 1999.

Lurdes started working with filmmakers Luigi Acquisto and Stella Zammataro in 2001 on the landmark documentary series East Timor – Birth of a Nation. She was an associate producer on the series, and on the 2008 sequel, Rosa's Journey. Lurdes is a producer of Beatriz's War as well as the script advisor and language consultant.



Lurdes Pires & Australian guest producer David Elfick on set

BEATRIZ'S WAR

STELLA ZAMMATARO

Producer

In 1997 Stella co-founded Abracadabra Films with Luigi Acquisto. She has produced many documentaries about some of the most critical social justice issues of our time. **The Life & Times of Malcolm Fraser** was an engrossing portrait of Australia's most controversial prime minister but also an indictment of Australia's policies towards asylum seekers, aborigines and the decision to enter the Iraq war.

The two-part epic for ABC TV, **East Timor: Birth of a Nation** told the story of the 21st century's first sovereign nation through the eyes of Rosa Martins, East Timor's 'Mother Courage'. The film received an unprecedented five AFI nominations and won the major award for an Australian documentary at the 2002 Real Life on Film Festival.

In 2006 Stella returned to Timor-Leste for the third instalment in the East Timor series, **Rosa's Journey**. In 2008 she production co-ordinated the Australian feature film **Balibo**, the first feature film to be shot in East Timor.

Stella produced **Beatriz's War** together with local producer Lurdes Pires.



Stella Zammataro with Kirsty Sword Gusmao, Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao & Bety Reis.

BEATRIZ'S WAR

BIOGRAPHIES Cont'd.

IRIM TOLENTINO Writer & Actor (Beatriz)

Irim is one of East Timor's most talented and experienced actors. She was an original member of the renowned theatre group *Bibi Bulak (Mad Goat)*, played the lead in **Rosa**, a local television series, and worked on the Australian film **Balibo** co-ordinating and rehearsing the hundreds of extras.

Irim, an award winning writer, co-wrote *Beatriz's War*, and plays the lead role of Beatriz. Producer Luigi Acquisto met Irim during the filming of **Balibo**. He was so impressed by her talent that he decided that she should be on the big screen, and *Beatriz's War* was born. Acquisto believes that 'Irim is the only woman in East Timor who could play Beatriz. Her performance is powerful, nuanced, and most importantly she understands the role. Like many of the actors she has lived through the history, or heard about it all her life. She inhabits the character of Beatriz with a virtuosity and intelligence that is astounding and leaves audiences devastated.'

Irim lives on the border town of Maliana with her two young children. She works as an area manager for World Vision.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

BIOGRAPHIES Cont'd.

AUGUSTA SOARES

Actor (Teresa)

Beatriz's War is Augusta's first film. Her portrayal of Teresa, Beatriz's sister-in-law, is breathtaking, forceful and played with conviction. Augusta has a natural grace that quickly breaks down when her character is confronted by tragedy: the execution of her father or the loss of her daughter. At these times her performance is raw, passionate and heart wrenching. She is the emotional core of the film. Augusta turned twenty-one during filming and plays Teresa with a complexity and sophistication that is preternatural.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

BIOGRAPHIES Cont'd.

Augusta comes from a very talented but very poor Dili family. Her younger brother, Eugenio, played the role of young Tomas and her younger sister, Dorotea, played the young Teresa. Augusta's cousin, Sandra was the young Beatriz. So this remarkable extended family contributed all of the child actors to the film.

The family's passion for performing grew out of their involvement in cultural youth groups in East Timor. Like many of the actors in the film Augusta has been performing in choirs and community theatre since childhood. She is currently on a scholarship and studying in Australia.



Sandra as Young Beatriz

BEATRIZ'S WAR

BIOGRAPHIES Cont'd.

JOSE DA COSTA

Actor (Tomas)

Jose da Costa is East Timor's leading actor. He has played major roles in award winning foreign productions such as the mini series **Answered by Fire** (Australia & Canada) and the award winning Australian feature film **Balibo**.

Jose worked with the clandestine movement during the Indonesian occupation. In 1992 he was arrested during the Santa Cruz massacre and tortured by Indonesian security forces. In 1995, wanted by the Indonesian military, he escaped to Australia as one of 18 Timorese refugees who fled in a leaky boat and was detained at the Curtin Immigration Detention Centre in Derby. Ill fated rebel leader Alfredo Reinado was one of the other escapees.

Jose studied in Australia and started working in theatre. He scored major roles in **Answered by Fire** and then **Balibo**. He moved back to East Timor in 2009 and a year later co-founded Dili Film Works with Bety Reis and Gaspar Sarmiento. He plays the lead male role in the film, Tomas.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

BIOGRAPHIES Cont'd.

OSME GONÇALVES

Composer & Actor (Father Nicolau)

Osme Gonçalves is a highly gifted artist: sculptor, musician, and actor. He was a bold choice to play a priest as he has a reputation as being Timor's *enfant terrible*: unorthodox and challenging. These qualities were channelled into the role of Fr. Nicolau, who confronts the Indonesian military fearlessly following the Kraras massacre.

During the war with Indonesia Osme fought with Falintil, the armed resistance, as a guerrilla fighter. His rifle is in the Resistance Museum in Dili. Since independence he has worked with the Bibi Bulak theatre company, Black Lung Theatre Australia, and as a freelance artist.

Osme plays the role of Fr. Nicolau, a character based on several Timorese priests who fought for justice during the occupation. He also wrote and performed much of the music for the film, which gives the film great veracity and reflects the importance music played in the resistance.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

BIOGRAPHIES Cont'd.

GASPAR SARMENTO

Line Producer & Actor (Captain Sumitro)

Gaspar De O.A.Sarmento is one of the founding members of Dili Film Works. He line produced *A Guerra da Beatriz*. He has worked with FairTrade films since 2005 and often works with other foreign film crews as a fixer and production manager.

Gaspar plays the role of Captain Sumitro, the Indonesian captain who was in command of the Kraras village when the 1983 massacre happened. Sumitro is based on a number of real life characters in the Indonesian military at that time.

Gaspar plays this villain with great skill and colour despite never having acted before. He claims he researched the character extensively during his time in the clandestine movement, both in Indonesia and East Timor, where he was able to observe the Indonesian military at close quarters. Gaspar was arrested and jailed several times for his activities. In 1999, following East Timor's historic vote for independence the Indonesian military, in retribution for the Timorese people's temerity, killed hundreds, looted, forcibly re-located over 200,000 Timorese to Indonesia and systematically burnt the country to the ground. Gaspar was in Bali at the time and learnt that he was on a hit list. As thousands fled the burning capital Dili Gaspar flew into the chaos to escape the death squads in Bali.

On set his performance, chilling and perversely compelling, contrasted markedly with the *simpatico* Gaspar that moments earlier was one of the crew.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

BIOGRAPHIES Cont'd.

XANANA GUSMAO

Resistance Leader

Xanana Gusmao is now the Prime Minister of East Timor, having also served as the country's President. He was the charismatic leader of the Falintil resistance for many years, was captured by the Indonesians, and imprisoned in Jakarta. He was released in 1999 following East Timor's courageous vote to become independent.



Photo – Luigi Acquisto

Xanana appears in two archival sequences in the film. His emotional speech near the end of *Beatriz's War* brings together the history of the nation and *Beatriz's* own life in an electrifying way and articulates the challenges which face a new nation.

Xanana is also an unseen character in the film. He ordered his men to attack the Indonesian soldiers based at the village of Kraras to 'show the world that the resistance is alive.' In retribution the Indonesian military committed the Kraras massacre, one of the most horrific atrocities of the occupation. Indonesian soldiers, under the command of Suharto's new son-in-law, Prabowo Subianto, killed every male in the village, over 260 men and children, and continued the campaign of terror for several months, murdering another three thousand people in the area. Prabowo, who allegedly ordered the massacres, is one of three candidates for the 2014 presidential elections in Indonesia.

BEATRIZ'S WAR

BIOGRAPHIES Cont'd.

THE AUSTRALIAN CONNECTION

The Foreign Crew.

Beatriz's War had a crew of over sixty. A small number of the crew came from Australia. Most of them had a strong connection to East Timor and a good knowledge of the country and its people. The Australian crew were Valeriu Campan (DOP), Rocco Fasano (camera operator), Glen Forster (sound recordist), Ed Tyrie (gaffer), Richard Piscionerie (stills photographer) and Nick Calpakdjian (co-producer & editor).

Valeriu and Glen had worked in Timor since 2000, on a number of documentaries. Glen also worked on the 2008 Australian feature film **Balibo** as the sound assistant. Rocco ran a camera workshop for Dili Film Works in 2010 and had filmed in the country a number of times. Richard took many of the great stills for the film that are found in this press kit.

Nick Calpakdjian first came to Timor in 2008 to edit **Rosa's Journey** for SBS Television. He returned to co-produce **Beatriz's War** and edit the film, his first feature. His contribution in raising finance for the film was invaluable. Nick organised the crowd sourcing campaigns, the weekly film screenings, and liaised with many of the local sponsors. These committed Australians were invaluable to the film and helped train a future generation of filmmakers.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

Bety Reis

Since 1999 Timor Leste has rebuilt itself from ground zero. We have achieved much and there has been much frustration as well. We have fought for many rights: the rights of women, the rights of children, and the right to rule ourselves. But there is also another right that we have been denied, the right to tell our story. It is my hope that this film is the beginning of a film culture, and a film industry, in East Timor.

Imagine what it is like to live in a country that has never made a film, that has never heard its language or seen the faces of its people on a screen, that has been oppressed for 500 years. A Guerra da Beatriz, my country's first film, is full of pain but also courage, love and the passion to bring our story to the world, and to our own people. In Maliana, a border town west of Dili, the film attracted over 2000 people to a screening. Another 2000 came the next night, and when the film finished they wanted to see it again. This has been the pattern in town after town where the film has been shown.

When I was 16 Timor-Leste voted for independence. The Indonesian military then burnt my country to the ground; killed and raped. I was made to kneel and was to be executed. I am grateful that I was spared to be able to make this film, and to be able to share it with my people.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

Luigi Acquisto

I first went to East Timor in 1999 following the Indonesian withdrawal from the country. It made a profound impression and I returned committed to telling the story of the new nation. In the years that followed I made four documentaries about the country, production co-ordinated the feature Balibo, and organised two historic filmmaking workshops in Dili, funded by various international film festivals and my own production company. In 2007 my wife and co-producer, Stella Zammataro, and I established a base in Dili which was essential for our work.

On Balibo I observed that Timorese are great actors, naturally gifted and with an innate knowledge of character. Irim Tolentino, who rehearsed the extras for Balibo displayed an extraordinary talent and intelligence. I felt that that her remarkable gift needed to be the centrepiece of a film, and the idea for Beatriz's War was born. Irim is also an award-winning writer and we started to co-write the country's first film, taking a 16th century French story as the basis for the plot.

Jose da Costa joined the team and together with Bety Reis and Gaspar Sarmiento formed Dili Film Works.

BEATRIZ'S WAR

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT cont'd

Luigi Acquisto

Beatriz's war is the start of a film culture in East Timor, something as rare as the birth of a new nation. In 2010 Stella Zammataro and I formed FairTrade Films to formalise the working relationship with Dili Film Works, and to co-produce Beatriz's War. Four years later the film was completed. It is a collaboration with a number of Australians who have worked on the film, and others who have mentored the Timorese writers, directors, producers and crew. It is a co-production between a Timorese company and an Australian company. Given that East Timor has no history of film production and little infrastructure these partnerships were essential, as they are in many other areas of development in a new and poor nation. However, there is no danger that the film does not speak with a true Timorese voice. Bety, Irim, Lurdes, Jose, Gaspar and the other members of Dili Film Works have taken the knowledge gained through the workshops and mentoring and run with it, made it their own, and doggedly rejected anything that is not authentic or true to their own story.

East Timor has been an important part of my professional life as a filmmaker for nearly fifteen years. But it has also enriched my personal life. I have many close friends in Timor, bonds forged through work and through having shared the early days of independence together, and later, the horrors of the violence that destabilised the nation from 2006 to 2008. The country has also given me two daughters, Thicia and Lili, which Stella and I adopted from an orphanage in Dili. Their family comes from Viqueque, near Kraras, where the 1983 massacre happened that features in Beatriz's War. Thicia and Lili have brought me even closer to East Timor, and to the story of A Guerra da Beatriz.



Bety Reis, Luigi Acquisto & Lurdes Pires

BEATRIZ'S WAR

PRODUCTION STORY

Origins

Beatriz's War started in 2009 with the idea of making a film that would showcase the talent of actor Irim Tolentino. Producer Luigi Acquisto met Irim during the filming of **Balibo**. Luigi and Stella Zammataro were the East Timor production co-ordinators on the film and employed Irim to cast, co-ordinate, and rehearse the many extras that worked on the film. It quickly became clear that Irim was a gifted actor and a highly intelligent woman. Irim is also a writer, and together with Luigi, started to write a feature film script. It took twelve months to finish the first draft, as the two were based in different countries for much of the time. In 2010 Dili Film Works was born and became the Timorese production entity for the film in partnership with FairTrade Films, a company established by Luigi and Stella.

Finance & Support

Funding the film proved to be difficult. There was no provision for film financing in the Timorese Government. The Department of Culture gave a few thousand, as did Youth and Sport but hardly enough to make a feature film. President Jose Ramos Horta gave a generous amount from his office to help Dili Film Works get established. So a guerrilla strategy for raising the finances was devised. A fan club was set up for the film where members contributed \$60 in exchange for a DVD of the film upon completion. A crowd sourcing campaign was mounted, several as it turned out, and many people sponsored the film. Dili Film Works started the first cinema in East Timor showing films from a Portuguese Foundation in the heart of Dili. Documentaries about Timor and the region provided a welcome respite for the many foreigners who hungered for knowledge about Timor, the resistance, and the country's rich history. Locals were welcome at a fraction of the cost. The script gained support from the Global Film Initiative which gave the film a generous grant. Dili Film Works also sold copies of its films throughout Dili and this expanded to other titles they gained permission to sell locally.

SBS Television in Australia acquired the film at this early stage and this was a significant breakthrough and boosted the confidence of the Dili Film Works team. Filming started in late 2011. There were enough funds to film for four weeks. In true guerrilla style we decided to film just over half of the film in two of the key locations. At this time major sponsorship was secured with in-kind support from many organisations: Timor Telecom, Toll Logistics, Airnorth, Rentlo, and the FFDTL - the Timorese Army.

Beatriz War could not have been made without the support of the Timorese Defence Force. The army supported the production in many ways, it attached 12 soldiers to the shoot, provided decommissioned weapons for the art department, authentic uniforms from the resistance, labour, vehicles, extras, and a lead actor, Commander Funu Lakan.

BEATRIZ'S WAR

PRODUCTION STORY cont'd

The Commander played the real life character of Celestino dos Anjos, a Timorese who had been trained as a paratrooper by the Australians in WW2, and fought alongside Australian troops against the Japanese.



A crew of over sixty worked to successfully complete this first block of shooting on schedule and on a very tight budget. Fund raising then started for the second and final block scheduled for early in 2012. More fan club members, sponsors, crowd sourcing campaigns, screenings, DVD sales, and again support from a handful of major sponsors. But no support from the Timorese government or NGOs.

One approach to an NGO looked promising until they requested that we downplay the war crimes committed by the Indonesians. The logic was that the proposal would have a greater chance of success with pro-Indonesians politicians in the Timorese Government who were on their board and had prior to independence worked for the Indonesians. We did not proceed with the application. It was a great frustration to not have access to conventional film funding but it was also liberating.

BEATRIZ'S WAR

PRODUCTION STORY cont'd

We often say the film was made in the same way that Timor won its independence, through a popular consultancy. The film's production is directly attributable to the hundreds of generous and like-minded individuals, from around the world, who supported it with small or large donations. With some footage under our belt, and a rough cut of the scenes we'd shot, we were also able to attract a number of investors, which was a great encouragement to the team.

The second block of filming took part in Kraras, the site of the 1983 massacre. Beatriz's War is a tremendously moving film but it was also a moving film to make. The recreation and filming of the massacre at the village of Kraras was a profound experience for the cast and crew. The massacre is a small part of the film but is critical to the central love story between Beatriz and Tomas. It is the event that leads to Tomas' disappearance, that changes Beatriz's life forever. The filmmakers decided to film in Kraras for many reasons. The landscape around the village, particularly the beautiful wide, black sand riverbed, sits incongruously with the horrors that occurred thirty years ago. This incongruity adds a special dimension to the film, showing the healing powers of the landscape, a rejuvenation that complements the spirit of the Timorese.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

PRODUCTION STORY cont'd

Filming a Massacre

Many of the extras that worked on the film were from Kraras and advised on how events unfolded, including describing the massacre. One important detail emerged the day before filming. A survivor told the directors, Bety Reis and Luigi Acquisto, that the Indonesians made the Timorese sing Foho Ramelau before they were shot. The reason for this strange detail was that the Indonesians could not execute hundreds of innocent men and boys. They needed a reason. Foho Ramelau was the anthem of the resistance. It was banned. It was enough to open fire. Over two hundred were killed at Kraras that day, but in the months that followed thousands were killed around Kraras and Viqueque.

The moment of filming the massacre brought back many memories for the men acting as extras. Three had survived the killing by feigning death and remaining motionless, buried under a pile of bodies. Others escaped prior to the arrests, and many had fathers, sons, or brothers who were murdered. All insisted on playing their part in the recreation. As the cameras started rolling the men started to weep. The sight of a young man holding his baby was heartbreaking, a telling detail of how incomprehensible the killings were. There was silence and Luigi Acquisto turned to Bety Reis to see why she hadn't called action. She was in tears. Acquisto called action but actor Gaspar Sarmiento, playing an Indonesian commander, was unable to continue. He was part of the Timorese clandestine movement, his family is from the district of Viqueque and he also broke down.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

PRODUCTION STORY cont'd

Once we filmed the massacre lead actress Irim Tolentino broke down as she searched for her husband's body. Bety Reis, co-director, called cut and walked through the many bodies and comforted her, only to be overcome with grief for a second time.



There was nothing cathartic for any of the people from Kraras that day, or for the cast and crew. It was a draining and distressing experience. Yet the strength, the faces, of the women who had lived through 1983, proud and defiant, was awe-inspiring. It gave us the strength to continue.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

PRODUCTION STORY cont'd

The Actors

Beatriz's War is no ordinary film. The actors and crew, and thousands of extras, had all lived this story in some way. All had lost family during the war, many had been tortured, or watched their loved ones raped, killed, or disappear.

Commander Funu Lakan had fought in the resistance, been captured by the Indonesians, and escaped to fight again. During the making of **Beatriz's War** he led the contingent of 12 soldiers who worked on the film and also played the role of Celestino dos Anjos, one of only a handful of Timorese who officially fought with Australian troops during WW2, as distinct to the hundreds of kriadus, young boys, who fought or helped unofficially and were never recognised. Long after the war Celestino was given a medal by Australia. He was from Kraras and soon after the 1983 Kraras massacre he was executed by Indonesian troops along with Hare Kaik the wife of his son, Commander Ular. Beatriz's War shows Celestino being executed. The real life commander playing the role, Funu Lakan, had trouble with the scene. He said 'I don't do surrender well' and he played it accordingly, defiant and contemptuous of the rifles pointed at him, refusing to dig his own grave.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

PRODUCTION STORY cont'd

Two of the small roles were surprisingly telling. A man who played a malevolent drunk in one scene played the role with ease and confidence. During the occupation he had survived by living under a bridge in Dili pretending to be drunk, appearing harmless to the Indonesian soldiers and intelligence agents who lived nearby. The 'mad' woman who talks about her son being killed by Indonesian militia delivered a powerful, disturbing performance wracked with grief and hate. We later discovered that her son had been murdered by militia in 1999. It is this merging of experience with the artifice of making the film that contributes greatly to its authorship as a Timorese film.



Difficulties Filming in East Timor

There were many difficulties involved in making the film, most common to a production anywhere, and others specific to making a film in a country with little infrastructure, wealth, or history of film production.

The first block of shooting had problems with some of the crew. A small number of the men on the Timorese crew resented taking 'orders' from women, local or foreign. This is common in East Timor where many men tend to observe whilst women work.

BEATRIZ'S WAR

PRODUCTION STORY cont'd

This attitude created a constant tension on the set and was tackled by the two producers, Lurdes and Stella, prior to the start of the second shoot. Some crew were not re-hired and others understood the need to respect the key role that women played in the film, and the resistance. The second shoot was able to exploit the strong sense of organization that Timorese have as a collective, something learnt during the resistance when communication and action were critical to victory and survival.

The location of Kraras presented its own set of problems. Kraras has no electricity or water. Water is carried from the river as there are no wells or water tanks. Generators were needed for charging batteries, but also for the crew's camp to provide basic lighting at night. To meet the needs of the sixty crew and cast water was trucked in every two days. Toilets were dug, paths built, and supplies brought in from nearby Viqueque.

Rain was a constant threat to filming. But the village holy man performed a rain ceremony to stop the rain. This worked! It rained every night, except when we had night shoots, and was overcast and dry every day when we filmed. But the nightly rain turned the village into mud, with many resulting falls and bogged vehicles. After two weeks the mud started to stink and the daily trips to the river for ablutions were very welcome.

There was no accommodation in Kraras but fortunately it was the school holidays so the cast and crew moved into the local school. We took over the small village and worked intimately with the community to research the events of thirty years earlier.



Early morning in Kraras

BEATRIZ'S WAR

PRODUCTION STORY cont'd

Screenings

In October and November 2013 *Beatriz's War* had a highly successful five-week cinema season in Dili. It has also toured the country and has screened to thousands throughout the regions. In Maliana, where lead actress Irim Tolentino lives, 2000 people turned up for the open air screening. Another two thousand turned up the next night, and chanted for the film to be repeated. This has been the pattern throughout Timor where **Beatriz's War** is screened to communities who have never seen a film before. The Timorese Government has finally supported its postproduction and workshops based around the film. Support has come from The Office of the President, H.E. Taur Matan Ruak, the Office of The Prime Minister, H.E. Xanana Gusmao, and the Ministry of Tourism which supported travel to film festivals.

The film screened in competition at the International Film Festival of Adelaide.

Beatriz's War won the top prize at the 44th International Film Festival of India. It was awarded the prestigious Golden Peacock award for best film competing against fourteen other titles from around the world. The film's success was reported widely in the press throughout India. The Times of India wrote: 'The 44th International film festival of India closed on an emotional note as 'Beatriz's War', East Timor's first feature film and its co-director Bety Reis's debut, won the Golden Peacock award for the 2013 best film. A tearful Reis drew tears from the audience and jury member and filmmaker Claire Denis with her acceptance speech. "Since winning independence from Indonesia my country has rebuilt itself from ground zero. We have fought for many rights: the rights of women, the rights of children, and the right to rule ourselves. But there was also another right that we'd been denied, the right to tell our story" she said. Bety Reis observed "we come from a country with the world's newest and smallest film industry. And that makes it a great honour to accept this award in India, a country with the world's biggest film industry, and more importantly with such a rich history and love of cinema. It gives us faith in what we have started and the inspiration to continue."

The film will also screen at the 2014 Byron Bay International Film Festival and the Big Picture Film festival in Sydney, Australia. The film's sales agent is entering the film into other international film festivals.

BEATRIZ'S WAR

PRODUCTION STORY cont'd

Themes: Women & Reconciliation

Beatriz's War presents a unique and fresh insight into the role women played in the independence struggle in East Timor. Beatriz's refusal to let go of the past, to put the horrors of occupation, and her husband's death, behind her, and move forward, is a highly personal story but also one that has dominated the psyche of the new nation since independence. Timorese politicians have told their people to forgive, to reconcile, and build a new life. Beatriz does decide to build a new life but she refuses to forgive the crimes committed against her and her people. She wants justice and this is the great dialectic facing East Timor today.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

East Timor: A Brief History

East Timor (Timor-Leste) is a country in Southeast Asia. It comprises the eastern half of the island of Timor. Located about 640 km northwest of Australia it is one of Australia's nearest neighbors, a short seventy-minute flight from Darwin.

East Timor was colonized by Portugal in the 16th century and was known as Portuguese Timor. In late 1974, following Portugal's Carnation Revolution, East Timor formed a number of political parties as part of the decolonization process. A civil war broke out in 1975 when one of the parties, UDT, attempted a coup. The pro-independence party FRETILIN won the war. The Portuguese Governor fled to the nearby island of Atauro, north of Dili.

Indonesia sought to portray the conflict as a civil war, which had plunged Portuguese Timor into chaos, but after only a month, aid and relief agencies from Australia and elsewhere visited the territory, and reported that the situation was stable. Nevertheless, many UDT supporters had fled across the border into Indonesian Timor, where they were coerced into supporting integration with Indonesia. Indonesia, the US, and Australia did not want what was perceived as a communist enclave in the region.

In October 1975, in the border town of Balibo, two Australian television crews (the "Balibo Five") reporting on the conflict were murdered by Indonesian forces, after they witnessed Indonesian incursions into Portuguese Timor. Indonesia had started a covert invasion of East Timor and felt confident in murdering foreign journalists.

Fretilin, knowing that a full-scale invasion was imminent, sought the return of the Portuguese Governor, pointedly flying the Portuguese flag from government offices. Portugal abandoned East Timor and in an appeal for international support Fretilin made a unilateral declaration of independence.

The Indonesian invasion of East Timor began on 7 December 1975. Indonesian forces launched a massive air and sea invasion, known as *Operasi Seroja*, or 'Operation Komodo', almost entirely using US-supplied equipment.

The Australian government did not react to this invasion. The reason may be the existence of oil found in the waters between Indonesia and Australia. This lack of action resulted in massive protests by Australian citizens remembering the heroic actions of the Timorese during World War II in helping Australian commandos fight the Japanese.

The East Timorese fought tirelessly for independence for 24 years. It was one of the greatest acts of resistance the world has known. A quarter of the population perished in the struggle, killed or dying from hunger. This is the highest per-capita genocide in history. Noam Chomsky described Timor under Indonesian occupation as 'the site of some of the worst atrocities of the modern era'.

BEATRIZ'S WAR

East Timor: A Brief History Cont'd

In 1999, following the United Nations-sponsored act of self-determination, Indonesia relinquished control of the territory and East Timor became the first new sovereign state of the 21st century on May 20, 2002.

In 1999 referendum 78.5 per cent of the population voted for independence. Indonesian soldiers carried out a campaign of violence and terrorism in retaliation. Approximately 300,000 Timorese were forcibly pushed into Indonesian West Timor as refugees. The majority of the country's infrastructure, including homes, irrigation systems, water supply systems, and schools, and nearly 100% of the country's electrical grid were destroyed. According to Noam Chomsky, "In one month, this massive military operation murdered some 2,000 people, raped hundreds of women and girls, displaced three-quarters of the population, and demolished 75 percent of the country's infrastructure".

Centuries of Portuguese colonisation and neglect followed by decades of a brutal occupation by Indonesia have left East Timor a poor country. It is placed 158th by Human Development Index (HDI) among the world's states, the second lowest in Asia and the lowest in South East Asia. Nation building has not been easy for East Timor. In 2006 the country was on the brink of civil war as political unrest rocked the nation. Again many were killed and buildings destroyed. Foreign troops were sent to restore order. In 2008 the country's president, the Noble Peace Prize Laureate, Jose Ramos Horta, was shot outside his home in Dili. He survived but the event further destabilised the nation.



BEATRIZ'S WAR

Cultural Development

Cultural development in East Timor has suffered as a result of its history. Until very recently there has been no film industry or culture in East Timor.

However, many foreign filmmakers have made documentaries in East Timor both before and after independence. Many Timorese have worked on these films and gained invaluable production experience. There is also a handful of Timorese who have studied media overseas. Several have acted in international films about Timor. There is a strong print media culture in Dili. There are several good published authors. Furthermore, East Timor has a strong oral tradition of telling stories. So there is a strong interest in storytelling amongst the country's youth which heralds well for the future.

If East Timorese will tell their own stories through film they will tell them in a different way and from a different perspective than foreign filmmakers. This will give a remarkable insight into the growth of a new nation.

Furthermore, film can create an awareness of the commonalities of experience amongst people in a fragmented and divided nation. It can contribute to a sense of nationhood, a difficult task for East Timor as shown by the violent events during the political crisis in 2006 and the assassination attempt on President Jose Ramos Horta in early 2008.

An integral part of **Beatriz's War** cultural veracity is the way it threads many animist practices into the narrative. The turning of the plates is a Timorese ceremony that is conducted when a family member dies. His or her plate, located in the sacred house, is turned upside down to indicate the person is now with the ancestors. In the film Tomas' plate is turned by his sister, Teresa, who wants to put his soul to rest and end her mourning. When Tomas returns he is viewed as a spirit, a ghost, and is not permitted to enter his house or sleep with his wife. This device, drawing on the country's deep animist beliefs, is critical to the mystery surrounding Tomas.

The support of the Timorese Government following the completion of **Beatriz's War** is encouraging and heralds a growing awareness of the importance of story telling to the creation of a national identity.



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