

Justiça (Justice)

(Brazil / The Netherlands 2004)
a film by Maria Ramos.

In **Justiça**, Maria Ramos puts a camera where many Brazilians have never been - a criminal courtroom in Rio de Janeiro, following the daily routine of several characters. There are those that work there every day (public attorneys, judges, and prosecutors) and those that are merely passing through (the accused). The camera is used as an instrument that sees the social theatre, the structures of power - that is to say, what is, in general, invisible to us. The corridors of the Courts of Justice, the design and layout of the courtroom, the discourse, the codes, postures - all the little visual details and sounds become relevant. The camera is always positioned for a specific scene but is not moved brusquely, in an attempt to avoid unnecessary commotion. A sign of respect, of non-intervention and not wishing to exploit. There are no interviews or statements, the camera registers what goes on in front of it.

The documentary shows the daily life in the Courts by observing hearings of relatively petty crimes: a man caught with a stolen car, another accused of complicity in theft, or young people caught carrying drugs and weapons. The filmmaker follows a little closer a public attorney, a judge/ professor in law and an accused. The sequences when judges interrogate the accused inside the courtroom are alternated with images outside of this universe (for example, the Detention Center and people in their home), which shows, therefore, that it is not closed and cyclical, but profoundly linked with the society of which it is a part, and with a direct consequence in the life of people that move through the legal corridors.

With her options clear, and unobscured by her choice for sobriety and simplicity, Maria Ramos makes it evident that, like documentary making, justice is a long war from being impartial. How and for whom the judicial system works for is the fundamental question dealt with in this film, without providing any definite answers or making preconceived judgements.

Pedro Butcher

Maria Ramos (1965) made her début in 1995 with **BRASILIA, A DAY IN FEBRUARY**. With her film **DESI**, she won the Audience Award at the 2000 IDFA and the Golden Calf for the best Dutch documentary of 2001.

This Film was made with the support of the Dutch Cultural Broadcasting Fund, the Filmfund of the Netherlands and the CoBO Fund.

Première January 25, 2004, International Film Festival Rotterdam.

In April 2004 **Justiça** was awarded the Grand Prix at the International Documentary Film Festival, **Visions du Réel** in Nyon, Switzerland.

The international jury motivated her unanimous decision as follows: ' With her profoundly sharp eye, Maria Ramos displays, in a very pure form, a relentless judicial machinery, in which all actors - judges, lawyers, and naturally the accused - are prisoners themselves.'

In October 2004 **Justiça** was awarded the Golden Wave, for best film, at the International Womens Film Festival of **Bordeaux**, France.

At **doclisboa 2004** (Lisbon), special mention of the international competition jury : "For the perspective without compromise or demagogy on the social destinies of Brazil".

In November 2004 **Justiça** was awarded the Amnesty Award at the **Copenhagen International Documentary Film festival**.

The Jury's statement:

This was indeed a hard choice, being presented with a number of documentaries of such high quality and desire to speak to the lives of people today.

After a full schedule of watching films of a wide variety, both artistically and in the range of subjects they so elegantly deal with - a credit and testament not only to the films but also to the cph:dox festival and its commitment to bringing to light these wonderful and important films, ...we did find one film which held us a captive audience from start to end. We have decided on a film that we believe has dealt with its topic with great confidence, sensitivity and a cinematic language that left the jury with images and thoughts that returned to each one of us throughout the past few days in our private, solitary moments and in our conversations and discussions together.

A film with an admirable subtleness and quietness, focusing on the smallest, most somber details, and allowing the viewer to come to their own thoughts and conclusions, without special sound effects, music, or an obtrusive camera, while simultaneously taking a very clear, powerful and brave stand on an important issue.

A beautiful investigation of a corrupt and unjust justice system which also speaks to poverty, class and economic differences, and the destruction of family, the jury has found Maria Ramos' film Justice, deserving of the Amnesty Award 2004.

We would like to congratulate her for a visually well conceived, sensitive and confident film.

In December 2004 **Justiça** was awarded the Grand Prize at the **Taiwan International Documentary Film Festival** in Taipei.

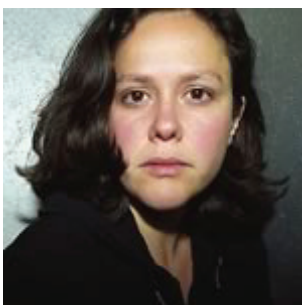
The statement of the Jury:

"This film combined the drive and rigor of a narrative film with the truth and revelation of a strong documentary. For its societal and class analysis and unflinching yet artistic probe into a system that is in desperate need of change, the jury awards the Grand Prize to 'JUSTIÇA'."

March 2005 : "Play-Doc award for the best documentary Atlantic section" in Tui, Spain. **Play-Doc, Festival Internacional de Documentales de Tui**.

scenario and direction	Maria Ramos
camera	Flávio Zangrandi
sound	Valeria Martins Ferro
editing	Virginia Flores, Joana Collier, Maria Ramos
producers	Niek Koppen, Jan de Ruiter and Renée van der Grinten
co-production	Selfmade Films and NPS
duration	100 minutes
awards	* Grand Prix de Visions du Réel (Nyon, Switzerland) * Vague d'Or, Fest. Int. du Cinéma au Féminin (Bordeaux) * Amnesty Award, Copenhagen Int. Doc. Film fest * jury special mention, Doclisboa (Lisbon) * Grand Prize, Taiwan Int. Doc, Film Fest. (Taipei) * Play-Doc award for the best documentary Atlantic section (Tui, Spain)

the director filmography



Maria Ramos (1964) was born in Brasília, Brazil. After graduating at the University of Brasilia (BA in Music/Piano), she moved to Europe where she studied Musicology and Electroacoustic Music in Paris at the Groupe de Recherche Musicale and, after that, in London at City University. In 1990, she moved to The Netherlands where she entered the Netherlands Film and Television Academy (NFTVA), specializing in directing documentaries.

Her first feature documentary **Brasilia, a day in February** was awarded the Prize of the Jury at the International Documentary Festival 'It's all true' in São Paulo and was screened in several international film and documentary festivals. In 1998, she created and directed **Butterflies in your stomach**, a documentary about children in love for the Dutch VPRO Television. These series were nominated for the Grote Kinderkast-televisieprijs, the award for best children's programme in The Netherlands in 1999.

Desi, a Pieter van Huystee production in co-operation with VPRO Television, won the Audience Award at the Amsterdam International Documentary Festival (IDFA) 2000, and the Golden Calf (Dutch Oscar) for best documentary film at the Netherlands Film Festival in 2001.

JUSTIÇA, a **Selfmade Films**, **Limite** and **NPS** co-production, won the *Grand Prix* at the International Documentary Festival 'Visions du Réel' in Nyon, Switzerland (may/2004); *La Vague d'Or* of best film at Bordeaux International Festival of Women in Cinema, France (october/2004); the *Amnesty Award* of Best Film at Copenhagen International Documentary Festival, in Denmark (november/2004), a Special Mention of the Jury at the Lisbon International Documentary Film Festival (november/2004) and the *Grand Prize* of Best Film at the Taiwan International Documentary Film Festival (december/2004).

Maria Ramos is also Adviser of the Dutch Cultural Broadcasting Fund.

filmography

Justiça

2003, 100min, color, 35mm

Script and direction

A Selfmade Films, Limite and NPS co-production

"Grand Prix" at the International Documentary Festival 'Visions du Réel' in Nyon, Switzerland (may/2004)

"La Vague d'Or" of best film at Bordeaux International Festival of Women in Cinema, France (october/2004)

"Amnesty Award" of Best Film at Copenhagen International Documentary Festival, in Denmark (november/2004)

Special Mention of the Jury at the Lisbon International Documentary Film Festival (november/2004)

*"Grand Prize" of Best Film at the Taiwan International Documentary Film Festival
(december/2004)*

Rio, a day in August

2002, 52 min, color, video

Script and direction

A Pieter van Huystee Film in co-production with
the Humanist Broadcasting Foundation

GNT Prize at the International Documentary Festival 'It's all true' 2003

Desi

2000, 90 min, color, 35mm

Script and direction

A Pieter van Huystee Film in co-production with VPRO Television

Winner of the Audience Award at the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam 2000

Winner of the Golden Calf for 'Best Documentary' at the Netherlands Film Festival 2001

The secret of the vibrato

1999, 25 min, color, video

Script and direction

A VPRO Television production

Butterflies in your stomach

1998, documentary series in 6 parts, 15 min. each, color, 16mm

Script and direction

A VPRO Television production (Villa Achterwerk)

about children in love.

Nominated for the Grote Kinderkast-televisieprijs in the category non-fiction at Cinekid 1999

Two times at home

1996, 16 min, color, 16mm

A VPRO Television production (Villa Achterwerk)

about children and anger.

Brasília, a day in February

1995, 72 min, color, 35mm

Script, direction and executive production

A NFTVA and Fundação Athos Bulcão Production

Special Jury Prize at São Paulo International Documentary Festival 1997

Boy and aleid

1994, 50 min, color, 16mm

Script, direction and executive production

A NFTVA Production

"I think what I want to say is..."

1993, 40 min, color, 16mm

Script, direction and executive production

A NFTVA Production

Nominated for the Ogawa Shinsuke Prize at Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, Japan 1995.