



INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM  
OPENING FILM



**MOZAMBIQUE, 1917**

PAULO BRANCO PRESENTS **JOÃO NUNES MONTEIRO**

SEBASTIAN JEKUL FILIPE DUARTE JOSEFINA MASSANGO

# MOSQUITO

A FILM BY **JOÃO NUNO PINTO**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ANA PINHÃO MOURA  
MARIO PEIXOTO AND ENRICO SARAIVA

« A character driven experience, Mosquito lives and dies by the truth of its lead. Fortunately then, Monteiro's performance is exceptional. The young actor delivers an exhausting spectrum of emotion across 125 minutes, allowing us to witness his greatest sins, his lowest degradation, and his ultimate transformation. Pinto crafts a stark depiction of the morally grey, crafting a character that demonstrates every facet of the human condition; he's flawed and easily led, yet also masterfully empathetic.» **Nathaniel Eker, UK Film Review**

«Rotterdam's opening film is a fever dream account of a young Portuguese soldier's experiences in 1917 Mozambique» **Screen Daily**

«Premiering at the 2020 Rotterdam film festival, João Nuno Pinto's 'Mosquito' is an provocative, if derivative, odyssey into the heart of colonial darkness.» **Jorge Mourinha, The Flickering Wall**

«João Nuno Pinto's Portuguese World-War-One drama tackles Portugal's colonial shady past in Africa.» **Ard Vijn, Screen Anarchy**



*Dreaming of great adventures and of standing up for his homeland, a young Portuguese man enlists in the army during World War I and is sent to the front line in Mozambique, Africa. Left behind by his platoon, he sets out on a grueling trek across the mystic Makua native land, walking for over a thousand kilometers, in search of his dream.*





## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*“Reality is not in leaving or arriving:  
it comes to us halfway through the journey.”*

Guimarães Rosa, Brazilian writer

In 1917, aged 17, my grandfather landed in Mozambique along with the 4<sup>th</sup> Portuguese Expeditionary Company, in order to defend the Portuguese ex-colony against the German threat. Like so many other European soldiers in Africa during World War I, they had to walk hundreds of kilometers every day, facing hard deprivations, diseases, hunger and thirst. The only difference is that he did it all by himself, completely alone, looking for the war and for his dreams of glory. Although *Mosquito* is inspired by my grandfather's journey in Africa, no one really knows what he went through during his long and solitary journey. This is where fiction and the meaning I want to convey the narrative comes in.

The way we Europeans and others still deal with African issues today reflects our colonial past and the long years of indoctrination of a certain paternalistic ideal about Africa. *Mosquito* uses a history of the past to confront us with choices of the present. Through the story of young Zacarias we are confronted with the horror of the war, and the subjugation of African people by the Europeans, through colonial domination. The film gives us a little more insight into a forgotten piece of our history, World War I in Africa, forcing us to reflect on a much longer period, when it was our right to subjugate and “civilize” other people who we conveniently considered to be inferior.

Private Zacarias' lonely journey searching for his platoon is the backbone of the story. Through its clear references to Classical Greek narrative, *Mosquito* navigates within the genre of an epic film, which makes it universal in its dialectic. Yet, it is not merely concerned with using the genre's classical codes, but also a language and a narrative approach that breaks away from conventions, meeting a more authorial universe. In a way, the film's unique approach dissociates it from a classical form and embraces a more raw and contemporary narrative, putting us closer to the (less and less) innocent look of the young soldier.

The film shows a kind of fluctuation between reality and fantasy, past and present, the fabrication and the everyday. The situations may seem fantastic but they are real. The hallucinations may seem real but they are built by a troubled mind. And its remembrances appear like scattered fragments of the memory. The idea of the reality versus the imaginary is important because of its closeness with the creation of history and war itself. That is part of *Mosquito*'s narrative: exploring the imaginary space left blurred by the historical amnesia.

João Nuno Pinto

## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



João Nuno Pinto is a Portuguese director, born in 1969 at Lourenço Marques, Mozambique. He moved to Portugal at the age of 5, shortly after the independence of the former Portuguese colony. In his latest years he has lived in Lisbon and São Paulo.

With a consolidated international career in advertising, in 2010 João Nuno Pinto premiered *America*, his first feature, an ironic look at contemporary Portugal through the eyes of illegal immigrants. The film was acclaimed in Portugal, Spain, and Brazil. It was selected and awarded by several film festivals around the world.

*Mosquito*, his latest film, co-written by his wife, the screenwriter Fernanda Polacow, and Gonçalo Waddington, is inspired by João Nuno Pinto's grandfather's story in Africa during World War I and took almost 7 years to prepare.

Director's filmography:

***Mosquito*** (2019)

***Don't Swim*** (short film, 2015)

***America*** (2010)

***Skype Me*** (short film, 2008)



## CAST & CREDITS

*Starring João Nunes Monteiro*

*Sebastian Jehkul, Filipe Duarte, Josefina Massango, Miguel Moreira,  
João Lagarto, Alfredo Brito, Miguel Borges, Cesário Monteiro, João Vicente,  
Manuel João Vieira, Nuno Preto, Aquirasse Nipita, Messias João, Mário Mabjaia,  
Hermelinda Simela, Maria Clotilde, Gigliola Zacara, Gezebel Mocovela  
with the special participation of Ana Magaia and Camané*

*Directed by João Nuno Pinto*

*Written by Fernanda Polacow and Gonçalo Waddington*

*Original ideia by João Nuno Pinto*

*Cinematography - Adolpho Veloso Art direction - Nuno Gabriel Mello*

*Original music - Justin Melland Costume design - Lucha D'Orey*

*Film editing - Gustavo Giani Sound - Gita Cerveira, Tiago Raposinho and Matthieu Deniau*

*Makeup - Nuno Miguel Esteves Casting - Ricardo Moura*

*Producer - Paulo Branco Co-producers - Ana Pinhão Moura and Mario Peixoto*

*Executive producers - Ana Pinhão Moura and Enrico Saraiva*

*A Leopardo Filmes (Portugal) production*

*In coproduction with*

*Alfama Films Production (France) APM Produções (Portugal)*

*Delicatessen Films (Brazil) Mapiko Filmes (Mozambique)*

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[WWW.MOSQUITO-FILME.COM](http://WWW.MOSQUITO-FILME.COM)

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