

SAMUEL AND THE LIGHT



A FILM BY
VINÍCIUS GIRNYS

70 mins / 2023 / Portuguese, English Subtitles / Brazil



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FILM FESTIVALS

BEST FILM AWARD – GUADALAJARA INT’L FILM FESTIVAL (FICG), MEXICO
BEST DOCUMENTARY JURY AWARD - SÃO PAULO INT’L FILM FESTIVAL, BRAZIL
CASCUDO TROPHY SPECIAL AWARD – MOSTRA DE CINEMA DE GOSTOSO, BRAZIL
JURY’S SPECIAL MENTION –CHILOÉ INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (FICH), CHILE
JURY'S SPECIAL MENTION – MOVIES THAT MATTER, NETHERLANDS
DECENT LABOR AWARD – CARTAGENA INT’L FILM FESTIVAL (FICCI), COLOMBIA
VISIONS DU RÉEL, SWITZERLAND
HOT DOCS CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL, CANADA
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GRAND BIVOUCAC FESTIVAL, FRANCE
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30__70 DOC FEST, ITALY
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA (IFFI) GOA, INDIA
SIBERIADOC, RUSSIA
DOCPOINT, HELSINKI DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, FINLAND
DUBLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, IRELAND
BELGRADE DOCUMENTARY AND SHORT FILM FESTIVAL (DOK), SERBIA
CINÉLATINO – RENCONTRES DE TOULOUSE, FRANCE
FILMFEST BREMEN, GERMANY
KINOLATINO FESTIVAL, BELGIUM
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FICMEC – ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL OF THE CANARY ISLANDS, SPAIN
AL ESTE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, PERU
FINCA – INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL, ARGENTINA
FAITO DOC FESTIVAL, ITALY
ECOFALANTE ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL, BRAZIL
PARATY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, BRAZIL
DOUARNENEZ FILM FESTIVAL, FRANCE
BEYOND BORDERS INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL, GREECE
NOVÍSSIMO CINEMA BRASILEIRO (CINUSP), BRAZIL
ARCHITECTURE FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM (AFFR), NETHERLANDS
VRAI VRAI PARIS FESTIVAL, FRANCE
OJOLOCO FILM FESTIVAL, FRANCE
VRAI DE VRAI FESTIVAL (RENNES), FRANCE

SYNOPSIS

Young Samuel lives in Ponta Negra, Brazil, a village untouched by electricity, where their idyllic life follows the rhythm of nature. When the project 'Light for All' arrives, everything changes. Filmed over six years, Samuel and the Light captures how the arrival of the "Light for All" project transforms his family and community. As tourism and modernization take hold, the film observes the change from an idyllic, self-sustainable way of life to one shaped by industrialization.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Vinícius Girnys is a 35-year-old director. *Samuel and the Light* is his first feature film, completed in March 2023. The film has been in more than thirty festivals around the world and has received ten awards and honorable mentions. It premiered in 2023 at Visions du Réel (Nyon, Switzerland), followed by Hot Docs (Toronto, Canada) and FICG (Guadalajara, Mexico), all in official competition. At the FICG Samuel and the Light received the FEISAL Award for Best Film and the Award for Best Ibero-American Feature Documentary, which qualified the feature for the first stage of the 2024 Oscars in the Best Feature Documentary category. At the São Paulo International Film Festival, the film won the Jury Prize for Best Documentary. In 2024, *Samuel and the Light* was awarded the Reconocimiento Trabajo Decente at the FICCI (Cartagena, Colombia) - a prize awarded by the United Nations' International Labor Organization - and also the Étoile from Scam, the French authors' society.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Filmed over six years in Ponta Negra: Samuel was under three when filming began and nearly nine when it ended. Ponta Negra is part of Natal city, in Brazil's northeast region, located about 12 km from its center. The film uses the passage of time to contrast life before and after the arrival of electricity. What began as a poetic, non-narrative short evolved into a documentary exploring the ambiguities of progress. The film adopts an observational style, capturing the community as electricity brings new visitors and challenges. Thoughtful editing builds analogies across time—comparing fishing's role in the local economy with the younger generation's use of electronics.

In the Director's Own Words – "Between tradition and modernity... a more complex reality gradually emerges. This is the story of Samuel and his family as electricity arrives in their community." – Vinícius Girnys, Interview for Ambulante 2023

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Director
Screenplay
Director of Photography
Cinematography

Vinícius Girnys

Vinícius Girnys

Pedro Cortese

Pedro Cortese

Chico Bahia

Olívia Pedroso

Vinícius Girnys

Emília Mello

Tom Laterza

Vinícius Girnys

Gabriela Baraúna

Fernando Pereira dos Santos

Daniel Turini

Henrique Chiurciu

Matéo Russon

Philippe Aussel

Fernando Pereira dos Santos

Sueli Ramos

Eliseu dos Remédios

Samuel Ramos dos Remédios

Marissol Ramos Almeida

Charles Ramos Nascimento

Julia Ramos

Daniela Ramos

Editing

Sound

Sound Design

Producers

Cast