

Associação Portuguesa de Argumentistas e Dramaturgos (APAD)

Annual Report for the year 2012

This is going to be a short statement. As you probably know, the life of a Portuguese Screenwriter has never been easy. Consider the average of our yearly production of motion pictures: in a good year, twelve films have theatrical distribution. Most of them, written by the directors themselves, in accord with a national tendency towards an 'authorship' view of cinema. But 2012 was far from a good year. It was actually one of the worst - so far, 2013 will be here in just a couple of months and things aren't improving. As Portuguese Cinema depends of Government Grants (since our market is too small to allow the surge of private investors), our sector took a terrible blow when all support was suspended with the excuse that a new Law for Cinema was being discussed. It's something never heard of before: suspend the old law while a new one is being discussed, written, discussed again, approved and then discussed again, leaving a blank in the meantime, a blank that resulted in a cultural desert towards Portuguese Cinema and the certainty that all production stopped and there's no work to be found outside the market for 'soap operas'. That brings us to Television. Right now, we've got three Channels – one public, two private. These last ones (SIC and TVI) are trying to adapt to the Global Crisis and, therefore, with the obvious decrease in revenue, their programming consists at the moment in creating soap-operas and reality shows. The first one, RTP, the one that's public and would supposedly guarantee some quality shows, is being sold to the highest bidder. So, being blunt, any chance for a Screenwriter in finding work in that area is minimal, to say the least. And just a quick line concerning the Theater: all grants or financial support to our companies have been suspended as well. It's fair to say, as I'm sure you're thinking right now, that we're in serious trouble and, if the worst happens in Portugal, Screenwriters over here will soon be as relevant and important as VHS. So APAD, the Portuguese Screenwriters Association, focus its efforts on the only pertinent cause this year: to make sure that our Association was present in all discussions and an important part of a group (together with the Directors, Producers, Animation and others) that tried to change this catastrophic situation and also help that our New Law (which is terrible) looks after the interest of a sector that is slowly dying. I wish I had better news. But I don't. That's it. That's our year.

Tiago R. Santos

APAD - President