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"The Falling Sky" by Eryk Rocha and Gabriela Carneiro da Cunha about the Yanomami people to celebrate its world premiere in Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival



Rome, April 16, 2024 - Selected for **Directors' Fortnight**, Brazilian directors Eryk Rocha and Gabriela Carneiro da Cunha's **"The Falling Sky"**, documents the powerful testimony of **Davi Kopenawa**, shaman and leader of the Amazonian Yanomami people as he performs the *reahu* ritual, a shamanistic ceremony mobilizing the community in a collective effort to hold up the sky and prevent it from falling. Through the *reahu*, the film addresses the destruction of the Yanomami's way of life caused by the intrusions of the *napë*, the white prospectors and the so-called civilized world into the Yanomami territory.

In spellbinding images of this rite central to the Yanomami identity, the film transmits the beauty of Yanomami cosmology and the strength of their geopolitical vision that invites us to take a deep look at our own future. Shaman Davi Kopenawa: *"The forest is alive. It will only die if the whites continue to destroy it. (...) Then we will die, one after the other, both we and the white people. All shamans will eventually die. When there are no more living ones to support the sky, it will collapse."*

In Brazil, about 30,000 indigenous Yanomami currently live in more than 300 communities. They are facing a severe humanitarian crisis caused by the massive invasion of miners in search of metals, mainly gold and tin. In recent years, the number of invaders has reached about 20,000, fostering violence, mercury contamination of water and fish, deforestation, and the spread of numerous infectious diseases among the Yanomami.

Davi Kopenawa, shaman and spokesperson for the Yanomami, states: *"The Falling Sky shows the people in the city our work, which is different, which doesn't harm the forest, doesn't harm our mother earth. This way, future generations will continue to listen to our speech. It shows the force of mother earth to the people in the city so they can respect her."*

Co-director **Eryk Rocha** adds: *"We are overjoyed to premiere our film at Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival, a historically fertile and combative space for thinking and transcreating cinema and the world. It will be an incredible chance to see and hear the dream, emotion and struggle of the Yanomami explode on the screen, letting the melody of the 'polyglot forest' and its songs echo along with the precise and trenchant thought of Davi Kopenawa, who brings together the indigenous peoples and the Yanomami as a cosmological and geopolitical force."*

Co-director **Gabriela Carneiro da Cunha** comments: *"The Falling Sky is the cinematographic expression of a relationship, of the enchantment we had when reading Davi and Bruce's book, certainly, but mainly of what was experienced in flesh, blood and spirit over the last 7 years of our relationship with Davi Kopenawa, the village of Watoriki and the Yanomami. It's a film where the camera doesn't just look at the Yanomami, but at us non-indigenous people too."*

The film, directed by Eryk Rocha and Gabriela Carneiro da Cunha, is freely based on the homonymous book by Yanomami Davi Kopenawa and French anthropologist Bruce Albert and results from a thirty-year relationship between the two. **The Falling Sky** is a Brazilian/Italian co-

production between **ARUAC FILMES**, **Hutukara Yanomami Association** and **Stemal Entertainment** with **Rai Cinema**, in collaboration with **Les Films d'Ici**.

About the directors:

Eryk Rocha is a graduate of *Escuela Internacional de Cine e Televisión San Antonio de Los Baños* in Cuba. A director, producer, editor and cinematographer, **The Falling Sky** is his 10th feature film, marking his 3rd time at Cannes Festival where he won the L'Oeil d'Or Award in 2016 for his film *Cinema Novo* (2016).

His works have participated in major film festivals including Cannes, Venice, Locarno, Visions du Réel, Idfa, CPH: DOX, Telluride, BFI in London, Sundance, or New Directors at MoMa in New York, Rio Film Festival, collecting many prestigious awards. Among his titles: *Rocha Que Voa (Stones in the Sky)*, *Quimera*, *Transeunte*, *Jards*, *Campo De Jogo*, *Breve Miragem De Sol (Burning Night)*, *Edna*.

Gabriela Carneiro da Cunha is a Brazilian artist, performer, filmmaker, and environmental art activist. She is the creator of the *Margins Project - On Rivers, Buiúnas and Fireflies*, an artistic project based on listening to Brazilian rivers in disaster situations, which has already given rise to numerous theatrical performances (presented in important European festivals such as Wiener Festwochen, Festival D'automne à Paris, International Summer - Festival Kampnagel Hamburg, Baltic Circle, Holland Festival, Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, Center Georges Pompidou), films, debates, workshops and the Buiunas Network - a network between women, rivers and art.

In cinema, she worked alongside Eryk Rocha for *Edna* and for the short films *Mãri hi - The Tree of Dream*, *Yuri u xëatima thë - Fishing with Timbó* and *Thuë pihi kuuwi - A Woman Thinking*, directed by Yanomami directors, presented at international festivals such as Venice and Rio de Janeiro.

The Falling Sky | La Chute du Ciel | A Queda do Céu (2024)

Directed by Eryk Rocha and Gabriela Carneiro da Cunha

Brazil | Italy

trt: 110min

The project was supported by: Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, ISA - Instituto Socioambiental, Nia Tero, Ford Foundation, Porticus, CLUA - Climate and Land Use Alliance, Instituto

humanize, Instituto Arapyaú, RFN - Rainforest Foundation Norway, NICFI - Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, RCA - Rede de Cooperação Amazônica, Instituto Iepé, Instituto Meraki, IRIS - International Resource for Impact and Storytelling, Amazon Watch and Fondation AlterCiné.

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International press contact:

Claudia Tomassini

claudiatomassini+associates

mobile : +49 173 205 594

email : claudia@claudiatomassini.com