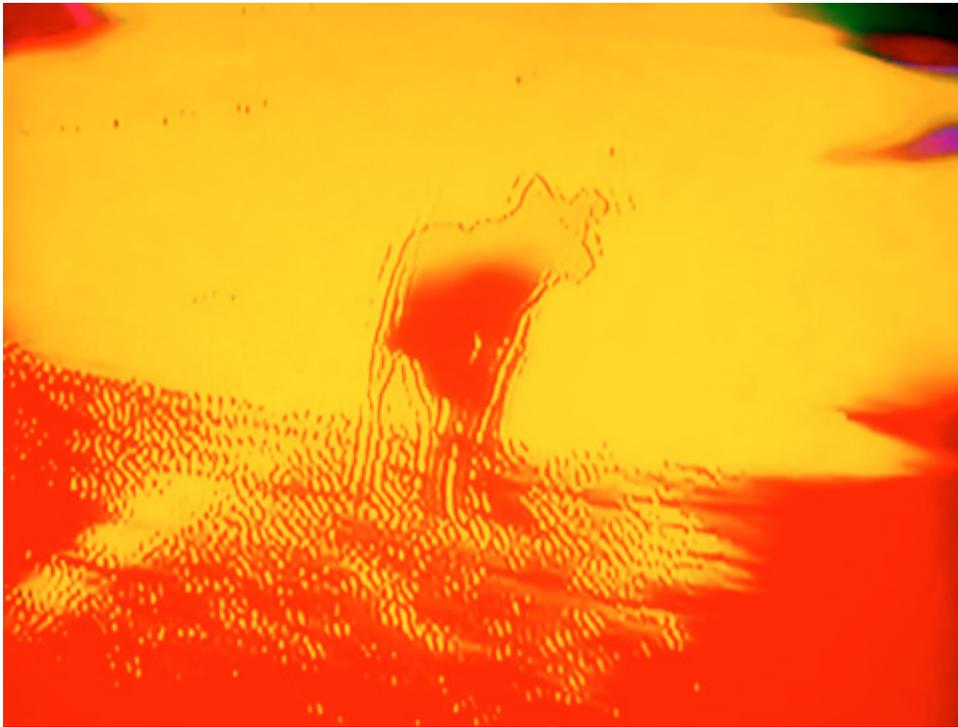


in search of the
EXILE

A MOTION PICTURE BY

Daniel *Clara*
FAWCETT & PAIS



SYNOPSIS

In Search Of The Exile (2016) is a visionary cinematic experience, a doorway into a dreamworld where reality morphs and transforms before our eyes.

In this film a lone figure wanders through a mysterious wilderness while hounded by spectres and unseen forces. This is a solitary journey, a path of exile and hardship that leads beyond the abyss to where reality loses its mask of concreteness and shows its true fluid face. The Wanderer is assailed by enigmatic figures and creatures that dance across the screen, reality is only momentarily graspable before disintegrating into a sea of colour, texture and abstraction. Each step forwards demands complete submission in order to find harmony in the tension of opposites.

Drawing upon their interest in cinema's connections to ritual, alchemy and mythology, Daniel Fawcett & Clara Pais have created a cinematic experience that is akin to a mystical vision. **In Search Of The Exile** is a ritual of submission and a challenge to the viewer's expectations of cinematic narrative and form.

CREDITS

Created By: Daniel Fawcett & Clara Pais

Cast: Fabrizio Federico, Clara Pais, Daniel Fawcett,
Joana Castro and Bruno Senune

Sound & Music: The Phantom Film Band

TECHNICAL INFO

Runtime: 63 mins

Ratio: 16:9

Shooting Format: HD/DV/VHS | Colour

Year: 2016

Exhibition Formats: Blu-ray Disc and Pro Res Quicktime file

CONTACT

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DIRECTORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Clara Pais & Daniel Fawcett have been working as collaborating artist filmmakers since 2011, under the banner of **The Underground Film Studio**. Cinema is both the subject and medium with which they work. Through filmmaking, installation, performance and photography they explore the language and forms of cinema as an arena for modern ritual in which one can engage with personal and collective myths.

In their films, Daniel and Clara explore unconventional forms, narratives and processes, seeking to expand the possibilities of what cinema can be as a form of storytelling, as a sensory experience and as an arena for rituals of healing and transformation. Their latest feature film, **The Kingdom Of Shadows** (2016), is a personal reworking of the biblical stories of Adam & Eve and Cain & Abel, inspired by dreams and silent cinema.

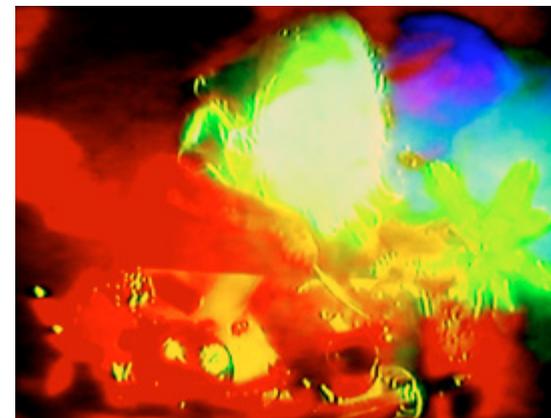
Their first collaboration, **Savage Witches** (UK, 2012), a kaleidoscopic experiment in cinematic alchemy, is a playful and experimental feature film that explores the boundaries of creative freedom. It has been screened at over 20 film festivals including Cambridge Film Festival, Brighton Cinacity, Cinema Culture Chicago, Alchemy Film & Moving Image Festival, Film Mutations Zagreb and Circuito Nomadica Bologna, it has received 2 awards. The film is soon to be released on DVD and VOD.

In their work, cinema extends beyond single screen projection into other art forms, such as performance, photography, publications and installations. In 2016 they presented the first performances of two new expanded cinema series, **Phantom Films** and **The Sacrificium Intellectus Suite**.

Cine-Rituals, their first gallery exhibition, took place at Palácio das Artes in Porto, Portugal, in May 2016. The exhibition consisted of video installations and sculptures and was accompanied by film screenings and expanded cinema performances.

Alongside their own work as artists, Clara Pais and Daniel Fawcett have organised several screening events including **The London & Porto Underground Film Festivals** and publish **FILM PANIC Magazine**.

Find out more about their work at <http://theundergroundfilmstudio.co.uk>



DIRECTORS' FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTED)

BLACK SUN (2017, in post-prod.)

Dir. Daniel Fawcett & Clara Pais

THE KINGDOM OF SHADOWS (2016)

Dir. Daniel Fawcett & Clara Pais | 70 mins

THE QUEST FOR THE CINE-REBIS (2016)

Dir. Daniel Fawcett & Clara Pais | 25 mins

IN SEARCH OF THE EXILE (2016)

Dir. Daniel Fawcett & Clara Pais | 63 mins

SPLENDOR SOLIS (2015)

Dir. Daniel Fawcett | 57 mins

WITCHES WALK (2012)

Dir. Daniel Fawcett & Clara Pais | 16 mins

SACRIFICIUM INTELLECTUS (2012)

Dir. Daniel Fawcett & Clara Pais | 67 mins

SAVAGE WITCHES (2012)

Dir. Daniel Fawcett & Clara Pais | 70 mins

TEENAGE WILDLIFE aka DIRT (2010)

Dir. Daniel Fawcett | 108 mins

COME ON THUNDER (2006)

Dir. Daniel Fawcett | 91 mins



REVIEW

IN SEARCH OF THE EXILE Review by Michael Haberfelner

Originally published in (re)Search My Trash - Filmsite, August 2016

I won't even try to give you a proper synopsis of **In Search of the Exile** here, as the film is rather on the abstract side and completely open to interpretation, so my synopsis might actually contradict 100% what somebody else sees in this.

That said, **In Search of the Exile** is an entirely fascinating movie, actually, a movie that sucks the audience into a world all of its own where nightmare logic prevails, a world that's presented in ridiculously over-saturated, primary coloured images that are at times so distorted it's left to anybody's guess what they're actually showing, and the film's evocative musical score, accompanied only by bird caws, does its own to let the mind wander rather than spoon-feeding the audience facts.

In all, **In Search of the Exile** is probably not like any movie you've ever seen - but an experience all of its own!



INTERVIEW

(re)Search My Trash interview with Daniel Fawcett & Clara Pais

By Michael Haberfelner

Originally published in (re)Search My Trash - Filmsite, August 2016

Your new movie *In Search of the Exile* - in a few words, what is it about? And since *In Search of the Exile* is a rather abstract, associative movie, how much emphasis did you put on the plot as such in the first place?

In Search Of The Exile is a visionary quest through a mythic dimension, a dream land where reality morphs and transforms, it is a film that has to be experienced with the senses. Even though it may seem abstract there is a narrative there but it's not the hand-fed narrative of industrial cinema, this is a disintegrated narrative that will be experienced and understood differently by each person who watches the film. There are some graspable elements, a wasteland, a wanderer, a house in a woods with a witch, but how all this fits together is down to the viewer to interpret.

In our work we are interested in expanding general concepts of narrative and storytelling, there is an instinct in humans to create stories but when people think of narrative generally they have in mind a very fixed form, especially in cinema, and this can be very restrictive and boring to both creators and audience. But storytelling is a very ancient and varied craft, it is not just about relating information but about creating an experience which somehow disrupts the apparently continuous flow of space and time and presents us with visions. So in this film we felt very free to have just a few narrative elements and let the images be our guide through this journey.

What were your sources of inspiration when dreaming up *In Search of the Exile*? And how much of the film was based on an actual script, even?

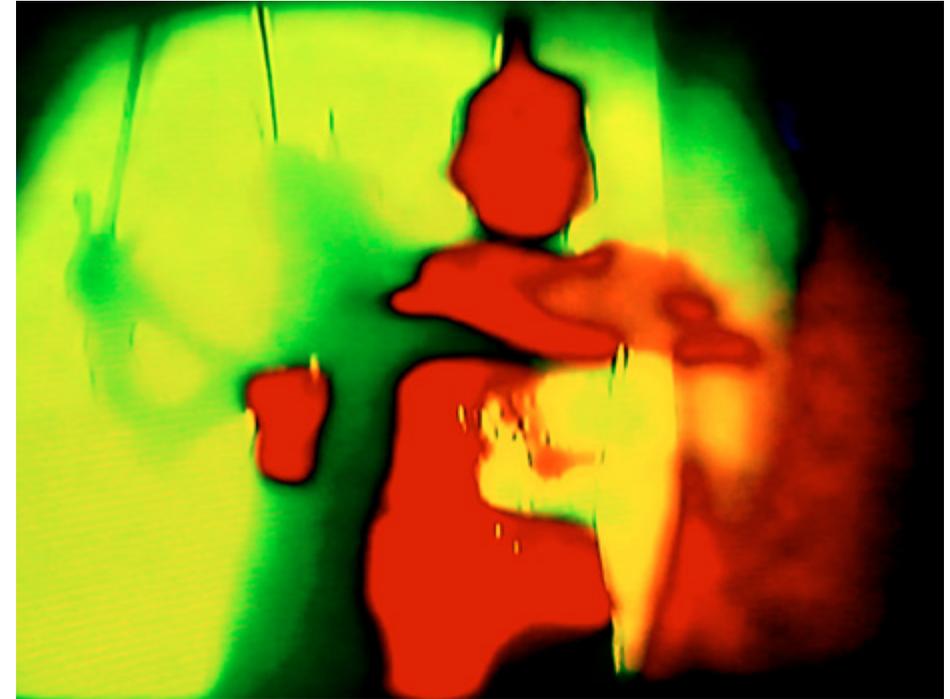
The initial ideas and narrative threads came from a series of poems that we had written called 'The Exile's Return Home'. These were as near as we came to having a script, the film differs from the poems somewhat, they share some characters and the sense of a journey through a wasteland. Our inspiration comes from many sources, we rely heavily on dreams and visions and find a lot of inspiration from painting, the tarot and mythology.

In *In Search of the Exile* you made some very bold artistic choices - want to talk about those for a bit, and the reasons behind them? And was the look of the movie planned from the get-go or only decided on in post?

We set out to make a film that was like a living painting, we have used similar processes to create some sequences in other feature films and some of our shorter works and installations but this is the first full length film using this process all the way through. Our aim was to create a film that was ungraspable, that could not be pinned down through the intellect but that offered the possibility of a completely unique cinematic experience.

What can you tell us about your overall directorial approach to your story at hand?

There was no real separation between production and post-production, we shot sequences and then would edit them the following day then shoot some more based on how the previous day's work had turned out. Due to the fact there were very few people involved we were able to work like this. We have been really working on developing a filmmaking process that gives us as much freedom to experiment and explore as possible, we nearly always work with some form of script and all our films are narrative but we want to really investigate the extreme reaches of what narrative cinema can be and to find ways of making films that allow us to change and reinvent the film as we go rather than to follow a fixed plan.



Do talk about your cast, and why exactly these people?

Two of the roles are played by us, the red knight and the witch. The other characters were played by performers we worked with in another film currently in post-production called **The Kingdom of Shadows**, really they are playing similar roles in this film and there is much in common in some of the themes and characters explored in both films but they have a very different formal approach and different atmosphere altogether.

The Wanderer was played by filmmaker Fabrizio Federico, and it is similar to his role of Cain in **The Kingdom Of Shadows**, he did a great job manifesting the anxious energy of this character lost in a wasteland. The Lovers were played by Joana Castro and Bruno Senune, two extremely talented Portuguese dancers that we have been lucky enough to collaborate with on several projects now.

A few words on the shoot as such, and the on-set atmosphere?

The film was completed in about a two month period, first we created the images

without any sound and then once the edit was complete we worked on the sound and music. We often have two or three projects on the go at once and as a lot of the work happens in our studio and around the house, we might spend a morning doing some post-production on one film then in the afternoon shoot some sequences for another film. So generally it's very creative and enjoyable, we can get more stuff done and we can really use the most of our relatively small resources. We work more like painters or sculptors than industrial filmmakers really.

The \$64-question of course, when and where will *In Search of the Exile* be released onto the general public?

We have a couple of screenings coming up, the next is on 27th of August when the Experimental Film Society screening it in Dublin as a part of a double bill with our first feature film **Savage Witches**. Also in November the San Diego Underground Film Festival will be hosting the North American premiere. More screenings to be announced soon.

Anything you can tell us about audience and critical reception of *In Search of the Exile* so far?

It has been fascinating, we have only had a couple of screenings so far but the effect it has had on people has been incredible. Some people love it and submit to the experience and go on their own journey with it while others resist and struggle a lot. At one screening recently we even had someone shielding their eyes and turning their head away, they had such a hard time with the film that they preferred to stare at the wall rather than watch the film!

Any future projects you'd like to share?

We are currently in post-production of two new films, **Black Sun** and **The Kingdom Of Shadows**. We've finished editing both films and we are working on the sound and music at the moment.

The Kingdom Of Shadows is a surrealist cinematic vision inspired by dreams, biblical myths, alchemy, family history and silent cinema. This film will have its world premiere at the Cambridge Film Festival this October. **Black Sun** is the first in a series of films exploring humankind's relationship to darkness. It's a personal exploration of the portrayal of female characters in European fairy tales, painting and literature. We're very excited about these two new films and can't wait to share them with an audience!



REVIEW

IN SEARCH OF THE EXILE Review by Nikola Gocić

Originally published on NGBoo Art, April 2017

The string of (positive) reviews for the boundary-pushing films including **The Suffering of Ninko**, **Still the Earth Moves**, **Sleep Has Her House** and **Frozen May** continues with the British auteur duo Clara Pais and Daniel Fawcett's liquid, mind-blowing phantasmagoria **In Search of the Exile**.

Defying any categorization, this wild cinematic experiment could be described in many ways, but none of the descriptions would give the potential audience an accurate impression of the opus. As it takes you to another, mercurial world of an alternate, oneiric reality, it seems like a spiritual (and more abstract) successor to E. Elias Merhige's **Begotten** as seen through infrared filters - think Philippe Baylaucq's ballet fantasy **ORA** or Thomas Kirk's music video for Muse's **Stockholm Syndrome**, yet even more lavish and intense.

Elusive and enthralling, it is akin to an iridescent fairy tale which is made of divine reveries and takes place in the arcane Realm of Tarot; the complete anthology of the primordial embryo's memories or the lost collection of an ethereal being's home videos... The titular search is shared by the directors themselves, the hypnotized viewer and the protagonist referred to as the Wanderer (Fabrizio Federico) or rather, our souls and astral projections, our dream-selves and nightmare-ids. The encounters with the Witch, the Red Knight and the Lovers make us look deeper into the Subconscious and Beyond.

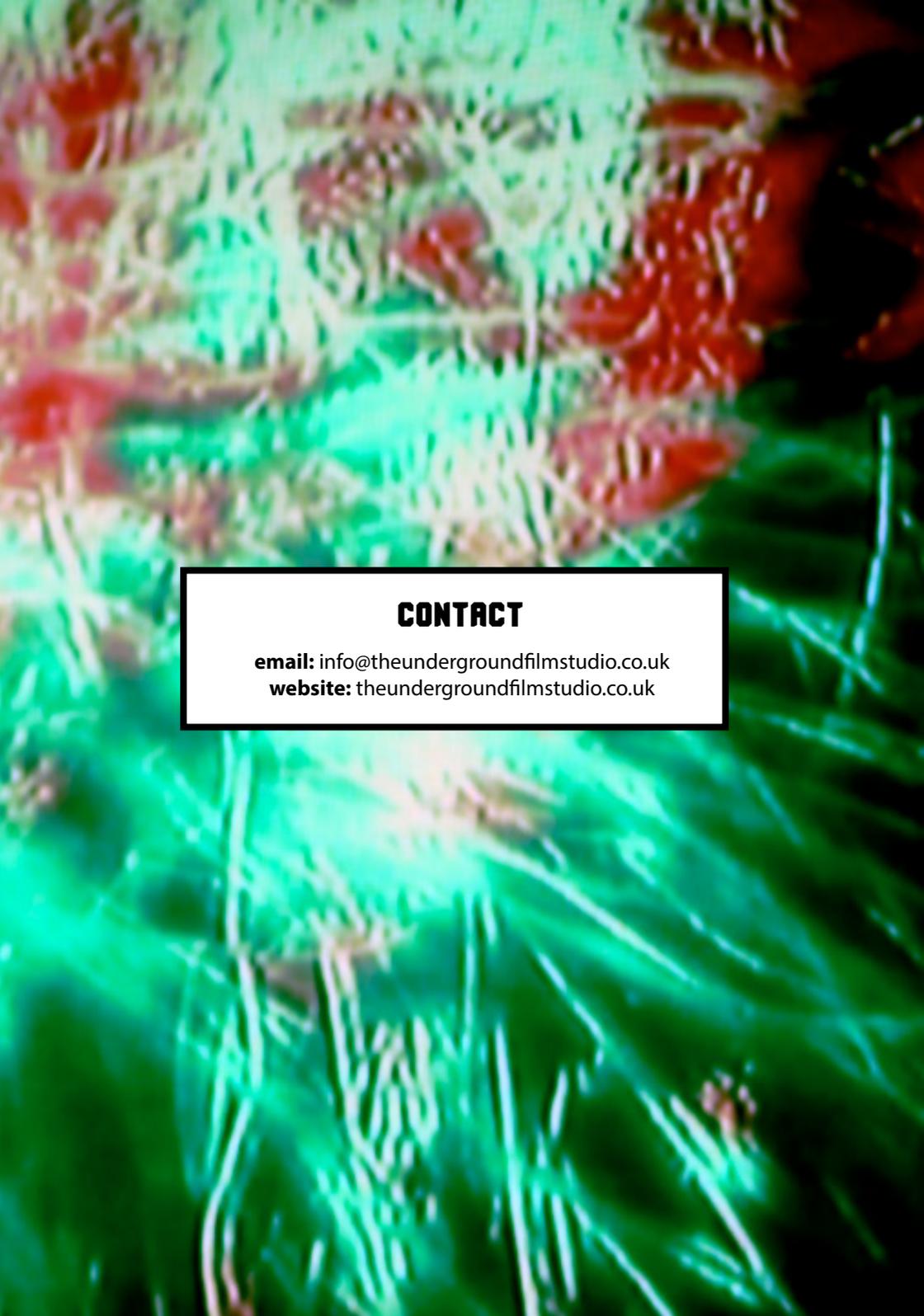
Drenched in screaming, hyper-saturated colors melting in front of your eyes, this avant-garde, dialogue-free mythos is an uninterrupted stream of equivocal images. Accompanied by the evocative score of familiar, yet alienating sounds, the dazzling, unearthly visuals create a whirlpool of an eternal, mysterious substance that you want to drown in.

During the watching, I thought to myself more than once: "If there is Heaven, I want it to be as immersive and stupefying as this."



SCREENINGS

- 2017** Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent, UK
Forest Happenings, Edinburgh, UK
- 2016** South Texas Underground Film Festival, Corpus Christi, USA
San Diego Underground Film Festival, USA
Andrómeda + Shortcutz Porto, Maus Hábitos, Porto, Portugal
Experimental Film Society, Filmbase, Dublin, Ireland
Palácio das Artes, Porto, Portugal



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