

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "ME YOU THEM"

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Lucy and Luiz Carlos Barreto • Walter Salles present**

a **CONSPIRAÇÃO FILMES** production
in association with **TeleImage** and **Quanta Centro de Produções**

Academy Award® Nominee

FERNANDA MONTENEGRO • FERNANDA TORRES

"THE HOUSE OF SAND"
(CASA DE AREIA)

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an
Andrucha Waddington
Film

OFFICIAL SELECTION
TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2005
SPECIAL PRESENTATION

A Sony Pictures Classics Release

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Synopsis

Áurea's saga starts in 1910, when, in pursuing a dream she never shared, she arrives in a caravan at a labyrinth of sand in Maranhão, northern Brazil. Her husband, Vasco, believes this land to be prosperous and she is condemned to a life in this barren place, her only female company being her mother, Dona Maria. Pregnant and dissatisfied with her destiny, she tries everything to find a way out.

She spends 59 years living with an imminent departure. At first Áurea is hindered by Vasco and is forced to live in a house on the top of a dune, until one day, alongside her mother, she witnesses the death of her husband, buried by his own insanity. With a mixture of both pain and relief, she believes herself to be free. But the truth is, her fate is in the hands of destiny.

Abandoned in the desert with her daughter, Dona Maria goes in search of a small settlement originally founded by runaway slaves. Here she meets Massu, who becomes an important companion for the two women. It is he who teaches them how to trade belongings for food. And salt, brought from afar by Chico, the only man able to come and go as he pleases, and whom Áurea clings to in the hope of leaving after she gives birth.

A girl is born, also called Maria. Nine years pass and Dona Maria is the first to realize that there is some sense to that place. But Áurea remains stubborn, only waiting for her daughter to grow up in order to face the journey. The possibility of realizing her greatest wish comes to life again with the return of the salt salesman. Just as everything seems set, Massu surprises them all by hindering their departure.

Desperate, Áurea runs across the sandy plains after Chico. Instead of finding him, she encounters Lieutenant Luiz, a young guide leading a group of scientists researching of the total solar eclipse in the region. In an emotional passage she is able to rescue her feelings, rediscover sex and is given a chance to restart her life. However, once again, circumstances beyond her will force Áurea to remain on the sandy plains. Alongside Massu, she discovers that she does belong here, after all.

CAST

Fernanda Montenegro	D. Maria
.....	Áurea (1942-1969)
.....	Maria (1969)
Fernanda Torres	Áurea (1910-1919)
.....	Maria (1942)
Ruy Guerra	Vasco de Sá
Seu Jorge	Massu (1910-1919)
Luiz Melodia	Massu (1942)
Enrique Diaz	Luiz (1919)
Stênio Garcia	Luiz (1942)
Emiliano Queiroz	Chico do Sal
João Acaiabe	Massu's Father
Camilla Facundes	Maria (1919)
Haroldo Costa	Foreman
Jorge Mautner	Scientist
Nelson Jacobina	Scientist

"On the sandy plains of northern Maranhão, three generations of women live a story filled with profound emotions ranging from despair to fulfillment."

● **FILM CREDITS**

Directed byAndrucha Waddington
Produced by Leonardo Monteiro de Barros
..... Pedro Buarque de Hollanda
..... Pedro Guimarães
.....Andrucha Waddington
Co-Producers..... Lucy and Luiz Carlos Barreto
..... Walter Salles
Associate Producers Luciano Huck
..... Patrick Siaretta
..... Daniel Filho
Script by Elena Soárez
Story by Luiz Carlos Barreto, Elena Soárez and Andrucha Waddington
Director of Photography Ricardo Della Rosa
Film Editor Sérgio Mekler
Visual Effects Supervisor.....Fábio Soares
Line Producer Tim Maia
Co-Line Producer Claudia Braga
Unit Production Manager..... Fernando Zagallo
Production Designer Tulé Peake
Costume DesignClaudia Kopke
Makeup Artist.....Martín Macías Trujillo
Production Sound..... Jorge Saldanha
Supervising Sound Editor.....Miriam Biderman
Re-recording Mixer..... Mark Berger
Music by Carlo Bartolini and João Barone

Production CompanyConspiração Filmes

Co-Production Companies Columbia Tristar Filmes do Brasil
.....Globo Filmes
.....TeleImage
..... Quanta Centro de Produções
..... LocaAventura

About the Production

The House of Sand is Andrucha Waddington's first feature-length fiction film since his 2000 award-winning *Me You Them* (Official Selection Cannes Film Festival/Un Certain Regard and Toronto International Film Festival; and Winner, Best Film, Karlovy Vary Film Festival).

Filmed entirely in the magnificent Lençóis Maranhenses region (an environmental conservation area in the north Brazilian State of Maranhão) between July and September 2004, it features Academy Award® Nominee **Fernanda Montenegro** (*Central Station*) and **Fernanda Torres** (Best Actress, Cannes Film Festival 1986 for *Parle-moi d'Amour*), two of the most renowned actresses of Brazil and real-life mother and daughter, brought together for the first time in a film's leading roles. Throughout the film (the story unfolds from 1910 to 1969) they share the roles of the main characters, Áurea and Maria.

The House of Sand also unites three generations of Brazilian cinema: based on an original idea by Luiz Carlos Barreto, Áurea's saga is the work of one of the most talented directors of the new generation, and has Walter Salles as a co-producer.

In this film Andrucha Waddington is joined by some of his colleagues from *Me You Them* (*Eu Tu Eles*) (producers Leonardo Monteiro de Barros and Pedro Buarque de Hollanda, scriptwriter Elena Soárez, costume designer Claudia Kopke, sound editor Miriam Biderman and 4-time Academy Award® winning re-recording mixer Mark Berger), as well as by new collaborators such as director of photography Ricardo della Rosa (*Olga*), production designer Tulé Peake (*City of God*) and producer Pedro Guimarães.

The script of *The House of Sand* received the Sundance/NHK International Filmmakers Award in 2002.

The production budget for *The House of Sand* was US\$ 3.4m (R\$8.5m). The film was mainly financed by public funds obtained via the "Chapter 1" and "Chapter 3" provisions of Brazil's Federal Law 8.685 (Audiovisual Law), via Brazil's Federal Law 8.313, and via direct subsidies from Brazil's National Film Agency (Ancine) and the State of Maranhão. Private funds came from Conspiração Filmes and its co-producers.

The "Chapter 1" and Law 8.313 funds were invested in the film by the following companies: PETROBRAS, ELETROBRÁS, Vivo, Nívea, Gol, BNDES, Alcoa and Urucum Mineração (a Cia. Vale do Rio Doce company).

The House of Sand was released to enormous press acclaim in Brazil in May 2005 and is still running after 14 consecutive weeks. The screenings at Toronto will be the film's international premiere.

The Story

The story of *The House of Sand* was developed from a photograph of an abandoned house buried in the dunes of the sandy plains of northeastern Brazil. It was Luiz Carlos Barreto, one of the film's co-producers, who thought up the story and encouraged Andrucha Waddington to embrace the project.

"The truth is, I never saw the photo. Luiz Carlos Barreto, upon his return from Ceará, told me the story behind the photograph and invited me to make a fictional film about a woman who lived in this house and had to fight against the sand her whole life. That same night I dreamed about the image. The next day we started discussing *The House of Sand*", recalls the director.

Following Luiz Carlos Barreto's original idea, the next step was to invite Elena Soárez to develop the story. During its conception, the screenwriter had to invent the saga practically from scratch. It took two years of work, with regular meetings between Elena, Andrucha, Barreto, his wife Lucy and producer Leonardo Monteiro de Barros, until the final version was completed.

"All we had to go on was the photograph and the confirmation of the 'Fernandas' in the main roles. Thanks to the participation of these two actresses, we thought of telling a story that spanned a century. It was a script written for them," explains Elena.

Three generations of women are forced by destiny to live for years in the remote sandy plains of the north of Maranhão. In order to mark the changes in the phases of the film, Elena decided to resort to important events of the century. The problem lay in how to reveal such occurrences, considering the inaccessibility of the inhospitable desert.

"I asked myself: 'how would information reach a place which is practically impenetrable?' I arrived at the conclusion together with Andrucha that the news would come from the sky.

"From there we started extensive research about the principal facts of the 20th century which had some connection to the sky. We discovered, for example, that in 1919 an English scientific expedition went to the northeast of Brazil in order to photograph a group of stars during a solar eclipse, thereby proving Albert Einstein's relativity theory. In the film, the sequence surrounding Áurea's meeting with the group of astronomers becomes an essential part of the narrative.

"We wanted three significant visits that would portray the century. The beginning has the impetus of science; in the middle the misery of war, and finally, the hippies as the means to represent the arrival of man on the moon," clarifies the writer.

Actress Fernanda Montenegro reaffirms the importance of this research:

"Elena Soárez brought a metaphysical plane to the script. She measured the story of these two women by placing the theory of relativity within the problems in their lives. Something very pure and qualified exists in the writer's vision, that not only makes a story but contributes to a non-realist structure, not humdrum, not simply the chronicle of a story. This meta-

language in the script is what makes *The House of Sand* a saga. More than just a drama of manners, it is an epic story connected to this wheel, this universe, which in the end describes the story of all of us on planet earth.”

Elena had to overcome some obstacles in the production of the script. According to her, one of the difficulties was to maintain the story engaging, due to the narrative structure of the film.

“It is difficult to create a drama when one has a long time span. When one extends the period for too long, one loses the tension. The ideal thing is to have something fundamental happens in the story every half an hour. When you open it up to a century, all urgency disappears. Besides this, the film is divided into three phases. For each new stage, a new story. I kept asking myself whether, at each beginning, the audience would be willing to start over.”

The partnership between Elena Soárez and Andrucha is a long one. It was for his first film *Gêmeas*, in 1999, based on the story of the same name by Nelson Rodrigues, that she wrote her first script for him. However, during the same period, she was working on the *Eu Tu Eles* script for three years, another feature film directed by Andrucha, released the following year.

“My relationship with Andrucha is very good. He has a virtue not very common among directors, he allows you the freedom to work, besides helping a lot with ideas. At the same time, he knows exactly what he wants. He is objective and determined. He makes things happen and will turn the world upside-down, if necessary,” compliments Elena, who also enjoyed the cooperation of the “Fernandas” in the construction of the script. “They helped me a lot in the beginning when the story was still very abstract. They contributed both in the dramaturgy and in giving life and personality to the characters.”

Elena decided to cut down on the amount of dialogue, thus enhancing the images and scenes.

“Dialogue is something dangerous because it is almost the opposite of cinema. One can fall into a trap. One tends to resolve everything through dialogue but cinema works with another peculiarity. It resolves itself with the image,” she comments.

THE CAST

The House of Sand did not follow normal procedures of film production. Fernanda Montenegro's and Fernanda Torres's participation was guaranteed during the development period, before the characters even existed. "The story was truly written for them," Andrucha reveals.

"What fascinated me about the movie was the fact that it is a mysterious and feminine narrative about time acting as an agent on mother and daughter, besides acting with "Nanda," and being directed by a great talent like Andrucha," says Fernanda Montenegro.

Although nervous about accepting the part in the movie because of its location, Fernanda Torres states that the place contributed to the character's composition. "I was really afraid to be a part of this movie because it was in a very distant and inaccessible place. I wasn't sure how it was going to be, so I thought: 'I'm going there in the same situation as the character did'. It is a physical movie, where the location helps build the part. Now I'm really happy, it was a wonderful experience."

Fernanda Montenegro plays three characters: Áurea's mother, Dona Maria, Áurea herself (at the ages of 60 and 87) – the main character – and her daughter Maria (58); while Fernanda Torres plays Áurea (28-37) and Maria (31). Although the movie was filmed in chronological order, avoiding confusion among roles and time periods, acting so many characters was not an easy task.

"In just the one movie I used up five old women of my life. I played women with an age range of 60 to 90 years of age. I used to tell Andrucha: 'I am making the effort of more than 20 years of old women.' I emptied my trunk of old women in this movie," Fernanda Montenegro jokes.

The rest of the cast, however, were chosen after the screenplay was finished. One can say Andrucha was daring in the casting of some of the actors. Luiz Melodia, for instance, a newcomer to the movie industry, was one of the biggest gambles. The singer plays Massu at 62 years of age, a character who, when young, is played by Seu Jorge.

"It was a risk that I took on my own. I noticed that Luiz Melodia was the ideal person for this role when I put his picture side-by-side with Seu Jorge's," the director explains.

Actress Laís Corrêa, the movie's cast coordinator, deserves part of credit for Melodia's acting. She spent days working out the scenes with the singer and followed the entire evolution.

"To begin with he was insecure. Besides being a newcomer to movies, he had to bring continuity to the work of another actor. With a lot of dedication to work he was able, little by little, to feel at home and become more confident. He really wanted to act," recalls Laís Corrêa. "Laís was fundamental. She was the person who most taught me the things I didn't know, like positioning, gestures. She was always there for me," compliments the singer.

Besides Laís's preparation and supervision before and during shooting, on the set Luiz Melodia received valuable tips from the distinguished Fernanda Montenegro, Stênio Garcia and Fernanda Torres.

"At first I thought I'd get nervous acting alongside them, but I ended up becoming even more confident. They're the ones that approached me. Fernanda Montenegro, with all her humility, would ask me: 'can I give you some tips?' Just being able to act with these stars, for me it was like winning an Oscar," recounts Melodia.

Seu Jorge reveals that he had certain freedoms in constructing his character.

"It was my best movie experience. Massu is dense and challenging. I had a lot of responsibility in constructing the character. I delved into the man's story within my own conception and imagination. Andrucha left me room, within his proposal, to change Massu's walk and help choose the costumes. It was incredible."

Enrique Diaz and Stênio Garcia shared the role of the military officer, at 35 and 58 years of age, respectively.

"I was very moved when I read the script. I was seduced by the cosmic characteristics of the film and the representations of Brazilian culture, of the archaic black man. I really admire the people involved in this project. To play Luiz, I thought about the way Stênio acts," says Enrique.

The inherent difficulties of working at a location like the Lençóis Maranhenses helped Stênio Garcia to construct his character.

"The climatic and geographical characteristics of the Lençóis really don't make it the most comfortable place to work. It is very hot. You breathe in sand, you sweat sand. But I'm the type of actor who searches for discomfort to better understand and play out a character. And besides, the excellent production crew of the film softened all the hardships," he says.

More accustomed to being behind the cameras, director Ruy Guerra played the role of the Portuguese Vasco de Sá.

"I accepted the role firstly because I found the story very interesting and I'd have an opportunity to act alongside the Fernandas and work with Andrucha. Furthermore, I like to act from time to time, because I believe it's important for a director to have the experience of being an actor," says Ruy.

Emiliano de Queiroz brings to life Chico do Sal, a trader in the region who agrees to take Áurea and Maria back to civilization.

"Playing Chico do Sal was fascinating. Firstly because I acted alongside two great actresses, and also because I had the opportunity to work with a young and talented director like Andrucha. Chico do Sal represents the passing of time, a living element of nature, the only compass in that region. As his salt becomes obsolete, he turns into an insignificant person."

João Acaiabe plays Massu's father. And Camilla Facundas takes on her first role as Maria at nine years of age. *The House of Sand* also counts on the special guests Jorge Mautner and Nelson Jacobina playing two scientists on the astronomy expedition.

THE PRODUCTION

Making *The House of Sand* was an arduous operation. One year of planning and approximately three months of pre-production to transform the small precarious and bucolic Santo Amaro, a town bordering the Lençóis Maranhenses National Park, into a base ready to receive a film crew. And two years of research and numerous trips to the location to make the production viable.

"We visited Lençóis in all the seasons of the year, a total of 11 trips, to understand the road conditions, the climate, how to deal with the sets in the sand and what were the norms in the national park," recalls the director.

Without the support and authorization of Ibama, Brazil's Environmental Protection Agency, *The House of Sand* never would have been filmed at Lençóis. The agency permitted that filming take place only in the buffer zones of the park, not in the reserves under maximum protection. According to one of the producers, Pedro Buarque de Hollanda, the site choice was correct.

"We noticed that our efforts were worthwhile, in virtue of what the place offered. The film would not have been the same in another location. All the money and energy that we spent were compensated," Hollanda analyses.

Making the film had positive effects both for the city and for the park.

"The entire infrastructure that we put together remains there. We helped Ibama build local headquarters, we promoted lectures on education and hygiene, and the economy of the place became more active. Today, the region is better prepared for quality tourism," evaluates Buarque.

Some of the production team even lived up to six months in Lençóis. The director himself lived there for three months, not counting the other trips beforehand. Numerous measures had to be taken to make the stay in Santo Amaro more comfortable. The attention given to accommodation, transportation and food were all fundamental.

"The city only had one pension and another under construction. We worked on the unfinished construction and rented 32 other houses," recounts Fernando Zagallo, the film's production director. "The restaurants were also very precarious. When they ran out of food they simply didn't open. So we brought a pizzeria from São Luiz to the city," reveals Andrucha.

The jeeps, always used at their maximum capacity, broke down and constantly got stuck on the dunes. The situation was so complicated that at one point 10 cars broke down on the same day.

"The transportation company LocaAventura, one of the co-producers of the film, set up a garage in the city to take care of car maintenance," comments Andrucha.

"Although a big budget film, the production in the desert site and the difficult access were major difficulties. But despite the location, *Conspiração* has the production know-how for adverse situations," said producer Pedro Guimarães.

"It was one of the most important films of my life. Many people thought we were crazy. But since we had an experienced and competent team, we were able to put together a well-organized structure and dodge the difficulties. It was not a film for lazy people," praises Zagallo.

The director, who started his movie career as a producer, participated actively in all the phases of the production of the feature film. He almost didn't sleep at all during principal photography.

"I really enjoy producing, it's something which gives me pleasure. I end up getting involved with everything, from the screw at the machine shop to the problems of dramaturgy. So, when the day was over, I would return to the office to solve production problems. I slept just three hours a night," he confesses. "I always want to be informed about everything. I like to change around the shooting schedule, the order of the day, to know how the food is on set, how people are being treated," he continues.

Fernando Zagallo emphasizes the importance of Andrucha's involvement in the production.

"When a director participates in the production process, everything becomes easier because he knows where he wants to invest. In this way decisions are made quicker."

Producer Leonardo Monteiro de Barros explains the importance of the partners in the realization of this project.

"Cinema is eminently a collaborative art, from the artistic, production and financial points of view. To produce a film this size, we made various partnerships, without which the project would never have materialized," he says. "*The House of Sand* unites three generations of Brazilian cinema: that represented by Lucy and Luiz Carlos Barreto, that of Walter Salles, and the new generation of film-makers who emerged after 1995, of which Andrucha Waddington is a great exponent," he comments.

"It was a pleasure to unite these three generations in this project. I'm proud that it worked out and that it resulted in such a delicate film," said Andrucha.

The financial resources that made this film possible came from Columbia TriStar Films of Brazil, through the mechanism of fiscal incentives known as "Article 30" of the Audiovisual Law; through sponsoring and companies supporting the production (these using their own resources or federal fiscal incentives like the Audiovisual and Rouanet Laws); through the Government of the State of Maranhão, which recognizes the economic and touristic importance that a film production generates in the region where it is shot; through co-producers TeleImage, Quanta Centro de Produções, Globo Filmes and the company LocaAventura, who invested precious resources in the form of goods and services; and finally by Ancine - Agência Nacional do Cinema (National Cinema Agency), which offered its financial support directly for the production through its Edict of Support of Finalization and Distribution," said Leonardo.

THE PRODUCTION DESIGN

The art design in *The House of Sand* is basically divided in two characteristics: the metropolitan objects of the time period, and the elements of regional culture of the Brazilian North. The first trip to the Lençóis Maranhenses, during pre-production was essential in the composition of the film sets.

"It was important for us to understand the local architecture. We noticed that the buildings had little colonial influence and much indigenous and African influence. The houses are made from primary resources found in the region: Carnaúba (wax drawn from the tree's leaves), Buriti (palm tree) and clay," recalls art director Tulé Peake. "On the other hand, there is the cultural cargo represented by the objects that they (the characters) brought from Rio de Janeiro. These objects ended up becoming extremely precious things. They cling to their world through these objects," he adds.

Twelve houses were built, with the help of two set designers and one painter, in addition to locals, using the intrinsic engineering methods of local traditions.

"I didn't want to use any of my methods, but rather those of the people from there. We almost didn't use measuring tools. We measured everything in steps and palms, the same construction processes used by the locals," says Tulé.

Some of the houses had to be reproduced in various versions to show the evolution of the characters, the different phases of the film and the geographical changes of the dunes.

"From an artistic viewpoint, we had to build various houses according to the stage of adaptation of the women. The first house was an imposition of Vasco and doesn't follow the typology of the place. The second is made by Massu and true to local culture. The last is a mixture of both cultures with walls made of stud and mud and a brick floor," explains Tulé. "To show the geographic changes during the first phase of the film we had to build the same house in four different stages. The first at the dried lagoon, the second on the peninsula with the lagoon full; the third in another place being swallowed by the sand; and the fourth cut in half and with no front to give the impression that it was buried even further," adds Andrucha.

Like in all the production departments of *The House of Sand*, the characteristics of the location were cause for concern.

"The transportation of people, objects, construction material and equipment was very complicated. The art objects were carried in two trucks from Rio de Janeiro as far as the dirt road that led to Santo Amaro. From there the material was taken to the town on tractors. The sand engulfed the set and buried the objects, which caused continuity problems for the film," remembers Tulé.

The script readings organized by the director were very useful for the conception of the film's art direction. Tulé also highlights Andrucha's working methods during filming.

"Andrucha has a really cool directing method. He is very generous, lets you work and provides things for the film from his soul. Despite being a film

made on dunes, it was one of the projects in which I had most powers of intervention. The readings were determining factors for the composition of the art design. The participation of the "Fernandas" in this process was fundamental. As they constructed the characters, I crafted the art design," he recalls.

THE MAKEUP AND COSTUMES

Since *The House of Sand* is a period film, or rather, a film which takes place over various periods, the characterization and costumes are fundamental aspects of the film. The passages of time were a challenge common to all departments. Headed up by Martin Trujillo, the makeup team had to be very thorough, especially in the characterization of the characters throughout the different phases.

"Because of the film's nature, it was very important to prepare the characterization with delicacy and a wealth of detail. Since we worked with various characters in distinct generations we needed to emphasize at least one different characteristic for each of them in each phase," says the makeup artist. "We aged the clothes to show the passage of time and the phase changes were very subtle. We sewed and unraveled all day long," recalls costume designer Cláudia Kopke.

The concept behind the costumes did not limit itself to historical publications. Creativity was essential in the realization of the costume design.

"I researched old books and magazines in order to compose the costumes, but the script pointed to something beyond this research, which was the lack of access to information. How did people adapt to this isolation? Wearing things that weren't clothes. For example, we turned sheets and towels of that period in time, into costumes," remarked Claudia Kopke.

Martin praises the contribution made by the "Fernandas" in the characterization process.

"Since I had just finished another film, I had little time to think about the physical composition of the characters. I arrived in Lençóis with four or five wigs under my arm. Both Fernanda and Nanda were very important in this process. We came up with all the ideas together and developed a train of thought. This partnership and the openness of these actresses was very important to me because the characterizations were complicated and demanded a lengthy execution time."

According to Martin, one of the most difficult scenes for characterization was when Fernanda Montenegro plays two roles in the same scene, a younger and older version of herself.

"For this scene, which took two days to shoot, Fernanda had to wake up with me at 3:00am. I did all her makeup for the older version, a process that lasted approximately three hours and three more hours to make the younger character. For those accustomed to the big city, arriving in Santo Amaro was both a great physical and emotional shock. I brought products which wouldn't stain, where sweat could fall freely on makeup without causing damage."

Both the makeup artist and the costume designer shared the same opinion when asked if the project was the hardest of their lives.

"It was definitely the most complex film I've made, but the result was very gratifying," confesses Cláudia. "When people ask me what was my best experience in Brazilian Cinema, I always answer *Eu Tu Eles*, with Andrucha. Now when they ask which was the most difficult, I answer *The House of Sand*", says Martin.

THE DIRECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The main concept behind the photography in *The House of Sand* was to transmit a panorama that reflected the drama lived by Áurea and Maria. The purpose was not to portray a beautiful landscape but rather an arid, hot and uninhabitable place.

"We didn't want to show the location looking like paradise. The idea was to show a tough place, a place almost impossible to live in," says director of photography, Ricardo Della Rosa.

Numerous tests were run, in locations and in laboratories, in order to choose the negatives, filters and hours to film.

"First, we did various tests over six months, in Arraial do Cabo. Afterwards, we worked with this material, carrying out diverse laboratory experiments. Then we took the camera to Lençóis and ran another series of tests there. We brought the material once again to the laboratory and Ricardo chose the negatives he wanted to use, the manner in which the light was filtered, we managed to have the sky always white," recalls Andrucha.

"We also did some tests in São Paulo for the night scenes. We watched various films, however the main references ended up coming from painters like Caravaggio, George De La Tour and Portinari," adds Della Rosa.

In order to favor the photography and spare the cast and crew from the midday heat, the director implemented a break of five hours during filming. If on the one hand the intermission relieved exposure to the sun, on the other, the day became much longer.

"We were very concerned about the sun. We filmed from 4:30am to 9:00am and then from 14:00 to nightfall. This allowed time for the team to rest and better lighting. The film's two main characters are women, and working under the midday sun is arduous. The whole team worked in unison in favor of the photography and the actresses," explains Andrucha.

According to Della Rosa, filming with celebrated actors like Fernanda Montenegro, Stênio Garcia and Fernanda Torres, made his job easier.

"Besides their exceptional acting, they have extraordinary positioning for the camera and lights, a privilege for any director of photography."

THE EDITING AND THE VISUAL EFFECTS

While the team worked in Lençóis Maranhenses, editor Sergio Mekler started a parallel editing process in Rio de Janeiro. According to him, this was only possible because the shooting schedule followed the order of the script, which allowed for complete sequences to be sent.

"I was there during the first week, which was great in order to get the atmosphere of the place. Afterwards, as the scenes arrived in Rio, I made a first cut following exactly what was written. This was possible because he filmed with two cameras, allowed me various options. From there on in, we started experimenting."

"Bangu I," (one of Rio's high security prisons), was the nickname given to the editing studio set up in the director's house, which literally held them prisoner. Andrucha and Mekler remained confined trying all the possibilities; even the most improbable were welcome, because they opened up other doors.

It was six months work, trying to resolve the sequences with the least amount of shots possible.

"Like Fernanda Montenegro said, *The House of Sand* is almost a theorem. At the beginning of the film *Áurea* is practically mute. So, one image is added to another, successively, generating a universe. Practically everything is comprehensible without the use of words. We wanted to find the language of cinema and discovered it together with the story, throughout editing," explains Mekler. "There is nothing in the film that has an aspect I don't like. Sometimes a director insists that it has to be his way or no way, and that's the end of that. But with Andrucha this doesn't happen: we solved all problems together. It was great to do this work, I'm satisfied."

The special effects in *The House of Sand*, although necessary, are simple. The main difficulty for the supervisor, Fábio Soares, was to prevent them from interfering in the film's simplicity.

"Andrucha called me to read the script and we soon saw that the effects would not be explicit. The concept of the effects was very conservative," recalls Soares.

The special effects were applied, basically, on four occasions: the star-filled sky, the eclipse, the war planes, and when the two characters of Fernanda Montenegro are in the same scene. *The House of Sand* is the first Brazilian film to be finalized in 2K, a digital format that offers the best image resolution quality and the widest range of colors without compromising optical quality.

For the sake of comparison, the HD (high definition) model normally used in Brazilian productions, works at 1920 x 1080 pixels resolution, at 8 bits, while 2K works with 2048 x 1536 pixels resolution, at 10 bits. The film's post-production services were provided by co-producer TeleImage.

"It was a great challenge to finalize the film in 2K. This process places you in a post-production situation very different from the norm, allowing for all the possibilities of digital resources without losing optical quality. On the other hand, it is a slow process and the files are gigantic," tells Soares.

THE MUSIC

Extravagant sounds, intermediate noises, low pulsations and little music. These are some of the characteristics of *The House of Sand's* soundtrack, composed by musicians Carlo Bartolini and João Barone.

"Andrucha wanted us to use music that did not sound like music. This took us down a new road," says Bartolini. "It's an atypical soundtrack. In fact it's a climatic contribution to the film."

There is only real music at two moments in the film. Jorge Mautner chose a repertoire of well-known songs of the time for the serenade in the scientists' camp. For the last encounter of Áurea and Maria, Andrucha pointed to the Prelude Opus 28, #15, "The Raindrop", by Chopin. The version presented is a brand new recording by Nelson Freire, made specially by the pianist for *The House of Sand*. The director explains why he did not use music, throughout the entire film, as an instrument for calling up emotions.

"Music is like a character missing from Áurea's life. Confined for many years in that place, one of the things that she most missed was music. When Áurea finds the scientists' camp, the music rescues all the feelings within her. At the end, it has a fundamental role in the story. It would be disloyal to the script to have music in this film."

While Barone was in charge of experimenting with percussion instruments, Bartolini worked with synthesizers and samplers.

"I experimented using a violin bow on cymbals, which creates a sound similar to that of "whale calls." I saw this in a show of the percussion orchestra of Strasbourg. I also used a rustic wood drum, used in old fugitive slave communities of the north of Brazil. These elements, together with synthesizers and samplers, blend with sound effects," explains Barone.

The sound department of *The House of Sand* won a great ally. The American Mark Berger, four-time Oscar winner, is responsible for the sound mixing. Among his most important works in cinema are *Apocalypse Now*, *Godfather II*, *Amadeus* and *The English Patient*, besides Andrucha's own *Eu Tu Eles*.

THE LENÇÓIS MARANHENSES

The Lençóis Maranhenses National Park is an area of 155 thousand hectares located in the districts of Barreirinhas, Primeira Cruz and Santo Amaro, in the state of Maranhão. The sand penetrates 50km inland and extends for 70km of desert beaches. An environmental protection zone houses dunes of white sand that reach heights of 40 meters and blue and green freshwater lagoons, that are full between June and September and dry from October to May.

ABOUT THE FILMAKERS

Anrducha Waddington (Director)

Anrducha Waddington, 35 years old, is one of the biggest names in the new generation of Brazilian cinema. Partner in the production company Conspiração Filmes since 1996, his first feature films as director were "*Gêmeas*" (1999), which won Best Picture (popular jury) at the Brasília Festival, and "*Eu Tu Eles*" (2000), official selection (*Un Certain Regard* screenings) at the Cannes Film Festival, and Best Picture at the Karlovy Vary, Havana and Cartagena Festivals. He directed "*Viva São João*," a documentary about the country festivities in the Northeast of Brazil, released in 2002, and "*Outros Bárbaros*", a record of the reencounter of Caetano Veloso, Maria Bethânia, Gilberto Gil and Gal Costa, 20 years after the famous show in Canecão concert hall. This show was released on DVD at the end of 2004. *The House of Sand* is his third fictional feature film.

Award-winner at the advertising festivals of Cannes and New York, Anrducha is one of the most sought-after directors of commercials in Brazil. "*Volkswagen Vestibular*", was awarded with the Best of Adage.com Ad of the Week in 2002; he received the award "El Ojo de Iberoamericana 2002", for directing "*Pepsi Reverência*".

He has directed international campaigns for Reebok, Pepsi Cola, Gatorade, Sustagem and Piz Buim. In Brazil, he has worked for Ambev, Penalty, Coca-Cola, Grendene, Brahma, Rider and Nívea. He is Brazil's director of music videos with the most awards, for his work with artists such as Paralamas do Sucesso, Skank, Arnaldo Antunes, Djavan, Caetano Veloso and Marina. For TV he has directed musical specials for Gilberto Gil and Paralamas do Sucesso.

He began his career in cinema assisting great directors like Cacá Diegues ("*Dias Melhores Virão*"), Hector Babenco ("*At Play in the Fields of the Lord*") and Walter Salles ("*A Grande Arte*").

CONSPIRAÇÃO FILMES

Created in 1991 and based in Rio de Janeiro, Conspiração Filmes (www.conspira.com.br) is a leading production company in Brazil, known for the high quality and originality of its work. Its films have been distributed in Latin America and worldwide by Warner Bros., Columbia TriStar and Sony Pictures Classics. Among them, *Me You Them/Eu Tu Eles* (Official Selection Cannes/Un Certain Regard and Toronto and Winner, Best Film, Karlovy Vary 2000) *The Man of the Year/O Homem do Ano* (Official Selection Berlin/ Panorama and Toronto and Winner, Skyy Award, San Francisco 2003) and *Redeemer/Redentor* (Official Selection Berlin 2005). Its television productions have been broadcast in over 30 countries. Conspiração Filmes also produces over 100 commercials a year.

GLOBO FILMES

Globo Filmes was created in 1997 with the goal to produce works that value Brazilian culture and stand out in quality and artistic value, as well as increase the synergy between the television and cinema business.

Globo Filmes has, to this day, taken part in the production of 33 films, conquering approximately 77% of audience participation in Brazilian cinema. Of the "10 Best of 'New Generation' Cinema", nine of the films had the participation of Globo Filmes, with highlights such as *Olga*, *Cazuza - O Tempo Não Pára*, *A Partilha*, *Carandiru*, *Cidade de Deus*, *Lisbela e o Prisioneiro*, *Os Normais* and *Sexo, Amor & Traição*.

In a market whose public has grown 10% on average per year, Globo Filmes is ready to maintain its trajectory of growth. In 2005-2006, it expects to be involved in 20 new films including *O Coronel e o Lobisomem*, *Se Eu Fosse Você* and *Dois Filhos de Francisco*, besides the newly released *The House of Sand* and *O Casamento de Romeu e Julieta*.