

Ventania no Coração da Bahia (Windstorm in the heart of Bahia)

by Tenille Bezerra

KEYWORDS

Santa Bárbara

Saint Barbara

Iansã, Bahia

Festivals

Brazil

Afro-Brazilian religion



1. Translator's note: In Afro-Brazilian religious tradition, Iansã (also known as Oyá, Matamba, or Bamburucena) is the orixá (deity/goddess) of the storms, winds, and lightning. She also guides the eguns (spirits of the dead) into the spiritual realm.

Filmmaker's Statement

Tenille Bezerra, translated by Isabel Machado

A tradition that dates back to 1641, the Festa de Santa Bárbara (Saint Barbara's Feast) traverses the city of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, each year like a windstorm. With its origins connected to a popular market in Salvador's port region, Santa Bárbara's festival is also a celebration of Iansã, Oyá, Matamba, Bamburucema,¹ forces and energies originating in African religions that, after crossing the ocean, definitively planted their Axés in Bahia. Today, more than three hundred years later, we Bahians maintain the tradition of celebrating the deities together on the fourth of December.

To engage with the history of a popular festival that, throughout the centuries, has informed the imagination of a city's inhabitants is to immerse oneself in the sensitive matter that constitutes popular celebrations and mobilizations, paying attention to the transformation of bodies, which, in ecstasy, surrender themselves to the freedom of transgressing the everyday order. The film *Ventania no coração da Bahia* (Windstorm in the heart of Bahia) seeks to access this collective poetic imaginary. To do so, it revisits archival images of the last fifteen years of the Santa Bárbara Market Feast, revealing a Bahia of strength and mystery, love and devotion, and celebrating the courage and resistance of the holy warrior women who, with their swords, open the popular festive season in Bahia.

Ventania no coração da Bahia is available to screen on the *Journal of Festive Studies* website at <https://networks.h-net.org/system/files/contributed-files/ventanianocoracaodabahia1.mp4>.

FILMMAKER BIO

Tenille Bezerra was born in Valença, Bahia, Brazil. Graduated in communication studies, she is a filmmaker and executive producer who has been active in Brazilian audiovisual production for over twenty years. She produced and directed the documentary feature *Aleluia, o canto infinito do Tincoã* (Aleluia: The Tincoã's infinite song), a poetic musical profile of legendary Brazilian singer Mateus Aleluia released in 2020 and the documentary short *Vamos à Luta* (Join the Struggle, 2021). As a singer, she performed with Aleluia in the "Segredos do Mar e do Tempo" (Secrets of the sea and time) concert series. Her first poetry compilation, *rumor*, was published in 2017. She is also screenwriter, editor, and producer of the podcast series *Canto dos Recuados* (The song of the retreated).

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