

A FEW THINGS
HAPPENING BY A
river



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
2026 OFFICIAL SELECTION
SHORT FILMS COMPETITION

A FILM
BY
DANIEL SOARES





FILM

SYNOPSIS

A group of teenagers floats down the river, pretending to be dead for social media. One of them drifts away unnoticed. As the body floats downstream, it passes overworked delivery workers, restless holidaymakers, and distracted families, each too caught up in their own absurd microcosms to see the quiet tragedy passing by.





DIRECTOR'S

STATEMENT

I can't count the number of times I've been interrupted, or rather distracted myself, while writing this note of intent. Rare is the day when we're not bombarded with messages of all kinds. News, advertisements, WhatsApp messages, etc. And with that, we increasingly lose the ability to focus on whatever it is. We live in a world of fragmented realities. We are part of invisible bubbles and our day-to-day concerns make us less and less present, in the now. We live side by side, but we lack a collective vision. Regardless of our social class, apps own us more and more, and we spend most of our days on autopilot, fulfilling the tasks expected from our roles.

Likewise, we consume audiovisual content more and more in a fragmented way. Whether through Instagram, Youtube or TikTok, the trend is for everything to accelerate more

and more in this 'short attention span' era. There is, however, a form of poetry, the haiku, which like *Stories*, requires very little attention. But unlike *Stories*, which exist to distract us and make us forget our reality, haikus stay with us and make us reflect on it. I began to wonder whether it would be possible to translate this brevity and density into cinema.

A FEW THINGS HAPPENING BY A RIVER is born from that attempt. An attempt that departs from a classical narrative structure, with the aim of bringing the language of cinema into the era of today's short attention span. The film is a kaleidoscopic journey along a river, triggered by an initial tragedy: a group of teenagers staging a performance for social media that goes wrong. A body loses consciousness and begins to drift away,

unnoticed by the people on the riverbank. It is not the event itself, the expected drama, that interests me. It is rather the reaction, or lack of it, of the people the floating body encounters. On the riverbank, each character is absorbed in their own world. Work, anxiety, social projection. Everyone has reasons not to see. Without knowing it, the characters face a paradox: by refusing to acknowledge the death before their eyes, they also stop seeing life itself. The body becomes a silent testimony to our inability to react to tragic and current events that do not affect us directly.

As David Byrne wrote in one of his songs:

*"Compassion is a virtue,
but I don't have the time."*



DIRECTOR'S

BIOGRAPHY

Daniel Soares is a Portuguese writer and director born in Germany. His short films have premiered at major international festivals including Cannes, Telluride, Locarno, Clermont-Ferrand, and Hong Kong.

His work received several awards, including a Special Mention for the Short Film Palme d'Or at Cannes, the Grand Prix at Premiers Plans d'Angers, and Best Short Film at IndieLisboa.

He is currently developing his debut feature film 900 TONS,

which has been selected for the Ikusmira Berriak Residency in San Sebastián, the Torino Film Lab, and the LIM programme at Le Groupe Ouest.

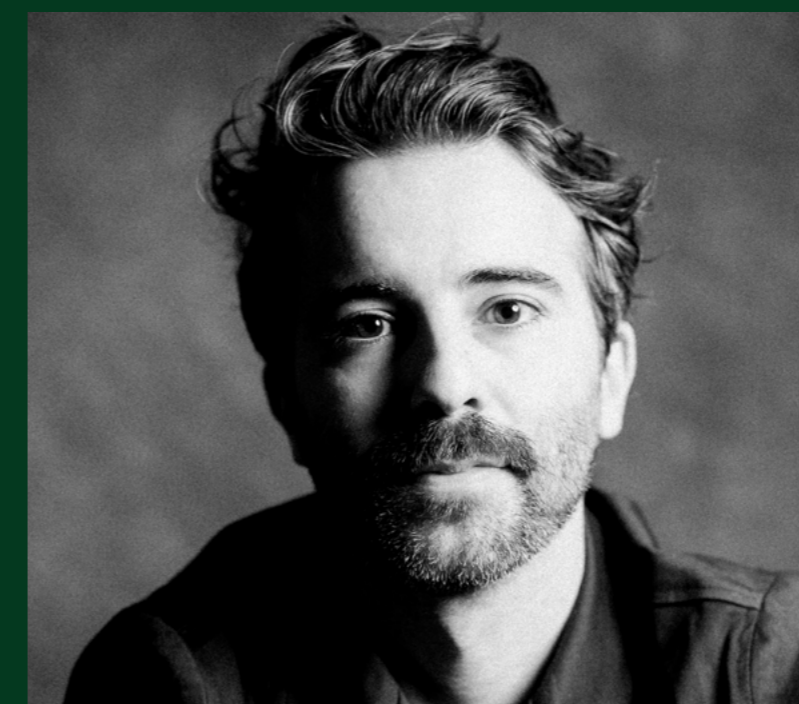
His latest short film, A FEW THINGS HAPPENING BY A RIVER, was developed at the Berlinale Talents Short Form Station. He is a member of the European Film Academy.

Alongside his filmmaking, his photography has been exhibited at the International Center of Photography in New York.

DIRECTOR'S

FILMOGRAPHY

- [2028] **900 Tons** (feature, in development)
- [2026] **A Few Things Happening By A River** (short, fiction)
- [2024] **Bad For A Moment** (short, fiction)
- [2022] **Please Make It Work** (short, fiction)
- [2021] **O Que Resta** (short, fiction)
- [2018] **Forgotten** (short, documentary)





THE CAST

Teresa Madruga
João Vicente
Clara Namora
Rui Pedro Silva
Cárin Silva
Dilip Ahuja
Amarjeet Singh
Hugo Narciso
Leonor Calheiros
Carolina Monteiro
Maria Velez
Guilherme Rebelo
Manuel Mozos
Concha Nogueira
Felipe Rossi
Matilde Abreu
Kaully Dourado

THE CREW

Written and Directed by Daniel Soares
Cinematography Marta Simões
Casting Romina Orsini
Sound Tomé Palmeirim
& Ines Adriana
Art Direction & Wardobe Ana Meleiro
Hair and Make-up Blue
Head of Production Joaquim Carvalho
Editing Sandro Aguilar
& Daniel Soares
Original Music by Meara O'Reilly
Color Correction Andreia Bertini
Producers Mouloud Ouyahia,
Thaddeus Christandl,
Luís Urbano, Sandro Aguilar,
Daniel Soares, Romina Orsini
Produced by L'OEIL VIF PRODUCTIONS
O SOM E A FÚRIA
KID WITH A BIKE



TECHNICAL

DETAILS

Tragicomedy, Short

14'

DCP: 1.66:1, Color

Sound: 5.1

Original Language: Portuguese, Hindi

FRANCE, PORTUGAL 2026

FINANCIAL

SUPPORT



CULTURA, JUVENTUDE
E DESPORTO



INSTITUTO DO CINEMA
E DO AUDIOVISUAL



SUPPORT



Developed at





DISTRIBUTION & SALES

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