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MORE LESS

Porto's favourite short film festival is back with a cinematic bang, and some fascinating special events, too, says Philip Scott

There's a whole lot more to Portugal than just Lisbon and the Algarve, a fact vividly underlined again this year by the return in July of Portugal's pre-eminent short film festival to the Teatro Municipal of Vila do Conde near Porto.

The 18th Curtas Vila do Conde augments the short film festival's growing international reputation with a vibrant mix of films, seminars, exhibitions and special events, including a special appearance by acclaimed US experimental film maker Ken Jacobs.

As ever, the focus of the eight-day festival will be on short films submitted in competition (last year's event attracted 3,300 entries from all round the world). Films chosen for exhibition and competing for the festival's various prizes are divided into half a dozen categories, including International, Portuguese, Experimental, Music Video, Curtinhas (films made for children under the age of 10) and Take One (for entries from film students). No film lasts longer than 60 minutes and the overall standard, if recent years are anything to go by, will be high.

Ken Jacobs, a director who has succeeded in staying at the leading edge of contemporary film making for the best part of 40 years now, will have an exhibition dedicated to his films on display at the Cinematic Art Gallery. Within the festival itself, a master class will present some of Jacobs' pivotal works and the director, together with his wife, will personally present a screening of *The Nervous Magic Lantern*, an intriguing 46-minute silent film made in 2005.

Elsewhere, special events include the group Dead Combo – a band with a superbly cinematic sound if ever there was one – teaming up with New York-based director Bruno de Almeida to present an audiovisual performance based around archive images of iconic fado singer Amália Rodrigues. **1**

Curtas Vila do Conde, 3-11 July 2010

www.curtasmetragens.pt



Stills from Ken Jacobs' *Spiral Nebula*