

❧ Palm Trees from Above ❧



2D animated miniseries, cut-out / 26 episodes of 11 minutes / main audience: young adults and adults / Brazil



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Logline

Palm Trees from Above revisits the Quilombo dos Palmares (a maroon community) and Colonial Recife through the journeys of Kofi and Dádiva. A Black man born free in the midst of slavery and a female artist disguised as a man in a patriarchal world—their crimes will make them partners and, inevitably, friends.

Sinopsis

Pernambuco, 1642. High up in the Serra da Barriga mountains lives Kofi, a vain young black man, born free in Palmares. He only had a delusional ego and one dream: to become the greatest elite warrior of all the Quilombo. When Ganga Zumba, the leader of Palmares, discovers the plans of a Dutch spy infiltrated in the quilombo, he needs to choose a warrior for a dangerous mission in the white world. And when one thinks of someone with exceptional combat skills, great discipline and a strategic mind, that someone certainly isn't Kofi. But a twist of fate makes him the perfect candidate, discarding dozens of better-prepared warriors: Kofi is the only one in the entire quilombo who can read and write.

At the same time, we follow David, a young Jewish man who arrives in the New World aboard a ship belonging to the WIC, the Dutch West India Company. The artist from Amsterdam has come to fill up the position of assistant painter in the entourage of Maurice of Nassau, the governor and most influential figure in the Dutch colonies in the tropics. The young man just didn't expect a series of misfortunes, which begins with a storm that sinks the ship and ends with Kofi catching him naked on the banks of the Capibaribe River, exposing a secret that didn't last even a single day in the New World: David is, in reality, Dádiva. A woman who, in order to fill a position intended only for men, solves her problem by wearing men's clothes and assuming a false identity. From then on, Kofi and Dádiva will do everything they're not supposed to—including becoming friends.



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Series Concept

Palm Trees from Above is a 2D animated miniseries for young people and adults set in 17th-century Brazil, during the Dutch occupation of the Northeast and the golden days of the Quilombo dos Palmares. The series follows Kofi, a young man born free in Palmares, and Dádiva, a Jewish artist who assumes a male identity to pursue her career in a world that denies women a place. Blending adventure, humor, satire, and historical research, the narrative revisits Brazil's colonial past through the lens of characters often erased from official accounts, such as Quilombolas, women, Indigenous peoples, and persecuted Jews.

Combining historical accuracy with creative freedom, the series transforms real events into an epic and captivating adventure about freedom, identity, and resistance.

Artistically, the project proposes an aesthetic inspired by the graphic style and narrative power of Samurai Jack, incorporating references from African art, 17th-century Dutch painting, Portuguese tilework, and Brazilian landscapes to create a unique and contemporary visual universe.



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Main Characters

Dádiva / David Almeida

A woman in search of artistic freedom.

17 years old. Dádiva was born in Amsterdam into a jewish family, with a remarkable talent for the visual arts and the misfortune of being born a woman in an ultra-conservative society. Dádiva decides to turn the tables using the only weapon at her disposal: disguise. To do this, she changes her identity to David and embarks on a journey to join Maurício de Nassau's entourage of painters in the New World. Her talent, intelligence, and a dockworker's tolerance for alcohol makes the perfect disguise. Throughout her journey, Dádiva will realize that she can conquer the world with her skirt, her talent, and her audacity. Dressing as a man is just the beginning of the game. Embracing her identity as a female artist will be her checkmate.



Kofi Manu

The Aspiring Hero

17 years old. Born free in the Quilombo dos Palmares, Kofi has a natural talent for getting into trouble and an absolute conviction that he is destined for greatness. Vain, impulsive and with a huge ego, he dreams of becoming the greatest warrior in Palmares. His athletic and slender build only contributes to his lack of modesty. When he is recruited to be a spy in the colonizers' world, he discovers that courage is not always enough. Between secret missions, unexpected disasters and harsh lessons about responsibility, Kofi will have to learn that a true hero does not fight just for himself, but for an entire community.



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Supporting Characters

R.A.U.L.

Narrator, gossip lover and commentator.



With a sharp sense of humor and a remarkable memory, he appears in every episode of the series. He belonged successively to Acotirene, founder of the Palmares quilombo; to a Jesuit; to a Bandeirante (a type of south american explorer); and, later, to a Tapuia shaman. He adopted, one by one, the nicknames given to him by each of his owners and, as a result, bears a noble name: Rudolf Atepiê Ubaldo Laurindo—or simply RAUL, as he prefers. Having belonged to various owners with contrasting personalities has shaped Raul into a rich and complex character, in addition to giving him a solid knowledge of history and dialectics.

Fire Hair (Cabelo de Fogo)

Courtesan, informant, and irresistible entrepreneur.

22 years old. Fire Hair is a force of nature in red lipstick. She runs the place with a firm hand and political prowess, hiding among the sheets and glasses of cachaça one of the most active branches of the RILP—the Palmares Information and Liberation Network. There, between sighs and whispers, she gathers secrets from plantation owners, soldiers, clerics and merchants, directing everything of interest to the quilombo. She was born from the unusual encounter between an enslaved shellfish gatherer and a Dutch navy cook. A feminist by nature, she doesn't preach equality: she preaches vengeance. She is a bridge, a threat, a rumor and a legend, all at the same time.



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Supporting Characters



Ganga Zumba
Palmares Leader

Ganga rules the famous maroon community Quilombo dos Palmares, also known as Angola Janga. While chaos reigns in the “white world,” Palmares remains unscathed and prosperous under his leadership. He is one of the central figures of the Black resistance in the Americas. Ganga Zumba is respected and bears the responsibility of protecting thousands of free people in a territory that is an island surrounded on all sides by the cruel slave-owning system.

Mauricio de Nassau

Supreme Governor of New Holland

Nassau rules over the “white world” of northeastern Brazil, trying to balance the conflicting interests of the Dutch, the Portuguese, the indigenous peoples, priests, rabbis, officials, and the common people, while facing a growing political crisis. Cultured, ambitious, and fascinated by knowledge, Maurice of Nassau dreams of transforming Pernambuco into a cosmopolitan center of the New World. Surrounded by artists, scientists, and conflicting political interests, he governs a territory marked by religious, economic, and military tensions that will determine the region’s fate.



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Character Design

We divided the character design phase into two parts: first, the concept was created using modeling clay (like the figures that appear alongside the text). This ensured the expressiveness of the design and helped us avoid certain types of patterns that are common in 2D characters.

With all the characteristics developed and established in modeling clay, we moved on to the stage of adapting the characters to 2D animation style. This work had already begun with all the references consolidated, so the execution and creation in 2D was already well advanced.

We brought in Clécio Rodrigues, an animator from Minas Gerais, to create the characters out of modeling clay. Clécio has a unique ability to transform simple pieces of modeling clay into one-of-a-kind characters.



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Aesthetic Reference

Our artistic reference, in terms of both design and animation, is Genndy Tartakovsky's series "Samurai Jack." The expressive and refined character and setting designs, combined with the economical and highly precise animation, are its trademarks.



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Our characters, Dádiva, Kofi, and Raul, placed within the visual universe of “Samurai Jack” - settings from episodes of the series - solely for visualization testing purposes.



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Iconography

We are not seeking to rebuild the 17th century; we are seeking to reinvent it through animation.

We're going to adopt a style that loves to exaggerate, like our inspiration, "Samurai Jack" (below). The idea is to take every detail from that time period and give it a twist. The "white world" repertoire includes Portuguese tilework and the incredible 17th-century Dutch paintings. For Palmares, a place influenced by every corner of Africa, we will have as inspiration the brass plates of Benin, the goldsmithing and weaving of Ashante culture, and the artistic references of various African peoples, such as Angolans, Congolese, and Mozambicans. A true cultural melting pot. We will also use as references the works that the painters of Nassau's Entourage, Frans Post and Albert Eckhout, created depicting the Brazilian landscapes and people.





Peoples of Angola and region



The Ashanti and Akan Peoples



Benin Plaques



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Why tell this story?

An adventure about freedom told by those who fought to conquer it.

The history of Quilombo dos Palmares, the biggest Brazilian maroon community, represents one of the most important resistance movements in the Americas, yet it remains unknown to international audiences and is rarely depicted in animation. In Palm Trees from Above, we revisit this period through adventure, humor, and the perspective of characters who have traditionally been sidelined in historical narratives.

The miniseries offers a multicultural perspective on the formation of Brazil, bringing together African, Indigenous Peoples, European, and Jewish characters in a context marked by encounters, conflicts, and transformations. Rather than presenting the past as a series of distant dates and facts, we seek to reveal its humanity, its contradictions, and its deep connection to contemporary issues.

Themes such as freedom, identity, belonging, religious intolerance, colonialism, and resistance flow through the narrative in an accessible and entertaining way, without sacrificing historical complexity. Through animation, we have transformed a key chapter in Brazilian history into an engaging experience capable of connecting with audiences from different cultures and generations.

More than just retelling the past, Palm Trees from Above seeks to expand the scope of historical animation, offering an epic, irreverent, and visually unique adventure centered around



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Production Status

Current stage: Pre-production

Palm Trees from Above is currently in the pre-production phase. The scripts have undergone several revisions and have been finished by a team of screenwriters; the visual concept and character designs are well advanced.

Funding

Project selected by the “Olhar Independente Call for Proposals”. It has currently raised R\$ 1.600.000,00 (approximately USD 315.264,00) in fundings for its execution.

Next Steps

- Raising additional funds for the production of the first season.
- Structuring national and international co-productions.
- Establishing partnerships with television networks, streaming platforms, and distributors.
- Expanding the project's international reach through film markets, festivals, and events in the animation industry.
- Development of production materials and preparation for the start of the animation phase.



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Team

TANIA ANAYA

Bachelor's and master's degrees in the arts from the School of Fine Arts at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Brazil. She studied animation at the Minas Gerais Animation Film Center, a technical cooperation project between Embrafilme and the National Film Board of Canada. Tania is dedicated to drawing and audiovisual work having directed several short films, commercials, and institutional videos. She made her first animated feature film, NIMUENDAJÚ, which premiered at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival in France in 2025. She is co-producer and co-director of the animated feature film, O FILHO DA PUTA, which premiered in Zagreb and was selected for the Annecy Film Festival Festival in 2026.

TATI MITRE

Is an executive producer at Anaya Produções and a partner at Amarillo Produções Audiovisuais. Holds a bachelor's degree in Film and Video from UNA University Center and the International School of Film and Television (EICTV) in Cuba, specializing in Production. She also holds a master's degree in History of Culture and Art from UFMG and was a visiting researcher in the Department of Film at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. She works as an executive producer on feature films, series, and national and international co-productions. Among her notable works are Castelo de Terra (France–Brazil), Nimuendajú (Brazil–Peru), O Filho da Puta (Brazil/MG–RS), Ó Primavera, Devolve-me a Meu Povo (Brazil–Chile), and Sussurram as Raízes (Costa Rica–Brazil).

CISSA CARVALHO

She worked at Rede Minas de Televisão as production director for the children's programming division and was part of the team behind the television series Muito Além do Play (currently in post-production). With a strong track record in the Minas Gerais advertising market, she has led campaigns for major brands and high-profile projects. Since 2017, she has been the production director at Anaya, where she coordinated the teams for the animated feature film Nimuendajú, which premiered at the Annecy Festival in France in 2025. She is currently part of the team behind the animated feature film O Filho da Puta, which premiered in Zagreb, Croatia, in 2026 and was also selected for the Annecy Festival, in addition to directing the production of the series Palm Trees from Above, which is now in production.



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Contacts

Executive Producer

Tatiana Mitre

anaya.producao@gmail.com

anaya@anaya.com.br

+55 31 992120801

Concept and Direction

Tania Anaya

taniaanaya10@gmail.com

+55 31 99196-8816

Production Company

Anaya Produções Culturais

<https://www.anaya.com.br/>

@estudioanaya

