

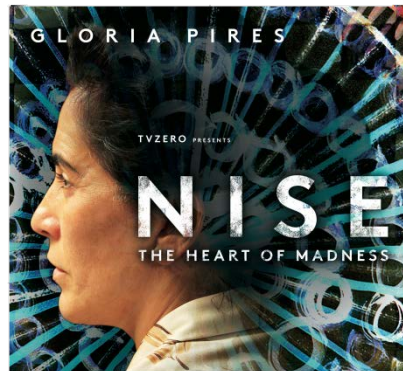


PRESENT

GLORIA PIRES in

# NISE – THE HEART OF MADNESS

Directed by: Roberto Berliner



Drama - 109 minutes-Not Rated

In Brazilian Portuguese (With English Subtitles)

Website: <http://www.nisetheheartofmadness.com>

## **SYNOPSIS**

1940's, Brazil- Dr. Nise da Silveira (Played by award-winning actress Gloria Pires) is at work in a psychiatric hospital on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro and refuses to employ the new and violent electroshock therapy for the treatment of schizophrenics. Ridiculed by doctors, she is forced to take the abandoned Sector for Occupational Therapy, where she starts a revolution through paints, dogs and love.

Through her efforts, renowned modern art museums opened their doors to artists nobody had ever heard of. Many critics pointed out that these exhibitions revealed painters that went on to be ranked amongst the best Brazilian artists of the century. Behind this miracle there was no art academy, patron or dealer. The artists were schizophrenic, poor, hospitalized for several decades, abandoned by their families and hopeless to all but da Silveira. NISE:THE HEART OF MADNESS tells the real life story of this "miracle" and the life of this rebellious, frail and engaging psychiatrist.

## **FESTIVALS AND AWARDS**

Tokyo International Film Festival 2015 – Best Film and Best Actress

Rio International Film Festival 2015 – Audience Award

Aruanda Festival, João Pessoa 2015 – Audience Award, Best Soundrack and Best Production Design

Gothenburg International Film Festival 2016 – Official Selection

Glasgow International Film Festival 2016 – Official Selection

Pachamama Festival, Rio Branco, Brazil 2015 – Closing Film

São Paulo International Film Festival 2015 – Official Selection

## **ABOUT THE FILM**

***“Nise always went against the grain, she always searched for her own truth, never rested, never was corrupted. She always fought for her ideals, from the beginning until the end of her life. This movie had to be made so audiences could meet an extraordinary woman, an example to us all in times of ethical and ideological crisis, such as the one we’re living now.”***

***Filmmaker Roberto Berliner***

**Nise – The Heart of Madness** shows a revolution that began in 1944 and shook the foundations of psychiatric care at that time in Brazil. This revolution was only possible through art, and its leader was one of the first women to ever study medicine in Brazil: Nise da Silveira (*Maceió, 1905 – Rio de Janeiro, 1999*).

For the actress **Gloria Pires**, Nise has turned an abandoned basement into a cozy sanctuary for the clients (the name Nise gave to her patients) to tell their own stories through art. A place inhabited by people who “weren’t afraid of the unconscious” as Carl G. Jung told Nise after being introduced to the work of her clients. Besides changing the lives of her clients, her work analyzing the paintings shed light on the study of the unconscious mind and created a group of followers, who try to practice a more humane psychiatry.

The production of the film **Nise – The Heart of Madness** incorporated essential elements for the most faithful recreation of the facts and experiences. The preparation of the cast was long and thorough. The crew moved to the old Psychiatric Center Pedro II (currently named Municipal Institute Nise da Silveira), where the rehearsals happened between real patients and also with Dr. Nise’s contributors. The clients depicted in the film are based on the real characters, and a lot of research went into each character. The works of art shown in the film are either the originals or reproductions of the original work. They are available at the archives of the Museum of Images of the Unconscious, based in Rio de Janeiro.

## CAST

Glória Pires (Nise da Silveira)

Simone Mazzer (Adelina)

Julio Adrião (Carlos)

Claudio Jaborandy (Emygdio)

Fabício Boliveira (Fernando)

Roney Villela (Lucio)

Flávio Bauraqui (Octávio)

Bernardo Marinho (Raphael)

Augusto Madeira (Lima)

Felipe Rocha (Almir)

Roberta Rodrigues (Ivone)

Georgiana Góes (Martha)

Fernando Eiras (Mário Magalhães)

Charles Fricks (Mário Pedrosa)

Zé Carlos Machado (Dr. Nelson)

Michel Bercovitch (Dr. César)

Tadeu Aguiar (Dr. Mourão)

Luciana Fregolente (Eugênia)

José Mário Farias (nurse)

Pedro Kosovski (Dr. Letier)

Eliane Costa (Leila),

Perfeito Fortuna (Aurélio)

Zeze Barbosa (Carmem)

## CREW

Director **Roberto Berliner**

Producer **Rodrigo Letier**

Associate Producers **Luiz Carlos Mello, André Horta and François Wolf**

Executive Producer **Lorena Bondarovsky**

Finishing Producer **Anna Julia Werneck**

Screenplay **Flávia Castro, Mauricio**

**Lissofsky, Maria Camargo and Chris Alcazar**

Final Screenplay **Patricia Andrade,**

**Leonardo Rocha and Roberto Berliner**

Screenplay Consultant **Bernardo Horta**

Collaboration **Luiz Carlos Mello, Gladys**

**Schincariol, Lula Vanderlei, Leonardo Domingues and Gina Ferreira**

Cinematographer **André Horta**

Editing **Pedro Bronz, edt. and Leonardo**

**Domingues**

Production Designer **Daniel Flaksman**

Costumes **Cris Kangussu**

Make up **Uirande Holanda**

Assistant Director **Fernanda Luz and Leonardo Rocha**

Production Direction **Henrique Castelo Branco**

Camera Operation **Marcio Menezes**

Actor Preparation **Tomás Rezende**

Casting Producers **Guilherme Gobbi and Dani Pereira**

Assistant to Gloria Pires **Antônio Padilha**

Sound **Leandro Lima**

Original Soundtrack **Jaques Morelenbaum**

Sound Design and Mixing **François Wolf**

Image Monitoring **Ely Silva**

Visual Effects Supervisor **Robson Sartori**  
Videographics **Marcelo Pereira**  
(Tecnopop)

Documentary Images **Leon Hirszman** with  
photography by **Luiz Carlos Saldanha**

### **NISE DA SILVEIRA – A Brief Biography 1905 – 1999**

*"My first years were very wild..."*

Nise was born in Maceió, in the northeast of Brazil, in 1905. Her father was a math teacher and her mother an excellent pianist. She was an only child and was enrolled early in the Medical School in Salvador with a fake birth certificate, as sixteen was the minimum age permitted. She graduated in 1926 as the only woman alongside 157 men.

With a diploma in hand she moved to Rio de Janeiro and unexpectedly specialized in psychiatry. In 1931 she moved to the *Psychiatric Hospital of Praia Vermelha*, where she worked. She said that she learned much more being in contact with the "crazies" during those years than from any medicine book.

*"I felt the patient couldn't be what he was being described as or even shown"*

She became acquainted with Rio's intellectuals and artists and attended meetings of the Communist Party. In 1935 she was denounced by a nurse and arrested. She shared the famous *Sala 4* (Room 4) with other intellectuals for two years.

*"When I was arrested I learned another lesson that contradicted what is in the psychiatry books. The books said that schizophrenics were indifferent and incapable of affection. But Luisa, a patient who would bring me coffee every day, wasn't indifferent. When she heard of my arrest, she beat up the nurse who had denounced me."*

Nise discovered what prisons and psychiatric hospitals had in common. When she was released she was not allowed back in her original position at the hospital. She had to spend eight years away from public hospitals. She married her cousin and colleague Mário Magalhães and they traveled a lot around Brazil. She immersed herself in her studies and discovered Carl Jung. As she was very fond of literature, she would often tell young students that instead of reading complicated psychiatric theses, they should read Brazilian writer Machado de Assis or Dostoyevsky, **"these are the real explorers of the depths of the soul"**.

In 1943, she went back to work at the *Psychiatric Hospital Pedro II*, where she was confronted by the new violent treatments: electroshock, lobotomy, insulin therapy. She strongly refused to apply these "modern" methods.

*"Since the beginning my main interest has been to penetrate inside the schizophrenic as much as possible."*

To Nise, it was impossible to understand why psychiatrists wouldn't be interested in the patients' world and in the origins of their disturbances. All many of them did was to get rid of the symptoms. She knew for schizophrenics, the analytical cure was very hard, but she believed there was another way of getting in contact with their psyches.

The Hospital took in poor patients. With no privacy and no affection whatsoever, they would loiter around the premises. The lack of resources and care kept the committed in a squalid state. Since Nise refused to apply the modern treatments, the director of the hospital decided she couldn't take patients of her own, and instead offered her the *Occupational Therapy Sector (OTS)*. This was a place that had been run by servants until that time, where women would mend the bed sheets while men would clean up the bathrooms. Despite the lower position and salary, Nise would take the job as long as she could "change it all."

In 1946, at the new OTS, Nise set up workshops of bookbinding, modeling and painting. The atmosphere of freedom, the affection provided by the interns - everything would contrast to the patients' daily routines in the rest of the hospital. Nise developed a method of interpretation of the artwork, inspired by Jungian theories that had not yet been put into practice systematically. With a more humane approach, Nise proposed a revolution. The term "anti-psychiatry" hadn't yet been created when a public hospital in a poor neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro started to question what was the then accepted common knowledge, and implement techniques that would only become common in Europe twenty years later.

The biggest revelations came from the Painting Workshop. The visual expressions carried images that partly revealed the origin of their anguish. And, even more surprisingly, some of them turned out to be true artists!

*"A young artist called Almir Mavignier worked with me. He was very surprised when he saw the paintings they had made. He brought Mário Pedrosa to see them and he was amazed."*

The most important art critics at the time, Mário Pedrosa and Ferreira Gullar, were amazed by what was being produced by the schizophrenics, and became their biggest advocates. This made it possible to exhibit the works of Emygdio de Barros, Fernando Diniz, Lúcio Noeman, Raphael Domingues, Carlos Pertuis, Octavio Ignacio and Adelina Gomes outside the hospital workshop. In 1947, people flocked to the exhibition at MASP (São Paulo's Art Museum). Intellectuals and artists were astounded by the paintings; psychiatrists, however, dismissed the event. Nise was shocked, she had expected to emotionally move her colleagues and convince them that occupational therapy could play a different role in the patient's life, other than just to distract them.

In the following decades she carried on with her work practically by herself, the only things that helped her were public opinion and journalists, and little by little her work became more accepted, and most of the laws governing mental illness changed in the 1990's. Her workshop became the *Museum of the*

*Images of the Unconscious* and today has hundreds of thousands of pieces - the world's largest collection of art produced by schizophrenics. In the 60's, the asylum's painting workshop became the mecca for young avant-garde artists in the city, who would come to learn from Dr. Nise's "clients" how to free themselves from the artistic dogmas taught at schools and academies.

In 1957, Nise da Silveira and C. G. Jung opened the Brazilian exhibition of the Second International Congress of Psychiatry in Zurich. Jung stood for hours in front of a mandala made by a patient from the hospital. He told Nise that just by looking at the paintings he could tell that the artists "*worked surrounded by kindness and people who weren't afraid of the unconscious.*"

Instead of fear, there was affection. This had always been her goal and method. As she noticed that the patients felt close to the stray dogs that wandered around the hospital, Nise decided to bring more animals and called them "co-therapists". Each patient got to have one and was responsible for it. This irritated many psychiatrists, who dismissed any progress in the patients' condition. One day, eighteen dogs were found dead at the hospital kennel. Nise spoke of this event as one of the worst in her life. She had over twenty cats at home and had a deep respect for animals.

Nise commuted 40km every day, from her home in Flamengo to the hospital in Engenho de Dentro, in the suburbs of Rio, for nearly forty years. In 1978 she was forced to retire, but her 75 years didn't stop her from showing up at the hospital the next day with a notepad under her arm. She said that since she couldn't go on being the director she wanted to apply for a trainee position.

Even after a fall confined her to a wheelchair, she continued being taken to the Museum she had founded. She was lucid, active, funny and wild up to the age of 94 when, as she desired, "definitively moved to another galaxy..."

## **ABOUT THE DIRECTOR**

**Roberto Berliner** graduated in journalism and started to direct in the 1980's. He has directed two fiction films: **Nise: The Heart of Madness** and **Julio's Gone**; and feature documentaries such as **Ruckus at the Circus, Pindorama and Herbert Up Close**; the short films **Born to Be Blind** and **Tuning In The Inner Side**; and TV Shows such as **Street Sounds, Free Jazz**; and music videos for several bands and a few award winning TV commercials in the 1990's. His work has been screened and awarded prizes in festivals such as IDFA, AFI, Tokyo and San Francisco. In 1993, he founded TvZero that produces all of his work.

## **ABOUT GLORIA PIRES**

Glória Pires (Nise da Silveira) was born in 1963, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She started working in television in 1968 and, since then, she has worked on over 30 soap operas during a professional career that has spanned over 40 years. In 1979 she won the São Paulo Association of Art Critics Award (APCA) for Most Promising Television Actress in the soap opera *Dancin' Days*. In 1989, 1992, and 1994, she won the APCA trophy for Best Television Actress for *Vale Tudo*, *The Owner of the World*, and *Mulheres de Areia*, respectively.

Glória has also won Best Actress prizes for her film work. For Oscar nominated movie *O Quatrilho*, she received the prize in the Havana Film Festival in 1995 and the APCA in 1996. She also received it for *Smoke Gets in your Eyes*, in the Brasília Film Festival in 2009 and the APCA in 2010. In 2013, she won the prize for *Reaching for the Moon*, in which she starred with Miranda Otto, and, in 2015, she won Best Actress at the Tokyo Film Festival for *Nise – The Heart of Madness*.

## **ABOUT TVZERO**

Based in Rio de Janeiro, TvZero produces documentaries, feature films and TV Series which are critically recognized worldwide. Among them are the documentaries **Born To Be Blind** (IDFA, Montreal World, Mannheim-Heidelberg), **Pindorama – The True Story Of The Seven Dwarves** (Silverdocs, AFI Fest, IDFA), **Simonal – No One Knows How Tough It Was** (San Francisco IFF), **Herbert Up Close** and **Serra Pelada** (It's All True, FIPA). The company's fiction debut was **Bruna Surfer Girl** (Havana Film Festival), a surprise box office hit, selling over 2M admissions domestically, followed by the comedy **Julio's Gone**. In 2015 TvZero released its third feature film, **Nise – The Heart of Madness**, winner of the Grand Prix at the Tokyo International Film Festival.