

In apocalyptic times, what does political filmmaking look like? For Angolan filmmaking collective Geração 80, it looks like air-conditioning units dropping from the sky.

Directed by Fradique, produced by Jorge Cohen and co-written and shot by cinematographer Ery Claver, the film features the jazz sounds of singer-songwriter Aline Frazão and black-and-white still photography by visual artist Cafuxi. Together, they use the imaginative possibilities of science fiction to offer a critique of both the former Portuguese colony's 'airspace' and its 'conditioning', or the self-interest with which it has been shaped.

In Luanda, Angola's capital, air conditioners are falling from their fixtures. According to the omnipresent sound of the radio, a spectre of all-too-recent revolution, conspiracy theories are rife. Audio dispatches suggest that the falling units are a ploy to insert Chinese-manufactured fans into the Angolan market; the country is 'always trying to import models from abroad'. Buildings are overheating, and tempers could also do with cooling off. A security guard, Matacedo (José Kiteculo), and a maid, Zezinha (Filomena Manuel), have been ordered by their boss to fix a broken A/C, which involves a trip to a repair shop owned by the notorious Mr Mino (David Caracol).

Without speaking aloud, a neighbour says to Matacedo, 'The thing you're looking for – you'll find it in a TV set.'

War veteran Matacedo begins a dreamlike sojourn around the port of Luanda, a city still rebuilding after Angola's 27-year civil war (1975-2002). As white Portuguese settlers established themselves in the country's interior, refugees fleeing the war were pushed outwards; the city now houses some eight million people. Matacedo spends lengthy stretches of the film wandering corridors and stairwells, peeking into scenes of the domesticity that lives behind half-closed doors. His own building houses families cramped into one-bedroom apartments, their living quarters stacked on top of one another. Tangled wires and makeshift power generators replace gardens. Like the air conditioners, the tall tower might well collapse – or combust.

'Our memories fall out with the trees,' says Mr Mino, whose shop contains the last plants in the city. According to the eccentric technician, the air conditioners hold secrets. Breaking one apart, it is revealed that the component contains memories. Like *Back to the Future's* Doc Brown, Mr Mino has used it to build a kind of time machine. When Matacedo steps inside, he feels the bliss of a cool breeze for the first time in days – and the visceral rush of the national trauma he's unable to forget.

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