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Kisedje [Suya] Filmmakers

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Cineastas Indígenas Kĩsêdjê/ Kĩsêdjê [Suyá] Filmmakers. 2011. Filmed by Kĩsêdjê filmmakers, produced by Fábio Menezes and Vincent Carelli. Olinda: Video nas Aldeias (www.videonasaldeias.org). Color DVD in the Kĩsêdjê language with subtitles in Portuguese, English, Spanish, and French. 20 page color booklet in Portuguese and English.

This is a wonderful DVD whose five short films were made by young filmmakers of the Brazilian Indian group that now calls itself Kĩsêdjê (also written Kĩsêdjê), but that was for centuries known as the Suyá—the name I used in my publications about them until recently. Filmed on high-quality digital video equipment and edited with precision, drama, and at times humor, these films are a testimony to the creativity of the young Kĩsêdjê filmmakers and the success of the program of the Brazilian NGO, Video nas Aldeias (Video in the Villages). This organization has worked for over 25 years to establish conditions for Brazilian Indians to create their own films by training indigenous filmmakers, encouraging their creative use of audiovisual language and techniques, and by producing DVDs for distribution and for sale whose proceeds return to the indigenous filmmakers. Some of their material is available through YouTube, but not what is on this DVD.

The five films, in Kĩsêdjê with subtitles in four languages, include a presentation of The Mouse Ceremony, dramatized enactments of two myths, a film about the making of one of those myths, and a history of the group that focuses on the challenges the Kĩsêdjê have had to meet and overcome, especially during the past century. The opening film “The Mouse Ceremony” (2010, 34 minutes) is the longest. It begins describing how the young filmmakers had not seen the ceremony in many years and wanted to learn about it and portrays their interviews with elders about it. Using excerpts from various elders, it then presents the ceremony from start to finish and features excellent sequences of singing and dancing as well as all the major parts of the

ceremony. It concludes with a fascinating section that presents some of the criticisms of the film made by the participants in the ceremony. My book, *Why Suyá Sing*, describes the ceremony in some detail and my field videos of some of the 1995 performance are available on the EVIADA website (<http://www.eviada.org/mainCat.cfm?mc=7>), but this film is far better, done on superior equipment, presented in only 34 minutes and filmed by the Kĩsêdjê. I recommend it enthusiastically to everyone who reads or teaches from my writings about their music.

The two enacted myths are very different. The first, “The War [Warrior] Women” (2011, 12 minutes) presents the Kĩsêdjê version of the story of the “Amazons”—warrior women who attack men. There is some wonderful footage of all the women singing their war song. “The Story of the Khátpy Monster” (2008, 5 minutes) was their first film and relates a much simpler story of a hunter who encounters a monster in the forest and narrowly escapes being killed and eaten. The interesting film of the making of that enactment is longer (2010, 11 minutes) and reveals some of the challenges of producing a film in a small community. “The Kĩsêdjê tell their History” (20 minutes) presents the history of the group, focusing on the 20th century and the challenges they have faced from Brazilians and the destruction of their environment by agroindustry. The color booklet that comes with the DVD is beautifully illustrated and gives nice short introductions to the group, the filmmakers, and the elders involved in all the films in both Portuguese and English. I highly recommend this DVD for those interested in Suyá/ Kĩsêdjê music or ritual, or in teaching about contemporary Brazilian Indians. The variety of the material presented wonderfully highlights different aspects of indigenous life today.

ANTHONY SEEGER

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