

midnight at the crossroads

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Esù is one of the most enigmatic entities in the cosmogony of West African religions and he crossed the Ocean hand in hand with the the slaves to land in a new world where forced labour, lack of freedom and missionaries would force a transformation that lasts until today in the global understanding of African rooted religions.

Midnight at the Crossroads documents and records these transformations and adaptations from its origin in Benin to Cuba, Brazil and then Haiti. Esù starts as a totem in Benin, becomes a child in Cuba, then a young seductive man in Brazil and finally an old man in Haiti, but it is always a confusing spirit that questions your certainties and makes you doubt along the way.

Esù is the energy for change and mutation. It is hard to define whether his influences are good or evil, but they stay challenging. He is the one in charge of the communication with the other Orishas, is in charge of the crossroads and is placing obstacles on your way for you to redeem the control on your own life.

In order to bring some light to the obscure narrative that predominates in popular culture and that directly links African rooted religions like Umbanda, Santeria or Voodoo, to devilish energies, this project combines a documentary approach to rituals and ceremonies with visions around the myths and legends that are illustrated to provide a wider and non-linear understanding.

Cristina De Middel and Bruno Morais have spent 3 years following the path of Esù and building a document that comes as a reaction to the advance of Evangelical churches across Africa and South America that are challenging the survival of an endangered cultural heritage adding some substantial input to the very much needed non-official version of History.

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