



# Querido Manoel...

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Manoel de Oliveira, probably the most anomalous and visionary cineaste in the history of cinema, is a case impossible to contain in a single exploration; even worse is making the critic's mistake of simply placing him in the pantheon of classics. **João Botelho** starts precisely from here: the problem of Oliveira is that in almost a century of cinema he has been the Classic, not once, but five, six, seven, ten times. Each of his films bears the indelible mark of an undying invention (a movement, a detail, a light: all skilfully isolated and examined by Botelho). From the title – **O Cinema, Manoel de Oliveira e Eu** (Cinema, Manoel de Oliveira and Me) – Botelho makes his

choice: Oliveira is cinema, in the middle between the image and us. A photo from 1980 shows Oliveira dressed as a priest with a protective arm around the shoulders of the young Botelho on the set of **Conversa Acabada**, in which the young filmmaker had cast the great master. From here, an intimate diary unfolds, made up of ideal gratitude and a meticulous study of the master's images. Botelho keeps alive their memory and at the same time gives them a new clarity, up to the homage that concludes the film, a silent short that shows one of Oliveira's unrealized ideas, **Prostituição ou a Mulher que passa**, which Botelho entitles **A Rapariga das Luvas**.

