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CYRIL PEDROSA'S **PORTUGAL** BACK TO HIS ROOTS

After his sweeping and elevating graphic novel *EQUINOXES*, an Eisner Award nominee, Pedrosa is back with a magnum opus of much simpler endeavor but no less deeper feeling.

PORTUGAL recounts his own experience curiously relating to his family's roots when visiting back in Portugal. He has been stuck in an impasse, an artist rut, a relationship with his wife that for him had run out of steam. He was passionless, devoid of a story to tell, empty. Besides the void with his wife, subtly shown, where we can see the love that was there but is no longer, we also witness his family get-togethers. His hard-driving father, always fleeing something. His heavy-handed uncle, alienating everyone. His former hippie aunt, who smooths things over... etc...

But it is in these get-togethers that he hears of the family origins, the grandfather who came over with a brother when Portugal was stiflingly poor and run to the ground by the dictator Salazar. Coincidentally, he was just invited to a comics fair in Portugal where he gets a wisp of the flavors and sounds he grew up with, but here in full, not transplanted to a foreign land. It strikes a chord, even if it is not fully what he grew up with. Strange but still beguilingly familiar. When he goes back for a longer stay with his distant family, they greet him like he was always close.

By osmosis, he changes, he is reinvigorated. He puts two and two together, makes connections which were just foggy and meaningless to him before.

As for *Equinoxes*, what makes this story truly extraordinary is Pedrosa's knack for relating emotions and feelings in a movingly real way.

We are swept away by his uncanny storytelling talent.

As a result, this graphic novel has sold over 100,000 copies in France and, with awards from the Angouleme Festival and the FNAC chain, solidified him as one of France's foremost storytellers in comics.

Specs: 9x12, 264pp., full color hardcover, \$39.99, ISBN 9781681121475, e-book: \$9.99;
Publication: December. For further information and to set up an interview, please be in touch with our publicist Stefan Blitz: publicity@nbmpub.com. If on a blog, you can help us by sending us a link to your review and posting it on Amazon.