

UNSERE ZEIT WIRD KOMMEN

Our Time Will Come

Director Ivette Löcker

Austria | 2025

105 min. | German, English, Mandinka with English subtitles

Screenplay Ivette Löcker. **Cinematography** Frank Amann. **Editing** Esther Fischer. **Sound Design** Ines Vorreiter. **Producers** Barbara Pichler, Gabriele Kranzelbinder. **Production company** KGP Filmproduktion (Wien, Austria).

World sales sixpackfilm

Synopsis

"Racism is a sickness. A sickness for the human society. A sickness that will never cure. Unless you use your power to stop it." Siaka is letting off steam. Years of insecurity and involuntary exile have worn the Gambian down. And not just him: his partner Victoria is also sick of the precarious situation. The graphic designer longs for normality above all.

Ivette Löcker accompanies the two of them for a year, making tangible their struggles for a relationship that is not just subject to bureaucratic forces but must also contend with cultural differences. Almost entirely without commentary but with a clear stance created by the editing, Löcker documents a constant search for mutual understanding and the desire to feel the ground beneath your feet.

OUR TIME WILL COME is the portrait of a love between cultures that endures despite all difficulties in an Austria increasingly moving towards authoritarianism. And this love also blossoms: at the end of the film, their child is born, together with the prospect that their dream of a life on two continents will become a reality. (Carolin Weidner)

Ivette Löcker, was born in 1970 in Bregenz, Austria and grew up in St. Michael/Lungau. She studied Slavic studies (Russian), Eastern European history, and sociology in Vienna. After graduating in 1997, she worked as a researcher, production manager, and assistant director on documentaries and features. Since 2006, she has directed her own documentaries. She lives and works in Berlin.

Films: 2010: Nachtschichten / Night Shifts. 2014: Wenn es blendet, öffne die Augen / When It Blinds, Open Your Eyes. 2017: Was uns bindet / Ties that bind. 2025: Unsere Zeit wird kommen / Our Time Will Come.

Director's Statement

The Love of Victoria from Austria and Siaka from Gambia

Steady solidarity against social pressure, discrimination and bureaucratic obstacles

The idea for this film found me, not the other way around. When I first heard about Victoria and Siaka's story, I was impressed by their courage and the strength of their solidarity. I was touched by the absoluteness of their love. Love must be like this to prevail.

We followed the couple for one year with the camera. Siaka, a Mandinka from Gambia with a migration story, finally had a secure residence status in Austria. It was the first year in their life together in which they were not constantly fighting bureaucratic and social resistance to stay together. And yet, the shadows of the past mercilessly loomed over their everyday life. Pressure from society and familial expectations from them, in Austria and in Gambia, did not leave their relationship unmarked. My film wants to shine a light on the reality of this life.

Victoria and Siaka are aware of the differences that result from each of their backgrounds. They constantly rearmed themselves to deal with racist prejudices and discrimination. They both initiated the film precisely because they see it – as I do as the director – as a contribution to sensitisation and changing people's views about dealing with migrants. Examining their life on film allows us to take a new look: at ourselves as members of the white majority in society in the Global North and at the migrants with whom we live.

It was important to me to portray all sides of the protagonists and to show moments of solidarity and affection as well as moments in which they solve conflicts and in which ambivalences or other viewpoints appear. The film wants to show them both as a couple together as well as unique individuals. It is a matter of perceiving differences and, at the same time, underlining what unites them and what they are looking for together. This longing for a better life is behind the film's title **OUR TIME WILL COME**. When will relationships like Victoria and Siaka's be an unquestioned norm?

In the course of the film, the garden in the courtyard of the building where Victoria and Siaka live changes. Siaka cares for it with a neighbour, with whom he became friends during this year. Something grows. I wish for this metaphorical image of growing together and a curious, respectful approaching of one another to have an effect.

OUR TIME WILL COME tells an encouraging story. Ultimately, it is a film about two lovers.

Ivette Löcker

Interview

A Process of Mutual Familiarisation

Ivette Löcker talk to Christiane Büchner and Barbara Wurm about the particularities, wishes, and boundaries of her very personal shoot with Victoria and Siaka

Barbara Wurm: I just re-watched the film and it is, as one can expect from you, an open, penetrating, and clear film, a relationship film, and one that is very precisely edited. The obvious first question is, of course, how you all met and which one of you convinced the other that a film should be made?

Ivette Löcker: I met the two of them as a couple in their forced exile in Bozen. That was still in the pandemic and shortly before they moved back to Vienna. I met Victoria at the film festival in Graz in 2017. Her short film KANTEN was shown with my film WAS UNS BINDET. It's a wonderful conceptual film about being foreign and being at home. Victoria is a graphic designer and has also worked as an artist. I say 'has' because in the summer after we met in Graz, she met her current husband. When she committed to this relationship, it also meant for her, at least until now, that her work as an artist would take a back seat because she needs to take care of earning a living for both of them. Victoria contacted me in 2020. She and Siaka had the idea of making a documentary about his migration story and experiences and asked me if this was a topic for me. At first, we met online, as the pandemic required, in multiple Zoom calls in order to get to know each other. I realised that what interested and touched me and what I wanted to know more about was not so much the story of how Siaka came to Europe, but rather how the two live together as a couple and how they master all the daily hurdles and bureaucracy. What they have put up with for their love simply to be able to live together. How they deal with the different cultures. I found that really exciting. And I think that as members of the white majority society, we know far too little about intercultural relationships. It is no easy decision to allow a film crew into your life. There is the question of how much I want to reveal about myself? What about it can a wider public relate to? We scheduled a test shoot and were able to get to know each other in the shooting situation. Yeah, and then we decided together to make the film.

Christiane Büchner: Amazing! Shooting with a couple, especially when you feel throughout the entire film that the two are grappling with controlling the narrative. It's interesting how you concretised this filmically. How did you all reflect on this?

IL: First of all – we had agreed that I would follow them with the camera for about a year. At that point it was already clear that they would get married in Italy and get residence papers for Siaka and that they could return to Vienna under more or less secure living circumstances. The idea behind the film was to look at what new challenges their love and relationship would encounter. Before, they were strongly bound by the struggle simply to stay together. Would something shift in their new daily life in Vienna? We organised five shooting blocks and thought together about what was currently happening in their life. What scenes are important for them? We agreed that in the film we would meet both families, because I found it important to situate them in their different heritages and in that way better understand the differences and the similarities. And from shoot to shoot, we discussed what we would like to film. No scene was developed without their permission. It was very important to them to co-create in this manner and I would not have shot anything that they did not agree to.

CB: There is also a scene in which they talk about what role the film shoot has for both of them.

IL: That scene was not planned as an examination of the shoot. We had not seen each other for a while and I wanted to know what was new in their life. At that time, Siaka was very occupied

with how he had again been subject to inequality in the Austrian bureaucracy. Victoria, however, wanted to bring more lightness into the conversation and talk about positive, mutual developments, which did not fit his needs in that moment. He likes to share and wants us to understand exactly what is on his mind. He can't hold anything back. He is very direct and emotional, which is also what is great about him.

BW: In that situation, you react spontaneously and openly...

IL: For me as the director, that was a very fragile situation because I didn't know where it was going. I wanted both of them to have the chance to express themselves and their feelings. But I didn't want anything to escalate between them. In the course of the conversation, Victoria makes it quite clear that she has had enough and doesn't want to be filmed anymore. We'd discussed this before the shoot, that I would pay attention to not crossing these boundaries.

CB: Your film deals a lot with language. How can I express what is on my mind? And here, the two are in a very different situation. How did you manage to balance them so finely? For instance, there is the neighbour with the garden and suddenly the film shifts in its storytelling approach and the protagonists can also express themselves differently than through words.

IL: From the start, it was clear to me that Siaka has an unbelievable physical presence. It is nice to watch him and he expresses so much with his body, through mimicry and movement. We wanted to emphasise this strength. How we balanced this through the different scenes – like the one with the neighbour – with Victoria's verbal eloquence came about in the editing. For me and my wonderful editor Esther Fischer, it was important that we not play them against each other in terms of their linguistic competency. Siaka taught himself two languages, English and German, practically alone. And it was also important for Victoria not to be the one who translates or even corrects him.

BW: You create a balance through the shooting locations too.

IL: Exactly. It was important to me that we see Siaka in Gambia in a new role. How sovereign he speaks his mother tongue and appears. In Gambia, he is familiar with everything, he knows his way around, he is appreciated. For me, that was a chance to give him some more space, or a different space. And the scene with the garden and the neighbour constitutes an important thread for this film. It came about by chance. Siaka and his friend meet the neighbour on the way to the garden. Siaka already knew her in passing. She was ready to be part of the film and they both became friendly over the garden and their love for plants, they met at eye level. With her, Siaka slips into yet another role because she views him as her 'gardening teacher'.

BW: I wanted to come back once more to the point about such a fragile and open conversational situation – Christiane used the expression 'controlling the narrative' – and where I think precisely that in this scene it opens very nicely and is very clear that nobody has this control. Did you have a sense of what you mean for them? A messenger for something, an observer, or maybe even a therapist or a mirror?

IL: Not an easy question. Honestly, I think I am or was a kind of mirror. Or maybe it would be better to say: The not always predictable dynamic in conversations or shooting situations was a mirror in which their relation in which their relationship was portrayed newly or differently. Of course, I want them to have discovered new and positive things about themselves as a result. But the film did, of course, come about because they wanted to relate the difficulties of intercultural partnerships. They wanted the film to spread this message about the kinds of experiences with racism and discrimination there are, and how this kind of relationship is encumbered by all these partly traumatising experiences.

BW: This is a rather theoretical question which nevertheless plays a big role in the process of film festival selection policies. Your film finds a very plausible solution to the question of people with white heritage filming Black people in that it is another one of your films that looks very closely at what relationships are and how they can be, what future they can have. In a constellation like Victoria and Siaka's, which also represents a challenge physically and energetically in relation to a migrant's everyday life – early in the film, he talks very poignantly about himself.

IL: I'm interested in relationships that don't receive much exposure. That's also why we chose the title: OUR TIME WILL COME. On the one hand, it is partly a quote from the film – they say to each other 'Your time will come', a motto that always returns in their relationship to give each other mutual support – and the title is also a statement, wish, and question all at once. It is time for the white majority society to respect intercultural relationships and for these to become normal, everyday. Why are we not so far yet?

BW: And the other thing is, of course, that it is clear that you also belong to this Austria, this target country in Europe, and you open up to stories which, as he says at the beginning, receive too little attention. Not showing some slogans, but rather a difficult and multifaceted reality.

IL: My films do indeed show private, personal relationships, but for me they are always political too – they are an expression of social conditions – and here in this film, of course, very particularly. I think it is important that you perceive how the experiences of Black people in our country have an effect, how those experiences are inscribed in their bodies and in their relationships. How marginalised migrants often stand on the edge, so to speak, and how much strength they need to survive and find happiness. It was very important to me to place that at the centre. I think that is precisely what raises political questions. The pain Siaka talks about. The ignorance of most citizens who are not migrants. Of course, I am a white, female filmmaker. I can only ever try to question my position and privileges and be as sensitive as possible. For me, it was also an important experience, including the confrontation again and again with my own prejudices. Because how do we encounter Black people? Would we assume that Siaka is a drug dealer if we meet him outside the Vienna club rhiz? Such prejudices are deeply engrained in us. I wish that we would begin as an audience to think about these contradictions in relation to ourselves.

CB: I'd like to jump in and ask you about the two families who you also visited. The families stand, on the one hand, for their heritage, but also stand in for the societies they each come from?

IL: Siaka was well received by Victoria's family in Upper Austria. They try to be open to him, take an interest in his topics, and also want to discuss cultural differences with him, where you may not find mutual words – or have not yet found them: It is all a process of mutual familiarisation. I found it impressive how everyone is striving for this understanding. Siaka's family in Gambia has many branches. It was nice to see how self-evidently Victoria was considered part of this big family and was taken into it despite the language barrier. The traditional wedding party that Siaka's relatives threw for the two of them is a sign for me that they have received Victoria as a white and non-Muslim woman.

BW: Can you describe the shooting situation?

IL: It was clear we wouldn't have a lot of time in Gambia for research. I only confirmed a few shooting situations beforehand, like the wedding party and the preparations for it. Then I wanted to shoot where Siaka used to work, a locksmith's where he began to work as a ten-year-old. And I wanted to film Victoria and Siaka visiting the property that they had just bought, because

the mutual future utopia can be seen precisely in that moment. I tried to be as open as possible in all the shooting situations, to be open to what happens. That was only possible because my crew, Frank Amann (camera) and Ines Vorreiter (sound) supported me all the way. And above all because as a crew we were welcomed with open arms by Siaka's relatives and friends.

CB: Yet another of the couple's tasks: hoping for support from the family in Gambia.

IL: Siaka feels a lot of pressure and many expectations from his family. In the film, we feel strongly that he suffers under this and worries how he can live up to them. He knows that without his help, a lot of people would have it worse off. Victoria and Siaka would like, aside from emergencies of course, to offer sustainable help and are especially supportive of family members in studying. Of course, the discrepancy remains, however, that they act from very different positions. Everyone is aware that they cannot hope that other family members will be able to come to Austria. That's illusory and tied to great dangers. Even if young family members keep trying to do so.

CB: Siaka and Victoria are now parents. We see that at the end of the film. What changes has this brought with it?

IL: Their everyday life has of course become different and more stressful. They share the care work. Siaka is still on paternity leave. He is fortunate to have an employer who supports him. In addition, Victoria founded her own graphic design company last year. The questions that arise more intensely now mainly concern raising their daughter. They want to strengthen the child's Black identity, she should grow up with two cultures and two languages. Zitat: They are constantly developing a mutual basis for how to deal with each other without pre-existing models.

BW: I wanted to ask you about the relatively detailed scene at the Viennese employee support funding office. What role does this scene play?

IL: It was important to me to show Siaka trying to find a good job, to integrate, that he wants to do everything for that. At the same time, however, the scene makes it clear how different his starting position is. He went to Quran school for three years. He taught himself English on the way to Europe. In this scene, you can re-evaluate and, at the same time, see the workings of the system with which he is confronted. It's clear that if he doesn't learn better German, none of the educational offerings will work out. On the other hand, if he takes on a full-time job, he won't have time to learn German. It's a tricky combination. The state offers support, but is it enough? Is it the right offer?

CB: Did you ever suggest scenes to them?

IL: Yes, I did as well. But it didn't make it into the film!

CB: It didn't fit?

IL: While we were shooting, there was an exhibition in Krems with African portraits. Since Victoria likes going to art shows with Siaka, I suggested to them we shoot a visit in Krems. The footage was nice, but it was ultimately the kind of directorial intervention that does not fit. They didn't think the location was a bad idea or anything, but what I had imagined didn't crystallise, namely that Siaka accompanies Victoria into the (art) world that is close to her.

BW: I wanted to ask this earlier but it would have been too abstract. Now it is very concrete: Were there other threads you followed that were removed?

IL: We shot more scenes and situations with Victoria in which she deals with art. For instance, we filmed her visiting the studio of an artist-friend. The pictures Siaka and her hang up in their

apartment are by that friend. And we filmed the rehearsal of a choir in which Victoria sings. All those scenes turned out nice, but in the editing we realised that they were unnecessary to strengthen her character and showcase it in individual scenes.

BW: One last question I still have is about the last sentence in your synopsis: 'OUR TIME WILL COME is the portrait of a special love for which there are no pre-existing models.' My question is: Do the similarities or the differences of this relationship outweigh those in other relationships, about which you have also made films?

IL: I think it is impressive how they both live out their relationship, because they have such different heritages. They are constantly developing a mutual basis for how to deal with each other without pre-existing models. Since they can't fall back on what is self-evident in relationships when we speak the same language, grow up in the same country, or have similar educational backgrounds. In the film, Victoria puts it more or less like this: The challenges that come with being in a relationship with Siaka are worth it. Knowing this, they can cope with anything. Every relationship has its own challenges and, to come back to the question – as in my other films, I try to follow these particular challenges, to represent the characters in all their facets, and to approach them in their different natures.