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 65<sup>th</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin

# FORUM

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## IMPRESSUM

Published by: The International Forum of New Cinema  
Director: Christoph Terhechte  
Potsdamer Str. 2, 10785 Berlin  
Tel.: +49 (0) 30 269 55 200  
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[www.arsenal-berlin.de/forum](http://www.arsenal-berlin.de/forum)



The International Forum of New Cinema is an event organised by Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art e. V. as part of the Berlin International Film Festival, Festival Director: Dieter Kosslick. A division of the Kulturveranstaltungen des Bundes in Berlin GmbH.



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung  
für Kultur und Medien

Forum  
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The short introductory texts to the film are taken from the Forum programme brochure (Editorial staff: Christoph Terhechte, Hans-Joachim Fetzer, James Lattimer).  
English translations: Allison Brown, Deborah Cohen, Millay Hyatt, Anne Thomas, Irene Triendl  
German translations: Caroline Weiland

Forum Expanded  
Editorial staff: Toby Ashraf, Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, Ulrich Ziemons, Nora Molitor, Daniel Hendrickson  
English translations: Daniel Hendrickson

Design, implementation  
and cover design: Ulrike Wewerke, paulichwewerke

Berlin 2015

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# Abaabi ba boda boda

## The Boda Boda Thieves

### Yes! That's Us

**Producer** James Tayler, Donald Mugisha, Maximilian Leo, Jonas Katzenstein, Nathan Collett, Wanjiku S. Muhoho, Jeremy Bean.

**Production companies** Switch Films (Cape Town, South Africa); Deddac (Kampala, Uganda); Hot Sun Films (Nairobi, Kenya); Augenschein Filmproduktion (Köln, Germany); Know Your City (Cape Town, South Africa). **Director** Yes! That's Us. **Screenplay** Donald Mugisha, James Tayler, Wanjiku S. Muhoho. **Director of photography** Carol Burandt von Kameke. **Production design** Donald Mugisha. **Costume** Shakira Kibirige. **Make-up** Shakira Kibirige. **Sound** Shantos Sekkito, Faisal Jjemba. **Music** Peter Miles, Graeme Lees. **Sound design** Pete O'Donoghue. **Editor** James Tayler.

**With** Hassan 'Spike' Insingoma (Abel), Prossy Rukundo (Rosa), Saul Mwesigwa (Lex), Michael Wawuyo (Goodman), Peace Birungi (Maria), Andrew Benon Kibuuka (Bujagali), Robert Mutaka (Richard), Irene Kansiime (Irene), Martin Musingu (Oranges), Hassan Kataabu (Designer), Swaibu Muwonge (Slaughter), Hamis Swalley (Hamis).

DCP, colour. 85 min. Luganda, Acholi.

**Premiere** 8 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

Life in Kampala today could be pretty OK for Abel, if he weren't a young man without prospects, with a father who drives a boda boda and keeps urging him to make start making a living for himself. Boda bodas (from „border-to-border“) are motorcycle taxis sometimes also used to carry goods. Abel is a young drifter whose existence is put to the test when an accident stops his father from being able to drive. All of a sudden, he gains full access to this freedom-representing vehicle. It's a fantastic opportunity for him to escape his life's predetermined plot, but it's not without risk. There are professionals in the city whose specialty it is to snatch handbags – and get away on their boda bodas. Plenty of money can be made from tourists and halfwits. By paying suitable tribute to Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di biciclette*, Yes! That's Us succeeds in making a neorealist urban portrait of Kampala brought right up to date with Ugandan music, locations and actors. *Abaabi ba boda boda* is a wonderful take on a European classic from a young, African perspective.

Dorothee Wenner

## Realism has come of age for African cinema

From the start, we set out to make a film in the spirit of Vittorio De Sica's classic neorealist masterpiece *Ladri di biciclette* (*Bicycle Thieves*, Italy 1948). Little did we realise it at the time but in doing, so we set ourselves up to be compared with one of the greatest works in the history of cinema. This became a daunting, humbling and ultimately inspiring task.

How do you make a film inspired by *Ladri di biciclette* without ruining the original or being compared to it? We believe our strength is that it was clear to us from the start that we were not trying to remake the original but rather that we were freely inspired to ,remix' it.

The question was always: where to start?

Our story belongs to the son and not the father. Considering the fact that eighty per cent of Uganda's population is under the age of thirty, we felt it important to tell this story from the point of view of a young man in transition to adulthood. Our protagonist Abel is a typical ghetto kid who is given a responsibility he is not yet ready for.

The themes we explore with this film are primarily related to the culture of machismo in Africa, the generation gap between rural migrant parents and their city-born children, and the nature of crime and corruption in contemporary African society. *Abaabi ba boda boda* is not *Ladri di biciclette* in a Ugandan setting. It is an original story with a ,borrowed soul'.

### Dysfunctional Kampala

We believe that realism has come of age for African cinema and that African realism as a cinematic aesthetic and an ideology is as relevant to audiences today as Italian neorealism was to audiences in the 1950s.

Africa today is saturated with images of wealthy people and their important problems, in Korean soap operas, Brazilian telenovelas, or American blockbusters. There seems to be a deliberate attempt to entertain, but not engage with, African audiences.

We take inspiration from the filmmakers of old who sought to tell real stories of ordinary people without melodrama or artifice and in this way articulate an indigenous sensibility and non-consumerist understanding of the realities that shape society.

Much as *Abaabi ba boda boda* highlights many social issues, above all we ask the question: ,Why do the right thing when no one else does?' For us this is a very relevant question not only for our main character, but also for us as filmmakers, artists, and world citizens. This is also a question without a neat answer or easy conclusion. Whether our film is compared to the original or not, we hope that our viewer will enjoy the journey when they watch the film as we ,re-mix' a classic. The city of Kampala itself has a beautifully dysfunctional character and we want to share its pulse and lifeblood with you.

Africa is alive with possibilities right now. As artists we believe in the power of cinema to mirror society with all its imperfections and all its beauty. We feel compelled to share *Abaabi ba boda boda* as a comment on the basic human values that hold us all together. A society that knows itself through its art is a self-aware society, and a society better equipped to meet any challenge.

*Donald Mugisha, James Tayler*



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**Yes! That's Us** is a Ugandan filmmaking collective founded in 2002 by Donald Mugisha, Rogers Wadada, Alex Ireeta and Senkaaba ,Xenson' Samson. The group had started producing music videos and short films in East Africa since 2001. *Abaabi ba boda boda* is the third full-length film by the collective, whose members Donald Mugisha and James Tayler were significantly involved in the production, performing various functions. Donald Mugisha studied Mass Communication at Makerere University in Kampala. He worked for MTV in Uganda before making his first film *The Wrath* in 2002. That same year, he helped co-found Yes! That's Us, as well as starting the Deddac production company. James Tayler worked

as a photojournalist and print editor before becoming interested in film and studying at the South African School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance. To date, he has produced, directed and edited an eclectic range of television series and documentaries, and he also works as a video artist.

### Films

2008: *Divizionz* (Berlinale Forum 2008, 91 min.). 2010: *Yogera / Speak* (85 min.). 2010: *My Silent City* (12 min.). 2015: *Abaabi ba boda boda / The Boda Boda Thieves*.



© About Productions

## Al-wadi

### The Valley

## الوادي

Ghassan Salhab

**Producer** Georges Schoucair, Serge Lalou, Titus Kreyenberg.  
**Production companies** About Productions (Beirut, Lebanon); Les Films d'Ici (Paris, France); Unafilm (Köln, Germany).  
**Director** Ghassan Salhab. **Director of photography** Bassem Fayad. **Production design** Hussein Baydoun. **Sound** Karine Bacha, Florent Lavallée. **Music** Cynthia Zaven, Sharif Sehnaoui. **Sound design** Karine Bacha, Lama Sawaya, Rana Eid. **Editor** Michele Tyan.

**Cast** Carlos Chahine (Accident Man), Carole Abboud (Carole), Fadi Abi Samra (Marwan), Mounzer Baalkabi (Ali), Yumna Marwan (Maria), Aouni Kawas (Hekmat), Rodrigue Sleiman (Armed Man 1), Ahmad Ghossein (Armed Man 2).

DCP, colour. 128 min. Arabic.

**Premiere** 7 September 2014, Toronto International Film Festival  
**World sales** Doc & Film International

Wandering aimlessly after losing his memory in a car accident, a man is taken in by the inhabitants of a farm in the Beqaa Valley in Lebanon, whose secret business is the drugs they manufacture in a laboratory on the closely guarded property. The presence of this nameless stranger has consequences for the clandestine community.

Little separates beauty and horror here. A latent sense of danger pervades the vast swathes of sublime landscape. A catastrophe looms. Tensions also rise in the cramped quarters of the house. The identity of the man without a past becomes an increasing issue as doubts regarding his amnesia rear their head. Is he a doctor or a mechanic? An angel or a spy? Like a blank page, he lends himself to fantasies of all kinds and ultimately becomes a prisoner. At once concrete and otherworldly, with a powerful soundtrack and images of great intensity, the film shows a set of melancholy existences on the eve of the apocalypse. Alongside radio news reports on current political crises, it leaves ample room for poetry, painting and a love song, and thus questions the status of art in times of terror and war, that is, in the here and now.

*Birgit Kohler*

## The omnipresent threat

„Things don't have significance; they only have existence.“

Fernando Pessoa

I was in Ouyoun El Simane, on one of Lebanon's mountaintops, preparing for my previous film, *The Mountain*. And just like every time I find myself in this place, I was struck by the magnificence of the landscape and its relentless power. On that particular day, however, a feeling of fright, of terror even, insinuated itself. Certainly, the sensation was related to the quasi-glacial majesty of the place, and to my state of mind at the time. Mostly, however, it was as if the state of things in Lebanon, the invariable state of threat in this loaded part of the world, had spread across the mountain heights in an elusive, intangible form.

Strangely, this threat took on its full meaning in this remote, seemingly serene place. It hovered densely, like a low, looming sky, ready to burst. *Al-wadi* came into being on that day, from that forceful sensation. As senseless as it may sound, I heard a car skidding, falling into the void; I saw the blood-drenched man appear, then start walking along the deserted road in the heart of the mountainous landscape, underneath open skies.

Who is this man? Why is he walking on this particular road? Where did he come from? Was he heading for the Bekaa Valley? Where is his accent from? Will we ever know? This man has suddenly lost all sense of familiarity, not only with the world around him, with the elements of nature, with other human beings, but with himself as well. By force of circumstance, he becomes nothing more than immediate perceptions, instinct; the remembrance of certain gestures, of the body, of a song's chorus playing in his head; the anxiety provoked by this blank memory.

In *Al-wadi*, the threat unfolds on several levels before exploding. It is present, from the beginning of the film, even before the first images appear. The threat is present, with the bloodied man without a past, of whom we know nothing, and who knows nothing. He is a threat to himself, but also to the people whom he helps nonetheless. The unknown, the stranger, is, as we all know, threatening. Similarly, the stranger instinctively senses an imperceptible danger from the women and men who take him to their estate, where armed men restrict his freedom of movement.

### In the eye of the hurricane

The threat never ceases to be present, it weighs prolongedly over Lebanon, in a region that is unstable, to say the least. And the dreaded war, which we are promised year after year, its explosion, which occurs abruptly, brutally, does not necessarily represent, even as it becomes reality, the end of the threat. It opens it up even further, disrupting one's relation to time, to space and to oneself. This war strikes everything around the estate, but does not directly affect our characters, as if they were standing in the eye of the hurricane; a hurricane whose terrifying impact they can hear, but of which they have no images, and no precise information (telephone and power stations, as well as satellite relay stations must have been hit, isolating them from the rest of the world). It's a hurricane that leaves the protagonists to their own devices: the people of the estate to their vain drugs production; the armed men to their search for friends; and the stranger to his recovered memory.

The Bekaa Valley is situated between two mountain ranges, Mount Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon. These two mountain ranges dominate the valley, but also wedge it; they protect it as surely as they threaten it.

Our protagonist's amnesia is at once a kind of black hole and a blank page, on which the instant, the immediate perception writes itself, in sharp opposition with the world of the people on the estate, with their perilous affairs, with their ambition, with the state of the country and of the entire region.

In my previous film, the main character used a trip abroad as a pretext to leave Beirut and isolate himself in a mountain hotel. The film escaped (everything took place at night, which inevitably blurred outlines) and enclosed itself within the walls of a hotel room, which it practically never left, except at the very end. With *Al-wadi*, space, strictly speaking, is totally open. The high mountain, the road, the valley, the large estate, the house with its large windows... And the sky, always immense, domineering, crushing, from the very first shots of the movie. Of course, the space closes in for a while in the room where our amnesiac is sequestered; but the sudden exterior violence will topple everything, opening the field paradoxically and considerably, giving it, if I may say, its full and terrible magnitude, thus merging earth and sky.

Ghassan Salhab

## Post mortem omne animal triste

Ghassan Salhab's harsh and demanding filmmaking does not give itself up easily, refusing all compromise or concession, no doubt out of fear of being forced to strike a bargain with the dominant commercial cinematic form it shies away from at all cost. In a world of permanent spectacularisation that is more and more ours, such refusal is a badge of honour. This is not filmmaking that comes to us easily, but one to which we have to go. In a sense, it is filmmaking that 'deserves' such effort.

This cinematographic path that Ghassan Salhab has been steadfastly pursuing for over twenty-five years makes him one of the most important filmmakers in post-civil war Lebanese cinema. This has not turned him into a father figure, but into a rather lonely one (which, when one gets to know him, is aptly fitting); a solitary character hovering right above a Lebanese scene that some claim is in turmoil. This undeniable distinction he holds in the midst of the Beirut melee comes largely from the fact that among all the local filmmakers, he is doubtlessly one of the most rigorous, constant and prolific in his work.

Thus, after a first succession of short films made during the 1980s and until the mid-1990s such as *The Key*, *After Death*, and *Afriqué Fantôme*, which all helped refine his style, Salhab began steadily turning out a progression of fiction feature films, at the rate of one every three or four years: *Phantom Beirut*, *Terra Incognita*, *The Last Man*, and *The Mountain*. Today, these films, along with his latest, *Al-wadi*, make up the core body of his oeuvre. The first three films on the list now constitute a seminal trilogy on Beirut melancholy, without having necessarily been conceived of as such from the outset. An experimental, mid-length film of exceptional aesthetic and metaphysical value, (*Posthume*), formed the closure of this cycle on Beirut melancholy, like a post-script sent from the underworld. A series of shorter films, at once visual essays, studies and intimate diaries, often combining fiction and documentary, such as *La Rose de Personne*, *My Living Body*, *My Dead Body*, and *Narcissus Lost*, join this hybrid, polymorphous body of work, as well as two entirely unique offerings, the feature-length documentary 1958 and the even lesser-known *Brief Encounter with Jean-Luc Godard*, or, *Cinema as Metaphor*.

In fact, all of Salhab's films are poetic-philosophical essays of sorts (with essay here also referring to its original meaning as attempt). He creates a *mise-en-abyme*, challenges and questions both the status of the image (film/video, animated/static, surface/depth) as well as the status of the narrative itself (documentary/fiction, collective/personal, testimonial/interpretive, true/false, empathetic/distantiated, diegetic/extra-diegetic). What Salhab works on, for this is in fact what works on him in turn, is the fundamental question of the double impossibility of being and unbeing in the world. This gives rise to filmmaking over which reigns an uncertainty as ontological as much as it is existential, deeply affecting the relationships of both director and viewer to the narrative, the image, the direction and more generally to art itself.

### An ephemeral flutter of life

It is Salhab's acute awareness of the tragic, sometimes pathetic dimension of historical existence that affords his work a certain form of empathetic distance. Of course, the experience of war in his native country, in all its horror and absurdity, has only served to compound that feeling. What remains, then, is a powerful sense of historical and existential melancholy, (dis)embodied in slow-moving figures that circulate their way from film to film, ghosts (or vampires, like in *The Last Man*), wandering all alone, just as absent to themselves as they are to others. By being forced into their furthest cinematographic corners, the very substance of these creatures, of the city, begins to disintegrate, both literally and figuratively, reduced to the improbable possibility of their presence. In *Afrique Fantôme*, the old man on his deathbed put it perfectly when he intoned: "That which a recording captures is nothing but a ghost."

The life we have been given is nothing but an ephemeral flutter (of a wing, an eyelash, a heart, of whatever we want), and there is very little comfort to be found anywhere or with anyone. Neither love nor war is a viable outlet. *Phantom Beirut* already showed us what might as well have been the motto of *Al-wadi*: *post bellum omne animal triste*. Worse yet, death itself seems to bring no respite, for no one is sadder in Salhab's films than the spectral figures haunting them; for even when the threshold to the afterlife has been crossed, as in *The Mountain*, it is a film that could, upon its closing like a nighttime tomb, end with the epitaph: *post mortem omne animal triste*.

### Reborn in the next film

Yet the only path this filmmaker treads, for it is the only one offered to us all, is the one that goes through the land of the dead, this land where we must all go, losing our memory along the way, desperately trying to hang on some debris from the past in order to reclaim some fragments of a present that also escapes and eludes us. One of the actors in *Phantom Beirut*, speaking as himself in an extra-diegetic commentary within the film, said: "We want to rise again. To be reborn. Even though we aren't really dead. We're merely dying." This is exactly who Salhab is: one dying, incessantly reminding us that we are too. Is that why he is, to my knowledge, one of the only filmmakers to have put his own death into one of his films? At the end of *The Mountain*, he appears for a few seconds, unexpectedly, lying in the snow, the camera capturing his last breath after he has just seemingly killed himself with a shotgun blast. This practically non-diegetic insertion of himself into his own fictional universe conjures up an extreme image, where the director's cinematic suicide becomes the drain, both literally and figuratively, through which both his blood and his film escape.

The only rebirth possible, as far as he's concerned, seems to be the one that will take place through the next film. Perhaps, however, it is not so much a question of rebirth as a matter of temporary survival, or better yet, a simple, ephemeral and maybe terminal spurt, in a never-ending cinematographic agony. *Al-wadi* is today the most recent of this filmmaker's spurts of energy before death, showing us that as of yet, whether he wants to or not, he still walks amongst us although he sometimes dreams that he is almost not one of us anymore.

Raphaël Millet



© About Productions

**Ghassan Salhab** was born in Dakar, Senegal, in 1958. In addition to making his own films, he collaborates on screenplays in Lebanon and France. He also teaches film in Lebanon. Ghassan Salhab has also published his texts and articles in various magazines. In 2012, he published his first anthology, *Fragments du livre du naufrage*.

### Films

1986: *La clef* (15 min.). 1991: *Après la mort* (21 min.). 1991: *L'autre* (10 min.). 1994: *Afrique fantôme* (21 min.). 1998: *Beyrouth fantôme* (116 min.). 1999: *De la séduction* (Koregie: N. Khodor, 32 min.). 2000: *La rose de personne* (10 min.). 2000: *Baalbeck* (Koregie: Akram Zaatari und M. Soueid, 56 min.). 2002: *Terra incognita* (120 min.). 2003: *Mon corps vivant, mon corps mort* (14 min.). 2004: *Narcisse perdu* (15 min.). 2005: *Brève rencontre avec Jean-Luc Godard, ou le cinéma comme métaphore* (40 min.). 2006: *Le dernier homme/The Last Man* (101 min.). 2006: *Temps mort* (7 min.). 2007: *(Posthume)* (28 min.). 2009: *1958* (66 min.). 2011: *La Montagne/The Mountain* (80 min.). 2014: *Al-wadi / The Valley*.





## Balibbayan #1 Memories of Overdevelopment Redux III

Kidlat Tahimik

**Production company** Voyage Studios (Mandaluyong, Philippines). **Director** Kidlat Tahimik. **Director of photography** Boy Yniguez, Lee Briones, Abi Lara, Santos Bayucca, Kidlat de Guia, Kawayan de Guia, Kidlat Tahimik. **Production design** Kidlat Tahimik. **Set design** Santiago Bose. **Costume** Katrin de Guia. **Sound** Ed de Guia. **Music** Los Indios de Espana, Shanto. **Editor** Charlie Fugunt, Abi Lara, Chuck Gutierrez, Clang Sison, Malaya Camporedondo.

**Cast** Kidlat Tahimik, George Steinberg, Kawayan de Guia, Wigs Tysman, Katrin de Guia, Kabunyan de Guia, Danny Orquico, Marlies v. Brevern, Mitos Benitez, Marita Manzanillo, Jeff Cohen, Craig Scharlin.

DCP, colour. 140 min. English, Tagalog, Spanish.

**Premiere** 10 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

Language is the key to the empire. Enrique is the slave of Ferdinand Magellan, who circumnavigated the globe. Aside from bathing Magellan every evening, Enrique also has to translate Filipino languages into Portuguese and Spanish. The film opens with a cardboard box containing film rolls being dug up from the ground. Shot in 1980 and now showing their age, the images tell the story of the circumnavigation. Magellan died shortly before the journey was completed, but had authorized that Enrique, now by default the first true circumnavigator, was to become a free man. Enrique carved his memories of the journey into wood, with the sculptures adorning his garden. *Balibbayan #1* weaves together the official story with that of Enrique, as well as with the director's cut of what Tahimik started filming 35 years ago in order to find out the truth and continued in a village in the province of Ifugao in 2013.

The actors are no longer the same, and Tahimik, who himself played Enrique in 1980, has grown older, just as children have been born. *Balibbayan #1* is a home movie, a flamboyant epic, a study of colonialism, a historical corrective and an homage to what Tahimik calls 'Indio Genius'.

*Stefanie Schulte Strathaus*

## A cinematic guest worker

'Balikbayan' – the word Kidlat Tahimik chose as the title of his film – is the Tagalog term for guest worker.

Many Filipinos from the huge underclass of their developing country work in affluent Asian countries like Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore, but also in Saudi Arabia and the Arab Emirates. Their employment is usually precarious and based on temporary contracts, some of which are extended for a long time. While women from the Philippines often work as housekeepers, nannies or nurses, many male Filipinos work as builders or drivers on building sites in the Gulf States, as workers on oil platforms or as sailors on ocean-going ships.

In some cases, whole families in the Philippines live from their salaries. Those who manage to land a job abroad enjoy prestige among those left behind. The state energetically supports this labour emigration: it has an agency dedicated to placing guest workers abroad, although this process entails great social costs and critics brand it a form of human trafficking.

Director Kidlat Tahimik, too, was a Philippine guest worker abroad for several years, and sometimes, with irony, he uses the German word for it: 'Gastarbeiter'. But his working conditions were more pleasant than those of most 'balikbayan'. After studying in the United States and spending time as an OECD staff member in Paris, in the early 1970s he lived in Munich, where he developed an interest in filmmaking.

His first three films – *The Perfumed Nightmare* (1977), which was feted at the Berlinale in 1977; *Turumba* (1981); and *Who Invented the Yoyo? Who Invented the Moon Buggy?* (1982) – made him one of the most important directors of postcolonial 'Third Cinema'. And all three films related to Germany; parts of two of them were even shot in Bavaria.

These works thus belong to a transnational cinema *avant la lettre*: long before this concept became popular in film-theoretical debate and in a time when the world was much less networked than it is today, Kidlat Tahimik was among the first filmmakers to cinematically document and reflect on political, economic and cultural globalisation.

### A slave as the world's first circumnavigator?

The protagonist in Kidlat Tahimik's long unfinished film *Memories of Over-Development*, who appears as simultaneous victim and beneficiary of Europe's colonial expansion, is also a 'balikbayan': Enrique Melaka, a slave of Ferdinand Magellan. The Portuguese seafarer, who undertook several expeditions to Asia on commission from the Spanish crown, thereby not only paved the way for Spanish colonialism; his journeys also finally proved that the earth is round. Magellan almost became the first person to circumnavigate the globe – but shortly before the end of his last journey, warriors of the tribal chief Lapu-Lapu killed him in battle on the island of Mactan, which is part of the Philippine Archipelago.

A few brief passages in the notes of Magellan's ship's chronicler Antonio Pigafetta make it seem possible that Magellan's slave Enrique succeeded where his master failed: in traveling all the way around the world. Magellan had bought him on an earlier expedition in Malacca (today a state in Malaysia) and brought him back to Portugal. Magellan's next voyage was to the 'Spice Islands' of Southeast Asia – but this time in the opposite direction, westward across the Pacific. In his testament, Magellan ordered that Enrique, who had served him as valet and interpreter, should be freed. If

Enrique returned to Malacca after Magellan's death, then he was in fact the first person to sail around the world.

Kidlat Tahimik deduces that Enrique originally came from the Philippines thanks to a detail that chronicler Pigafetta mentions in his log of Magellan's expedition: when the Spanish ships reached Cebu, Enrique was able to make himself understood by the natives. For the filmmaker, that was an indication that Enrique was actually a Filipino who had either been sold as a slave to Malacca or who was a member of the Filipino minority community there. (Another explanation why Enrique could communicate with the rulers on Cebu, of course, could be that Malay, which he spoke fluently, was the lingua franca of the entire region at the time.)

The extant historical sources cannot conclusively prove the claim that Enrique was a Filipino and also the world's first circumnavigator, but they don't conclusively refute it, either. Kidlat Tahimik uses the resulting narrative possibilities to stage a fascinating thought experiment: what if a paradigmatic victim of early colonisation accomplished a historic, pioneering achievement? Did a man purchased as a servant by a Spanish conquistador on the slave market in Malacca, who interpreted for him and had to serve him at table, play a role in history comparable to that of Marco Polo or of Columbus? In the film, Enrique (played by the director himself) does not appear as the object of European exploitation, but rather as a kind of shrewd cosmopolitan from the Global South. Kidlat Tahimik began working on his film about Enrique Melaka in 1979, but for personal reasons never completed it. Not until more than three decades later has he now been able to finish it, almost without a budget – partly thanks to new developments in media technology (some of the new footage was shot with an iPhone).

*Tilman Baumgärtel*

## Home is in the heart

When the thought of the First Circumnavigator strikes home (i.e., that the voyager might have come from our islands...) it becomes a storytelling energy that is not bound by time. It becomes a personal voyage – however long the timeline takes. The story evolving on film might span several generations... might risk extending over several lifetimes.

When I started churning my 16mm Bolex Camera in 1979, I expected completion within four or five years. Since I had gotten used to filming sans script, I knew it would take time for the story to evolve. We know very little about Enrique the slave aside from seven sentences (in the journal of the voyage) depicting him as an interpreter speaking the language of the islanders. This was in contrast to volumes about Master Magellan in academic write-ups and biographical novels... and perhaps in some obscure forgotten film.

### A personal road map

But the slave's story was in no way 'a story to be filmed' – in the classical sense of a character to be embellished from historical accounts. The filming itself was a story to be lived out – for the next three-and-a-half decades. The living road had to be trekked (a karmic path?) to know what elements would become essential in the roadmap.

There's nothing heroic about that. It happens to be my path in doing projects: 'Bathala Na!' (Go for it!... but let the Cosmic Forces put wind in your sails.) In the late 1980s, my three sons were just growing into cool beings whose groupie I wanted to become. So

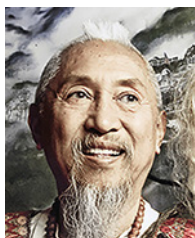
I decided in 1988 to shelve the 16mm shooting of Magellan's trip, expecting to resume playing the slave in five or seven years. Little did I know it would take twenty-five years – of lifestyle changes and political upheavals, of climate-revolts and techno-quakes – to weave the tapestry this tale has become.

Never could I envision that my being adopted by a tribal village would re-crystallise my POV. Nor would I guess that to reach the finish line, my tiny tots in the film would have to play larger roles (in a physical and literal sense.) So, the story rolled along... wherever thirty-five years of serendipitous storytelling-on-film has charted out its own world map. We detoured, sighting a lot of barren atolls, hidden bays, surprise reefs and skirting unromantic isles – not found on efficient maps.

Magellan, the logistics master, was obsessed with discovering an efficient route to the Spice Islands' profit peaks. Enrique the slave, tacitly in touch with nature's currents and winds, 'knew' the way. Because... home is in the heart.

However long the voyage, we reach our home island. Yes, we did stray on track.

*Kidlat Tahimik*



**Kidlat Tahimik** was born as Eric Oteyza de Guia in Baguio City in the Philippines in 1942. Between 1958 and 1963, he first studied Mechanical Engineering, then Speech Communication and Theatre Arts at the University of the Philippines. In the 1960s, he lived for a while in the United States, earning an MBA from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.

Between 1968 and 1972, Tahimik worked in Paris for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In the early 1970s, he began writing. After a stay in Germany, where he collaborated with Werner Herzog, among other people, he returned to the Philippines in 1975 and began work on his first film, *Mababangong Bangungot/The Perfumed Nightmare* (1977). He later made many films and videos. He lives in Baguio as a filmmaker, installation artist, performer, lecturer and author.

### Films

1977: *Mababangong Bangungot/Perfumed Nightmare* (Berlinale Forum 1977, 93 min.). 1979: *Sinong Lumikha ng Yoyo? Sinong Lumikha ng Moon Buggy?/Who Invented the Yoyo? Who Invented the Moon Buggy?*. 1981: *Olympic Gold*. 1982: *Yanki: Made in Hongkong*. 1983: *Turumba*. 1984: *Memories of Overdevelopment*. 1987: *I Am Furious Yellow*. 1989: *Takadera Mon Amour*. 1992: *Orbit 50 (Letters to my Three Sons)*. 1994: *Bakit Yellow ang Gitna ng Bahaghari?/Why Is Yellow Middle of Rainbow?*. 1995: *Our Bomb Mission To Hiroshima*. 1996: *Bahag ko, Mahal ko/Japanese Summers of a Filipino Fundoshi*. 2000: *Banal-Kahoy/Holy Wood*. 2003: *Aqua Planet*. 2005: *Some More Rice*. 2005: *Tatlong Atang at Isang Pagnakaw*. 2007: *Bubong/Roofs of the World! Unite!*. 2015: *Balikbayan #1 Memories of Overdevelopment Redux III*.



# Beira-Mar

## Seashore

Filipe Matzembacher, Marcio Reolon

**Producer** Marcio Reolon. **Production company** Avante Filmes (Porto Alegre, Brazil). **Director** Filipe Matzembacher, Marcio Reolon. **Screenplay** Filipe Matzembacher, Marcio Reolon. **Director of photography** João Gabriel de Queiroz. **Production design** Manuela Falcão. **Sound** Tomaz V. Borges. **Music** Felipe Puperi. **Sound design** Tiago Bello. **Editor** Bruno Carboni, Germano de Oliveira.

**Cast** Mateus Almada (Martin), Maurício José Barcellos (Tomaz), Elisa Brites (Natalia), Francisco Gick (Mauricio), Fernando Hart (Bento), Maitê Felistoffa (Carol), Danuta Zaguetto (Luiza), Irene Brietzke (Marisa).

DCP, colour. 83 min. Portuguese.

**Premiere** 6 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** FiGa/Br

Having been good friends for years, Martin and Tomaz now find themselves on the cusp of adulthood. Martin's father sends his son to southern Brazil, where the family is from, to sort out an inheritance matter. Tomaz accompanies him there. For both of them, the brief excursion to the coastal town becomes a journey into themselves. It's not just the sea that nearly reaches the doors of the country house which exerts a slow, yet relentless pull on them – the two friends have the same effect on one other.

Filipe Matzembacher and Marcio Reolon's richly atmospheric, autobiographically inspired feature debut follows its two main characters on a weekend that will change their relationship forever. *Beira-Mar* is a wander through the borderlands between love and friendship, exploring sexual orientation and personal identity. The outstanding camerawork picks up on the protagonists' complex emotional states in the same way as the soundtrack captures the roaring of the sea: gentle and powerful in equal measure. Always on an equal footing with the subject and the characters, the film creates a moment of magic and tenderness. Looking for love and finding it are sometimes one and the same thing.

*Ansgar Vogt*

## The unknown side of Brazil

*Beira-Mar* is about the time before we met. In our first feature-length movie, we decided to dig up our memories and create a process of gluing our pasts together, creating a common universe for ourselves as teenagers. Following our research on youth and sexuality, we also added an autobiographical and naturalistic tone to the narrative.

When we met in film school, we realised we had had a very similar adolescence, sharing the same fears and the same desires. And we both grew up spending our summers on the very same beach, without ever meeting. So we built two characters based on our memories of when we were each eighteen years old. We dove deep into these memories. There was a long process of rehearsals with the main actors in the film, and many meetings based on the exchange of experiences and a search for a common vision of what we wanted to do in this film. During filming, both the directors and the main cast stayed in the house where most of the film is set.

Another important point for us as filmmakers was to develop a narrative that could explore a side of Brazil that is almost never portrayed in films, and that is distant from the global image of the country. A cold region, with relatively apathetic people and deserted urban spaces: this was the unknown side of Brazil we wanted to depict.

*Beira-Mar* came together through our memories, our desires (fulfilled or not), of finite and unfinished relationships. Working on this film made it possible for us to go back a few years and relive, with friendship and tenderness, the beach on which we were both raised and which made us who we are today.

*Filipe Matzembacher, Marcio Reolon*

### “We shared the same fears, desires and longings”

*Beira-Mar* is your first feature-length movie. What is the movie about?

**Marcio Reolon, Filipe Matzembacher:** Youth has always been a constant theme in our work. In our first feature film, we've focused primarily on adolescence's key moments: breaking away from one's parents, the search for one's identity, and exploring one's sexuality. They are parallel processes and they feed off of each other. We've tried to make the film as honest as we possibly could, while making the depiction of this generation – to which we also belong – as accurate as possible. We want this generation to feel represented in the movie's conflict, its narrative language, and in its style. We've chosen themes (transitions into adulthood, friendship, discovery) that are universal, but we've added some very personal elements.

*Personal elements?*

Yes. The writing process was a memory exercise. When we met at university, we found out that both of us used to spend our summers in the same beach town, throughout our entire childhood and adolescence, without ever actually meeting during that time. We've been through similar experiences and we realised our juvenile worlds were very much alike. We shared the same fears, desires and longings. From that we created two characters that are a recollection of our memories. We put them in front of one another, at an earlier stage in life where we confront our identity and sexuality. It was a process that made us immerse ourselves in our pasts, to the point that the screenplay

was written at the eventual shooting locations, which were often actual places that existed during our adolescence. The film's narrative was built through factual memories, but reinterpreted. So we can't really say the characters are us, and we definitely cannot say the movie turned out to be autobiographical.

*What about the filming process? How did it go?*

It was a very intense experience. It was a thirty-day shoot and we were living with the two protagonists in the house that is the main location in the film. We slept, ate and worked in the same space. The lead actors began to take ownership of the environment – this process was crucial for building of their characters. The entire process was extremely intimate, and there were a very small number of people involved, while the rest of the crew stayed at the house next door. We decided to shoot the movie in chronological order, allowing us to create and transform the plot on set. Some scenes that were initially short in the original screenplay became longer during the shoot. The screenplay was our guide, but it was very important to us that the process be free. We believe that this freedom can be felt while watching the movie.

*What was working with the actors like?*

Creating characters and working with actors are two of the main reasons why we make movies. We both started our careers in acting, and that's why this aspect is of extreme importance to us. The two main actors had no formal training. One had worked previously on two short films, but the other had never acted before *Beira-Mar*. We rehearsed with them for more than seven months, having several weekly meetings throughout, aiming to reach what we were looking for, a free-flowing naturalistic tone. *Beira-Mar* is about conflicts and feelings that come from the inside, and it is from within the characters that the main plot twists happen. They are the ones that make the connection between the movie and the audience. This collaboration was a very intense process, involving mutual trust. We are happy with how it turned out and very grateful for the actors' trust, and for how they took a risk with a process that is atypical and visceral.

*Why the ocean, a cold, raging, winter sea, is always hidden?*

For several reasons. First of all, for the specific reason that makes the beach landscape in our state – which is in the extreme south of the country – a very different one from other regions in Brazil. The beaches down here are grey, the water is dark, the sand is rough. The wind is strong and the temperatures are very cold during wintertime. Apart from that, *Beira-Mar* symbolises conflicts that we all must face in order to enter adulthood. The sea is close by, yelling at us, but sometimes we don't wish to face it. Another reason we chose not to show the ocean is the fact that the characters are taken out of their routines and so-called comfort zones so that they can confront themselves 'unarmed'. For a weekend they isolate themselves from the world, and are forced to face each other, their families, their friendships, their past, and their desires. The excuse to get away, to get in touch with nature, tends to be a revealing one at this age.

*Source: Avante Filmes*



**Filipe Matzembacher** was born in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1988. He studied Film Directing at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica in Porto Alegre. Along with Marcio Reolon and other filmmakers, he founded Avante Filmss, a production and screening platform. Apart from being a filmmaker, he also works as a producer, screenwriter and curator. Following a number of short films, *Beira-Mar* is his first full-length film.

#### Films

2010: *Silêncio, Por Favor* (7 min.). 2010: *Rocco* (16 min.). 2011: *Quando a Casa Cresce e Cria Limo* (8 min.). 2011: *Preservativo/Condom* (Co-director: Marcio Reolon, Samuel Telles, 5 min.). 2011: *Nico* (18 min.). 2012: *Um Diálogo de Ballet/A Ballet Dialogue* (Co-director: Marcio Reolon, 7 min.). 2012: *Máscaras* (Co-director: Marcio Reolon, 5 min.). 2012: *Cinco Maneiras de Fechar os Olhos/Five Ways to Close Your Eyes* (Omnibusfilm, with: Abel Roland, Amanda Copstein, Emiliano Cunha, Gabriel Motta Ferreira). 2013: *Quarto Vazio* (21 min.). 2015: *Beira-Mar / Seashore*.



**Marcio Reolon** was born in 1984 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Before studying Film Directing at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica in Porto Alegre, he worked as an actor. Along with Filipe Matzembacher and other filmmakers, he founded Avante Filmss, a production and screening platform. Apart from being a filmmaker, Reolon works as a producer, screenwriter and distributor. Following a number of short films, *Beira-Mar* is his first full-length film.

#### Films

2009: *Por Uma Noite Apenas* (14 min.). 2010: *Depois da Pele* (13 min.). 2011: *Preservativo/Condom* (Co-director: Filipe Matzembacher, Samuel Telles, 5 min.). 2012: *Um Diálogo de Ballet/A Ballet Dialogue* (Co-director: Filipe Matzembacher, 7 min.). 2012: *Máscaras* (Co-director: Filipe Matzembacher, 5 min.). 2015: *Beira-Mar / Seashore*.



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## Ben Zaken

בן זקן

### Efrat Corem

**Producer** Itai Tamir. **Production company** Laila Films (Tel Aviv, Israel). **Director** Efrat Corem. **Screenplay** Efrat Corem. **Director of photography** Shafir Sarussi. **Production design** Ben Shalom Davidi. **Costume** Yam Brusilovsky. **Make-up** Ana Paris. **Sound** Michael Goorevitch. **Sound design** Michael Goorevitch. **Editor** Nisim Massas, Lev Goltser.

**Cast** Eliraz Sade (Shlomi), Rom Shoshan (Ruhi), Mekikes (Ronen), Amar (Leon), Chani Elemlch (Dina), Batel Mashian (Riki), Robby Elmaliah (Yair), David Ben Hamo (Rabbi).

DCP, colour. 90 min. Hebrew.

**Premiere** 8 June 2014, Cinema South Film Festival Sderot, Israel. **World sales** Patra Spanou Film Marketing & Consulting

The Ben Zaken family lives in the small Israeli city of Ashkelon on a run-down housing estate. The family is made up of single father Shlomi with his eleven-year-old daughter Ruhi, his brother Leon and the mother of the two brothers. Their living situation is somewhat precarious. The austere apartment is cramped and everyone's nerves are pretty frayed. Social services has its eye on the motherless Ruhi, who is bullied in school and is not an easy child.

Efrat Corem's remarkable debut film is a sensitive portrait of an environment marked by stagnation and a lack of economic and emotional resources. The film tells its story in calm scenes that are empathetic while still retaining a degree of distance. They often consist of single shots, which are less about putting bleakness on display than posing the question of what family is. Is a shared name and a shared roof over your head enough to define a family, or is it more about having feelings of altruistic responsibility for each other? Over the course of the film, Ruhi's father is forced to find a very concrete answer to this general question and to find what his role as a father is supposed to be.

*Anna Hoffmann*

## On the outskirts of Israeli society

The Ben Zaken family interests and moves me because they have a unique survival mode and specific life codes that belong to an invisible world on the outskirts of Israeli society and culture. The people who live on these fringes are supposedly weak, or as people tend to say, weakened, but when it comes to the Ben Zaken family, these definitions are invalid. This family does not measure itself against anything or anyone else.

The camera in *Ben Zaken* functions as a witness; my intent was to keep the characters from conducting themselves in front of it. I wanted to give them the freedom to move, though in terms of narrative, they are never really free.

Life according to the Ben Zaken family is a cruel and harsh journey in which there are neither shortcuts nor solace. The only comfort comes from the knowledge of the shared fate they all have. In that sense, Shlomi rebels against his natural instincts to preserve the order of things as they always were by trying to break the cycle for his daughter's sake. For that reason he is my hero.

*Corem Efrat*

## The misery of a single father

"This is the kind of film that expects its viewers to have the patience to listen and watch, even if they don't agree with what they see on the screen," says Efrat Corem, writer-director of *Ben Zaken*, one of the first two films to come out of Sapir College, in the south of the country and very close to the Gaza Strip.

For the last five years, Corem was artistic director of Festival Darom (Cinema South Film Festival), an event organized by her alma mater and Sderot Cinematheque for the benefit of a population deprived of the film luxuries that abound in cities such as Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa.

Cannes screened Corem's first film, *Your Younger Daughter Rachel*, in 2007, but embarking on a feature film was a completely different matter.

"Moving from a graduation short to a full-length feature was a major step, mentally. It took me no less than six years to write the script, and once I met my producer, Itai Tamir, I needed yet another year to organize the pre-production, cast the picture and shoot it, though that was the shortest process of them all – only 16 days." The funds to complete the film, \$335,000, came from several sources. "Israel Film Fund was one of them, the Gesher Fund whose purpose is to encourage productions in the peripheries, added their contribution and even Festival Darom and my school, Sapir College, pitched in with a grant, which was very encouraging," Corem says. Last year, she won another grant at Jerusalem Film Festival's Pitch Point, which allowed her to move into the actual production. The entire story takes place in one of the more deprived corners of her hometown, Ashkelon, next door to Sderot. It is her very personal universe. "The elementary school you see is the one I went to; everything around there is painfully familiar to me," she says. The plot follows the relationship between a middle-aged single father and his eleven-year-old daughter, and their respective attempts to break out of their circle of misery, just like all their neighbours.

"There is nothing heroic about the main character, barely making a living as a night guardian and still living with his own mother, at a loss to assume his responsibility as a parent," she says. "Only

when he is separated from his daughter does he really become a father in the true sense of the word."

The entire cast consists of non-actors and her main goal was to make it all look almost, but not quite, a documentary, certainly different from any other film of this kind. Her minimalist approach means each scene consists of only one shot.

As for the future, Corem has no intention of moving out of Ashkelon. "This is my world and I want to go on exploring it."

*Edna Fainaru, Screen Daily, 17 July 2014*



© photo by Tami Luria

Efrat Corem was born in 1979 in Ashkelon, southern Israel, where she also grew up. She studied cinema and television at Sapir College in Sha'ar HaNegev. In 2006, she made her thesis project film, *Berachel bitha haktana / Your Younger Daughter Rachel* (34 min.). Since 2009, Efrat Corem has been the artistic director of the Cinema South Film Festival in Sderot, for which she also heads the Israeli cinema section. *Ben Zaken* is her first full-length feature film.





## Brasil S/A

### Brazilian Dream

Marcelo Pedroso

**Production** Livia de Melo. **Production company** Símio Filmes (Pernambuco, Brazil). **Director** Marcelo Pedroso. **Screenplay** Marcelo Pedroso. **Director of photography** Ivo Lopes Araújo. **Production design** Juliano Dornelles. **Costume** Rita Azevedo, Maria Esther. **Make-up** Tabira Mariz. **Sound** Pablo Lamar. **Music** Mateus Alves. **Editor** Daniel Bandeira.

**With** Edilson Silva, Adeilton Nascimento, Giovanna Simões, Wilma Gomes, Marivalda Maria Dos Santos, Maracatu Estrela Brilhante.

DCP, colour. 64 min. Without dialogue.

**Premiere** 18 September 2014, Festival de Brasília do Cinema Brasileiro. **World sales** ANTIPODE Sales & Distribution

Brazilian sugar-cane harvesters which transform themselves into astronauts to save their nation. Monumental excavators that dance ballet to opulent orchestral music. The national flag of Brazil triumphantly hoisted high on a gigantic building crane in the heavens above the skyscrapers... *Brasil S/A* – Brazil Inc. – is an Eldorado for the eyes and ears: bodies, machines and landscapes in heroic movement. Choreographies of a brave new world in which the sun always shines. Instead of individual plot threads, director Marcelo Pedroso creates thrilling images of a country of superlatives unwaveringly committed to a belief in progress and success. Individual images whose impressive assembly suddenly makes them seem not only cheerful and lovely but also chillingly monstrous – turning the thrill into a hangover. Pedroso's editing room is a rugged assembly hall in the factory complex of Brazil Inc., where the images themselves are turned into powerful tools in tandem with Pablo Lamar's brilliantly wrought soundtrack. A film without dialogue but with a powerful voice nonetheless, satirically calling into question the promises of progress.

*Ansgar Vogt*

## Eternally the country of the future

*Brasil S/A* is the fruit of a reflection on Brazil today. We Brazilians are used to seeing the country as peripheral, subaltern, poor and third-world. But in recent years Brazil has experienced rampant transformation that has reconfigured its archaic social structure. Yet this difficult and paradoxical modernisation runs up against problems that seem to be historically determined. In *Brasil S/A* we ask: what images can capture this new country? And we chance a few answers, starting with the delirious fable-spinning of a nation drunk on its own progress. These are images and sounds that echo and, at the same time, collide with the grand founding narratives of the national mind-set. Through these images, we enter into conflict with the messianic vocation of a Brazil eternally pre-destined to be the country of the future. Bodies, machines and landscapes move and shudder. Until the final eclipse.

Marcelo Pedroso

## "The colonial bases are still very present"

*Brasil S/A* seems to be a film that was largely scripted in the editing room. Would that be true?

**Marcelo Pedroso:** The film didn't really have a script, as such. It evolved out of images: a flag hoisted on a construction-site crane, as if commemorating the conquest of some urban peak; circular land-art made in the cane-fields by harvesters; workmen who become astronauts in order to save the nation... So the editing suggested juxtaposing these images, pitting them against each other, finding nexuses, fusions and collisions between them. I think the film's unity, if there is any, comes from the rigour of the scenes, the music and the historical conjuncture in which it was made and which underpins the narrative, determining possible states for the elements in a scene.

*The film offers up a number of agendas against a former slave society that is sexist, classist and ecclesiastical, vertical and 'auto-cratic', in the sense of it being dominated by the automobile industry. Was it your intention to posit these as inseparable elements?*

As Brazil modernises, I feel it has to grapple more intensely with the ghosts in its archaic structure. The colonial bases are still very present and they set a certain patriarchal tone that contaminates social relations as a whole: in the family, at work, in the occupation of public and private spaces. I believe there is continuity between these everyday spheres, though we tend to see its manifestations as isolated incidents.

*In what way does the urban environment affect your work?*

Urban space in itself is not a subject that is particularly dear to me. I think I'm more engaged in the debate on political configurations and how they reflect on social arrangements. In the case of *Brasil S/A*, what I wanted was to understand the country in terms of the messianic vocation I think has accompanied it since its foundation. Brazil grew out of a notion of Eldorado. From the very beginning, the nation and its people seem to have been striving for that glorious moment when they would become that Eldorado.

*Do you think Brasil S/A is a film that could only have been made by a filmmaker who had experienced the recent transformations that have occurred in the Brazilian northeast, a region that was historically the poorest part of the country?*

When I started sketching the film in my mind, one of the first images that came to me was of the flag flying from a crane. For quite a while I wasn't sure whether it should be the flag of Pernambuco (a peripheral north-eastern state) or of Brazil. The Northeast is used to this peripheral condition. Historically, Brazilian films that speak about the Northeast present the region as poor, a point of exodus, drought-ridden, and rife with hunger and unemployment. Recognising the socioeconomic transformations in the region was important insofar as it showed me that the film could actually redress that: it wasn't Brazil talking about the Northeast, it was a Northeast finally capable of talking about Brazil.

*To what extent was the opulent soundtrack already present in the original treatment for the film, and how did that change the course of the editing and post-production?*

The grandiloquence of the soundtrack is connected with the very genesis of the film: the idea of a rising economic powerhouse. The music had to be imposing in order to dialogue with the major structures set in motion during the scenes. Among the references for *Brasil S/A* were films that choreograph collective spaces and bodies, such as *Man With A Movie Camera* and *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*. So we had to achieve this major symbiosis between the rhythm and intensity of the images and sounds. The editing helped us keep all these elements in step.

*With so many jib sweeps, tracking shots and scenes filmed from helicopters, the film acquires an exuberant feel. Is this aesthetic of clean, precise movements also a criticism of the idea of a mechanised society?*

Yes, and maybe also a tilt towards the fascism of the image. This ideal of the perfect, symmetrical image, with balanced composition and pitch-perfect lighting brings us back to our everyday visual experience, screen-drunk as we are on ideal lifestyles that impose their standards on our bodies and desires. Again, the idea resides in replicating this effect in order to cause shifts. At the same time, this apparatus suggests a certain enchantment with movement. There's dialogue with the ideology of the Soviet avant-garde and its fascination with the scene in motion.

*The film conveys this idea that we're living in a nation-company, where business relations set the tone for social interactions. Was the irony with which you approach this premise the way you felt most comfortable formulating this critique?*

In the film, we dialogue with the idea of a certain official discourse, the kind you find in institutional promos and governmental propaganda, films that have a very clear objective: to sell a utopia, an ideal world, free of conflicts or contradictions. By adopting this aesthetic, I believe we at once duplicated and inverted this effect, fighting the spectacle with more spectacle.

*Given its metaphorical nature, with scenes that function as figures of language concerning the contemporary nation, do you consider Brasil S/A an open work?*

The film was initially full of theses. The images that sprang to mind were vehicles for various presuppositions that determined a certain reading of reality. Thankfully, I think these theses were diluted over the course of the filming. They were brought to bear in images that gave them new life, no longer as theses. The film became a film precisely because it knew how

to eradicate those theses. As such, I reckon it proposes an association between visual platforms that allow for a range of readings and feelings.

*Carolina Almeida, November 2014*



**Marcelo Pedroso** was born in Recife, Brazil in 1979. He has been making films for the past ten years. *Brasil S/A* is Pedroso's third full-length film. He is currently working towards a doctorate in film, and he gives lectures and workshops throughout Brazil.

#### Films

2008: *KFZ-1348* (Co-director: Gabriel Mascaro, 81 min.). 2010: *Pacific* (74 min.). 2011: *Corpo presente* (22 min.). 2012: *Câmara escura* (22 min.). 2013: *Em trânsito* (18 min.). 2014: *Brasil S/A / Brazilian Dream*.



© Claire Angelini

# Ce gigantesque retournement de la terre

## This Gigantic Furrowing of the Ground

**Claire Angelini**

**Production** Claire Angelini. **Production company** Albanera Production (Paris, France). **Director** Claire Angelini. **Screenplay** Claire Angelini. **Director of photography** Claire Angelini. **Sound** Claire Angelini. **Editor** Claire Angelini.

DCP, colour & black/white. 71 min. French.

**Premiere** 11 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

Normandy is a place steeped in history – after the Allied landings on 6th June 1944, it became one of the Second World War’s most hotly contested territories. Making direct reference to Jean Grémillon’s film *Le six juin à l’aube*, which was shot in 1944/5 under the direct influence of the total destruction of the region, this documentary essay carries out an inspection in search of the traces left behind by history 70 years later. But landscapes are silent. They tell us little of themselves. The scars of the past are not revealed unasked. So how can history be made visible in the present through film? To begin with, an old man affected by the war in his youth formulates his memories. Then the locations from Grémillon’s film are shown in their current state, augmented with the dramatic music and narrator’s commentary from the original film. Then there are off-screen reflections about post-war architecture and images of buildings that represent “urban modernity”. The three-part structure and the precise use of sound and image expose the different temporal strata and historical sediments, which, newly visible, are inscribed into the terrain.

*Birgit Kohler*

## Layers of time and history

For *Ce gigantesque retournement de la terre*, I deliberately chose three cinematic styles, each representing a unique kind of expression. Together, they compose the facets of a reflection 'in action' – that is to say, in images and sounds – aroused by Jean Grémillon's film *Le 6 juin à l'aube* (France, 1945), which is about the landing at Normandy by Anglo-American forces, and the resulting consequences for the region. Grémillon, who was born in that region, refers in his film to the recent past ('happy Normandy'), a distant past (the landing of Edward III of England in Barfleur in 1346), an 'immediate' past (fighting) and a present characterised by ruins and a devastated countryside.

In *Ce gigantesque retournement de la terre*, I make use of layers of time and history by retracing Grémillon's footsteps and recreating his geographical journey through the towns and villages he filmed in September of 1944 and in July and August of 1945.

The first part features a farmer in Normandy. We show this man today as he remembers the events of the past; at the same time, we see the past seventy years inscribed upon the body of this eighty-four-year-old man. He mentally runs through his three weeks of wandering in the countryside while shells landed around him, past the dead and the ruins. He evokes all that he and his family had to face following the invasion, a time marked by destruction, injury and death. 'In that corner of our Normandy, he concludes, everything was destroyed...'

### In the footsteps of Jean Grémillon

The second part of the film follows in the footsteps of Grémillon's film, showing current images of the places he recorded for *Le 6 juin à l'aube*. Like in the story imagined by François Rabelais in the fourth book of his pentalogy of novels *The Life of Gargantua and of Pantagruel* – where sounds and words frozen during severe winter battles are brought alive a year later by melting heat, to the amazement of travellers – the historical gap between two different times that concern the same territory is recorded in *Ce gigantesque retournement de la terre*. But is this ground, where so many lost their lives during the war, still the same seventy years on? The third section focuses specifically on the reconstruction of the post-war era and the architectural principles that inspired and formed it. Planners and architects commissioned by the Minister of Reconstruction, Raoul Dautry (former president of the French Mutual Aid, which came to the aid of disaster victims), established rules for the whole country, and led projects aimed at giving Normandy a new look. And what about today? In reality, such a 'gigantic furrowing of the ground' couldn't be magically filled in, the way the poet Jules Supervielle imagined it.

What do the cinematic images tell us? How can we perceive the result of these projected buildings, houses, and cities? And what logic does this new era inevitably follow in the on-going and still crisis-ridden urbanisation of the countryside, and the mechanisation of agriculture?

The three chronological levels of this film (a story of the past filmed in the present, a past story in the present, and a possible story) are related to three modes of historical discourse (living contemporary witness; factual description of events, planning for the future). They are made tangible by a film that is interested in a contemporary space-time.

Claire Angelini

## In the wrong place at the wrong time

In 1944 and 1945, French director Jean Grémillon went back to his native Normandy to record the destruction of the region caused by the still-raging war. What he saw was terrifying: destroyed towns and 'damned landscapes', one of the greenest regions in France suddenly swallowed by death. But he also saw the vital force of the people at work, for survival and reconstruction. The resulting documentary, *Le 6 juin à l'aube*, reappeared only recently in the French cultural landscape, after a poor reception at the time of its release and almost seven decades of obscurity. The testimony of the 'collateral damage' undergone by those rural areas remained invisible in the face of the winners' history of the war and the arrival of modernity.

In several of her films, Claire Angelini has addressed these impossible historical situations in which people get trapped in silence, their stories untellable because, whether on the 'right' or 'wrong' side of the official history, they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Collateral damage: a really terrible notion. So Claire Angelini literally followed Grémillon's path, making a film out of the previous film. She went back to Normandy, and filmed again every village that appeared in *Le 6 juin à l'aube*. She filmed houses and tractors, roads and fields, peasants at work and the empty spaces of modern urbanity, what is and what is left. The spectator is guided three times through this historical and geographical journey, three movements across image, sound and imagination. In the first movement, we follow another guide, an eighty-four-year-old man telling his story of surviving through these dreadful times of the summer of 1944 and the winter that followed. He was fourteen, and here he tells his story for the first time. His memory reconstructs the succession of names, places and events step by step, throughout his speech – small events that marked him forever: the lice where they slept that night, the raw cabbage they had to eat, the wounded cow, the sadness of their mother when she came back from the hospital... In the darkness of his kitchen, with the small noises around him of life going on, we plunge with him into a past defined by the litany of his 'there was nothing', 'we had nothing left', 'there was nothing around', 'nothing at all', 'no, nothing'... Nothing but the dead, lots and lots of them – French, German or American, that doesn't make much difference.

### History, a deeply incarnated process

After this initial, mental return to the scene of the crimes, the second movement of *Ce gigantesque retournement de la terre* comes back to Grémillon's film. Claire Angelini's work then cannot but evoke a whole history of film, including *Le 6 juin à l'aube*, in a tradition that would mobilise also Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub's *Trop tôt, trop tard* (1982) as well as Marguerite Duras' *Son nom de Venise dans Calcutta desert* (1976). Grémillon's soundtrack accompanies images of present-day Normandy; each village mentioned appearing in the prosaic reality of its contemporary state. The film then questions precisely what cinema can do to record what is as what is left, to see through the green pastures and ordinary houses the traces of the past disasters. What if they became invisible? What would that tell us of our history – or of the limits and possibilities of film as a witness to the movement of history? But the tragic music of Grémillon's film accompanying a young couple of joggers through the streets of a small Norman town still reminds us of both the past dramas that occurred here when they were not yet born, and of the vital force that runs through these bodies and ours. From the wounds described by the old man

with his soft voice to these joggers and to the slight trembling of the handheld camera, history appears here as a deeply incarnated process, inscribing itself in the bodies of the people, as well as in the trees and buildings. The 'furlowing of the ground' is already a bodily description of the rape that this countryside has undergone.

### Soulless urban sceneries

The third movement leaves Grémillon behind, to question the processes that governed post-war reconstruction – or that would govern it, to adopt the strange conditional mode adopted by the narrator, a mode intermixing the fiction of what was with the sense of totalitarian ineluctability. What is left to the eyes today, after that destruction to nothing, is what has been reconstructed. Claire Angelini shows us another Normandy, devoid of true life and imprisoned in the standardisation of architecture, in concrete and plastic, in soulless urban sceneries. The 1950s reconstruction has been indifferent to rural culture, and urbanism has largely remained so until today. The destruction of Normandy has made it a perfect field for the early experiments of this modernity. Having, as it were, no history left, it could start again from scratch in the new world. It takes the three movements of Claire Angelini's film to show us that Normandy does have a history, forgotten though it may be, or hidden underneath the green and the concrete. Its traces are still perceptible in the bodies of old men and old trees. Seeing them requires attentive eyes sustained by both patience and the sense of emergency. What makes *Ce gigantesque retournement de la terre* particularly moving is that these qualities have emerged here from Claire Angelini's constant and modest dialogue, through her art, with her colleague Jean Grémillon, who died in 1959. Walter Benjamin once wrote that the problem with today's bourgeoisie was that they lived in houses where nobody had died before. Claire Angelini lives in a cinema full of dead people, and her art is thick with that incredible richness.

Benoît Turquety



Claire Angelini was born in Nice, France in 1969. She studied at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, the Université Paris-Sorbonne and, from 2003 to 2004, the University of Television and Film Munich. In 2001, she founded the French-German collective Laboratorium Geschichte ("history laboratory"). Since 2001, her films, installations, photos, and drawings

have been shown in solo and group exhibitions, in galleries, and at festivals. Claire Angelini is also a writer, editor and lecturer. She lives and works in Munich and Paris.

### Films

2002: *Réciprocités/Reciprocities* (60 min.). 2004: *Un trou dans le gant/A Hole in a Glove* (32 min.). 2004: *Hier liegt die Grenze des pädagogischen Bemühens/The Limit of the Pedagogical Effort Has Been Reached Here* (22 min.). 2005: *Es geht eine dunkle Wolk' herein/A Dark Cloud Is Coming Inside* (20 min.). 2007: *Loci soli/Soliloques* (24 min.). 2007: *She/See* (22 min.). 2009: *Par l'eau et par le feu/On Water and Fire* (11 min.). 2009: *La mémoire n'est pas un jeu d'enfant/Memory is not a Child's Game* (49 min.). 2009: *Le retour au pays de l'enfance/Back to the Land of Childhood* (100 min.). 2010: *Marche/Aragon* (23 min.). 2011: *La guerre est proche/War is Looming*

(80 min.). 2012: *Et tu es dehors/Und raus bist Du/And Out You Go* (85 min.). 2012: *Jeune. Révolution!/Young. Revolution!* (13 min.). 2012: *Brise la mer!/Break the Sea!* (11 min.). 2015: *Ce gigantesque retournement de la terre / This Gigantic Furlowing of the Ground.*



# Чайки

## Chaiki

### The Gulls

**Ella Manzheeva**

**Producer** Elena Glikman, Yaroslav Zhivov. **Production company** Telesto Film Company (Moskau, Russian Federation). **Director** Ella Manzheeva. **Screenplay** Ella Manzheeva. **Director of photography** Alexander Kuznetsov. **Production design** Denis Bauer. **Sound** Philipp Lamshin. **Music** Anton Silayev. **Editor** Sergey Ivanov.

**Cast** Evgeniya Mandzhieva (Elza), Sergey Adianov (Dzhiga), Evgeny Sangadzhiev (Ulan), Lyubov Ubushieva (Mother), Dmitry Mukeyev (Ledzhin).

DCP, colour. 87 min. Russian, Kalmyk.

**Premiere** 7 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** Antipode Sales & Distribution

Elza lives in a small town in the Republic of Kalmykia on the Caspian Sea. Another year comes to an end, it's cold and the steppe is covered in a thin layer of snow. When her husband, who makes a living from illegal fishing, asks her one night what she did during the day, she lies. She wasn't at her mother's, but at the bus stop. She thought of leaving – to find out what it might be to escape the infinite expanse of her dreary small world. But she didn't dare; instead she stays and withdraws into herself, unconcerned by who might see. One day, her husband doesn't return from a dangerous boat trip. It is said that a fisherman only returns if he has a woman waiting for him and that seagulls are the souls of the missing. At the start of a somewhat unplanned pregnancy, widowed and alone, Elza wanders ever further through the city, plotting a path between tradition and the contemporary until she's no longer on familiar ground. In her debut film, Ella Manzheeva gains access to Elza's inner life through the lens of landscapes, living rooms, offices, corridors and roads. In *Chaiki*, Kalmykia is not a backdrop but a state of mind.

*Dorothee Wenner*

## Happiness is within each of us

*Chaiki* is a parable set against the backdrop of modern Kalmykia. It tells the story of a poacher's wife and takes place in a small town on the shores of the Caspian Sea. We often associate our troubles and failures with the people around us. By shifting the responsibility over to them, we justify our weakness, and laziness, our lack of willpower and ideas. However, happiness is within each one of us, and we are the only ones who can let ourselves be happy, daring, free or unhappy. This film is about the energy of life. Slow down. Listen. Listen to yourself and you will hear others. When time finds its space, there comes an incredible happiness and freedom, freedom of the soul. I would like for the viewers to trust themselves more, to rely on their own unique experiences and characters so that the film's drama lives on in their minds and everyone is able to create their own ending, learn their own moral lesson. I'm not trying to convey a particular message by creating this story – I simply ask a question. Everyone may respond in their own way.

Ella Manzheeva

## "Kalmykia women put generally their hopes in men"

*Chaiki* is your first feature-length film. What was your starting point for this story?

**Ella Manzheeva:** Everything started from an image of a woman who wants to leave her husband. She goes away and comes back, and he does not even notice. I thought this over for a very long time, perhaps a year. And then suddenly I sat down and wrote the screenplay in just five days, all in one go. And only then, stepping back, did I see many real-life stories that happened to me or to people dear to me, and see the characters from my film. And then we filmed a trailer and it was a success. It helped us arouse the interest of other people. But we were not sure if we would manage to realise the film, because not many people in Russia were interested in a film about a small ethnic group. The last film made in Kalmykia was twenty years ago. Everything was difficult and no one wanted to tackle it. In 2013 I participated in the Berlinale Talent Campus. Something changed in my head. I suddenly believed in myself and became very strong. I saw a very clear road in front of me and I understood how I should move my idea forward. Perhaps it was because of certain people I was lucky enough to meet there, maybe because of everything I saw. When I came back, I was a different person. Later I met Lena Glikman, my wonderful producer, who simply believed in the story I wrote. Around that time, the topic apparently also became interesting for the Russian Ministry of Culture. The stars were aligned for my project. We got support and made this film.

*Elza, the protagonist of your story, seems to be a deeply sad person. We sense that she's not happy with her life, her work, or her husband's family. The death of her husband doesn't make her sad; it on the contrary, it helps her to change her life. How did you develop this character?*

Unfortunately, in Kalmykia there are numerous people unhappy with their job, their life, their wives, their husbands... and deep inside I am one of them. I fight with this every day. It's just a state of mind that might be absolutely independent from any real problem. It may sound surprising, but ninety per cent of the women who auditioned for the role of Elza told me it was their story. Every one of them wants to leave her husband but

does not leave him because there is nowhere to go and there is no one else to live with. Perhaps it is difficult for a European to understand, but in Kalmykia women generally put their hopes in men. A man will come and solve all your problems. So the most important thing for a woman is to marry. It is something in the genes, in the upbringing, perhaps... and I am the same, regardless of how I may discuss the subject. Perhaps Elza is myself, in a moment of my life.

*Kalmykia is located in the European part of Russia. It's the only region where Buddhism is the dominant religion, as we also see in your film. What role did this fact play in the development of your film?*

Yes, Buddhism is the main religion in Kalmykia. Our capital, Elista, has the largest Buddhist temple in Europe. Were it not for Buddhism, I would perhaps not have become a film director. Before entering a film school, I went to see a Lama and asked him whether I should try to pass the entrance examination this year or not. And he answered: do as you wish. I was a bit disappointed – I thought he would make a decision about my destiny for me. He just advised me to bring some tea before the divine service – this is a ritual to remove obstacles and open the road. I entrusted this to my grandmother and went away to try to get into film school. Four months later, I passed the examination. I called my grandmother to tell her the good news. She groaned and said, "Thank God. I am really tired of carrying the tea to the temple every day." She brought the tea in for four months. Anyone could pass the examination with such help.

*You show what may be typical family structure of the region. If the father is no longer present, the eldest son takes care of the family. In the end, Elza goes with her husband's younger brother to her husband's wake. Is she going to marry him?*

Yes. There are many families like this. In most cases, the eldest man in the family takes all the family's problems upon himself. Everyone obeys him. But he must live up to this status. He must prove that he deserves it. But in reality, all the most important decisions are taken by the mother or the grandmother. It's a kind of hidden matriarchy. Perhaps that is why they are so hard to please in their relations with daughters-in-law: you can entrust your family only to a person who is most reliable and loyal. I think Elza and Ulan themselves do not know their future. It's their destiny. Still, there is a possibility of marriage. Their ways of living and thinking are similar. In earlier times, Kalmyks practiced levirate marriage, where a widow was obliged to marry her husband's brother, and a widower his wife's sister. Now it seems strange; we became more European in that sense. It is easier to take a baby from a woman than to make a relative marry her.

*We hear the grandmother singing a song during the youngest sister's engagement celebration. What song is she singing?*

It is a song about the family, about the preservation of family and the way of life. It is a song of good wishes.

*You show wide-angle shots of the foggy waterway scenery as well as images of the sparse landscape of the region. It appears in a way unspecific, nearly unreal. What was the visual concept behind it?*

I wished to make a sensual picture, to grasp the spirit of this place, its atmosphere. But our most important reference was our protagonist, Evgeniya Mandzhieva. She inspired us with the



beauty of her soul. And we managed to convey it thanks to our cameraman Alexander Kuznetsov.

*Is there a realistic background to the drug trafficking shown in the film?*

Yes, it's quite real; the grass grows in every kitchen garden. But it's not interesting.

*Interview: Gabriela Seidel-Hollaender, January 2015*



**Ella Manzheeva** was born in 1981 in Elista, Republic of Kalmykia, Russia. She first studied violin at the music academy in Elista, then Sound Directing at the St Petersburg State University of Film and Television, and finally Directing at the High Courses for Scriptwriters and Film Directors in Moscow. Ella Manzheeva took part in the Berlinale Talent Campus in 2013. *Chaiki* is her first full-length feature film.

#### Films

2007: *Prazdnik/Holiday* (5 min.). 2008: *Chuzhaya. Step./Uninvited. Steppe.* (5 min.). 2009: *Zhenshina vnutri kak step/A Steppe Inside Her* (14 min.). 2015: *Chaiki / The Gulls.*



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## 철원기행

# Cheol won gi haeng

End of Winter

### Kim Dae-hwan

**Producer** Lee Im-kul. **Production company** Tiger Cinema (Seoul, South Korea). **Director** Kim Dae-hwan. **Screenplay** Park Jin-soo. **Director of photography** Kim Bo-lam. **Production design** Ahn So-hyun. **Sound** Lee Ho-won. **Music** Kang Min-kuk. **Cast** Moon Chang-gil (Kim Sung-geun), Lee Young-lan (Yoon Yeo-jeong), Kim Min-hyuk (Kim Dong-uk), Lee Sang-hee (Kang Hye-jeong), Heo Je-wone (Kim Su-hyun).

DCP, colour. 99 min. Korean.

**Premiere** 2 October 2014, Busan International Film Festival  
**World sales** Lotte Entertainment

Sung-geun, a teacher at Cheolwon Technical High School, is retiring. His two sons and a daughter-in-law arrive to take part in the celebrations with their parents. During a meal, Sung-geun announces that he is to file for divorce. The news freezes the expressions on the faces of his wife and children. It is just as icy in the provincial town of Cheolwon, where busses are not running due to a snowstorm. The family is quite literally stuck where they are. Although Kim Dae-hwan's directorial debut only takes place over few days, the film tells the family's entire story. The years that have gone by are very visible in the parents' apartment. The cramped rooms make apparent that there has been no intimacy within its walls for a long time now. The camera continually takes a step back, turning each shot into a precise still life of feelings that no longer exist or perhaps never did. Isn't the father's outburst also an utopian gesture? He's already found a new place to live and cooks the potatoes that he grew in his very own garden. This too is a way of being a provider, as a family begins to rediscover itself.

Anke Leweke

## The meaning of family today

The family is the primary and the most intimate network of human relationships. In modern society, however, the family is not only taken for granted, but family members act negligently towards each other. For some people, their family relationships are the closest ones they have, but for others, they can be the most distance ones. Through *Cheol won gi haeng*, I wanted to think about the meaning of family today, and to invite the audience to think about their own family.

Kim Dae-hwan

## "There is no such thing as happy family"

*Why did you choose to focus on the family?*

**Kim Dae-hwan:** I'm from Chuncheon [the capital of the South Korean province of Gangwon-do -Ed.]. My family has lived apart ever since I came to Seoul to attend Hongik University in Seoul and my brother, seven years younger than me, moved to Seoul to study for university entrance exam. Even before that, I remember my parents living apart from each other in different cities because they're both teachers, like the family in the film, and they were assigned to positions in different schools. Living apart from each other made me question the meaning of family, and this is something I'm presently most interested in.

*How did you come to think about the set up of the film, where a family, living apart from each other, gets stuck with each other in a small house in Cheolwon in the middle of the winter?*

When my mother was working as a teacher in Cheolwon five or six years ago, I once went to visit her with my father. It wasn't comfortable as the three of us slept under one blanket in her small studio apartment.

*Can you talk about Sung-geun's sudden remark about divorcing his wife after the retirement ceremony?*

In the film, the father has been living in Cheolwon and the mother in Chuncheon for a long time. The father feels that he's ready to start a new life, now that his sons are all grown up. Divorce is like Sung-geun's declaration of a new life.

*The family is unable to understand their father, who remains silent until the end.*

I talked a lot about family with Lee Im-kul and Park Jin-soo, the producer and screenwriter of the film. We all agreed that Korean fathers are really blunt and lacking expression. Rather than sharing their thoughts before they act, they act out right away. Sung-geun in the film is the typical Korean father figure.

*During the uncomfortable three-day stay at the father's house, the problems of each family member arise, including the mother, who's angry about her husband's announcement of wanting to divorce her; the eldest son's family, which needs money; and the second son, who needs to buy a house before his wedding. However, no one is able to resolve anything.*

I thought it portrayed the typical Korean family. One thinks that family can be open to each other and expose everything to each other, but that's actually not true. You can talk about your problems with a friend over a drink, but not with your parents. Families also have complaints about each other. You might be

able to talk about it and resolve it, but other problems surface again. So there is no such thing as a 'happy family without problems'. The family is a continuation of problems.

*There aren't any major incidents in the film, yet it powerfully grasps you until the end.*

There are many characters in the film; however, they're not exposed from the beginning, but their relationship to each other is gradually revealed. The family in *Cheol won gi haeng* seems like a normal family in the first scene, but their problems surface as the film progresses.

*It's impressive that the film demonstrates simple images without fancy technique, and the editing is bold in that it cuts out decisive passages in the film.*

*Cheol won gi haeng* is my graduation work from graduate school, the School of Film and Digital Contents of Dankook University. I wanted to eliminate any use of dramatic effects as much as I could, because the film captures a portrayal of the family in reality. I concluded that the camera needed to be fixed and stable, in order to faithfully capture the actors' performances. In that sense, I'm inspired by Hirokazu Koreeda's films.

Jang Sung-ran, *Magazine M*, 3 October 2014



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**Kim Dae-hwan** was born in Chuncheon, in the province of Kang-won in South Korea, in 1985. He studied film and digital media design at Hongik University in Seoul from 2005 until 2012. He then studied at the Graduate School of Cinematic Content of Dankook University in Yongin, South Korea until 2014. While a student, Kim directed two short films, *Picnic* (2011, 25 min.) and *Interview* (2012, 30 min.). *Cheol won gi haeng* is his first full-length feature film.



© Martin Farkas

## Cinema: A Public Affair

### Tatiana Brandrup

**Producer** Katrin Springer, Tatiana Brandrup **Production company** Filmkantine UG (Berlin, Germany). **Director** Tatiana Brandrup. **Screenplay** Tatiana Brandrup. **Director of photography** Martin Farkas, Tatiana Brandrup. **Sound** Tatiana Brandrup. **Music** Jonathan Bar Giora. **Sound design** Michal Gideon, Ariel Orshansky. **Editor** Tatiana Brandrup, Arsen Yagdjan.

DCP, colour. 96 min. Russian, German.

**Premiere** 12 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

What are films and the cinema capable of accomplishing in the best case? Who can answer this complex question more beautifully and wisely than Naum Kleiman? The Russian film historian and curator of the legendary Eisenstein Archive was director of the Moscow Film Museum, which was closed in 2005. Since then the cinematheque's films and collection have been in storage on the grounds of the Mosfilm Studios. The Moscow Film Museum – Kleiman and the Friends of the Museum – continued working in exile however, against all resistance. The film reconstructs the events leading up to the summer of 2014, when Kleiman was scandalously dismissed. "Cinema has the ability to turn people into citizens." Only a few film excerpts are needed to grasp why Kleiman is such an admired film advocate and enthusiast: like his allies Erika and Ulrich Gregor of Berlin's Arsenal cinema, Kleiman knows how to use film as a weapon in the fight for better, more open societies. It's thus fitting that while this film looks back on an impressive, courageous life, it first and foremost documents why Naum Kleiman's understanding of cinema in today's Russia can hardly be surpassed in terms of force and topicality.

*Dorothee Wenner*

## A site of freedom

"A film begins when it's over. It begins in conversations and the exchange of opinions. That's where the dream we have just seen crystallises. In this mental work, you become a bit better, freer, and more open."

Naum Kleiman

Moscow's film museum, the Musei Kino, was founded in 1989 by the world-famous film historian Naum Kleiman. It had enormous significance for Moscow in the years of change and for a whole generation of young Russian film directors. In 2005, a real estate scandal made the Musei Kino homeless; since then it has been only an archive. From 2005 to 2014, its Director Naum Kleiman and his associates struggled to get a new building. Their tireless commitment kept the 'Film Museum in Exile' alive by organising screenings almost daily in cinemas and museums all over Moscow. In October 2014, the Russian Culture Minister replaced Naum Kleiman with a director loyal to the current government. This spelled the end of the Musei Kino as a forum for film and the free exchange of ideas. I lived in Moscow from 2009 until 2014. I'm half Russian, half German. As a filmmaker, I'm surrounded by friends and colleagues who are constantly grappling with film. But I have never met people to whom film meant so much as the Muscovites who are struggling for the survival of this film library. For Naum Kleiman and his companions, film is a path to personal growth and democracy. Their commitment has moved me again and again over the years.

The mood among my Russian acquaintances is increasingly one of fear. Statements against the government can cost you your job. Many people want to leave the country.

My Russian family's experience has shown me what it means to live under a totalitarian system and how fear can mould daily life and become a reason to emigrate.

Naum Kleiman has spent his whole life under repressive regimes. Although he had the opportunity to emigrate, he never considered leaving the country. Fear is not an option for him. He responds to the current political situation with courage and imperturbability. The people who support him belong to the widest possible range of age and professional groups. Some of them have become internationally award-winning directors who regard the Musei Kino as their most important training ground. Others have no professional connection to film. But one thing unites them all: film's existential significance for them.

Around the globe, the digital revolution has changed filmmaking as well as how we see films. Anyone can shoot a film with their smartphone, and everyone can watch films alone at home. Although there are still film libraries in the West where movies can be watched in company, this option is valued less and less.

My film tells a story about people who no longer have a forum for the films that are important to them, even though they live in a country with one of the world's most significant and oldest film traditions. They no longer have any opportunity to discover and discuss 'their' and foreign films together. This absence suddenly makes palpable what such a place can mean. The Musei Kino was a site of freedom.

For Naum Kleiman, the right to freedom is a central theme. He experienced discrimination and deportation first-hand. Cinema plays a decisive role for him in the struggle against fear.

Listening to Naum Kleiman gives one courage.

Tatiana Brandrup

## Moscow on foot

Research for the film began in 2009. The project received a development grant. We tried everything to get production funding, but received only rejections. I have the impression that television stations have less and less scope for culturally demanding films. There were some enthusiastic commissioning editors who wanted to carry out the project, but it floundered because it was not considered a good ratings prospect. It was impossible to find funds to make *Cinema: A Public Affair*. At the same time, the political situation in Russia was growing tenuous. The threat to Naum Kleiman's work and the Musei Kino was increasing. So we decided to make the film independently, with a minimal budget. From 2011 to 2014, I shot alone, with the support of the cameraman Martin Farkas, who came to Moscow several times. When I recall shooting the film, the key term that occurs to me is 'on foot'. Moscow is always in a traffic jam; you can hardly move with a car, so you use the Metro instead. That's why I often went on foot, with the camera in tow. That opened up a lot of perspectives for me that I might not have found otherwise. Shooting over such a long period without financial means entails many limitations. But the advantage was that I was able to really get to know the people who appear in the film. That was important for the interviews. I got to meet a great many unusual, wonderful people during that time.

Tatiana Brandrup



© Solomon Ito

Tatiana Brandrup was born in North Carolina, United States, in 1965. She studied Visual Anthropology with Jean Rouch and others in Paris, then Feature Film Directing at New York University and at the University of Television and Film Munich. She has worked since 1990 as a director and screenwriter of feature films and television series and as a documentary film director for television and Internet formats. In 2004, she directed her feature film debut, *Georgisches Liebeslied/Georgian Lovesong*. She also works as a lecturer. Tatiana Brandrup lives in Tel Aviv.

## Films

1991: *Das Haus mit dem Bananenbaum/The House With the Banana Tree* (60 min.). 1995: *Neuschwanstein sehen und sterben/To Live and See Neuschwanstein* (15 min.). 2004: *Georgisches Liebeslied/Georgian Lovesong* (90 min.). 2015: *Cinema: A Public Affair*.



© Jem Cohen

# Counting

## Jem Cohen

**Producer** Patti Smith, Jem Cohen, Ryan Krivoshey, Graham Swindoll. **Production company** Gravity Hill c/o Cinema Guild (New York, USA). **Director** Jem Cohen. **Screenplay** Jem Cohen. **Director of photography** Jem Cohen. **Sound design** Jem Cohen. **Editor** Jem Cohen.

DCP, colour. 111 min. English.

**Premiere** 9 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

Jem Cohen's newest film is a personal, essayistic documentary in 15 chapters. The director composes images, sound and music with remarkable intensity, combining them into a hypnotic foray through the metropolises of our world: New York, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Istanbul, Porto and a city intended to remain unknown. Time passes and stands still at the same time. The camera is like a magnet for attracting and capturing the ephemeral: Flickering lights in windows, bunting and plastic bags fluttering in the wind. Snapshots of places both popular and unknown and of people, striking observations of everyday life, a tender gauging of reality, snippets of voiceovers in passing. It is life itself that the director shows us. Jem Cohen is at once a flaneur and a street smart worker, with his film an archive of his steps – a storeroom replete with dreamlike memories, including ones of Chris Marker's *Chats perchés*. Cats of all shapes and sizes appear in the frame again and again. *Counting* is like taking a Sunday walk through spatial and temporal interstices, as touching as it is magical.

Ansgar Vogt

## Similar to life-drawing

*Skywriting*, the piece that initiated the *Counting* project and now constitutes its final chapter, was made in reaction to the death of Chris Marker. I certainly can't claim to have known him well, but he was hardly the recluse that he's often painted to be. We met a few times, had been in occasional correspondence for over a decade, and the postscript is drawn from one of his e-mails. I'd once sent him a young filmmaker's first effort (Garret Scott's *Cul de Sac*) and with characteristic generosity he responded that he felt it was a masterpiece. A few years later, Scott died, suddenly. I reported the sad news to Chris and he wrote back noting the recent death of the sound engineer for his *Le Joli Mai* and reflecting, in his matchless way, on loss, memory (and Walter Benjamin, whom we both revered). The pebble of those words became the ripples of this film.

## No three-act storytelling

So, I made *Skywriting* and then kept going, pulling from my archive and shooting more whenever I could. Chapters began to accrue and reverberate. What began with a loose and personal tribute soon took off into other territory altogether, some of it urgent, some celebratory, and some uncomfortable. It became a portrait of the world as I saw and experienced it over the last few years, a chain of home movies, and a way of navigating difficult times. It also became a way of thinking about documentary itself and a reaction against certain tendencies – in particular, the increasing pressure to conform to formulas – most often related to 'three-act storytelling' built around characters who embark on 'arced journeys with satisfying conclusions.' There are, of course, excellent films made in that mode, but there are whole other realms of documentary work that take different routes altogether. Some are based on registering life as it unfolds, where observation and close listening are primary and little can be scripted, much less pitched. These films take on the stranger forms that personal engagement, rather than the marketplace, demands. Often these films are also deeply political. (I think not only of Marker, but of two others whose work I admire whom we recently lost, Harun Farocki and Alan Sekula).

## The afternoon light on a visitor's face

*Counting's* approach can be fairly described as less intellectually rigorous than the work of those filmmakers – it continues in a mode that I often think of as life-drawing. In reaction to my last film, *Museum Hours*, a woman in Long Island came up to me after the screening, which was at a strip mall. She said 'I had nothing to hold onto but I also had everything to hold onto.' I am hard pressed to say exactly what this new film is about, but it could be about that. It's about riding subways, planes, and trains; it is in fact affected by jet lag. It's about the afternoon light on a visitor's face. (Does it matter that this very light from my own backyard will soon be blocked by a luxury condo tower, one of thousands now obliterating countless neighbourhoods across the globe...?)

It's about Gareth walking Tom and Tom walking their dog. It's about seeing blood on the subway platform. It's about the Jewish Telegram joke ('Start worrying, details to follow.'). It's about animals and music; without them we are lost.

Most of all then, the project embodies an insistence which many filmmakers have shared but which Marker exemplified – that the most interesting terrain is the grey area between recognised categories and genres, the no-man's land where we actually live.

Jem Cohen



© Jem Cohen

Jem Cohen was born in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1962. In 1984, he graduated with a degree in Film and Photography from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. He lives in New York. Cohen's films are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Whitney Museum and have been screened in retrospectives in London, Oberhausen and Gijon. Jem Cohen has collaborated with the author Luc Sante and with numerous musicians and bands, including Fugazi, Patti Smith, Terry Riley, Godspeed You Black Emperor!, Gil Shaham/Orpheus Orchestra, R.E.M., Vic Chesnutt and The Ex.

## Films

1994: *Buried in Light* (60 min.). 1996: *Lost Book Found* (37 min.). 1999: *Amber City* (48 min.). 1999: *Instrument* (115 min.). 2000: *Little Flags* (6 min.). 2000: *Benjamin Smoke* (Co-director: Peter Silten, Berlinale Forum 2000, 75 min.). 2004: *Chain* (Berlinale Forum 2004, 99 min.). 2006: *Building a Broken Mousetrap* (62 min.). 2008: *Evening's Civil Twilight in Empires of Tin* (100 min.). 2009: *Anne Truitt, Working* (13 min.). 2009: *Buildings in a Field* (Berlinale Forum Expanded 2010). 2012: *Gravity Hill Newsreels* (64 min.). 2012: *Museum Hours* (107 min.). 2015: *Counting*.



© Images courtesy of Filmoteca UNAM

# Cuatro contra el mundo

## Four Against the World

### Alejandro Galindo

**Producer** César Santos Galindo. **Production company** Cinematografía Azteca (Mexico City, Mexico). **Director** Alejandro Galindo. **Screenplay** Alejandro Galindo, Gunther Gerszo. **Director of photography** Agustín Martínez Solares. **Production design** Gunther Gerszo. **Make-up** Margarita Ortega. **Sound** Rodolfo Benítez. **Music** Gustavo César Carrión. **Sound design** Enrique Rodríguez. **Editor** Carlos Savage.

**Cast** Victor Parra (Paco Mendiola), Leticia Palma (Lucrecia), Tito Junco (Máximo), José Pulido (Tony), Manuel Dondé (el Lagarto), Conchita Gentil Arcos (Doña Trini), Salvador Quiróz (el General), Sara Montes (Tony's girlfriend), José Elías Moreno (commander Canseco), Ángel Infante (truck driver).

DCP, black/white. 99 min. Spanish.

**World sales** Nuevo Cinema Latino

40s and 50s film noir is considered the most American of genres, influenced by the hardboiled fiction of Chandler and Hammett and shaped by European emigrants who developed its murky camerawork and narrative style. What is less well known however, is that the same phenomenon took hold in neighbouring Mexico as far back as the early 40s. Alejandro Galindo's *Cuatro contra el mundo*, seen as the prototype for Mexican film noir, can now be discovered in a restored version.

Galindo's unnerving film tells the story of the demise of a gang whose sights are set on a brewery's money transporter. The raid ends in bloodshed and only four of their unlucky number actually manage to escape. They barricade themselves in the attic apartment of their leader's girlfriend who had just been packing her bags, her breakup note already on the table. Faced now with a suitcase stuffed full of money, she reconsiders her decision. Here the story takes a turn toward Mexican melodrama: the lady gives her heart to the most stoic and cold of all the gangsters, who is allowed to show his feelings for the first and only time in his life.

*Christoph Terhechte*



## Mexican film noir

*Cuatro contra el mundo* revitalises the genre and its characters locked in another time. Director Galindo and Gunther Gerszo, set designer and scriptwriter, took a real event – the robbery of a beer truck – to make a singular plot that, while certainly Mexican, had all the marks of American film noir: a group of men risk it all in a crime that goes wrong.

We find feelings of guilt, a femme fatale who disrupts the fragile balance of male camaraderie, confinement, ambition, and betrayal. The presence of [actors] Victor Parra, Leticia Palma, Tito Junco, José Pulido and Manuel Dondé represents an effort to introduce realistic elements drawn from everyday news briefs in a naturalist drama that reflects urban crime more profoundly than any romantic film [of the Mexican crime melodrama genre] had previously done.

Rafael Aviña, *Catalogue of the Festival international de Cine de Morelia*



© Images courtesy of Filmateca UNAM

**Alejandro Galindo** (1906–1999) was born in Monterrey, Mexico. He started studying Odontology in Mexico City, but discontinued his studies and went to Hollywood to work at several film production companies. In 1930 he returned to Mexico City, where he began to write screenplays and direct radio plays. In 1935, he shot his first short film, the documentary *Teotihuacán, tierra*

*de emperadores*, followed by his feature film debut *Almas rebeldes* (1937). His career as a filmmaker reaches into the mid-1980s and encompasses some eighty films of different genres. He is regarded as the cinematographic chronicler of post-revolutionary Mexico.

### Films

1935: *Teotihuacán, tierra de emperadores*. 1937: *Almas rebeldes*. 1938: *Mientras Mexico duerme*. 1939: *El muerto murió*. 1940: *El monje loco*. 1941: *El rápido de las 9:15*. 1943: *Tribunal de justicia*. 1944: *La sombra de Chucho el Roto*. 1945: *Campeón sin corona*. 1946: *Los que volvieron*. 1947: *El muchacho alegre*. 1948: *Una familia de tantas*. 1949: *Confidencias de un ruletero*. 1950: *Cuatro contra el mundo / Four Against the World*. 1951: *Dicen que soy comunista*. 1952: *Sucedió en Acapulco*. 1953: *Espaldas mojadas*. 1954: *Y mañana serán mujeres*. 1955: *Tres melodías de amor*. 1956: *Policías y ladrones*. 1957: *Piernas de oro*. 1958: *La edad de la tentación*. 1959: *Ellas también son rebeldes*. 1960: *Mañana serán hombres*. 1961: *La mente y el crimen*. 1967: *Corona de lágrimas*. 1968: *Remolino de pasiones*. 1969: *Cristo 70*. 1970: *Simplemente vivir*. 1971: *Tacos al carbón*. 1972: *San Simón de los Magueyes*. 1973: *El juicio de Martín Cortés*. 1974: *...Y la mujer hizo al hombre*. 1977: *Mojados/Wetbacks*. 1978: *Milagro en el circo*. 1979: *El giro, el pinto y el colorado*. 1981: *Cruz de olvido*. 1982: *El color de nuestra piel*. 1985: *Lázaro Cárdenas*.



© Gunjo-iro

## ダリー・マルサン

# Dari Marusan

### Izumi Takahashi

**Producer** Izumi Takahashi, Hiroaki Saito. **Production companies** Kazumo (Tokyo, Japan); Gunjo-iro (Tokyo, Japan). **Director** Izumi Takahashi. **Screenplay** Izumi Takahashi. **Production design** Buji. **Sound** Takeshi Kawai. **Music** Masahiro Hiramoto.

**Cast** Hiromasa Hirose (Yoshikawa), Miho Ohshita (Dari), Takashi Matsumoto (Takatsudo), Midori Shin-e (Marina), Yasuhiro Isobe (Mitsu), Hikaru Takanezawa (Machizaki), Satoshi Yabumoto (Sasaki), Keiko Sugawara ("Aide"), Akie Namiki (Meg).

DCP, colour. 103 min. Japanese.

**Premiere** 26 November 2014, Tokyo FilmEx

**World sales** ColorBird

Traditional Japanese wooden Daruma dolls have no ears. The classmates of this film's hearing impaired heroine gave her the nickname 'Dari Marusan' in reference to such dolls. While Dari has now adopted the name as her own, she hasn't got over the hurt.

Yoshikawa (played by Hiromasa Hirose, Takahashi's long-time collaborator) is a severely traumatised man who keeps his distance from other people and thinks he has severed all links to the past. When the sensitive Dari and the gruff, inconsiderate Yoshikawa meet, old wounds resurface for the both of them.

The films of Izumi Takahashi are populated by defeated people, people who are physically and psychologically maimed, who hurt one other and are even looking to be hurt themselves. But as wounded as they may be, they are also always looking for healing and for someone to make that possible. Dari works for an agency that tracks down missing pets, and is given the assignment of finding the parrot that Yoshikawa lost two years previously. She will have to figure out what her client has really lost and find her own dignity in the process.

*Christoph Terhechte*

## Innerlife and physical communication

I wanted to portray the inner workings of people in a realistic way against a decidedly fantastic setting. My intent was not to focus on deafness; rather, I wanted to use physical movement to depict communication with others.

*Izumi Takahashi*

### "Happiness is something like taking a nap"

*Dari Marusan* is your second film as a director, after *The Soup, One Morning*. In the intervening years, you worked as a screenwriter. What was your motivation to get into directing again, and why did it take ten years?

**Izumi Takahashi:** I've always had motivation when it comes to directing films and seeking that expression. But I feel there's an extreme lack of freedom in Japanese film production, and so I had to wait for the right moment to get everything I wanted. My stance in the ten-year interim was therefore to make a living by writing screenplays.

*What exactly do you mean by 'an extreme lack of freedom'?*

In Japan, there's been a polarisation between commercial 'products' and creator-inspired 'work'. Although they fall into the same field of filmmaking, it's very difficult to establish both at the same time. I find it no longer possible to express myself cinematically and earn money at the same time. On the other hand, there is a strange cinematic space that exists in Japan for 'self-made' films that resemble, but are in fact completely different from, the conventional 'indies' category. Neither truly work nor hobby, these films are completely self-funded by the creator and are made entirely from self-interest. The creator, in full control, operates under no creative constraints. But to make such a film, conditions pertaining to money, labour and collaboration all have to coincide. This can take time. Therefore, I earn money by writing screenplays for commercial productions while awaiting the opportune moment to shoot my movies.

*One of the main characters, Dari, is a deaf female pet detective. How did the idea for this unique character come about?*

First, I wanted physical interaction, because communicating with Dari requires moving your body – even if you can't do sign language – whether it's just getting up, grabbing her, getting her to face you. I wanted to embody relations through the accumulation of details like that. Also, the loss of a pet is depicted once in the world of Haruki Murakami as throwing life off-balance. I wanted to visually show the act of getting that back, recovering something lost. That's how Dari came about.

*We are also introduced to a company boss, Mr Sasaki, who likes to break people's bones. How did come up with this cruel character?*

In Japan, we talk about 'black companies'. These are companies that subject their employees to long workdays, impossible sales quotas and practices that can drive workers to their mental limits. And yet they cling to these companies because there is no safety net to catch them if they fall from there. Put another way, the desperate desire to remain in such a place to the point of physical sacrifice itself creates 'monster' superiors like Sasaki.

*Several times we come across the image of a river that runs from top to bottom. What exactly do you mean by that?*

Humans are creatures who feel pain. And instinctively, they feel others' pain, too. So people who have become numb to pain will then abuse those weaker than themselves. And so forth down the line until there exists a vertical process of becoming desensitised to pain, whether it runs through a family, a company or a school. *Dari Marusan* tries to depict how one can break away from that chain of violence, from the overwhelming force of top-to-bottom, from one's given environment. It's about doing something, no matter how small, that can bring back a faint smile.

*What does the missing parakeet stand for?*

It's a symbol of being freed from gravity. But it only appears that way, because in reality, the bird must beat its wings several hundred times a minute. You can't just simply fly.

*Do the notions of freedom and happiness exist for you?*

Happiness is something like taking a nap. It feels soft and good. Take one if that's what you want. Freedom is a moment where feelings are all that is traveling between people. It's forgetting about one's own physicality.

*Interview: Ansgar Vogt, January 2015*



**Izumi Takahashi** was born in 1973 in Saitama, Japan. In 2001, he formed the Gunjo-iro production company with Hiro-sue Hiromasa. In addition to working as a director, he has also written numerous screenplays.

### Films

2005: *Aru asa, soup wa / The Soup One Morning* (90 min.). 2007: *Musunde-hiraite / What the Heart Craves* (Berlinale Forum 2008, 98 min.). 2011: *Ningen konchūki* (TV-series, episodes 1.3 und 1.4). 2012: *Atashi wa sekai nankaja naikara / I Am Not the World You Want to Change* (112 min.). 2014: *Dari Marusan*.

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## The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills

**Marcin Malaszczyk**

**Producer** Laura Hebberton, Marcin Malaszczyk, Agata Szymańska, Magdalena Kamińska. **Production companies** Mengamuk Films (Berlin, Germany); Hot Metal Films (Pittsburgh, USA); Balabusta (Warschau, Poland). **Director** Marcin Malaszczyk. **Screenplay** Marcin Malaszczyk. **Director of photography** Marcin Malaszczyk. **Sound** Tobias Rütther, Eric Ménard, Clara Bausch. **Sound design** Jochen Jezussek. **Editor** Maja Tennstedt.

**Cast** Natalie Warlow (Natalie), Maria Christine Brehmer (Maria), Stefania Malec (Stefania), Elise Brehmer (Elise), Emily Hunt (Emily), Emma Koster (Emma), Helena Strzelec (Helena), Zofia Siegienczuk (Zofia), Zofia Borkowska (Zofia), Stanisław Malec (Stanisław).

DCP, colour & black/white. 71 min. English, German, Polish.

**Premiere** 6 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

Back when families still used to chronicle their lives in photo albums, the summer holidays were often followed by snapshots of Christmas Eve, the interim period slipping away imageless. *The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills* takes its title from a collection of poems Charles Bukowski wrote for his lover. This film's depiction of everyday life comes across like poetry as well: three young women on a summer evening in an almost empty apartment. One of them later immerses herself in the sweet presence of small children, yet only for hours at a time, as a nanny. She puts on her make-up and the film slowly shifts to colour; from then on, it takes place in the apartment of a Polish grandmother, crammed full of the evidence of a long life. Friends come by to talk. A man dies. They drink tea. Life goes on. Autumn comes, and then winter: With tender intimacy, the film looks within the cosmos of the private for the moments in which the time in between becomes concentrated in the gaze of the horses running by. A touching illusion emerges, as if Marcin Malaszczyk managed to capture the fleeting moments of life between its turning points on film.

*Dorothee Wenner*

## Two countries, two lives

I was raised mainly by women. Women will be seen throughout the film. But the film is not about women. If it is, it is only so in passing. The femininity of the actresses forms a backdrop to a story about existing in a state of alienation from oneself and from the world. *The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills* arose out of a need to portray my life straddling Germany and Poland: to bring the intimate spaces and the relationships of these two worlds together in cinema. It is the first attempt to make accessible to a viewer these two realities that coexist within my mind. The thought of how such diverse realities or mental states can coexist simultaneously within the world, or even within a culture or society, has occupied me from childhood, and can be seen in my first full-length feature film *Sieniawka*, about a hospital for the nervously and mentally ill. The perspective of *The Days...* is even more personal, as I will elucidate my own private sphere through cinematic space: my internal world will be brought to the stage, so to speak. The cinematic representation of everyday life within *The Days...* is not without dramatic or stylistic interference. By showing the everyday lives of the protagonists, the cinematic narrative is able to closely reflect our present. In a series of different life situations portraying various states of mind, the film depicts how our self-perception changes over time and how we experience the passing of time in youth and age.

All the women who appear in the film are, or have at one point in my life, been close to me. My relationship to each of them remains unknown to the viewer. It is my intention that the people appearing before the camera are drawn into a process of self-theatricalisation and self-reflection during shooting. As with my previous work, I want the camera to attain an absolute closeness whilst remaining invisible, creating a fictional space and framework in which the viewer can imagine and create their own fiction. The viewer, like the people in the film, will be transported to the stage of everyday life and motivated to reflect upon him or herself.

The aforementioned procedure allows me to work both intuitively and improvisationally, with thoughts, ideas and themes originating organically in the moment.

With a long shooting period, the work on the film becomes a fixture in the daily lives of those involved, thus avoiding the usual production conditions, with their long periods of waiting for the next project.

I believe in a form of discursive filmmaking, one that closely follows one's own life and, in a way, works through one's own biography, in order to convey a picture of the present through the theatricalisation of the everyday.

Appearing within: my ex-girlfriend, my female friends, my mother, my great-aunts, my grandmother and her friends.

Marcin Malaszczyk

## Losses and changes

Blossoming youth, loneliness, child's play and motherhood, longing, desire, aging and loss appear in Marcin Malaszczyk's tenderly composed film, in which the director observes only the women in his life.

Crucially, it is the director's choice and combination of space and time that stand out: a drunken chat among girlfriends, followed by reckless dancing to YouTube videos in the summer heat of a living room, the reading of a fairy tale in a kindergarten, the half-bored

play with a child on the kitchen floor, the grandmother's falling asleep on her sofa, seen through the reflection of a TV screen, which is showing a production of *Madame Butterfly* – all these elements gain a deeper meaning in connection with discussions about a growing acceptance of one's body; with a mother's frustrated boredom demonstrated in a mean but funny power game with her clever little daughter; or with a grandmother drinking tea in the kitchen with a friend, the two women commiserating about the loss of their husbands, full of sorrow and big-hearted sympathy. The journey starts with young Australian women in Berlin, shot in black and white, and later takes a leap to colour and to Poland, where Malaszczyk's Polish aunts and grandmother are seen in the beginning of autumn. Interiors dominate the film, the places we share with our most trusted friends – the living rooms, kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms – adding to a strong sensation of close intimacy. Occasionally, the director lures us into dream-like shots of nature, the different seasons in Berlin and Poland, creating a universal relation to existential questions that occupy most people. With *The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills*, everyone will be reminded of their childhood in the care of their mother or other responsible adults; the anxiety of separation in light of the first big move to a new home; and experience the dignified preparedness that comes with a wiser age, when the loss of loved ones is near.

*The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills* gazes at life in all its facets – playful, wild, philosophical and nostalgic.

Verena von Stackelberg



Marcin Malaszczyk was born in 1985 in Kowary, Poland. He emigrated with his parents from communist Poland to what was then West Berlin, where he grew up. Malaszczyk studied Directing at the German Film and Television Academy Berlin (dffb). *The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills* is his second full-length feature film.

## Films

2010: *Der Schwimmer / The Swimmer* (29 min.). 2013: *Sieniawka* (Berlinale Forum 2013, 126 min.). 2014: *Orbitalna / Orbital* (Berlinale Forum Expanded 2014, 25 min.). 2015: *The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills*.



## Le dos rouge

### Portrait of the Artist

#### Antoine Barraud

**Producer** Vincent Wang, Cédric Walter, Antoine Barraud. **Production companies** House on Fire (Paris, France); Centre Pompidou (Paris, France); Anna Sanders Films (Paris, France). **Director** Antoine Barraud. **Screenplay** Antoine Barraud. **Director of photography** Antoine Parouty. **Production design** Antoine Barraud. **Make-up** Carrie Arbogast. **Sound** Gilles Bernadeau. **Music** Bertrand Bonello. **Editor** Cathérine Libert, Frédéric Piet.

**With** Bertrand Bonello (Bertrand), Jeanne Balibar (Célia Bhy No. 1), Géraldine Pailhas (Célia Bhy No. 2), Joana Preiss (Barbe), Pascal Greggory (Pascal), Sigrid Bouaziz (Édith), Valérie Dréville (Alice), Nicolas Maury (young journalist), Barbet Schroeder (doctor), Nathalie Boutefeu (Catherine), Nazim Boudjenah (Prométhée), Isild Le Besco (Renée), Alex Descas (Scottie), Marta Hoskins (Edwarda Kane), Charlotte Rampling (mother/voice)

DCP, colour. 127 min. French, English.

**Premiere** 3 October 2014, Centre Pompidou Paris

**World sales** Reel Suspects

A Chinese aphorism says that although the poet dreams he is a butterfly, it is perhaps instead the butterfly that dreams it has become a poet. In *Le dos rouge*, a famous filmmaker played by Bertrand Bonello searches for an image of the uncanny. An eccentric female art historian accompanies him through museums, where they examine and discuss numerous works of art. A metamorphosis gradually takes place, as red marks appear on the filmmaker's back. It seems that gazing at all that monstrosity has brought about a transformation in the observer. Bonello, a victim of Stendhal Syndrome, gradually loses himself in his admiration of the sublime uncanny. When he is hypnotised by the artworks, he exudes a fascination as great as that of the objects themselves. It's a pleasure to watch one artist gazing at another, for this film is a multi-layered mise en abyme. By creating a fictional portrait of an aesthete, Barraud subtly allows the paintings to enter into a dialogue with his newly created images. Artificiality meets art, and during the search for the ideal monster, a playful, aesthetic spell is cast.

*Cécile Tollu-Polonowski*

## Monster paintings

I have always had a deep-felt, mysterious obsession with museums. I am impressed by their apparent calm and solemnity in displaying what would be classified elsewhere as madness, psychiatry, beat-up lyricism or even absolute violence. Their nature is kind-hearted. I usually say my mother made me love the paintings and my father, an antiques dealer, the frames around them. I have spent several hours strolling through the long corridors museums and copying the pictures in my little sketchbooks. Nonetheless, with time, I couldn't avoid becoming a 'hasty' visitor, more eager to 'see' the paintings than actually 'looking' at them. I have recently discovered that the average time spent before a work of art is less than twenty seconds.

*Le dos rouge* took shape in an effort to counter this troubling trend. It was an opportunity to take the time to really look at the pictures. This need fused with the idea of putting together a personal panorama of monstrosity in art. I had a long-lasting passion for a few paintings that drew their inspiration from that theme, which I have been exploring since my first film. The transfigured face of a young girl by Hans Bellmer, the skin disorders of a Brazilian slave in a painting by Joachim da Rocha, Léon Spilliaert's emaciated figure in his self-portraits, the veiled and phantom-like gaze of Balthus' Alice, and then Bacon, Caravaggio, and many more. My desire to film those pictures was parallel to the desire of taking the close-up shot of a Hollywood actress. And then, I wanted to give Bertrand Bonello the leading role. His initial surprise gave way to curiosity, and he came on board with me on this unexpected adventure, excited and terrified at the same time. I imagined a gallery of strange and witty creatures for him to communicate with: his spouse, his producer, a historian, a young journalist and many others. The multiple faces and characters in this film are the expression of his own self. They all convey towards him. What makes this film exciting for me is the outcome of two different desires: mine and Bertrand Bonello's.

It is the result of two separate universes, both unrestrained and uncensored. *Le dos rouge* is in itself a unique creature.

Antoine Barraud

## "It was an incredible feeling to have the Louvre to ourselves"

Can you tell us how the idea of your new feature film was born?

**Antoine Barraud:** It arose from the collision of different desires. On the one hand, I wanted to make a film with several distinct characters, because my previous films were all focused on one or two main roles. Also, I wanted it to be light. Or at least lighter and funnier than what I'm used to working with. And having Paris as the backdrop also played a part in it. I've always thought of making films as a great excuse for travelling and even if I've always loved that city, it never really inspired me. But this time around, I really discovered another side of Paris that went hand-in-hand with not only the desire to film the paintings, but also the places that give them a home. It was an incredible feeling to have the Louvre to ourselves during an entire day of shooting, to be so close to such masterpieces. I wanted to trick the watchmen so I could stay there all night, alone, with the paintings, and look at them by candlelight, like Michèle in Carax's *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf*. I remember feeling the same way the first time I saw the Cranach room of the

Gemäldegalerie in Berlin. I felt I could live there with just a mattress and a drawing book. And from time to time, I'd walk a few rooms down and stare at the paintings by Bellini.

Was it an obvious choice to have Bertrand Bonello in the main role?

I wrote the movie with him in mind. I can't explain why. When you work on a movie, you spend a lot of time with the actors, with everyone involved in it... and I guess I wanted to spend some time with Bonello. I also felt he had some kind of hidden talent for acting... I think the character he plays can also be seen as a weird, twisted portrait of himself. Like in Cubism. But who cares for resemblance? Lies are as good as facts. Even better, sometimes.

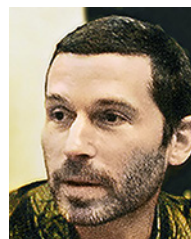
What was Bertrand Bonello like on set?

He was a brilliant actor, very professional and generous. Totally devoted to the movie. Day or night, covered in red paint, he was always great.

How did you persuade him to be in front of the camera?

I wrote him a letter. I told him I considered his films 'monster flicks', because they're all about different creatures. I also explained some fragments of the film's story and he said yes, with no conditions. The shooting was a long, hard ride. Four years! Sometimes we would stop for six or eight months and then get back together and take it from where we'd left off... Meanwhile, he directed *L'apollonide (House of Tolerance, 2011)* and *Saint Laurent (2014)* and I directed my first feature film, *Les gouffres (The Sinkholes, 2012)*, produced *Age is...* by Stephen Dwoskin, and wrote other projects. And during all this time, *Le dos rouge* would reunite us every now and then. It was really charming and exciting in a way. It gave me the time to give free rein to my ideas. There was no pressure. I felt like I was writing a very long novel. At one point we had no money, no schedule, nothing, really. But I felt everything was possible.

Source: production



Antoine Barraud was born in Aulnay-sous-Bois, France in 1971. Since making his first short film, *Monstre (2005)*, he has directed and produced several more films.

## Films

2005: *Monstre (27 min.)*. 2006: *Déluge (48 min.)*. 2007: *Song (59 min.)*. 2008: *Monstre numéro deux (36 min.)*. 2009: *River of Anger (38 min.)*. 2010: *La forêt des songes (54 min.)*. 2011: *Son of a Gun (Co-director: Claire Doyon, 13 min.)*. 2012: *Les gouffres / The Sinkholes (65 min.)*. 2014: *Le dos rouge / Portrait of the Artist*.





© Evangelia Kranioti

## Exotica, Erotica, Etc.

### Evangelia Kranioti

**Production** Charlotte Vincent. **Production company** Aurora Films (Paris, France). **Director** Evangelia Kranioti. **Screenplay** Evangelia Kranioti. **Director of photography** Evangelia Kranioti. **Sound** Evangelia Kranioti. **Music** Eric Neveux. **Sound design** Jérôme Gonthier. **Editor** Yorgos Lamprinos.

DCP, colour. 73 min. Spanish, Portuguese, Greek.

**Premiere** 10 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

This essay film tells of the ocean as a place of yearning, of the world of giant container ships and their crews, and the women that wait for them in ports and drinking holes. The protagonists' thoughts are rendered as inner monologues in voiceover, all set to striking documentary images. Sandy represents all the women willing to give themselves to strange men, the perfect complement for the desire of all those roaming restlessly from port to port. The film has an affectionate eye for this eccentric former prostitute, for her body marked by life, lust, and the men she's met, as well as for her free, yet romantic idea of love. She is a siren and Penelope in equal measure. The voices of the various sailors come to symbolise all the men who risk their lives facing dangers at sea and temptations on shore, much like Odysseus once did.

Alone among men on board gigantic freighters, the director travelled to 16 countries and lived with prostitutes in various harbour towns. From these experiences she has created a film whose impressive images and haunting soundtrack merge into a maritime symphony, a narrative of freedom, longing, love, and desire.

*Hanna Keller*

## Sailors and prostitutes

Ever since I can remember, my country's maritime tradition has been an inspiration for me. As a Greek native, I have always considered the sea as my vision of my motherland, generating a series of concepts strongly linked to the themes of wandering and desire. Thus in 2006, I decided to carry out an artistic and anthropologic endeavour focusing on the lives, travels and intimacies of Mediterranean sailors across the world.

I instinctively drew upon my culture and its rich mythology to find parallels between the great heroes of the past and today's everyday man and woman. The life and feats of Ulysses had always fascinated me as a child, but it was the sailor's figure in the literary work of the Greek poet, writer and seaman Nikos Kavvadias (1910-1975) that had the most significant impact on me. His writings, halfway between fiction and anthropology, deal with the endless human journey and give birth to the modern version of a nomadic myth. I managed to pursue my research solely over a nine-year process, and travelled to many countries, listening to the stories of my subjects, and learning about the wounds they carry, the dreams they harbour, their everyday struggles for dignity and happiness. The ports of multinational cities are a terra incognita of transition and impermanence, where sailors mingle with other people, overwhelmed by a primary need to feel alive. Erotic desire is the most significant expression of this urge. Thus for a few moments, all barriers – ideological, cultural, political, ethical or social – disappear; and a human being is standing naked in front of another human being. These brief, yet intense moments became the source for my interest in the prostitutes of the ports and, through them, the eroticisation of faraway places.

Prostitutes form an archetypal couple with sailors, offering an exciting metaphor on man's elementary relationship with the other. But how does one explore what lies in the deepest recesses of consciousness? What visual vocabulary does one choose to evoke the memories of a past life, the dreams left behind, the fantasies lying ahead, and how do they all lie in stark contrast with the grim and gritty reality of everyday life as a sailor on a ship, or a prostitute in a port?

## The rhythm of merchant ships

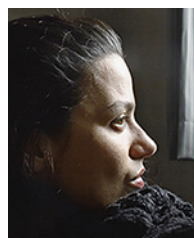
To answer these questions I decided to become a sailor myself and pursue my research on another, more meaningful level. As the only woman on board supertankers, bulk carriers and container ships of the Greek merchant navy, I experienced the flow of cargo during numerous crossings: from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, venturing into the Atlantic to the Strait of Magellan and the Pacific, from Panama to the Baltic, all the way to the North Pole. The works I have produced over this period include a vast photographic corpus and 450 hours of video footage, which led to the creation of my first documentary feature.

*Exotica, Erotica, Etc.* navigates centuries-old trade routes and speaks to the universal orientation towards exploration, expression and affection. But above all, it is a love note to the forgotten, hidden and ignored men and women whose long sojourns, dangerous travels and bouts of loneliness are paradoxically essential for societies to function.

*Exotica, Erotica, Etc.* is a documentary conceived as an endless journey, an on-going dialogue between man and woman, nature and the world. The film's non-linear narrative embraces the rhythm of merchant ships in perpetual motion and unfolds like a landscape, an archipelago: a retired woman of the night reflects on encounters

with past lovers long gone, perhaps lost at sea. We listen to her as she longs for one to return and fulfil the final romantic chapter of her life. The voice of an old captain coming from far away – the solitude of the ocean or the hotel room of an unknown port – becomes an echo to her monologue. Both characters are real and their personal narratives, kept intact, eventually weave a dense discussion about longing, memory and loss.

*Evangelia Kranioti*



© Evangelia Kranioti

**Evangelia Kranioti** was born in Athens in 1979. She studied piano at the Athens National Conservatory and Public Law at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She studied Visual Arts & Prints as well as Editorial Design at the École nationale supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris. In 2014, she graduated from Le Fresnoy – Studio national des Arts Contemporains in France. Since 2007, she has presented her work revolving around photography, installations and film in numerous solo and group exhibitions in several European countries as well as in the United States and in Japan. She is currently based in Paris. *Exotica, Erotica, Etc.* is her first feature-length film.



# Flotel Europa

## Vladimir Tomic

**Producer** Srdjan Keca, Selma Jusufbegovic. **Production companies** Selma Jusufbegovic (Kopenhagen, Denmark); Uzrok (Novi Sad, Serbia). **Director** Vladimir Tomic. **Screenplay** Vladimir Tomic. **Sound design** Alex Pavlovic. **Editor** Srdjan Keca.

DCP, colour. 70 min. Bosnian.

**Premiere** 6 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

When this film's director was still a boy, he stood in front of „Flotel Europa“ and was hugely excited about the prospect of this gigantic ship moored in the port of Copenhagen becoming a new home for him, his mother and his older brother. Together with about 1000 other refugees from the former Yugoslavia, they started life anew on the ship. Like many families did in the early 90s, they used to send video messages on VHS to the father, who had stayed back home: footage of the communal kitchen, the windowless cabin, the TV room, excursions made with cool new friends, a dance performance by the unattainable Melisa. Director Vladimir Tomic could have just used this material to illustrate a lost childhood and the squalor of refugee life, but by editing it together and drawing on his memories of that time, he succeeds in creating something new, something of his own, something special. The shift in perspective from internal to external turns *Flotel Europa* in an autobiographical film about a difficult lot, which is all the more touching because it liberates the refugee from the role of the victim – and transforms a shy young man into a lovable film star.

*Dorothee Wenner*

## Video tapes from Denmark

Not long before his death, my grandfather gave me an old VHS tape with the inscription 'To my grandfather from Flotel Europa'. On the tape was a recording of my mother, my brother, and me. We recorded it in 1993, during the time when there was a war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and we were living in Copenhagen, Denmark as refugees. As the phone line to Bosnia rarely worked, we refugees started recording our lives and personal messages on VHS tapes and sending them to our relatives through Red Cross humanitarian convoys. The Danish refugee centre we were living in was called Flotel Europa. It was, in fact, a ship/floating platform placed in one of many harbours in the centre of Copenhagen. We spent two years there, together with a thousand other Bosnian refugees, waiting for a decision on our asylum.

The VHS tape I once sent to my grandfather took me back to that time, and I felt that there was a story that needed to be told. Together with my dear friend and producer Selma Jusufbegovic, I started gathering the VHS material from other Bosnian refugees living in Denmark, and soon I had hundreds of hours of people's personal material in my hands. My memories of life at Flotel Europa were as vivid as the material, so I wrote them down. With the help of my good friend, filmmaker Srdjan Keca, we edited this film in one intensive month.

While making *Flotel Europa*, I felt as if I were reliving that period of my life when I was a twelve-year-old kid trying to find his place and live a normal life on a refugee ship, when not much of what was around him was normal.

I fell into a space between time, a place where refugees often find themselves when forced to leave their homes in search of new stable ground. While making *Flotel Europa*, I was able to look at my life from a distance. Seeing it as it is with all its ruthless beauty made me laugh and cry at the same time, and I would like the viewer to feel the same way.

Through this small personal story I tried to tell a much bigger story, of how Yugoslavia fell apart while I was jerking off.

Vladimir Tomić

### "We didn't want life to stop"

*Flotel Europe* shows a universal destiny through a very personal angle. How did you get the idea of introducing a coming-of-age story – your story, I suppose – as the main plotline? Are all the details authentic, or is there also some fiction involved?

In most of my work with film, I try to keep things on a personal level, especially when it comes to storytelling. That is because I can feel things better and I believe that if I can feel them strongly enough, the viewer will do the same. The coming-of-age story was natural for me to use in this film, as I experienced this story on my own skin.

Like the history that is written down by our selective memory, not one film can be authentic all the way. I don't believe in the one and only truth and I don't claim to know the whole truth, even the one about myself. So it is natural for me to use the material creatively and make the story work, even if there is some fiction involved.

How did you research the video material? How did the protagonists react when you spoke to them again after so many years?

Some time before his death, my grandfather gave me the VHS tape my mother, brother, and I recorded while living at the Flotel Europa refugee centre back in 1993. Because of the war, there was often no telephone communication with family in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so many Bosnian refugees recorded VHS letters and sent them through humanitarian convoys to their relatives in Bosnia. I knew that there was much more material out there among Bosnians in Denmark, so I started contacting them. The original idea I started working on was to shoot a film about those who recorded this material, together with people who were living at Flotel Europa, and use their interviews in the film, but my own story came to me and I decided to do it.

I didn't shoot any of the material in this film. It was made by Bosnian refugees who were much older than I was at the time. I met the protagonists and the ones who recorded the material again, and they gave me permission to use the material. The period of war and of being a refugee was a great source of fear in the lives of many Bosnians I talked with. It was a traumatic experience, which many would like to forget, but while interviewing them I also felt that there was a need to talk about this time, in order to put this story in its place.

How much material did you re-watch, and what feelings came up while watching those materials?

I think I re-watched more than 100 hours of this archive material. It was like taking out a family photo album and looking at the pictures. Everybody knows how it is. You look and wonder if everything really looked like that and happened that way. You laugh, maybe you cry when you see people who were dear to you, or not.

Many feelings came up, but the funny thing is that much of the time I was bored to death. I don't want to be arrogant, but I mean, how emotional can it be when you watch twenty photos taken by your uncle, from various positions, of your grandmother sitting on the sofa? But sometimes there were these glimmers in the material that shone through everything else and took me back to the time when I was a twelve-year-old kid living at Flotel Europa, struggling to belong to a group of people who were torn apart because of the war. Those small glimmers evoke every possible feeling there is, and it was those feelings I wanted to present to the viewer.

Do you think those video messages sent from Copenhagen to the war-torn former Yugoslavia also had an effect on how people dealt with the trauma of a lost identity?

For me, the most tragic thing about that war, apart, of course, from the lives that were lost, is the trauma of lost cohesion. Maybe not even identity; identity is a difficult term to talk about, since I believe it is not something stable, as we maybe would like it to be. The feeling of lost cohesion between people is the tragedy. An idea of a new group identity was the only thing many had to hold on in that difficult situation, so many people chose to deal with the loss of identity as Yugoslavs by belonging to an ethnically 'clean' group at the refugee centre. That is why nationalism, religion and folk music experienced

some kind of renaissance there. And it had to be filmed. All of it. Some people needed evidence that they existed.

*On the one hand, Flotel Europe talks about a lost youth and missing identities. On the other hand, there are many attempts to live life as 'normally' as possible...*

Most people adapt to the situation they are in as best they can. At Flotel Europa we did so too. For us children, it was easier somehow, as we could mostly rely on our parents or just get busy playing. But many grown-ups were traumatised or had nothing to do, so they fell into some state of apathy, and that was hard to watch. I remember one night waking up when I heard a scream from the kitchen as one man stabbed himself to death with the knife, after hearing that his only son had died in war. Or the woman who would send us kids to buy groceries from the shop. She would ask us to buy things for her son as well, although he had disappeared somewhere in Bosnia, and no one had heard from him in a very long time. All this frustration came out as hatred between different ethnic groups at Flotel Europa, and many times I and others experienced discrimination. We lived with all this, but there was no time to stop and think about these things. In those situations, you move. If you stop, you feel, and being so young I couldn't or I did not want to feel those things so close to me. That is why I found those who tried to live in some kind of 'normality'. We didn't want life to stop, we were not in the war anymore, and that war was not our war. We didn't need the new identity or our own 'clean' ethnic group. We escaped from all of that, but at Flotel Europa, far away from the war in Bosnia, much of what was happening there caught up with us again.

*After the Flotel Europe experience, you continued to live in Denmark, where you established yourself as a filmmaker. Many of your films deal with subjects having to do with the former Yugoslavia. Considering the refugees entering Europe from other parts of the world today, how would you define 'identity' within your personal biography?*

As I said before, I do not believe in identity as a stable thing, so why, then, do we try to hold on to it? After the experience of Flotel Europa, for many years I struggled to understand this, and it still goes on. Through my filmmaking those thoughts of identity and complexity of the human mind come to form, some kind of crystallisation. There are many levels on which identity can be discussed, but I prefer storytelling, as it brings lofty ideas down to the ground and gives them drama, poetry and meaning. Subjects having to do with the former Yugoslavia are often an inspiration for my work, as I find the Balkans to be a 'mirror' turned towards the rest of Europe, maybe the world. A relatively small part of Europe, it is a region that contains very complex identity issues, everything that Europe has been fighting to tame in itself for generations. As we see the rise of nationalism in Europe today, war and floods of refugees, once again we experience the shadow of our past coming over us. History repeats itself so much that in the end it becomes boring, just like the folkdance that spins round and round, or those twenty photos shot by an uncle of a grandmother sitting on the sofa. What better story is there to tell than that of a boy trying to live a normal life in a place where almost nothing around him is normal?

*Bernd Buder, January 2015*



Vladimir Tomic was born in 1980 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2002, he attended the CPH Film & Photo School in Copenhagen. From 2003 to 2009, he studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. From 2008 to 2009, he was an exchange student at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna. Vladimir Tomic lives and works in Copenhagen.

#### Films

2004: *Trilogy: Dead Nature and Movements, The Pianist, The Mailman* (18 min.). 2005: *Echo* (17 min.). 2006: *The Valley of Shadows* (12 min.). 2009: *My Lost Generation* (31 min.). 2012: *Unfinished Journeys* (43 min.). 2015: *Flotel Europa*.



© Galen Johnson

# The Forbidden Room

**Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson**

**Producer** David Christensen, Phoebe Greenberg, Penny Mancuso, Phyllis Laing. **Production companies** Phi Films (Montreal, Canada); Buffalo Gal Pictures (Winnipeg, Canada); National Film Board of Canada (Montreal, Quebec, Canada). **Director** Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson. **Screenplay** Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson, Robert Kotyk. **Director of photography** Stephanie Weber-Biron, Ben Kasulke. **Production design** Galen Johnson. **Set design** Brigitte Henry, Chris Lavis, Maciek Szczerbowski. **Costume** Elodie Mard, Yso South, Julie Charland. **Sound** Simon Plouffe, David Rose, John Gurdebeke, Vincent Riendeau, Gavin Fernandes. **Editor** John Gurdebeke.

**With** Roy Dupuis, Clara Furey, Louis Negin, Céline Bonnier, Karine Vanasse, Caroline Dhavernas, Paul Ahmarani, Mathieu Amalric, Udo Kier, Maria de Medeiros, Charlotte Rampling, Geraldine Chaplin.

DCP, colour & black/white. 130 min. English.

**Premiere** 26 January 2015, Sundance Film Festival

**World sales** Mongrel International

A submarine in distress, a lumberjack who mysteriously appears to the crew – wasn't he just in the dark forests of Holstein-Schleswig rescuing the beautiful Margot from the claws of the Red Wolves? A neurosurgeon who digs deeply into the brain of a manic patient; a murderer who pretends to be the victim of his own killings; a traumatised young woman „on the Deutsch-Kolumbianisch Express somewhere between Berlin and Bogota“; seductive skeletons, zeppelins colliding, and a hot bath that seems to have triggered the whole thing. Guy Maddin's rampant, anarchic film, co-directed by Evan Johnson, resembles an apparently chaotic, yet always significant eroto-claustrophobic nightmare that never seems to want to end, in which the plot, characters and locations constantly flow into one another in truly enigmatic style. The countless fantastic plotlines are structured like the intertwined arms of a spiral nebula – all of them inspired by real, imaginary and photographic memories of films from the silent era now lost, to which the half-damaged nitrate print aesthetic also pays fabulous homage.

*Christoph Terhechte*

## Stay safe!

We just have too much narrative in our heads, so much that we feel our brains are going to explode. With this film, we set out to create a controlled setting, an elaborate narrative network of subterranean locks, sluice gates, chambers, trap pipes, storm sewers and spelunking caves where all the past, present and future films in our large heads might safely blow! Where no one will be hurt by the spectacular Two-Strip Technicolor havoc we'll wreak on the screen, knowing the whole thing will drain away by credit roll. Stay safe and enjoy!

Guy Maddin

## "I've finally figured it out, this filmmaking business"

What can you tell me about your forthcoming feature, *The Forbidden Room*?

**Guy Maddin:** *The Forbidden Room*, my eleventh feature, was just completed and will have its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in January of 2015. It is blessed with some of my favourite actors, Roy Dupuis, Mathieu Amalric, Udo Kier, Charlotte Rampling, Geraldine Chaplin, Maria de Medeiros, Adele Haenel, Sophie Desmarais, Ariane Labed, Jacques Nolot, fantastic newcomer Clara Furey (who is such a star!), and of course my longstanding muse, Louis Negin, who has never been better. It was shot entirely in the studio, or in many small studios, but, strangely, in public studios, over three weeks at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris and another three weeks at the Centre PHI in Montreal, where any visitor to those institutions could simply walk up and watch us shoot, watch the movie stars act, at very close range. I think this is by far the best picture I've ever made. It was so strange to script a movie that would be shot in public, without giving away the exact plot to that public. And the movie is in fullest, fuller-than-full colour – more colourful than any other movie ever made. How's that, you ask? I'm feeling very proud now, like I've finally figured it all out, this filmmaking business. Of course I had a lot of help from great collaborators.

What is the connection between *The Forbidden Room* and your ongoing *Seances* project?

Well, they were both shot in public in Paris and Montreal, but there are big differences between the two. While *The Forbidden Room* is a feature film with its own separate story and stars, *Seances* will be an interactive narrative website, or app, that anyone online can visit and play with. It's produced by the sexy new incarnation of The National Film Board of Canada. I never thought I'd use the word sexy to describe the NFB, but it's so amazing now. The *Seances* site/app will launch in 2015, shortly after *The Forbidden Room* is released. I'll describe the workings of *Seances* in the next interview, closer to launch date. I can say that the museum installation in which we shot all our footage was called 'Spiritismes' in Paris, and 'Seances' in Montreal, but *Seances* is the final and only title now. It's a website where anyone online can hold 'séances' with the spirits of cinema, lost and forgotten cinema. The site has really evolved in recent months. It was going to be title-for-title remakes of specific lost films, but we found as we went along that the spirits of many other lost movies, and the spirit of loss in general, haunted our sets and demanded to be represented in front of our

cameras. I'm really excited about the results. No one knows, in spite of what might have been previously reported on Wikipedia and even in earlier interviews with me, what's finally going to launch, but I feel we have something original on our hands – all this boasting, I'm so sorry! I'm not usually like this. But Noah Cowan, back when he was one of the directors at the Toronto International Film Festival, told me he didn't think it was possible to make art on the Internet. That comment, from my dear friend, whom I owe \$60 by the way, reminded me of what people said about cinema when it was starting out, when the Moviolas and Kinetoscopes were considered artless novelties, so I felt the challenge to do this, to make internet art, to really reach everyone out there online who might be inclined to like my stuff. So while I shot the two projects at the same time, and under the same lost cinema spell, *The Forbidden Room* and *Seances* are two distinct entities, on two distinct platforms.

How did the writing process for *The Forbidden Room* and the *Seances* project differ from your previous films?

Since the beginning I'd always written with my best friend George Toles. When I started this project it was a pet obsession of mine. I started the writing process alone, way back in 2010. I had no idea where I wanted it to go. I just knew I wanted to adapt as short films a bunch of long-lost feature films. Almost every director whose career straddled the silent/talkie era has a number of lost films on his or her filmography. Some poor directors have lost almost their entire bodies of work, though they aren't alive any more to grieve over this. I wanted to shoot my own versions, as if I were reinterpreting holy texts, and present them to the world anew as reverent and irreverent glosses on the missing originals. I hired a former student of mine, Evan Johnson, as my research assistant, and he got into the project so much that he soon became my screenwriting partner. He brought on his friend Bob Kotyk to help, and soon the three of us got a lovely chemistry going. It helped that they were young and unemployed and had all the time in the world and little interest in money, because the project soon got very large. Every day we discovered more and more fascinating things about lost cinema, every day the conceptual tenets of the website and the feature evolved, became complicated, tangled themselves up in our ardent thoughts, and then suddenly became simple. It was kind of a miracle the way we figured it all out, whatever 'it' is! I asked George back to join us, but I know I had hurt his feelings by starting up without him. Thank God we remain friends. My wife Kim Morgan and I wrote three days' worth of shooting material as well – that was a blast. And even the great, great, great American poet John Ashbery chipped in with an enormous contribution, a screenwriting event that gave me gooseflesh of awe and soiled shorts – shat drawers of awe.

At one point, you were planning to shoot the *Seances* films Factory-style, in a Warhol-like process. How and why did you abandon that idea?

Well, I never really abandoned the *Seances*. They were called 'Hauntings' back in 2010 when I first took a stab at shooting adaptations of lost films, but once completed these were to be installation loops rather than short films. I did complete eleven of them for Noah Cowan, who installed them as projections for the opening of his Bell Lightbox Building, the nerve centre of TIFF (Toronto International Film Festival –Ed.). I deputised a bunch of talented young filmmakers I had met in my travels

to shoot these ‚Hauntings‘ in a factory situation. My writing partner Evan Johnson ran the factory under the job description Hauntings Coordinator. He had a business card made up that read, Evan Johnson – Hauntings coordinated, Coordination of Hauntings. His job was to keep churning out movies with a production team made up of wildly disparate styles and talents hired to direct a bunch of films all at once, all in the same room. This was a chaotic situation. I think before this, Evan’s biggest professional responsibility had been pouring toxic detergent into Rug Doctor machines. But he kept this wild affair going for a few weeks while I directed *Keyhole*. It was genuinely surreal watching all those silent films get shot, sometimes as many as six at a time, a row-upon-row productivity resembling, I imagine, those porn factories of urban legend. Ah, silent film, post-dubbed porn! I really wish we’d made our Hauntings Factory into the setting of a reality show. It looked and sounded so eerie, hearing almost nothing, while each in its own little circle of light, a half-dozen films made themselves in an otherwise dark room. We were going to shoot a lot of titles – a hundred! – but we were underprepared and definitely underfinanced, so we aborted the project after we had finished enough movies for Noah. Evan was stripped of his Hauntings Coordinator epaulettes – disgraced! But shortly after he became my full partner on these new projects. He is my co-director on both *The Forbidden Room* and the *Seances*.

*What more can you tell me about your writing process for The Forbidden Room and how it differed from your process on previous films?*

It was pretty much the same as with George. We found ideas we liked, argued and wrote. I really like to collaborate. I can’t write alone. I’m amazed I can even answer these questions alone.

*What are your current plans for the Seances website/app?*

The technicians at the NFB have cooked up some incredibly cinematic doodads for this super-sophisticated app. When all the kinks are worked out, which will be sometime early in the new year, movies will be watched in ways that perhaps the chestnutty old metaphors of cinema long ago ordained movies should be watched, in ways that surpass mere streaming, something more haunted, like ghost or soul streaming!

*Psychological realism still holds sway, tyrannically, even amongst writers and filmmakers who are not otherwise interested in realism, but you consciously work to create melodramatic characters and situations. Mostly, writers work to avoid melodrama. So why write melodrama?*

I think it’s easier to achieve psychological realism with melodramatic methods. Think of the psychological plausibility, or truth, in the greatest old fairy tales, the Bible, in Euripides, in a Joan Crawford or Barbara Stanwyck film, in Expressionist painting – in cave painting! There is every bit as much truth in these works as in all of Chekov, and more than in a security camera feed. And surface realism does not guarantee psychological truth, I think it merely misleads the viewer into thinking he beholds reality, when in fact the story beneath the surface might be very dishonest. I’ve always defined melodrama as the truth uninhibited, liberated, not the truth exaggerated as most people feel. I just watched John Waters’ *Female Trouble* – not realistic at all on the surface, but pure truth to its toxically melodramatic core.

*What ruins melodrama?*

Same thing that ruins all bad art, I guess: charmless dishonesty. There can be horrible melodrama too. I don’t like all of it. I just adore it when it’s done well. It feels more universal. I like all sorts of narrative genres; I don’t limit my tastes to one brushstroke. I’m a bit puzzled by people who eschew all melodrama. Don’t they realise they’re watching it in almost everything they view? Especially in reality television, which is usually, but not always, bad melodrama, but also in the straightest most ‘realistic’ movies. There, melodrama thrives in disguise. Isn’t all art the truth uninhibited to some degree? Sure, some art is the truth mystified, but honesty is usually exposed in some, sometimes inscrutable, way.

*What is the key to writing strong melodrama?*

I’m not sure; we’re still trying to do it. I would imagine even the great screenwriters and directors would admit that it’s different each time out, that sometimes it works and other times merely dullness results.

*Interview: Jonathan Ball, January 2015*



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**Guy Maddin** was born in Winnipeg, Canada, in 1956. He studied economics at the University of Winnipeg. He is an autodidact and shot his first short film, *The Dead Father*, in 1985. Maddin is an installation artist, screenwriter, cinematographer and filmmaker. He has also mounted numerous live performance versions of his films around the world, featuring live music, sound effects, singing and narration.

## Films

1985: *The Dead Father* (26 min.). 1988: *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* (72 min.). 1989: *Mauve Decade* (7 min.). 1990: *Archangel* (90 min.). 1991: *Indigo High-Hatters* (34 min.). 1992: *Careful* (100 min.). 1993: *The Poms of Satan* (5 min.). 1995: *The Hands of Ida* (30 min.). 1997: *Twilight of the Ice Nymphs* (91 min.). 2002: *Dracula – Pages from a Virgin’s Diary* (73 min.). 2003: *The Saddest Music in the World* (100 min.). 2004: *Cowards Bend the Knee* (60 min.). 2005: *My Dad Is 100 Years Old* (16 min.). 2006: *Brand Upon the Brain!* (Berlinale Forum 2007, 95 min.). 2007: *My Winnipeg* (Berlinale Forum 2008, 80 min.). 2008: *97 Percent True* (51 min.). 2009: *The Little White Cloud That Cried* (13 min.). 2009: *Night Mayor* (Berlinale Forum Expanded, 14 min.). 2011: *Keyhole* (94 min.). 2012: *Mundo Invisível* (70 min.). 2015: *The Forbidden Room*.



**Evan Johnson** has been working with Guy Maddin since 2009. Johnson lives in Winnipeg, Canada.





# Freie Zeiten

## After Work

### Janina Herhoffer

**Producer** Janina Herhoffer (Berlin, Germany). **Director** Janina Herhoffer. **Screenplay** Janina Herhoffer. **Director of photography** Tobias Zielony, Janina Herhoffer. **Script consultant** Judith Berges. **Sound mix** Jochen Jezussek. **Sound** Thomas Knapp, Michael Tumm. **Sound design** Jochen Jezussek. **Editor** Janina Herhoffer.

QuickTime ProRes, colour. 71 min. German.

**Premiere** 6 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

A girl band makes music. Women at a slimming course talk about successfully losing weight by controlling what they eat. Teenagers dance or go shopping. A role-play on conflicts at work is performed at a meeting of a men's group. Other people do yoga, meditate to the sound of Tibetan singing bowls, limber up by babbling gibberish or run laps in a gymnasium.

A documentary that trains its gaze on group leisure activities. There's something slightly insane about seeing an entire yoga class hanging upside down from ropes, an image that fascinates and alienates in equal measure. At moments like this, the protagonists come across like unknown creatures performing strange rituals. The film keeps watching and listening to them with true precision. The static camera and carefully considered framings generate clarity and concentration. The montage succeeds in bringing a feeling of abstraction into these concrete observations of recurring situations. A portrait of free time as a project designed to hone one's body, consciousness or performance skills emerges, whether through discipline, play or conversation. One would never have thought that research into leisure could be so visually rich.

*Birgit Kohler*

## “People look for instruction in every area of their lives”

*Let's begin with the obvious question: why make a film about leisure?*

**Janina Herhoffer:** I wanted to work with a theme we are all constantly surrounded by, one that most viewers relate to and about which they can form an opinion. Since people's own experiences and observations accompany and are compared with a film, the reception of that film is expanded to include the personal. I liked that idea. Ultimately, I arrived at the topic of leisure time; astonishingly, there have been hardly any films on this before. There is a great British black-and-white film from 1939 titled *Spare Time*, at least. But aside from that, leisure seems to be an overlooked theme. I can't really explain why. After all, what we do in the hours we're not working says a lot about the dominant zeitgeist.

*Leisure is a very broad topic. How did you approach the whole thing?*

I spent a lot of time considering how to deal with this topic – for example, whether I have to show work if I want to talk about leisure. But that would have constantly imposed conclusions: someone who does this kind of work spends his free time in this way, etc. That's why I did not show the context in which the people I portray move when they're not engaged in their leisure activities. This enables the viewer to develop conjectures about the figures involved, without confirming these ideas. In the end, the concept was very simple and clear: each activity is depicted within a situation, in the form of unprocessed excerpts. A band practices, a group of men converse, a yoga lesson is held. The point is to watch how people spend their free time.

*What distinguishes leisure activities from hobbies?*

The term 'hobby' is hardly used anymore, at least not without a value judgement; I think this mere fact is revealing. It used to be a matter of course to mention your hobbies on your CV. Today, the term has a petit bourgeois ring to it. That distinguishes it from the term 'leisure activity'. A hobby is, in principle, free of any intention; that may be why it no longer fits in with our times. A fairly well known German fashion designer has collected cacti for thirty years. That seems like a classic hobby to me. But my impression is that there has been a move toward professionalisation, even in leisure activities like growing cacti. Even when the leisure activity is not about one's own body but, as in this case, about an object, nowadays the aim is to achieve high standards, as professional as possible. The point is always to optimise something and to constantly acquire new specialised knowledge.

*Object-related leisure activities don't appear in Freie Zeiten. Why not?*

I thought about showing something like that in the film. Riding racing bicycles – powerfully object-related, almost fetishist. In it, too, the apparatus, the bicycle, is constantly expanded and changed. I also found it fascinating that people who ride racing bicycles in their free time try to become one with, to fuse with, their machine. But in the end, I concentrated more on group activities and especially on instructed groups, because I have the impression that they are especially representative of our time.

*In what way?*

Today, people look for instruction in every area of their lives. We encounter coaches and advisors everywhere, and that extends

to our free time. In some passages, however, I thought it was important to stretch the concept of free time and to let situations fall outside the given framework. That's why I show a girl band in its practice room and young people shopping. They all act without instruction.

*These two groups consist of teenagers, by coincidence – or maybe not coincidentally. They are what put me in the best mood. That could simply be because they are likable, charming people, or perhaps because the idea of self-optimisation does not seem to be salient. Whereby we could debate whether the idea of a better life that you buy with a new piece of clothing plays a role when they shop.*

The shopping was important to me for the film, because, like many other activities carried out in free time on one's body or one's attitude, it is a move to shape and it ultimately aims at one's self-perception. The young people are constantly expressing attributions like, 'You look low-class in that top', etc. Nonetheless, these activities seem freer and more carefree than others in the film, because they don't move within a clearly defined system. I'm amazed when I see fifteen grown people doing yoga and submitting themselves to the voice and instruction of a single person. There's something unsettling about it. And yet it's clear that precisely this instruction is what provides what many people seek there: an hour of time out.

*I was impressed by the apparatus with which the yogis work. The slings, stools and ropes.*

I always wonder how well disposed these objects are towards the human body. But older people really can't practice this kind of yoga without such aids.

*Let's talk about the formal aspects of Freie Zeiten. You worked with a static camera that rests on the protagonists for quite some time.*

I wanted to give the viewers a chance to observe people and their bodies. How do they behave in a situation in space, what do each of them look like when carrying out a certain motion or activity? What do their gestures and facial expressions tell about the demands they place on themselves or about the background they bring into the situation? I greatly enjoyed this aspect, during my research as well. At first I always had to participate in the respective activity, but at some point came the moment when I could merely watch. What a joy! Sometimes when the bodies follow such a defined performance, you see beauty. In other activities, there is scope for breaking out and interpreting. In the laughing group, for example, the idea is to act in freedom from all systems. But often there is only success or failure. What does failure mean then? Must you simply keep practicing, or did you choose the wrong system?

*Is the point of the laughing group to learn how to laugh again?*

The idea is, of course, that laughing is fun and good for you. In such groups, a fundamental human ability is institutionalised and instructed; it can be and is supposed to be trained. In my research, I found it fascinating that part of the point in the laughing group is to consciously make yourself ridiculous and step outside of your roles. I easily understood the attraction something like that can have.

*What do you see as the reason for the development that Freie Zeiten illustrates in general? For example, would you say that neoliberalism plays a role in it?*

I don't want to propound a particular hypothesis with the film. That's too narrow and stifles the discussion too much. I think it makes sense to look closely at things. After all, it's also a pleasant desire to practice something regularly, to devote oneself intensely to an activity. I was interested above all in the limits people run into in the framework of their leisure activities: at what moment do I get the impression that the ambition or the practice of such an activity turns against the person carrying it out.

*Interview: Anne Waak, January 2015*



**Janina Herhoffer** was born in Heidelberg in 1978. Since 2000, she has been an assistant editor of documentary and feature films; since 2001, she has been a freelance editor and script consultant. From 2003 to 2009, she studied Film Editing at the Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf (formerly University for Film and Television Konrad Wolf) in Potsdam-Babelsberg, Germany. Her

graduation film project *Es sind noch Berge draussen* (58 min.) was her first work as director. *Freie Zeiten* is her first full-length film.



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## タバから遠く離れて第二部

# Futaba kara toku hanarete dainibu

## Nuclear Nation II

### Atsushi Funahashi

**Producer** Yoshiko Hashimoto. **Production companies** Documentary Japan (Tokyo, Japan); Big River Films (Tokyo, Japan). **Director** Atsushi Funahashi. **Director of photography** Atsushi Funahashi, Yutaka Yamazaki. **Sound** Atsushi Funahashi. **Music** Haruyuki Suzuki. **Theme song** Ryuichi Sakamoto. **Sound design** Tomoji Kuwaki. **Editor** Atsushi Funahashi.

HDCAM, colour. 114 min. Japanese.

**Premiere** 15 November 2014, Tokio **World sales** Wide House

In 2012, Atsushi Funahashi presented *Nuclear Nation*, his film about the consequences of the March 2011 nuclear disaster in Fukushima Daiichi. 1400 people from nearby Futaba were evacuated to a school building in a Tokyo suburb. Funahashi documented people's desperation with true empathy and showed the full extent of the destruction. This year, he presents the sequel. We learn that the former mayor – previously a fervent advocate of nuclear energy and now a passionate fighter for the victims of the catastrophe – has now been replaced by someone younger. The single-minded cattle breeder also makes another appearance, originally having resisted the government's orders to evacuate the disaster zone and kill his livestock. Today, a look at his animals lays bare the consequences of radioactive contamination: they all have ulcers and open wounds. It wasn't until late 2014 that the final people left the school building – but they're unlikely ever to be able to return to their homes. The epicentre of the catastrophe has been declared a toxic waste disposal site. The inhabitants of Futaba, to whom nuclear energy once brought affluence, are now alone in paying the high price for it.

Gabriela Seidel-Hollaender

## The Faustian bargain

Many people have forgotten what happened in Fukushima. For them, it's ancient history. But radiation still leaks from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Contaminated water is flowing into the ocean, unstoppable, though the Prime Minister has announced it is 'under control'. Every time the plant's operator, Tepco, removes debris from the destroyed reactor buildings, radiation levels increase in places as far as 100 kilometres away.

Almost four years after the accident, more than 100 thousand people are still displaced. Most of them are living in temporary housing or subsidised apartments in Fukushima.

All the townspeople of Futaba (about 7,000 people) have been forced from their homes since ninety-six per cent of the town is a so-called 'difficult-to-return' zone – the government's euphemism for a 'no-return zone'.

Tepco is starting to compensate them. Through property assessments, they put a price on houses and land, based on what they were worth on 10 March 2011, the day before the accident. Century-old heritage homes in Futaba are valued at next to nothing, about the same as an empty plot of land. People from the 'difficult-to-return' zone are not fully compensated since it's assumed they will be able to return 'someday'. But the government won't say when they can expect that 'someday' to come.

Japan's Minister of the Environment says 'it's just a matter of *ka-neme* (money)'. Is that really all the people of Fukushima have lost? The community is dissipating. Connections between townspeople are disintegrating. The history and culture of Futaba, fostered over generations, is dying. It's as though time stopped there on 12 March 2011, the day they evacuated. There is no future where the town's 600 children can grow up together, in a safe and secure environment. But neither Tepco nor the Japanese government take responsibility for this.

## A form of modern colonialism

The government has planned to build what they call 'interim storage sites' for contaminated waste. They will start loading in radioactive soil in January 2015. Why do evacuees have to sell their homeland so it can become a nuclear dump?

It's a question of ethics. Their towns were used by Tepco for more than forty years without being told what they stood to lose in the event of an accident. They were not told they could lose their land, their more-than 1,000-year history, the prosperity that was supposed to continue beyond the first forty years after the plants were built.

Almost 100 per cent of the electricity Fukushima Daiichi produced was sent to the Tokyo metropolitan area. Tokyo has blindly pushed this risk far away, onto rural communities like Futaba. It's a feudalistic relationship between small towns and the central government that has persisted despite the Meiji Restoration [the political and social renewal in Japan at the end of the nineteenth century –Ed.] and the loss of the Second World War. I call it modern colonialism. We now realise we were selling our souls to demons just as Goethe's Faust did. The contamination is not limited to Fukushima. It is spreading all over Japan and the Pacific Ocean. When we imported the technology, we swallowed whole President Eisenhower's idea of 'Atoms for Peace', as something separate from the A-bombs that hit Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But we have now subjected ourselves to the same contamination and after-effects.

We brainwashed ourselves into thinking this would make our future bright. Now our ignorance and recklessness are backfiring, but many

Japanese, including government officials, don't want to admit it's our own fault. Our Faustian bargain has come back to haunt us. I strongly believe we need to face this inconvenient truth.

Atsushi Funahashi

## Futaba, to be continued

The nuclear disaster arising out of March 2011 has inspired hundreds of documentaries, but the first to receive international acclaim was Atsushi Funahashi's 2012 *Futaba kara toku hanarete*, about the exile of 1,415 residents from the area housing the crippled Fukushima Daiichi plant. Premiering at the Berlinale Forum less than a year after the meltdowns, it provided an extremely intimate look at an unconscionable situation, following the fates of evacuees from Futaba Machi, who had been forced to move 250 kilometres away to an abandoned high school in Saitama.

Highlighting the inhumane conditions, the on-going agonies, the unanswered questions about the true costs of nuclear energy and capitalism – and introducing us to feisty Futaba Mayor Katsutaka Idogawa, a cheerleader for nuclear power who was now regretting his support – the film quietly earned our moral outrage, as the government and Tepco continued to ignore demands for empathy and the information vacuum gradually sucked all hope from the survivors.

*Futaba kara toku hanarete* ended in December 2011 with over 600 residents still at the school, but Funahashi never stopped shooting. After cutting down over 400 hours of footage, he has now created the second chapter in the refugees' grim ordeal.

*Futaba kara toku hanarete dainibu / Nuclear Nation II* begins at New Year's 2012, and brings us forward to this past March, when the school is once again abandoned. In this chapter, there are no more bands coming to cheer up the evacuees, no more truckloads of fresh produce, no more visits from the emperor and empress, no more 'Gambare Futaba Machi!!' ['Hang in there, citizens of Futaba!' –Ed.] banners. But there are still the annual observances of prayer marking 11 March, the brief visits to crumbling homes in the exclusion zone (ninety-six per cent of the town is deemed uninhabitable), men shuffling into meetings they don't want to attend.

## Quarrelling about temporary storage

There is also increasing desperation, bickering over differing levels of resident compensation, and a new mayor: (...) Shiro Izawa is less outspoken, but equally opposed to the co-opting of Futaba as a dumping ground for irradiated soil and other nuclear debris. Although it is not included in the film, it was widely reported in September that Izawa and Fukushima Gov. Yuhei Sato had met with Prime Minister Abe to accept the government's proposal.

Fortunately, the mayor was on hand after the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan's sneak preview of *Futaba kara toku hanarete dainibu / Nuclear Nation II* to set the record straight: 'While it's true that the governor did make the decision to accept plans to build temporary storage for nuclear waste,' Izawa said, choosing his words carefully, 'the town of Futaba is still discussing the issue. So contrary to what the Japanese media has reported, we have not totally accepted the construction of these sites.'

Funahashi immediately added: 'What's being forgotten is the land-owners' [rights] to decide whether to sell or lease their land. The central and prefectural governments are going over their heads and accepting the facilities... and creating a context in which people are being forced to sell their land, even if it's against their will.'

Three and a half years after the triple disaster, close to 100,000 people still live in temporary facilities in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures due to construction delays on permanent housing. To a question about matching them up with suitable housing from the eight million vacant residences throughout Japan, Izawa said, 'For these people, everyday life is linked to a sense of community. They have their family, friends and relatives; they share an environment, share a history, and that's what makes a town... I think it's important to give them back the community they had, and not just let it collapse.' Funahashi added, 'I see it as a kind of human rights violation to force people to live in temporary housing.' Earlier, he had mentioned, 'The role of my film is to show they have lost something *kaneme* can never compensate.'

Atsushi Funahashi continues to document this on-going tragedy, and we should expect *Nuclear Nation III* to include Futaba's reactions to the controversial rebooting of Japan's nuclear program.

*Karen Severns, 14 October 2014*



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**Atsushi Funahashi** was born in Osaka in 1974. He studied Film at Tokyo University before moving to New York in 1997, where he studied Film Directing at the School of Visual Arts. In 1999 he started a production company with Alyssa Jo Black and Eric van den Brulle. Funahashi has also directed several documentaries about social and cultural issues in New York City for NHK,

Japan's public broadcaster. Along with his work as a filmmaker, Funahashi writes for Japanese film and art magazines such as *10 + 1*, *Kinema Junpo*, and *Eureka*. He moved back to Tokyo in 2007.

### Films

1994: *Blind Blue* (40 min.). 1998: *It Happens* (10 min.). 1999: *Talkie & Silence* (17 min.). 2002: *Echoes* (72 min.). 2002: *One Year from the Day – Annual Commemoration of September 11* (50 min.). 2002: *After-School Education* (50 min.). 2002: *New Yorkers Comedy Special* (50 min.). 2002: *New Yorkers Fort Greene Special* (50 min.). 2002: *New Yorkers Broadway Special* (50 min.). 2003: *Jazz on Sundays* (20 min.). 2005: *Big River* (Berlinale Forum 2006, 105 min.). 2005: *For the Joyful Moment of Life – Treatment of Alzheimer's Disease* (20 min.). 2006: *The Unforgettable – 5th Anniversary of September 11* (50 min.). 2006: *Dialogue with a Terrorist's Mother* (20 min.). 2007: *Stop Global Warming – the First Step* (20 min.). 2009: *Deep in the Valley / Yanaka boshoku* (Forum 2009, 135 min.). 2011: *Nishimura Kyotaro Suspense Series, Murder Express Kusatsu* (90 min.). 2012: *Nuclear Nation / Futaba kara toku hanarete* (Berlinale Forum 2012, 145 min.). 2012: *Sakura namiki no mankai no shita ni / Cold Bloom* (Berlinale Forum 2013, 119 min.). 2013: *Radioactive* (35 min.). 2014: *Futaba kara toku hanarete dainibu / Nuclear Nation II*.



## Der Geldkomplex (El complejo de dinero)

### Der Geldkomplex (The Money Complex)

#### Juan Rodríguez

**Producer** Juan Rodríguez. **Production company** Tajo abajo (Las Matas, Spain). **Director** Juan Rodríguez. **Screenplay** Eloy Enciso, Eduard Mont de Palol, Juan Rodríguez. **Director of photography** Roman Lechapelier. **Sound** Nicolas Tsabertidis. **Sound design** Nicolas Tsabertidis. **Editor** Eloy Enciso.

**Cast** Lola Rubio (Francisca), Gianfranco Poddighe (Henry), Rafael Lamata (Rafael), Eduard Mont de Palol (Lucas), Jorge Dutor (The Son), Katrin Memmer (The Bride), Pablo Herranz (The Idiot), Juan Rodríguez (Domingo), Cecilia Molano (Cecilia), Julia de Castro (Singer), Miguel Rodríguez (Musician).

DCP, colour. 76 min. Spanish, German.

**Premiere** 10 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

Rafael resides on his southern Spanish finca with his friends, a group of bohemian refuseniks, adventurers and leftover revolutionaries. They loaf about in style in the idyllic surroundings, playing around, drinking, chatting, reciting verse, posing and performing. Early on, Rafael's son shows up with his German fiancée, who soon runs off with Julio after some four-handed piano playing. Henry is on a relentless quest for new business ventures and is prospecting for gold in a secret mine; Franziska prefers to ignore the need to earn money; Lucas reads book after book about economics and culture. And then there's Domingo, who is supposed to relieve a certain Herr Müller of Düsseldorf of three million Euros.

This debut film is loosely based on Franziska zu Reventlow's 1916 anarchic novel of the same name and is directed with a lightness of touch and subtle feeling for comedy and the absurd. It is an impish tale about our brief appearances on life's stage and our struggle for the right to exist under the conditions of the current system. It is about 'love or money'. And about friendship.

*Hanna Keller*

## The camera knows more than we do

Everywhere in Europe, people are afraid of losing their riches, instead of doing something useful, or even joyful, with that wealth. Franziska zu Reventlow made the following proposal: 'Let's play that money game as if it were the only thing that really mattered'. We followed that suggestion, but soon realised that we were working with some kind of desperate happiness; a journey that seemed to lead to nothing but painful irony. But it also gave us the chance to work with masks, to perform a summer theatre, to create distance from a situation that it is not at all so far removed from our day-to-day lives. When a mask reveals the truth, that is where one of the doors that leads to reality can be found. We gain access to a truth, an emotion, through the mask.

The scenes in *Der Geldkomplex (El complejo de dinero)* have no centre. The film has no centre. Rather, it represents a flow of ideas that can't be reduced to a single meaning. The idea was that the camera should maintain a distance so that the aura of each of the actors is preserved. We did not shoot in the bedrooms. A close-up is a basic tool used to give a film psychological weight. Since this film is by no means dogmatic, we filmed some close-ups. Filmmaking is a hard job to do; maybe that's why it has failed. It's aggressive, or perhaps more correctly: it can be aggressive with reality. When fiction and representation are possible, then reality becomes content. The camera knows more than we do. A gathering of friends. Their enthusiasm lies in their freedom. The more freedom they have, the more enthusiasm they feel. And vice versa. The punishment for those who do not submit to the work ethic is to suffer from a money complex. Whatever it may be, it will always involve facing up to reality. Saying things directly at times, showing things as they really are. Slightly seriously and somewhat jokingly. Leisure in excess, but beyond that: a lack of experience. The anxiety of improvised takes. When do they start, when do they end? Cinema makes us stronger, more aware of our fragility, and more capable of coming to terms with it.

Juan Rodríguez

## "The film is a response to the overdose of 'confessionalism' in which we live"

*How did you come across the novel Der Geldkomplex ('The Money Complex') by Franziska zu Reventlow, and what fascinated you about the book?*

**Juan Rodríguez:** The Spanish translation of *Der Geldkomplex* was published in Spain in 2011. It had been unknown in Spain before then. Eduard Mont de Palol, the co-screenwriter on the film, and I were looking for a text we could use as a basis for a film. Right from the start, we thought it was much better to work from an already existing text than to make up the story and the characters ourselves. Eduard proposed *Under the Volcano* by Malcolm Lowry, and I suggested *The Sailor from Gibraltar* by Marguerite Duras – unaware that a film version already existed, directed by Tony Richardson. Fortunately, *Der Geldkomplex* appeared very early on in the search process. I read it and loved it. I passed it on to Eduard, who quickly wrote back to me confirming that we now had our starting-point. It's a magnificent epistolary novel full of multi-layered, eccentric comedy. From the very first line, the narrator's witty cynicism prevents any sort of illusion. It's wonderful to imagine where this attitude came from: perhaps the Paris Commune, which occurred in the same year in which Franziska was born? Perhaps it also

has to do with Nietzsche's jolliest side. In short, we had a whole range of possibilities that allowed for very subtle jesting about Franziska zu Reventlow's contemporary, Dr Freud from Vienna.

*What were the greatest challenges in transforming the novel into a script?*

The most significant difference with respect to the novel is that we turned the Alpine sanatorium into a country estate in southern Spain, where instead of a director of the clinic we have the owner of the large estate, and instead of a drunk and disorderly patient – in the novel it's a Russian baron – there's a son with the same characteristics.

The reflections on property and inheritance, which are so important within the novel, are almost taken for granted in the film, so to speak. But there was never a script. The basis of the work with the actors was a description of each character of no more than two pages. And we also had a series of scenes written in the manner of: 'Francisca talks to Rafael about her marriage as they stroll beneath the acacias', or 'The son accompanies Henry to the mine'. Those scenes were used to organise the work, the day-to-day filming. I wouldn't say that we improvised in our work with the actors, rather that we approached the representation of the characters in a playful manner. There is a certain energy present through which each actor relates to his character. There is a gradual process of assimilation – or projection – and the time comes when you have to go on stage and you let the character come forth.

This adaptation process, or creation of our own system, took some time – the first two weeks, more or less. We followed a completely anti-psychological approach, which has a lot to do with the type of staging that I wanted to research: the type that doesn't dictate the spectator's vision, but respects their freedom as an observer.

Otherwise, I don't think it was difficult at all to understand and represent these characters, who maintain such a morbid relationship with the world of work and the world of money. In this sense, I'd say the film is realistic, and to some extent a collective self-portrait.

*How did you put your ensemble together?*

The actors are friends of mine; the majority have professional training in contemporary dance or performance. They are used to being on stage in a particular way: always intent on making clear that space exists and that it is 'occupied' by objects. I had no intention of taking on the usual dynamics of filming which, especially in fiction, are very hierarchically structured. I think it is legitimate to speak of a democratisation of creation. That may require the order of priorities to be inverted: not looking to make a 'good film' at all costs, but to find a way of committing ourselves to work where we can bring together our experiences in life. In other words, to not separate work from life; to not have money or ambition as a catalyst, but rather a humane organisation of time and work. So we had the theme, the characters, a proposal for the staging, Roman Lechapelier as director of photography and Nicolas Tsabertidis as sound engineer, and five weeks to work freely. Gradually, we began to harmonise with one another as we became immersed in the cinema trade.

*The characters seem to put the 'public' before the 'private'.*

You could say that the 'superficial' prevails over the 'profound', which refers to a certain concept of cinema. I think the famous



'obsessive worlds' of film directors are a journalistic cliché. At the same time, you could say that *Der Geldkomplex (El complejo de dinero)* is a response to the overdose of a kind of 'confessionalism' in which we live. What is private is instantly made public – or should I say publicised? – on Facebook, etc. Hanging on to modesty, resisting the display of feelings, are things that are sorely missed. It is as if the pendulum had swung from classical nineteenth-century repression (Victorian, Lutheran or Roman Catholic; they each have their own charms) to the current proliferation where we feel entitled to do or say whatever we please because 'That's how I feel'. The characters in *Der Geldkomplex (El complejo de dinero)* are able to maintain dignity in a situation in which it is by no means easy to do. Given the sensory overload we are faced with at present, it is difficult to find the serenity necessary to avoid being swept along with it. Stepping aside might be a good idea in this respect.

*In the second half of the film, there is a song that all of your remaining characters sing together. Which song do they sing, and what is the meaning behind this sequence?*

It is a traditional Mexican farewell song. I think the meaning behind it is exactly what the film narrates: all the characters gather around the father to say farewell to his son who is leaving the estate, jilted after discovering that his girlfriend has run off with his friend. The reversal of values is also apparent: in the film it is more natural for the father to continue to offer abode to his helpless friends than to dismiss them from his home in order to satisfy or comfort his son, who seemingly has even greater problems to solve. Perhaps no one has yet diagnosed him with a money complex, and he is therefore unaware that he suffers from one.

*What is the meaning of nature and landscape in the film?*

We were working from an approach to cinema that accepts its artificiality. In that sense, nature is another character, which is not too present at the start of the film but gradually gains prominence. I think the contrast between the representations by the actors, in which some kind of distancing intercedes, and the replication of what is 'real' as captured by the film technique, has great expressive strength and complexity. The concept of nature in the film can be understood through Henry, the 'fanciful entrepreneur' gold prospector who sets out into the fields with his tools, like a painter, and comes back home empty-handed, perhaps with the sole satisfaction of having spent a pleasant day outdoors. However, he is capable of imagining that there might be something in those stones. He builds a plaster-cast model, puts something gold on top and then a blue ribbon. Without harming anyone, without destroying the world.

*Interview: Ansgar Vogt, January 2015*



© Chema Castiello

Juan Rodríguez was born in Madrid, Spain, in 1971. After studying film, he completed a degree in History. He then ran the art gallery La verde oliva in Granada. In 2008, he started the Tajo abajo production company, and made his first short film, *A la sierra de Armenia / To Armenia's Mountains*. He co-founded the Institute of Illiterate Art in 2013, along with a group of choreographers and performers. *Der Geldkomplex* is his first full-length feature film.

#### Films

2008: *A la sierra de Armenia / To Armenia's Mountains* (12 min.). 2010: *Hoja sin árbol / Leaf, Treeless* (25 min.). 2011: *Hoja sin árbol (II) / Leaf, Treeless (II)* (25 min.). 2015: *Der Geldkomplex (El complejo de dinero) / Der Geldkomplex (The Money Complex)*.



# Il gesto delle mani

## Hand Gestures

**Francesco Clerici**

**Producer** Velasco Vitali, Matteo Visconti de Modrone. **Production companies** Velasco Vitali (Bellano, Italy); Fonderia Artistica Battaglia (Milan, Italy). **Director** Francesco Clerici. **Screenplay** Francesco Clerici. **Director of photography** Francesco Clerici. **Production design** Velasco Vitali. **Sound** Michele Brambilla. **Music** Claudio Gotti. **Sound Design** Mattia Pontremoli. **Editor** Francesco Clerici.

DCP, colour & black/white. 77 min. Italian.  
**Premiere** 11 February 2015, Berlinale Forum  
**World sales** Jon Barrenechea

A bronze foundry in Milan. Hands that shape, knead, model, mix, repair, sand and polish. Work carried out on matter and fire, out of which the bronze figure of a dog by artist Velasco Vitali will ultimately emerge. The Fonderia Artistica Battaglia was founded in 1913 and is one of the oldest and most important artistic foundries in Italy. It produces bronze sculptures using lost-wax casting, a founding technique that dates back to the 4th century BC and is still done in much the same way today.

The film draws on a purely observational mode. It takes note of the workshop and its equipment, the peeling posters on the walls showing how long people have been working here. The sounds of work blend into the noise of the radio and the conversations in the background. The camera's concentrated, patient gaze corresponds to the handwork being carried out. The individual stages in the creation process are interspersed with historical images of the foundry, revealing a continuity that spans decades. It is the hands and their gestures that link us to the world and create a connecting line from the past to the present.

*Annette Lingg*

## The artisan's rituals: the Fonderia Artistica Battaglia in Milan

*Il gesto delle mani* wants to be both scientific and (in particular) narrative. It describes life and work within the Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, a historic place in Milan that is currently under the management of the FAI, the Italian Artistic Foundation, which looks after historic and artistic sites. This film describes the noise and the passing of time during a working day at the foundry. The artisans who work there are depicted only through their work, their faces and their movements.

### Like an ancient holy ritual

The process of 'giving birth and re-birth' to a dog sculpture, which refers to the process of the red wax dog turning into the bronze one, is fascinating to me because it looks like an ancient holy ritual in an old church; an abstract gospel dedicated to life and to birth. Velasco Vitali's sculptures of dogs are famous in Italy, and to me they seemed a perfect vessel by which the viewer can travel through the process of their creation. This journey is possible thanks to these artisans' culture, knowledge and love of their craft. As the Italian sculptor Giacomo Manzù once said, 'Sculpture is not a concept. Sculpture is the hand gesture; a gesture of love. In the gesture of the body lies the relationship with the world, the way you see it, the way you feel it, the way you own it.'

### Story of the production

After five years of working with Velasco Vitali and constantly sharing ideas, I decided to shoot some footage at the foundry. He loved the initial edits, so we decided to create a feature documentary based on capturing the various artistic and scientific processes. Velasco supported me in various roles on this film – as producer, advisor, sculptor and 'actor'. In the beginning of the process, everything starts from modelling the dog sculpture in wax and ends with the finished sculpture joining a 'pack' of other dog sculptures. This film is very much a 'family business' production, with a very low budget and a very high level of cooperation. We refused to give the project to bigger film companies that were interested. The production started in February 2013 and was finished in November 2014. I didn't want to provide narration or any chapter interruption (as production companies would have asked me to). I wanted the story of the 'birth' of the bronze dog to pass in front of the spectator as a unique flow, where this process becomes an abstract presence lost in the gestures of the job and in this medieval location.

We didn't want to disrupt the artisans' work, so initially I shot footage alone. After spending several days at the Fonderia Battaglia, I wondered if I should stop shooting and apply for a job, as I was completely hypnotised by the rhythm of their gestures whilst working.

### Director's choices

Stefano Crespi, an Italian art critic, has said of the workers at the Fonderia Battaglia: 'Unforgettable workers, wrapped in austere silence inside their own rite.'

The film attempts to present images and sound in this austere silence and those rites in an environment out of time. For this reason I did not use an extra-diegetical soundtrack and favoured a fixed camera (with a few movements that were functional to the rhythm). I tried to use the focus sometimes in an apparently 'wrong' way and to make few 'dirty' shots, alternating them with very precise and 'clean' shots. I also decided to cut out some moments from the 'didactically predictable' chronological order.

There's a moment just right before the foundry phase where I edited the process in a cryptic manner: you'll understand later what happened before. Somehow I tried to create (strange perhaps for a seventy-seven-minute documentary with almost no dialogue and no music) a thriller-like suspense.

### Archive footage

The archive material was found only after the filming of the present-day footage. But once I found it, I was sure it would be perfectly placed in the gestures and rituals of foundry work today. The lost-wax casting method has not changed since the pre-historic period; the process is the same.

The 16 mm footage by TV camera operator Sergio Arnold from 1967 is the only old footage I found about artistic foundry work in Italy. I searched at Archivio Luce, at the Italian Home Movies National Archive in Bologna, and at RAI (Italian Radio and Television) in Milan and Rome: nothing else exists in Italy about this. We were about to give up on the research when I received a phone call from the Battaglia Foundry telling me they had found this 16 mm film in a basement. Not only had this old footage been shot at the same foundry where we had shot, it also showed the same gestures and process.

Arnold's material had no audio, so I tried to insert the soundscape of today's foundry onto the older film, matching the moments of the processes. I showed it initially to friends and no one noticed that the sound was not the original one. It was exactly what I wanted: a clear temporal continuity that creates a sort of 'outside of time' moment. The past and the present are two entities that are completely mixed in the work in the foundry and this is observed in the documentary.

### The coming generation

At the beginning of the shoot, the artisans were suspicious about my presence, even after they if they got to know me. While coming and going from the Fonderia Battaglia, I started to learn about this fascinating process and the history behind how these skills, culture and craft are handed down through the generations. I then shyly started documenting the artisans and they slowly started to accept me; in exchange, they wanted me to give them photographs of them working.

When viewing this documentation, the artisans themselves discovered that their gestures in the images and footage revealed how skilled they looked. After that, we became friends. Lino, one of the artisans, showed me some old pictures of his, and a month later he gave me a DVD he had: this is the old footage from 1974 I edited at the end of *Il gesto delle mani*. The quality was not good enough to be used in the documentary's flow, but I wanted to use it at the end of the film during the final credits, as a summary of something we already saw in 2014 and in 1967.

Lino de Ponti and Mario Conti are probably two of the best artisans in their field. Both of them will retire in the next couple of years and part of their knowledge will soon disappear. Battaglia is now recruiting young workers and making sure that they have enough time to learn the secrets of each process before Lino and Mario retire.

### Underground history of contemporary art

While shooting them they told me many stories about the bronze process and about artists they had met – for instance, about an African sculptor who cooking rabbits in the heat of the foundry during the fusion process; or about Lucio Fontana, Giuseppe Penone

or Arnaldo Pomodoro asking for their advice. Some of these stories were funny and some very interesting and all were historically relevant. They make up an underground history of contemporary art made by artisans. I collected these stories and they will create the foundations for what may become a second documentary, or a book. The artisans' work in this foundry is very important for Italian culture and for all of art history. The artisans at the Fonderia Artistica Battaglia produce art, but the unique gestures they make while producing it deserve to be observed and pondered.

*Francesco Clerici*



Francesco Clerici was born in Milan, Italy in 1983. He studied Art History at the University of Milan. Since 2003, he has been a lecturer, presented a film club, and led filmmaking workshops for children. He is currently working as an artistic assistant, writer, filmmaker, and project manager for the Italian artist Velasco Vitali. In addition, Francesco Clerici has published articles and essays about cinema and art.

In 2010, he made his first documentary, *Storie nel cemento/Cement Stories* (28 min.). *Il gesto delle mani* is his first feature-length film.



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# H.

## Rania Attieh, Daniel Garcia

**Producer** Ivan Eibuszyc, Pierce Varous, Rania Attieh, Daniel Garcia, Shruti Rya Ganguly, Matthew Thurm. **Production companies** Enpassant (Brooklyn, USA); Nice Dissolve (Brooklyn, USA); Frutacine (Buenos Aires, Argentina). **Director** Rania Attieh, Daniel Garcia. **Screenplay** Rania Attieh, Daniel Garcia. **Director of photography** Daniel Garcia. **Production design** Rania Royo Barrera. **Costume** Romina Prandoni. **Make-up** L. Bates Jaffe. **Sound** Javier Farina. **Music** Kazu Makino, Alex Weston, Daniel Garcia, Jesse Gelaznik. **Sound design** Javier Farina. **Editor** Rania Attieh, Daniel Garcia.

**Cast** Robin Bartlett (Helen), Rebecca Dayan (Helen), Will Janowitz (Alex), Julian Gamble (Roy), Roger Robinson (Harold).

DCP, colour. 97 min. English.

**Premiere** 25 January 2015, Sundance Film Festival

**World sales** Film Sales Company

Two women named Helen live in Troy, New York. While one Helen is around sixty, married to Roy and looks after an uncannily lifelike baby doll as if it were a real child, the other makes up one half of a successful artist duo with her boyfriend Alex. She is also pregnant. Over four chapters, we are introduced to their lives, which are changed forever by a mysterious event: after being presaged by a series of disconcerting omens, a meteorite hits the city. People disappear and eerie things begin to happen.

It's more than just the names of the protagonists and the location that allude to Greek mythology and the story of Helen of Troy in this film. Without retelling them in literal fashion, *H.* positively teams with complex references to Greek legends. It is the playful use of fragments of myth and the sense of the superhuman and inexplicable found in the tales of the gods that create the film's subtly disturbing atmosphere, which also unobtrusively draws on fantasy and disaster film conventions. What makes *H.* so modern is less its contemporary reworking of legend than its pioneering revival of myth as a narrative form.

*Anna Hoffmann*

## The crucial moment

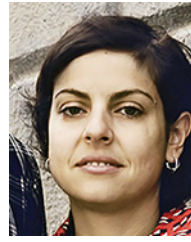
*H.* is a film about change. But more importantly, it's about being changed, and being changed by grand forces outside of one's own control. For us, this is one of the hallmarks of Tragedy, and this is ultimately what we feel *H.* is – a modern Tragedy, one that flirts with the conventions and mutterings of science fiction. But what do tragedies prepare us for? What do they warn us of? With *H.*, we aimed to have our characters exist simply as players on a proverbial stage, each unknowingly waiting for their eventual, and inevitable, brush with change, each equally unable to avoid their fates. Overall, many of the narrative elements in *H.* are loosely based on real-life events that we happened to come across either in research or as simple, everyday Internet whimsy – events that share the same overall absurdity that sometimes is present in normal life, which, when crafted together form an intricate tapestry of fiction. Everything from the meteor explosion, the 'Reborn doll' culture, the large Greek statue head that floats down the Hudson River – these were all based on real-life events that seem to stretch the imagination, so to speak. *H.* is also infused with ideas that deal with the motherhood of women at different ages, their relationship with their babies versus their partner's, their overall 'need' to have children, the fears and projections they develop in regard to their children, etc. All of this we put into a pot, if you will, and simmered it for a while until we had what made sense to us. *H.* is a tale that is maybe both ancient and modern.

*Rania Attieh, Daniel Garcia*

## A tour-de-force in the pressure cooker

The evolution of *H.* as an actual film came about in a whirlwind of non-stop madness. The film was made as part of Venice Biennale College-Cinema Programme, which selected three films to receive a micro-budget production grant, mentorship and a special screening during the Venice Film Festival. While amazing, what this meant is that we basically had to make a film in well under a year to make the Venice August deadline. We have, quite literally, never worked so intensely for such a sustained period of time, and it was brilliant but utterly exhausting. We've made other films that would not have been such a stretch at this timeline, but *H.* is a very different film for us, with many more moving parts and much greater ambition. We had horses and crowds and forest days in a foot of snow (it was the worst winter ever), and a post production tour-de-force that included travel to Argentina (from Brooklyn) for VFX work and a rather complicated sound design and mix, not to mention a tonne of scoring from four different composers that were scattered all over the world – all having to come together just four months after shooting. Granted, after Venice, we've gained the time to go back and tinker here and there with elements that were perhaps a bit rushed, but the film was by and large made in a pressure cooker of bitter cold, sleepless nights, and not enough days.

*Rania Attieh, Daniel Garcia*



Rania Attieh was born in Tripoli, Lebanon. She studied Media Art Production at City College of New York. Along with Daniel Garcia, she has been involved in making several films as screenwriter, director, editor and producer. Their films have screened at museums and film festivals around the world. Rania Attieh is also an adjunct professor of Film Aesthetics at New York University's Tisch Graduate School of the Arts.

## Films

2007: *Almost, Brooklyn* (Co-director: Daniel Garcia, 14 min.). 2009: *Tripoli, Quiet* (Co-director: Daniel Garcia, 15 min.). 2011: *Short Scenes from a Long Marriage* (Co-director: Daniel Garcia, 12 min.). 2011: *Tayeb, Khalas, Yalla/Ok, Enough, Goodbye* (Co-director: Daniel Garcia, 95 min.). 2014: *Recommended by Enrique* (Co-director: Daniel Garcia, 85 min.). 2015: *H.*



Daniel Garcia was born in Texas, United States. He studied philosophy before earning a degree in Film from New York University's Tisch Graduate School of the Arts. Along with Rania Attieh, he has been involved in making several films as screenwriter, director, editor and producer. Their films have screened at museums and film festivals around the world. Daniel Garcia is also a musician and composer. He lives and works in New York.

## Films

2007: *Almost, Brooklyn* (Co-director: Rania Attieh, 14 min.). 2009: *Tripoli, Quiet* (Co-director: Rania Attieh, 15 min.). 2011: *Short Scenes from a Long Marriage* (Co-director: Rania Attieh, 12 min.). 2011: *Tayeb, Khalas, Yalla/Ok, Enough, Goodbye* (Co-director: Rania Attieh, 95 min.). 2014: *Recommended by Enrique* (Co-director: Rania Attieh, 85 min.). 2015: *H.*



## המכה השמונים ואחת

# Ha'makah ha'shmonim ve'ahat

## The 81st Blow

David Bergman, Haim Gouri, Jacques Ehrlich, Miriam Novitch, Zvi Shner

**Director** David Bergman, Haim Gouri, Jacques Ehrlich, Miriam Novitch, Zvi Shner. **Screenplay** David Bergman, Haim Gouri, Jacques Ehrlich, Miriam Novitch, Zvi Shner. **Music** Joseph Mar-Haim. **Sound editor** D. Treuherz. **Editor** Miriam Gross. **Documentary footage** Miriam Novitch. **Photographic documents** Haim Chreiber.

DCP, black/white. 115 min. Hebrew, Yiddish, German.

**Premiere** December 1975, Jerusalem

The story of the eighty blows with which young Michael Goldmann-Gilad was nearly beaten to death by Commander Schwammberger in the ghetto of Przemysl came to light in 1961 at the Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem through the testimony of a different witness. The Holocaust survivor Goldmann-Gilad had earlier experienced that no one in Israel believed his story. That people considered his report to be the product of his imagination, resulting from his terrible experiences, was like an eighty-first blow to him. The title of the film was consciously chosen, since it presents a kind of proof by evidence. Put together solely from historical photos and film footage, it tells of Jewish life in Europe, the rise of National Socialism, the German masses that cheered Hitler's and Goebbels' speeches, the anti-Semitic excesses, the first pogroms, the beginning of the war, deportation, selection and annihilation in the camps and finally the small acts of resistance and the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. Instead of explanations or commentary, one hears surviving witnesses' testimonies from the Eichmann Trial and music composed especially for the film.

*Ha'makah ha'shmonim ve'ahat* is the first part of an Israeli film trilogy – later came *The Last Sea* (1980) and *Flames in the Ashes* (1985) – that was made in the context of the Ghetto Fighters' House, a research, documentation and education institution in western Galilee founded by survivors

of the Holocaust and the Warsaw Ghetto revolt. The directing collective included the poet Haim Gouri, who had experienced Goldmann-Gilad as a witness in the Eichmann Trial. In 1975, *Ha'makah ha'shmonim ve'ahat* was nominated for an Oscar as Best Documentary Film; not until 2013 did another Israeli film have this honour. Films like this play an important role for an 'Israeli identity politics on the silver screen', as film scholar Yosefa Loshitzky calls it. By using solely archive material, *Ha'makah ha'shmonim ve'ahat* finds itself among important compilation films that reassemble and contextualise already existing material (including *Den blodiga tiden* by Erwin Leiser and *Obyknowenny faschism* by Michail Romm). Compilation as a technique and the use of archive footage are especially prevalent in the cinematic approach to themes of Nazi rule and the destruction of the Jews, notes the media scholar Matthias Steinle in his essay '*Das Archivbild*' (Medienwissenschaft, Issue 3, Marburg 2005). These images, which in the case of *Ha'makah ha'shmonim ve'ahat* support the statements of the witnesses, are surely fundamental for the film's documentary effect. But here the point is not superficially a critique of the sources, information about the origin of the pictures (many come from the perpetrators' archives) or detailed information on what is depicted. Rather, the archive image in this film turns from a document into a monument, from a piece of evidence into a memorial. Precisely because archive pictures are now available everywhere and foster the 'illusion of unmediated and unfiltered reproduction of history or past reality' (Steinle, pg. 296), it's worthwhile exploring them as phenomena of perception. In the face of the countless films that combine pictures of contemporary witnesses, commentaries and archive images like an audio-visual ready-to-bake mix, rediscovering *Ha'makah ha'shmonim ve'ahat* is worthwhile in several ways: as an object of research, as a document and as a monument.

Anna Hoffmann

The films *Ha'makah ha'shmonim ve'ahat* (*The 81st Blow*) and *Me'kivun ha'yaar* (*Out of the Forest*) are, in addition to their revival at the Berlinale Forum, part of the project 'Asynchronous. Documentaries and Experimental Films on the Holocaust. From the Collection of the Arsenal', which the Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art e.V. is devoting to the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army.

**David Bergman**, born in Paris in 1931, emigrated to Israel in 1945. After studying Drama, he was a director at theatres in Paris and Brussels and directed the School for Theatre and Film in Ramat-Gan. He has also made several television films.

**Haim Gouri**, born in Tel Aviv in 1923, studied Literature in Jerusalem and Paris and then initially worked as a journalist. He gained renown as a poet and for a publication about the Eichmann trial (*Facing the Glass Booth*, 1962). Together with Jacques Ehrlich, Gouri made *The Last Sea* and *Flames in the Ashes*.

**Jacques Ehrlich**, born in Strasbourg in 1931, fled with his family to Switzerland during the Second World War. After studying Art in Paris, he emigrated to Israel in 1949. He later worked as an editor and as a professor at the School for Theatre and Film in Ramat-Gan.

**Miriam Novitch**, born in Yurtishk, Belarus in 1908, fought in the resistance in the Second World War. After the war, she emigrated to Israel. Novitch was one of the founders of the Ghetto Fighters' Kibbutz and the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum. The museum's first curator, she assembled its collection of art and films. She died in 1990.

**Zvi Shner**, born in Łódź, Poland in 1912, fled to the Caucasus in 1939. In 1948, he emigrated to Israel. He was one of the founders of the Ghetto Fighters' Kibbutz and the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, which he headed until his death in 1984.





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# Hedi Schneider steckt fest

## Hedi Schneider is Stuck

### Sonja Heiss

**Producer** Jonas Dornbach, Janine Jackowski, Maren Ade, Maria Ekerhovd, Kjetil Jensberg, Svein Andersen. **Production companies** Komplizen Film (Berlin, Germany); Mer Film (Tromsø, Norway); FilmCamp (Øverbygd, Norway); ZDF – Das kleine Fernsehspiel (Mainz, Germany). **Director** Sonja Heiss. **Screenplay** Sonja Heiss. **Director of photography** Nikolai von Graevenitz. **Production design** Tim Pannen. **Costume** Nicole von Graevenitz. **Make-up** Monika Münnich. **Sound** Andreas Prescher. **Music** Lambert. **Sound design** Daniel Iribarren. **Editor** Andreas Wodraschke.

**Cast** Laura Tonke (Hedi Schneider), Hans Löw (Uli), Leander Nitsche (Finn), Melanie Straub (hearing-impaired woman), Simon Schwarz (Arne Lange), Margarita Broich (Hedi's mother), Matthias Bundschuh (Mr Schild), Rosa Enskat (psychiatrist), Urs Jucker (therapist), Alex Brendemühl (head of NGO).

DCP, colour. 90 min. German.

**Premiere** 8 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** The Match Factory

A model family's happy life unexpectedly goes off the rails when the care-free Hedi, played by Laura Tonke, suddenly starts having panic attacks. First mental illness and then drug dependency – the happiness that these happy-go-lucky thirty-somethings once took for granted suddenly seems unattainable, and their world fragile and uncertain.

Sonja Heiss takes quite a risk with her second feature film, tackling a serious subject with an unerring grasp of comedy. But the director masters the balancing act between tragedy and comedy with bravura. It's not just Laura Tonke's performance that is splendidly on the brink, such as when Hedi gets stuck in a lift at the beginning of the film and begins a nonsensical conversation with the man who responds to her emergency call. Throughout the film's 90-minute running time, the dramatic structure and editing equally allow for the most absurd ruptures and mood changes, which still always end up leading somewhere. The film repeatedly challenges the audience to revise their hasty judgements, reallocate their sympathies and reassess the plot and actors. Underestimate *Hedi Schneider steckt fest* at your peril.

*Christoph Terhechte*

## "One of the worst things was that I lost my sense of humour"

*Like Hotel Very Welcome, this film also takes a humorous look at a generation's quest for meaning. How did you arrive at this combination: a story of romance and illness?*

**Sonja Heiss:** I wanted to tell a love story in which a character's mental illness is like a troublemaker stirring things up. I wanted to explore the fragility of a great love by throwing it dangerously off-balance through the sudden debilitation of one of the lovers. I don't think a film can convey the private terror of psychological crisis, anyway. You can barely describe it in words, let alone in images. That's why I didn't just want to make an observation on illness: I felt that there were too many of those already. I wanted to examine the impact of such an illness on love and on a couple. That meant that the key was in the characters.

*How were the characters created?*

Hedi Schneider needed to be an extroverted, brave and funny wild woman, and she needed to have a family that, in the context of its normal, stable existence, didn't take itself too seriously. The characters were meant to show that an anxiety disorder can have all kinds of reasons and triggers, but that there's no one specific reason – that it can happen to anyone.

After *Hotel Very Welcome*, I wanted *Hedi Schneider steckt fest* to be a film that approaches the characters in a playful and poetic way. The challenge was not to represent reality, but rather to present the crisis in such a way that the story didn't lose its plausibility or emotional impact. I wanted to alternate between clear realistic scenes and exaggerated, even crazy moments. It was also important to me that the acting was lifelike enough for viewers to be moved and to sympathise with the characters. What I didn't want was for them to observe the characters with distant amazement. In Laura Tonke, Hans Löw and Leander Nitsche, I found the perfect partners for this project. That goes for all of the supporting actors, too.

*How did you work with the actors? Hotel Very Welcome was partially improvised. How did you work this time?*

This time, in order to make my points more clearly, it was important to me not to use improvisation. I wanted to have more control, spend less time editing and, above all, to accurately translate my idea into film – even though the improvised approach of *Hotel Very Welcome* does offer you the 'gift' of many beautiful moments. In the years since *Hotel Very Welcome*, I've also developed a passion for writing. I'd been working on the screenplay for *Hedi Schneider steckt fest* for a while when I realised I needed a break. I began to write short stories without knowing whether I was even capable of producing literary material. But it worked. My first book, *Das Glück geht aus* ('Luck is Running Out') was published in 2011, and I'm now working on my first novel.

I found literary writing a lot freer, and it's had a big influence on my approach to filmmaking. In a way, I've become more imaginative, my ideas are wilder and my writing is braver. All the same, there are a couple of scenes in *Hedi Schneider steckt fest* that emerged from improvisation, either during casting or in rehearsals. Laura Tonke and Hans Löw are actors who offer wonderful moments with their courage and sense of humour. I took those improvised scenes, worked on them prior to filming

and integrated them into the screenplay. Very little improvisation actually occurred on set.

*Why is there so much humour in the screenplay and dialogue?*

First and foremost, I think that's just my way of looking at the world. I take it seriously, but not too seriously. Maybe it's a kind of survival strategy. I certainly think we live in a pretty absurd world. When I started writing, it was clear to me that I wanted to make a film that laughs about life, even when it's horrible – because life is sometimes simply too absurd to take it seriously. Nonetheless, it's important to me that I never make fun of my characters. I have to love them if I want to write really good jokes for them. And I have to know them really well. Then I know how they talk.

During shooting and editing, the jokes are constantly being tested. If every detail isn't right – if the timing is off or the camera angle's wrong or whatever – they can easily get lost. I also have a tendency to write dialogue-based jokes that need time to be understood. That can work well at the beginning of the film, but, at the height of a conflict, the joke has to be really strong for the audience to take the time to appreciate it, and then to really laugh.

With Hedi Schneider, though, there's another backdrop to the humour. For a while, I suffered from anxiety and panic attacks myself. One of the worst things about that time, for me and for others, was that I lost my sense of humour. I still clearly remember the sense of relief I felt the first time I made a really good joke again. Above all, I remember finally regaining the ability to joke about myself and my situation. That's one of the reasons Hedi Schneider turned into a comic character. Through her, I wanted to show that you don't have to be an introspective, anxious, melancholic person to be affected by that kind of thing.

Apart from that, during the period in which I was having anxiety attacks, some really bizarre and extremely funny things happened to me. Of course, it wasn't until later that I saw them like that.

*Can you give any examples?*

I remember one psychiatrist who quoted Goethe at great length, when all I really needed was a few pills as fast as possible. With another therapist, I spent weeks drawing a little cross on a squeaky whiteboard next to 'minus five' on a scale of minus seven to plus seven. One day, I put the cross next to 'minus four', and the therapist was beside herself with excitement. It's really difficult to find the right help – that's what Hedi and Uli experience in the film, too.

*The way in which the two characters deal with the crisis also tells us something about our generation. We have a different approach to mental illness.*

Previous generations probably weren't so ready to ask themselves whether it was worth staying in a relationship. People's approach to those kinds of problems wasn't as open, nor was it as focused on finding solutions. It wasn't 'normal' to see a therapist. People were much quicker to stigmatise, to categorise you as 'crazy'. I'm not certain, but perhaps the current incidence of anxiety disorders also has something to do with society. Every day, we have to decide between far too many options; we're constantly asking ourselves whether what we're doing will make us 'happy'. Apart from anything else, we often

strive to achieve a permanent state of happiness, and that can only result in disappointment.

I don't, however, think that we're now totally open and accepting of mental illness. Things are much better than they used to be, but, for example, if somebody suffers from panic attacks, some people still interpret that as being 'crazy'. Nowadays, everyone has 'burn-out'; hardly anyone has depression. 'Burn-out' makes it sound like someone's just been working too much: it suggests there's a reason for the illness and, what's more, the reason is a perfectly respectable one. On the other hand, 'depression' suggests that the person is just inexplicably mentally ill – despite the fact that millions of Germans suffer from depression and anxiety disorders.

In the film – the scene in Hedi's office – I suggest that we still don't live in a totally unprejudiced society. It was important to me at least to scratch the surface of this topic. Hedi returns to work and everyone else is supposed to look after her. They watch her like a zoo animal; she can't even go to the toilet in peace. Of course, her colleagues are asking themselves how she'll behave now that there's something wrong with her head. And then there's Hedi's mother, who doesn't understand why her daughter suddenly has to have 'that kind of problem'. Mostly, she thinks Hedi needs to pull herself together.

*What happens to a relationship in this kind of phase? What's the survival strategy for love?*

'How can a relationship survive something like this?' was the question I kept asking myself when I was working on the screenplay and then the film. After all, the person you loved, respected and admired is gone. They've been replaced by someone who's lost their strength, humour, courage, intellect, curiosity, sense of empathy, physical presence... This someone is exclusively concerned with themselves and their own negative thoughts; they don't really notice you anymore. But they still need you – they can't survive without you. The healthy partner is now irrelevant; life revolves around the ill person and their irrational anxieties, around the pain they're feeling because they think they might die of a cold or never again make it around the corner to the supermarket. How can you keep your love alive when you pity your partner? How can you hold on to your positive feelings when, sooner or later, you're overcome by the anger that comes from having totally lost your own place in life? And how can you stay positive when you're constantly surrounded by these negative thoughts and actions? I think a couple can survive that kind of experience, but I think it's extremely difficult. And that the scar will always remain. Inevitably, the relationship will be irreversibly changed.

*By the end of the film, despite the therapy and their sense of humour, have Hedi and Uli lost the battle for their love?*

I don't know, but I'm hopeful that they haven't. I think everyone sees the ending differently, depending on their own life experience and point of view.

When they decide to be happy again for this one, single day, they're reconnecting with the playful approach to life and love that we saw at the start of the film. Now, though, there's a distance between them that wasn't there before. Maybe it's the distance that exists in a relationship before it transforms into something new. Or maybe it's the beginning of the end. I do, however, believe you can always rekindle old feelings, even if you think they're gone forever. That's why I gave the film's final

moment to Hedi and Uli: we don't see how it ends. It might be that their tentative attempt is futile and their relationship still doomed to failure – I consciously chose to leave that possibility open.

*Source: production*



© Peter Hartwig/Komplizen Film

**Sonja Heiss** was born in Munich in 1976.

From 1998 to 2006, she studied at the University of Television and Film Munich. Her first feature film, *Hotel Very Welcome*, was also her graduate thesis film at the university. From 1998 to 2004, she was a casting director in advertising. She has directed commercials since 2003, and from 2005 to 2011, she has worked with Jan Bonny as part of the duo Sonny & Bonny. In 2011, she published her first book of stories, *Das Glück geht aus* (Berlin Verlag / Bloomsbury). Sonja Heiss lives in Berlin.

#### Films

1999: *Schnell und Sauber* (12 min.). 2001: *Karma Cowboy* (Co-director: Vanessa van Houten, 45 min.). 2004: *Christina ohne Kaufmann* (15 min.). 2007: *Hotel Very Welcome* (Perspektive Deutsches Kino, Berlinale 2007, 89 min.). 2015: *Hedi Schneider steckt fest / Hedi Schneider is Stuck*.



© Sarrazink Productions – Arte France Cinéma

# Histoire de Judas

## Story of Judas

### Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche

**Producer** Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche, Rémi Burah. **Production companies** Sarrazink Productions (Montreuil, France); Arte France Cinéma (Paris, France). **Director** Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche. **Screenplay** Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche. **Director of photography** Irina Lubtchansky. **Production design** Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche. **Costume** Alice Cambournac. **Make-up** Magalie Dumas. **Sound** Bruno Auzet. **Music** Rodolphe Burger. **Sound design** Nikolas Javelle. **Editor** Grégoire Pontecaille.

**Cast** Nabil Djedouani (Jesus), Mohamed Aroussi (Barabas), Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche (Judas), Marie Loustalot (Bethsabe), Patricia Malvoisin (Suzanne), Elliott Khayat (The Scribe), Régis Laroche (Pontius Pilate), Xavier Mussel (Menenius), Roland Gervet (Centurion), Nouari Nezzar (Caïphe).

DCP, colour. 99 min. French.

**Premiere** 6 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

A man ascends a barren summit. It is Judas, come to collect Jesus and carry him down the mountain on his back, joking and panting as he does so. After bathing in the river and taking part in a henna ceremony, Jesus leaves for Jerusalem. Judas is concerned for his friend's safety, since the Roman occupiers look upon the prophet as an insurgent.

The wind rustles in the palms; the rock formations in the Arabian desert are shot with breath-taking beauty. Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche's version of this oft-interpreted biblical material places an emphasis all of its own. The physical dimension of the landscape and the bodies within it is accentuated. In passing, the film also notes the coexistence of the religions at this early juncture. The relationship between the two men is close, with no trace of betrayal. Here, Judas is as much a victim of the power games played by the Romans, the high priest and the Pharisees as Jesus is. Even when the headache-plagued Pontius Pilate knowingly sentences an innocent man to death who deploys words rather than weapons to champion freedom, the tone of this period film remains gentle and muted. This makes it resonate all the stronger in the present.

*Birgit Kohler*

## The true adventure of Judas

For two thousand years, the Jews have been considered Christ's murderers. We are all aware of the grief, tears, and suffering this slanderous accusation has caused them. Oppressed by hatred, they have been tortured and exterminated in countless numbers. As a symbol of the anti-Semitism that burgeoned over the centuries like a never-ending, delusional stigma, Judas has crystallised this hatred of others, as well as self-hatred. He is the renegade, the snake in the grass, the villain and informant, of whom we can only fear the worst. His appearance is hideous, his soul corroded by cupidity, marked by base intentions and inhabited by the Devil. Having been accepted for centuries as the man who denounced and sold Jesus to his persecutors, Judas is also he whose despair drives him to suicide, since he is unable to carry the burden of his deceit. His name remains a synonym for betrayal. He symbolises the hatred directed at the Jewish people.

With a modern historical approach to ancient Judaism and early Christianity, our aim is to rehabilitate Judas.

Intensive and meticulous research into this crucial era has shown us that there are in fact very few sources of information on the first Christian community.

### A rehabilitation

In our plausible and exhilarating hypothesis, Jesus appears in the middle of sumptuous, arid landscapes as an accomplished master; alert, powerful, and bearing the torch of the Torah. As for Judas, he is the impeccably heroic figure yearning for the sublime in action. Rooted in the land of Judea, he appears in broad daylight as a loyal, beloved disciple, entrusted with keeping the master's spiritual secrets. The ultimate confidant, he is the guardian of his master's inspired and living words.

Far from the temptation toward abstraction of so-called experimental cinema, our approach favours experiential cinema, calling not only on the endless possibilities of a story that is straightforward and simple, but also on the powers of the body. Thus, the film becomes the full-scale experimentation of ideals and values within an ephemeral community. It opens up a space of sharing to a multitude of sensibilities present, a communal space where the human being ventures through movement, word, smile and gaze, and engages in an overwhelming infinity. *L'Histoire de Judas* is an authentic adventure with its physical risks and psychological challenges and has no claim to say anything that can be separated from its particular experience.

Our ambition is simply to encounter what is there, the appearance of reality, in order to reveal its complexity and ambiguity. Inspired by the idea that knowledge derives from confrontation with the unknown, we want to explore uncharted zones of the imaginary by accepting not knowing, to be pre-empted by forces that escape us, so that the film might in turn embrace them.

By upsetting historical spaces, we attempt to restore to the past its quality of former present, its uncertain dimension where everything seems possible and where everything occurs as if for the first time. Capturing the imperceptible, bringing out the invisible, apprehending what only passes by, touches on the poetic foundations of cinema as an art in the present.

*Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche*



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Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche was born in 1966 in Beni-Zid, Algeria. He and his family emigrated to France in 1968, and Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche grew up outside of Paris. After studying social sciences, he founded Sarrazink Productions in 1999. In 2001, he directed his first feature film, *Wesh wesh, qu'est-ce qui se passe?*

### Films

2001: *Wesh wesh, qu'est-ce qui se passe? / Wesh Wesh, What's Going on?* (Berlinale Forum 2002, 83 min.). 2006: *Bled Number One / Back Home* (100 min.). 2008: *Dernier maquis / Adhen* (93 min.). 2012: *Les chants de Mandrin / Smuggler's Songs* (97 min.). 2015: *Histoire de Judas / The Story of Judas*.



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# Hotline

## Silvina Landsmann

**Producer** Silvina Landsmann, Pierre-Olivier Bardet. **Production companies** Comino Films (Tel Aviv, Israel); Idéale Audience (Paris, France). **Director** Silvina Landsmann. **Screenplay** Silvina Landsmann. **Director of photography** Silvina Landsmann. **Sound** Guy Barkay. **Sound design** Yoss Apelbaum. **Editor** Silvina Landsmann, Gil Schnaiderovich.

DCP, colour. 100 min. Hebrew, English, French.

**Premiere** 7 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** Go2Films Distribution & Marketing

The women from the Tel Aviv hotline for refugees and migrants work around the clock. They look after the rights of people without papers, give legal advice, go to government offices on their behalf and do public relations for their cause.

The camera catapults us right into the midst of the action. Before an enraged crowd, a woman activist calls for the refugees from Sudan and Eritrea brought to Sinai by Egyptian traffickers and now stranded in Israel to be given residence permits. She is met with vehement resistance and is verbally and nearly physically attacked. But the organisation doesn't just have to fight the xenophobic mood in the population, but also a brand of legislation that treats any illegal border crossing as a criminal offence. The refugee prisons near the Egyptian border are constantly being expanded. The director is denied access. Silvina Landsmann takes the viewer along to the various settings – government offices, courts, the Knesset – and edits together her material in such a way that it becomes clear what the struggle for human rights consists of: talking, mobilising, documenting and persuading.

*Anke Leweke*

## Asylum politics in Israel

I started shooting *Hotline* in September 2012, a couple of months after the third amendment of the Prevention of Infiltration Law came into force. Under it, asylum seekers who entered Israel were jailed for at least three years.

I followed the workers of the organisation Hotline for Refugees and Migrants in their daily routine: the young women informing asylum seekers about their rights, the lawyers fighting to free asylum seekers from prison, the public policy coordinator working at the parliament's Internal Affairs Committee and so on. *Hotline* is a live portrait of this organisation at a specific moment in time.

A couple of months after shooting wrapped, the Israeli High Court of Justice ruled that this third amendment was unconstitutional and must be overturned, ruling that administrative detention of this sort violates the Israeli Basic Law of Human Dignity and Liberty.

The government then passed a fourth amendment to the Prevention of Infiltration Law: asylum seekers who enter Israel were to be jailed for one year, after which they were to be transferred to an 'open residential centre' named Holot (which means 'sands'), located on the other side of the road from the prisons for asylum seekers, on the border with Egypt.

The Supreme Court ruled that this fourth amendment was unconstitutional, and decided that Holot should close within ninety days. The policy toward asylum seekers can't be based solely on mass detention of innocent people.

Then the Israeli Knesset legislated a fifth amendment to the Prevention of Infiltration Law. The Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, together with other human rights organisations, has submitted yet another legal petition to the Supreme Court calling for its invalidation.

This petition is still pending, and the hotline's work is still never-ending.

Silvina Landsmann

### "It's the battle of words"

Your last film, *Bagrut Loachamim*, was about a group of Israeli combat soldiers participating in a series of army-sponsored courses, including civic studies focusing on issues of human rights and democracy. Your film showed the difficulties those young men have with tolerance and acceptance in the country. Now you've again focused on a huge problem in Israel. What motivated you to make a film about the *Hotline for Migrant Workers*?

The issues of migration and of the role of NGOs in the political arena have interested me for many years. In 1998, I moved back to Tel Aviv after living in Paris for ten years, where I had just finished my first film, *Collège*. The massive presence of migrant workers from Bulgaria, Rumania, China, Thailand and the Philippines in Tel Aviv was something new to me. These people were brought to Israel by manpower companies in order to replace the traditional workforce of the Israeli economy, the Palestinians from the occupied territories.

The process started after the first Intifada (1987-1991), with state support, in a proudly neo-liberal environment. Fascinated by this phenomenon, I decided to make a film about a little NGO that gave legal assistance to those migrants. Much to my regret, the film never happened.

*Hotline* is a result of that regret: After finishing *Bagrut Loachamim*, I decided to go back to those issues, which had become bigger with time. Very quickly, I found myself swallowed by the activity of the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, which opened its doors to my camera.

Who is the British ex-member of parliament visiting the hotline office? And what came out of this encounter?

This former member of parliament was brought to the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants by a member of the Israeli parliament, in order to meet with representatives of several human rights organisations fighting human trafficking and learn about this struggle in Israel. His name is not the issue. He reminds us, if needed, that migration is a global issue, and that NGOs play a central role in western democracies.

What came out of this encounter? It's difficult to determine. The goal of this kind of meeting is to inform influential people so they can 'spread the word' and speak with decision-makers and thus try to generate change. It's like advocacy, or lobbying.

Sigal Rozen, the public policy coordinator for the Hotline for Migrants, makes clear that the distinction between 'refugee' and 'infiltrator' is kept on a vague basis in Israel. But isn't there clear evidence of which countries are conflict areas?

The rate of recognition of Eritreans as refugees in Europe is close to eighty-two per cent, while in Israel only two Eritreans have been recognised as refugees and the rate is close to zero per cent. Recognising them as refugees would mean giving them legal status, and this is something Israel is trying to avoid. So it's not a matter of evidence. It's semantics. It's the battle of words, or a battle through words. It's one of the issues of the film.

We witness in your film scenes of public commotion and aggression. There are also situations in court or moments when you were only able to record sound. How did you plan shooting in terms of filming permits and unforeseeable situations?

When I knew beforehand that I would have to follow one of the hotline workers to the prison's gate or to the tribunal door – prison and court are two places where cameras are forbidden – I asked the prison spokesperson for permission to film outside the prison, and the tribunal spokesperson for permission to film inside the tribunal building, with a special permit to film inside the courtroom until the judge arrived. These permits were granted without any problem. But sometimes I had to ask for the permit while filming, regretting not having some help. Most of the time I was able to get permission to film at a moment's notice. But it did happen that I had to argue with a train guard, and had to claim I was just holding the camera. It's so simple to film everywhere with one's cell phone nowadays that most of these limitations feel somewhat absurd.

You show the daily work in the NGO's office. There are striking images of details like faded papers that form the legal basis for remaining in Israel for these people; faces and hands bearing the traces of their lives as refugees. You show people in distress. How was your relationship to the people frequenting the hotline office? And for how long did you accompany the work of the hotline?

I followed the everyday work of the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants for four months. I was there filming the hotline's work when the 'clients' arrived. I'd explain to them that I was doing



a film about the hotline, and I'd ask for permission to film them as well. Sometimes they agreed, sometimes not. Each one of them bears their own story, a story that we can only guess at. In another time, another place, it could be you, or me. I shot more than 300 hours of footage.

*At the end of the film, Sigal receives a phone call from a photographer who wants to take pictures of tortured refugees. It seems odd, since there's the chance the photographer might use the photos in a lurid way for his own purposes. But is this still a legitimate way to draw attention to this problem?*

The question you're asking is important. Furthermore, you could ask if this is a way to pay attention to this problem at all. It's a complex issue. Let me refer you to *The Tyrant's Bloody Robe*, the introduction of Slavoj Žižek's text *Violence – Six Sideways Reflections*. In this very concise text the question is brilliantly analysed.

But since the question is important, I sent it to Sigal Rozen. Here is her answer:

'As part of the efforts to raise awareness about the Sinai torture camps and the lack of rehabilitation services to about 7,000 survivors living in Israel, the hotline has brought the personal stories of survivors to the media, but of course, only with their consent. This first conversation with the photographer seemed as if no good could come from it, but I receive calls like that about once a day and sometimes they lead to a fruitful collaboration. Artists get to meet the hotline's clients only after several meetings with the staff members, who make sure of what their intentions are. That is why I did not want to dismiss him right away.'

*Interview: Gabriela Seidel-Hollaender, January 2015*



© Neïta Dollár-Landsmann

Silvana Landsmann was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1965. Her family emigrated to Israel in 1976. She studied Film at Tel Aviv University. After graduating, she lived in Paris for ten years, where her first film, *Collège* (1997) was made. After returning to Israel, she started the Comino Films production company. In addition to working as a director, she also teaches Documentary Film at the Tel Aviv Cinémathèque.

### Films

1997: *Collège* (133 min.). 2004: *Machleket Yoldot/Post Partum* (66 min.). 2007: *Avo Ba-Mechilot/Unto Thy Land* (60 min.). 2012: *Bagrut Lochamim/Soldier/Citizen* (Berlinale Forum 2012, 68 min.). 2015: *Hotline*.



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## Joe Bullet

### Louis de Witt

**Producer** Tonie van der Merwe. **Production company** Bullit Films (Cape Town, South Africa). **Director** Louis de Witt.

**Screenplay** Tonie van der Merwe. **Director of photography** Louis de Witt. **Music** Silver Threads. **Editor** Oscar Burn.

**Cast** Ken Gampu (Joe Bullet), Abigail Kubeka (Beauty), Jimmy Sabe (Popeye), Cocky "Two Bull" Tlholthalemaje (Flash), Sidney Charma (Jerry), Dan Poho (President), Sol Rachilo (Sonny), Matthew Molete (Spike), Richard Khumalo (Lucas), Henry Siduma (Henry).

DCP, colour. 85 min. English.

**World sales** Rushlake Media

*Joe Bullet* must have been an extraordinary sight to Sowetan cinema-goers in 1973. Ken Gampu's on-screen presence echoed Roundtree's Shaft or Connery's Bond in his sheer, suave physicality. Rooted firmly in the action tradition, the film's plot centres on a shadowy mobster trying to fix a championship football final. There is intrigue, murder, and only one person to call – Joe Bullet!

In making the film, businessman-turned-producer Tonie van der Merwe, hoped to reach a new market. In step with 1970s black popular culture, the film was indebted to Blaxploitation cinema and was importantly, one of the first with an all-black cast that included stars like Gampu and Abigail Kubeka. Not only did *Joe Bullet* offer a thrilling new hero to audiences, but also a wholly different vision of black life than known at the time. This was an image of agency, aspiration and power, at odds with the realities of most non-white South Africans under apartheid. Despite having no overt oppositional politics, the film was quickly banned and remained unseen for decades.

Recently restored, *Joe Bullet* is a compelling, complex piece of South African cinema history and one which deserves a contemporary reappraisal.

*Darryl Els*

## “We wanted to create a black James Bond”

*How did you come to make Joe Bullet?*

**Tonie van der Merwe:** I had a construction company in those days. We had about two hundred black workers and they stayed in the company compound and had nothing to do at the weekend. We always hired a projector and a film on Saturday nights and we screened it to everyone. I then met Elmo and Louis de Witt; they used to be well known in the South African film industry. Then one day Louis said to me, ‘Why don’t you make your own movie?’ Louis convinced me and I had to finance the whole movie, I knew nothing! The movie took eighteen months to make, a long period, and it cost a lot of money – it was a very expensive movie for those days. We made a lot of mistakes... but I learned... I paid for it! Eventually, the movie was finished and we had a few screenings at the Eyethu, a cinema in Soweto, and then the film was banned.

We had endless problems with the authorities while we were shooting. They harassed you, raided your offices and your studios and looked in your cameras and film stock. If you went to Soweto to film, they would send somebody with you all the time, checking on what you were shooting. [*The football game sequence is an example of this, where several white police agents are visible amongst the crowd monitoring the production of the film. –Darryl Els*]

*What were the influences for the film? Were you aware of Blaxploitation cinema in the United States at the time?*

When we made *Joe Bullet* we looked at *Shaft* (USA 1971, Gordon Parks) and we looked at a couple of other black movies. We wanted to create a black James Bond; that was the whole idea, in those days there were no black African heroes or figures to look up to. We succeeded to such an extent that in townships, no matter where in the country, they recognised Ken Gampu and the other actors and mobbed them – it was quite something!

*How did you go about casting the film?*

When we started I thought, ‘Well, we have to begin somewhere...’ I had a storyline and then came the actors. In those days there was only one black actor who had a name and that was Ken Gampu, because he had starred in *Dingaka* (1964) by Jamie Uys. I made contact with Ken and we became great friends... He suggested we use Cocky ‘Two Bull’ (Cocky Tlholthalemaje) and then we got him and Abigail Kubeka and then everyone suggested Joe Lopez. They actually did the casting for me on *Joe Bullet* because I didn’t know the actors.

*Did you expect the film to be banned?*

Never in my life! I can’t remember exactly, but the points on the banning order were ridiculous like, ‘A black man is seen owning a firearm. This will teach the blacks how to handle guns...’ The censors gave ridiculous reasons for banning it! The newspapers said it was the first South African film to be banned outright. Normally the censors would say, ‘do a few cuts’ or, ‘there has to be an age restriction’. I think the only reason it was banned outright was because they didn’t know what to do.

*Darryl Els, Marie-Hélène Gutberlet*

After *Joe Bullet*, Tonie van de Merwe continued working in the film industry and went on to successfully lobby the South African government in the 1970s for the implementation of a new film subsidy called the B-Scheme. For more information, see *Umbango*.

**Louis de Witt** (1938-1995) began his career as an assistant at the South African production company Kavalier Film. He became one of the most sought-after cinematographers in South Africa, and he worked on more than twenty films with directors such as Jamie Uys, Jans Rautenbach, Dirk de Villiers and Bertrand Retief. In 1970, Louis de Witt teamed up with Tonie van der Merwe, who produced *Joe Bullet*, de Witt’s first and only film as director. Upon completion of the film, he formed his own production company, Mojadji Films.

The presentation of the restored prints of *Joe Bullet* (Louis de Witt, South Africa 1971) and *Umbango* (Tonie van der Merwe, South Africa 1988) is in the context of the research project ‘B-Schemes’ by Darryl Els, which is dedicated to the critical reappraisal and presentation of South Africa’s so-called ‘B-Scheme’ films, which have previously not been the focus of much research. The work by Darryl Els is part of the Visionary Archive project, a collaborative trans-local experiment in five different places and in five different archival contexts. The five partner institutions are: Cimatheque – Alternative Film Centre in Cairo; the independent cinema The Bioscope in Johannesburg; the archive of the late filmmaker Gadalla Gubara in Khartoum; the Geba Filmes association in Bissau; and Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art e.V.. Visionary Archive is supported by the TURN fund of the German Federal Cultural Foundation.



## K

### Emyr ap Richard, Darhad Erdenibulag

**Producer** Jia Zhangke, Emyr ap Richard, Justine O, Zhang Dong, Tao Li, Tsiring, Zhao Siyuan. **Production companies** Xstream Pictures (Peking, People's Republic of China); East Light Film Limited (Hongkong, People's Republic of China); Beijing Y&Y Film Development Co., Ltd. (Beijing, People's Republic of China).

**Director** Emyr ap Richard, Darhad Erdenibulag. **Screenplay** Emyr ap Richard. **Director of photography** Matthieu Laclau.

**Production design** Emyr ap Richard, Darhad Erdenibulag.

**Costume** Yang Yunyi, Liu Shuwei. **Make-up** Imp Chan. **Sound** Yang Zhang. **Sound design** Yang Zhang. **Editor** Matthieu Laclau.

**Cast** Bayin (K), Jula (Frieda), Yirgui (Olga), Altanochir (Artur), Zandaraa (Jeremias), Nomindalai (Barnabas), Ariuna (Amalia), Urinshaa (Landlady), Norbu (Landlord), Oyunsang (Village Mayor).

DCP, colour. 86 min. Mongolian.

**Premiere** 7 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

You've heard this one before, a land surveyor named K arrives in a distant village and becomes ensnared in the nearby castle's procedural machinations. Yet this time round, things are different. As K traverses the vast Inner Mongolian plain, there's no castle on the horizon and his arrival in the village is merely an abrupt awakening on a sunny afternoon. His two leather-clad assistants are hardly as alike as snakes, and Jeremiah, not Artur is to be their name.

This village is nearly all interiors, tight shots of hallways, lobbies and antechambers in various shades of white, green and blue. Old wirelesses play crackly 40s-tinged jazz, calls are taken on an orange rotary dial telephone and jumbo jets thunder overhead, a place archaic and modern in equal measure.

As the shifting maze of mayors, secretaries and ministers increasingly engulfs K, each passage begins to resemble the next and new rooms contain new visions. For in this spare, quietly radical adaptation of the Kafka classic, bureaucratic capriciousness becomes channelled into spatial confusion. A castle never seen, but always felt, like a half-remembered dream, bathed in the diffuse light of dawn.

*James Lattimer*

**“I thought the best idea would be to set it in a language that no one would understand”**

*What difficulties were there in adapting a novel that isn't just Kafkaesque, it is actually Kafka?*

**Darhad Erdenibulag:** The biggest difficulty was getting the material into a form appropriate for cinema. When you examine the text of the novel, what you find is that most of the narrative takes the form of seated conversations in or near beds. About eighty per cent or more of the novel is like this: K. talks to the Mayor while he lies in bed, the Landlady confronts K. when he's getting out of bed, the long Olga scene takes place around a kitchen table while Olga's parents and Amalia sleep in a bed at the back of the room, etc. Kafka even manages to turn the schoolhouse into a bedroom.

In this respect, we tried many different approaches, like filming a lot of supplementary material to help make the film more watchable. And in our earlier edits, the film was very different, longer, more flashy and stylised. But none of these approaches worked. They all lacked that key emotional component. Jia Zhang-ke helped us to find the emotional core, revolving around K.'s relationship to the women in the story, particularly in the character of Frieda and once that was in place, all the supplementary material fell away.

*Emyr, you come from a photography background; how important are the images in K for you?*

**Emyr ap Richard:** Darhad Erdenibulag and I both come from photographic backgrounds. The photography of the film was very important to us. We had always talked of shooting a film entirely by natural light and we tried to do this with our first film, *Tabun mahabuda (The First Aggregate, 2012)*, but the demands of the script were too much of a constraint. One of the advantages of adapting *The Castle* is that the physical setting is very loose; it's not set in any particular place. But where Kafka's novel takes place in deep snow and an almost endless night, *K* takes place on an endless day with no night.

*What do you think the film gained by transporting it to Mongolia?*

**Darhad Erdenibulag/Emyr ap Richard:** This gets back to the way the book is written. It's not really clear where the book is set, in that the physical location is not so important to the story. 'Place' isn't a character in the work as it would be in another novel. Instead it takes place in an unnamed snowy village in an unnamed country. There are only two or three references in the book that ground it to any particular geography, and those are Frieda's comment about running away to France or Spain, and the Mayor's reference to the official named Sordini – an 'Italian'. In terms of the actual story, all you need are some rooms and a few village exteriors. I didn't feel these three references were enough to demand that the story be set in Europe. I also felt that if you were to make this in Europe, it would have to be a period piece and people would have trouble relating. By switching everything to an unnamed Central Asian village, and a language that almost no one would speak, we could 'level the playing field'. For example, if it the film were shot in Europe, in German, then you'd have at least one audience who could watch the film without any textual support. So for me, I thought the best idea would be to set it in a language that almost no one would understand. This forces most viewers to interact with the film textually, i.e. through the subtitles. Then most people are

at the same disadvantage when they see it. The physical location is not obvious, and the language is hard to identify – there are even five separate dialects of Mongolian spoken in the film, not all of which would be easily understood by some Mongolian viewers. That's not to say that we had an idea and went to look for a minority language in which to shoot it. We've both lived in the capital Hohhot for many years, and you do what you can with the resources available and try to use what you have in the most effective way.

*'What you say is not untrue, only hostile.' The film features some great dialogue. Was much of it your own?*

Almost none. It's based entirely on Kafka's dialogue. Of course, some of the dialogue is combined and summarised and reworked. But it's all essentially from the novel. There was actually no Mongolian script for the actors. There was a reference script in Chinese but we used it only as a guide to the content of the scenes. Bulag and I would sit down with the actors and discuss the meaning of the dialogue, and then through experimentation and consensus, we would decide on the rough form of the Mongolian. We would only do this immediately prior to shooting so as to preserve the freshness. It was also important to do it this way because each of the actors speaks a different dialect of Mongolian, each of which is sonically different from one another. If we had produced a Mongolian screenplay, it could only have been written in the standard script and each of the actors would then have felt pressure to produce the dialogue in the standard dialect. By forcing everyone to translate the meaning of the words into their own dialects, it gave the dialogue a lot more life and in a sense all of the actors were the authors of their own dialogue.

*I'm sure you're aware of Haneke's adaptation of Kafka's The Castle, but did you ever look to it for inspiration in solving problems or did you make sure to go as far away as possible from it?*

Of course, we watched all the other versions we could find. Rudolf Noelte, Alexei Balabanov, and Michael Haneke's were the main adaptations. We also read various stage adaptations. We didn't really look to Haneke's version for inspiration because the aims of that film were entirely different to ours. I think Haneke was commissioned to make it for Austrian television and he himself said that its only purpose was to encourage people to read the novel. So it wasn't really appropriate for us to draw inspiration from that version. Our aim was to make a watchable film from difficult material.

*Considering that Kafka died before completing the novel, was there a big discussion about the film's ending? What made you choose the ending you did?*

I think there are two schools of thought on the ending. For example, some commentators consider *The Castle* to be more complete than, say, *The Trial*. Whilst it's true that *The Trial* has a more definitive beginning and end, there are enormous gaps in the body of the narrative, and the precise arrangement of the chapters was not known to Max Brod when he put the manuscript together for publication. I personally feel *The Trial* to be more incomplete. But if you look at *The Castle*, it feels like the more singular work. What you have in the novel is a blow-by-blow account of where K. is and what he does over the course of six days. The only gaps in this chronology are the sections where K. is asleep. And if you think about where he is by the end

of the novel, everything that's been set up has run its course. There are, of course, some loose ends, like his plans with the young boy at the school, but all the major plot lines have come full circle. In our earliest plans, we knew the film could not end in the same way as a book. The novel famously breaks off mid-sentence, which creates a strange high point that works as the ending for the book. But if you then ask what the cinematic equivalent is, it can only be an unexpected cut. We didn't feel this would work, and searched around the book for an alternative. Our original plan was to have the film end with a recreation of a beautiful scene hidden in the early part of the book, when K. remembers a childhood adventure where he scaled the high wall of a church. We filmed all of these scenes, set in a very obviously modern Inner Mongolia, and in Chinese. But in the end they didn't really work and broke the sense of isolation we feel in the rest of the film. The eventual ending was probably the most difficult thing to find, and not finding it was the source of our biggest problems.

*Many actors will be unknown to the audience. Where did you find them and was it difficult to cast?*

We've both worked in Inner Mongolia for many years, and over the years we've come to know many great actors. It was a dream of ours to find a project that would appeal to audiences outside of Inner Mongolia, that would require an ensemble cast, which would allow us to offer roles to all of the great Mongolian actors we know who otherwise wouldn't have a chance to work together. In this sense, Bayin was the glue that would tie everything together. Casting Bayin as K. was crucial, because we had to have someone with a very specific set of attributes, who would have the necessary authority to act as a natural focus for the rest of the cast. We didn't think there were any other actors who could play the role of K. and if Bayin had refused, we would have dropped the idea and done something else. He's a well-known and well-respected actor, and a lot of the cast are not so well known, so we hoped that for them, playing alongside Bayin would emulate the feeling in the novel where K. is the odd man out. His very real stage presence and celebrity created a tension in the supporting cast that we hoped would emphasise K.'s status as a stranger in the midst of a close-knit village community.

*Interview: Ashley Norris*

### The flow of the Mongolian language

Adapting *The Castle* in Mongolian is an excellent idea. When I first watched the film, I was struck by the fact that all the actors spoke Mongolian. The rhythm and flow of the Mongolian language is a great attraction for me; it feels alien yet strangely familiar, bringing with it a kind of abstract feeling that matches the novel. It allows us to move past specifics of place or person, and transposes the story into the universal. We can all relate to *The Castle*; it's a concept each of us carries inside. When the lead actor says, 'Every relationship has its flaws', I feel we glimpse a truth that transcends boundaries. This film moves me.

*Jia Zhang-ke*



**Emyr ap Richard** was born in Carmarthen-shire, Wales, in 1981 and worked for the Welsh-language television station S4C before moving to live in Inner Mongolia, where he worked as a freelance photographer, writer, and English-Mongolian translator. After *Tabun mahabuda/The First Aggregate* (2012, 90 min.), which he co-directed with Darhad Erdenibulag, *K* is Emyr ap Richard's second feature-length film.



**Darhad Erdenibulag** was born in Ordos, Inner Mongolia, in 1978. He studied Fine Art at Inner Mongolia University's College of Art. After graduation, he first worked as a freelance interior designer before starting as a documentary filmmaker for Inner Mongolia Television. To date, he has made two films in collaboration with Emyr ap Richard: *Tabun mahabuda/The First Aggregate* (2012, 90 min.) and *K*.



© Martin Kollár

## Koza

### Ivan Ostrochovský

**Producer** Ivan Ostrochovský, Marek Urban, Jiří Konečný, Kamila Zlatušková, Maroš Šlapeta, Tibor Búza. **Production companies** Sentimentalfilm (Bratislava, Slovak Republic); Endorfilm (Prague, Czech Republic); Česká televize (Prague, Czech Republic); Punkchart films (Bratislava, Slovak Republic). **Director** Ivan Ostrochovský. **Screenplay** Ivan Ostrochovský, Marek Leščák. **Director of photography** Martin Kollár. **Sound** Tobias Potočný. **Sound design** Tobias Potočný. **Editor** Viera Čakányová.

**Cast** Peter Baláž (Koza), Zvonko Lakčević (Zvonko), Ján Franek (Franek), Stanislava Bongilajová (Miša), Nikola Bongilajová (Nikolka), Tatiana Piussi (Hitchhiker).

DCP, colour. 75 min. Slovakian, Czech, German.

**Premiere** 8 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** Pluto Film

They call him Koza, the goat. His best days as a boxer are behind him. Sometimes he re-watches the video of his fight at the 1996 Olympics. Now he needs money because his girlfriend is pregnant. That's why he decides to return to the ring. His boss, for whom he otherwise collects scrap metal, accompanies him on this tour as a kind of boxing impresario – a tour that is sadly more of an ordeal than a triumph. Koza's body is barely up to the training and he loses most of his fights in the first round. Unlike life, however, the film shows mercy to its protagonist. In this melancholy road movie, the camera focuses less on the boxing matches than on the unglamorous action backstage. Drives through wintry landscapes, days on which it never really gets light and when the cola in the car freezes in the bottle, the inglorious end to the fights – the film shows all of this in exquisitely framed images, which gift the anti-hero another space than that of the boxing ring. Slovakian boxer Peter Baláž, who plays himself here, was a brilliant find for the film and easily stands comparison with other boxing film heroes.

*Anna Hoffmann*

## "It's not necessary to emphasise the social aspects of the story"

*What inspired you to make Koza? Did you hear about Peter Baláž first and then decide to build a film around his character, or did you first have the idea of making a film about that situation of social helplessness, and then found him as a symbolic character?*

**Ivan Ostrochovský:** I have known Koza for about ten years. We both come from the same town in the south of Slovakia. But unlike me, Koza was, however, unfortunate enough to grow up in a Roma ghetto, close to my neighbourhood. I shot a short documentary about him in my first year at film school. I was fascinated by the fact that we had grown up on the same street, but somehow on a different planet.

Four years ago, Koza called me and asked for help. He was forced to borrow money for an abortion for his partner Miša, because they simply couldn't afford to have a third child. They had taken all their valuables to a pawnshop and Koza wasn't able to pay and get them back. Voluntary abortions cost about 300 Euros in Slovakia. Koza's disability pension is 150 Euros. So Marek Leščák and I paid for Koza's things at the pawnshop and started to write the screenplay.

*Baláž is a symbolic character in a few senses: he is of Roma origin, and he took part in the Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996. Today, the once-promising sportsman finds himself on the lowest rungs of the social ladder. In favour of a bleak, yet realistic atmosphere, you avoided creating any social pathos. What were the main thoughts behind this bleak and raw but authentic concept?*

It was obvious that Koza's story is so absurd and sad, but straightforward at the same time, that it's not necessary to emphasise these aspects of the story. One could say we even deliberately repressed them, in order to avoid the pathos that emerges when misery is stressed.

Right from the beginning, we agreed with the cinematographer, Martin Kollár, that we didn't want to use a hand-held camera that would move along with our characters and which is a significant element of films focusing on people on the fringes of society or films with non-professional actors. We decided to go with a static camera and shooting in long shots. Simply put, we took a step back from the characters and their misery with the camera, and that's how we made a film that tells the story in long shots, but also keeps a bit of a psychological distance.

*Films such as Zamatoví teroristi have made you quite famous for mixing elements of documentary with fiction. How much authenticity, how much fiction do we find in Koza? For instance, are the fights real; is Kálmans and Baláž's tour through Europe real? Is the relationship with Miška real; are the hospital scenes real?*

Unlike *Zamatoví teroristi*, *Koza* features much more fictional storylines. The film was shot according to a screenplay based on Koza's life. Of course, the casting of non-professional actors gives the impression of documentary authenticity and a blurred line between fiction and non-fiction. The fact that the cast play themselves adds to this feeling. The fights in the film are a combination of authentic and fictitious matches, but Koza's tour through Europe with his manager is completely made up. Koza usually has one match in two months. The film features Koza's real girlfriend, but they split up during the shooting and Koza lives alone at the moment. The little girl, introduced as Koza's daughter, isn't in fact Koza's real child. He has two different children in real life.

*How did you do your research in the boxing milieu, and find the locations? And was Peter Baláž involved when creating the atmospheres and the relationships between the protagonists? How did he react when you asked him to cooperate on the film?*

We didn't look for locations at Koza's professional matches, nor did Koza collaborate on the story or the development of the characters. Koza read the final screenplay prior to shooting and we've adjusted a lot of scenes according to his acting disposition on location during the shooting. Koza has long felt that he doesn't deserve a life on the outskirts and he saw the film as an opportunity to reflect this problem.

*Peter Baláž and his manager form a pretty offbeat business partnership. How did these non-professional actors work together?*

We were considering a professional actor for the role of Koza's manager for a long time, but after a few rehearsals we realised it wasn't going to work out. We eventually cast a non-professional actor, our friend Zvonko Lakčević, but he had nothing to do with the world of boxing and didn't know Koza at all. So a different problem occurred – Koza understood what he was performing because he acted as himself, and in this combination, he was actually the professional. Zvonko on the other hand had to work towards his character. The tension between Zvonko and Koza grew thanks to their absolutely differing natures and of course, thanks to the instructions we gave Zvonko to be distant to Koza, as well. I think Zvonko handled his role above our expectations.

*The relationship between the manager and Baláž bears a smell of sado-masochistic hierarchy between the cold-hearted manager and the naive dreamer, to put it in a very pointed way – though there are a lot of nuances between them. Is that a relationship that might be typical for a part of the society where everyone has to fight for his sheer existence?*

I wouldn't like to generalise on whether the behaviour of our characters is typical for people living on the fringes of society. But I surely can say that most of the details were observed from reality, and therefore it's not a construction of ours.

I think that following dreams that are not realistic isn't just a feature of people of Koza's type, but applies to us all.

*Interview: Bernd Buder, January 2015*



**Ivan Ostrochovský** was born in 1972 in Žilina, Slovakia. He studied Documentary Film Directing in Bratislava, after which he completed his post-graduate studies at the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica. Ivan Ostrochovský is the co-owner of the SentimentalFilm and Punkchart Films production companies, for which he also works as a producer, in addition to his work as a director. He lives and works in Bratislava.

### Films

2004: *Menšie zlo / Lesser Evil* (co-directed by Pavol Pekarčík, 50 min.). 2004: *Vietor / Wind* (co-directed by Pavol Pekarčík, 26 min.). 2005: *Karakorum* (co-directed by Pavol Pekarčík, 26 min.). 2008: *Uli Blaho* (co-directed by Pavol Pekarčík, 58 min.). 2010: *Ilja* (30 min.). 2013: *Zamatoví teroristi / Velvet Terrorists* (Berlinale Forum 2014, 87 min.). 2014: *Pavol Simai* (26 min.). 2015: *Koza*.





## Madare ghalb atomi

### Atom Heart Mother

Ali Ahmadzadeh

**Producer** Amir Seyedzadeh. **Production company** Afrand Film (Teheran, Iran). **Director** Ali Ahmadzadeh. **Screenplay** Ali Ahmadzadeh, Mani Baghbani. **Director of photography** Ashkan Ashkani. **Visual effects** Ali Tasdighy. **Art director** Melody Esmaeeli. **Costume** Melody Esmaeeli. **Sound** Amin Mirshekari. **Music** Sahand Mehdizadeh. **Editor** Ali Ahmadzadeh, Ehsan Vaseghi.

**Cast** Taraneh Alidoosti (Arineh), Pegah Ahangarani (Nobahar), Mehrdad Sedighyan (Kami), Mohammad Reza Golzar.

DCP, colour. 96 min. Farsi.

**Premiere** 9 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** DreamLab Films

## مادرِ قلبِ اتمی

On their way back from a wild party, Arineh and Nobahar cause a car accident. A mysterious stranger by the name of Toofan offers to cover the costs. This won't be the last time they'll cross his path over the course of the night. Cars form a popular setting in Iranian cinema. They move through the public sphere, yet their occupants remain among themselves. But what happens if a policeman suddenly gets into your vehicle, finds black market DVDs and forces you to admit, tipsily, that *Argo* is a film hostile to Iran? This road movie through Tehran by night begins as a hyperactive, drugged-up farce that pokes fun at the authorities, interprets the cultural history of Western toilets, and postulates other daring intercultural theories. Yet gradually the atmosphere changes and tension steadily rises in the car, thanks to Toofan, who keeps appearing again and again out of the blue. He plays a diabolical game with the two friends, one that crosses the boundaries into the metaphysical realm. As fanciful and spooky as the plot may seem, it is clearly anchored in Iran's present.

Anke Leweke

## The dictator's confusion

The no-man's-land between dream and reality has forever fascinated me and I've always been attracted to those that oscillate within it. The dividing line between the two is but a hair's breadth and thus we often confuse them.

Should, one evening, a dictator cross your path, you will rapidly realise that he lives on a completely different planet to you. The problem is that the opposite is also true and that you have no place in his cosmology.

And if we push the logic a little further, you will find that the most notorious dictators in the history of humanity have always confused dream and reality.

And that confusion has often led to the destruction of the real world.

Ali Ahmadzadeh

## "Tehran is a mother with a nuclear heart"

*How did you choose the title of the film? Are you a Pink Floyd fan?*

As a child, I was a fan of Pink Floyd. The first time I heard the song *Atom Heart Mother*, I was a kid, but the name of the movie has nothing to do with the song by Pink Floyd. In the past decade, political events both inside and outside of my country have affected Iranian lives, so in my opinion Tehran is a mother with a nuclear heart.

*The film opens with a title card explaining an amendment to a law. What's that about?*

The story happens on the night in 2009 when the Iranian government began implementing its long-planned reform of the distribution of subsidies to citizens. I thought I should explain to foreign audiences where this law came from. This movie is about dictatorship. The main role is an example of a dictator who can harass two young girls. *Madare ghalb atomi* is about an important and historical character in a surreal environment.

*Lots of Iranian films take place in cars. Do you have any insight into why that is?*

I love road movies. Both of the feature films I've made so far take place in cars. I am not interested in making films in a place like an apartment or another indoor location, because of some of the limitations that we have in Iran, like the hijab. I think audiences won't find the characters plausible if they wear a headscarf when they are at home. It's totally unrealistic, so I prefer to put them outside. Because even foreigners know that women in Iran have to cover their heads when they're out on the street.

*To what social class do your two heroines, and their friend Kami, whom they pick up on the way home, belong?*

They belong to the middle class, which forms the largest and most important part of Iranian society, and whose members are often young and well educated, with so many dreams. The two girls and their friend Kami dream of emigrating and possibly leading a free life.

Kami gets out of the car at some point, and a strange man appears out of nowhere, a mysterious apparition.

*Madare ghalb atomi* is about a strange man who sometimes gets so weird that it seems unreal. The other man, Kami, is a complicated character; you can find many like him in Iran. From

his way of dressing, speaking, and analysing politics, you can conclude that he's a weirdo. He's about to emigrate to another country and he's gay. He behaves the way young people in Iran act when they want to show that they are different. He wears sunglasses at night, which also emphasises the surreal environment of the movie.

*Interview: Anke Leweke, January 2015*



Ali Ahmadzadeh was born in Tehran, Iran in 1986. After earning an Architecture degree, he studied Music at the Neinava University of Music Sciences in Tehran, as well as Film Directing at the Young Cinema Society.

## Films

2007: *Achmaz/Pinned* (11 min.). 2009: *Avantage/Avantage* (23 min.). 2011: *Collage* (20 min.). 2012: *Zanjan* (40 min.). 2013: *Mehmouniye Kami/Kami's Party* (80 min.). 2015: *Madare ghalb atomi / Atom Heart Mother*.



## La maldad

### Evilness

Joshua Gil

**Producer** Fabiola De la Rosa, Joshua Gil. **Production companies** Perro Negro Cine (Puebla, Mexico); Parábola (Distrito Federal, Mexico). **Director** Joshua Gil. **Screenplay** Joshua Gil. **Director of photography** Cesar Salgado. **Production design** Guillermo Vidal. **Sound** Jorge Rodríguez Sánchez. **Music** Galo Durán. **Sound design** Sergio Díaz. **Editor** León Felipe Gonzáles, Joshua Gil.

**Cast** Rafael Gil Morán (Man 1), Raymundo Delgado Muñoz (Man 2).

DCP, colour. 74 min. Spanish.

**Premiere** 7 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

An old man in the country wants to make a film, the story of a whole life told across twelve songs, of a love lost and a family torn asunder, all guided by the logic of dreams. But even if the script is the best in the world, this film won't be easy to make, as actors aren't cheap and Mexico City holds the purse strings.

But maybe his film is the one we're already watching. The same sense of longing is certainly there, in the emptied out landscapes, the mist of dewy mornings and the unquenchable fire. We don't hear all twelve songs and it's only the old man that sings, but each one somehow evokes all the others. Yet there's more to this film than just love and longing. As he and his friend wander the fields, chew their food or merely rest their weary bones, we could be watching a documentary, a stark portrait of growing old in the country. And the political is never far away either, as assassinations and corruption still reverberate even here. Or perhaps let's just settle for a road movie, in which one man disappears into the fog and another makes his way to the big city: an important meeting, an impromptu demonstration, sudden gunfire and a fade to black.

*James Lattimer*

## Poetry and politics

What does independent filmmaking mean to me? Freedom.

*La maldad* combines two basic themes: poetry and politics. It took eight years to bring together all the elements needed to make my debut movie, *La maldad*, possible. And it wasn't until 2012, the year of the presidential election, that everything came together for its production.

Friendship was the excuse, and filmmaking the true purpose of a story about the suffering caused by constant uncertainty. As the cold air blows, an ethereal atmosphere is observed on screen, in which the clouds metaphorically touch the ground to show a rarely observed Mexican reality.

We shot for six weeks over the course of six months. We filmed for only a few days a week because of the main protagonist's terminal illness, and we used only natural light conditions. We were able to tell this story only with the incredible support of professional colleagues, friends and family. Once again: Freedom.

The lost love that the main character suffers because of the woman who abandoned him is the primary inspiration of the story in *La maldad*. I cling to my love of cinema, and together with the characters, I seek to reach the end of the story, no matter how painful or real it is.

Joshua Gil

### "Right now we are going through a small revolution"

*How did you come up with the idea for La maldad?*

**Joshua Gil:** *La maldad* was born from the true story of the protagonist Rafael Gil, a curious character who lives in a remote and poor town in Mexico. He described himself as a composer, singer and writer. He wrote an autobiographical screenplay, which in his own words was a film the light of which has never been seen. This project of his, which never came to fruition, is the driving force behind our film.

*Can La maldad be described as a documentary, since Rafael Gil is the protagonist of his own story?*

Fiction was always our goal. It may be based on a true story, but my search for a narrative point of view and our mode of production was always with the clear idea of creating a fictional film. In fact, the decision to work with Rafael is grounded more in his expressive and singular character than in the fact that he was the protagonist of the story that is mentioned in the film. At the same time, we were in a situation where reality influenced fiction. As a whole, the production team and I were clear on these conditions. We had to be constantly aware of the things that happened not only to the character, but to us as well. In that sense, the illness that afflicted Rafael defined everything. Throughout the principal photography his health worsened, and we ended up incorporating this as a major dramatic element in the film.

*How did you get acquainted with Rafael?*

I had known him for a few years. He is a distant relative of mine. Nevertheless, the last time I saw him before the film was at some point in my childhood. The idea of working with him came to me when I was developing the project of my first film. I remembered him, and I was struck by the notion that he could be a great actor. With time, I got to know him better. When I discovered the stories he'd hidden in songs he'd written, I decided

that he was the film subject I was looking for. The more I knew him, the more I was interested.

*How was it working with non-actors?*

The challenge is that there is no method. Every person has his own language, and his own way of understanding the scene and his work in front of the camera. Each of them had their own pace and demanded different things from me. That was the most difficult task; we had to figure it out on a daily basis, in each scene. We could not even control the beginning and the end of a shot. We depended on them and the moments that suddenly arose spontaneously. Another challenge with Rafael was the fact that he lost his hearing years before the film. Basically we had to communicate through cards and signals. With time we learned to adapt in every sense.

*How was the shooting process?*

It was a very demanding film to make. Understanding the particular needs of our film, we divided the production process into five stages. We had to organise the shooting around events that we could not control and that had their own timing, like the fog or the burning off during the harvest season. We also had to organise our movement through Mexico. To accomplish my vision, we had to extend the production process across four different states of Mexico, because every scene demanded a different climate and atmosphere.

These strenuous conditions demanded a flexible crew that could adapt to any condition, and it also put pressure on us to finance the film ourselves so we could shoot without having to account for deadlines or economic pressures.

*Would you work using the same process of production?*

Every film has its own complexity. I think that the experience of *La maldad* was unique. I have always understood that *La maldad* had its own production system that grew from the necessities, the screenplay and the actors. Nevertheless, I recognise aspects of the production process that I would change and others that I definitely will preserve. Documentary and fiction are two things that I'm interested in working with, but above all, I think that telling stories from contemporary Mexico is indispensable, and this is what I am currently focused on.

*What do you want to do next?*

There are a lot of subjects to explore, but right now I feel the urge to expose the suffering and lack of justice in my country. I think there is too much pain in the air flowing around, but at the same time you can sense the love and solidarity still alive in the people of Mexico. Right now we are going through a small revolution in Mexico, and I want to contribute a film to the cause.

Source: production



**Joshua Gil** was born in Puebla, Mexico in 1976. He studied cinematography at the Escola Superior de Cinema i Audiovisuals de Catalunya (ESCAC) in Barcelona, Spain. After working as a director of photography for several years, in 2007 he began directing documentaries, commercials, and television series. *La maldad* is his first feature film.



# Mar

## Dominga Sotomayor

**Producer** Iván Eibuszyc, Lisandro Rodríguez. **Production companies** Cinestación (Santiago, Chile); Frutacine (Buenos Aires, Argentina). **Director** Dominga Sotomayor. **Screenplay** Lisandro Rodríguez, Vanina Montes, Dominga Sotomayor, Manuela Martelli. **Director of photography** Nicolás Ibieta. **Art director** Limarí Ascui. **Sound** Julia Huberman. **Sound design** Julia Huberman. **Editor** Catalina Marín.

**Cast** Lisandro Rodríguez (Martín), Vanina Montes (friend), Andrea Strenitz (mother).

DCP, colour. 60 min. Spanish.

**Premiere** 9 October 2014, Festival Internacional de Cine de Valdivia. **World sales** New Europe Film Sales

January 2014 on the Argentine coast. Martín and his girlfriend Eli are on holiday in Villa Gesell, a beach resort south of Buenos Aires. The sun is scorching. They read horoscopes, slurp maté, play guitar, and cool off in the ocean and the resort pool. The conversations on the beach and at dinner revolve around life and how it progresses. Nights are punctuated by dogs barking on the street and the piercing sirens of automobile alarms. This 30-something urban couple's relationship seems troubled and on the verge of falling apart. The sudden appearance of Martín's mother does not ease the tension, but just intensifies the distance between the two of them. Reality invades this fictional story when several dozen tourists are struck by lightning on the beach during a storm and three of them die.

Dominga Sotomayor's *Mar* impressively dissects the peculiarities of everyday life and directs our attention to the nuances of what is perceived as trivial. Based on the intimate portrait of a relationship and family configuration, it creates a subtle picture of a society in the elusive grip of unconsciousness.

*Caroline Pitzen*

## The inner deadlock

Mar is a film that was created spontaneously, without very clear intentions or expectations. As the starting point, I took an idea that came from the lead actors, Lisandro and Vanina. A month later we were shooting on an Argentinian beach, with a small group of friends that I invited to collaborate. We shot for eight days, working around a shifting anecdote, allowing improvisation and finding a narrative as we went along. All of this was very refreshing, and also very different from the experience on my first film, *De jueves a domingo* (Thursday Till Sunday), which was carefully planned with a longer development process.

I'm interested in portraying everyday situations from a certain distance, one in which what's familiar can become threatening or strange. To be able to capture this margin where the ordinary and extraordinary coexist.

The film observes the deadlock this young couple find themselves in during a vacation at the beach. The man's mother arrives and the distance between them becomes even more tangible. While we were shooting, a tragic event happened on the location: a lightning strike killed three people on the sand and the town was shocked. This made us stop. We brought this into the story, and it opened another dimension in the narrative, which confronts the subtlety of the emotional conflict with the irreversible cycles of life and death.

*Dominga Sotomayor*

### "The big scene never arrives, like in real life"

*How did the project start?*

**Dominga Sotomayor:** It all started when I met Lisandro Rodríguez, the lead actor, at a film festival at the end of 2013. We realised that we had similar interests, so the idea of doing something together came up. The starting point was a memory of a holiday he had with Vanina – his girlfriend, and also an actress – and also the idea of them playing a couple. When I came back to Chile, I called together a crew of friends that had worked with me before, and who were willing to travel to the coast of Argentina, where we had a place to stay. Lisandro contacted the other possible actors in Buenos Aires, and a few days later Iván Eibuszyc got involved in the project as our Argentinian co-producer. Everything worked out fast; the only thing missing, a week before shooting, was the screenplay. From the first encounter with Lisandro and the beginning of the shooting, it had only been two months. It was all very fast and spontaneous.

*Tell us about the screenplay, the story and the real events during the shooting.*

Lisandro had taken some notes on his phone during some vacations with Vanina in Mar de las Pampas, a beach resort near Villa Gesell. That was our starting point. The text was about a couple and their different perspectives on life. It was written in a reflexive and personal tone, without scenes. So we had the concept of a couple stuck on the beach, some notes from Lisandro and Vanina's real vacations, and pictures of the location. Thinking about the real possibilities we would have during eight days at Villa Gesell, Manuela Martelli and I wrote ten screenplay pages that consisted of some scenes without dialogue and a tentative structure. Then, when we wrote the outlines of scenes, we came up with possible situations and I

let the fiction in. I wanted to distance it from reality and to obtain that freedom.

With that premise in mind, a fiction was sketched about a couple in crisis that travels to the Argentinian coast in the summer to spend a few days, which are then disrupted by the visit of the man's mother.

That was the founding base from where we started shooting, open to improvisation and chance. In some way, nature and the location started trespassing into the story. They were always playing with the idea of how fragile fiction is, but it became much more evident when a lightning strike killed a group of teenagers on the beach. I think that *Mar* was a living story. We were framing things apparently irrelevant, recording daily situations that seemed to have no importance and reacting to what was happening.

In that sense, even though the creative structure and production process of *Mar* were the complete opposites of *De jueves a domingo* (Thursday Till Sunday) it follows the same line: an observation of everyday life, fragility and life itself. *Mar* is a film where the big scene never arrives, just like in real life.

*What was special about the shooting location and Villa Gesell?*

It is a very special place. It's a popular beach town that gets crowded during the summer. The variable weather and the washed-out, monochromatic colours create a timeless atmosphere. We discovered Villa Gesell because the owner of a hostel there is an actress, and she lent us the place to stay and shoot. She even played a small part in the film.

Leaving Chile to shoot was very special. We were a small mixed group of Chilean and Argentinians, who became like a family. For me, film has nothing to do with nationalism, and this experience confirmed it. I now have the feeling that I could shoot anywhere, that what interests me in movies is not something related to countries, but something beyond those boundaries. I felt comfortable shooting as a foreigner in Villa Gesell; seeing everything for the first time and without the prejudices that a local could have.

*What was it like working with a reduced crew?*

I felt that the experience was closer to the process of a theatre company rather than a film production. We would all cooperate on everything; we would solve everything amongst ourselves. Lisandro cooked in between scenes, I would buy groceries for breakfast, and everybody would participate in choosing locations and proposing ideas. The crew was composed of ten people, including actors, and we had eight days to find locations, produce and shoot. It was sometimes intense, but at the same time very rewarding. Sleeping in the same place in which we were shooting gave us flexibility. It was a good exercise in making a film with just the essentials. I think this experience really changed the way I want to approach filmmaking from now on.

*Source: production*



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**Dominga Sotomayor** was born in Santiago, Chile in 1985. After graduating from the Universidad Católica de Chile in 2007 with a degree on Audiovisual Direction, Dominga Sotomayor got her master's degree in Film Direction at the Escola de Cinema y Audiovisuals de Catalunya (ESCAC) in Barcelona. In 2008, she founded the production company Cinestación, where she works as director and producer. Dominga Sotomayor also works as a university lecturer in film. She has made videos for exhibitions including *Little Sun* by Olafur Eliasson (Tate Modern, London 2012). She is currently pursuing an MA in Fine Arts at the Universidad de Chile.

### Films

2007: *Noviembre/November* (15 min.). 2007: *Debajo/Below* (18 min.). 2008: *La montaña/The Mountain* (10 min.). 2009: *Videojuego/Videogame* (6 min.). 2012: *De jueves a domingo/Thursday till Sunday* (94 min.). 2013: *La isla/The Island* (30 min.). 2014: *Mar*.



## Me'kivun ha'yaar

### Out of the Forest

מכיוון היער

Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef, Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef

**Producer** Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef, Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef. **Production companies** Cicero Films (Tel Aviv, Israel); Noga TV (Herzliya, Israel); IFS (Jerusalem, Israel). **Director** Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef, Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef. **Screenplay** Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef, Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef. **Director of photography** Eithan Haris. **Sound** Maxim Segal. **Music** Mystaria Sound Group. **Editor** Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef. **Research** Saulius Berzinis. **Translation from Lithuanian** Saulius Berzinis.

DCP, colour. 94 min. Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, Hebrew, English.  
**Premiere** 4 July 2003, International Jerusalem Film Festival  
**World sales** Cicero Films

In a forest near Ponar, a village ten kilometres west of the Lithuanian capital, Vilna, more than 100,000 people were murdered in mass executions between 1941 and 1944. Most of them were Jews from the ghetto in Vilna. They were shot in open graves, and then their corpses were burnt. Kazimierz Sakowicz, a resident of Ponar, documented the shootings, along with life in the village, in diary entries, on scraps of paper and calendar pages, and in notebooks. The historian Rachel Margolis deciphered and published the notes he hid in bottles and buried. They make it clear that the mass executions were not kept secret, but carried out in public. Before the eyes of the villagers, the people were taken to a wooded area fenced in with barbed wire; the shots were heard; and the smoke produced by burning the corpses wafted through the village. Working from Sakowicz's diary entries, *Me'kivun ha'yaar* portrays the people who lived in direct proximity to the mass execution site, some of whom are still alive. Irana, for example, remembers how her cow in the meadow licked the face of a man who managed to flee. Yelana lived beside the train tracks; from a hill, she and her girlfriends watched how the victims were first forced to disrobe and then were shot. Regina worked in the camp's kitchen. The clothing of the murdered was later sold in the village; some villagers had close relations with the perpetrators. Using the moving reports of contemporary witnesses, the



film shows how survivors return to the site of the mass shootings after almost sixty years and recall their traumatic experiences. It is visibly difficult for them to describe the circumstances under which they were able to survive. William Good remained untouched by the bullets; he lay, uninjured, for many hours under dead bodies and did not flee until the dark of night.

Based on the diary excerpts, *Me'kivun ha'yaar* connects the memories of the villagers with those of the survivors. The viewer gets an impression of the seeming normality in which the people of Ponar continued living while mass murder was committed behind their houses. Some of the current villagers are confronted on camera with the diary entries about their parents. They react with doubts about the truth of the information or flatly deny it with the attitude of, 'Only someone who didn't live in Ponar could believe something like that.' In point of fact, what emerges is that most residents of Ponar stood idly by in the face of the mass killings, some enriching themselves with the clothes and valuables left by the victims, while turning away the few who could initially flee, so that the latter were shot by their pursuers shortly thereafter. It was mostly Lithuanians who carried out the mass murder ordered by German SS men, and there were fewer of them than of those killed. Would liberation have been possible? Who could have intervened? The partisans?

*Me'kivun ha'yaar* asks about the complicity of the mostly passive witnesses to the mass killings, who after sixty years still deny any share of responsibility. The film forces the viewers to reflect on their own responsibility for their fellow humans. What would we do today for our neighbours? What responsibility do we bear, and what guilt do we accrue with our indifference to other people and their suffering?

Gerrit Woltemath

The films *Me'kivun ha'yaar (Out of the Forest)* and *Ha'makah ha'shmonim ve'ahat (The 81st Blow)* are, in addition to their revival at the Berlinale Forum, part of the project 'Asynchronous. Documentaries and Experimental Films on the Holocaust. From the Collection of the Arsenal', which the Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art e.V. is devoting to the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army.

**Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef** was born in 1963 in Haifa, Israel. From 1987 to 1990 he studied Film and Television; in 1994 and 1995 he studied History at Tel Aviv University. Since 2001, he has been working as a producer. In 2002, he started an independent distribution company for Israeli feature films. Kaftori made his directing debut with *Me'kivun ha'yaar*. Since then, he has directed and produced several films.

#### Films

2001: *Perachim Lahag/Holiday Flower* (60 min.). 2003: *Me'kivun ha'yaar / Out of the Forest*. 2005: *4,7 Million* (60 min.). 2007: *Ima Hozerat Habayta/A Working Mom* (80 min.). 2009: *Tzulam Al-yeday Yitzhak/Filmed be Yitzhak* (60 min.). 2010: *Melissa Selly/Mom and Me* (60 min.). 2012: *Yeled Mizveda/Suitcase Child* (60 min.). 2003: *Me'kivun ha'yaar / Out of the Forest*.

**Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef** was born in 1972 in Tel Aviv, Israel. In 1992, she studied Art History, Philosophy and French at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1996, she graduated from the Sam Spiegel Film School in Jerusalem. She has been working as a film editor since 1998. *Me'kivun ha'yaar* is her first full-length film.

#### Films

2003: *Me'kivun ha'yaar / Out of the Forest*. 2007: *Ima Hozerat Habayta/A Working Mom* (80 min.). 2010: *2048* (50 min.).

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## Out of the Forest

מכיוון היער

Mekivun hayaar  
Stimmen aus dem Wald

Regie: Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef,  
Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef



**Land:** Israel 2003. **Produktion:** Cicero Films Productions, Noga TV, IFS. **Regie:** Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef, Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef. **Buch:** Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef, Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef, nach dem Tagebuch von Kazimierz Sakowicz. **Recherche, Übersetzung aus dem Litauischen:** Saulius Berzinis. **Kamera:** Eithan Haris. **Ton:** Maxim Segal. **Musik:** Mystaria Sound Group. **Schnitt:** Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef. **Produzenten:** Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef, Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef. **Format:** 35mm, 1:1.66, Farbe. **Länge:** 93 Minuten, 24 Bilder/Sek. **Sprachen:** Russisch, Polnisch, Litauisch, Hebräisch, Englisch. **Uraufführung:** 4. Juli 2003, Internationales Filmfestival Jerusalem. **Kontakt:** Cicero Films Productions, 9 Sumo St, Tel-Aviv, Israel 69708. Tel.: (972-3) 6475674, Fax: (972-3) 6478760. E-mail: cicero1@bezeqint.net; www.outoftheforest.net

### Inhalt

„Freitag, 11. Juli 1941. Das Wetter ist schön. Es weht ein warmer Wind. Der Himmel ist nur leicht bewölkt. Vom Wald her hört man Schüsse.“

Mit diesen Worten beginnt das Tagebuch von Kazimierz Sakowicz, einem Polen aus Ponar, einem kleinen Dorf zehn Kilometer westlich von Vilnius, der Hauptstadt von Litauen. Zwischen 1941 und 1944 wurden hier mehr als einhunderttausend Menschen umgebracht, zum größten Teil Juden. Sakowicz hörte die Schüsse und wusste, dass ganz in der Nähe etwas Seltsames geschah. Er beschloss, heimlich alles, was er hörte und sah, aufzuschreiben. Insgesamt dokumentierte er 835 Tage des Genozids. Ausgehend von Sakowicz' Tagebuch berichtet OUT OF THE FOREST von Menschen, die in unmittelbarer Nähe eines Massenhinrichtungsplatzes lebten. Zu ihnen gehörte ein junges Mädchen, deren Kühe auf den offenen Gräbern weideten, eine Frau, die gezwungen wurde, für die Mörder zu kochen, ein Mann, der mit den Kleidern der Toten Handel trieb, und eine weitere Frau, die sich weigerte, einen Gefangenen in ihr Haus zu lassen, der wenige Minuten zuvor der Exekution entkommen konnte.

Der Film ist auch eine Geschichte über Nachbarschaft und Gemeinwesen in schlechten Zeiten; eine Geschichte darüber, wie grundlegend unterschiedlich die jeweiligen Bevölkerungsgruppen (Polen, Litauer und Juden) die schrecklichen Vorkommnisse wahrgenommen haben und wie heute, sechzig Jahre später, niemand die Verantwortung für das Geschehene übernehmen will und jeder die Schuld bei den Anderen sucht.

### Synopsis

“Friday July 11, 1941, the weather is nice with some warm wind blowing. Only a few clouds are in the sky. Shots were heard coming out of the forest.”

These are the opening words in the diary of Kazimierz Sakowicz, a Pole living in Ponar, a village about 10 km west of Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. From 1941 until 1944, more than 100,000 people, most of them Jews, were killed in Ponar.

Sakowicz hears the shots and understands that something strange is going on in the vicinity. He decides to secretly write down what he hears and sees. Altogether he documents 835 days of the genocide.

Through the guidance of Sakowicz's diary, OUT OF THE FOREST tells the story of the people who lived in the backyard of a mass murder site: the stories of the girl who herded her cows on the open grave; the story of the woman who was forced to cook for the murderers; of the man who sold clothing of the dead; and of the woman who refused to open the door to a fugitive who just minutes before had barely escaped execution.

It is also a story about neighbours and community in the hardest of times; the story of how different communities – Poles, Lithuanians, and Jews – see the same horrifying events totally differently, and how 60 years later, each community refuses to take any responsibility for its actions and puts all the responsibility on others.

The film is built as a collage, using the accounts of locals, the testimonies of victims who miraculously escaped death at Ponar, the written diary, and images of Ponar today. There is no archival footage, nor images of corpses or blood, but rather sensitive questioning and a discreet camera that succeeds in penetrating the superficially quiet surface of the village.

### Directors' statement

Somewhat paradoxically, since we were brought up in Israel, where stories and testimonies of the horrors of the Holocaust are a part of our lives, the story of the Ponar massacre was not what initially caught our attention.

Der Film ist wie eine Collage konstruiert und besteht aus Berichten der Anwohner, aber auch der Opfer, die wie durch ein Wunder dem Tod in Ponar entkommen konnten, sowie Auszügen aus dem Tagebuch und Aufnahmen des heutigen Ponar. Der Film enthält weder Archivaufnahmen noch Bilder von Leichen oder Blut. Mit vorsichtigen Interviews und einer unaufdringlichen Kameraführung gelingt es dem Film, hinter die dünne Fassade des Dorfes zu schauen.

### Die Regisseure über ihren Film

Wir sind in Israel aufgewachsen, in einem Land, in dem Berichte über die Gräueltaten des Holocaust Teil unseres täglichen Lebens sind. So mag es erstaunen, dass es nicht das Massaker von Ponar war, das unsere Aufmerksamkeit als Erstes auf sich zog.

Für uns war es im Wesentlichen die Geschichte dieses Mannes, der alles dokumentierte, der an seinem Fenster sitzend akribisch notierte, beschrieb und beinahe gefühllos die zahllosen Hinrichtungen auflistete, die hinter seinem Haus begangen wurden.

Was bringt einen Menschen dazu, so etwas zu tun? Zuerst wollten wir seinen Charakter näher betrachten und herausfinden, was für ein Mensch dieser Sakowicz gewesen sein könnte. Woher kam er? Was wollte er mit diesen Aufzeichnungen erreichen?

Aber je mehr wir herausfanden, je mehr Menschen wir trafen, desto klarer wurde uns, dass hinter dieser Sache viel mehr steckte als nur das, was dieser eine Mann getan hatte. Wir fühlten, dass Sakowicz trotz seiner lakonischen und technischen Aufzeichnungen uns nicht nur über das Massaker informieren, sondern auch sich selbst, seine Nachbarn und die Stimmung der damaligen Zeit beleuchten wollte.

Der Film verknüpft das unfassbare Massaker und die unbegreiflichen Erzählungen der Menschen, die Zeugen der Massenhinrichtungen waren und dabei ihr normales Leben fortsetzten. Nachdem wir das Tagebuch gelesen hatten, stellten sich uns viele Fragen, die nach unserer Einschätzung nur die Leute aus Ponar beantworten konnten. Zunächst befürchteten wir, dass die älteren Bewohner des Dorfes unseren Fragen nur sehr zurückhaltend gegenüberstehen und uns als Fremde betrachten würden, die alte Wunden öffnen wollten und sie beschuldigen würden. Wir dachten, dass sie – wie die jungen Israelis, die die alten Holocaust-Erinnerungen manchmal lästig finden – nur äußerst ungern die alten Geschichten wieder hervorkramen würden, mit denen sie über ein halbes Jahrhundert gelebt hatten.

Doch die Reaktionen der Menschen in Ponar waren ganz anders als erwartet. Die älteren Bewohner Ponars waren vollkommen ruhig. Wir hatten den Eindruck, als wären wir die Ersten, die sie nach ihren persönlichen Geschichten befragten, die Ersten, die ihnen zuhören wollten. Ganz offensichtlich hatte man sie in den fünfzig Jahren der Sowjet-Herrschaft kein einziges Mal nach ihren Gefühlen und ihrer Meinung über die Vorkommnisse von Ponar gefragt. Diese Menschen schienen unbedingt über ihre Gefühle reden, ihre Version der Geschichte berichten, und vielleicht sogar Taten beichten zu wollen, die sie nach dem Krieg nicht zugeben mochten. Während der Dreharbeiten wurde uns klar, dass die Menschen in Ponar zum ersten Mal nach sechzig Jahren über ihre wahren Gefühle reden wollten.

Zu Beginn der Dreharbeiten untersuchten wir, wie die Bevölkerung von Ponar mit der Erinnerung an die Geschehnisse umgeht. Wir stießen auf Verleugnung, Schuld, Unterdrückung. Ihre Reaktionen ähnelten denen der Überlebenden des Holocaust, deren Wunden nicht verheilt sind und die unablässig versuchen, die Erfahrungen erneut zu

Essentially, it was the story of one man: the man who documented, who sat by his window and meticulously wrote, described and listed, almost callously, the numerous murders committed in his own backyard.

What motivates a human being to do such a thing? Initially, we thought we might examine his distinctive character, to try to find out what kind of person this Sakowicz was. Where did he come from? What was he trying to accomplish? We even started wondering whether we would be able to find a missing last part of his diary.

But the more we learned, the more we read, the more people we met, the more we began to realise that the story is much bigger than just the acts of one man. We sensed that Sakowicz, despite his laconic and technical manner of expression, wasn't just aiming to inform us of this massacre, but also to put himself, his neighbours, and the mood of those days under the spotlight.

This story connects the inconceivable massacre with the unbelievable narrative of the human beings who witnessed this mass execution, yet continued leading their normal lives. Reading the diary raised many questions we felt could only be answered by the people of Ponar.

At first, we were concerned that the elders of Ponar would be reluctant to talk to us, that they would consider us strangers who came to open old wounds and point a blaming finger. We figured they would be loath to tell the same old story they have been living with for over half a century, as it is with the younger generations in Israel, who sometimes find these old Holocaust stories tedious.

But when we arrived at Ponar, the reaction was quite the opposite. Not only were the elders not agitated, but it seemed as though we were the first ones to ask them for their personal stories, the first ones willing to listen. Apparently, during the 50 years of the Soviet regime, not one person inquired after their feelings and opinions regarding the occurrences in Ponar. These people appeared to be eager to share their emotions, tell their side of the story, and perhaps confess actions they dared not reveal when they were younger, in those first years following the war. Throughout the making of this film, we realised that the people of Ponar were willing to expose their true feelings, for the first time in 60 years.

We began by exploring the manner in which they dealt with their memory of the events. Denial, guilt, suppression. They had similar reactions to those of the Holocaust survivors, carrying an unhealed wound, incessantly attempting to relive it. They seemed to be dealing with many unanswered questions, directed mainly toward themselves; their distress growing deeper as they neared the end of their lives. Although the 60 years that have gone by did not bring any of them to assume personal responsibility, each is pointing the blame at their neighbor. The Poles blame the Lithuanians, who blame the Russians, who, in turn, blame the Poles, and so on and so forth. (...)

It is customary to discuss the horror experienced by Holocaust survivors, and its repercussions on the second and

durchleben. Man hatte den Eindruck, dass die Leute von Ponar sich mit vielen unbeantworteten Fragen auseinandersetzen, und dass ihre Verzweiflung mit fortschreitendem Alter wächst. Die vergangenen sechzig Jahre hatten keinen von ihnen dazu gebracht, persönliche Verantwortung zu übernehmen: Die Polen beschuldigen die Litauer, die Litauer die Russen, die Russen wiederum die Polen und so weiter. (...) Für gewöhnlich stehen die Holocaust-Überlebenden und ihre grauenhaften Erlebnisse im Zentrum der Aufmerksamkeit, oder die Auswirkungen ihrer Erfahrungen auf die zweite oder gar die dritte Generation ihrer Nachfahren. Wir wollten jedoch die Rolle der angeblich passiven Zeugen und die kumulative Wirkung der Ereignisse auf die Bewohner untersuchen.

Ab diesem Moment begann der Film eine universelle Form anzunehmen. Was ist die korrekte Art und Weise, sich mit diesen Ereignissen auseinanderzusetzen? Wer entscheidet das? Ist es ebenso abscheulich, Zeuge eines unmenschlichen Unrechts gigantischen Ausmaßes zu sein und nicht einzugreifen, wie an diesem Unrecht teilzunehmen? Diese Fragen führten uns zwangsläufig zu der Frage aller Fragen: Was hätten wir in dieser Situation getan? Welche Maßnahmen ergreifen wir heute? Instinktiv sagen wir uns, dass uns so etwas nie hätte passieren können. Wir hätten Stellung bezogen und etwas gegen diese schlimmsten Verbrechen in der Geschichte der Menschheit unternommen. Vielleicht ist das so. Aber was ist mit den kleineren Verbrechen? Was tun wir, wenn es unserem Nachbarn nebenan schlecht geht? Oder dem Nachbarn auf der anderen Straßenseite? Oder den Menschen in unserem Nachbarstaat oder auf unserem Nachbarkontinent? Gibt es Abstufungen bei den Verbrechen der Gleichgültigkeit anderen Menschen und ihren Leiden gegenüber? Gibt es eine Rechtfertigung? Gibt es eine Rechtfertigung für eine Frau, die einen um sein Leben flehenden Flüchtling nicht in ihr Haus gelassen hat?

Im Verlauf unserer Recherche gab es Stimmen, die meinten, dass Sakowicz, der Autor des Tagebuchs, Mitglied der polnischen Untergrundbewegung 'Armia Krajowa' oder dass das Tagebuch nichts anderes als ein ganz gewöhnlicher Geheimdienstbericht war, in dem Aktionen, Strategien, Taktik etc. dargelegt werden. Vielleicht ist das so. Unserer Meinung nach war diese Form der Aufzeichnung auch Sakowicz' Art, mit dem Leben in jenen Tagen zurecht zu kommen. Ähnlich war es wohl mit dem Lachen von Regina, der Wut von Jelena und dem Weinen von Leonarda.

Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef, Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef

**Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef** wurde am 24. Juni 1963 in Haifa geboren. Von 1987 bis 1990 studierte er Film- und Fernsehwissenschaft an der Universität von Tel Aviv. 1994/95 absolvierte er ein Geschichtsstudium ebenfalls an der Universität von Tel Aviv. Seit 2001 arbeitet Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef als Produzent. 2002 gründete er einen unabhängigen Filmverleih für israelische Spielfilme. Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef schreibt außerdem Drehbücher. OUT OF THE FOREST ist sein Regiedebüt.

**Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef** wurde am 4. Oktober 1972 in Tel Aviv geboren. 1992/93 studierte sie Kunstgeschichte, Philosophie und Französisch an der Sorbonne in Paris. 1996 schloss sie ihr Regiestudium an der Sam Spiegel Filmschule in Jerusalem ab. Seit 1998 arbeitet Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef als Cutterin. Ihr erster eigener Film, *Sophie Calle in Jerusalem*, entstand 1999. OUT OF THE FOREST ist ihr erster abendfüllender Film.

even third generations of Holocaust survivors' descendants. We, however, were drawn to examine the role of the allegedly passive witnesses, and the cumulative effects these events had on them.

From this point on, the film began to take a universal form. What is the correct manner in which one should deal with these events? And who is to decide? Can witnessing an inhumane crime of gigantic proportions without rising up against it be considered as vile as taking part in that crime? These questions led us to the inevitable, ultimate question of them all: What action would we have taken had we been in that position? What action are we taking today?

Instinctively, we tell ourselves this could never have happened to us. We certainly would have chosen to take a stand and act in the face of the most horrific crime in the history of human kind. Perhaps. But what about lesser crimes? What action do we take when our next-door neighbour is in pain? What about the neighbour across the street? And the one in the neighbouring country? The neighbouring continent? Can crimes of indifference to others' suffering be ranked on a scale? Is there justification? Can there be justification for a woman who wouldn't open her door to a fugitive begging for his life?

In the course of our research, some raised the possibility that Sakowicz, the author of the journal, was actually a member of the Armia Krajowa (the Polish underground), and that his journal was none other than a standard intelligence report, exposing actions, strategies, tactics, etc. Perhaps.

In our opinion, this form of documentation was also Sakowicz's way for dealing with life in those days. Much like Regina's laughter, Yelena's rage, and Leonarda's crying.

Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef, Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef

### Biofilmographies

**Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef** was born on 24 June, 1963 in Haifa, Israel. From 1987 to 1990 he studied film and TV; between 1994 and 1995 he studied history at Tel Aviv University. Since 2001 he has been working as a producer. In 2002 he started an independent distribution company for Israeli feature films. Yaron Kaftori Ben Yosef also works as a screenwriter. OUT OF THE FOREST is his directorial debut.

**Limor Pinhasov Ben Yosef** was born on 4 October, 1972 in Tel Aviv, Israel. In 1992/93 she studied art history and philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1996 she graduated from the Sam Spiegel Film School in Jerusalem. She has been working as a film editor since 1998. She directed her first film, *Sophie Calle in Jerusalem*, in 1999. OUT OF THE FOREST is her first full-length documentary.

### Films/Filme

1999: *Sophie Calle in Jerusalem*. 2001: *Holiday Flowers*. 2003: OUT OF THE FOREST.



## 水の声を聞く

# Mizu no koe o kiku

### The Voice of Water

#### Masashi Yamamoto

**Producer** Masashi Yamamoto, Shinichiro Muraoka. **Production company** Cinema Impact (Tokyo, Japan). **Director** Masashi Yamamoto. **Screenplay** Masashi Yamamoto. **Director of photography** Futa Takagi. **Production design** Fumiaki Suzaka. **Music** Dr. Tommy. **Sound design** Shintaro Kamijo. **Editor** Kenji Yamashita.

**Cast** Hyunri (Minjon), Shuri (Nami Sakai), Natsuko Nakamura (Sae), Akihiro Kamataki (Mikio), Kei Oda (Takazawa), Hayate Matsuzaki (Mamoru Komiya), Riku Hagiwara (Shinji), Izumi Minai (Yoshie Komiya), Jun Murakami (Akao).

HDCAM, colour. 129 min. Japanese, Korean.

**Premiere** 30 August 2014, Tokyo

**World sales** Geta Films/Spirits Project, Inc.

Cinema Impact was the name of a workshop launched by Masashi Yamamoto in 2012. It produced fifteen short films, including one directed by Yamamoto himself about a Zainichi (a Korean living in Japan) who is exploited by a shady sect and made into their figurehead. The success of other Cinema Impact films encouraged the director to expand this short prologue into a feature-length film.

*Mizu no koe o kiku* is set in Okubo, Tokyo's Koreatown, where Minjon receives outcasts of all kinds and listens to their stories of woe, responding to them with flowery Korean platitudes they are unable to understand. Her act is so successful that a group of canny businesspeople make use of her standing to found the God's Water sect. Enter Minjon's father, who is being pursued by brutal debt collectors and seeks help from his estranged daughter. Yamamoto doesn't just manage to fuse satire, yakuza trash and a moral message with his trademark sympathy for the underdogs of Japanese society, he also takes his protagonist seriously, ultimately allowing her to rebel against the very system she created, turn toward the shamanism of her ancestors and embrace her Korean roots.

*Christoph Terhechte*

## The search for stability and salvation

Our lives today are shaped by stagnation and helplessness, chaos and confusion, anxiety and distrust. We are unable to see into the future. People go through life not knowing what they can cling to. *Mizu no koe o kiku* depicts the cult group God's Water and its Japanese-Korean leader Minjon. The film shows lives, both sacred and profane, as well as nature, water, wind, and clouds. With its depiction of the vitality that spawns from nature, the film also aims to refresh our parched souls.

Masahi Yamamoto

## Are workshops the saviour of independent film?

Workshop films are a fact of life in Japanese independent cinema. Funding is scarce these days, unlike the 1990s and the pre-Lehman Shock 2000s when investors were throwing money at all sorts of projects, and the government would rather invest tax revenues in promoting a narrow bureaucratic definition of pop culture. So what's a hard-up filmmaker to do?

The most successful workshop project to date has probably been *Koi no Uzu (Be My Baby)*, directed by Hitoshi One soon after the success of his late-night TV series and movie spinoff, *Moteki (Love Strikes!)*, of which *Calamity Strikes* is a loose parody). *Koi no Uzu* turned out to be a local box-office success for a film of its scale. It was screened at several overseas festivals, including Hong Kong and Edinburgh, and was selected for competition at the Udine Far East Film Festival.

The film emerged from a workshop called Cinema Impact, which was the brainchild of Masashi Yamamoto, an indie survivor who directed several critical successes such as *Robinson no Niwa (Robinson's Garden)* and *Janku Fudo (Junk Food)* in the 1980s and 1990s. From 2012 to 2013, Cinema Impact facilitated mainly short works from an illustrious assortment of directors including Isao Yukisada, Yuki Tanada, and Junji Sakamoto.

Yamamoto also directed three shorts of his own, one of them being the thirty-one-minute drama *Mizu no koe o kiku, Puroro-gu (The Voice of Water, Prologue)* about a young Zainichi (Japanese-born) Korean woman who reluctantly acts as a medium for a fraudulent religious cult. He hoped to use it as the basis for a full-length film but had no completed script, let alone funding. That was until *Koi no Uzu* started drawing accolades and audiences, and enjoyed a long run in theatres despite featuring a cast of unknowns.

Producer Yamamoto ploughed the profits back into *Mizu no koe o kiku (The Voice of Water)*, his first genuine feature-length movie since 2007's *Kikareta Onna (Man, Woman and the Wall)* (...). He had been running a free class for workshop participants who had not been cast in films by the other Cinema Impact directors, and one of them was a young South Korean woman named Hyunri who was raised in Japan.

She didn't have the right air about her to play one of the many flaky characters in *Koi no Uzu*, but was highly rated by both One and Yamamoto. Working with her on the prologue gave him the inspiration to complete the script for a feature version in which she would also star.

The resulting 129-minute ensemble piece is a testament to Yamamoto's skill at shaping characters to his actors' strengths, and dealing with social issues in a very human rather than abstract way. (...) Hyunri makes for an appealing and sympathetic lead, substantially evoking Minjon's gradual transformation from a directionless

youth to a woman taking control of her own destiny, regardless of the consequences.

The realism extends to the cult's utilitarian premises, constructed on an entire floor of a company office that was loaned to the production for an extended period. As Minjon performs for the needy in front of her makeshift altar in the worship room, administrative staff carry out busywork on the other side of the wall. Occasionally the employees move outside to chat candidly on the balcony or act out ceremonies on the rooftop, with the camera occasionally pulling away to show the building dwarfed by a wall of Shinjuku skyscrapers.

## A DJ priest and techno beats

The exploration of the inner workings of the cult concentrates on personal dynamics, and no grand statements are made on religion or the state of modern Japan. Many exterior shots were filmed on the streets of 'Korea Town' in Shinjuku's Shin-Okubo district, but the rising antipathy toward Zainichi Koreans among a certain section of the Japanese populace is never broached. In fact, Minjon frequently addresses her followers in her mother tongue, forcing them to use the automatic translation function of their raised smartphones as if it is completely natural. Yamamoto says he despises the pretentiousness of explicit social commentary and what he sees as the predilection by cinephiles for aesthetic beauty divorced from reality. He focuses on creating believable situations and realistic interactions between everyday people, although as his multicultural and outsider-centric films to date like *Janku Fudo* and *Atlanta Boogie* have shown, his definition of 'everyday' is unusually inclusive.

One other aspect that makes *Mizu no koe o kiku* so enjoyable are its very funny moments, such as Minjon and Mina's visit to one of Akao's side businesses, the Spiritual Wind Church, where a long-haired DJ priest pumps out techno beats and a laser light show for followers getting down in identical T-shirts emblazoned with the cult's logo. Yamamoto's veteran guerrilla-style approach to location photography creates one of the film's best sight gags: a long shot whereby cult members on their way to a meeting with Akao enter his place of work, which turns out to be the headquarters of the all-powerful advertising behemoth Dentsu.

The screening I attended was followed by an on-stage talk in which the guests included Yamamoto and the film's producer, Shinichiro Muraoka. They recounted the story of how they first met in a bar while heavily intoxicated, which led to a brawl in which Muraoka lost teeth and Yamamoto lost consciousness. Many years later, they have collaborated for the first time to make *Mizu no koe o kiku*. Just as well they managed to patch things up.

Don Brown, 26 September 2014

[http://ajw.asahi.com/article/cool\\_japan/movies/AJ201409260008](http://ajw.asahi.com/article/cool_japan/movies/AJ201409260008)



Masashi Yamamoto was born in 1956 in Oita Prefecture, Japan. He began making Super-8 Films in 1979 and directed his first feature, *Carnival in the Night*, in 1982. During the 1980s, he also produced records and organised music festivals. In 1998, Yamamoto spent a year in New York. In 2012, he opened the Cinema Impact workshop, through which he has produced fifteen films by thirteen directors.

## Films

1982: *Yami no kanibaru / Carnival in the Night* (Berlinale Forum 1983, 108 min.). 1987: *Robinson no niwa / Robinson's Garden* (Berlinale Forum 1987 117 min.). 1990: *What's up Connection* (118 min.). 1996: *Atlanta Boogie* (108 min.). 1997: *Junk Food* (Berlinale Forum 1998, 105 min.). 2000: *Limousine Drive* (87 min.). 2005: *Days* (58 min.). 2005: *Cycle* (48 min.). 2006: *Man and Woman and Wall* (87 min.). 2011: *Three Points* (85 min.). 2012: *One Nation Story* (35 min.). 2012: *Night in Tacos* (25 min.). 2014: *Mizu no koe o kiku / The Voice of Water*.



# La mujer de barro

## The Mud Woman

### Sergio Castro San Martín

**Producer** Carlos Nuñez, Gabriela Sandoval, Gonzalo Bubis, Marco Díaz. **Production companies** Storyboard Media (Santiago, Chile); HD Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina); Prize Producciones (Ovalle, Chile). **Director** Sergio Castro San Martín. **Screenplay** Sergio Castro San Martín. **Director of photography** Sergio Armstrong. **Production design** Marcela Urivi. **Costume** Marcela Urivi. **Make-up** Cez Navotka. **Sound** Erick del Valle. **Music** Sebastián Vergara. **Sound design** Roberto Espinoza. **Editor** Andrea Chignoli, Sergio Castro San Martín. **Cast** Catalina Saavedra (María), Paola Lattus (Violeta), Daniel Antivilo (Raul), Maite Neira (Teresa), Elsa Poblete (Rosa), Tiare Pino (Carla), Angel Lattus (Dario).

DCP, colour. 92 min. Spanish.

**Premiere** 6 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** Media Luna New Films

Maria, a single mother in her early forties, needs money and thus sets off for a job as a harvest worker with a revolver in her pocket as a precaution, leaving her daughter Teresa in the care of her good friend Rosa. At the farm, Maria encounters Raúl, her supervisor and former tormentor. She sullenly carries out her work and socializes little with the other female labourers. Only occasionally does Violeta, a younger, peroxide blonde with whom Maria shares a room, succeed in motivating her taciturn companion to go out with her. When Raúl once again abuses Maria, she silently endures her pain. However, when Violeta has a serious accident at work shortly afterwards, Maria decides to take revenge: for all the past scores left unsettled, the brutal power structures and all the exploitation.

Castro tells this story with great calm and quiet tonality. The camera skillfully captures the tense atmosphere of scorching heat and enduring drought in northern Chile, but also the impassive beauty of its rural locales. The film sets the vulnerability of the female body against its toughness and the tender solidarity of women.

*Hanna Keller*



## The life of a seasonal Worker

The idea for *La mujer de barro* came about when I heard several news stories that took place in different regions of Chile, all related to the seasonal agricultural workers. I find it equally interesting and contradictory to observe these fruit pickers working ten hours a day under conditions that are almost inhuman, in landscapes of breath-taking beauty; how they become victims of their fear and sometimes even violence by the contractors of this industry. The film was inspired by a news story about a woman named Maria Cartagena, who suffered serious injury due to the use of a chemical, about which she was not warned, in a cherry orchard in 1985. Maria did seasonal work to earn enough money to visit her brother, who had been a political prisoner since New Year's Eve of 1973. With these real events as the starting point, I wanted to develop a fictional story for the character of Maria Cartagena, which I wanted to tell using the documentary format. Within the group of seasonal workers I met while carrying out research for this film, I was especially struck by a woman possessed with such deep desire to provide financially for her family that she is able to transcend, day by day, the darkest and most inhumane elements of this work.

### Excellent wines and miserable working conditions

Other factors of great dramatic importance in the life of a seasonal worker are migration and the fear that grows in these women when they leave their homes and families. I also met workers who faced non-fulfilment of agreements on the part of their employers, meaning they did not get paid. It's paradoxical to think that zones like this produce wine of world-class quality, but under conditions that are unhealthy and unacceptable for any human.

I was interested in making a film that focuses on the issue of work, because is in this place that we spend a great part of our lives and where fears and joys are manifest. It was also important to me to show landscapes that are unknown even to many Chileans.

With *La mujer de barro*, I wanted to make a socio-critical film about the reality of agricultural work in Chile and specifically, the situation of the seasonal workers on Chilean farms. Following this main objective is the clear intention to build a social picture from the workers' perspective, to establish a female microcosm, whereby the relevance of the context is provided not by appearances, but by the fact that it is all part of a same world, in which relationship are as important as economic interests.

### A female microcosmos

*La mujer de barro* leads the viewer into the cosmos of the women fruit pickers, without issuing judgements about the characters or the main character. The film presents real facts based on research and fictionalised situations reflecting this same reality. In this sense, the film intends to 'show' and to 'observe' without any moral judgments, which we believe to be the viewer's job.

The question posed by the film about humane working conditions gains a dramatic importance when contrasted with the natural beauty of the landscapes where *La mujer de barro* takes place. Chile's so-called fourth region, the region of Coquimbo, and more precisely the area of the Andes foothills, is known as one of the most beautiful parts of the Chilean north because of its geographic virtues, and this is contrasted with the hostility and toughness of the hundreds of women who are victims of this system of work. All of the actions of our main character, Maria Cartagena, are shown from a documentary and biographical perspective. The film is divided into three acts, corresponding to the central themes of her

life: family, work and the spiritual revenge she undertakes. The film closely follows this woman and her journey, which makes her look lost in a land that belongs to no one, a paradise that means nothing at all to her or the other women.

Somehow the movie is a chronological cycle: it begins with rain and ends with water, surrounding the raw and cold state of Maria Cartagena's life.

*Sergio Castro San Martín*



**Sergio Castro San Martín** was born in El Salvador, Chile, in 1979. From 1998 until 2004, he studied Architecture at the Universidad Mayor in Santiago, Chile. From 2005 to 2008, he studied Screenwriting and Directing at the Chilean Film School in Santiago. He made his final thesis film, *Paseo/The Walk*, in 2009. Since then, he has made numerous documentary, music, and television films.

Alongside his work as a director, Sergio Castro San Martín also teaches directing and editing at various universities in Santiago. *La mujer de barro* is his second feature film.

### Films

2005: *Sincopado/Syncopated* (20 min.). 2005: *Trainticket* (24 min.). 2006: *Ojo de buey/Bull's Eye* (10 min.). 2007: *Primer Tango/First Tango* (10 min.). 2009: *Paseo/The Walk* (75 min.). 2011: *Electrodomesticos el frio misterio/Electrodomesticos, The Cold Mystery* (126 min.). 2012: *Un Fotógrafo/A Photographer* (25 min.). 2012: *8 Fotógrafos/8 Photographers* (35 min.). 2012: *A Day With Tortoise* (62 min.). 2015: *La mujer de barro / The Mud Woman*.



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## Nefesim kesilene kadar

### Until I Lose My Breath

Emine Emel Balcı

**Producer** Nadir Öperli, Titus Kreyenberg. **Production companies** Prolog Film (Istanbul, Turkey); Unafilm (Köln, Germany). **Director** Emine Emel Balcı. **Screenplay** Emine Emel Balcı. **Director of photography** Murat Tunçel. **Production design** Meral Efe Yurtseven, Yunus Emre Yurtseven. **Costume** Manfred Schneider. **Make-up** Nimet Inkaya. **Sound** Jörg Kidrowski. **Editor** Dora Vajda.

**Cast** Esmé Madra (Serap), Rıza Akın (father), Sema Keçik (Sultan), Gizem Denizci (Dilber), Ece Yüksel (Funda), Uğur Uzunel (Yusuf), Yavuz Pekman (brother-in-law), Pinar Gök (sister), Yavuz Özata (Ibrahim).

DCP, colour. 94 min. Turkish.

**Premiere** 6 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

Serap, a young woman whose mother is no longer around, works in a textile factory in Istanbul. She longs for her father, a lorry driver, to finally make good on his promise and rent a flat for the two of them. In the meantime, she lives with her sister and her husband. She does everything she can to make sure her wish comes true, saving her wages for her father and allowing herself nothing. Her stubborn perseverance almost reverses the standard parent-child relationship. The daughter is the one who cares and provides, looking after her father and giving him money. She chooses to ignore the fact that he always comes up with new excuses and lies and rejects the more realistic picture that her sister paints of him. Although the camera is always with Serap, we only get to know her and her life gradually, as well as how far she is prepared to go for her wish. This piercing tale of a father and daughter is also about the mixed set of feelings that flow together in existential human relationships – longing, neediness, lies, disappointment, illusion and anger – a mix described frequently, yet almost deceptively as love.

*Anna Hoffmann*

## The reality we set for ourselves

Our dependency on the reality that we set for ourselves has always drawn my attention. The impulsiveness and ambiguity in the way we create our own morals, our own conscience, and our own gods has always made me ask questions. And the answers I found while writing about Serap and the others pushed me to make this film. Where does our dependency on the reality that we set start to dissolve? When, where, and how do we question our beliefs or the people we believe in?

In *Nefesim kesilene kadar*, Serap makes up a 'father' for herself. But the father does not really have an equivalent in practical life. I tried to make Serap realise this; the obstacles she faces on the way to reach her father are actually the ones she faces on the way to reach her own essence.

I tried to find out where Serap's loneliness comes from. It points to a society in which Serap and other women find themselves in the dark and stuffy back of a van, every morning. Through the story of Serap, I want to show my criticism of how we are totally alienated from the concepts of gender and family, which are always considered sacred.

*Emine Emel Balci*

## "This story could take place in any city, in any country"

*The title of the film seems to address the audience directly. Why is Serap losing her breath, what does she want to achieve in life?*

**Emine Emel Balci:** The title of the film points at Serap's determination to stay alive. But it is difficult to give a simple, concrete answer to this question. While I was writing the screenplay, I wanted to set Serap free from any taboos, restrictions, and limits I myself might be having. I wanted to see what she would be capable of doing. I got Serap involved in things that wouldn't be appreciated; in this way I was able to criticise her community and the loneliness she is exposed to. This also gave me the chance to consider Serap as a human being with all the conflicts and grey zones in her character. She is very quiet, but she also has ambitions, she feels hatred, and she experiences complex urges. Although she evolves throughout the film and discovers certain dark sides in herself, for me Serap is still just someone who has ordinary goals in life and believes that one should advance in life.

*It seems like you preferred to leave the city unidentified in your film. Other than a few details, you didn't use any defining characteristics of Istanbul. Is there a special reason for this?*

I intended to shape the camera movements and framing according to Serap's life and needs. The city became insignificant as soon as I started to create a character that was living in closed spaces, disconnected from the city she lives in, solely focused on her work. This story could take place in any city, in any country. It was much more appealing to give clues about the city that Serap lives in through the soundscape, for instance.

*In your previous short films and your documentary Ich Liebe Dich, female characters were your main focus. Nefesim kesilene kadar also revolves around a female character. Could we say that as a filmmaker you are more interested in women's stories?*

The issues that I am familiar with and feel an urge to talk about primarily concern women. In a society such as Turkey, where patriarchy infiltrates many areas, it is inevitable that women are

overlooked, ignored and oppressed by the system. Even when you look at the relationships between individuals, the result isn't much different from the bigger picture. This is a situation I feel rather hopeless about, which is why I try to tell stories about issues concerning women's lives. But these issues are so multi-dimensional and peculiar that they could be told through a film with an all-male cast as well.

*There are very few male characters in the film and they are inept, short-sighted or naive. Is your decision to depict men in this manner influenced by the fact that women are usually defined solely through male characters in Turkish films?*

I'm sure there are certain faulty codes that influence the films we make. Female characters are either sanctified or turned into sexual objects as a result of a well-intended or sexist approach. It's true that I tried to break this tendency in my film. But I'm not only criticising men in my film. The status that men try to gain in this society is usually ludicrous. A kind of exploitation runs through masculinity and male bonding. However, in my film, I do not praise the women characters; they are also cruel to each other. This is also about accepting gender roles. It has traces in my life as well as in yours. We are talking about codes that are centuries old. But when making a film it may be useful to subvert customs to make problems more visible.

*How did you decide to work with Esme Madra? How was the process of working together?*

When I was developing my script, it was clear that the camera would not leave Serap's side. It was necessary to create a character profile strong enough to engage the audience to achieve such a form of narration. I first thought that I could work with amateur actors. But my desire to do long rehearsals, to play with the script and to describe the story world through a unique visual design inclined me to work with professional actors. I knew Esme and had watched her previous work. After our first meeting, we embarked on a long period of rehearsals. Esme is an unbiased and very talented actress. It was going to be beneficial for her to go through a process like the one I went through while I was writing the script. She visited many sweatshops, observed how people work and behave there. We worked together on the details of Serap's emotional and physical codes, and we had rehearsals with other actors in a very mixed schedule. This way we ensured the inner continuity of Serap's character. And at the end of this intense period of rehearsals, we both started shooting the film with the belief that Serap was a person who actually existed.

*The camera usually watches Serap from different angles while staying very close to her at the same time. Was your main reason for using a hand-held camera in order to make the audience feel closer to Serap?*

Serap is a character that is constantly in motion. She needs to be permanently available in the sweatshop. That is part of her job. The best way to shoot this was to use a hand-held camera. This choice was also beneficial for the creation of an insecure, uncanny atmosphere. The change of camera movements in relation to changes in the character would also make it possible for us to feel Serap's breathing with the hand-held camera.

*The workshops and the people working there are depicted very realistically. Did you shoot these scenes in a real workshop with real workers?*

There was a long period of research for the film. Although supporting roles, locations and the plot changed a lot through different drafts of the script, Serap and the sweatshop were always at the centre of the story. I visited textile factories and talked to the people I met there in an effort to understand the dynamics of this world. During these visits Murat Tuncel, the cinematographer, accompanied me and we took lots of photos to decipher the visual codes of this world. The textile industry is one of the industries where workers are exploited big time. There is a lot of competition and the work is intense, irregular, and insecure. Because of such factors we did not work in a real workshop. The workshop in the film was constructed entirely for the film. We found a location that used to be a workshop, which we changed according to our needs. We had a similar approach in the casting of female extras. We tried to cast women who were either actual workers, or had worked in a textile workshop at least once in their lives.

*What was your reason for highlighting the issue of money in Serap's life so much?*

Money disrupts everything it gets involved in. It quickly changes ethical perceptions and judgement. I thought the slipperiness of Serap's relationship with money might raise some questions in the minds of the audience.

*The moment when Serap betrays Dilber is a turning point in the film. Does Serap become a more determined character due to the harm she causes her best friend?*

Usually, certain disappointments and needs lie behind important decisions in our lives. Serap's situation is also like that. I hope that the ethical aspect of Serap's act will evoke some discussions about the difficulty of deciding who is more evil or hostile, and what purification or corruption means in our lives.

*After Dilber's departure from the film, a young character, Funda, joins the story. Considering the end of the film, would it be fair to say that there is a circular relationship among Dilber, Serap, and Funda?*

This circularity creates a dead-end feeling; it implies that life has turned into a vicious cycle. I introduced Funda to the story to reveal an important aspect about Serap's life. But when I thought about how the women in the structure of the film are each other's reflection or representation, I created Funda as someone who had the potential to replace Serap. I wanted to stir up a curiosity in the audience that would linger even after the film was finished, a wish to pursue the story further.

*Source: Prolog Film*



**Emine Emel Balcı** was born in 1984 in Turkey. She studied Film and Television at the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University in Istanbul. After working as an assistant director and screenwriter, she made her first short documentary in 2007, *Gölün Kadınları/Women of the Lake*. In 2011, Emine Emel Balcı took part in the Berlinale Talent Campus. *Nefesim kesilene kadar* is her second feature-length film.

## Films

2007: *Gölün Kadınları/Women of the Lake* (24 min.). 2008: *Bekleyiş/The Waiting* (13 min.). 2012: *Ich liebe Dich* (90 min.). 2015: *Nefesim kesilene kadar / Until I Lose My Breath*.



© *La nuit et l'enfant*

## La nuit et l'enfant

### The Night and the Kid

#### David Yon

**Producer** Carine Chichkowsky, Guillaume Morel, Karim Aitouna, Thomas Micoulet. **Production companies** Survivance (Paris, France); Hautlesmains Productions (Lyon, France). **Director** David Yon. **Screenplay** David Yon, Zoheir Mefti, Bachar Lamine. **Director of photography** David Yon. **Sound** Bertrand Larieu. **Music** Jean D.L., Sandrine Verstraete. **Editor** Jérémy Gravat. **Cast** Lamine Bachar (Lamine), Aness Baitich (The Kid).

DCP, colour. 61 min. Arabic.

**Premiere** 9 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**Contact:** Hautlesmains Productions

A child throws stones at the moon. They say the sun has gone and will only return when anxiety has disappeared. Until then, the stars are there to offer comfort. So the child counts the stars in the night's endless expanse on the slopes of the Algerian Atlas mountains. Aness, the child, is the companion of Lamine, a young man on the run. Both are being pursued by nameless people carrying arms. Who are these criminals? Why must the two of them hide and sleep at night with weapons in their hands? Is the child merely a figment of Lamine's imagination? A desire made flesh? Narrated elliptically and associatively, *La nuit et l'enfant* tells of omnipresent danger and constant threats. The film moves between realism and dream: Almost documentary-like shots alternate with powerful, poetic imagery. In the 90s, the Djelfa region was a terrorist stronghold. Lamine says that life was different before the terrorists came. Without dogma and with plenty of room for interpretation, this film is the account of a young generation's will to live, a generation which must set boundaries even as it suffers. David Yon has created a dark, atmospheric fable reminiscent of the story of another little prince.

*Cécile Tollu-Polonowski*

## Algeria's bloody legacy

After *The Birds of Arabia*, my first film, I soon felt the need to return to Djelfa, Algeria, and shoot a second one. What the young people have to say, their connection to the landscape and to history, called for a film to be made. While in *The Birds of Arabia*, one would hear voices of the past – the correspondence between the anarchist Antonio Atarès and Simone Weil – I wanted this new film, *La nuit et l'enfant*, to feature the present-day voices of Djelfa.

The region was once populated by nomadic tribes. A pocket of the Algerian War of Independence and a hotbed of terrorism in the 1990s, its heavy historical legacy weighs so much that threat intrinsically pertains to it. But despite the blood legacy received, the young Algerians I have met struck me with how they have made this landscape their own, how they took me to places still considered by others to be sullied by danger. One of the main shooting locations in *La nuit et l'enfant* is La Mare Blanche, an oasis in the middle of the steppes. During the 1990s, terrorists came along and the farmers left. Now, 'The White Pond' is uninhabited, frozen in the traces of former violence.

Over time, trust has developed between me and my friends in Djelfa, the Lahrech brothers: Salah, Ilyes, Idriss and Boubaker. They have assisted me in the long-term filming process. This enables us to consider making a film a collective experiment, a way of setting free both words and bodies. They all are truly active in the making of the film, made with them and not about them.

In the course of my trips to Djelfa, a powerful character emerged, embodied by Lamine Bachar, the film's main character and a friend of the Lahrech brothers. His commitment to and passion for filmmaking have resulted in the film being built around him and his natural talent for creating a character, both his extended self and someone else. I am susceptible to his way of giving himself and to his graceful, concrete, tangible approach to his environment. The film has been developed by three voices: Algerian filmmaker Zoheir Mefti's, Lamine's and mine.

In the film, by inventing rituals of his own, Lamine tries to have 'the ruins re-flower' within a seemingly endless night, accompanied by a child who is his confidant. I hope this is what the film will document: history seeping out of the landscape and young people calling upon it by means of a film, aiming at setting themselves free of it.

David Yon

### "My desire was to make a film that would be a collective emotional experience"

*The film has evolved over a long period of time. Could you tell us about how the project started and how it has changed over the course of several years? First more of a documentary, it has turned increasingly into a drama...*

**David Yon:** While shooting my first film in Djelfa in 2007, I met young people of my age, the Lahrech brothers Salah, Ilyes, Idriss, and Boubaker, who became my friends. I regularly returned to see them and my desire to make a film with them and those in their inner circle kept increasing.

The first idea was inspired by their Spanish great-grandmother, who had been kidnapped by Emir Abdelkader and had to marry one of his lieutenants. The point was to find something between documentary and drama, based on history.

But once we started asking people around them about this great-grandmother, I realised that the story triggered debates that were more important to their parents' generation than to theirs.

At one point, they said a fictional rather than a documentary film would be better suited to expressing what they wanted to. We tried to figure out what kind of feature we could make together. The only idea I introduced was the one of the sun that no longer rises. As for the formal aspect, I intended to create a type of image in which what is visible keeps disappearing. Working with HD means everything is highly defined, too dense, and I wanted to use darkness and half-light so the image would be full of mystery.

We organised the casting with all the friends of my friends. For them, a feature film is generally an action picture, so several of them walked around the wasteland with a gun. We viewed the footage together and we all agreed that Lamine had the most onscreen presence of them all. Lamine Bachar is Salah Lahrech's best friend as well as the brothers' neighbour. We then decided that Lamine would be the main character, so all we had to do was write the screenplay for the feature.

*Were the texts and dialogue, which at times are quite literary, written before, or are they based on made-up or improvised accounts?*

For the past seven years, I've stayed in Djelfa every year and kept a diary about my impressions, so we did have a written basis. Let me quote a passage that is meaningful to me:

'In Djelfa, I often imagined a water drop on a rock, under full sunlight. This image alluded to my experience there, in a country that isn't mine. With heat, sounds, light, an organic and mineral environment. Experiencing exhaustion made me let go. From a certain point on, I let go of my fear of disappearing, and this is when freedom began. I wish this film to be in love with such freedom.'

An important factor in making this film is I don't speak Arabic and my Algerian friends in Djelfa speak almost no French. Our relationship can't be based on spoken language. This is why I shot situations without focusing on words, being all the more attentive to gesture, movement, light and backdrops appearing in the image. My desire as a director was to make a film that could be a collective emotional experience. For the film to be good, it had to combine elements of a personal story and this search for light, for the representation of man. This is why I asked Algerian filmmaker Zoheir Mefti, who lives in Spain, to provide his artistic help in making the film. Together, we would view the footage I had shot in Algeria, and he helped me to understand what exactly I had shot. I got the meaning of the images after a kind of necessary delay, so I would have the appropriate distance to them and to what they were telling. As we intended to avoid a certain type of realism and to bring in a few fantastical aspects, we wrote a screenplay based on the characters, locations, the accounts we collected, and texts that were previously written.

Zoheir is about the same age as Lamine. They've had similar experiences as they were born in the late 1970s-early '80s. They spent their young years, from the ages of ten to nineteen, during the period of terrorism.

Zoheir had written poetical texts based on his own experience. The script we first wrote was a kind of Western, unfolding as an initiation process: 'After a murder, an adult and a child on the run explore a territory'.

Once this script was translated into Arabic, I was able to discuss it with my friends in Djelfa and do the scene preparations. On the set, I asked Lamine to improvise, starting from a given situation, from written texts, from his own experience and from what he knew about his character. He understood very well that he was playing a role, but that it had to be fuelled by his own experience. He did reveal his very generous, natural talent as an actor. When I asked him if some of his own photographs or texts could be used, he brought several of them. For instance, the voiceover at the beginning of the film is a poem written by Lamine when he was in his twenties.

For a major scene of the film, with that red background, shot on the last day of the first phase of shooting, I asked him to express directly to camera how he felt. I didn't understand what he was saying, but I felt something was going on: he was staging himself, choosing this red background, putting on glasses, he was really taking the film in hand, in order to express through the feature something personal. Back in France, someone translated the scene and I realised that it dealt with his childhood, and with the terrorism that had ruined it. I felt we needed to properly spin the whole story with Lamine, the child, the dark period, the lost childhood, the territory to be explored. This is why we needed a second phase of shooting. Having the opportunity for several scoutings and shootings was a real treat, interweaving writing and editing periods.

*When did the child appear?*

As a cousin of the Lahrech brothers, Aness had been with us on location scouting. (You can also see him in the first shot of my first film).

Once when we were strolling around with him and Lamine, I filmed them and this became the daylight scene with bees in the film. I immediately realised that their relationship would be the touchstone of our film. It's about him and the boy. Lamine had touched me because I had felt how sensitive he was, both shy and with a strong longing for another type of life, and something from his childhood was still very strong in him. For him, acting with the child could be a way of revealing himself and the child within.

Aness is now fourteen. When we started shooting he was the same age Lamine was when his childhood was taken away from him. It's an interesting age because as a child, Aness regarded shooting the film as a kind of game. He would, for instance, kick at thistles... so I was inspired by what he was naturally doing on location and have him re-enact it in a shot. But at the same time, his childhood was coming to an end. To him, the most important thing wasn't making a film, but being with adults and doing things with them. Growing up.

*What was your shooting method? How did you choose locations?*

We're a small team: just me, operating the camera, and my sound engineer. He's French, and neither of us speaks Arabic. The only person who speaks both languages is Salah, one of the Lahrech brothers, who therefore is our translator and assistant director. All other members of the crew are friends of the Lahrech brothers and not trained at all. They suggested locations where they thought some scenes could be shot. We then all prepared the scenes. Some were in charge of props, wardrobe and light, and others acted.

Most of the locations were outside the town (Djelfa is three hours south of Algiers, at the edge of the desert), in the steppes

and in the forests. That was first of all because we had no shooting permit, but also because this was part of the initial film project. Most of the inhabitants of Djelfa belong to formerly nomadic tribes who used to live in tents out in the steppes, but because of the period of terrorism, they have settled in town in regular houses. My friends and I shared the desire to be on the move again and to re-occupy some deserted places, as an attitude of emancipation.

They were places such as La Mare Blanche, a former farmed oasis, abandoned during the dark period. Two of the Lahrech brothers, one a shepherd and the other a farmer, tried a few years ago to re-farm it and to live in one of the former farm-houses for six months, but the salty spring poisoned some of their sheep. This is a truly important place to them, but they no longer know how to inhabit it.

The military mill, a now-empty colonial building, is a place where my friends like to come together on weekends because of the river, the trees and its location on the outskirts of town. Several young people from Djelfa have written their names and words of love on the walls. It's a kind of place for free expression.

Salt Rock is a striking location near Djelfa, a unique lunar landscape where they took me several times because it looks like a location for a science fiction film. To them, cinema automatically meant stunning settings. That's why we shot a scene there. Another major shooting location was the wasteland in front of the Lahrech house, where Ylyes built a cabin and tends his sheep. Numerous scenes were shot there. It was at once a playground and a set. Since everyone lives nearby, it was easy to organise shooting, and this is also the place where my friends meet every night for discussions, coming together and telling stories around a fire.

*Interview: Sylviane Chirouze*



**David Yon** was born in Provins, France in 1979. He studied Documentary Filmmaking at the Université Stendhal-Grenoble 3 in Grenoble. After his graduation, he co-founded the film magazine *Dérives* (in the meantime online: [www.derives.tv](http://www.derives.tv)). In 2009, David Yon completed his first film, *Les oiseaux d'Arabie / The Birds of Arabia* (40 min).

Apart from being a filmmaker he works as a film curator, conducts workshops, and hosts a radio programme on cinema. *La nuit et l'enfant* is his first full-length feature film.



© Sean Price Williams

## Queen of Earth

### Alex Ross Perry

**Producer** Elisabeth Moss, Alex Ross Perry, Adam Piotrowicz, Joe Swanberg. **Production companies** Her Majesty September (New York, USA); Forager Film Company (Chicago, USA). **Director** Alex Ross Perry. **Director of photography** Sean Price Williams. **Production design** Anna Bak-Kvapil. **Costume** Amanda Ford. **Make-up** Amy Forsythe. **Sound** Clayton Castellanos. **Music** Keegan DeWitt. **Sound design** Ryan Price. **Editor** Robert Greene.

**Cast** Elisabeth Moss (Catherine), Katherine Waterston (Virginia), Patrick Fugit (Rich), Kentucker Audley (James), Keith Poulson (Keith), Kate Lyn Sheil (Michelle), Craig Butta (groundkeeper).

DCP, colour. 90 min. English.

**Premiere** 7 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

Catherine and Virginia are best friends. Last year, Virginia wasn't doing well, while it's Catherine who's struggling this year. Virginia's parents own a lakeside cabin, the perfect place for a week of mutual wound licking. Sun pours in through the windows, framing the cool green of the trees outside. But this isn't the refuge it seems and it's not just the music that awakens the menace in the images. The ripples across the lake and the wan sunlight offer little comfort, to say nothing of the picture of a skull lying forgotten in a cupboard.

Last year's events keep crashing in upon the present, things weren't good then and they aren't better now. When the two women confide in one another, it's like two separate monologues, the camera gliding between their strained faces as if they were one and the same. They otherwise stick to wry barbs, each criticizing the other's privilege as they still cling on to their bond. As salad leaves wilt, men come and go, and tension gives way to hostility, what even remains of this friendship? Dark-ringed eyes alight with rage, a stream of quiet bile, one face cut into another, two true Queens of Earth.

*James Lattimer*



## Cruel intrusiveness

I wanted to challenge myself. I have made a few films in a row that are categorised as comedies, meaning some people laugh when watching them. With the support of a returning crew of close collaborators, it seemed only natural to create a film that took similar themes of misery and loneliness in a direction more adherent to the conventions of a psychological thriller than anything people find overtly amusing.

This film is about privacy. I have noticed that people are almost chemically resistant to giving others any space for themselves. *Queen of Earth* is about one woman's reaction to the world's refusal to leave her alone. Dishonesty, cruelty and curiosity are one and the same. The prying and the incessant joy that people get from knowing information about anybody other than themselves feels like a societal sickness, and this is about a character who finds her immunity to that sickness slowly deteriorating in the face of her own personal tragedy.

Alex Ross Perry

### "That threat affects the characters in a way that the realisation of it is incidental"

*Two long-time friends confront each other in a house in the countryside. Metaphorically, their roommates seem to be the ghosts of their past. What was inspiration for your film?*

**Alex Ross Perry:** The film came out of a time where I wanted to be left alone more than anything, and more than I had been in a very long time. Various factors in my life all negatively converged and I felt as though I couldn't go out in public without my privacy being invaded by people who didn't know how to mind their own business. I wanted to do a film that looked at an extreme version of these feelings, of characters who felt like the outside world was conspiring to crush them.

*Was the screenplay completely written out in detail – or did you also integrate improvisation while shooting, for instance in Catherine and Virginia's monologue scenes?*

Contributions from actors have become more and more valuable to me. I learned on my last film that their instincts are worth pursuing, and generally very interesting to me, and a major improvement over whatever I had put on the page. So going into my second collaboration with Elisabeth Moss, and knowing what she is capable of, I intentionally left parts of the script and story vague so that she had room to bring her own ideas into as many scenes as possible. The monologue is an example of being pretty much exactly what was written. Sometimes it's just best to go with that.

*Formally, the film reveals a complex work of montage in which the layers of past and present gradually merge into each other. To what extent does the editing process contribute to the final film?*

The time-hopping structure was in the script, but the idea of sort of *Easy Rider*-ing the cutting into them was something that occurred to me during shooting and became very relevant and necessary. I have found that editing is extremely important in conjunction with giving the actors the space necessary to find moments or elaborate moments beyond what is written. So the edit is about conforming what we captured to the initial

intentions. It all becomes very liquid but the film finds its way back to whatever it was originally meant to be.

*The soundtrack seems to be the third main protagonist in your film – somehow like an uncanny intruder.*

This again, like leaving space for actors to bring in ideas and moments of their own, is endemic to working with film composer Keegan DeWitt for the second time. I was able to talk to him about ideas and send references along during production and he was even making music to the dailies for us to listen to on set. Often, the sound and music, and the atmosphere created as a result of them, really make the film what it is.

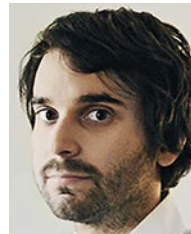
*What is the meaning of nature in your film?*

That's getting pretty close to interpretation for me but I will say that this and my last film both take as a defining moment characters escaping from 'the city' into a quieter, idyllic place, and I think moments like that do define people who live in hectic cities.

*A leaf blower and a knife appear. Physical violence seems to be within reach, but it is not carried out. Could you please explain the concept of violence in your film?*

Again, that's interpretative. But this is the sort of lesson you can learn from a master like Roman Polanski, where things sort of threaten to happen and that threat affects the characters in a way that the realisation of the threat is incidental, if it even arrives at all.

Interview: Ansgar Vogt, January 2015



Alex Ross Perry was born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania in 1984. He attended the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and worked at Kim's Video in Manhattan. Perry lives in Brooklyn, New York.

### Films

2009: *Impolex* (73 min.). 2011: *The Color Wheel* (83 min.). 2014: *Listen Up Philip* (108 min.). 2015: *Queen of Earth*.



# Rabo de Peixe

## Fish Tail

Joaquim Pinto, Nuno Leonel

**Producer** Joaquim Pinto. **Production company** Presente Lda (Lissabon, Portugal). **Director** Joaquim Pinto, Nuno Leonel. **Screenplay** Joaquim Pinto, Nuno Leonel. **Director of photography** Joaquim Pinto, Nuno Leonel. **Sound design** Joaquim Pinto, Nuno Leonel. **Editor** Joaquim Pinto, Nuno Leonel.

DCP, colour. 103 min. Portuguese.

**Premiere** 7 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** Presente Lda

Rabo de Peixe is a village in the Azores that is home to the largest collection of artisanal fisheries on the whole archipelago. Joaquim Pinto and Nuno Leonel first came here at the end of 1998 to see in the New Year. After befriending a young fisherman named Pedro, they decided to make a film with him over the following year, a TV documentary later tampered with by the broadcaster and shown only once.

They have now edited the same material into something new, a tender essay rooted in friendship and fascination. The two of them follow Pedro out to sea to land mackerel and swordfish or just drink in the atmosphere of the island: rippling fish shoals, fireworks over the harbour, a procession through slender white streets, bodies on black sand. Themes emerge unobtrusively: the virtue of working by hand, industrial restrictions, the slippery concept of a free man. Here, friends can easily commandeer the camera, there's enough room for sea monsters and stories and the very grain of the footage adds to its beauty.

By the end, Portugal has the euro, songs are sung and somebody is missing. A bygone era, near and yet far, images of happiness of things no longer there.

*James Lattimer*

## The courage of the fishermen

Footage for *Rabo de Peixe* was originally shot with the support of a public broadcaster in co-operation with fishing associations who were looking for a record of disappearing small-scale fishing methods and skills. Our approach was not well received and were asked to remove all scenes that, according to them, 'gave a bad image of fishermen and fishing communities', as well as specific references to particular characters. A fifty-five-minute version was then produced and broadcast once by Portuguese public television. Fourteen years later, industrial methods have replaced traditional fishing tackle, standardised labour relations have superseded the old communal organisation of work, and countless small open boats have given way to a small number of large, modern boats with electronic equipment. Even the topography has changed: Rabo de Peixe's small port has been destroyed and a huge structure intended for industrial fishing has been built with EU funding. The scale of these changes made us want to re-edit the movie according to our original plan. Our new feature version is designed to do justice to the bravery of the young men depicted in it and their struggle to maintain a cherished tradition. Since filming, many have given up the sea, unwilling or unable to adapt to predatory industrial fishing practices. Some have joined the ranks of the unemployed. Others have emigrated to America. A few are keeping up the fight for sustainable fishing.

Joaquim Pinto, Nuno Leonel

## The declining volume of fisheries

To help with understanding the framework of our shared experience with these fishermen, we quote a small text we wrote in 2000, before starting the year-long shooting:

### The report

The recent United Nations report PAGE (Pilot Analysis of Global Ecosystems), which is the result of the most ambitious project ever undertaken in relation to global ecosystems, discloses to an alarming extent how close we are to the breakdown of the various ecosystems.

Coastal/maritime ecosystems are deeply affected: fishing fleets exceed the oceans' sustained production capacity by forty per cent; trawling destroys large areas of the ocean bed. The declining volume in fisheries relating to more than one third of fish species will lead to very grave economic consequences for more than a billion people worldwide.

### Focus on: the Atlantic Ocean

One of the threatened species is the Atlantic swordfish. In the 1960s, the introduction of long lines of up to sixty kilometres in length, equipped with thousands of hooks reaching the depth of the swordfish feeding grounds, along with highly sophisticated methods of fish detection, are in large part responsible for this situation.

### Focus on: the Azores

Since 1960 the population of the Azores has been in decline, reaching the current figure of about 240,000. São Miguel, the largest

island of the archipelago, is sixty-five kilometres long and sixteen kilometres wide. The island is made up of two volcanic massifs separated by a central low altitude chain.

### Focus on: Rabo de Peixe

The parish of Rabo de Peixe (meaning 'Fish Tail') is situated on São Miguel's northern coast. Its inhabitants' main activity is small-scale fishing, which is still carried on with the use of traditional methods. The lack of any harbour means that all boats must be beached. This involves hoisting them on to land after the working day. These open crafts have not been subject to much change during the last decades. The only improvement was abandoning sails in favour of motor engines some twenty years ago.

Rabo de Peixe's entire population involuntarily feels the huge effects of the drop in Atlantic fish stocks, the causes of which are so clearly explained today. However, full awareness of the situation continues to be confused, probably the result of a lack of information. We regularly hear the blame for successive lean years' catches being attributed to simple bad luck.

Joaquim Pinto, Nuno Leonel

## A free man

It is clear enough that one kind of work differs substantially from another by reason of something which has nothing to do with welfare, or leisure, or security, and yet which claims each man's devotion; a fisherman battling against wind and waves in his little boat, although he suffers from cold, fatigue, lack of leisure and even of sleep, danger and a primitive level of existence, has a more enviable lot than the manual worker on a production-line, who is nevertheless better off as regards nearly all these matters. That is because his work resembles far more the work of a free man.

Simone Weil, *Oppression and Liberty*



© Rui Godinheiro

Joaquim Pinto was born in Porto, Portugal in 1957. He was the sound designer for more than 100 films, working with directors such as Manoel de Oliveira, Raul Ruiz, Werner Schroeter and André Techiné. Between 1987 and 1996 he was the producer for some 30 films, including João César Monteiro's *Recordações da Casa Amarela / Recollections of the Yellow House* (1989). He

directed several short films before making his first feature-length film, *Uma Pedra no Bolso / Tall Stories*, in 1988.

### Films

1989: *Uma Pedra no Bolso / Tall Stories* (91 min.). 1989: *Onde Bate o Sol / Where the Sun Beats* (89 min.). 1992: *Das Tripas Coração / Twin Flames* (66 min.). 2013: *E Agora? Lembra-me / What Now? Remind-Me* (156 min.). 2013: *O Novo Testamento de Jesus Cristo Segundo João / The New Testament of Jesus Christ According to John* (Co-director: Nuno Leonel, 129 min.). 2013: *Fim de Citação / End of Quote* (Co-director: Nuno Leonel, 89 min.). 2013: *Rabo de Peixe / Fish Tail*.



© Rui Gaudêncio

Nuno Leonel was born in Lisbon, Portugal in 1969. He works as a set designer, cinematographer, sound editor, film editor, and actor. He has been making films with Joaquim Pinto since 1996, and in 2009, Leonel and Pinto founded the Presente publishing company.

### Films

1995: *Schizophrenia* (16 min.). 1996: *Surfavela* (Koregie: Joaquim Pinto, 38 min.). 2013: *O Novo Testamento de Jesus Cristo Segundo João / The New Testament of Jesus Christ According to John* (Co-director: Joaquim Pinto, 129 min.). 2013: *Fim de Citação / End of Quote* (Co-director: Joaquim Pinto, 89 min.). 2015: *Rabo de Peixe / Fish Tail*.



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# La sirène de Faso Fani

## The Siren of Faso Fani

**Michel K. Zongo**

**Producer** Christian Lelong, Michel K. Zongo, Michael Bogar.  
**Production companies** Cinédoc Films (Annecy, France); Diam Production (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso); Perfect Shot Films (Berlin, Germany). **Director** Michel K. Zongo. **Screenplay** Michel K. Zongo, Christophe Cognet. **Director of photography** Michel K. Zongo. **Sound** Moumouni „Jupiter“ Sodre. **Music** Smokey. **Sound design** Fanny Lelong. **Editor** François Sculier. **With** Rachim Naser Sanou (Radio voice).

DCP, colour. 90 min. French, Mooré.

**Premiere** 11 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** Cinédoc Films

After it was shut down in 2001, the Faso Fani textile factory in Koudougou, Burkina Faso's third-largest city, was left to rot. It probably figures in the World Bank and IMF archives as one more piece of collateral damage, yet another write-off in a West African sideshow. Michel Zongo, who grew up in Koudougou, reopens the case of this legendary factory. He visits relatives and former employees, including his uncle, who once owned a much admired modern cult object thanks to Faso Fani: one of the first refrigerators in town. Zongo digs through radio and TV archives and pieces together the factory's proud history, which produced so much more than just textiles. As a true local, however, Zongo is not focussed on the demise of his hometown, but rather discovers women in its courtyards who have begun to weave again – and men conversing beneath the trees. His film is an homage to a specifically African form of resistance in the face of the madness of globalisation, a visually powerful document of a revolt by energetic women and eloquent men. Out of necessity and conviction, they work out their own contemporary ideology of progress – with ingenuity and charm and without the IMF.

*Dorothee Wenner*

## The textile factory Faso Fani

For a long time, Koudougou was considered Burkina Faso's main textile-producing city, a reputation established by the presence of one factory: Faso Fani, which means 'the country's pagne' (pagne is a colourful cotton textile widely worn in West Africa).

The whole city would rise in the morning to Faso Fani's siren. I was born and grew up in Koudougou, and the factory played a central role in my childhood.

Faso Fani was the nation's project and a strong signal of its independence.

The factory was a gamble that soon proved its worth: the pagnes produced were of a very high quality and their reputation spread far beyond the borders of Burkina Faso. It was the pride of our city. However, in 2001, following several restructuring plans imposed by the IMF and the World Bank, the factory shut down and hundreds of employees suddenly found themselves jobless.

More than ten years later, I set out to meet the ex-employees of Faso Fani and reveal the disastrous consequences of global economic policies that are blind to local realities – specifically those of Koudougou. Along the way I also met the textile workers who are tirelessly working away producing their own home-made pagnes. Together, we dream of the day when we will witness the revival of the cotton industry in our city.

Michel K. Zongo

### „Faso Fani was the project of the whole nation“

*Your film focuses on the history of the Faso Fani textile factory in Burkina Faso. To what degree is the decline of the factory emblematic of the situation in your country?*

My country is one of the biggest cotton producers in West Africa. But it is also a country in which eighty per cent of the population lives from agriculture. The problem is obvious. Cotton is still sold to France at the same price as it was sixty years ago. Faso Fani was the project of a whole nation that found itself at the end of the colonial era and on the eve of independence. At that time, Burkina Faso was exhilarated by a vision, sought paths to autonomy and sought its dignity and also its pride. The people had a common history, a fiction they spoke to each other about; together they lived through an adventure. They were inspired by the desire or urge to feel useful: to do something for themselves, but also for the whole nation. We were like one big family. The factory was an important symbol of independence, because it processed what our farmers grew on our fields. The cotton for clothing was made into pagnes, which were made into clothing, so with these fabrics our farmers could clothe themselves. That was the core idea.

*How did you come up with the idea for this film?*

When I saw *Roger and Me* (Michael Moore, USA 1989) for the first time, I immediately thought of Faso Fani. I felt a connection between Michael Moore and me. Not so much in relation to the obstinacy and passion of his settling accounts with 'Roger' or to his downright criminological approach, which was supported by a provocative and sometimes even aggressive camera work. My affinity to Michael Moore results from our common interest in what ties us to our childhood: a factory, people we knew

who worked in it and a city. I was immediately aware of how important and meaningful it was to make a film about Faso Fani.

*What is the international importance of the history of this factory?*

When companies are dissolved or factories are closed – whether in Detroit in the United States, in Besançon in France or in Koudougou in Burkina Faso – no one is interested in the thousands of employees who become jobless. For us, these people have no face; we hear about them solely in the form of numbers or curves. Unfortunately, we live in a world in which the system of economic exploitation is all too easy to understand. The rule according to which the world functions is to bring the poorest, who are also the largest group, up against the rich, who form the elite. You have to realise that the dissolution of the factory was carried out in the framework of a structural adjustment programme that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund launched as an economic assistance measure. They had called on the Burkinabé government to withdraw from a number of so-called 'unproductive' businesses. One of these businesses was Faso Fani. The history of this factory in the southern Sahara clearly illustrates the influence that the global economy has on the lives of thousands of people in a small city in Africa.

Source: *Diam Production*



Michel Kiswendsida Zongo was born in 1974 in Koudougou, Burkina Faso. He attended Cinematography courses at the Centre national du cinéma Burkina Faso (CNC) and at Télévision Nationale du Burkina (TNB). Since then, he has worked as a cinematographer, director and screenwriter. From 2003 to 2008, he worked for Cinomade, an association based in Burkina Faso whose objective is to create and distribute tools to increase political awareness, notably through cinema. In 2010, he founded the production company Diam Production. *La sirène de Faso Fani* is his second feature-length film.

### Films

2009: *Sibi, l'âme du violon* (38 min.). 2009: *Ti Tiimou / Nos sols* (30 min.). 2011: *Espoir voyage* (Berlinale Forum 2012, 82 min.). 2015: *La sirène de Faso Fani / The Siren of Faso Fani*.



© courtesy of Milestone

## Strange Victory

### Leo Hurwitz

**Producer** Barney Rosset. **Production company** Target Films (New York, USA). **Director** Leo Hurwitz. **Screenplay** Leo Hurwitz, Saul Levitt. **Director of photography** Peter Glushanok, George Jacobsen. **Music** David Diamond. **Editor** Leo Hurwitz, Faith Elliott (Hubley), Mavis Lyons.

**Cast** Virgil Richardson, Sophie Maslow, Cathy McGregor, Jack Henderson, Robert P. Donely, Alfred Drake, Muriel Smith, Gary Merrill, Saul Levitt.

DCP, black/white. 64 min. English.

**Premiere** 25 September 1948, New York; restored version: 9 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** Milestone Films

What did the victory over Hitler mean for the social harmony of US society? America may have won the war, but “the ideas of the losers are still active in the land of the winners”. A collage of documentary materials, newsreel footage, and re-enacted scenes, the film recaps the military triumph over the ideologies of ethnic superiority – and establishes that anti-Semitism and racism have survived in post-war America. Stickers saying “Save America – Don’t Buy from Jews”, signs stating “For Whites Only” and images showing the victims of ritual murders committed by the Ku-Klux-Klan are brought into correspondence with footage of Nazi rallies and concentration camp inmates. In 1945, enthusiasm about this “strange victory” was short-lived. The same old structures, whereby skin colour and religion determined whether the front or the back door was to be used to go to work, were still very much alive.

The film is an early polemic against racism, which holds America up to its own standards as a civil society. And at the same time it’s a still highly relevant analysis of the simple, yet unfortunately powerful nature of racism.

*Bernd Buder*



## The American decline

*Strange Victory* was the first solo film by Leo Hurwitz, a central character in the radical Frontier Film movement. It is both an exposé and inside view of the facts of the Cold War as experienced at the very moment of its birth. The director's vision amounts to an almost surrealist network of images and sounds about the perverse consequences of the 'strange victory' – how high hopes are destroyed, and the flowers of evil grow instead, with aggressive Capitalism and anti-Semitism taking over, vampire-like, all aspects of everyday life, probably including personalities who had natural goodness in them. It's not just a Cold War, it is also a civil war. The chilling existence of American fascism is revealed through a puzzle of collage materials. Hurwitz utilises both archival material ('found footage') and material he has shot himself – and, as with some other rare examples, the technically uneven material somehow, on a par with its splendid montage, just blossoms into visual brilliance. Tens and even hundreds of faces flash on screen, with a poignant testimony in them: there are too many terrible faces on the street. There, in the familiar circumstances of peaceful life, we can detect horror and degradation, welling deeper than that of a horror movie. These are flashes that can't be reduced to the pseudo-ideas of 'left-wing' propaganda. The dramaturgy is an open one, respecting the intelligence of the spectator, and proceeding in sharp turns: dramatic condensations, fascinatingly illusory plot turns (the search for Hitler – 'the biggest man hunt in history'), and paradoxes. V-Day is like a ghost: 'If we did win, why do we look as if we lost?' The doubts that were growing, even from 1945's summer of great hope, are delivered as a play of light and shadow, something that is profoundly connected to the very essence of cinema.

*Peter von Bagh*

## A pathological parallel

The setup of this extraordinary documentary essay (featuring journalistic research, archival footage, and fictional reconstructions) is that of a film noir, but Hurwitz, with his audacious editing and blunt commentary, infuses it with a substance far more radical and harrowing than anything Hollywood could produce. The horrors of a world in which concentration camps functioned untouched are shown to have a pathological parallel in American prejudice – anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, and especially racism in all its forms, from job and housing discrimination to lynching, the victims of which Hurwitz calls 'the casualties of a war.' Tracking Hitler's rise to power, Hurwitz is shocked to find 'the ideas of the loser still active in the land of the winner.' The film acts as a kind of collective psychoanalysis; its findings are yet to be worked through.

*Richard Brody, The New Yorker, Vol. 86, Issue 4, p. 16, 15, March 2010*

## The hollow patriotism of the post-war years

*Strange Victory* was created during a time when any critique of American society was seen as bordering on treason. In many ways, the isolationism and conservatism of the post-war years was a response to the period of progressive activism that had preceded the Second World War.

In the 1930s, the poverty and mass unemployment of the Great Depression in the 1930s had created a groundswell of support for social equality. The Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) and other left-leaning organisations were popular with both workers and intellectuals seeking a better society. Reflecting the 'Popular Front' policy introduced by the Comintern in 1934, the CPUSA actively worked in cooperation with other progressive organisations including the Socialist Party, and even actively supported the New Deal policies of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. At its height in 1939, the CPUSA had approximately 50,000 members (a very small fraction of the US population of 130,900,000), although how many were active and how many were 'sympathetic' to the cause is unknown.

## The Second Red Scare

In 1939, when the Soviet Union and Germany signed the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Agreement (officially the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact), many CPUSA members and allies saw the move as a betrayal of the ideals of the movement and of the people of Eastern Europe and Finland. The agreement was broken when German troops invaded the USSR in June 1941.

Although during the war, the United States and the Soviet Union were allies against the Axis powers of Nazi Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and Japan, the coalition was inherently fragile and did not last. Following V-E Day, the Soviet Union began instituting a policy preventing its republics and people from any contact with the rest of Europe and the US. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill dubbed this Soviet isolationism an 'Iron Curtain' (although he did not originate the phrase). During the war, the USSR had gained control of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, and it went on to control and annex other Eastern European countries including Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Albania, and East Germany. In response, and for its own internal and international reasons, the US government (now led by President Harry S. Truman) moved away from any political engagement with the USSR and much of American society retreated into a defensive shell, where anything foreign was viewed with suspicion. One manifestation of this was the second Red Scare (the first took place following the First World War). Today, most people think of post-war anti-communism as 'McCarthyism' (named after the Republican US senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy, who accused many in and out of the government of being current or former members of the CPUSA), but the paranoia and persecution both pre-dated the senator and was a nationwide phenomenon.

In March 1947, President Truman signed an executive order creating the 'Federal Employees Loyalty Program', establishing political-loyalty review boards to determine the loyalty of federal employees and to recommend termination of those who had confessed to spying for the Soviet Union, as well as some suspected of being 'Un-American'. That same year, the Taft-Hartley Act required union leaders to file affidavits declaring that they were not supporters of the Communist Party and had no relationship with any organisation seeking the 'overthrow of the United States government by force or by any illegal or unconstitutional means'. In response, the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organisations), fired union leaders and expelled several national unions.

## Blacklists for artists

It was a time of loyalty oaths, naming names ... and blacklists. The first systematic Hollywood blacklist was instituted on 25 November 1947, the day after ten writers and directors were cited for

contempt of Congress for refusing to testify to before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. A group of studio executives acting together fired the so-called 'Hollywood Ten'. To make blacklisting easier, in 1950 three former FBI agents and a founder of the racist John Birch society began publishing a pamphlet entitled *Red Channels* that identified 151 entertainment industry professionals as 'Red Fascists and their sympathisers.' Soon most of those named, along with a host of other artists, were barred from employment in most of the entertainment field. Perhaps due in part to this film, director Leo Hurwitz was named in the publication, and throughout the 1950s and 1960s he was only able to work anonymously for the television broadcaster CBS's programme *Omnibus*.

### Returning to a racist environment

In this climate, Hurwitz's message in *Strange Victory*, which compared the people of post-war America to the Fascist enemies the country had defeated, did not bode well for its critical reception or box office success. The film explores the hypocrisy of race relations in America following the country's victory over an overtly racist and genocidal enemy. Having just defeated Nazism, US soldiers come home to an all-too-similar environment at home. African-Americans were still oppressed, discriminated against, segregated into inferior housing and education, denied the right to vote, and subject to violence at the hands of both mobs and police. Black veterans who had just been in charge of piloting aircraft came home to find that they were only employable in unskilled positions. The film provides staggering statistics on African-Americans in the post-war workforce: out of the 80,000 civil engineers employed, fewer than 100 were black. Of 200,000 doctors and dentists, just two per cent were black. Sadly, comparing these statistics to the modern-day workforce, we find that inequality is still present. Today, out of 262,170 civil engineers, just six-point-four per cent are black, and out of 893,851 doctors, three-point-eight per cent are black. Out of 90,000 employed architects, two per cent are black and black lawyers account for only three per cent of lawyers at big firms.

### Invisible labels

As a Jew, Hurwitz had faced injustice and discrimination. Producer Barney Rosset, although born to wealth, faced obstacles as he was half-Jewish and an avowed liberal in the military – he also struggled to find work after the war. *Strange Victory* attempted to convey a poignant and overtly political message that challenged the blandly patriotic and self-congratulatory sentiment popular in post-war America.

The film called into question the prevailing ideology that celebrated the powerful post-war American republic – a democracy that reacted to victory by passing laws discriminating against its own people. While Jews in Nazi Germany had been forced to wear a yellow star to mark them, minorities in America wore invisible labels that limited their rights and governed their lives. In a country formed by immigrants, anti-immigrant messages and beliefs echoed throughout the nation. Hurwitz conveyed this irony and hypocrisy with shots of whites-only facilities and lynchings. (Even in 1946, there were six reported lynchings of African-Americans.) The film boldly proclaimed that 'the colour of your skin... the slant of your eyes... the breadth of your nostrils... the shape of your nose' determined the fate of children born into the utopia of post-war America.

### Best brand to have is WXF

In Leo Hurwitz's original script for *Strange Victory* (courtesy of the George Eastman House from the Hurwitz Collection), the director provides some insight into his and Rosset's theme for the film: 'Though our dead were not all buried, we had the right to celebrate. We lifted off the weight of years of war. We turned on the lights. We were happy. We smiled for every camera. We climbed telephone poles, and hung the Axis leaders in effigy. We rode on our neighbours' backs. We kissed the nearest girl. A holiday long pent-up, celebrating a freer, peaceful future – celebrating no more war – celebrating a United World. We had seen the end of Hitler and Mussolini and the might of Japan. We had seen the end of international hate and the German Aryan superman... the end of satanic anti-Semitism... We had seen the end of all the monstrous acts of man which grew from the idea that one people was worthy of the whole Earth and all others were to be crushed, enslaved, or burned into manure for the fields... But America is not a single place, a single idea, a single aim. Today – there are those among us whose first concern is: your colour – your religion – your birthplace – your beliefs. They ask whether your life is insecure, whether you are unemployed. Then they give their answers: the danger is the JEWS. Your enemy is the POPE. The NEGRO threatens white supremacy... You will have to understand this complicated civilisation. And you will be wise to accept facts as they are, adapt to them, if you want to get along. Though you all look alike and pretty anonymous, you will soon be branded. There are small variations that make all the difference... The best brand to have is W X F; that means White Christian, Protestant. You don't have any choice in the matter, but if you have this brand, you're off to a good start... Or, if you are one of three million other American, you will find many doors to clubs, jobs, and houses closed to you. Your brand will be W J – white, Jewish. As I said before, these letters are not going to be burned into you – no need to cry – these are facts that you are going to have to face as the Class of America, Twentieth Century.'

Source: Milestone Films

### Two copies and the restoration of *Strange Victory*

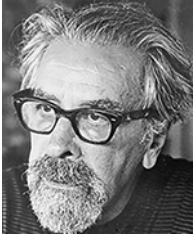
Milestone Films licensed *Strange Victory* directly from producer Barney Rosset and Evergreen Review in 2011. It turned out that Hurwitz's materials on *Strange Victory* had been donated to the George Eastman House, which claimed to have the best existing materials. Meanwhile, the Rossett Collection had been donated to Columbia University. Fortunately, Milestone had a long relationship not only with the GEH but also with the Hurwitz estate's trustee, Manfred Kirschheimer.

In 2014, Milestone was able to get Columbia University and the George Eastman House to send their film elements to Metropolis Post for inspection and to create a 2K test scan of the first few minutes. It turned out the GEH material included a very beautiful 35mm negative created in 1963, most likely for Hurwitz's re-release the next year. However, the big surprise was that Columbia University's 35mm 'composite print' was actually the original 35mm nitrate fine grain master from 1948! It too was in excellent condition with very little to no shrinkage. After scanning the first few minutes of each version, it was obvious that the original nitrate material was a little sharper and with slightly better contrast – as would be expected from a previous generation of material.

The first job was scanning nitrate 35mm fine grain, followed by the laborious task of digitally cleaning the dust and scratches that

had accumulated over the years. Jack Rizzo's Metropolis Post did the work, with colourist Jason Crump timing the material and Ian Bostick doing the cleaning. Rich Cutler Sound Mix and Design in New York restored the sound.

Source: Milestone Films



© courtesy of Tom Hurwitz

Leo Hurwitz (1909–1991) was born the son of Russian immigrants in the Williamsburg neighbourhood of Brooklyn in New York City. After studying at Harvard on a scholarship, he edited the New Theater Magazine and was the cameraman and co-writer of the film *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (USA 1936, director: Pare Lorentz), before deciding on a career as documentary film

director. Among his best-known films are *Native Land* and *Verdict for Tomorrow*, a documentary on the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. Leo Hurwitz was a member of the Workers Film and Photo League. In 1934, he and some other members founded Nykino, an organisation aimed at making documentary-dramatic revolutionary cinema. Later Nykino was absorbed by Hurwitz's own production company, Frontier Films, one of the first non-profit production platforms for documentary filmmakers. From 1969 to 1974, Hurwitz was a professor at the Graduate Institute of Film and Television at New York University.

#### Films

1942: *Native Land* (80 min.). 1956: *The Museum and the Fury* (56 min.). 1961: *Eichmann Trial* (TV). 1961: *Verdict for Tomorrow* (30 min.). 1981: *Dialogue with a Woman Departed* (225 min.). 2014: *Discovery in a Painting* (Co-director: Manfred Kirchheimer, 29 min.). 1948: *Strange Victory*.



# Sueñan los andróides

## Androids Dream

Ion de Sosa

**Producer** Ion de Sosa, Luis López Carrasco, Luis Ferrón, Karsten Matern. **Production company** Ion de Sosa Filmproduktion (Berlin, Germany). **Director** Ion de Sosa. **Screenplay** Ion de Sosa, Jorge Gil Munarriz, Chema García Ibarra. **Director of photography** Ion de Sosa. **Sound** Jorge Alarcón, María José Molanes. **Sound design** Manolo Marín. **Editor** Sergio Jiménez. **Cast** Manolo Marín, Moisés Richart, Marta Bassols, Coque Sánchez, Margot Sánchez, Óscar de la Huerga, César Velasco, Begoña Alarcón, Eva Swoboda, Begoña Jiménez.

DCP, colour. 61 min. Spanish.

**Premiere** 8 November 2014, Sevilla European Film Festival

**World sales** Luis Ferrón

The year may be 2052, yet this is a future with one foot in the past. Between the strangely artificial skyscrapers along the coastline and the neon-lined broadwalk, there's nothing here to suggest it isn't still 1975, 1995 or 2015. But there are fewer people around nowadays and many apartments lie empty, a tranquil wasteland of exposed wires, unfinished plasterwork and endless dust. Those that remain are at least house-proud, eager to show off their knickknacks and traditional costumes, when not meeting up for the occasional dance. Hardly the most obvious place for a bounty hunter, but the robots still need to be exterminated, particularly as they already look so much like you and me.

Ion de Sosa's spare, enigmatic adaptation of Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is at once a minimalist genre piece, an oblique treatise on difference and an essayistic almost-documentary on the unreal status quo of contemporary Spain. And as the title suggests, these androids do indeed dream: of far-off places and new opportunities; of the songs of past summers; of a shared embrace, a sheep on a leash, as the towers and mountains open out beyond.

James Lattimer

## A future without a future

Earth 2052. A beach with no sea. A map of the future without a future.

Choosing Benidorm as the setting for a depiction of Earth in 2052 is no arbitrary decision. This city in the province of Alicante is the poster child for the type of growth that Spain saw in the second half of the twentieth century. It is a model of the fun-in-the-sun tourism that has transformed Benidorm from a quaint fishing village into a city of skyscrapers whose population reaches half a million during the summer. These vacation cities, which experienced huge growth in a very short period of time, are enclaves designed in the late 1950s to sell an idyllic image of Spain as a service industry-based society and a place of leisure and fun.

A Benidorm of cheap skyscrapers and glitzy hotels, a native replica of Dubai and Hong Kong, appears in the film as the future of Earth, an oasis for senior citizens. It is a paradise dying in slow motion, a Las Vegas-style Mediterranean tourist enclave with few economic resources.

Thus, the detective who is the main character walks through a city that is difficult to locate, a non-place designed for retirees. We could be anywhere in the world, yet we are nowhere. Seeing as how the sea is never shown, the resort town acquires a delirious and claustrophobic quality. Similarly, having filmed the summer vacation resort during autumn, the city appears desolate and gloomy, its skies overcast, its shops closed. The dance halls and nightclubs, the streets crowded with signs and neon lights promising alcohol and partying only work at half-speed, tinting the Earth's future with an atmosphere of decadence and obsolescence.

The presence of tourists and locals works as a folksy and endearing counterpoint to the main character's bloody and merciless investigation. All the contented elderly people who roam the streets and cafes in motorised wheelchairs appear to not be aware of anything; they in no way react to the main character's slayings. The city emerges as an increasingly surreal and strange place.

## Like a 16 mm B-movie from the 1970s

The film sticks to the conventions of a B-movie filmed in 16 mm, similar to a dated science fiction movie that would have been filmed in the 1970s. It is a film that imagines a future all too similar to the ruins (in this case touristic) of our present day. The fictional film only breaks away at very specific moments: every time an android is killed and we 'see' their implanted fake memories. And in those implanted memories, we get a sense of my memories: my house in Spain, my family, and my friends. The documentary footage reappears or cuts in, although it has always been beneath the futuristic plot. And below the documentary footage we find the evasion, the plot of science fiction, in a game of alternating sets of associations and correspondences. The film functions as a mirror reflecting everyday life and escapism, one's personal experience and imagination in the same gesture.

*Sueñan los androides* is a tempered and realistic science fiction movie. The science fiction reveals itself here as a promise that does not reach its culmination. It is a leap of faith, because nothing in the film truly transports us into the future. The futuristic plot feeds on truth and the commonplace, yet at the same time the spaces portrayed take on another life, sometimes comic, sometimes eerie. Working with the actors on improvising the dialogue and the portrayal of their jobs at their workplaces and in their day-to-day lives is unusual for a fantasy film – although in the end, the characters

and locations end up being inundated by the strangeness of the story being told.

*Ion de Sosa*



**Ion de Sosa** was born in San Sebastián, Spain, in 1981. From 2001 to 2004, he studied Cinematography at the Escuela de Cinematografía y del Audiovisual de la Comunidad de Madrid (ECAM). Since graduating, he has worked as a cinematographer, producer and director. Following *True Love* (2011, 70 min.), *Sueñan los androides* is his second feature-length film.



# Superwelt

## Superworld

### Karl Markovics

**Producer** Dieter Pochlatko. **Production company** epo-film (Wien, Austria). **Director** Karl Markovics. **Screenplay** Karl Markovics. **Director of photography** Michael Bindlechner. **Production design** Isidor Wimmer. **Costume** Caterina Czepek. **Make-up** Danijela Ibricic. **Sound** William Edouard Franck. **Music** Herbert Tucmandl. **Sound design** Philipp Mosser. **Editor** Alarich Lenz.

**Cast** Ulrike Beimpold (Gabi Kovanda), Rainer Wöss (Hannes Kovanda), Nikolai Gemel (Ronnie Kovanda), Angelika Strahser (Sabine Kovanda), Thomas Mraz (Georg), Sibylle Kos (Helli), Michael Scherfff (Neighbour), Harri Stojka (Geronimo).

DCP, colour. 120 min. German.

**Premiere** 9 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

Married supermarket worker Gabi Kovanda's lower middle class life revolves around her family and her job. Until, after work one day, everything changes. Suddenly, there's someone new in her life, someone with whom she had already been casually acquainted: God!

*Superwelt* is a story about God and the world: a world whose heroine works the till and a God we never see nor hear, but whose presence we feel throughout the film. Lead actress Ulrike Beimpold delivers a remarkable, moving performance as a woman under divine influence, a woman in crisis who sends shock waves through her whole family. While director Karl Markovics consistently works in a realistic mode, his narrative approach is often operatic, with elaborate bird's eye shots and strikingly composed images of biblical proportions that make God's presence manifest. Until, that is, the twilight of the gods descends and the heavens come crashing down on the plot. All good things come from above, after all. *Superwelt* is like a small miracle. A super good one.

*Ansgar Vogt*

## In the beginning, a picture

Like all of my stories, *Superwelt* began with a simple image. I encountered it while shopping. The cashier at a chain supermarket used a short break in the afternoon stream of customers to clean the rubber conveyer belt that moves items to the cash register. She reached into the hidden depths of the space at her feet below the register console for a bottle of all-purpose cleaner and sprayed it on the endless black belt, pressed a rag onto the belt, and set it in motion again with a hidden button on the floor.

This little everyday scene was the trigger for my story. I no longer know how one thing led to another, but finally it was clear that this would become a story about a relationship; a relationship to what is hidden and to what there is nothing else behind: to God. 'Woman meets God. Woman loses God. Woman gets God back again.' In a certain way, *Superwelt* is the continuation of my first film, *Atmen*. Both are about recognising one's 'being thrown into the world' and the consequences of this awareness. Both are about people who find limits, because there are 'things' for which there are no words and concepts. And in both, these people sense that knowledge is possible only on the other side of this boundary.

Karl Markowics

## Assumptions about God

### 1st Blog Entry

It's a strange feeling to work on a script for nearly two years, and when you begin to shoot to suddenly find that you are reminded of yourself every day. A team of forty or fifty people works twelve to eighteen hours to turn an invented recollection into a real memory. The film is called *Superwelt* and tells the story of a fifty-year-old supermarket cashier whose simple life is turned upside down by an encounter with God. This film has nothing to do with religion. I say that not in my own defence (or in the defence of any religion); I say it for the sake of thoroughness. *Superwelt* is an essay about God – a God the way I would like to imagine Him. I was baptised a Lutheran, but in my childhood I sometimes helped out as an altar boy for the Catholics. My best friend smuggled me into this. At the time, I enjoyed the change of pace – rising from being a simple listener to a sober-sided Protestant sermon (where my grandmother took me every other Sunday) to being a participant in a relatively opulent event with light, smoke, and sound effects, and incidentally also receiving tips (key words: baptisms, weddings, funerals). But back to my film and what are probably the most frequently posed questions; I hope answering them in this blog will spare me many future interviews (*credo quia absurdum?*). Question 1 among these frequently asked questions about my new film: 'Mr Markovics, how did you come up with this material?' Markovics: 'One day I observed a supermarket cashier who, apparently lost in thought, reached down and brought up a bottle of all-purpose cleaner from the depths of her register console. She sprayed the conveyor belt with cleaner, tore off a few paper towels, set the belt in motion, and pressed the paper towels on it to clean the belt. The whole time, she stared off into space. ('Into a distance where no one could follow,' Alfred Polgar would say.) She looked as if she were listening intently to someone. To herself perhaps? Or maybe to God? I wanted to tell a story about this person – a story about what is most banal and what is most special.

22 June 2014

### 2nd Blog Entry

On *Superwelt's* Facebook page, it says: 'Markovics walks spiritual paths.' I have no idea who wrote this – it doesn't matter. Interesting is that people always shift to a different language when the subject is God, the way one moves to the other side of the street when a stranger approaches in an unfamiliar neighbourhood. With 'different language' I don't mean Aramaic or Latin, but the kind of formulation. What other times does one use terms like 'walks' (rather than 'walks on') and 'paths'? The same phenomenon can be observed in relation to diction. Please tell me which speaking coach teaches the Austrian priesthood (and many of the Austrian People's Party's politicians)? As if they had first anointed their tongues, devotions bubble from their mouths, often sounding more self-righteous than devotional. Why must one bend and twist oneself in speech when bowing would suffice? If one seriously believes in God, then in my opinion, one believes in the most natural thing in the world. I wish for this kind of faith. I've experienced this kind of belief for moments. But I can't remember ever 'walking a path'. This could be Question 2 of the most frequently posed questions about my film *Superwelt*: 'Mr Markovics, do you believe in God?' – 'Yes.' 'No.' 'Yes.' 'No.'

2 July 2014

### 3rd Blog Entry

I admit my last blog entry was rather short. And I've already received a gentle reproach for it. To excuse myself, I could add that the time between sleeping, shooting and sleeping again is short, but that doesn't count as a valid excuse. My conscience is rather sensitive – it feels bad easily. So I want to quickly add a few thoughts on the topic of 'signs'. As I understand it, signs are not things that are 'written', but things that are 'to be read'. What I mean is that God would never set a thorn bush afire. Thorn bushes, especially in deserts, burn very easily and without much external help. But if you open your eyes and ears (and one's heart – yes!) in the right place at the right time, then the most banal events can reveal themselves as existential truths. A little example: a few years ago, I was driving out of Vienna on Triester Strasse, and at a red traffic light I observed a young bloke almost tenderly poking with the tip of his shoe an apparently dead pigeon that lay in the gutter. You might now say, 'Aha,' but for me this scene had something very human, not to say divine, about it – a kind of reverent and simultaneously helpless curiosity about Creation, which for me expressed itself as a sign in this image. With which we come back to my somewhat cumbersome idea that signs are not something 'written', but 'to be read'. In the scene I've just described, you could say something to the effect that the connection between the two through the gesture of poking and the observation by a third person (in this case, me) can lead to something sign-like. Something greater presses outward and powerfully demands its interpretation. How we ultimately interpret the signs lies less in the literal eye of the beholder than in our souls. When things/beings enter into relationship with one another, there is inevitably a reaction. If another observes this reaction and tries to interpret it, it becomes a sign. Why am I so interested in signs that the result is the longest blog entry in this series so far? Because signs are representatives of something ineffable. At bottom, art is the same. Might God be a mathematician, after all? (...)

### 5th Blog Entry

(...) Hardly any collective phenomenon is so simultaneously unifying and separating as faith. Across all continents and all social

strata, no matter what age, skin colour or sexual orientation – the question of God is a question of humanity and the individual at the same time: it is a question of the 'I' and the 'we'. And the way this 'believing we' is defined is essentially shaped by religious affiliation. We Christians! We Muslims! We Buddhists! We Jews! The respective others have only a secondary place in a denominational world of imagination – at best as potential converts. In my idea of an 'ideal God', the 'more ideal believers' are those English atheists who drew attention to themselves in 2008 with a poster campaign in which they covered London buses with the slogan: 'There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.'

The attempt to imagine God is one of the oldest human cultural phenomena and has persisted through all epochs and all civilisations to the present, although or precisely because it eludes rational access. And because the idea of God is so irrational (in the subjunctive mood, so to speak), because faith means believing rather than knowing, the issue of right, true and the only thing leading to blessedness is so complicated and ultimately an unbelievably presumptuous matter. Every religion, every church, every persuasion propagates a possible idea of divinity. That's how it should be. But to claim that one's own idea is the only right, true or blessed one is a stupid, naïve or criminal fallacy. God neither throws dice (Albert Einstein), nor does he enter a church, mosque, temple, synagogue or cinema. At least that's what I believe. I don't know, of course.

Question 5 of the probably most frequently asked questions in connection with my new film *Superwelt*:

'Mr Markovics, the leading characters in your film are working class. The protagonist lives with her husband and her son in a one-family house in eastern Lower Austria. You, too, come from a similar milieu and grew up in a similar area. This isn't a coincidence, is it?'  
'No, it's no coincidence. I grew up in Kapellerfeld near Gerasdorf near Stammersdorf near Vienna. Somehow it was still the countryside, but it was very close to Vienna. There we had not only 'real' farmers with fields and tractors and such, but also workers and small business owners who, in order to create 'something of their own', built little houses on the plots of land that were still affordable back then. My parents were in the latter group. That's usually how it is: you write about something you know. I know the so-called 'ordinary folks', and I wanted to bring these people into connection with the greatest thing I can imagine. The greatest thing in my imagination is the unimaginable. And the most unimaginable thing in my imagination is God.'

20 July 2014

### 6th Blog Entry

Today is the last weekend before the last three days of shooting *Superwelt*. We began shooting this film seven weeks ago. So somehow it is almost already finished, in terms of the raw (in our case digital) material. But actually, a film becomes ever more unfinished and unclear the more of it is shot. When you finish shooting, you have a certain amount of film material (celluloid, magnetic tape or digital hard disk content). In that, somewhere and somehow, is the story – but only somehow and somewhere. Only in the montage, in the editing do you encounter supposed traces and signs that help you get to the supposed bottom of the story. And it's not rare that the story unfolds in a completely different way from how the screenwriter and director planned. That is metaphysical. You could also call it superworldly.

With this film, from the beginning I had this strange feeling – namely, of having no inkling of what would come out in the end. I literally had no inkling. Normally this is not a pleasant state, at

least not for someone like me. But in this case, cluelessness set me free and, in a certain way, carefree. An old saying occurs to me, one whose last line Johannes Mario Simmel took as the title of one of his countless novels: 'I live and don't know how long,/ I'll die and don't know when,/ I am going and don't know where, /I'm surprised that I am so happy.' (...)

27 July 2014

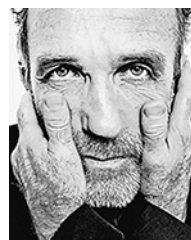
### 7th Blog Entry

Wednesday, 30 July was the last day of shooting, and it ended with a literal clap of thunder. After we had shot the last takes, a massive thunderstorm broke out, with lightning bolts this way and that; there were even horizontal flashes and double bolts in parallel over the rooftops. Rain poured in buckets, and the water pattered through all the cracks and gaps of the disused factory hall where we had just shot the last scenes of *Superwelt*. I have no particular reason for describing this.

I love people. I can't express it any other way. Even though I know what horrors we are capable of and what horrors we actually perpetrate. It's hard for me to imagine a life without us. And yet there would be life without us – but there would be no concept of it. Creating an idea of as much of everything as possible is what I call living – that's what I always wanted to spend my life doing, for as long as I can remember. My earliest thoughts were imaginings – imaginings of 'I', imaginings of 'you', and imaginings of 'it'. Consciousness brings forth the present, but only through imagination can an event become conscious as a sequence of something in the past, present and future. At least that's how I imagine it.

It's one of the beauties of the German language that the term 'Vorstellung' (idea, imagination) has the meaning, on the one hand, of 'to create a mental picture of something' but also, on the other hand, of external presentation in the sense of a theatre or circus performance. For me, internal and external 'Vorstellung' were always connected. The one was unthinkable without the other. Everything I could imagine, I also wanted to present = construct in the world. As a child, I didn't have to decide whether I wanted to be a writer, director or 'merely' a performer. I was everything together – simply a child, playing. Only later, when terms like 'profession' and 'adult' moved into the world of my imagination, did this become a serious identity problem. All of this has quite a bit to do with my new film, but I hope it's not all essential for understanding the film.

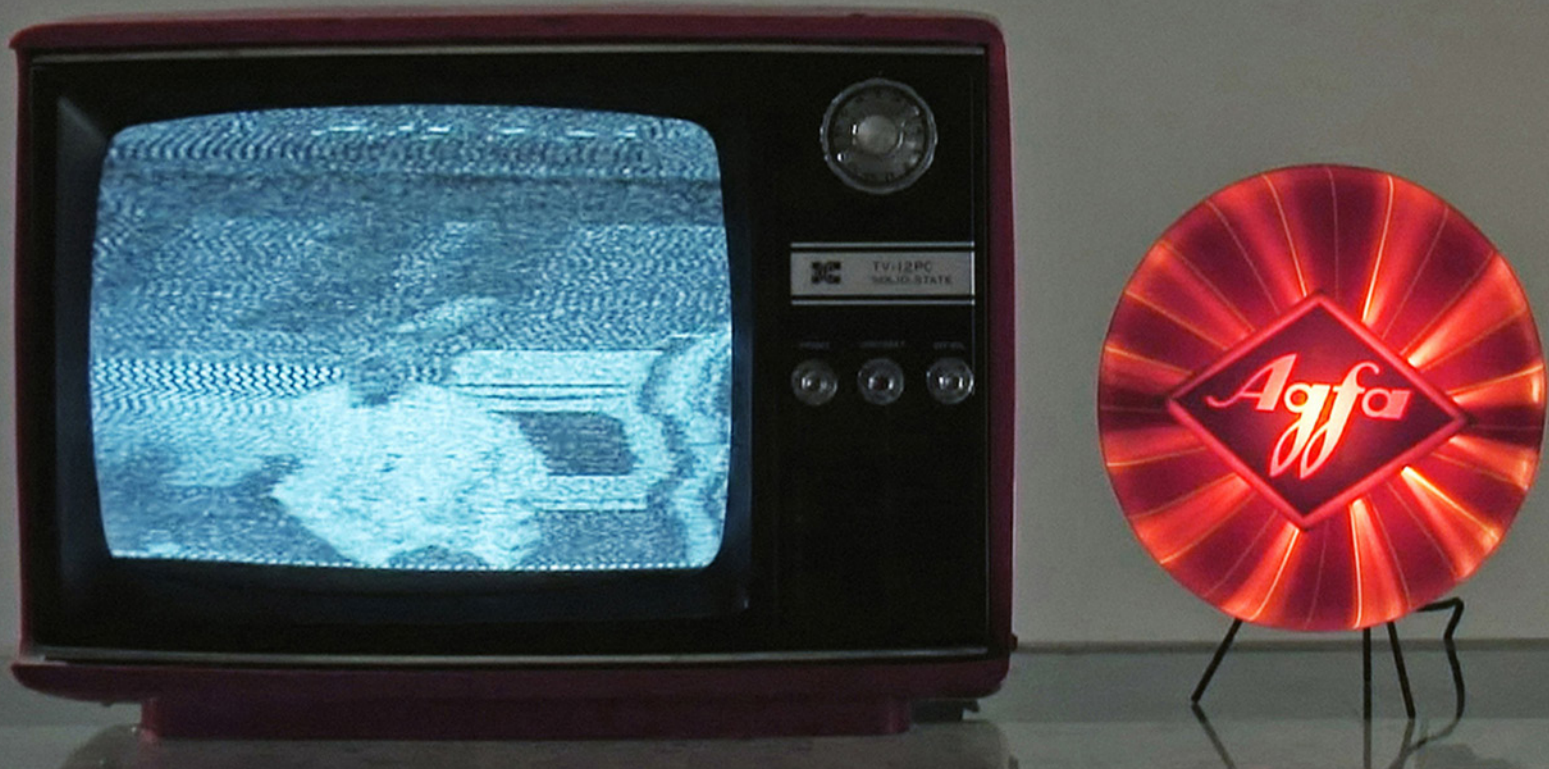
3 August 2014, Karl Markovics



Karl Markovics was born in Vienna in 1963. He began his acting career in 1982 at Vienna's Serapionstheater and later worked at theatres such as the Vienna Ensemble and the Vienna Volkstheater, among others. Beginning in 1994, he became known to a broader public in the role of Detective Inspector Stockinger in the television police series *Kommissar Rex*. Numerous TV and film

roles followed, along with work in theatre, opera, and musicals. Markovics' biggest international acting success so far was in the lead role of Salomon Sorowitsch in Stefan Ruzowitzky's film *Die Fälscher / The Counterfeiters*. In 2009, he and other Austrian film professionals founded the Academy of Austrian Film. Markovics debuted as a director and screenwriter in 2011 with the feature film *Atmen / Breathing* (90 min.). *Superwelt* is his second film.





© Akram Zaatari

ثمانية وعشرون ليلاً وبيت من الشعر

## Thamaniyat wa ushrun laylan wa bayt min al-sheir

### Twenty-Eight Nights and A Poem

**Akram Zaatari**

**Producer** Akram Zaatari. **Production company** Akram Zaatari (Beirut, Lebanon). **Director** Akram Zaatari. **Screenplay** Akram Zaatari. **Director of photography** Akram Zaatari, Bassem Fayad, Mark Khalifeh. **Sound** Carine Basha. **Music** Nadim Meshlawi. **Sound design** Rana Eid. **Editor** Jowe Harfouche. **Commissioner** Musée Nicéphore-Niépce.

DCP, colour. 120 min. Arabic.

**Premiere** 9 February 2015, Berlinale 2015

**Contact:** [festivals@mcdistribution.me](mailto:festivals@mcdistribution.me)

The song 'Fil bahr' (At Sea) extols the moon in twenty-eight different ways before finally making its point about the fleeting nature of love at the end. Different variations on one and the same thing, each an original: **28 Nights and a Poem** is an interpretation of the archive of the Sheherazade photo studio. Photographer Hashem el Madani opened the studio in 1953 in the Lebanese city of Saïda after spending years photographing people in front of their shops, in public squares or at the beach to satisfy their wish to appear before the camera. Some of the poses he captured on film were adopted by those who saw the photographs and subsequently took on a life of their own. They were recorded by photo and 8 mm cameras and are accompanied in the film by songs recorded on cassette tapes and played back on a laptop, together with el Madani's stories. In one children's programme, a polyphonic song is used to teach the alphabet. The archive's numerical ordering system is topsy-turvy because the booklet with the list of recordings was held the wrong way round. The archive does not actually exist in itself, but is generated by a system of recordings and transmissions in infinite variations.

*Stefanie Schulte Strathaus*

## The essence of archives

*Thamaniaat wa ushrun laylan wa bayt min al-sheir* is partly a study of a photographer's studio practice in the mid-twentieth century and partly an exploration of the essence of archives today. The film tries to understand how this mode of producing images functioned in the lives of the communities it served, how it ceased to exist and what it led to. It is set between the Arab Image Foundation, where most of Hashem el Madani's collection is preserved today, and Studio Shehrazade in Saïda, where the photographer still spends time surrounded by his old machines, tools, photographs, negatives, and what remains of millions of transactions that took place there. The film is a reflection on making images, on an industry of image making, on ageing and on the life that remains and continues to grow in an archive. All of this is presented in this film through a set of staged interventions of which Madani himself is a part.

Akram Zaatari

### "I was interested in a matrix that makes the image end up looking the way it does"

*You were one of the co-founders of the Arab Image Foundation, which is not just an important archive in the Middle East, but also a source for much of your work. Could you tell us about its beginnings?*

Akram Zaatari: I would say that the archive of the AIF is not a source but the outcome of a research project that I largely contributed to on photography in the Middle East and North Africa. I do not use existing archives as sources for developing work. My work aims to bring to light stories, experiences, and documents, and the many links within all of them. So the work generates collections of documents, mainly photographic records, which are kept by the AIF. It is not the other way around. The creation of AIF was very eventful. It could have ended up simply as an image bank. My involvement in research projects, besides acting as president of its board for thirteen years, marked AIF's path after the first two years. That reflects mainly in the weight given to extensive fieldwork while working on art projects that communicate or present them at the same time. This dual focus, research/art project, dominated AIF's practice from 1998 until 2010. That was the time when I researched the theme of the vehicle and made *The Vehicle: Picturing Moments of Transition in a Modernizing Society* (1999) and later, together with Walid Raad, we made *Mapping Sitting* (2002).

Reflecting on its history today, I consider that the initial goal of the foundation was a bit naïve, but it proved to be not so unproductive: we wanted to be able to recount, one day, a history of photography in the Arab region. AIF did not exist as an archive before individual artists expressed the desire to create a collection and work on it, work with it. AIF therefore reflects the concerns and desires of those behind it.

Now the question is whether AIF's collection is, or is not, an archive, and what it means or entails if it were or not. I believe there is a fundamental difference between archives as collections of 'sediment' – repositories of images of various practices in an institution – and what we do as individuals, as artists too, with AIF. If you want to consider AIF an archive, I would say it is more an archive of research and collecting practices than an archive of photographic practices.

*In many ways, you work as an aggregator, a collector – one could even say curator – as much of your work has taken as its starting point pre-existing archival photographs, studio images, and documentary footage. The archive of portrait photographer Hashem el Madani, who is from your hometown in Saïda, has been a rich source of creative activity for you. Can you talk about your relationship to the authors of these images, in particular Madani?*

Anything pre-existing around me is an extension of my experience, knowledge, and perception, and could possibly end up as a subject for my research and in my work.

There are so many people who took pictures in the twentieth century, and most of these practices interest me. My relationship to authors of individual photographs is one of research in addition to the contractual side, with the exception of Madani, with whom I have a human relationship in addition to those. I spent so much time with him and know so much about his family, his work, and his life. Madani himself became part of my work, and not only his photography. I am interested in his work because I am interested in Saïda's history, on one hand, and because I am interested in taking an entire archive as a source to write the history of an industry, a practitioner, and a city. While working on a huge body of work made by one person, the question of authorship imposes itself immediately, whereas it does so to a lesser extent when you work on a number of images each made by a different person. I always insist that photographers whose work featured in my work are not my collaborators, because I initiated the work with an interest that goes beyond the scope of individual images they made, and an interest that is different from theirs.

The fact that I don't consider these photographers my collaborators does not mean they are not authors. I think this complicates notions of authorship the way institutions, galleries, indexing methods, and the art world in general understand it. One needs to explain why a single photograph made by Madani in the 1950s is dated differently on a museum website and listed under an artist's name. Madani becomes here a subject in an art project. Some databases do not have that much flexibility or space to describe a picture!

By doing so you displace and comment on works made by others and transform their perception. I use images made by Hashem el Madani and build around them so they look like fossils, metaphorically. If those documents are photographs, then yes, to answer you, a single photograph would have two parents, two authors. In this case they are products of a photographer's practice, tradition, and economy, and at the same time an artist's project that displaced them into another time, another tradition, another economy, while studying them and producing around them works that aim to change their initial perception completely. And that is what I like to call theatre.

*Your work (in still and moving images) in many ways can be thought of as documents for writing history. Can you tell us how you see your works in relation to the writing and retelling of histories?*

Much of my work is indeed about how personal narratives meet historical moments. It is a way of looking at how moments in history translated into the micro, into people's day-to-day. It is exactly like looking at family pictures of people in the 1950s and looking at how the values of modern times seem to infiltrate people's lives.

I am interested in the mechanism that makes an image what it is, even when that mechanism is a total accident, or when

images come to be what they are for purely economic reasons – that would be even better. I am after learning, and I cannot learn from something that was made to follow canons. This is why I was interested in the photographer Hashem el Madani, because he was self-taught and because I can learn from his simple, spontaneous reasoning. I agree with you that there is a lot behind someone's attitude facing a camera, not only ideology, but a universe of factors, a matrix that makes the image end up looking the way it does. The fact that this happens today without a facilitator, without that medium that used to be the photographer, multiplies choices and accidents and makes self-representation go completely off-canon. On the one hand, the images get wilder, but on the other – and thanks to instantaneous dissemination – dominant types get to reproduce much quicker than before. The marketing of digital cameras and phones, and the ease and immediacy with which images circulate, certainly represent a revolutionary phenomenon in the history of image production and diffusion, and that will definitely impact not only how images look, or how they are constructed, but also our logic, our human relationships, our recording habits, or simply our lives.

*Interview: Eva Respini, Ana Janevski*



© Marco Milán

**Akram Zaatari** was born in Saïda, southern Lebanon in 1966. He studied Architecture at the American University in Beirut and Media Studies at the New School in New York. He works as a performance and video artist, photographer, filmmaker, writer, and curator, and he lives in Beirut. Zaatari co-founded Beirut's Arab Image Foundation.

Zaatari's works are shown all over the world in solo and group exhibitions and are now found in the collections of many museums (Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Global Arts, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Arco Foundation, Madrid; TBA21, Vienna). Along with his artistic work, Zaatari teaches at numerous universities at home and abroad.

### Films

1997: *Al-Sharîf Bi-Khayr / All Is Well on the Border* (45 min.). 2003: *Al-Yaoum / This Day* (86 min.). 2005: *Fo Haza al-Bayt / In This House* (13 min.). 2008: *Tabiah Samitah / Nature Morte* (10 min.). 2010: *Tomorrow Everything Will Be Alright* (10 min.). 2011: *Hia wa Houa / Her + Him* (33 min.). 2013: *The End of Time* (14 min.). 2013: *Letter to A Refusing Pilot* (34 min.). 2014: *Beirut Exploded Views* (30 min.). 2015: *Thamaniaat wa ushrun laylan wa bayt min al-sheir / Twenty-Eight Nights and A Poem*.



© NGF

# Über die Jahre

## Over the Years

### Nikolaus Geyrhalter

**Producer** Nikolaus Geyrhalter, Michael Kitzberger, Wolfgang Widerhofer, Markus Glaser. **Production company** Nikolaus Geyrhalter Filmproduktion (Wien, Austria). **Director** Nikolaus Geyrhalter. **Screenplay** Nikolaus Geyrhalter, Wolfgang Widerhofer. **Director of photography** Nikolaus Geyrhalter. **Sound** Andreas Hamza, Ludwig Löckinger. **Sound design** Peter Kutin. **Editor** Wolfgang Widerhofer.

DCP, colour. 188 min. German.

**Premiere** 8 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** Outlook Filmsales

When we see nappies being packed in cellophane by hand, we already suspect it will all soon be over. Taking the demise of a textile factory in Austria's Waldviertel region as its starting point, with the antiquated manufacturing plant initially shown in full operation, this film poses the question of what work means for people's self-image and character. After the factory goes bankrupt and closes, the filmmaker accompanies some of its employees as they continue to make their way, questioning them about their daily routines, the circumstances in which they live, about looking for work or the new jobs they find. One woman's situation is precarious, but that doesn't prevent her from bringing up her two grandchildren. Another woman works here and there, flexible and resourceful. One man blossoms visibly in his newly unemployed state. Bit by bit, different aspects of their private lives and personal misfortunes emerge. What begins as the documentation of a branch of industry dying a slow death develops over the course of ten years into an epic documentary tale of life and work in the post-industrial era. It is an outstanding, moving film devoted to people.

*Birgit Kohler*

## A dying craft

In 2003, we heard about a textile factory in northern Austria's Waldviertel region, where time has supposedly stood still in. The owner, well past seventy, was said to produce traditional kinds of fabric with museum-piece machines and the last of what were once three hundred employees. The products were less and less marketable.

Soon thereafter, we entered the factory for the first time, without knowing where this journey would take us. It soon became clear that we wouldn't have much time before the company closed its doors forever.

At any rate, we wanted to accompany the people we encountered there for a while yet. Ultimately, it has been more than ten years between the beginning and the end of this film.

*Nikolaus Geyrhalter*

## Open-ended life histories

A project. A film project: an old textile factory in the Waldviertel region in northern Austria, reportedly devoted to traditional production methods and craftsmanship that will soon vanish. Hence the idea to document it all. There follow encounters with, and recordings of, five, six, or seven people at their workplaces. But very soon this workplace, and actually also the film project, is steam-rollered by an accelerated demise. The factory is closed. But the filmmakers want to continue observing, for another three or four years, what that means: unemployment, the job search, and what it all does to people in whose region jobs are a rare commodity. From the beginning, *Über die Jahre*, the new film by Nikolaus Geyrhalter, was an incalculable project with unforeseeable results.

'You collaborate with a future that, in every way, is unforeseeable and unknown': this is what the American director Richard Linklater is supposed to have said about his opus magnum, *Boyhood*. For ten years, at regular and less regular intervals, Linklater had followed a young American boy as he grew up and underwent an education sentimentale – 'a crazy undertaking'.

*Über die Jahre* certainly has an affinity to this kind of insanity and its vulnerability – who could predict, for example, that you could rely on technical continuity or a compact ensemble of protagonists over such a long period? But here there was the crucial difference that, unlike Linklater, Geyrhalter and his co-author, editor Wolfgang Widerhofer, could not refer to a 'prewritten', 'secured' network of fictions and screenplay twists that could have guaranteed continuity.

No, every new encounter, each new shooting over these ten years resulted in new, unforeseeable twists that, as is generally so stupidly said, 'are written by life'. Sometimes they are like cheerful little tremors 'through the years'; for example when a man reveals increasingly unusual hobbies: archiving 1,800 songs, for example. Sometimes they are like cold shivers from a past about which someone didn't want to speak for a long time: a married couple tells about a family disaster. And sometimes they achieve an almost grotesque, apocalyptic pitch: someone rummages in scrap metal containers in a rain-swept no man's land to supplement his low basic salary with a few salvaged aluminium cans.

At such moments, you think: how can this go on? But that it does go on, and how it does – that's what the film narrates. Or more precisely, the situations that always move forward in Geyrhalter's

pictures and Widerhofer's montage, toward happy and less happy moments, narrate themselves – through the film, as it were.

Within Austria's arts and culture, which are not exactly lacking in images of country life – cruel, oppressive, idyllic – *Über die Jahre* is an incomparable individual case. That is due in no small part to its orientation towards lifetimes and working (and unemployed) times. In the childhood recollections of a Franz Innerhofer, Gernot Wolfgruber or Josef Winkler or in the catastrophic tirades of a Thomas Bernhard, it is usually memory that structures events and thus also their arc of suspense. They knew what they wanted to narrate and show. Geyrhalter and Widerhofer had no recourse to such safeguards – through experience, virtuosity or whatever. Open-ended life histories demand an open approach, an open form.

Thus, *Über die Jahre* may come closest to a life and travel journal, a diary. One writes forward through the days, sometimes coming to a conclusion that is often rescinded because of knowledge gained a few days, weeks or months later. A great quality of this film is that it doesn't present itself as retroactively 'smarter'; it doesn't place itself above the people and situations it found, much less formulate wise maxims. It accompanies and observes over the years, and from the wealth of observed details it takes on immense power and challenges us emotionally and intellectually. *Über die Jahre* is, as Nikolaus Geyrhalter and Wolfgang Widerhofer put it, 'an epic, but an intricately fashioned one'.

*Claus Philipp*

## "I like to move in forgotten places"

*Ten years of work on a project like this... What led you to trust that the protagonists would stick with it?*

**Nikolaus Geyrhalter:** Ten years was not originally the plan. In the beginning, we thought we would shoot for three or four years, because it was important to me to depict this process of how, over a certain period of time, people lose their jobs and look for jobs again. The more time passes, the more happens, of course. At some point the project developed its own dynamic, and time no longer played a big role. In some phases, our contact with the protagonists was less close. Again and again, it was definitely an effort to visit some of them again and persuade them to let us film them again. From the time when it became clear that the film would really be a long-term project, we strived to extend it as much as possible, of course. That the project is finished now, after ten years, has many reasons: the factory will now indeed find a new owner; we finally had to settle accounts with our backers; and ten years was simply a good time to close this vessel.

*Speaking of the forming of this vessel: Wolfgang Widerhofer, when did you begin editing the film?*

**Wolfgang Widerhofer:** We sat down at the editing table with the initial material relatively early, to see what it could do. In the meantime, however, we were making several other films. I began editing the current version of the film in January 2014. For twelve months from that point on, I dealt with the material. Then we shot the last chapter of the film last year, and we asked ourselves what topics we wanted to talk about with which people.

*How did your questions change over the ten years?*

**Nikolaus Geyrhalter:** We didn't have any set questions in the proper sense. It was soon clear that from the moment when the factory, which we were still quite able to portray in detail, no longer existed, what would follow were the stories life tells. This film developed like a tree that you plant without knowing what directions its branches will grow in. While shooting, I withdrew to the approach of intervening as little as possible and simply waiting to see what happened in the individual biographies. Ten years times seven protagonists equals seventy years of life – a whole lifetime – and quite a bit happens. To pour all this into a film, to find images that do it justice – that's what I saw as my task. But in fact, the lives of the protagonists are what primarily wrote this film.

**Wolfgang Widerhofer:** Our position was to respond to the lives of the protagonists. I find it crucial that this is ultimately what shaped the film's form. In the beginning, we had an awful lot of material from the factory, and you see that this factory material gives the film a certain security: everything is stable. There's a compact space, a self-contained building, and the people all on-site. So at first the camera has a relatively confident position. But then comes this turning point; the factory is locked up and suddenly everything is set in motion. Suddenly there is the hand-held camera and a playful dynamic develops, a form open in all directions – like many streams flowing together and diverging again, with all the factors of chance.

*Most of the film's protagonists are not very eloquent, if not to say, taciturn. For example, right at the beginning, one of your first questions – 'Describe one of your days' – is followed by a non-description. It's amusing and frustrating at the same time.*

**Nikolaus Geyrhalter:** I liked that the protagonists were selected as if at random. They were simply still there at the time when we were shooting in the factory. If we had cast them from a larger number of people, it would raise many questions: Why did you choose those people? What are they supposed to represent? I think it's wonderful to simply accept this given situation and to give the people a space that they don't otherwise have.

**Wolfgang Widerhofer:** No answer is often the expression of a character or of a resistance to questions. While editing, it was interesting for me to see how Niki, as filmmaker, becomes a person pushing this film forward. The film also traces once again what it's like to make a film. Sometimes not getting an answer or having to stop an interview... I'm fascinated by such uncertain moments.

*What was the creative dialogue between the two of you like?*

**Nikolaus Geyrhalter:** Many of the working procedures have become so well-established between us over the years that much seems to happen on its own. Wolfgang is like a corrective to me. What you see when you shoot differs from what you see when you edit. It's also a big advantage that Wolfgang is never present on the set. That means that, when he's at the editing table, he sees only what's really in the material.

**Wolfgang Widerhofer:** Niki once described it himself: field work and in-house work. And that's how I view editing: as work on the interior of the film. Niki doesn't even look at everything he's filmed; I do. From this material, I extract something like the substance of what this film can tell us about life. What's inside all of this material? How can this story be best told in this open form? What is the real nitty-gritty of this film?

For this film, it's very important that Niki is so present with his questions; that you see how the people respond to the film team; that they help shape the situation itself and can liberate themselves from it, rather than the reverse: that the protagonists are forced into a situation. The film shows these moments of interaction again and again.

*How is it that the film in its final version seems so compact, although it took so long to shoot it?*

**Nikolaus Geyrhalter:** I, too, was surprised. It probably has to do with the way I make films, to which I'm very dedicated, and in which I'm probably not very flexible. I've already worked for longer than these ten years with certain basic principles according to which I want to depict places, and especially people and encounters. That may be why this now seems like there's continuity – I'm a bit astonished by it myself. I didn't come up with a special visual language for this film; I merely wanted to apply the same standards here with which I always work.

**Wolfgang Widerhofer:** Especially important for us was that the film should go in a positive, powerful direction. You watch this film, experience changes and transience, you also experience tragedy, but – and now comes the big but – every single one of the protagonists finds his very own way to deal with all the changes and special challenges.

*What do you associate with the term 'life history'?*

**Nikolaus Geyrhalter:** Life moves forward, you have no influence over it. You can go to the labour office, or not: ten years pass, whether you shape them or let them be shaped. In the end you are ten years older. As I grow older, I sometimes think you become more reconciled with life, your own and also the lives and fates of others. If I had known ten years ago how much that is tragic would happen in this film, I might have been afraid to make it. I now simply accept it with more composure, because I know that you have to accept everything anyway. This greater composure probably transferred to the shooting, especially at the end.

**Wolfgang Widerhofer:** Yes, anti-dramatic. Trusting the calm and the normal. Continuity has a special significance for all Geyrhalter films, actually, and in a way that I am more and more conscious of when working on them. All Geyrhalter films address the question: What is it like after something? What is it like after a catastrophe? What is it like after this factory is shut down? What comes afterward? This long view is probably needed to expose the many layers resulting in this afterward. How do people cope with changes? This is a basic theme running through all my work with Niki.

**Nikolaus Geyrhalter:** It's funny; in my life, I really always look to the future. But it's true: like when we shot *Das Jahr nach Dayton* in Bosnia, or *Pripyat* around Chernobyl, my interest always really grows from the point when a topic disappears from daily news reporting. Apparently I like to move in forgotten places.

*Interview: Claus Philipp, January 2015*



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Nikolaus Geyrhalter was born in Vienna in 1972. Since 1992 he has worked as a director, cinematographer and screenwriter. He started his own production company in 1994. Since then, he has also produced numerous films.

### Films

1994: *Angeschwemmt/Washed Ashore* (86 min.). 1997: *Das Jahr nach Dayton/The Year After Dayton* (Berlinale Forum 1998, 204 min.). 1999: *Pripyat* (Berlinale Forum 1999, 100 min.). 2001: *Elsewhere* (240 min.). 2005: *Unser täglich Brot/Our Daily Bread* (90 min.). 2008: *7915 km* (106 min.). 2010: *Allentsteig* (79 min.). 2011: *Abendland* (90 min.). 2012: *SMZ OST – Donauspital/Danube Hospital* (TV, 80 min.). 2013: *Cern* (TV, 75 min.). 2015: *Über die Jahre / Over the Years*.



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# Umbango

## The Feud

### Tonie van der Merwe

**Producer** Steve Hand. **Production company** Jaguar Films (Durban, South Africa). **Director** Tonie van der Merwe. **Screenplay** Pat Johnston. **Director of photography** Tonie van der Merwe. **Sound** Edwin Knopf.

**Cast** Innocent „Popo“ Gumede, Kay Magubane, Hector Mathanda, Dumisani Shongwe, Vusi Gudazi, Fikile Majози, Mao Mkhwanazi, Emmanuel Shangase, Vincent Velekazi.

DCP, colour. 69 min. Zulu.

**World sales** Gravel Road Entertainment Group

*Umbango* is that rarest of cinematic curiosities – a South African western filmed entirely in isiZulu with an all-black cast (bar the hapless ‘Gringo’) and produced in the dying days of Apartheid.

A product of the B-Scheme – a government film subsidy which saw scores of films ostensibly made by white producers for black audiences between 1973 and 1990 – *Umbango* is one of the few surviving Westerns from that time. Starring Popo Gumede and Hector Mathanda (channeling Zulu versions of Bud Spencer and Terence Hill), as Jet and Owen, this is a Wild West fable of good pitted against evil, and vengeance against forgiveness. When the merciless and powerful Kay Kay rides into town to avenge his brother’s death, Jet and Owen must stand together and head for the final high noon showdown.

As with *Joe Bullet*, this film shows the influence of American cinema on B-Scheme films and importantly, the manner in which genres were appropriated and repurposed to suit the scheme’s mix of mass entertainment and moral messaging. *Umbango* was one of the last films to be produced under the subsidy, which was to collapse by the end of the decade, mired in allegations of corruption.

Darryl Els



## Films for a black audience: South Africa and the B-Scheme film subsidy

In the early 1970s, the South African government introduced a subsidy for film productions aimed at black African audiences. This subsidy was referred to as the 'B-Scheme' and was in part modelled on the general or 'A-Scheme' – an incentive for Afrikaans- and English-language cinema. From 1973 until 1990, hundreds, if not thousands, of films were cheaply produced, widely circulated and just as quickly forgotten. The impetus for the subsidy stemmed in part from producer Tonie van der Merwe's experiences with the production, banning and lost opportunities of *Joe Bullet*. Tonie recalls: 'At that stage [after the production of *Joe Bullet*] there was no subsidy for black films, but Heyns Films was getting financing from the government for a newsreel. I thought to myself, why not make a movie in the Zulu language, which is the strongest [sic] language. I went to see the Department of Industries, and parliament granted their request for the subsidy. So I made *Ngomopho* (1974), which [was the first] Zulu movie. And it took off immediately. It was like a wildfire the way this thing spread through the country. Several months later, Thys Heyns made a black movie [sic]... so that was how it started...'

### The system got out of hand

The lack of exhibition infrastructure where such films could be screened led to the creation of extensive mobile cinema circuits. Often owned by the production companies themselves, these units would exhibit films in rural areas and South Africa's homelands or 'Bantustans' (territories created for specific ethnic groups of black South Africans). Screenings of films like *Umbango* took place mostly in schools, churches and community halls. The subsidy was based on a return on ticket sales, and this combined with the informality of the exhibition circuit invariably led to corruption. Van der Merwe: 'A lot of guys just [made up audience attendance numbers]... and how do you check it? There was no way that the government in Pretoria could check it, they don't even know where's Kraggas Quarrel [sic] or how to get there? There's no communication, there's no telephone... The subsidy encouraged you to make bad movies. The cheaper you can make the movie, the more profit you can make. And that's how the thing got totally out of hand... Some people would take a roll of film [which] took eleven minutes and they would shoot that in one take, then they change magazines [and] carry on, so it was like filming a stage show. Or they would go and film a soccer match and say that was a movie. There were some really bad movies... I think one year there were nearly a thousand movies made... Some guys were claiming ten, twenty million rand a year in subsidies [one to two million US dollars]... It was totally, totally wrong. And eventually it crashed and they took the subsidy away...'

Still, as van der Merwe explains, the system did create a sizable industry with a ready audience, '...but we did become an industry, we were much bigger than Ster Kinekor [the largest South African cinema chain] on the distribution side and we produced more movies than the white production houses did in ten years. So it became big. It was a massive market and I always realised the black market is the market for the future; the white market is too small.' Historically, the films produced under the B-Scheme have largely been dismissed by critics. This is in part due to the low production values of many of the films, but more to the argument that as a state intervention, the subsidy had little to do with the actual promotion and growth of a formal and sustainable black African

film industry. Many critics saw the scheme as collusion between the apartheid state and the white-dominated film industry, who were acting as its ideological proxies, driven by an economic imperative.

### A renewed public interest

The recent restoration of many of these films has seen them re-emerge into circulation, screening in cinemas, at film festivals and on national television in South Africa. This renewed public and academic interest raises the issue of how cinema and heritage is viewed in post-apartheid South Africa. Litheko Modisane, author of *South Africa's Renegade Reels: The Making and Public Lives of Black-Centered Films* (2013), poses a number of intriguing questions around this point: 'The conversation around heritage and those films is a very important one. Do you call these films part of the cultural heritage of South Africa or do you exclude them? How do you deal with films that are produced as a part of a modernity which in itself has a lot of problems in terms of social-political relationships? The conversation has to go to the extent of raising questions of what does it mean for white filmmakers who were privileged at the time to be able to produce these films when black people were not able to do so – what does it mean if such an inheritance is now called heritage?'

The B-Scheme films highlight the complexities of cultural production under apartheid. Although some may argue that these films reinforced the ideology of racial capitalism, they also resonated widely with their intended audiences. Modisane reminds us, 'that texts are not reducible to their authors' intentions, but are ever subject to engagements that stem from the intricate social and political relations of which they are a part... the outcome of which may make possible new strategies of relating to power in all its forms.'

Certainly, the B-Scheme films demand a contemporary reflection, most specifically in the area of audience reception and in the influence of other pop cultural media of the time (such as comics and radio plays). Viewing previously unavailable and newly restored films like *Umbango* today allows us the chance to reconsider this forgotten era of South African cinema history.

Darryl Els

*Excerpts from interview with Tonie van der Merwe, recorded 23 October 2014 by Darryl Els and Marie-Hélène Gutberlet. Excerpts from interview with Litheko Modisane, recorded 29 October 2014 by Darryl Els and Marie-Hélène Gutberlet.*



Tonie van der Merwe was born in 1940 in South Africa. The qualified mathematics teacher worked as a blasting manager for the oil industry, as well as an aircraft pilot, before meeting Louis de Witt and becoming his producer on the film *Joe Bullet*. After this film, van der Merwe worked on more than 300 films as producer, director, cinematographer or editor. Tonie van der Merwe is considered the father of the black film industry in South Africa.

### Films

1975: *Trompie*. 1979: *Botsotso*. 1980: *Botsotso II*. 1982: *Bullet on the Run*. 1987: *Operation Hit Squad*. 1989: *Barrett*. 1990: *Fatal Mission*. 1990: *Fishy Stones*. 1988: *Umbango / The Feud*.

The presentation of the restored prints of *Umbango* (Tonie van der Merwe, South Africa 1988) and *Joe Bullet* (Louis de Witt, South Africa 1971) is in the context of the research project 'B-Schemes' by Darryl Els, which is dedicated to the critical reappraisal and presentation of South Africa's so-called 'B-Scheme' films, which have previously not been the focus of much research. The work by Darryl Els is part of the Visionary Archive project, a collaborative trans-local experiment in five different places and in five different archival contexts. The five partner institutions are: Cimatheque – Alternative Film Centre in Cairo; the independent cinema The Bioscope in Johannesburg; the archive of the late filmmaker Gadalla Gubara in Khartoum; the Geba Filmes association in Bissau; and Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art e.V.. Visionary Archive is supported by the TURN fund of the German Federal Cultural Foundation.



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## Viaggio nella dopo-storia

### Journey into Post-History

#### Vincent Dieutre

**Producer** Stephane Jourdan. **Production company** La Huit Production (Paris, France). **Director** Vincent Dieutre. **Screenplay** Vincent Dieutre. **Director of photography** Arnold Pasquier. **Sound** Benjamin Bober. **Editor** Dominique Auvray. **Mit** Simon Versnel (Alex), Vincent Dieutre (Tom), Emmanuel Pierrat (Emmanuel).

DCP, colour. 80 min. French, English.

**Premiere** 9 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

A couple travels to Italy. During their trip, the state of their relationship becomes clear to them: They argue, take different paths and wonder whether to divorce.

Vincent Dieutre has remade *Viaggio in Italia* and adapted it to his own life. Alex and Kate have become Alex and Tom, played by Vincent himself and his partner Simon. This new couple goes to the same places, experiences similar things, but their time in Naples is inevitably not the same. The city has changed, as has the nature of relationships, tourism has become more digital.

As the two become increasingly alienated, Vincent the filmmaker moves through the city with his camera. He talks about how Rossellini's film shaped him. We hear his thoughts about a remake, notes to himself, his discussions with a copyright lawyer. Isabella Rossellini says she doesn't want to be involved.

In Vincent and Simon's world, much like that of Tom and Alex, the procession of the final scene gives way to a football match. What was still sacred back then becomes a riot here. Yet the miracle of Rossellini's film remains, inscribing itself on the bodies of the two men: voices superimposed on to images and images superimposed on to bodies.

Marie Kloos

## Rossellini, Naples – remixed

If Pasolini takes the trouble to quote one of his poems to herald the arrival of 'dopo-storia' (after-history rather than post-history) in his film *La Ricotta* (1963), it is perhaps because the Italian Neo-realism he issues from will have been the culminating, enchanted moment of the relationship between cinema and history, between the Italian people and their filmed 'national novel', as Godard affirms – not without sadness – in his *Histoires du Cinéma* (one of the key works of 'dopo-storia'). Rossellini's cinema can only be understood within this relationship to European history, between Marxism and Christianity. Which is what makes it so precious in an era of constant information and the perpetual present. This is why my Rossellinian *Exercice d'Admiration* (EA4) brings the couple from *Viaggio in Italia* (Roberto Rossellini, 1954) into an entirely different Italy, that of 'dopo-storia'. It remains to be seen what survives – of the couple, of Naples, of tourism and of social relations – once everything has been recycled, remixed, sampled and swept away by the wind.

The adaptation of Rossellini's screenplay to the current context almost technically forces us to take into account the profound changes of international tourism, the disappearance of certain sites in Naples, the sudden appearance of the duly married gay couple on the stage of social norms and new forms of 'class consciousness' (less apparent, more relaxed, but violent nonetheless). All these are factors that cloud the mirror my project aims to hold up to Rossellini's film.

Current legislation concerning remakes, moral rights and the right to quote will dictate the film's structure and will be laid out by Maître Emmanuel Pierrat, legal specialist in the abuse of rights owners. Of course it is not a matter of limiting the film to a cunning game of hide-and-seek with the law, which is why I believe it is wise to expose the 'jurisprudence of the movie remake' from the beginning, to better enter the paradox of the Exercise of Admiration: *Viaggio in Italia* is one of the fundamental works that propelled me toward cinema, but does this give me the right to reclaim it for myself and make it my own? I believe so, but the only true answer will be the film, in its very vanity, in its impediment.

Vincent Dieutre

## Feeling and History

Alex and Tom are in love, were lovers, got married, are no longer in love, are in love again. They arrive in Naples for a few days of sunshine and vacation away from London and business, perhaps, but it also seems they've inherited a house... Unless they're simply there to try starting over, or get divorced, or end it once and for all, break up, separate, kiss and make up.

Alex and Tom are Simon Versnel and Vincent Dieutre, two real people: old friends and an actual ex-couple who have become 'sex-friends'. At the same time, they are two characters, reflections of the protagonists of an Italian film masterpiece that is reinvented before our eyes: *Voyage to Post-History*. Vincent observes the Italy of today and films it in fragile sepia tones, in English; he films like the act of breathing, hiding nothing, least of all the details, the little nothings of daily life, the seams. The film that gets made will also be the story of what a film mirroring Roberto Rossellini's *Viaggio in Italia* (1954) could be. Returning to the traces, understanding what 'fashioned' us, seeing and determining what has changed and what hasn't. Vincent calls this his 'Exercices d'Admiration';

after Kawase, Cocteau and Eustache, this will be his fourth exercise (EA4), a way of filming *within* cinema, of using cinema as a character. Though within his rights, Vincent nevertheless invites Maître Emmanuel Pierrat, well-known lawyer specialising in copy-right issues, to explain the rules of the game.

If *Viaggio in Italia* remains the framework, the title of this new film brings Vincent to Pasolini – *Viaggio nella dopo-storia*. Omnipresent and luminous in the European Rossellini, the feeling of history troubles Pasolini's work, from poetry to politics. Vincent Dieutre is heir to both, in the sense that his poetics always have a firm grip on time, disaster and current events, yet in the form of resistance. The film plunges us into 'dopo-storia', a time Pasolini pronounced beginning in the mid-sixties, a new era of post-history which erases the ghosts of past narratives and provokes the most atrocious levelling of bodies and flesh with no memory, dazed in front of TVs, football, iPads, politics/violence. The rights of remaking reality are negotiated at the price of gold, while the fireflies of hope are extinguished one by one as Vincent Dieutre portrayed in his recent *Orlando Ferito*. To the backdrop of a malfunctioning Europe, the two works converse, and toy with the idea of a new principle/hope, a principle of desire.

## Knowing where you are from

The feeling of Post-history in Pasolini is first experienced through a return to a time of pre-history. Vincent returns to his first loves: to Naples, capital of popular and mythical Italy; to the cinema of Rossellini, so fundamental to him; and finally, to the unlikely couple he formed for a time with Simon Versnel. Knowing where you're from to know where you're going...

Because there is no end that holds! Vincent Dieutre does not say things were better before. He says let's not forget what it was like, here's what it has become, what do we do now? What weapon to use, how to act, where to head, where to begin? Vincent Dieutre is anything but resigned or pessimistic, his cinema is a response, and through its particularly modern hybrid form and layered filmic language, it is able to express complexity in order to help us envision it. Because with Vincent Dieutre's cinema, we can no longer distinguish fiction from thought since the formal registers are so interwoven and fade into each other.

The couple of Simon/Alex and Vincent/Tom move through a Naples whose streets, ruins, museum and computer screens are still haunted by the Rossellinian shades of Katherine (Ingrid Bergman) and Alex (Georges Sanders). As the film advances, Vincent's memory becomes reality and he positions his camera in an undecidable in-between, pierced with SMS and Lancôme ads, a particularly pertinent place where fiction, feelings, private journal and critical reflection interact.

In literature it is sometimes said that the novel is the genre of what has no genre, because it can (must) embrace everything. In this, Vincent Dieutre's cinema is highly novelistic; it belongs to that genre which has no genre, a genre that will not be reduced, a whiff of freedom. Is it auto-fiction, an essay, documentary or 'normal' fiction? An homage to one filmmaker by another? Why choose? It is a little of each, and above all a splendid film.

Olivier Steiner



Vincent Dieutre was born in Le Petit-Quevilly, France, in 1960. He studied film at the IDHEC film school in Paris from 1983 to 1986, during which time he made his first short films and videos. Along with making films, Dieutre works as a film journalist, editor and translator.

### Films

1984: *Une martyre* (6 min.). 1985: *Wiener Blut* (11 min.). 1986: *Arrière saison* (29 min.). 1988: *Lettres de Berlin* (50 min.). 1995: *Rome désolée* (Berlinale Forum 1996, 70 min.). 2000: *Leçons de ténèbres/Tenebrae Lessons* (Berlinale Forum 2000, 77 min.). 2001: *Entering Difference/Lettre de Chicago* (18 min.). 2001: *Bonne Nouvelle* (60 min.). 2003: *Mon voyage d'hiver/My Winter Journey/Meine Winterreise* (Berlinale Forum 2003, 104 min.). 2003: *Bologna Centrale* (61 min.). 2004: *Les accords d'Alba* (25 min.). 2006: *Fragments sur la grâce* (101 min.). 2007: *Después de la Revolución* (55 min.). 2008: *Ea2: 2ème exercice d'admiration: Jean Eustache* (21 min.). 2010: *Toutes les étoiles tombent* (10 min.). 2010: *Ea3* (45 min.). 2012: *Jaurès* (Berlinale Forum 2012, 83 min.). 2013: *Déchirés/Graves* (82 min.). 2013: *Orlando Ferito – Roland Blessé* (121 min.). 2015: *Viaggio nella dopo-storia / Journey into Post-History*.



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# Violencia

## Violence

### Jorge Forero

**Producer** Diana Bustamante, Paola Pérez, Camilo Ganado, Felipe Aguilar, Carlos Congote, Maximiliano Cruz, Sandra Gomez, Katrin Pors. **Production companies** Burning Blue (Bogotá, Colombia); PostBros (Bogotá, Colombia); Blond Indian Films (Bogotá, Colombia); Congo Films (Bogotá, Colombia); Interior XIII (Mexico City, Mexico). **Director** Jorge Forero. **Screenplay** Jorge Forero. **Director of photography** David Gallego. **Production design** Angélica Perea. **Costume** Ramses Ramos. **Make-up** Liliana Cabrejo. **Sound** Carolina del Mar Fernández. **Sound design** Carlos Garcia. **Editor** Sebastián Hernández, Jorge Forero. **Cast** Rodrigo Vélez (Kidnapped), David Aldana (BMX boy), Nelson Camayo (Paramilitary).

DCP, colour. 74 min. Spanish.

**Premiere** 7 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

Cicadas and birdsong, a black screen, the jungle floor coming into view at the start of day. A leisurely tracking shot: roots, moss, a metal chain, a sleeping man shackled, hands clasped together, feet caked in mud. A silent captive whose captors' faces remain unseen, a daily routine in the forest as helicopters rumble above.

Pleasurable moans in a dark bedroom, a white curtain with black flowers that keeps out the morning light. A teenager making his way through the city, CV in hand, the camera his constant companion: bustling streets, bright colours, huge intersections, a skate park. But he only finds a job in the countryside.

A shower first thing, water droplets on broad shoulders, a trip to a hardware store before work. A man most at home in military gear, eating in silence at the top table, a 360-degree pan surveying his chatting subordinates. Will the new recruits be up to the task?

Jorge Forero's stunning debut exudes a quiet confidence, content to let the links between these oblique episodes emerge steadily and organically: one day, three men, three different settings, the all-pervading violence that envelopes Colombia their inexorable connective tissue.

*James Lattimer*

## What counts is empathy

When I saw the final edit of my movie, I couldn't help but feel a deep sadness inside of me: even after having worked on the this film for such a long, its effect on me was still very strong. So much time had passed between coming up with the initial idea for *Violencia* and filming it that I wondered whether it could keep its validity and expressive power when it was completed. Rather naively, I had assumed that the Colombian people would be able to make some progress in the area of peace and reconciliation. But the reality of the situation proved me wrong and showed me that *Violencia* is even more topical today than it was four years ago. Looking at the topic of violence from the perspective of people who are affected by it as either victims or perpetrators, but without judging, explaining, or blaming, seemed to me to be the only sensible approach for the film, in view of the tendency towards polarisation in Colombia. When everybody believes that right is on their side, when instead of justice we ask for revenge, taking a closer look at those whose daily life is affected by violence allows us to have a broader view, and we are able to recognise them as human beings and develop a deep understanding for the circumstances of their lives.

### Without Manichaeian interests

A few years ago, I was diagnosed with a degenerative disease, which ended up changing my attitude towards cinema and life. While searching for a cure, I was struck by how valuable the capacity for true and sincere empathy with the suffering of others is. For me, this attitude became a chance at reconnection with other human beings. And there I found what for me is the heart of *Violencia* as a movie: generating empathy for others. That's why *Violencia* is a movie about the experience of violence. I didn't want the film to be reduced to only its three protagonists; rather I wanted them to be archetypes of the hundreds of people that are going through the same situations.

I observed the protagonists of my film, created a bond with them and their lives, and accompanied them in their most private moments, but also in more public ones. I avoided dramatising violence as well as the depiction of the connections between cause and effect. That allowed me to make the film without Manichaeian interests. There is no definitive answer to the question of the causes of violence in Colombia, so it would be irresponsible and pretentious to try to explain it in a film. In view of the violent conflicts being carried out in Colombia, it makes no difference who the individuals are who are involved, which armed group is which. Ultimately, both sides are involved, each in its own way.

*Violencia* is made up of three different stories in which the spirit, the emotions and the body are destroyed. I would like my film to make it possible for viewers to recognise in the other a human being of flesh and blood, and I would like to touch their hearts.

*Jorge Forero*

## Violence is an imprint

Forero's debut consists of three fragments, three experiences of violence, three central characters. The starting point feels familiar, almost cold and programmed as if it were an academic essay. But the film itself moves the viewer to another place of understanding; it plays its cards elsewhere. Here, the violence is more

an imprint than an event: the violence was and is in the actors'/ characters' bodies and in their mental and physical traces, which are followed by a camera that doesn't rest. This violence will remain, and with its strange and annihilating force, it will destroy any sense of familiarity and belonging. It is a violence that is not confined to acts, but lurks in words, looks and gestures, and seems not to admit the possibility of a different solution to the standardisation, the banality, of evil. But the film itself is an answer. By refusing to reproduce violence explicitly or literally, it shows a way of escaping the maze through art; it expresses a kind of perception that passes through understanding and distinguishing, through seeing beyond what is seemingly inevitable and homogeneous about violence, and noticing how exceptional and unacceptable violence is for each individual.

*Pedro Adrián Zuluaga*



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**Jorge Forero** was born in 1981 in Colombia. He studied Film at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá and Visual Poetry at the Universidade de São Paulo. He also attended workshops at the Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión in San Antonio de los Baños in Cuba. In 2010, Diana Bustamante and he co-founded the production company Burning Blue. *Violencia* is his first feature-length film.

### Films

2001: *Uno de esos días* (15 min.). 2004: *En el fondo del pozo* (35 min.). 2010: *Sometamos o Matemos* (12 min.). 2015: *Violencia / Violence*.



© Beatrix Schnippenkoetter

## Was heißt hier Ende? Der Filmkritiker Michael Althen

### Then is It the End? The Film Critic Michael Althen

**Dominik Graf**

**Producer** Joachim Schroeder, Christoph Fisser, Charlie Woebcken, Henning Molfenter. **Production companies** Preview Production (München, Germany); Studio Babelsberg (Potsdam, Germany). **Director** Dominik Graf. **Director of photography** Felix von Boehm, Till Vielrose. **Make-up** Ingrid Navratil. **Sound** Robert Richert. **Music** Florian van Volxem, Sven Rossenbach. **Editor** Tobias Streck.

DCP, colour. 120 min. German.

**Premiere** 13 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** Preview Production

A film continues even after the final credits have rolled – when people talk about it and discuss it. Critic Michael Althen, who died in May 2011, knew how to get this sort of passionate dialogue with cinema going in the most beautiful manner with the texts he wrote.

Art and fairground, documentary and fantasy, everyday life and ecstasy – it was these contrasts that drew Michael Althen into the cinema. Colleagues, friends, directors, his wife, and even Althen himself all get to have their say and it's as if film history itself suddenly started speaking. Dominik Graf's endearing portrait of his friend gets its message across with hardly any film clips. Recollections of Althen's articles and quotations are enough to put images in motion in the mind's eye. Althen once said that he writes film reviews because he's incredibly forgetful, and that writing helped him piece together which emotions remained after viewing a film and why. He usually carried out this pleasurable reconstruction work until deep into the night. A colleague of his once said that perhaps the unconscious played a role in Althen's writing. A wonderful notion.

Anke Leweke



## Obsessive cinephilia

Once upon a time there was a great emphasis. A never-ending enthusiasm for cinema, at all times. Growing up in the darkness of the movie theatre. Writing about film as if with blood. Writing about happy film experiences was an act of love. 'For film is not our life, but a wonderful alternative to what we consider life.' Michael Althen's writing and filmmaking was obsessive cinephilia, intellect and emotion and brilliant aesthetics, all of it always tied directly to life, to the everyday life of our feelings – the big picture and in detail. His early death is a devastating loss. *Was heißt hier Ende?* is an attempt at a biographical approach to him with his colleagues, friends, family and texts.

Dominik Graf

## "Always late but then brilliant"

*How did you meet Michael Althen?*

**Joachim Schröder:** His parents visited my parents, some time around 1978. I was thirteen; he was two years older and already enthusiastic about American movies. As a lazy child in England and later Bavaria, I had seen many old Hollywood films on television. So back then, I could keep up with him, at least at first.

*How would you describe Michael Althen? What made him unmistakable?*

Michael was 'a real Mensch', as Jews put it, full of quiet, laconic, sometimes mischievous humour. Warm-hearted, intelligent, vulnerable, melancholy – sometimes lugubrious. His whole attitude was that of a great, old-fashioned romantic. Most of his reviews and obituaries are poetic, astute, and sensitive reflections about life. They touch the heart, the mind and the soul. That's why, in his texts, Michael will never be forgotten.

*In 2007, you, Michael Althen and Hans Helmut Prinzler produced the film *Auge in Auge* – Eine deutsche Filmgeschichte. How did you experience Michael as a filmmaker during work on the project?*

Always casual, always lovable, always slightly ironical, always working until late at night, never early, always late. But then always brilliant!

*The idea for *Was heißt hier Ende?* is based on your initiative. Was Dominik Graf the man who was to be director, from the start?*

Actually it was conceived as a continuation of *Auge in Auge* – with Michael and Hans Helmut Prinzler as co-authors again, but this time about women in German film. After Michael died, I had the idea that a film ought to be made about this unique man. During a conversation with his widow, Bea, she suggested Dominik Graf as the right director. Dominik, too, was close friends with Michael and had made two films with him. Dominik agreed after we talked in person. He was the right choice!

*What void does Michael Althen's absence leave in your life and in the German film landscape?*

As a friend? As always when people we love disappear from our lives, it leaves behind a wound; a scab gradually forms and you learn to live with it, at best, but it never heals. The loss remains for the rest of your life. For the German film landscape? Our film answers that question.

*At the end of the film's closing credits it says: 'We'll remain in loose contact!' What does that mean?*

That was Michael's standard goodbye – coupled with a warm-hearted, mischievous smile.

Source: Preview Production

Joachim Schröder is one of the producers of *Was heißt hier Ende?*



© Caroline Link

Dominik Graf was born in Munich in 1952. He studied in the Film Department of the University of Television and Film in Munich from 1974 to 1980. He made his first film, *Der kostbare Gast*, in 1978. Since then, Dominik Graf has made more than fifty films for cinema and television. In addition to working as a director and writer, he is also a professor of Feature Film Directing at the Internationale Filmschule Köln (ifs).

## Films

1975: *Carlas Briefe* (28 min.). 1979: *Der kostbare Gast* (60 min.). 1979: *Familiientag* (TV series, 2 episodes, each 24 min.). 1982: *Das zweite Gesicht* (101 min.). 1987: *Die Katze* (117 min.). 1988: *Tiger, Löwe, Panther* (TV film, 97 min.). 1990: *Spieler* (111 min.). 1992: *Die Verflechtung* (TV film, 100 min.). 1994: *Der Sieger* (134 min.). 1995: *Tatort* (TV series, episode "Frau Bu lacht", 89 min.). 1995: *Reise nach Weimar* (85 min.). 1995: *Sperling* (TV series, episode "Sperling und das Loch in der Wand", 92 min.). 1996: *Dr. Knock* (TV film, 93 min.). 1996: *Das Wispern im Berg der Dinge* (TV documentary, 59 min.). 1997: *Sperling und der brennende Arm* (TV film, 96 min.). 1998: *Bittere Unschuld* (TV film, 89 min.). 1998: *Deine besten Jahre* (TV film, 89 min.). 2000: *München – Geheimnisse einer Stadt* (essay film, 120 min.). 2001: *Der Felsen* (117 min.). 2002: *Die Freunde der Freunde* (TV film, 94 min.). 2002: *Hotte im Paradies* (TV film, 118 min.). 2005: *Der rote Kakadu* (128 min.). 2006: *Eine Stadt wird erpresst* (TV film, 89 min.). 2007: *Das Gelübde* (TV film, 89 min.). 2010: *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* (TV series, 10 episodes, each 47 min.). 2010: *Polizeiruf 110* (TV series, episode "Cassandras Warnung", 89 min.). 2011: *Dreileben* (TV film, part 2 "Komm mir nicht nach", 89 min.). 2011: *Lawinen der Erinnerung* (89 min.). 2011: *Das unsichtbare Mädchen* (TV film, 105 min.). 2013: *Die reichen Leichen. Ein Starnbergkrimi* (TV film, 89 min.). 2013: *Tatort* (TV series, episode "Aus der Tiefe der Zeit", 89 min.). 2014: *Die geliebten Schwestern* (140 min.). 2014: *Es werde Stadt!* (TV film, 143 min.). 2014: *Polizeiruf 110* (TV Series, episode "Smoke on the Water", 102 min.). 2015: *Was heißt hier Ende? Der Filmkritiker Michael Althen / Then is It the End? The Film Critic Michael Althen.*



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## Zurich

### Sacha Polak

**Producer** Marleen Slot, Dries Phlypo, Jean Claude van Rijckeghem, Karsten Stöter, Benny Drechsel. **Production companies** Viking Film (Amsterdam, Netherlands); A Private View (Sint-Amansberg, Belgium); Rohfilm (Leipzig, Germany). **Director** Sacha Polak. **Screenplay** Helena van der Meulen. **Director of photography** Frank van den Eeden. **Production design** Jorien Sont. **Costume** Sara Hakkenberg. **Make-up** Françoise Mol. **Sound** Miroslav Babic. **Music** Rutger Reinders. **Sound design** Markus Krohn. **Editor** Axel Skovdal Roelofs. **Cast** Wende Snijders (Nina), Sascha Alexander Gersak (Matthias), Barry Atsma (Sven), Martijn Lakemeier (Hitchhiker).

DCP, colour. 89 min. Dutch, German, English.  
**Premiere** 7 February 2015, Berlinale Forum  
**World sales** Beta Cinema

We don't exactly know what happened. But Nina has gone off the rails due to a shocking event, paired with the sudden realisation that she hasn't led the life she thought.

The young woman goes to ground in the anonymous world of motorways and service stations, restless and constantly on the move to avoid ever having to look back. The director follows her movements from as close as possible, a state of closeness that gives the film its texture. Nina and the camera end up in a state of delirium, drifting and drifting away. Nina once again finds herself in a long-distance lorry driver's bed, spends a couple of days with him, he even introduces her to his children, before she ends up back on the road. The montage jumps between different times and makes memories flare up – of easygoing moments, of another man. The scenes are only loosely connected and do not add up to the story of a life. Sometimes the camera lingers on Nina's face, registering the different facets of an all-encompassing grief – running the gamut from absolute hopelessness, anger, to sheer despair. Sacha Polak's film lets the viewer almost take part in the grieving process.

Anke Leweke

## A woman wants to disappear

If you have a dream in which you are chased by a cheetah, it may suggest that you need to be more active in pursuit of your goals. It could also symbolise that something is missing in your life – or that you somehow feel that you are missing the mark as far as your purpose in life goes. Alternatively, a cheetah may appear in your dream when you are trying to move on in life and something keeps bringing you back to the same dilemma.

Once we had wrapped up the writing of *Hemel*, Helena van der Meulen and I soon started dreaming about a new film. The development process of *Hemel* went smoothly and we definitely wanted to continue our cooperation. *Hemel* is about a motherless child. *Zurich* is about a childless mother.

Nina is played by Wende Snijders. Who Nina really is (before Boris's death) is something we barely see in this film. Nina is traumatised right from the start. Who is this woman who is capable of abandoning her own child? I think this film will give rise to moral questions. We are probably more used to the idea of a man abandoning his children than a woman. I want to portray a woman who deeply loves her daughter Pien, but who becomes a threat for the child due to Boris's betrayal and her own inability to mourn. What she really wants is simply to disappear because she's been swept off her feet and can't look after her daughter any longer. I approached this film like a dance film; a film aimed at portraying a feeling from the subconscious – the feeling of wanting to disappear and of not being able to cope with responsibility any longer.

*Zurich* has been split up into the parts 'Hund' and 'Boris'. Both Hund (a dog) and Boris die in the film, and they are both important to Nina. We've had lengthy discussions about the structure of the film. How we would narrate the story in the correct emotional order. I think this is a story full of suspense and I hope the story will leave the viewer with mixed feelings.

The first part of the film shows a woman who suffers a heavy blow when her boyfriend dies, and it considers the question of whether Nina will return home at all or if she'll find comfort in Matthias's arms for good instead. We don't yet know about the existence of a daughter.

The second part shows the blow caused by the news and the incomprehension it gives rise to. What I like is that the end actually feels like an end and that you can look back later and realise that the end is not the end. The film ends chronologically with the death of Hund, the dog – an emotional blow and one that allows her to face Boris's death for the first time. It's a blow that might bring Nina back to Pien, something we deliberately choose not to show, something for the viewer to fill in.

## Not afraid of self-exposure

We've also added scenes with Sven and Paco, without Nina. I did this to try and make *Zurich* a broader story by introducing more characters. The film still has to lean on Nina's experiences, though. Therefore, we carefully picked the moments during which we do not see her but do get on with our story. The scene with Paco and his friends at the cemetery may therefore feel a bit odd, because you want to stick with Nina emotionally, but I must say I love such scenes because they create a bit of friction.

In 2012, *Zurich* was selected for the first residency of the Berlinale. Together with five other filmmakers from different countries I was given the opportunity to work on the film in Berlin for a period of four months. I was provided with a coach with whom I elaborately discussed the screenplay. This was a very inspiring time for me.

Helena showed me the TV programme *24 Hours With...* by Wilfried de Jong, in which Wilfried de Jong and Wende Snijders spent twenty-four hours locked up in a room together. Wende was changeable and fascinating. The idea to use Wende as an actress gave rise to the plan for *Zurich*. We got Wende involved in the script development right from the start. It was quite a risk to let such a demanding role be performed by a singer. For me, it was important to find the similarities between Wende and Nina and to let them become one. I thoroughly enjoyed working with Wende. She really threw herself right into it, from screaming at the top of her voice to complete self-exposure. She is not afraid to be ugly or vulnerable. We found one another in making things we consider important without making concessions.

Sacha Polak

## The reversal of cause and effect

*Zurich* is an artistic feature film of the un-Dutch road movie genre. The starting point was creating a leading role that would fit Wende Snijders like a glove. Besides being a wonderful singer with great presence, Wende is also an intriguing and surprising personality, who adopts such an open and (seemingly?) vulnerable attitude, that time after time the opposite threatens to be achieved. This inner conflict formed the inspiration for this role and this screenplay. A character that balances between attraction and revolt and creates both intimacy and distance in the audience is something I consider ultimately filmic.

In order to incorporate as organically as possible Wende's personality with that of Nina, the fictional leading character, and to increase the feeling of authenticity, we approached Wende right at the beginning of script development. This allowed her to grow along with the screenplay, which allowed Wende to put herself in Nina's position and vice versa.

The idea for the narrative structure of the film arose from the story we wanted to tell: two parts, in a narrative structure that was reversed.

As a result of the non-chronological order the question of 'what exactly happened' remains unanswered until the very end (giving it away would be a spoiler...). The accompanying reversal of 'cause and effect' is more important, though. The first part of *Zurich* ('Hund') shows the consequence of a terrible blow that befell Nina (the effect). The second part ('Boris') happens before the actual blow takes place (the cause). Or rather: the blows – one by fate and the other by her own doing.

That is why the second blow is worse, both for her and for us.

## Placing yourself outside time

This emotional climax of the film, which chronologically happens much earlier, takes place at the end of the film, thus forming the climax of the viewing experience.

The first part of the film ('Hund') follows Nina, running away from emotions that are too intense: love, grief, anger and guilt. Lots of guilt. Feelings that are too contradictory to cope with just like that. It needs time. And she claims this time by placing herself outside 'our' time, as it were. She stops taking part in a world that keeps on turning as usual. Nina lets herself 'be lived', as it were, until the wound begins to heal and she is able to step back into her own life.

'Hund' shows the disorientated wanderings of a woman who has been thrown off balance, a woman and mother (though we don't

know that yet) who cannot or will not return home, by her own doing (but we don't know that yet, either).

All she has brought along is her voice. That is what she falls back on. The only way for her to start giving room to her emotions is by singing and humming, whispering or screaming.

Why Nina is unable or unwilling to return home is revealed in the second part ('Boris') – in retroaction. This part is no whimsical wandering; on the contrary, it unwinds in an implacable straight line from one dramatic event to the next.

Both parts avoid explaining Nina's character psychologically or otherwise. Without explaining her emotions, let alone judging her behaviour, the film wants the viewer to sympathise with Nina, with room for her own mystery, something inimitable that makes her unique and for that reason moves us. Just like in real life.

*Helena van der Meulen*



© Bas Loekekoet

**Sacha Polak** was born in Amsterdam in 1982. She graduated in 2006 from the Netherlands Film and Television Academy in Amsterdam with her short *Teer*. In 2009, she took part in the Directors' Lab at the Binger Filmlab in Amsterdam. *Zurich* is her second full-length feature film.

#### Films

2006: *Teer/Tar* (23 min.). 2007: *El Mourabbi* (10 min.). 2008: *Drang/Craving* (26 min.). 2008: *Onder de tafel/Under the Table* (40 min.). 2011: *Broer/Brother* (10 min.). 2012: *Hemel* (Berlinale Forum 2012, 80 min.). 2013: *Nieuwe Tieten/New Boobs* (67 min.). 2015: *Zurich*.



市川 崑

**Kon Ichikawa**



© Kadokawa Corporation

炎上

**Enjo**

**Conflagration**

**Kon Ichikawa**

**Producer** Hiroaki Fuji. **Production company** Daiei Film (Kyoto, Japan). **Director** Kon Ichikawa. **Screenplay** Natto Wada, Keiji Hasebe. **Director of photography** Kazuo Miyagawa. **Production design** Yoshinobu Nishioka. **Costume** Toshiaki Manki. **Make-up** Masanori Kobayashi, Emi Ishii. **Sound** Masao Osumi. **Music** Toshiro Mayuzumi. **Sound design** Nobu Kurashima. **Editor** Shigeo Nishida. **Restoration/director** Masahiro Miyajima. **Restoration/sound** Mototsugu Hayashi.

**Cast** Raizo Ichikawa (Goichi Mizoguchi), Tatsuya Nakadai (Tokari), Ganjiro Nakamura (Dosen Tayama), Yoko Uraji (young woman), Michiyo Aratama (master of flower arrangement), Tamao Nakamura (prostitute), Yoichi Funaki (Tsurukawa), Kinzo Shin (assistant superior of the temple), Tanie Kitabayashi (Goichi's mother), Jun Hamamura (Goichi's father).

DCP, black/white. 99 min. Japanese.

**World sales** Kadokawa Corporation

In 1944, following the death of his father, the young Goichi Mizoguchi enters the famous Shukaku temple in Kyoto as a novice. The introverted young man has a stutter and suffers humiliation as a result. After his only friend in the monastery dies, he befriends a cynical fellow student who opens his eyes to the priests' double standards and business acumen. The high priest has a lover, and the tourists who've been flocking to the temple since the end of the war keep the monastery's coffers full. Goichi, for whom the temple represents beauty and truth as well as symbolising his late father's dreams, feels that the purity of Shukaku is in danger. In his attempts to protect the temple, he becomes ever more lonely and desperate. His disturbed state leads him to commit an act of violence: he sets the monastery on fire. This complex psychological study of an outsider unfolds in a masterfully executed series of flashbacks. *Enjo*, which Kon Ichikawa considered one of his best films, is based on Yukio Mishima's book *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, which was inspired by the burning of a national shrine in 1950.

Annette Lingg

The *kinkakuji* (Kinkaku Temple) was a Japanese national shrine and one of Kyoto's most important tourist attractions. In 1950, one of the temple's students set it on fire. *Enjo* is the film version of Yukio Mishima's novel about this event, *Kinkakuji (The Temple of the Golden Pavilion, 1956)*. At the request of the temple priests, the film changed the temple's name to Shukaku.

### The transience of outward beauty

Ichikawa knows that the old Japan is irretrievable. But he sees that the conservative ideologues don't want to believe it. In the middle of beautiful parks, the old temples still stand and centuries-old Buddhas still smile, oblivious to the world, so they think they can invoke them as ever, unchallenged by everything one does in everyday life. But what really motivates the modern tourists who stand in front of these magnificent things? 'Are they degrading this beauty to a profane business?' asks the stuttering temple student in *Enjo*. 'Can they be allowed to hypocritically admire a museum piece to which they have long since had no inner tie?' he wonders and sets alight the Golden Pavilion, a national shrine of Japan. The case is authentic. The Japanese poet Yukio Mishima wrote a novel about it; Ichikawa chose the novel as the basis for his best film. 'To provide us all an example, the boy in *Enjo* set the great temple afire. That was a crime,' says Ichikawa. 'But my question is why this youth had to perpetrate this deed, why he could not do otherwise. I will probably always be interested in such questions. This is the source of my work.'

*Enjo* not only reveals more clearly than Ichikawa's other films the source of the director's disquiet; the film also limitlessly displays his stylistic mastery for the first time. Photographed in Cinemascope by Miyagawa (known in the West only as the cameraman of Kurosawa's *Rashomon*), this film's visual beauty can confidently be compared to the best results of the collaboration between Antonioni and di Venanzo. Ichikawa's optical gift is extraordinary. Perhaps he benefits from his prior training as a painter, although one will hardly discover in him 'painterly' compositions in the European sense, as with Mizoguchi, for example. Ichikawa's images are emphatically photography. He prefers flat backgrounds with linear composition, whereby the sparse Japanese interiors offer him the most artful possibilities (they often recall Mondrian's grids); the figures in the foreground are sharply contoured. 'Atmosphere' is nonetheless evoked, but it is hardly describable and at bottom does not develop from visual appearance, but from its meaning: a whiff of melancholy lies on the clearest pictures – a farewell-bidding melancholy rooted in the knowledge that outward beauty is fleeting and cannot prevent inner corruption. With Ichikawa, exterior footage, too, is usually static – hence the restrained coolness of the shots in *Nobi*, which makes the outrageousness of events at all depictable and conceivable in the first place. When he does let the camera move, he usually immediately unleashes it entirely. These are the emotional climaxes or vital explosions. In Japan, Ichikawa is famed perhaps all too exclusively for his formal qualities. People admire his taste, delight in his artificial constructions, and, I'm afraid, try to elude the provocation of his themes. A bit odd, they venture, but how perfectly staged! But these are self-protective evasions. They can't hide that, however one may claim to feel pleased by his aesthetic charms, this director makes one uncomfortable – hellishly uncomfortable.

*Wilfried Berghahn, Filmkritik, No. 3, Munich 1963*



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Kon Ichikawa was born in 1915 in Ujiyama (now Ise) in the prefecture of Mie, Japan. He spent much of his childhood drawing and painting. Ichikawa has named the Disney cartoon series *Silly Symphonies* as one of the most important influences on his artistic development. In 1933, he began working as an assistant in the animation department of a film studio. He became an assistant director for feature films in 1935. He made his first short animated film, *Musume dojoji / A Girl at Dojo Temple*, in 1945. Ichikawa then directed numerous feature films and documentaries, many of which were based on screenplays by his wife, Natto Wada. He started his own production company in 1973. In 2000, he received the Berlinale Camera award. Kon Ichikawa died in 2008.

### Films

1945: *Musume Dojoji / A Girl at Dojo Temple* (short film). 1948: *Hana hiraku / A Flower Blooms*. 1949: *Ningen moyu / Human Patterns*. 1950: *Ginza Sanshiro / Sanshiro of Ginza*. 1951: *Iraishan / Nightshade Flower*. 1952: *Wakai hito / Young People*. 1953: *Pu-san / Mr Pu*. 1953: *Aoiro Kakumei / The Blue Revolution*. 1953: *Seishun Zenigata Heiji / The Youth of Heiji Zenigata*. 1954: *Okuman choja / A Billionaire*. 1955: *Kokoro / The Heart*. 1956: *Biruma no tategoto / The Burmese Harp* (Berlinale Retrospektive 1990). 1956: *Shokei no heya / Punishment Room*. 1957: *Tohoku no zummutachi / The Men from Tohoku*. 1958: *Enjo / Conflagration*. 1959: *Kagi / The Key*. 1960: *Ototo / Her Brother* (Berlinale Forum 2015). 1961: *Kuroi junin no onna / Ten Dark Women*. 1963: *Yukinojo henge / An Actor's Revenge* (Berlinale Retrospektive 1993 / Berlinale Forum 2015). 1964: *Tokyo orimpikku / Tokyo Olympiad*. 1968: *Seishun / Youth*. 1973: *Matatabi / The Wanderers*. 1976: *Inugami-ke no ichizoku / The Inugami Family*. 1977: *Gokumonto / Island of Hell*. 1978: *Hinotori / The Phoenix*. 1980: *Koto / Ancient City*. 1983: *Sasameyuki / The Makioka Sisters*. 1985: *Biruma no tategoto / The Burmese Harp*. 1988: *Tsuru / Crane*. 1994: *Shijushichinin no shikaku / 47 Ronin*. 1996: *Yatsuhaka-mura / The 8-Tomb Village*. 1999: *Dora-Heita* (Berlinale 2000).



© Kadokawa Corporation

おとうと

## Ototo

Her Brother

Kon Ichikawa

**Producer** Hiroaki Fujii. **Production company** Daiei Film (Kyoto, Japan). **Director** Kon Ichikawa. **Screenplay** Yoko Mizuki. **Director of photography** Kazuo Miyagawa. **Production design** Tomoo Shimogawara. **Sound** Mitsuo Hasegawa. **Music** Yasushi Akutagawa. **Restoration/director** Masahiro Miyajima. **Restoration/sound** Mototsugu Hayashi.

**Cast** Keiko Kishi (Gen), Hiroshi Kawaguchi (Hekiro), Kinuyo Tanaka (mother), Masayuki Mori (father), Noboru Nakaya (policeman), Jun Hamamura (doctor), Kyoko Kishida (Mrs Tanuma), Takaya Hijikata (Nakata), Sho Natsuki (detective), Kyoko Enami (nurse Miyata).

DCP, colour. 98 min. Japanese.

**World sales** Kadokawa Corporation

Young Gen and her brother Hekiro live with their father and stepmother. Due to the stepmother's severe rheumatism, it's Gen who does most of the work around the house. She's also unceasingly loyal to her brother, a good-for-nothing rebel incapable of avoiding trouble. Their mother, a pious Christian who feels the rest of the family doesn't really accept her, often laments her poor health. The father never really listens to his family's troubles, content to dole out platitudes when not remaining silent. The family's fragile relationships only begin to heal when Hekiro becomes seriously ill. Kon Ichikawa is as non-judgemental as one of the songs playing at the hospital, its lyrics referencing "The sins of the parents, the sins of the children...". The film is narrated exclusively from Gen's perspective, who oscillates between obedience and defiance, yet is still unable to escape the family which determines her life. Ichikawa chose a muted colour palette for this family drama, in which the stifling atmosphere of the family home is contrasted with the promise of freedom offered by nature.

*Annette Lingg*



## The range of reds

*Ototo* is a film of surprising beauty with memorable compositions that engage eye and sympathy. Ichikawa has said that he suppressed the colour scheme to 'evoke the dark feeling of Taisho', but that undersells the visual impression of the film. Whilst the range of reds, russets, and clarets might not have been quite as opulent as those in another Taisho-era film in the season, Seijun Suzuki's *Zigeunerweisen* (1980), the richness of the range of deep reds constantly enlivened interest and helped to emphasise the leading character's emotional sympathies. For this film has to be read through the thoughts of Gen, the daughter, played by Keiko Kishi. Gen is one of the two named characters in the film along with her brother Hekiro, played by Hiroshi Kawaguchi. It would be tempting to slip 'titular' in front of 'her brother', but it shouldn't be; the film – and the book on which it is based – is entirely focused on the standpoint of Gen and the title of the film should more emphatically be translated as 'My Brother'.

### An emotionally cold father

There was one aspect where Kon Ichikawa seemed to take pleasure in retaining his sardonic streak. 'Father' was played by one of the most renowned of all Japanese actors, Masayuki Mori, in surely one of his least flattering roles. (...) He's emotionally cold (until the last moment of the film), he's lax even when confronted by his family, damagingly indulgent of his son, and callous with his daughter. And despite working from home, he's simply not there. But this 'Father' is not any old father. Japanese viewers would have all known at the time that the film was made from a highly topical novel by Aya Koda, clearly autobiographical of her own life and, in particular, of her very famous father. Rohan Koda is as renowned in Japanese literature as, say, Charles Dickens, but much more high-brow. Rohan was sufficiently famous for his writing (and his drinking), that Aya could find herself in the papers just for working in a sake shop. It was only after Rohan's death that Aya could begin to write, and eventually write her masterpiece, *Flowing*, memorably made into a film by Mikio Naruse. By all accounts (and I rely heavily on Alan Tansman's book for information), Aya gave a more nuanced account of her father than Ichikawa and scriptwriter Yoko Mizuki allow. I fancy that either or both of them still resented spending time in school reciting his storm description from *The Five-Storeyed Pagoda*.

But as the film's title suggests, at least in Japanese, it's the relationship between elder sister and younger brother that lies at the centre of the film. Mother, as in real life, is long dead. Kinuyo Tanaka has to act the role of a struggling stepmother who cannot find her role in the family and gets no support from Rohan in checking little brother. Apart from the beautifully recreated opening scene, Gen and the other women are nearly always filmed inside, whereas Ichikawa uses highly contrasted outdoors scenes to convey the driven, impetuous character of little brother.

I had never previously thought of Kon Ichikawa and Mikio Naruse as sharing the same muse, but in Aya Koda they certainly did. And, even as a Naruse devotee, I'd have to concede that Ichikawa's *Ototo* is, visually and aurally, a much more advanced film. Both directors' reputations rest strongly on their literary adaptations. Like Naruse, it's tempting to speculate how much Ichikawa's career was boosted with close association with female scriptwriters.

Roger Macy, <http://www.midnighteye.com/reviews/her-brother/>

## Distance and decency

The 'home' is said to be comprised of paternal love, maternal love, marital love, sibling love. But no matter how much love there may be between family members, a person is ultimately alone. Because of this premise that people are lonely beings, showing kindness and consideration to one another while living together makes this love beautiful. And while there may be a difference in situations, the troubles a young soul carries or the way it leaps logic is the same now as it was in the distant past. This film's story is about the home of the human spirit.

It's important to convey that you lead a lonely existence. I feel sorry for those who live out their lives without ever recognising their loneliness. However, it's also not enough to just realise this inherent solitude. Every one of us builds a family and lives within it. From the outside, most of these families may look like an average, happy household. But one step inside reveals a web of complex, contradictory human relationships.

Each lonely existence is strongly bonded by blood to live together in one home as a small group. Some may say it's only natural that blood relations should be able to love one another as a matter of fact. But that would never be my opinion. I believe that actively accepting the fact that each family member is lonely enables the love between parent and child, husband and wife, sister and brother, in their mutual life, to be unrelenting and irreplaceable, and therefore, that much more precious. This issue regarding loneliness and love makes up the fundamental form of the soul and it hasn't changed. No, perhaps we need to face this problem even more so at present. Without question, the environment surrounding us in modern times is much more relentless compared to the Taisho era. And people easily use the word 'solitude' in a convenient, very abstract sense. It's almost like an escape from the harsh modern times or a passive armour of self-righteousness. I dislike this kind of use of the word. I believe loneliness is a personal issue within each human's soul, and that one of the bigger influences that connects an individual with others is 'decency'.

I decided to express this decency through the woman called Gen.

Kon Ichikawa



© Kadokawa Corporation

Kon Ichikawa was born in 1915 in Ujiyama (now Ise) in the prefecture of Mie, Japan. He spent much of his childhood drawing and painting. Ichikawa has named the Disney cartoon series *Silly Symphonies* as one of the most important influences on his artistic development. In 1933, he began working as an assistant in the animation department of a film studio. He became an assistant director for feature films in 1935. He made his first short animated film, *Musume Dojoji / A Girl at Dojo Temple*, in 1945. Ichikawa then directed numerous feature films and documentaries, many of which were based on screenplays by his wife, Natto Wada. He started his own production company in 1973. In 2000, he received the Berlinale Camera award. Kon Ichikawa died in 2008.

### Films

1945: *Musume Dojoji / A Girl at Dojo Temple* (short film). 1948: *Hana hiraku / A Flower Blooms*. 1949: *Ningen moyu / Human Patterns*. 1950: *Ginza Sanshiro / Sanshiro of Ginza*. 1951: *Ieraishan / Nightshade*

Flower. 1952: *Wakai hito/Young People*. 1953: *Pu-san/Mr Pu*.  
1953: *Aoiro Kakumei/The Blue Revolution*. 1953: *Seishun Zenigata  
Heiji/The Youth of Heiji Zenigata*. 1954: *Okuman choja/A Billionaire*.  
1955: *Kokoro/The Heart*. 1956: *Biruma no tategoto/The Burmese  
Harp* (Berlinale Retrospektive 1990). 1956: *Shokei no heya/Pun-  
ishment Room*. 1957: *Tohoku no zummutachi/The Men from Tohoku*.  
1958: *Enjo/Conflagration* (Berlinale Forum 2015). 1959: *Kagi/The  
Key*. 1960: *Ototo / Her Brother*. 1961: *Kuroi junin no onna/Ten Dark  
Women*. 1963: *Yukinojo henge/An Actor's Revenge* (Berlinale Ret-  
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Tokyo Olympiad*. 1968: *Seishun/Youth*. 1973: *Matatabi/The  
Wanderers*. 1976: *Inugami-ke no ichizoku/The Inugami Family*. 1977:  
*Gokumonto/Island of Hell*. 1978: *Hinotori/The Phoenix*. 1980:  
*Koto/Ancient City*. 1983: *Sasameyuki/The Makioka Sisters*. 1985:  
*Biruma no tategoto/The Burmese Harp*. 1988: *Tsuru/Crane*. 1994:  
*Shijushichinin no shikaku/47 Ronin*. 1996: *Yatsuhaka-mura/The  
8-Tomb Village*. 1999: *Dora-Heita* (Berlinale 2000).



© Kadokawa Corporation

## 雪之丞変化

# Yukinojo henge

### An Actor's Revenge

#### Kon Ichikawa

**Producer** Hiroaki Fujii, Tomio Takamori. **Production company** Daiei Film (Kyoto, Japan). **Director** Kon Ichikawa. **Screenplay** Daisuke Ito, Teinosuke Kinugasa, Natto Wada. **Director of photography** Setsuo Kobayashi. **Licht** Kenichi Okamoto. **Production design** Yoshinobu Nishioka. **Costume** Yoshio Ueno. **Sound** Iwao Otani. **Music** Yasushi Akutagawa, Masao Yagi. **Restoration/director** Masahiro Miyajima. **Restoration/sound** Mototsugu Hayashi.

**Cast** Kazuo Hasegawa (Yukinojo/Yamitaro), Fujiko Yamamoto (Ohatsu), Ayako Wakao (Namiji), Eiji Funakoshi (Hyouma Kadokura), Shintaro Katsu (Shimanuke Houin), Raizo Ichikawa (Hirutaro), Ganjiro Nakamura (Sansahi Dobe), Chusha Ichikawa (Kikunojo Nakamura), Narutoshi Hayashi (Mukuinu), Eijiro Yanagi (Hiromiya).

DCP, colour. 114 min. Japanese.

**World sales** Kadokawa Corporation

Under Kon Ichikawa's direction, this remake of a 1935 film by Teinosuke Kinugasa becomes a fascinating visual spectacle, which simultaneously marks the 300th film appearance of actor Kazuo Hasegawa. Staged with haunting elegance, the film tells the story of Yukinojo, a performer of women's roles in Kabuki theatre in the nineteenth century, who is obsessed with avenging the death of his parents. While acting in a touring production, he looks into the audience and sees the three men who drove his parents to suicide 20 years before. With cunning, intrigue and the help of one of the three's daughter, who has fallen in love with him, he sets about destroying their lives.

Ichikawa plays around with illusion and reality and weaves them into a delirious widescreen work full of vivid colours. The action remains within the stylised stage setting; the boundaries between on- and offstage become blurred and repeatedly flow into one another. The soundtrack also draws on the same stylistic blend of tradition and modernity, moving effortlessly between Japanese classical music and suggestive jazz.

Annette Lingg

An old favorite story based on a novel by Mikami (1891–1944) done as a breathtaking avant-garde experiment, made to celebrate star actor Kazuo Hasegawa's 300th film appearance. Ichikawa had him play the same double role – kabuki actor of female roles Yukinojo and small-time gangster Yamitaro – that he had played in Teinosuke Kinugasa's 1935 version of the same story.

*Audie Book: Japanese Film Directors, Tokyo, New York 1978*

### Wide-screen photography and Kabuki

It is only in very recent years that either Ichikawa or Kobayashi gained production freedom and thus one finds in their work films which they might not have undertaken had they had a free choice. Not that either of them has been cowed by this experience, Ichikawa least of all, (...) It is even reported that the film *Yukinojo henge* was affectionately known in the business as 'Ichikawa's revenge'. Together with his wife Natto Wada, who has written all his scripts, and the two great old men of Japanese cinema, Daisuke Ito and Teinosuke Kinugasa, he reshaped the whole script, making a virtue of necessity. To be more exact, he took the old melodrama and worked it into a masterpiece. The casting of the long-popular matinée idol, Kazuo Hasegawa, as an onnagata of the Kabuki theatre opposite one of the most popular and beautiful young stars, Ayako Wakao, resulted in the disturbing sight of a man playing a woman making love to a woman less than half his age. The frisson derived from this is nothing to the startling effects that Ichikawa managed to squeeze out of the wide-screen photography. Location shooting is happily mixed with the most obvious stage sets derived from the Kabuki. It was as if someone had suddenly discovered colour and the tricks of the camera all over again. One is left with memories of brilliant sword play in the near dark from a 'woman' who never takes on male attributes even when slaying, a rope stretching off into the dark to lasso a fleeing enemy suddenly going taut and pointing off into nothing as it finds its mark. For sheer magic it has hardly been surpassed yet at its heart there is a story of a lone search for reason along a road paved with doubts. Ichikawa must have enjoyed himself making the film, to judge by the result; Daiei, the production company, were less happy since the film lost money.

*Richard N. Tucker: Japan: Film Image, London 1973*

### Genuine is artificiality

*Yukinojo henge* is a film set in the theatre and, as soon as it leaves the theatre, in a reality modelled in equal parts on the seemingly mutually exclusive spatial laws of theatre and film. Immediately after its beginning, which situates the action on a stage, it opens its gaze to the distance. The fake snow is genuine, from one edit to the next. The tree is genuine; the world is genuine. As genuine as the world of film in the studio can be, when an artist of surfaces and master of two-dimensionality like Kon Ichikawa stages it. But the distance has no depth; a thin white rope floats in the blackness of a breath-taking battle scene like a white brushstroke on a black canvas. Often moving to the side with one of the figures, the camera collides with walls that block any deeper view. The film dashes through many media, because cinema seldom comes this close to abstract painting; in these moments, only a thread ties the picture to the story, whose logic it at least seems to serve. The stage as a circumscribed space, the broadness of the canvas as a flat, spreading space and the painterly chiaroscuro of the play of

light and shadow set in motion – that is this film's form. Ichikawa lets these three spaces of performance and movement blend into each other, sets them in relation to each other, and carries into them his figures and the stories that connect them.

The centre, which, however, does not govern all the figures and relationships, is the story of the actor's revenge. Three merchants once drove his parents to their deaths in Nagasaki; they encounter each other again in Edo. As a famous actor of women's roles in the Kabuki theatre, he is the star of the stage and manages to enter his enemy's house because the latter's beautiful, sickly daughter desires him. She is the Shogun's mistress and has fallen in love with the actor. But, as an effeminated man, Yukinojo remains an artificial character in real life.

There are subplots with minor characters, like the thieving couple hunting for wallets, first in the theatre and then in a never precisely locatable outside; or the actor's former competitor, of bad character. Swords flash through the blackness, which is much more the black of the screen than of the night, while robes flutter on the sound track. The camera is freed of the imperative of realistic cinema that commands the constant creation of order and a comprehensive view. Here it can fall in love with the sight of a red gemstone, give itself up to the filmed surface of the water, or lose itself to the night. Kon Ichikawa regards cinema as composition, as a dance among the media. The picture is always an artificial product like the Kabuki actor, who remains far removed from naturalness even in real life. Genuine is artificiality, nothing else.

*Ekkehard Knörer*

[www.jump-cut.de/backlist-yukinojosrache.html](http://www.jump-cut.de/backlist-yukinojosrache.html)



© Kadokawa Corporation

**Kon Ichikawa** was born in 1915 in Ujijama (now Ise) in the prefecture of Mie, Japan. He spent much of his childhood drawing and painting. Ichikawa has named the Disney cartoon series *Silly Symphonies* as one of the most important influences on his artistic development. In 1933, he began working as an assistant in the animation department of a film studio. He became an assistant director for feature films in 1935. He made his first short animated film, *Musume dojoji / A Girl at Dojo Temple*, in 1945. Ichikawa then directed numerous feature films and documentaries, many of which were based on screenplays by his wife, Natto Wada. He started his own production company in 1973. In 2000, he received the Berlinale Camera award. Kon Ichikawa died in 2008.

### Films

1945: *Musume Dojoji / A Girl at Dojo Temple* (short film). 1948: *Hana hiraku / A Flower Blooms*. 1949: *Ningen moyu / Human Patterns*. 1950: *Ginza Sanshiro / Sanshiro of Ginza*. 1951: *Ieraishan / Nightshade Flower*. 1952: *Wakai hito / Young People*. 1953: *Pu-san / Mr Pu*. 1953: *Aoiro Kakumei / The Blue Revolution*. 1953: *Seishun Zenigata Heiji / The Youth of Heiji Zenigata*. 1954: *Okuman choja / A Billionaire*. 1955: *Kokoro / The Heart*. 1956: *Biruma no tategoto / The Burmese Harp* (Berlinale Retrospektive 1990). 1956: *Shokei no hey / Punishment Room*. 1957: *Tohoku no zummutachi / The Men from Tohoku*. 1958: *Enjo / Conflagration* (Berlinale Forum 2015). 1959: *Kagi / The Key*. 1960: *Ototo / Her Brother* (Berlinale Forum 2015). 1961: *Kuroi junin no onna / Ten Dark Women*. 1963: *Yukinojo henge / An Actor's Revenge* (Berlinale Retrospektive 1993 / Berlinale Forum 2015).

1964: *Tokyo orimpikku/Tokyo Olympiad*. 1968: *Seishun/Youth*. 1973: *Matatabi/The Wanderers*. 1976: *Inugami-ke no ichizoku/The Inugami Family*. 1977: *Gokumonto/Island of Hell*. 1978: *Hinotori/The Phoenix*. 1980: *Koto/Ancient City*. 1983: *Sasameyuki/The Makioka Sisters*. 1985: *Biruma no tategoto/The Burmese Harp*. 1988: *Tsuru/Crane*. 1994: *Shijushichinin no shikaku/47 Ronin*. 1996: *Yatsuhaka-mura/The 8-Tomb Village*. 1999: *Dora-Heita* (Berlinale 2000).

A blurred, purple-tinted photograph of a crowd of people walking, overlaid with a semi-transparent purple rectangle. The text 'Forum Expanded' is centered in white.

# Forum Expanded



© Ammar Al-Beik

## Ammar Al-Beik

### LA DOLCE SIRIA

A cinematic letter to Federico Fellini:

Dear Federico, I don't think that this circus from Italy, which is visiting Syria, has ever visited Rimini, your town in the past. This circus is nothing like the one in your childhood. No one can tame the lion here in this tent; it's smashing everyone and everything. Even the clowns with their wide, grotesque, make-up smiles and their cheap colourful costumes, meant to make my brother and me and all the other kids laugh, are terrified. Everybody is running out of the circus. Everyone is leaving their excitement inside and carrying the sadness on their shoulders and the terror in their eyes while sprinting out of the tent. No fireworks around the tent Federico! Neither their mesmerizing colours are there when they explode, nor is the sound of their explosions. Scud and bombs are the fireworks that we recognise my friend! Red is the colour that we see. And everyday here, my friend, the usage of the word 'Mama' becomes less and less; either children die, or mothers.

'Vita' is not 'dolce' in Syria, Federico!

The circus is boring.

And I miss you.

I forgot to tell you this earlier: 'Lion' in Arabic means: 'Al Assad'.  
(Ammar Al-Beik)

2014, colour & black/white, DCP, 23 min., Arabic. **Director** Ammar Al-Beik.

**Ammar Al-Beik**, born in Damascus, Syria in 1972, is an award-winning filmmaker and artist based in Berlin, Germany. His films have been shown at numerous international festivals, including Venice, Locarno, Rotterdam, Yamagata, Busan, and Oberhausen. Represented by Ayyam Gallery since 2008, Al-Beik's artworks have been featured in exhibitions across the world, most recently at Photo Shanghai, China (2014), and are housed in private and public collections such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Contact: <http://www.ayyamgallery.com>



© Leila Albayaty

## Leila Albayaty

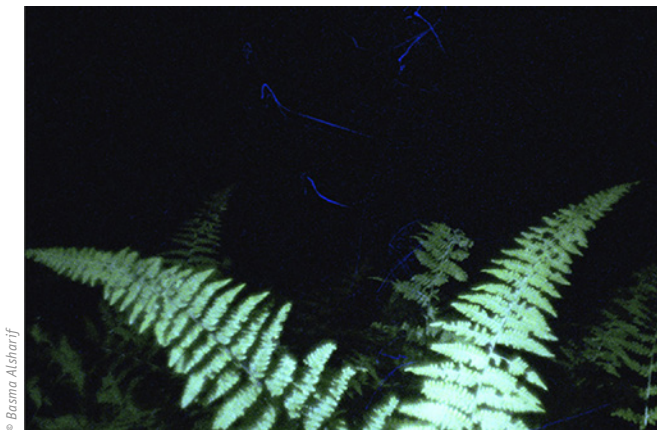
### FACE B

The b-side of a record often contains hidden treasures and secrets. When Leila, actress, singer, and director, decides to make her first feature, *Berlin Telegram*, a lot happens between the lines. She says she is auditioning for the film, while in fact she is its director and main protagonist. With a suitcase full of music, she travels between Berlin and Paris and meets musicians and actors on the way. Her story is told as a mysterious hybrid somewhere between autobiography and fiction – poetry, perhaps. Leila decides to steal her own images, to secretly pocket her b-sides to edit a new, even more ambiguous film. How often are you allowed to tell a story? How often can you reassemble your footage? There is no answer to that question. Instead, there is a new film. (Toby Ashraf)

2015, colour & black/white, 39 min., English, French. **Director** Leila Albayaty. **Production** Annabella Nezri, Michel Balagué, Leila Albayaty. **Director of photography** Michel Balagué. **Editor** Violeta Tseli, Leila Albayaty. **Sound mixing** Mikael Barre. **Music** Leila Albayaty, Cristoforo Spoto, Ivan Imperiali, Alain Rylant, Jef Mercelis.

**Leila Albayaty** is French of Iraqi origin. She is based between Belgium, Germany, Egypt, and France. Her first short film, *VU*, received a special mention at the Berlinale 2009. As well as directing the film, she played the starring role and composed the soundtrack. Building on the experience of this first directing adventure, she went on to make her first feature: *Berlin Telegram* is distributed in Germany by arsenal distribution.

Contact: [annabella@kwassa.be](mailto:annabella@kwassa.be)



© Basma Alsharif

## Basma Alsharif

### A FIELD GUIDE TO THE FERNS

Deep in the woods of New Hampshire, apathy and violence are blurred. A horror nature film develops, as Basma Alsharif fuses images from Ruggero Deodato's "timeless slice of visceral horror," *Cannibal Holocaust*, a self-referential study of sorts of the representation of violence, with those of another horror, equally distant, yet all too close.

2015, colour, QuickTime ProRes, 11 min., English. **Director** Basma Alsharif.

**Basma Alsharif** is an artist/filmmaker of Palestinian origin who was born and raised nomadically, and developed her practice between Chicago, Cairo, Beirut, Amman, Sharjah, and the Gaza Strip. She received an MFA in 2007 from the University of Illinois in Chicago. Filmography (excerpt): *O, Persecuted* (2014), *Deep Sleep* (2014), *Home Movies Gaza* (Forum Expanded 2013), *Farther Than The Eye Can See* (2012), *The Story of Milk and Honey* (Forum Expanded 2011), *We Began By Measuring Distance* (2009), *Everywhere Was The Same* (2007)

Contact: <http://www.basmalsharif.com>



© Marwa Arsanios

## Marwa Arsanios

### HAVE YOU EVER KILLED A BEAR? OR BECOMING JAMILA

A video that uses the history of a magazine – Cairo's Al-Hilal '50s and '60s collection – as the starting point for an inquiry into Jamila Bouhired, the Algerian freedom fighter. An actress designated to play her role is showing the magazine's covers to the camera. From the different representations of Jamila in cinema to her assimilation and promotion through the magazine, the performance attempts to look at the history of socialist projects in Egypt, anti-colonial wars in Algeria, and the way they have promoted and marginalized feminist projects. The clear gender division used to marginalize women from the public sphere was overcome for a short moment during the Algerian war of independence (Jamila becoming its icon). Different voices and film and print material are used to explore this history. What does it mean to play the role of the freedom fighter? What does it mean to become an icon? Between role playing and political projects, how does the constitution of the subject serve certain political purposes?

2014, colour, QuickTime ProRes, 25 min., Arabic. **Director** Marwa Arsanios.

**Marwa Arsanios** lives and works in Beirut, Lebanon. She obtained her MFA from Wimbledon College of Art, University of the Arts, London (2007) and was a researcher in the fine art department at the Jan Van Eyck Academie (2011-2012). She has exhibited in London, Beirut, Athens, Oxford, Lisbon, Santiago de Chile, Rome, Damascus, and recently at NGBK in Berlin. Her films have been shown worldwide, including at Forum Expanded of the Berlinale in 2010. She is a founding member of the artist organization and project space 98weeks Research Project, and one of the organizers of the traveling project Platform Translation. Marwa is also a part-time teacher.

Contact:

[marwaarsanios@gmail.com](mailto:marwaarsanios@gmail.com) <http://www.marwaarsanios.info>





## David Askevold

### CONCERT C WITH DOOR

Presented as an installation with a total running time of seven minutes, the film *Concert C with Door* was originally a six-month performance in which artist David Askevold tried to investigate the correlations and interactions of sounds and space. Alongside the audio recording *Concert Tone Compressions*, he created a piece of conceptual art in the form of a performative installation that relied on a specific technical set-up.

Askevold installed a tuning fork at a door that would close and open in regular intervals. With every other closing and opening of the door, the fork would be activated to produce a sound which would last for the interval of the next two closings and openings. With approximately four closings and openings a day, the total amount of door movements during the half-year period would add up to around 700. For what was later called an architectural music performance, two microphones were installed: one at the top of the door to record the tone of the tuning fork and the instructions David Askevold gave his cameraman during the period of time. A second microphone would be installed at the bottom of the door to record the opening and closing sounds.

1971, colour, 7 min., single-channel 16mm film installation, sound, courtesy The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

**David Askevold**, born in 1940 in Conrad, Canada, was an experimental artist whose conceptual art was often recorded on videotape. He taught at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CalArts in Valencia, and the University of California. His work was exhibited in the group show *Reconsidering the Art Object 1965–1975* at MOCA (1995) and at the 1977 Documenta exhibition in Kassel among other venues. David Askevold died in 2008 in Halifax.

Contact: <http://www.moma.org>



© Jean-Pierre Bekolo

## Jean-Pierre Bekolo

### LES CHOSSES ET LES MOTS DE MUDIMBE

*Les Mots et les Choses de Mudimbe* is a portrait of the Congolese intellectual V-Y Mudimbe, one of the most important living African philosophers and writers. Mudimbe was born in 1941 in Likasi, then the Belgian Congo and today the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At first he studied economics in Kinshasa, later getting his doctorate in Romance Philology in Paris. The linguistic genius – he speaks around 10 languages and can read in another 8 – has taught at a large number of prestigious universities in the world, in France, Belgium, Mexico, Canada, Great Britain, Israel, and Germany. In 1979 Mudimbe emigrated to the USA, where he is still Professor Emeritus at Duke University. In his work, which has received numerous awards, Mudimbe is concerned with the past and present of Africa between tradition and European influence, and with the processes of breakup and destruction caused by colonialism, missionary activity, and development aid. For instance, his novel *Shaba deux*, which came out in 1978, treats the horrible events under the Mobutu dictatorship. His novel *Le Bel Immonde* (1976) appeared in German in 1982 under the title *Auch wir sind schmutzige Flüsse* and in English in 1989 as *Before the Birth of the Moon*. His monographs *The Invention of Africa* (1988) and *The Idea of Africa*, in which he attempts to liberate Africa from its positioning as the ‘absolute other’ in Western thought, are considered classics and their significance is often compared to Edward Said’s *Orientalism*.

The film is an unusual portrait by one of the the most well-known filmmakers in Cameroon. An “introduction, abduction, seduction” (Dorothee Wenner) into Mudimbe’s work and thought. Organized like a book, in which new chapters are continually being opened up, introduced each time with handwritten text panels, the film inserts itself into this highly complex thought, this biography that practically covers the whole globe. The house where Mudimbe lives becomes a structure that houses this life and thought, and thus the film. Only at the very end does the camera come to rest in a shot that can be taken as inviting. Precisely in its tenacity, the film unfolds into an architecture of alternating perspectives, it creates configurations, it traces assemblages that embody the knowledge and thought of Mudimbe: never conclusive, always in connection (Édouard Glissant would say *relations*). The house, Mudimbe’s stories and references, and thus the film are filled with books, photos – of family and companions and friends – memories, diplomas, countless objects, statues, and technical devices. Encompassing an entire century, but still open to everything, the old as well as

the new. It’s about Hegel, Derrida, Aristotle, about Hannah Arendt, Clifford Geertz, Pierre Bourdieu, and – as is clear from the title – about Foucault; about the Berlin Africa Conference, about the philosophical emergence of thinking about ‘Rasse’ during the German colonial period Rwanda/Burundi. About African philosophers and a critical investigation of occidental production of knowledge. And what it’s about over and over again is: how knowledge arises, is taught, how it is conveyed. Mudimbe creates fascinating cross connections, a way of ‘reading,’ of analyzing the past and the present, constantly critical, constantly curious. His own private histories also come into play, as the son of parents from different ‘ethnicities,’ educated by the Benedictines (a comparison of different religions also comes up). His thought, his teaching, his research is not an end in itself, “but he also means himself when he says that it’s actually better ‘for the system’ if philosophers are dead – otherwise they cause trouble.” (Dorothee Wenner)

Bekolo once again shows himself to be a delightful portrait filmmaker. Like in his magnificent – radically short – portrait of Djibril Diop Mambéty (*La grammaire de ma grand-mère*, F 1996), he creates a *mise-en-scène* from speech and the ever present possibility of contradicting it, of the “possible encounters ... with the question of what film can say and how it can narrate something together with someone, with other things and people” (Brigitta Kuster). An unusual film, as fascinating as its object/subject, opulent, sensitive, clever, and radical. Another station of delightful postcolonial, cosmopolitan filmmaking.

(Nanna Heidenreich)

2014, colour, HDVCAM, 243 min., French, English. **Director** Jean-Pierre Bekolo.

**Jean-Pierre Bekolo**, born in 1966, is one of the most well-known filmmakers in Cameroon. He already garnered attention at the Cannes Film Festival with his debut film *Quartier Mozart* (1992), becoming the representative of a new generation, following that of Djibril Diop Mambéty – in homage to whom Bekolo made *La grammaire de grand-mère* (1996) – that has been working against the restrictive expectations of African cinema, mixing genres and linking pop with politics. He produced *Le complot d’Aristote* (1996) for the British Film Institute as part of a series that has included the participation of artists such as Scorsese, Bertolucci, and Godard. His avant-garde political thriller *Les Saignantes* (2005) was nominated in two categories at the French Césars in 2009. In 2013 his feature film *Le Président* was banned in Cameroon for political reasons. Alongside his work as a film director, Bekolo writes and publishes, in addition to teaching at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and at Duke University. Recently he has been dividing his time between the USA, France, and Cameroon, and starting in the summer of 2015 he will be a fellow of the Artists Program at the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Berlin.

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© Frederico Benevides

## Frederico Benevides

### VIVENTES

Fortaleza is one of many cities in Brazil that is going through a process of "Miamiization", which raises an armored layer unsurpassable by most of its inhabitants. Thus, some specificities present in the locals' art of living disappear without a trace.

Moreira Campos was a writer who had a surgical eye for these specificities, identifying very unique particularities in those ways of life. His house was demolished to build the thousandth shopping center parking lot in the city.

*Viventes* (Livings) brings these characters into this space so that they can pay a visit to their father. These characters are staged by the artists and thinkers of Fortaleza. As Campos's characters, these artists are also possible ghosts of the future.

These tableaux vivants are also part of the film *Visit to the Son* (2014), in which a senile man drifts through the city in search of his son. During his wanderings, he passes through a parking lot where he faces these viventes - the living beings.

2015, colour, 21 min., single-channel video installation, sound.

**Frederico Benevides** lives and works in Rio de Janeiro. He is an artist, thinker, and filmmaker with a degree in Cinema and Audiovisual Studies from the Fluminense Federal University, Rio de Janeiro.

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© Pauline Boudry, Renate Lorenz

## Pauline Boudry, Renate Lorenz

### OPAQUE

In *Opaque* we see two performers of unknown gender and origin who are lingering in an empty and abandoned swimming-pool. In a particular scene, they recite a text by Jean Genet about a "declared enemy," and re-stage a film scene from an underground political group from 1970. The props recall an anti-war demonstration and contrast with the set of a drag performance. Using veils, curtains, camouflage, or smoke, the performers seem to demand what Edouard Glissant called "the Right of Opacity." People (and probably other creatures and objects) have a density, thickness, or fluidity, which escapes knowledge. When something is appropriated by knowledge, it gets revealed, uncovered, or unveiled. The claim for opacity can be a strategy to refuse giving information about our political work, our origins, our bodily conditions or our sexuality. The work of Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz often revisits materials from the past, referring to unrepresented or illegible moments of queerness in history. They combine different forms of media, while simultaneously incorporating materials from historical archives of photography and film. Embodiments are shown which are able to cross different times, but also to draw relations between these different times, thus revealing possibilities for a queer futurity. At the same time, lines of desire and fetishization are incorporated.

2014, colour, 10 min., English, single-channel video installation, sound. **Cast** Ginger Brooks Takahashi, Werner Hirsch.

**Pauline Boudry**, born in 1972 in Switzerland, and **Renate Lorenz**, born in 1963 in Germany, are filmmakers, photographers, and artists. Their works investigate questions of sexual identity and gender roles from forgotten moments of history. In them, they combine music, performance, and video, as well as historical documents. Their works have been shown internationally, among others at Les Complices, Zürich, at the Centre d'Art in Geneva, at Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam, at Swiss Institute, New York, at Temporären Kunsthalle Berlin, as well as in the 54th Biennale in Venice. They live and work in Berlin.

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## Felipe Bragança

### ESCAPE FROM MY EYES

"I want to go back, but my brother is a ghost with no feet. I still dream of diamonds and blood. They see a black man, and think it's a lion."

*Escape from my Eyes* tells three short fables about Mayga from Mali, Elias from Ghana, and Abidal from Burkina Faso, using documentary images and imaginary fiction.

Where are they going now?

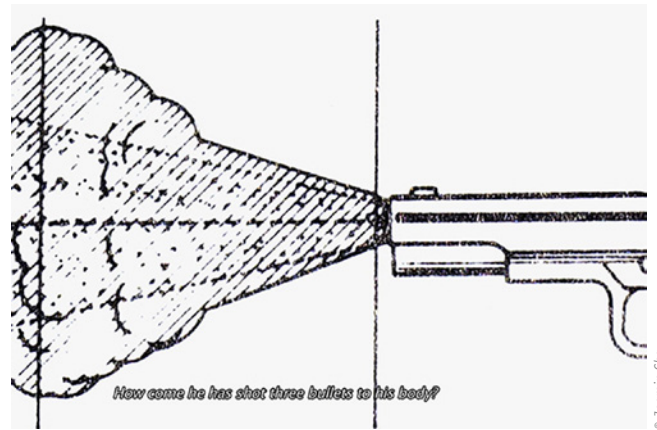
The film was shot over the course of four months at the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014. Felipe Bragança, then an artist in residence with the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin program, facilitated the creation of fictional and poetic images based on a number of interviews made with a group of war and political refugees who at the time were living in tents in a protest camp on Oranienplatz in Kreuzberg, Berlin. In the film, the men re-enact their own stories of escape and struggle, transposed to Berlin in the winter.

2015, colour, 33 min., German, English. **Written and directed by** Felipe Bragança. **Production** Duas Mariola. **Associate producer** Eduardo Raccach. **Cast** Mayga, Elias, Abidal. **Voice-over** Koukou. **Supported by** DAAD.

**Felipe Bragança**, born in 1980 in Rio de Janeiro, is a filmmaker and author whose films have been presented around the world in festivals like Oberhausen, Tampere, Rotterdam, Berlin, and at the Sharjah Art Biennial. In 2013, he was invited as guest artist for the DAAD – Artists-in-Berlin-Programm. He co-authored the script for the feature film *Praia do Futuro* by Karim Ainouz, which was in Competition at the Berlinale 2014. He lives and works in Rio de Janeiro.

Filmography (excerpt): *Fernando que ganhou um pássaro do mar* (2013, with Helvécio Marins, Jr., Forum Expanded 2014), *A Alegria* (2010, with Marina Meliande), *Escape of The Monkey Woman* (2009, with Marina Meliande).

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## Jeamin Cha

### AUTODIDACT

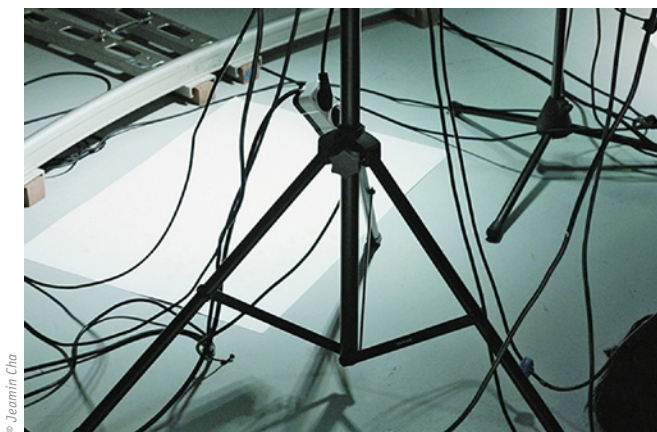
*Autodidact* was initiated by a meeting with Mr. Hur, a family member of a victim of a suspicious death in the military, and also an unofficial forensic investigator. Youngchun Hur is the father of Won Keun Hur, who lost his life in 1984 during the Fifth Republic of Korea. At the time of his death, Hur Won Keun was serving in the army as a Private First Class. Since the cause of his son's death was not made clear by an official investigation, Mr. Hur taught himself forensic medicine to reveal the truth. The video shows magnified images of the investigative materials Mr. Hur studied and examined along with his handwriting. At the same time, two narrators tell a story.

The script took its inspiration from conversations with Mr. Hur about the 30 years of struggle to reveal the truth while being under the control of state authority. The topics of conversation included politics, life, and forensic evidence. The two alternating narrators are Mr. Hur and a man in his early twenties. The work attempts to establish a method of reflecting the 'voice' of the others through reading by eyes, reading by voice, and re-reading by voice.

2014, colour, 10 min., Korean, single-channel video installation, sound.

**Jeamin Cha**, born in 1986 in South Korea, is an artist and filmmaker living and working in Seoul. She holds degrees from Chelsea College of Design and Arts in London and the Korean National University of Arts in Seoul. Her works have been exhibited widely, among others at DOOSAN gallery and Audiovisual Pavilion, Seoul, at Surface Gallery, Nottingham, DMZ Film Festival, Korea, and Rencontres Internationales, Berlin and Paris.

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© Jeamin Cha

## Jeamin Cha

### HYSTERICIS

*Hysterics* is a work inspired in part by Heinrich Heine's poem "The Vale of Tears," in which a coroner reveals the cause of death of a miserable couple. I focused on the fact that the death of a couple is what is excluded in the situation, conceiving a relationship between hysteria and the agent that raises questions. In short, the work attempts to stage 'meaninglessness' and a hysteric state as a theatrical situation where white papers and a specific kind of lighting interact with each other. Moving on a circular track, the camera gazes at the situation within the boundary of the track. It is the gaze that is singular and fixated (the video is shot in a single take). As the camera circles along the track, it records spatters of unidentified fluids on the sheets of paper, illuminated temporarily under the black light. This type of light is used as a scientific instrument in criminal investigations as the light illuminates the phosphorus in bones and blood.

Pain makes people raise questions, and those who question become hysteric. Those who refuse to take plausible explanations and attempt to find the fundamental reason constantly raise questions. [...] Those who are in this hysteric state, the ones that raise questions until the end, discover other individuals who become victims. (Jeamin Cha)

2014, colour, 7 min., Korean, single-channel video installation, sound.

**Jeamin Cha**, born in 1986 in South Korea, is an artist and filmmaker living and working in Seoul. She holds degrees from Chelsea College of Design and Arts in London and the Korean National University of Arts in Seoul. Her works have been exhibited widely, among others at DOOSAN gallery and Audiovisual Pavilion, Seoul, at Surface Gallery, Nottingham, DMZ Film Festival, Korea, and Rencontres Internationales, Berlin and Paris.

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© Courtesy of the artist and Chi-Wen Gallery

## Cheng-Ta Yu

### PRACTICING LIVE

*Practicing Live* features an ordinary family coming together to celebrate the father's birthday. What makes this family special is each member's employment within the art scene, which creates intersections between work and familial ties in even the most commonplace of conversations. All seven actors are professionals from the world of visual arts: the Director of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, a Japanese collector, his Taiwanese gallery director, an independent curator, an artist, an art critic, and an art academy professor all perform in the play. Each individual's role overlaps with his or her real-life identity, which creates a tension that is injected into the play's seemingly ordinary dialogue and uncovers long-hidden realities of working in the art world. Through the tensions between their real and fictional personae in their enactment of this family drama, the actors dismantle and reconstruct their relationships with each other. The director takes a look at the dynamics of the art world and the conditions of production that today's young artists must face. Punning on the word "life," *Practicing Live* is a live broadcast of a constantly rehearsed and practiced life.

2014, 31 min., 3-channel video installation, sound, courtesy the artist and Chi-Wen Gallery.

**Yu Cheng-Ta**, born in 1983 in Tainan, Taiwan, holds a B.A. and an M.F.A from the Taipei National University of the Arts, Taiwan. He has participated in international exhibitions including: the 10th Shanghai Biennale (2014), Queens International (2013, New York), Asian Art Biennial (2013, Taichung), the 5th International Biennial of Media Art (2012, Melbourne), the 53rd Venice Biennale Taiwan Pavilion (2009), Biennial Cuvée 08 (2009, Linz) and the 6th Taipei Biennial (2008). He currently works and lives in Taipei, Taiwan.

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© Nicolas Cilins

## Nicolas Cilins

### GINEVA

Adi and Florin, two men from Romania, are dancing in front of a blue screen. Once they stop to address the camera, they begin thanking everyone who helped them survive in Geneva throughout the past weeks. Having moved there a while ago due to the extreme poverty in their native Romania, they go on to ask their imaginary audience for some help and assistance. The two re-enact some scenes from their past and present lives in a number of short role-plays; sometimes cartoonish, sometimes visibly heartfelt and emotionally charged. They recall their farewell from their family homes in Romania, simulate some of their experiences as rent boys in Geneva, look up their favorite songs online with the two cameras on the set, and share their financial issues and other worries.

"In 2014, I heard of a bar in Geneva where men go to pick up young male Romanian prostitutes. When I walked in there for the first time I was immediately taken aback by the peculiar and strange atmosphere inside. The place was almost empty but for two older men drinking at the bar, facing a group of younger Romanian guys. From the outside, the bar served as a suitably normal façade for what really went on inside. At first I could not quite figure out how the transactions between potential customers and the Roma guys occurred. This is where I met Adi and Florin. I offered them to be part of a film I was currently working on. We then vaguely discussed that perhaps there could be some money in it for them, and in the end they agreed to come along. Filming was to take place on an improvised and rudimentary film set that was installed at Geneva's art school."

(Nicolas Cilins)

2014, colour, QuickTime ProRes, 43 min., Romanian. **Director** Nicolas Cilins. **Cast** Adi, Florin. **Director of photography** Nicolas Cilins, Felipe Monroy. **Editor** Dominique Auvray. **Sound mixing** Philippe Ciompi. **Translation** Irina Ionita. **Supported by** FCAC, Fonds d'art contemporain SCC, DIP, Etat de Genève, HEAD, Geneva University of Art and Design.

**Nicolas Cilins**, born in 1985 in France, is an artist, filmmaker, and translator currently living and working in Geneva, Switzerland.

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© Roy Dib

## Roy Dib

### A SPECTACLE OF PRIVACY

We cyclically mourn the disappearance/demolition of our cities as if it's something new. We strive to maintain our cities. We fight for them. We revolt. We draw borders. We break them. Our entire lives become shadows of fights that are both legendary and futile: our intentions noble, and our struggles mundane.

We strive to save our cities, assuming they once were shelters for our wilting dreams. We want to freeze their geographies in time, assuming smiles in picture frames will follow. We are selfish. We want to maintain our privacies by sustaining the world outside. We want to fuck in private, in a public discourse that allows for us to fuck in private.

Outside shells inside, instead of inside constructing out. We strive to maintain our cities. We shout, shoot, and die for them. We die for the outside so others can quietly fuck inside. As we cyclically mourn the disappearance/demolition of our cities, did we miss the possibility of the exercise of our most private moments becoming the bricks and mortar of the appearance/construction of our cities to come? Who shuts who up? What censors what? This is a story of the city mourning the disappearance/demolition of its people and the compass of their fights.

(Roy Dib)

2014, black/white, 9 min., Arabic, 3-channel video installation, sound.

**Roy Dib**, born in 1983 in Lebanon, is an artist that works and lives in Beirut. He has presented works at venues and events such as Video Works, Beirut (2011), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012), Home Workspace Program -2012, Ashkal Alwan, Beirut, and the 18th edition of Videobrasil, São Paulo (2013). His film *Mondial 2012* (2014) was part of the Forum Expanded 2014 and won the Teddy Award for Best Short Film.

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© Martin Ebner

## Martin Ebner

### EIN HELLES KINO

Presented as a 2-part video installation, Martin Ebner's piece investigates the spatial and temporal experiences that are connected to a fictitious cinema space. This space can be seen as an imaginary, inner, and mental state of mind. A feeling of floating is created for the spectator by a screen that smoothly and steadily glides up and down in the background. In close range, a different projection screen presents the "program," which is stretched in time and consists of short, very short, and medium-length sound and image fragments as well as regular breaks in the sound and image. The fragmentary use of time, unusual for conventional models of perception, allows the spectator's mind to stray, and at the same time the object-like quality of the two projection surfaces and their respective projectors come more and more to the fore, especially when the screen remains dark or when there happens to be no sound. During the course of events, there will be no beginning and no end, which eventually means that the duration of the work could be anything from a few seconds to a couple of days. This video installation turns into a specific walkable space, to which you can react. Through its exemplary dissection of some of the basic elements of the cinematographic experience it describes the possibility of a reserved and complex audiovisual presence.

2015, 35 min., 2-channel video installation, sound.

**Martin Ebner** was born in Austria in 1965 and lives in Berlin and Hamburg. He studied Journalism and Communication Studies at the University of Vienna and Visual Media at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. His work draws on film, video, sound, sculpture, installations, room installations, text, music, and economic criticism. He publishes on a regular basis, is involved a range of communication projects, is the co-runner of the JAZZCLUB, Berlin as well as co-editor of the magazine STARSHIP. In 2005, he designed the exhibition project "Poor Man's Expression" in the foyer of the Filmhaus at Potsdamer Platz together with Florian Zeyfang.

Contact: <http://martinebner.org>



© Antje Ehmman, Jan Ralske

## Antje Ehmman, Jan Ralske

### WIE SOLL MAN DAS NENNEN, WAS ICH VERMISSE?

*How shall I name what I am missing? (Wie soll man das nennen, was ich vermisse?)* is the title of a text that Harun Farocki wrote for "Search Images: Visual Culture between Algorithms and Archives" (ed. Wolfgang Ernst, Stefan Heidenreich, and Ute Holl), a book published in conjunction with the symposium "Search Images: Toward an Image Archive of Filmic Topoi," held at the Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin in February 2001.

What Farocki felt he was missing was an image archive of filmic topoi or a history of filmic motifs, to be compiled within the medium of film itself. Over the course of many years, pursuing multiple strands of film history, he composed a number of entries for such an imaginary encyclopedia: *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1996); *The Expression of Hands* (1997); *Prison Images* (2000); *Feasting or Flying* (with Antje Ehmman, 2008); and *War Tropes* (with Antje Ehmman, 2011).

Harun Farocki can no longer continue this filmographic project himself. This is one of the many things we now mourn and ourselves deeply miss. We have conceived an approach to the motif of doors in film history as an addition to the encyclopedia that we feel Harun would have approved with enthusiasm.

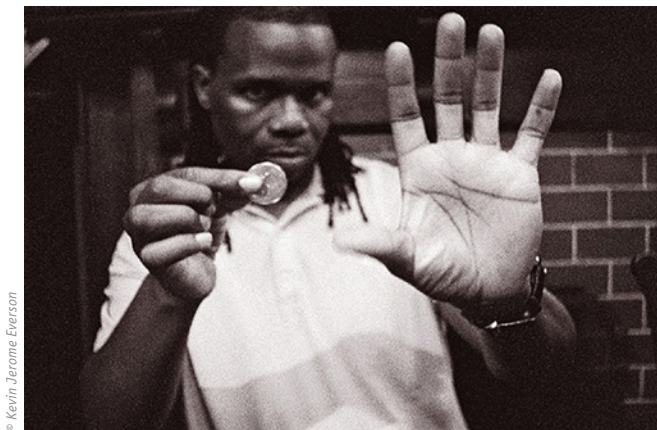
We found ourselves tempted to apply Harun's method to his own work, which supplied us with many examples of doors in film, as well as with frequent references to linked motifs: the threshold, the factory gate, separation/connection, incarceration/liberation. Thus we began to index and edit all the door scenes in Harun's work and to research the door motif generally. It quickly became clear that we could not pretend to make a Harun-film without Harun. Instead, we found ourselves writing something like a love letter to Harun – hoping meanwhile to open some doors in the process. (Antje Ehmman, Jan Ralske)

2015, 12 min., 2-channel video installation, sound.

**Antje Ehmman**, born in 1968 in Gelsenkirchen, is an author, curator, and video artist who lives and works in Berlin.

**Jan Ralske**, born in 1959 in the USA, is an artist and filmmaker who lives and works in Berlin.

Contact: <http://farocki-film.de>



© Kevin Jerome Everson

## Kevin Jerome Everson

### THREE QUARTERS

Two magicians practice their sleight of hand tricks. With cards, cotton, and silver coins. Shot in silent black and white.

2015, black/white, DCP, 4 min., silent. **Director** Kevin Jerome Everson.

**Kevin Jerome Everson**, born 1965 in Mansfield, Ohio, is an artist, filmmaker, and currently a Professor of Art at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville Virginia. He has made eight feature length films and over 100 short films, of which many have shown internationally at venues including the Sundance, Rotterdam, and Oberhausen Film Festivals, the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, Whitechapel Gallery in London, and Centre Pompidou in Paris.

**Contact:** <http://www.picturepalacepictures.com>



© Jeanne Faust

## Jeanne Faust

### IN ROM

The moon didn't give off much light, so it was darker outside the hut than inside. The hut, the shelter, was quickly built: four stakes, some wooden slats, a metal rooftop. Eyes that were used to the darkness of the night could make out a gap between the roof and the wall, a piece of clearance for better ventilation, holding sheet and wood together. The language getting through to the outside was without faces, only the garments reflected the sparse lighting. In it, motion sequences could be roughly reconstructed. A beige sponge slid back and forth in the hut, seemingly of its own accord. Now and then it uncovered a diamond shaped spot, once the glistening white of eyes turned away. A reluctant stamp of a foot on the ground could be heard. The simultaneous whispering in the twilight sounded like a rhythmic duel.

2014, colour, 4 min., Punjabi, single-channel video installation, sound, poster.

**Jeanne Faust**, born in 1968 in Wiesbaden, is an artist and art professor at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg. She lives and works in Hamburg and Bremen.

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## Mahdi Fleifel

### 20 HANDSHAKES FOR PEACE

September 13, 1993: Two national leaders reach out and shake hands, while a third one watches. Yasser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin, and Bill Clinton in the garden of the White House. A historic moment, repeated 20 times, tainted by countless shattered hopes. On the soundtrack Edward Said expresses his outrage at the Oslo Peace Accord which was settled by this handshake.

"I remember the handshake very clearly. My dad recorded the ceremony on video and would play it over and over again. He could not believe what had happened. In fact, none of us could. One time he threw his shoe at the TV and shouted so loud, the next door neighbors complained about him. Listening to the last interview with Edward Said while watching the ceremony made me realize that father's anger was because chairman Arafat was the first one to reach out his hand." (Mahdi Fleifel)

2014, colour, QuickTime ProRes, 5 min., English. **Director** Mahdi Fleifel. **Production** Mohanad Yaqubi.

**Mahdi Fleifel**, born in Dubai in 1979, was raised in Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp in Lebanon and later in the suburbs of Elsinore in Denmark. In 2009, Fleifel graduated from the National Film and Television School in London. His first-year film, *Arafat & I*, screened at festivals around the world and won numerous awards. Fleifel's first feature-length documentary *A World Not Ours* screened in the Berlinale Panorama section and received awards all over the world.

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© Mohammad Shawky Hassan

## Mohammad Shawky Hassan

### WA ALA SAEEDEN AKHAR

#### And on a Different Note

A text-image montage with empty apartments, lonely rooms, of views from windows and street scenes in New York and Cairo. In the background: an uninterrupted soundtrack of news and talk shows. Self-proclaimed pundits make their appearance, want to be heard.

"Today in this house nothing happens, nor does it in the homes of others. Time and place stand on parallel lines, refuting the coordinates of existence. The chronology of events is obscured, subversive noise is obliterated, elucidation impossible and language futile. All that remains is a soundscape perpetually occupied by self-proclaimed patriots, and scattered spaces carved by the rhythm of everyday life, all conspiring to maintain the status quo while hiding the humming background noise of the world.

*And on a Different Note* is a navigation of an attempt to carve out a personal space amid an inescapable sonic shield created primarily by prime time political talk shows with their indistinguishable, absurd, and at times undecipherable rhetoric/ noises. Equally repulsive and addictive, these noises travel across geographies gradually constituting an integral part of a self-created map of exile." (Mohammad Shawky Hassan)

2015, colour, QuickTime ProRes, 24 min., Arabic, English. **Director** Mohammad Shawky Hassan. **Director of photography** Michael Kennedy. **Editor** Louly Seif.

**Mohammad Shawky Hassan** is a filmmaker, writer, cinematographer, editor, and programmer. He lives and works in Cairo.

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© Eva C. Heldmann



## Eva C. Heldmann

### STROM

The film interviews five people who cannot pay their electricity bills. They live below the poverty line without light and heat, in or near large cities. Berlin-based artist Laurence Grave acts a composite role, representing aspects of the other people. She sees, hears, and touches in her forsaken apartment, and feels limited and excluded. At the same time she is extra-sensitive to the passage of light, day and night, through her windows.

A long indoor twilight persists between the bright sunlight and the nightcar lights that both shine onto her walls making 'cinema'. The sounds that creep into the apartment are just alien to her. The people interviewed read their responses for the camera – a technique meant to relax the original interview and give the people some interpretative distance from themselves. They speak of how they lost work, then electricity, then hope, and finally found clever solutions to their precarious situations.

In the end the actress rises from her dark world to dizzy heights, flashing with her own electricity, remaking the rules of the game. Elektra triumphs!

2015, colour, 81 min., German. **Director** Eva C. Heldmann. **Cast** Laurence Grave, Margit Liebl, Michael Kleist, Claudia Kottke, Timotheus Kartmann, Dirk Reheis. **Director of photography** Ulrike Pfeiffer. **Editor** Dörte Völz-Mammarella. **Music** Eunice Martins.

**Eva C. Heldmann**, born in 1951 in Dillenburg, lives and works in Berlin. She has been making films and videos since 1983. Filmography (excerpt): *Riverred* (2012, Forum Expanded 2012), *Puff-rock back in America* (2011, Forum Expanded 2011), *Fremd gehen* (1999, Forum 2000), *Johnny oder das rohe Fleisch* (1984).

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© Courtesy the artist; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York; Hauser &amp; Wirth, London; Esther Schipper, Berlin; and Anna Lena Films, Paris

## Pierre Huyghe

### UNTITLED (HUMAN MASK)

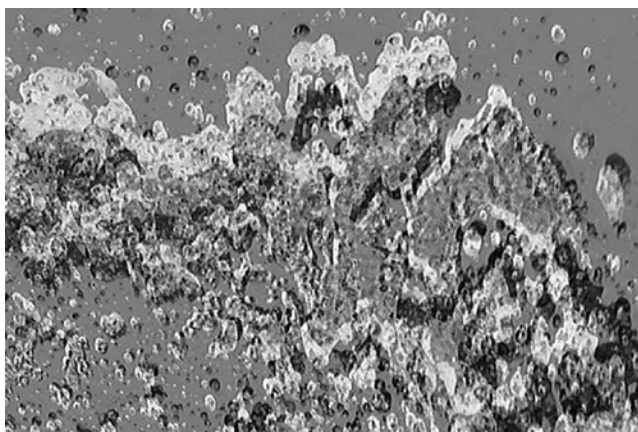
Huyghe creates films, installations, and events that blur fact and fiction, reinvent rituals of social engagement, and use the exhibition model as a site for playful experimentation. The *Human Mask* film is inspired by a real situation in Japan, in which a monkey – wearing the mask of a young woman – has been trained to work as a waitress. The film opens with footage of the deserted site of Fukushima in 2011, the camera functioning as a drone scaling the wreckage. This is followed by scenes of the monkey alone in her habitat, silhouetted against the empty, dark restaurant. In this dystopian setting, an animal acts out the human condition, trapped, endlessly repeating her unconscious role.

(Bettina Steinbrügge)

2014, colour, DCP, 19 min., English. **Director** Pierre Huyghe.

**Pierre Huyghe** was born in Paris in 1962. He studied at Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. His works have been exhibited internationally. His recent solo presentations include a major touring retrospective at LACMA, Los Angeles (2014), the Centre Georges Pompidou (2013), Paris, France and Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany (2014) and an exhibition of screenings of the film *The Host and The Cloud* (2009 – 2010, Forum Expanded 2011) at Museo d'art Contemporani de Barcelona in Spain in April 2014. He lives and works in Paris.

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© Ken Jacobs

## Ken Jacobs

### CYCLOPS OBSERVES THE CELESTIAL BODIES

In Ken Jacob's latest film, a stream of water shooting from a fountain, arrested in mid-air, serves as the material for a hypnotic, frenzied exploration of 3-dimensional cinematic vision.

"Cyclopean 3D is the most 3D a single eye can come up with. This means the celestial horde on display here can only seem to be galloping through space. Actual seeing into depth must be denied, it's the law." (Ken Jacobs, 2015)

"Hollywood might do well to learn from Ken Jacobs, who can boast more than 40 years of provocative, demanding, and transformative explorations of various permutations of 3D, putting the primitive, in-your-face assaults of Hollywood to shame.

The 78-year-old New York-based artist has dedicated his life to exploring both the mechanics of human perception and the technologies of movies, returning to cinema's origins in the 19th century to create transcendent experiences of film viewing, experiences that lift you out of your seat and transport you into the space and movement of the image itself....

Rather than dutifully depicting a more realistic space or, worse, using 3D for gimmicky visual tricks, Jacobs deploys 3D technology as part of a larger, lifelong exploration of vision, consciousness, and the materiality of cinema, even in its incredibly ephemeral manifestations." (Holly Willis, LA Weekly, 2011)

2014, colour, QuickTime ProRes, 15 min., without dialogue. **Director** Ken Jacobs.

**Ken Jacobs**, born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1933, is an artist and filmmaker. He studied painting with Hans Hofmann from 1956 to 1957 and started making films in 1955. He created and directed The Millennium Film Workshop, NYC from 1966–68, started the Department of Cinema at SUNY at Binghamton in 1969. He is Distinguished Professor of Cinema Emeritus. His films and videos have been shown worldwide.

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© Ken Jacobs

## Ken Jacobs

### ORCHARD STREET

1955, Alan Becker sometimes assisting. My first film, revisiting the Jewishness (permeating the street at that time) of my upbringing. Originally lasting close to a half-hour, I was afterwards told there was no chance of screening a documentary longer than 12 minutes and, broke and hungry the way young artists are expected to be, I cut it down. There was no fat so the cuts were into bone and muscle. And then, the deed done, I despised myself and did nothing with it. An engagement broke (she went West and connected to Christopher MacLaine) and in my economic free-fall I began filming *Star Spangled To Death* starring the unknown Jack Smith and Jerry Sims, 1956-1959, though the somewhat-more-affordable shorts *Little Stabs At Happiness* and *Blonde Cobra* came out earlier. 2014: after very occasional screenings of the disaster, and with daughter Nisi at the computer, a close return to the original was effected, in luxurious silence. I'd been on the street a lot with my Bell and Howell 16mm 70DL and no one ever objected. Some asked what channel would they see themselves on and I would explain 'independent filmmaker,' aka bum with a camera. Knocks me out to see how Kodachrome preserves semblances of time.

Sorry to have disappointed you, people of Orchard Street of over half a century ago, you were wonderful. The couple in the clinch: she worked on the street and embodied it, the kisser is me. (Ken Jacobs)

1955, QuickTime ProRes, 27 min., silent. **Director** Ken Jacobs.

**Ken Jacobs**, born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1933, is an artist and filmmaker. He studied painting with Hans Hofmann from 1956 to 1957 and started making films in 1955. He created and directed The Millennium Film Workshop, NYC from 1966–68, started the Department of Cinema at SUNY at Binghamton in 1969. He is Distinguished Professor of Cinema Emeritus. His films and videos have been shown worldwide.

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© Mireille Kassar

## Mireille Kassar

### THE CHILDREN OF UZAI, ANTINARCISSUS

A fleeting instant on the beach of Uzaï, a suburb in southern Beirut. Kids play amongst the waves. All of it could take place somewhere else, but it is happening right here.

*"The Children of Uzaï, Anti-Narcissus takes as its object the glorious body of childhood and preadolescence through a musing moment, an instant that could well be eternity. Sensations are summoned, emotions seek inscription. It is a stream of images flowing into the sea, taking the form of an elegy, a hymn to life. Here, all the foreshadowed forms of death are fought."* (Mireille Kassar)

2014, 16 min., single-channel video installation, silent. **Director of photography** Mireille Kassar. **Editor** Benjamin Cataliotti Valdina.

**Mireille Kassar**, born in Lebanon in 1963, is an artist working with paintings, drawings, sound, films, writings, and installations. She holds degrees from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts and the Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne. Her work has been presented internationally since 1996. She lives and works in Paris and Beirut.

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## Yazan Khalili, Lara Khaldi

### LOVE LETTER TO A UNION: THE FALLING COMRADES

This lecture performance is a letter exchange between distanced lovers who write about their daily lives while conflating several love stories and historical events. These include the brief formation and fall of the United Arab Republic and the first Intifada – events that are interpreted through the disruptive act of love. During the lecture performance they exchange archival footage, listen to songs, and watch two films together with the audience: The first film, Jumana Emil Abboud's *The Diver* is a video narrative that tells the story of a Diver whose gender, name, and nationality is ambiguous, and who is on an endless search to find 'heart'. The second film, *The Story of Milk and Honey* by Basma Alsharif, is a video that weaves together images, letters, and songs that detail the failed writing of a love story in Beirut, Lebanon.

2015. Lecture Performance

**Yazan Khalili** is an artist that lives and works in and out of Palestine. Through photography and the written word, he unpacks historically constructed landscapes. Solo and group exhibitions include: *Regarding Distance* at E.O.A.Projects, London (2014); *'Margins'* at The Delfina Foundation, London, UK (2008); *'Future of a Promise Pavilion'*, 54th Venice Biennial, Venice, Italy (2011); *'Passport to Palestine'*, London (2011); *'Forum Expanded'*, 62nd Berlinale (2012). Khalili's writings and photographs have been published in *Frieze Magazine*, *Race & Class*, *Contemporary Art: World Currents* and others.

**Lara Khaldi** is an independent curator based between Ramallah, Palestine, and Amsterdam, the Netherlands. She recently completed the de Appel curatorial Programme, Amsterdam, and is also pursuing her MA degree at the European Graduate School, Saas-Fee, Switzerland. Khaldi was director of Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre, Ramallah (2012–13). She has co-curated a number of exhibitions, which include *'Gestures in Time (Show 6, Jerusalem, Israel, and the Riwaq Biennial 5, Ramallah, 2013)*; film and video programmes in 2009 and 2011 as part of the Arab Shorts initiative by Goethe Institute, Cairo

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© Courtesy of the artist © Arvo Leo

## Arvo Leo

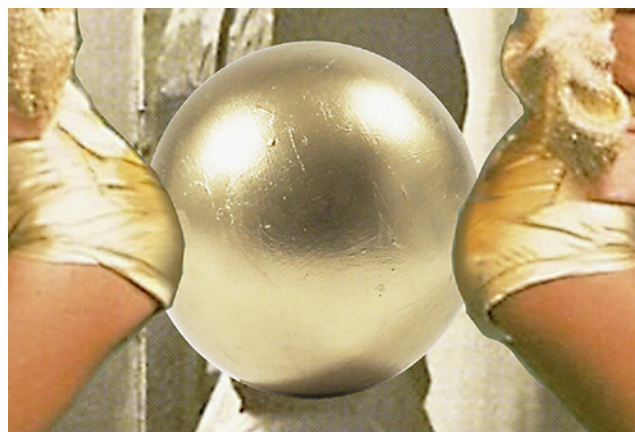
### FISH PLANE, HEART CLOCK

For many years Inuit hunter-turned-artist Pudlo Pudlat (1916-1992) lived a traditional semi-nomadic life on Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic. Eventually, in his forties, after a hunting injury, he moved to the settlement of Cape Dorset where he began making drawings with materials provided by the newly established West Baffin Eskimo Co-op, the first Inuit printmaking studio. Over the next thirty years Pudlo would produce over 4000 drawings and paintings with graphite, felt markers, coloured pencils, and acrylics; many of which have never been exhibited.

Pudlo was part of the generation of Inuit in the late 1950s who were given pencils and paper and asked to just 'draw their thoughts'. What is exemplary about Pudlo is that he was one of the first artists to move away from making only images of traditional Inuit life – images that were often preferred by the art market further south. Upon the white page hunters, igloos, seals, and walrus are often found mingling in the company of such modern conveniences as airplanes, telephone poles, automobiles, and clocks; things that were swiftly becoming commonplace in the north. Pudlo, with his imaginative and playful touch, would sometimes even morph these subjects into each other, creating surreal hybrids that embodied the radical cultural transformations occurring around him. Twenty-two years after Pudlo's death, Arvo Leo traveled to Cape Dorset to spend the spring living in the place where Pudlo made his work. In *Fish Plane, Heart Clock* many images of Pudlo's drawings and paintings are collaged with imagery that Leo created during his time there. Leo portrays the daily life of a small town in seasonal transition while also subtly evoking the surreal and enigmatic energy that was intrinsic to Pudlo's art.

2014, colour, 60 min., English, single-channel video installation, with drawings by Pudlo Pudlat, courtesy Feheley Fine Arts, and film version, sound.

**Arvo Leo**, born in 1981 in Canada, is an artist and filmmaker living and working in Vancouver. His works have been presented, among others, at the Biennial of Moving Images in Geneva (2014), at Le-Roy Neiman Gallery, New York, at CAG – Vancouver Contemporary Art Gallery, and at MACBA, Barcelona.



© Courtesy of the Artist and Upstream Gallery, Amsterdam

## Jen Liu

### THE MACHINIST'S LAMENT

When economists and politicians talk about bringing industrial production back to America, it's a response to real economic problems: particularly, a blighted Midwest region, the former heart of America's postwar boom, now a string of ghost towns. If the factories come back, they would bring back jobs and money, that is true – but what makes it so compelling as a subject of economic policy is what else is promised: that social dynamics, family relationships, political mechanisms, everything will work properly again, as it was intended, as we all desire.

*The Machinist's Lament* speculates on re-industrialization, retaining the magical thinking that drives such unrealistic policy. It imagines a non-specific future populated by female factory workers. Here, alienation is implicit in putting on a welder's mask – a separation between performer and viewer, past and present, what is possible and unattainable fantasy. Footage was shot in Ohio, part of the Midwestern Rust Belt region. Voice-over text sources include industrial manuals, Monique Wittig's *Les Guérillères*, and Adorno's *Minima Moralia*.

2014, colour & black/white, 18 min., English, single-channel video installation, sound, courtesy the artist and Upstream Gallery, Amsterdam.

**Jen Liu**, born in 1976 in Smithtown, New York, is a visual artist working in performance, video, painting, and installation. She has presented work at, among others, the Shanghai Biennial, Liverpool Biennial, Aspen Museum of Art, Royal Academy and ICA in London, Issue Project Room, New York, and Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna.

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© Elke Marhöfer, Mikhail Lylov

## Elke Marhöfer, Mikhail Lylov

### SHAPE SHIFTING

Granting culture to nonhumans, *Shape Shifting* outlines a cartography of a landscape found in many parts of Asia, which in Japan is called satoyama—space between village and mountain. Satoyama signifies the diffusions between ‘wild’ and ‘designed’ and can be understood as a membrane arranged through exchanges and encounters between humans and nonhumans. The basis for satoyama’s productivity in agriculture and forestry is based on an increase of biodiversity. The more collaborations between species and cycles of materials are created—the more stable ecosystem and films can be formed.

‘Satoyama’ is a concept that refers to an assemblage of transformations appearing on the plane of a landscape. It highlights the symbiotic relation of nonhuman and human life forms and thus undermines human economic and technological activity as the main formative principle. If human activities are no longer in the foreground, but comparable to and in association with the activities of nonhuman animals, the separations of nature and culture, object and subject, earth and history become interchangeable. Two questions became of particular importance to us: how are natural processes of material transformation entangled in the conditions of production (which are both historical and natural)? And the second: how to perceive the culture and history of nonhuman participants such as animals and plants, but also of generic elements like water, wind, fire, paddy fields, chemical elements, and electricity?

(Elke Marhöfer, Mikhail Lylov)

2014, colour, 18 min., Without dialogue. **Directed by** Elke Marhöfer, Mikhail Lylov.

**Elke Marhöfer**, born in 1967 in Adenau, Germany, is an artist and filmmaker living and working in Berlin. Her works have been presented in international venues, most recently at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, Houston Museum of Fine Arts, and at the Film Festival Rotterdam.

**Mikhail Lylov**, born in 1989 in Voronezh, Russia, is an artist mostly working with film and performance. His work has been shown in the 3rd Moscow Biennial and the 4th Moscow Young Biennial.

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© Lyusya Matveeva

## Lyusya Matveeva

### VYSHYBALSHITSA EMBROIDERESS

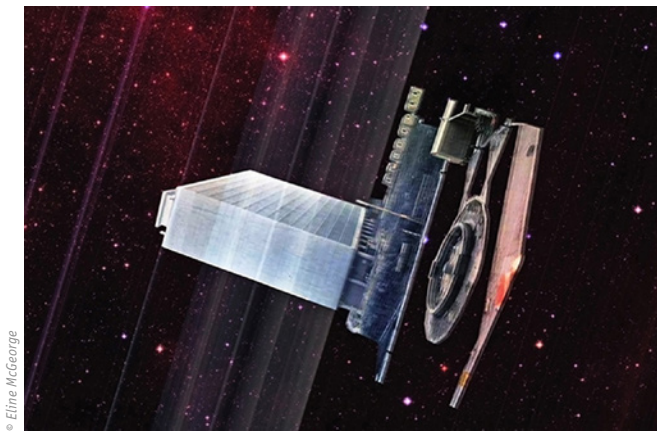
Five short stories – ‘Helicopter,’ ‘Sunday,’ ‘Doggie-Photographer,’ ‘Mausoleum,’ and ‘Apocalypses’ – united by one general action: like the goddesses of fate in the Ancient Greek myth, the author embroiders these stories, spinning the thread of human life.

“I had five dreams about myself, my memories, about my routines and ambitions, about the things that terrify me. And of course you can’t leave out the environment, the history and the political situation. At the end of the film when I finish embroidering, the computer starts to erase the memory. What does that mean — to erase your memory year by year? This dream is still a mystery for me...” (Lyusya Matveeva)

2014, QuickTime ProRes, 21 min., Russian. **Director** Lyusya Matveeva.

**Lyusya Matveeva**, also known as Liudmila Zinchenko, born in Tver Oblast in 1964, is a photographer and artist living and working in Moscow, Russia.

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© Eline McGeorge

## Eline McGeorge

### MED BLINDPASSASJEREN INN I OLJEALDEREN OG BEYOND

With the Free Rider into the Oil Age and Beyond

The title refers to the plot of the 1970s Norwegian Sci-Fi TV series *Blindpassasjer* (meaning: stowaway or free rider): After a research project on an unknown red planet, a Norwegian starship is on its way back to headquarters. The crew discovers they have a “biomat” on board, an artificial human made out of a cloud of programmable molecules. Its mission is to protect the unknown planet’s ecological balance. Both the starship and its headquarters are considered a potential threat.

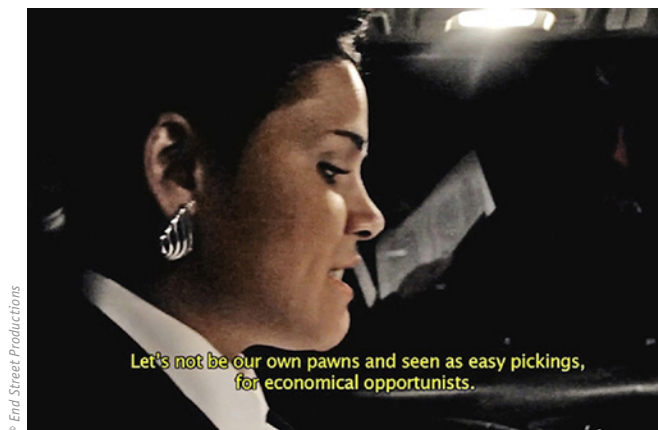
The video connects clips from the series with footage from the construction of a government building in Oslo in 1958, an architecture meant to express the social democratic ideas of that time. It also weaves in contemporary material from the highly contested tar sand extraction in Canada by Statoil. At the time of the *Blindpassasjer* series Statoil was founded in Norway as a state owned oil company, based on ideas such as the distribution of wealth and people as the owners of natural resources. The video weaves these various pasts and their ideas of a future into the present and extends them into its own paradoxical future still haunted by the “biomat.”

The “happy ending” of *Blindpassasjer*’s original plot, where the “biomat” is eliminated, is altered: The starship misses the headquarters on its return and continues into space. This sequence shows the government building today, still covered up after the 22nd July 2011 terrorist bombing.

2014, colour & black/white, 12 min., English, single-channel video installation, sound, artist book.

**Eline McGeorge**, born in 1970 in Norway, is an artist living and working in London and Oslo. Her work incites theoretical, political, and visual engagements through work processes combining materials and references in collage, montage, drawing, sculpture, animation, text and publications, prints, video, and more, most often put together in installation. She is represented by Hollybush Gardens, London.

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© End Street Productions

## Mpumelelo Mcata

### BLACK PRESIDENT

What is Black Guilt? I've often asked myself, why can't artist Kudzanai Chiurai be free to just paint flowers or some shit...? If he wants to that is. Will he and can he ever be President of his own State of Being? Or must he forever carry the fate and history of his people on his shoulders?

"A child is born with no state of mind... blind to the ways of mankind," proclaim Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five in *The Message*, their seminal hip hop behemoth of a song about African-American ghettos in the '80s, then comes consciousness. In the case of this boy, a certain young Zimbabwean man, the fine artist named Kudzanai Chiurai, black consciousness appears, closely followed by black pride or ideas of black power. An ideological militancy adopted perhaps just as a means to access the freedom he needs to truly fly and to find his spirit. His flight however, as is the case for many a young black artist, is often weighed down by guilt, a guilt masquerading as responsibility. This black guilt is Kudzanai Chiurai's last hurdle before true freedom – it is a demon that must be slayed.

The central thesis or question of this film is focused on this idea of 'BLACK GUILT'.

In this film we question the responsibility of African artists in an ever more globalised universe, where we maybe find ourselves "playing catch up" to the West as opposed to following our own paths. Are we victims of our past, forever beholden to our so-called arrested development, or is our superpower our burden?

Will we ever be truly free to express without having to necessarily represent all our people in our every breath, or is the need to be that kind of free simply irresponsible.

How much do these complexes and relationships to the ghost of our continent's violent collective history of oppression, exploitation, and struggle haunt us?

Is there such a thing as postcolonialism or indeed neocolonialism if colonialism never ended in the first place?

Are we still slaves?

Am I a slave?

In *Black President* 'The White Queen' (a character from one of Kudzi's pieces) personifies the idea of an externalised and internalised quasi-colonialism, when she first appears in a work by

Kudzanai Chiurai and then steps out of that frame and into the world of the film.

She soon goes rogue and irritates everyone around her, while trying to buy up every African person and object she sees. How will this end?

When will we Africans stop shooting ourselves in the foot to prove a point about our own agency in relation to the so-called Western standard?

Will we, the Africans, ever rid ourselves of this burden?

When will we lynch these ideas?

(Mpumelelo Mcata)

2015, colour, DCP, 75 min., English, Shona, Zulu, Xhosa. **Written and directed by** Mpumelelo Mcata. **Screenplay** Anna Teeman. **Cast** Kudzanai Chiurai, Anna Teeman, Melissa Goba, Lindiwe Matshikiza, Zaki Ibrahim. **Director of photography** Motheo Modaguru Moeng. **Editor** Khalid Shamis. **Sound** João Orecchia. **Music** João Orecchia. **Producer** Anna Teeman, End Street Productions.

**Mpumelelo Mcata**, born in Port Elizabeth/Nelson Mandela Bay, is an artists, musician, and cultural activist based in South Africa. He is a member of the internationally acclaimed South African band BLK JKS. *Black President* is his first feature film.

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© Jasmina Metwaly, Philip Rizk

## Jasmina Metwaly, Philip Rizk

### BARRA FEL SHARE' Out on the Street

*Out on the Street* is a film about a group of workers from one of Egypt's working class neighborhoods, Helwan. In the film ten working-class men participate in an acting workshop. Through the rehearsals, stories emerge of factory injustice, police brutality, courts that fabricate criminal charges, and countless tales of corruption and exploitation by their capitalist employers. On a rooftop studio overlooking the heart of Cairo – presented as a space between fact and fiction – the participants move in and out of character as they shape the performance that engages their daily realities. *Out in the Street* interweaves scenes from the workshop, fictional performances, and mobile phone footage shot by a worker intended as evidence for the courts to stop the destruction of his workplace. This hybrid approach aims to engage a collective imaginary, situating the participants and spectators within a broader social struggle.

"The idea for this project started with a sense of limitation in the making of documentaries. We've been working together on short videos since 2011, filming on the streets, in factories, joining marches and sit-ins in cities across Egypt in an attempt to document the issue of a wide variety of struggles. In the case of workers we went to listen, to film, and to try to understand the different dimensions of their protests. Where better pay or better working conditions are the tip of the iceberg, we wanted to know the unseen battles; hierarchies and social manipulations, work-caused illness and injuries and, in severe cases, death. It is always about exploitation and systematic corruption, the effects of capitalism creeping deeper into people's lives, the closing down of a public sector, privatizing public land and industry for the sake of growth, investment, and the 'economy' rather than people. We were inspired by how courageous people are, how strong in the face of their bosses. These workers risk being demoted, losing their jobs, or being beaten by police, military, or hired thugs, arrested or tried before military tribunals. Over time we realized that filming, editing, and posting our material online or occasionally screening it in neighborhoods has its limitations in the audience that it reaches and the effect it has on people. There is only so much one can do with an online intervention or a few street screenings. We don't want to make a film that turns that harsh reality into a spectacle, a source of entertainment, but a re-evaluation of the past and an imagining of what the future could hold. We believe the film will travel because the stories that emerge are not unique to a neighborhood

or a country. The forms of exploitation, dispensability of people is happening across the globe, and this is our audience. It's this global audience that drives us to keep working on a project like *Out In the Street*."

(Jasmina Metwaly and Philip Rizk)

2015, colour, QuickTime ProRes, 78 min., Arabic. **Directed by** Jasmina Metwaly, Philip Rizk. **Production** Mostafa Youssef. **Cast** Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed El Rob', Ahmed Kamel Taha El Nouby, Aly Khalili, Hassan El Gharieb Mohamed, Khalaf Ibrahim Ahmed, Mohamed Mahmoud, Saeed Ramadan Hassan, Sabry Hakiem Khella. **Directed by** Louly Seif. **Directed by** Hassan Soliman. **Directed by** Max Schneider.

**Jasmina Metwaly** is a visual artist and filmmaker based in Cairo, co-founder of the 8784 project and a founding member of Mosireen video collective. She studied painting in Poznań. She is interested in the points of intersection/division between single-channel image, video, and documentary filmmaking. Since January 2011 Metwaly has been involved with the No to Military Trials on Civilians campaign. Metwaly's work has been exhibited at international art venues and festivals including Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt (2010), Cairo Documenta (2010/2012), IFFR (2012), and Berlinale Forum Expanded (2014).

**Philip Rizk** is a filmmaker and activist based in Cairo, Egypt. Rizk studied philosophy and anthropology and has been working in video since 2008, primarily to engage with community struggles in Egypt. In 2010 Rizk completed the documentary film series "Sturm". Rizk's films have been screened at numerous festivals including the Berlin Biennale and IFFR. Rizk is a member of the Popular Campaign for the Dropping of Egypt's Debt and since 2009 has been documenting cases of torture as a member of the Task Force Against Torture. He is a member of the Mosireen video collective.

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© Islam Safiyyudin Mohamed



## Islam Safiyyudin Mohamed

### ACAPELLA

A prison-scene: Men in small cubicles - exhausted, withdrawn into themselves, beaten down. They hold their heads down at first, but then they are handed a message on a thread. Communication starts, knocking on the walls, then chanting begins – and with it their liberation.

“One true moment of awareness carries the potential to counteract a lifetime of complacency. To conceive a different way to known, run-down models; an automated existence; systems that fail because they are based on a game that is fixed from the get go. For most of us who remain asleep, the cruelties of such systems are either missed completely or are strengthened by our silence. And only when all man-manufactured instruments and devices are removed from the symphony of existence do the masses have a chance at reaching harmony through a true and resonating Acapella.” (Islam Safiyyudin Mohamed)

2014, colour & black/white, QuickTime ProRes, 13 min., Arabic.  
**Director** Islam Safiyyudin Mohamed.

**Islam Safiyyudin Mohamed**, born in Heliopolis, Cairo in August of 1976, is an Egyptian author and artist. He lives and works in Cairo.

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© Idioms Film &amp; Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung

## Asem Naser

### FROM RAMALLAH

Legend has it that a Roman woman used to run the largest brothel in the region on the current site of al-Moqata'a – President Abbas's Office. The Roman army commanders would meet there and discuss army matters. Eventually, the mistress and the women of the brothel learned all the army secrets. The Roman governor ordered the brothel to be destroyed and all the women were brutally killed. The legend goes on to say that for a long time shrieks and voices could be heard coming out of the site of the massacre. No one dared to go near it.

2014, colour, QuickTime ProRes, 5 min., Arabic. **Written and directed by** Asem Naser. **Production** Mohanad Yaqubi. **Director of photography** Sami Said.

**Asem Naser** is an artist, filmmaker, photographer, and graphic designer living and working in Palestine. He is a student of Visual Arts at the International Academy of Art, Palestine.

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© Ho Tzu Nyen

## Ho Tzu Nyen

### THE NAMELESS

*The Nameless* is about a person known as Lai Teck, which was one of the 50 known aliases of the Secretary General of the Malayan Communist Party from 1939 to 1947, when he was killed in Thailand after being exposed as a triple agent, working first for the French and British secret forces, then with the Japanese Kempeitai during the years of the Malayan Occupation.

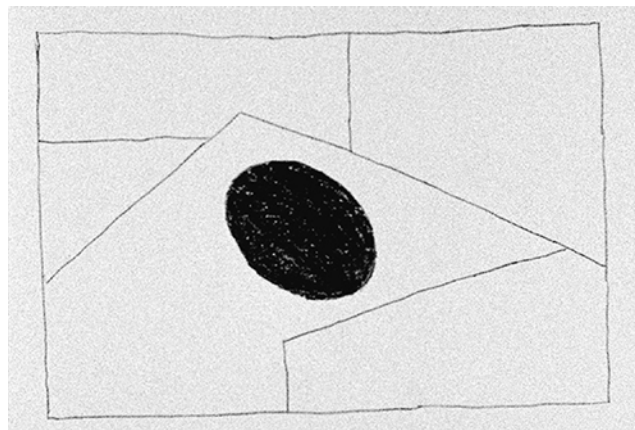
But *The Nameless* is also about cinema, and acting. Of all the great cinematic cultures of the world, it is perhaps Hong Kong cinema that has shown the most intense fascination with 'compromised' individuals, as evident from the constant stream of Hong Kong films about 'stool pigeons', 'double-agents', 'informers', and 'traitors'.

A film about a shapeshifter, told through a series of pilfered images, featuring an actor from a land of multiple allegiances.

2014, colour, 20 min., 2-channel video installation, sound.

Ho Tzu Nyen makes films, video installations, and theatrical performances that are related to his interests in philosophy and history. His works have been shown internationally in museums, galleries, film and performing arts festivals. Numerous film festivals have presented his work, including Cannes, Venice, Locarno, Sundance, and Rotterdam.

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© Courtesy the artist and Simon Preston Gallery

## Jenny Perlin

### 100 SINKHOLES

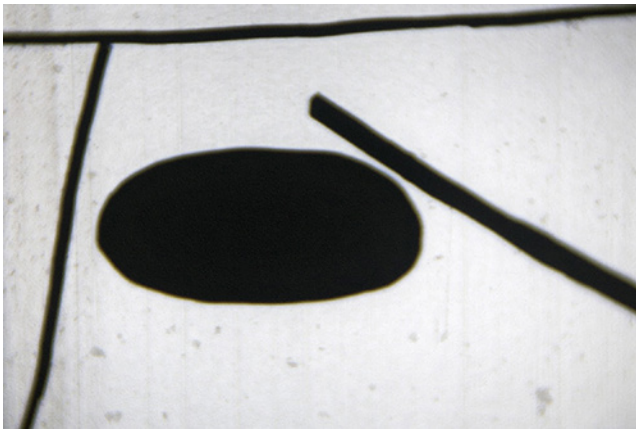
The increasing global phenomenon of sinkholes are taken as a point of departure; mining the sudden collapse of the earth's surface as a metaphor for unexpected gaps, cognitive failures, and chance detours. One hundred individual sinkholes, sourced from online data are rendered in graphite on a 16mm loop, each insistently filling the emptiness of the void. As a sinkhole emerges, it quickly disappears into the unsteady rhythm of the animation, undermining its monumental scale, abstracted into geometric lines.

2014, black/white, 14 min., single-channel 16mm film installation, silent, courtesy the artist and Simon Preston Gallery.

Jenny Perlin (b. 1970, Massachusetts) currently lives and works in New York. She received her BA from Brown University in Literature and Society, her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in Film, and did postgraduate studies at the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York. Her films have been shown at numerous venues including the Guggenheim Museum, New York; Mass MoCA, Massachusetts; MoMA, New York; Guangzhou Triennial, Canton; and at the Berlin and Rotterdam film festivals.

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© courtesy the artist and Simon Preston Gallery



## Jenny Perlin

### INKS

*Inks* is connected to Jenny Perlin's installation *100 Sinkholes* and goes even further: the film loop of drawings of sinkholes devours itself, destroying individual sinkholes by slowly using up the celluloid in high frequency repetition.

2014, black/white, 10 sec., single-channel 16mm film installation, silent, courtesy the artist and Simon Preston Gallery.

Jenny Perlin (b. 1970, Massachusetts) currently lives and works in New York. She received her BA from Brown University in Literature and Society, her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in Film, and did postgraduate studies at the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York. Her films have been shown at numerous venues including the Guggenheim Museum, New York; Mass MoCA, Massachusetts; MoMA, New York; Guangzhou Triennial, Canton; and at the Berlin and Rotterdam film festivals.

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© Isabelle Prim

## Isabelle Prim

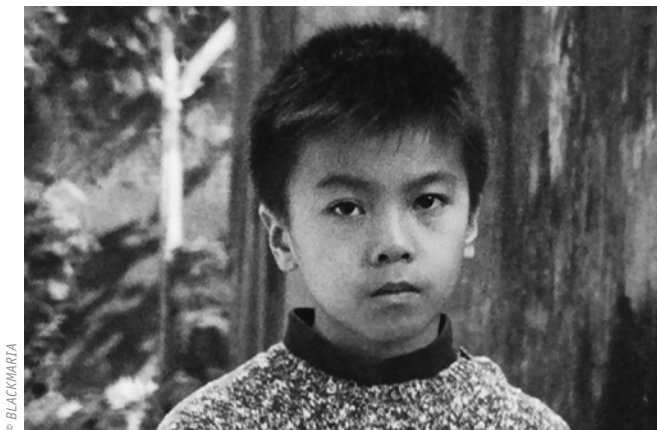
### CALAMITY QUI?

Christine Boisson is being interviewed at her Parisian apartment. The things she says, the images that appear obviously have something to do with the legendary character named Calamity Jane. But what exactly is the relationship between the two women? Is one the reincarnation of the other? Is she an actress playing her role? Someone dissecting her life? Her great grand-child? "One day, all of this will be known."

2014, colour & black/white, DCP, 4 min., French. **Director** Isabelle Prim. **Cast** Christine Boisson. **Director of photography** Victor Zébo.

Isabelle Prim, born in 1984 in Paris, is an actress, video artist, and filmmaker. Since 2014 she has been teaching film and video at the ESAM (École Supérieure D'arts & Médias) Caen/Cherbourgund. Prim has previously shown her works at Forum Expanded, the last one being *Déjeuner chez Gertrude Stein* (2013). Her works have been featured at numerous festivals and as part of art shows, including: Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Festival del Film Locarno, FID Marseille, and the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma in Montréal. Apart from her work as director, she has worked as editor for Leos Carax, Caroline Champetier, HPG, and others and has acted alongside people such as Jean-Claude Brisseau, Luc Moullet, or Dorothee Smith.

Contact: <http://www.isabelle-prim.com>



© BLACKMARTA

## João Pedro Rodrigues, João Rui Guerra da Mata

### IEC LONG

The latest collaboration between João Pedro Rodrigues and João Rui Guerra da Mata is a short film that marks the return of the two filmmakers to the former Portuguese colony Macao where they shot *The Last Time I Saw Macao* in 2012. The word "panchão" was first heard in Macao. From the Chinese "pan-tcheong" or "pau-tcheong", dictionaries define it as a Macanese regionalism also known as "China cracker" or "Chinese rocket". Making firecrackers used to be one of three main crafts in Macau, the others being making joss sticks and making matches. The craft of making firecrackers arrived in the city late in the 18th century. The two filmmakers trace the history of the Iec Long Fireworks Factory, which is the only well-preserved survivor of industrial heritage in Macao. An eye witness reports:

"I first entered the Iec Long Firecracker Factory led by my father. Times were difficult and children had to help support their families. It was tradition, it was like that back then... And it still is in some regions of China. Some of us were only six years old... It was hard work... It was dangerous work, there were many explosions. There were lots of dead people, many of whom were children, and dozens were injured. Throughout the years, many people died... I lost many friends. Yes, these memories haunt me like ghosts."

2014, colour, DCP, 31 min., Cantonese. **Directed by** João Pedro Rodrigues, João Rui Guerra da Mata.

**João Pedro Rodrigues**, born in 1966 in Portugal, lives and works in Lisbon. After studying biology at Lisbon University he attended the Lisbon Film School. Since 1988 he has directed numerous short and feature lengths films which have been shown in festivals world wide, such as Venice, Cannes, Locarno, and Toronto.

**João Rui Guerra da Mata**, born in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, lives and works in Lisbon. He is an art director, scriptwriter, and director. Rodrigues and Guerra da Mata have collaborated on films since the 1990s, and shared the directing credit since 2007.

Joined Filmography: *O Corpo de Afonso (The King's Body)* (2014), *Mahjong* (2013), *A Última Vez Que Vi Macau* (2012), *Alvorada Vermelha (Red Dawn)* (2011), *China, China* (2007).

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## Łukasz Ronduda, Maciej Sobieszcański

### OSKAR DAWICKI IN THE PERFORMER

An insight into the contemporary art world, based on the life of performance artist Oskar Dawicki who plays himself. The main theme of his art is the search for an answer to the question of whether... Oskar Dawicki exists at all. The trademark of his performances is his blue shining jacket.

We meet Oskar at a turning point in his life, when he learns that his Mentor Zbigniew Warpechowski is dying. Warpechowski has also been mentoring the Dearest, Oskar's childhood friend and a rival, who has devoted himself to more commercial art and become the most profitable contemporary artist in Poland. Oskar has one more complicated relationship in his life: a love affair with his art dealer. As in Dawicki's previous works, established norms of moral, spiritual, and social order are challenged and put on trial. *The Performer* is the first-ever art exhibition in the form of a feature film: Oskar Dawicki's works are connected on the screen not only by time and space, but also by narrative, drama, and emotion. The film is an unusual mix of performance art with acting, and a fusion of documentary film-making with fictional storytelling. The premiere screening of the film will be followed by Oskar Dawicki's performance *I am sorry* (2015).

2015, colour, DCP, 62 min., Polish. **Written and directed by** Łukasz Ronduda, Maciej Sobieszcański. **Production** Kuba Kosma, Wojciech Marczewski. **Cast** Oskar Dawicki, Agata Buzek, Zbigniew Warpechowski, Anda Rottenberg, Jakub Gierszał, Arkadiusz Jakubik, Katarzyna Zawadzka. **Director of photography** Łukasz Gutt. **Editor** Rafał Listopad, Mateusz Romaszkan. **Production design** Joanna Kaczyńska. **Sound** Paulina Bocheńska. **Music** Antoni Komasa-Łazarkiewicz.

**Łukasz Ronduda** is a curator, writer, scriptwriter, and film director living in Warsaw and working on the interface between contemporary art and cinema. He is the curator of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. His novel *Half Empty (Lampa i Iskra Boza)* was published in 2011. The book's main hero is Oskar Dawicki.

**Maciej Sobieszcański** is a film director, screenwriter, playwright and lecturer. He teaches at the Wajda School as well as the National Higher School of Film, Television and Theatre in Łódź. His directorial debut *Birthday* was screened at many festivals, including the Gdynia FF, Warsaw Film Festival, and the "Etiuda&Anima" festival in Krakow.

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© Emilien Awada



## Constanze Ruhm, Emilien Awada

### INVISIBLE PRODUCERS. KAPITEL 1: PANORAMIS / PARAMOUNT / PARANORMAL

*PANORAMIS PARAMOUNT PARANORMAL* is a film essay whose subject is the history of a specific place within the history of film, and the history of certain films related to this place. The installation can be considered a preface, a first chapter, consisting of a short trailer and of three prologues of various lengths for the planned feature film production (*To Live With Ghosts*; *Four Times a Forest*; *Comparing Local Specters*); as well as including photographs and archival materials. The project focuses on the site of the former film studios of St. Maurice near Paris, founded in 1913 and destroyed by fire in 1971. Later, the apartment complex Le Panoramis was built there.

Within a multitude of different specific or associative aspects, such as casting situations, birds, the film studio St Maurice, ghosts, and film references, *PANORAMIS PARAMOUNT PARANORMAL* investigates the role of cinema concerning the production of memory and recollection, and it poses the question of what it is that one will have to reckon with if one refuses to remember. Which form is it that the work against forgetting needs to adopt, and how is it possible to live peacefully with the specters – and is that even desirable, after all? Derrida replies, that one has no other option than to learn to live with the ghosts, in whichever way: *apprendre à vivre avec les fantômes*.

2015, colour, 59 min., German, 4-channel video installation, sound, posters, research material. **Cast** Laurent Lacotte, Caroline Peters, Judith van der Werff, Frank Dehner. **Camera** Emilien Awada. **Editor** Emilien Awada. **Colour correction** Alexandre Lelaure. **Sound Mix** David Ansaem. **Sound Design** Arnaud Marten. **Music** Gaël Segalen. **Make-up** Anne Verhaugue. **Text** Constanze Ruhm. **Concept** Constanze Ruhm, Emilien Awada.

**Constanze Ruhm**, born in 1965 in Vienna, is a video artist and art professor at Akademie der bildenden Künste (Vienna). She lives and works in Vienna and Berlin.

**Emilien Awada**, born in 1988 in France, is a filmmaker, editor, and photographer. He lives and works in Paris.

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© sixpacke Hans Scheugl

## Hans Scheugl

### DEAR JOHN

*Dear John* is the way I addressed a friend from the USA who presented me with the opportunity of leaving my life and starting a new and different one in the USA. I recollect this less from my memory but more from the letters he wrote me. I rediscovered them in a box only recently and read them again. The letters depict an image of a constellation of both my and his life that seems strange to me now and that made me curious.

This would have remained a walk down memory lane had I not discovered the house John now lives in. Quite unexpectedly, this imaginary, almost forgotten person of the past turned into an image of present-day life.

This transformation prompted me to make the film, albeit without any intention of actually trying to have a dialogue with *Dear John*. Seeing the house so unexpectedly suddenly caused the past 50 years to enter my consciousness as a gap, but there was nothing that I could do to retroactively fill this life gone astray – the emblem of which is this house. Not that I would have wanted to, in reality the distance in both space and time is unrecoverable.

The film, however, can attempt to encounter the idea proposed in the letter, of another life in America, from the present time and from the place where I now live.

(Hans Scheugl)

2015, DCP, 42 min., English. **Director** Hans Scheugl.

**Hans Scheugl**, born in 1940 in Vienna, has been making films independently since 1966. He was one of the co-founders of the Austria Filmmakers Cooperative (1968). Apart from his films and Expanded Cinema performances, he published articles on film history and theory. After a brief hiatus from filmmaking in the 1970s, he re-established the Filmmakers Coop in 1982 and started making films again in 1985. Since then, he has produced fiction, documentary, and avantgarde films as well as books. He lives and works in Vienna.

Filmography (excerpt): *Homeless New York 1990* (2013), *Prince of Peace* (1993), *Keine Donau - Kurt Kren und seine Filme* (1988), *Was die Nacht spricht* (1986), *Der Ort der Zeit* (1985, Forum 1986), *Sugar Daddies* (1968), *zzz: hamburg special* (1968), *Milz in der Früh* (1966)

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## Lior Shamriz

### CANCELLED FACES

Korea, the now: A young man makes a fateful encounter with a stranger he passionately falls in love with. When Unk rides his scooter through the night he fails to notice a drunk pedestrian, a man called Boaz, and hits him. The accident has unforeseen repercussions since shortly afterwards Unk and Boaz start an intense relationship that leads into a gradually worsening dependency and the “nouveau-noir story of absorption and autonomy” (Lior Shamriz) takes its course. Filmed as a gay melodrama in black-and-white shots, the classically narrative strands are intertwined with scenes from an eccentric theatre production that incorporates stories of the great revolt of the Jews against the Roman Empire. Bit by bit, the lines between a romantically orchestrated reality and the performative staging of a fictional tale begin to blur.

Lior Shamriz's film deals with cultural and historical appropriation. Elements of the New Queer Cinema, American pop culture, Biblical history, and fetish fashion are singled out, taken out of context, then re-contextualized and integrated into an unconventional narrative that consciously recites cinematic conventions at the same time. In the form of what could be called a cinematic mash-up, *Cancelled Faces* alienates cultural signifiers and opens a view to the concept of alienation on various levels. The personal alienation of two lovers inside a relationship, the cultural alienation of subjects in a globalized consumer culture and lastly, the alienation of concepts of national, sexual, or cultural identity. (Toby Ashraf)

2015, black/white, QuickTime ProRes, 80 min., Korean. **Written and directed by** Lior Shamriz. **Production** Lior Shamriz. **Cast** Kim Won-mok, Lee Je-yeon, Ye Soo-jeong, Won Tae-hee, Kim Hye-na. **Production manager** Kim Kyeongkoo. **Costume design** Oh Seborg. **Sound mixing** Jochen Jezussek. **Music** Ohal Grietzer.

Lior Shamriz was born 1978 in Ashkelon, Israel, and currently lives in Berlin and Los Angeles. His work has been presented at numerous international film festivals, including Berlin International Film Festival (2010, 2013), Locarno, Torino, Frameline, Sarajevo, BAFICI, Oberhausen Kurzfilmtage and venues such as MoMA, New York, Kunstwerke, Berlin, Centre George Pompidou, Paris, and The National Museum of Art Washington D.C.

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© Fern Silva

## Fern Silva

### WAYWARD FRONDS

Mermaids flip a tale of twin detriments, domiciles cradle morph invaders, crocodile trails swallow two-legged twigs in a fecund mash of nature's outlaws... down in the Everglades.

*Wayward Fronds* references a series of historical events that helped shape the Florida Everglades as they are today, while fictionalizing their geological future and their effects on both native and exotic inhabitants. Exploring this region was influenced by recent talks to finally disperse billions of dollars in restoration funds, giving way to ideas and possibilities of a future eco-flourished Everglades that engulfs civilization along the way. Events in this film imply that nature begins to take over, that the Everglades switch roles and tame civilization after centuries of attack, and even guide it into its mysterious aqueous depths, forcing humans to adapt and evolve to their surroundings.

“Sound serves as a field of play for many ... filmmakers, who call to viewers with it in ways that excite the imagination. Fern Silva's *Wayward Fronds* ... combines verdant landscape imagery with richly heightened natural sounds of chirping birds and insects, bubbling water and galloping horses, which together help give a sense of an expanding ecosystem.” (Aaron Cutler)

2014, colour, 14 min., English. **Director** Fern Silva.

Fern Silva, born in 1982, in Hartford, Connecticut, uses film to create a cinematographic language for the hybrid mythologies of globalism. His films consider methods of narrative, ethnographic, and documentary filmmaking as the starting point for structural experimentation. He has created a body of film, video, and projection work that has been screened and performed at various festivals, galleries, museums, and cinematheques including Toronto, Berlin, Locarno, Rotterdam, New York, Edinburgh, Images, London, and others.

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© Michael Snow



## Michael Snow

### TAUT

#### Installation Instructions for *TAUT*

*TAUT* utilizes some of the extraordinary Black Star Collection (archived at the Ryerson Image Centre in Toronto) of news photographs (demonstrations, rallies, riots, confrontations, etc.). A video of the artist's hands holding such photographs are projected onto a real classroom (chairs, tables, and a chalkboard) which will be covered in white paper to become a three dimensional white screen for the two-dimensional images of three-dimensional events and places.

It's a three-dimensional work and each position of the viewer/spectator will be rewarded with different "effects" relative to the projections on areas of wrapped tables and chairs. There is no one "best" point of view as each superimposed photographic projection makes different light and shade things happen. It's a three-dimensional sculptural work, not a movie.

The placement of the chairs and tables and chalkboard should allow the spectators to stand mostly to the right of the tables and chairs but also from behind them and from the left side (at Ryerson, this was the smallest space).

The tables, chairs and chalkboard should be wrapped with matte white paper (a warm white is preferred) and taped with matte white adhesive tape. The paper should be as unwrinkled as possible, and the tape should be as similar to the paper as possible. The seams of the paper should face away from the projection. In order to make a vertical projected image, the projector used is mounted on its side. At its first installation at the Ryerson Image Centre, the projector was mounted about 7 feet from the floor aimed at the wrapped furniture and the chalkboard. This meant that people's heads passed through the projection beam as they moved around the installation. In order to make a vertical projected image, the projector used is mounted on its side.

The Ryerson installation should be used as a model, but because of the size of the given room, and the size of the tables and chairs, it might be that to fill the same scale of space, more or fewer tables and chairs may need to be used. At the Ryerson installation, there were 9 tables and chairs. The room that housed *TAUT* was 23 feet and 9 inches (7.24 metres) by 17 feet and 9.5 inches (5.25 metres) with a ceiling height of 8 feet and 6 inches (2.59 metres). It is important to maintain the amount of walk around space that the Ryerson installation used.

Michael Snow, 2015

2012, single-channel video installation, silent, photographic paper, furniture, with the kind support of Ryerson Image Centre, Toronto, Canada.

**Michael Snow**, born in 1928 in Toronto, works in many media: film, video and sound installation, photography, holography, music, bookworks, sculpture, painting, and drawing. His visual artworks are widely collected and exhibited, including solo exhibitions at the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Power Plant (Toronto), National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Hara Museum (Tokyo), Museum of Modern Art (New York), Centre Pompidou (Paris), and at the Secession (Vienna). Snow's films and video have been shown extensively in festivals (London, New York, Rotterdam, and Berlin) and are in the collections of the Oesterreichisches Filmmuseum (Vienna), Anthology Film Archives (New York) and Royal Belgian Film Archive (Brussels). A long-time professional musician, Snow has performed in Canada, the US, Europe, and Japan – most often with Toronto-based CCMC – and has released many recordings. His interactive DVD-ROM "Anarchive 2-Digital Snow" (2002) is online at [www.fondation-langlois.org/digital-snow](http://www.fondation-langlois.org/digital-snow)

Contact: <http://www.ryerson.ca/ric>



© Rania Stephan



## Rania Stephan

### MEMORIES FOR A PRIVATE EYE

In this chapter of *Memories for a Private Eye*, I tried to explore my personal archive by invoking a fictional detective to help me unfold deep and traumatic memories.

The images, which come from different sources, weave together into a labyrinthine maze to create a blueprint of memory itself.

The film spirals around a lost image, the only moving image of my dead mother. How is absence lived? What remains of love, war and death with the passing of time?

These are the questions that are delicately displayed for contemplation in this film. (Rania Stephan)

2015, DCP, 30 min., Arabic, English. **Written and directed by** Rania Stephan. **Director of photography** Rania Stephan. **Editor** Rania Stephan. **Sound mixing** Rana Eid. **Special effects** Compagnie Générale des Effets Visuels. **Post production** the Postoffice.

**Rania Stephan** was born in Beirut, Lebanon. She graduated in Cinema Studies from Latrobe University in Melbourne, Australia and from Paris VIII University, France. She has worked as first assistant with renowned filmmakers including Simone Bitton and Elia Suleiman. In 2011, she released her first feature film *The Three Disappearances of Soad Hosni*.

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© Arthur Tuoto



## Arthur Tuoto

### JE PROCLAME LA DESTRUCTION

"Je proclame la destruction!" "Je proclame la destruction!" "Je proclame la destruction!" "Je proclame la destruction!" "Je proclame la destruction!" "Je proclame la destruction!" "Je proclame la destruction!" "Je proclame la destruction!" "Je proclame la destruction!" "Je proclame la destruction!" "Je proclame la destruction!"

One scene, dissected into two shots. In seemingly endless repetition we see the same thing over and over: a middle-aged man walks up to a podium. In front of him in rear view, a group of mostly young people. Behind the man a table and a chair, as if a lecture had just finished. It seems to be in a basement vault, or in a factory hall at least. The situation has a conspiratorial quality, the audience seems like students. Countershot to a closeup of three faces. A young man wants to move up closer, next to him is another young man, a woman – the only one it seems – is just behind him. Then the man walks up to the podium once again, goes to the microphone again, speaks his sentence. The crowd cheers, roaring with approval, cut to the closeup of the young man. "I declare the destruction," says the man at the podium – not in rage, not screaming, just assertively and quite clearly. What he wants to destroy is withheld from the audience, since we find ourselves in an endless loop of waiting, declaring, and verbally articulated approval. It all lasts exactly 18 seconds. Arthur Tuoto puts this into his film ten times, so that the end would be reached after three-and-a-half minutes. But the film starts all over again, it becomes timeless, endless, imperative. The mantra, perhaps a bit anarchistic, starts up again; timelessness and endlessness are completely suspended in its presentational form. We can't even match up the two shots, Tuoto has cleverly pulled the applause from the first shot into the second, so that we cannot fix any before and after. The exclamation remains without context, becoming more pressing each time. Anyone who knows Robert Bresson's *Le diable probablement* (*The Devil, Probably*), from which this scene is taken, might know a bit more, but knowing this isn't crucial. About the Bresson film, J. Hoberman once wrote, "Religion is a farce, the world is shown as coming to an end." But this is a new, a different film. Reduced to a moment. (Toby Ashraf)

2014, colour, 1 min., French, single-channel video installation, sound.

Arthur Tuoto, born in 1986 in Curitiba, Brazil is a filmmaker and

visual artist. His films have been shown at film festivals and exhibitions like Videonale (Germany), dokumentART (Poland), Videoformes (France), Kunstfilmtag (Germany), Bienal de la Imagen en Movimiento (Argentina), Instants Vidéo Festival (France), Rio de Janeiro International Short Film Festival (Brazil), and Short Shorts Film Festival Mexico (Mexico).

Filmography (excerpt): *What We Make of Our Misfortunes* (2014), *Death of an Equal* (2013), *Dead Hands* (2012), *Act of Love* (2012), *Transcommunication* (2010).

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© Courtesy Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam and the artist



## Wendelien van Oldenborgh

### BEAUTY AND THE RIGHT TO THE UGLY

*Beauty and the Right to the Ugly* is a cinematic experiment set in the multifunctional community center, Het Karregat, in Eindhoven. Het Karregat, designed by architect Frank van Klingeren and completed in 1974, is situated in the center of a neighborhood of new housing and sought to propitiate communal forms of habitation. The design was an open-plan space wherein different activities and functions – a library, a school, a café, a health centre, a supermarket, and a communal area – would be connected under the same superstructure. Wendelien van Oldenborgh examines the devenir – and partial failure – of this utopian architecture, while conceiving and implementing a filming methodology that translates architectural premises such as ‘open’, ‘user-led’, and ‘participative’ into cinematic devices.

Van Oldenborgh’s piece is a continuation of the artist’s interest in filmmaking as a performative device and of her ongoing engagement in discussions on collectivity, its intersection with the private, and the role cultural production plays in this.

2014, colour, 55 min., Dutch, English, 3-channel video installation, sound, courtesy the artist and Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam. With the kind support of the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program.

**Wendelien van Oldenborgh**, born in 1962 in Rotterdam, is an artist based in Rotterdam. Her practice explores social relations through an investigation of gesture in the public sphere. She received her art education at Goldsmiths, University of London, during the eighties and has been living in the Netherlands again since 2004. Recent works include: *La Javanaise* (2012, Forum Expanded 2013), *Bete & Deise* (2012), *Supposing I love you. And you also love me.* (2011) and *Pertinho de Alphaville* (2010, Forum Expanded 2011) Van Oldenborgh has exhibited widely and participated in the Venice Biennial 2011, the 4th Moscow Biennial 2011, the 29th Bienal de São Paulo 2010, and at the 11th Istanbul Biennial 2009. At the moment she is a guest of the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin-Programme.

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© Anton Vidokle

## Anton Vidokle

### THIS IS COSMOS

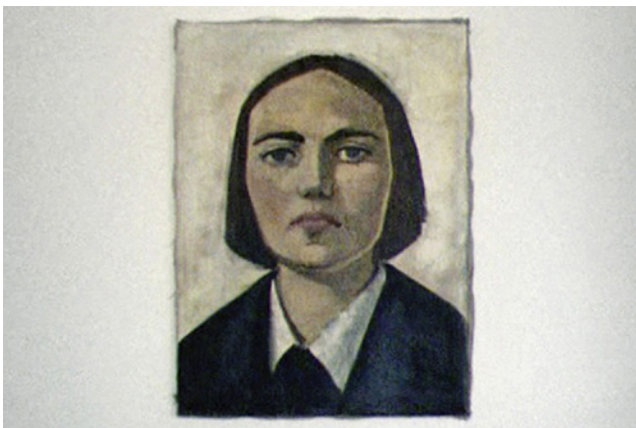
Based on the ideas of Russian philosopher, Nikolai Fedorov, Anton Vidokle’s film was shot in Siberia, Crimea, and Kazakhstan. Fedorov, like others, believed that death was a mistake, “because the energy of cosmos is indestructible, because true religion is a cult of ancestors, because true social equality is immortality for all.” Fedorov was one of the Cosmo-Immortalists, a surge of thinkers that emerged in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They linked Western Enlightenment with Russian Orthodoxy and Eastern philosophical traditions, as well as Marxism, to create an idiosyncratically concrete metaphysics. For the Russian cosmists, cosmos did not mean outer space: rather, they wanted to create “cosmos” on earth. “To construct a new reality, free of hunger, disease, violence, death, need, inequality – like communism.”

2014, colour, QuickTime ProRes, 30 min., English. **Written and directed by** Anton Vidokle. **Cast** Iman Musa Kulmohhametov, Svetlana. **Director of photography** Marcello Bozzini. **Editor** Meggie Schneider. **Sound** Jochen Jezussek. **Music** John Cale.

**Anton Vidokle**, born in 1965 in Moscow, Russia, is an artist, curator, and filmmaker currently living in New York and Berlin. His work has been exhibited internationally, including at the Venice Biennale, Dakar Biennale, and at Tate Modern. He is the founder of e-flux.

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© sixpack® Friedl vom Gröller



## Friedl vom Gröller

### RUHE AUF DER LEINWAND

A museum visitor spends an average of eleven seconds in front of an artwork. Friedl vom Gröller turns the gaze to a painted portrait for one minute and thirty seconds. Positioned unframed on a white wall, the view functions like in a white cube that is meant to allow us to enter into dialogue with the work without the distractions of architecture or color. *Silence on the Screen* reigns in the eponymous silent film in a double sense. The film screen shifts the viewer into the position of art beholder, only the slight shaking of the hand that holds the camera points to the existence of a third person placed in between—we view the artwork through their outsourced camera eye. The filmed portrait of a woman also radiates calm: large eyes stare at us from the screen—or lock onto a point beyond. After forty seconds the camera focuses on the face, now its contours appear as though framed by a halo. Coming to mind is a young Frida Kahlo as painted by Paula Modersohn-Becker in earthy tones. Reddened cheeks and a dimple on a chin framed by a white blouse collar evoke questions: Who is this woman? Who painted her? When was the portrait made? Artworks seek dialogue: they are also approachable and graspable without additional information; projection surfaces. Friedl vom Gröller's portrait of a portrait in the surroundings of its reception is an invocation for contemplation as well as concentration—an appeal to one's own pictorial competence.

(Sarah Alberti)

2014, colour, 16 mm, 2 min., Without dialogue. **Director** Friedl vom Gröller.

**Friedl vom Gröller**, born 1946 in London, lives and works in Vienna. She founded the School for Artistic Photography, Vienna, and was its director until 2010. In 2006, she also founded the School for Independent Film, Vienna, which she directed until 2013. Since 1968 she has made circa 80 films. In 2013 Forum Expanded presented a program of nine new films by Friedl vom Gröller.

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© Julia Yezbick

## Julia Yezbick

### INTO THE HINTERLANDS

The Hinterlands, a Detroit-based performance ensemble, practice a form of ecstatic training which they see as a provocation towards the unknown — a space both physical and imaginary. Their practice is one of ecstatic play, of finding the edge of one's balance, and the limits of one's body. Yezbick trained with the ensemble for a year, always filming while physically participating. Each session followed an unscripted, non-verbal improvisation during which they developed gestural 'grammars' through repetition, patterned breathing, and movement. Imagined affective landscapes are conjured as audio compositions from field recordings swell through the room. Rather than allow the viewer to gaze upon the ruins of Detroit, this piece makes an aural gesture toward the city beyond and summons the space of an inverted hinterland, an unknown inside to be plumbed for meaning and creative inspiration. Continually looking for new ways to 'see' with the camera (shooting with her feet, shoulder, and neck), Yezbick's embodied camera immerses the viewer in the collective ecstatic experience; merging the space of their ludic play with the liminal space of the cinema.

2014, colour, DCP, 39 min., English. **Director** Julia Yezbick. **Cast** Richard Newman, Liza Bielby, Barney Baggett. **Director of photography** Julia Yezbick. **Editor** Julia Yezbick. **Sound** Julia Yezbick. **Sound mixing** Ernst Karel.

**Julia Yezbick** (born 1980, Ypsilanti, Michigan) is a filmmaker, artist, and doctoral candidate in Media Anthropology and Critical Media Practice at Harvard University. She lives and works in Detroit.

**Contact:** <http://www.intothehinterlands.com>



© Alexander Schmoeger, Lisa Schmidt-Colinet, Florian Zeyfang

## Florian Zeyfang, Lisa Schmidt-Colinet, Alexander Schmoeger

### INSTITUTE ABOVE-GROUND

*Institute Above-Ground* is a documentary narrative about visionary architecture in Cuba. The “Instituto tecnológico de suelos y fertilizantes André Voisin” is a symbol of the early, euphoric building experiments that emerged shortly after the revolution. In addition, it represents an early example of the politics of the “rural schools,” with which Cuba sought to decentralize education during the 1970s.

The whole facility was designed by Vittorio Garatti in 1961, one of the three architects at the famous art school in Havana. The Instituto André Voisin, an agricultural school, is much less well-known and is located in the fertile plain near Güines. The architecture, assembled on site from concrete elements, has a futuristic look, not least through its only intermittent contact points with the ground, which is regularly flooded due to rice cultivation in the area. The footbridges floating above the landscape link the various buildings into a modern living and studying space.

The institute was originally constructed for the 2000 students who lived, worked, ate, and slept there. Later it was used as a military prison and today it stands in the landscape like a stranded spaceship: a kind of ark for ideas that still have to be realized.

2015, colour, QuickTime ProRes, 22 min., Spanish, German, English. **Directed by** Florian Zeyfang, Alexander Schmoeger, Lisa Schmidt-Colinet.

Florian Zeyfang, Lisa Schmidt-Colinet, and Alexander Schmoeger have been collaborating on projects and exhibitions with and about architecture and film in Cuba since 2003. In 2013 Forum Expanded showed their film *Microbrigades – Variations of a Story*; in 2008 Florian Zeyfang was represented at the Berlinale in the Forum with *Introduction to a Short History of Photography* and again in 2011 in Forum Expanded with *F66 Geisterschiff*.

Since 2008, they have been designing sculptural and architectural installations with slide and video projections in exhibitions. They have published the reader “Pabellón Cuba” in connection with the 8th Biennale in Havana. For this project they worked in the collective RAIN 2001-2006 along with Valdés Figueroa, Susi Jirkuff, and Siggie Hofer.

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