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# La Cupola

## Volker Sattel

2016, DCP, color, 40 min., Italian, German. **Producer** Volker Sattel (Berlin, Germany), Caroline Kirberg (Berlin, Germany). **Written and directed by** Volker Sattel. **Director of photography** Volker Sattel, Thilo Schmidt. **Sound** Filipp Forberg. **Music** Tim Elzer. **Sound design** Tim Elzer. **Editor** Stefanie Gaus, Volker Sattel. **Research** Francesca Bertin. **World sales** Arsenal – Institut für Film und Videokunst e.V. **With** Minze Gaus, Francesca Bertin, Giuseppina Isetta, Stephan Geene, Severin Dold.

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The portrait of a house without supporting walls. A bold dome made of concrete, an open space – right in the middle of the bizarre rock formations of a rugged coast made of reddish granite.

The house belonged to actress Monica Vitti and director Michelangelo Antonioni. The emptiness of the “cupola” and the deserted quality of the site are the starting point for speculating – seemingly at random, figures wind up in the image and enter the dome, and even today, the utopia of an alternative concept of living seems to float above its form.

*La Cupola* begins and ends with images of the red porphyry cliffs at Costa Paradiso, Sardinia. Forms of becoming, non-finito, stone fingers and hands that want to be grasped. We are all fortune tellers in the spirit – we have to read the world to get it; we reveal ourselves in the interpretation. Perhaps the sculptures are already kept in stone or the future waits in the mountain, as Björk once sang.

The architect Dante Bini and his commissioners Michelangelo Antonioni and Monica Vitti must have felt like they were discovering an old and yet unknown tomorrow when they built a vacation home here at the end of the '60s. The thin concrete dome, constructively seen a bubble, with windows, doors, and an access bridge cut into it – like carved into a poppy seed capsule – the open space without columns in which there's even room for a garden, the super Cinemascope window with a view to the red Martian landscape... all of this speaks to the attempt to interweave a new way of seeing with a new way of living.

But the rough shell is crumbling, the dome of freedom is showing its age. In the off space of the film, only 160 kilometers to the south, in Oristano, there are formally similar, and yet very different buildings from the Second World War, massive concrete bunkers from 1942/43, as Paul Virilio has described in his "Bunker Archaeology". The footprint of peaceful utopias – among other things, Antonioni wrote the script for *Zabriskie Point* there – is lighter, the sea air hurries to wear down the house. And despite all regrets about the disappearance of this monument, at least that is consoling.

Christoph Hochhäusler

**Volker Sattel**, born in 1970 in Speyer, lives and works in Berlin. He acts as writer, director, and cameraman in various film forms and genres. From 1993 to 1999, he studied directing and camera at the Baden Württemberg Film Academy. Since then, he has frequently directed and done camerawork, mostly in documentaries, and collaborated with Mario Mentrup on several experimental feature films. Sattel's works have received numerous awards, including the German Schnittpreis of VG Bild-Kunst and the Gerd Ruge Fellowship for his film *Under Control – An Archaeology of Nuclear Power* from 2011 and a project grant from the Kunstfonds Foundation for his current film project *La Cupola*. In 2013, along with Stefanie Gaus, he was a fellow at the Goethe-Institut's Villa Kamogawa in Kyoto, Japan, where they collaborated on the film *Beyond Metabolism*.

#### Films

1999: *"040"* (34 min.). 2002: *Unternehmen Paradies* (59 min.). 2005: *Stadt des Lichts* (co-directed by Mario Mentrup, 60 min.). 2006: *Sie kommen nachts* (co-directed by Mario Mentrup, 29 min.). 2007: *Ich begehre* (co-directed by Mario Mentrup, 76 min.). 2010: *Der Adler ist fort* (co-directed by Mario Mentrup, 21 min.). 2011: *Unter Kontrolle/Under Control* (Forum, co-directed by Stefan Stefanescu, 98 min.). 2014: *Beyond Metabolism* (Forum Expanded, co-directed by Stefanie Gaus, 40 min.). 2016: *La Cupola*.