



Pitching Catalogue

Documentary Campus Masterschool Pitch 2025



Industry Training Days
31 October – 1 November 2025



Creative
Europe
MEDIA

PROJECT

ABC: One Letter at a Time (ABC – Buchstabe für Buchstabe)



Teaser

International title

youtu.be/O81snXMsthk

Synopsis

An intimate, observational documentary about a group of Arab women who enroll in a literacy course in Berlin to learn to read and write for the first time. The classroom becomes their sanctuary and a microcosm of their new lives. We follow a makeup artist who can't read her own invoices, a mother desperate to understand the German her children speak, and a student who dreams of navigating the city alone. As they struggle with household duties, financial independence, traditional expectations, and prejudice, their shared journey transforms their classroom into a vibrant community in the midst of Germany's shifting politics.

Contact

Mayye ZAYED

Film Director/ Producer

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ABC: One Letter at a Time (ABC – Buchstabe für Buchstabe)

GERMANY

In a Berlin classroom, immigrant women trace their first letters, one at a time. Over the course of a year, as they learn the German alphabet, their search for identity and belonging collides with Germany's changing politics and the rise of the far right.

Language

Arabic, German, English, Turkish

Length

90 minutes

Director

Mayye ZAYED

Producer

Anke PETERSEN

Jyoti Film Gmbh

Germany

Total budget of the film

395,330 €



Financing already in place
4,000 €

Detailed Budget
[abc-budget-sep2025.pdf](#)

Themes
– Human Interest/Family
– Social Issues/Activism

Stage of development
Early development

Needs
– Distributors
– Sales Agents
– Co-producers
– Private Funds / Banks
– TV
– Foreign TV Channel
– Regional funds

Format
– feature-length

Estimated date of shoot
June 2026

Deck
[abc-pitch-deck-dcm-2025-lq.pdf](#)

Treatment

The Story:

In a quiet Berlin classroom, a group of Arab immigrant women are learning to read and write in German for the first time. For many, literacy was a denied opportunity in their home countries. Now, in Germany, it is the key to their new lives. Over a year, the camera watches patiently, showing the students' small victories and their hard moments. The classroom, with its posters, writings, light, and warmth, becomes a central character in the film, serving as a safe haven for different cultures to meet and grow into a powerful community. But outside, the world is less patient, as the students have to deal with prejudice and the pressures of traditional gender norms on a daily basis. As Germany's political mood shifts and far-right ideas grow, the students' simple act of learning becomes a quiet but powerful protest.

Potential Characters:

The film focuses on a few key people whose personal stories show the universal search for strength and belonging. We have found several people who could be in the film, and their stories show the main ideas of the project. These include:

The Entrepreneur: A lively and outgoing makeup artist for brides within the Syrian community, whose freelance business provides her with a small measure of independence. But she cannot read her own bills and depends on her husband to handle her money.

The Mother: A loving mother who balances her language classes with chores at home. She feels excluded from her children's new German-speaking world and is frustrated by her inability to assist them with their school homework.

The Dreamer: A young, focused woman who learns to read with a clear goal: to walk around the city by herself, making the simple act of learning a powerful tool for freedom and self-discovery.

The Teacher: In the midst of the chaos and hope, there is the German teacher. She is the students' first and most important link to their new society. Patient and empathetic, she offers more than lessons. She helps them with forms and legal papers, and her presence shows the kindness and support that can exist alongside the struggles of integration.

Visual Approach:

The project, which includes a feature documentary and an immersive installation, uses an observational *cinéma vérité* style to capture the students' experiences as they unfold naturally. The film's visual approach relies on steady compositions that are patient and poetic. The cinematography evolves with the seasons, from the vibrant warmth of a summer classroom to the muted, gray tones of a Berlin winter. This change in seasons serves as a subtle metaphor for the students' journey and transformation. The camera is a quiet presence, highlighting small but significant moments such as a hesitant hand writing new letters, the rhythmic repetition of new words, or a sudden look of understanding on a face.

The film's editing follows the structure of a fictional narrative, with scenes built from real-life footage to create a cohesive story. While the film shares the emotional intimacy of my prior documentary, *Lift Like a Girl*, it takes a different visual path, emphasizing stillness over action and creating emotion through subtle shifts in facial expressions, season, and daily routines.

The immersive installation will be a non-linear companion to the film. It uses the similar footage and soundscapes to create a physical space where visitors can step into the classroom and experience the women's struggle and triumph firsthand. This format is designed to deepen the film's themes, offering a more personal and interactive experience for audiences in a gallery or museum setting.

Themes:

1. The Power of Literacy: Learning to read is not just a skill. It is a key act of power against a system that has often left these women without a voice.
2. Identity and Belonging: The classroom becomes a space where women from different countries find a new, shared identity. They find a sense of belonging that is often not there for them in the outside world.
3. Traditional Gender Roles: The film looks closely at the difficult relationship between the students' traditions and their wish for freedom.
4. Finding a New World: This is a film about the immigrant experience from the inside. It shows the daily fights and small victories that create a new life, set against the changing political scene in Germany.

Social Impact Campaign:

ABC: One Letter At a Time is not just a film but a tool for social change. The film's social impact campaign is a key part of this project. Our goal is to fight stereotypes about Arab immigrants in Germany and help people feel more empathy, especially young people and those who may support the far-right AfD party.

Director's statement

I learned early in life what it means to be unable to read and write. My paternal grandparents were illiterate, and I still remember reading letters and medical forms to them. The greatest impression came when my great-aunt, at over 50 years old, decided to attend a literacy course in Egypt. Her biggest dream was to read the newspaper herself. I helped her with her homework and saw firsthand how deeply this journey shaped her.

Years later, when I moved to Germany, I experienced a similar issue. I've been here for three years, yet learning the language still feels like an enormous challenge. Even though I am privileged and multilingual, it was through personal frustration that I realized how difficult it must be for those who do not have these advantages.

According to the federal program AlphaDekade, 6.2 million adults in Germany struggle with reading and writing. Many are immigrant women, yet their stories are rarely heard. With this film, I want to change that. I chose a quiet, observational style to show the women in these courses as they truly are: strong, vulnerable, determined, and not victims. My camera is patient and steady, focusing on the small, quiet moments like a hesitant hand, a look of understanding, and a smile between friends. The changing seasons outside the classroom become a powerful, subtle metaphor for their own transformation.

In a time when far-right ideas are growing across Europe, this film becomes a vital counter-narrative. It's a direct answer to hatred and stereotypes. By humanizing these

women, the film invites viewers to see them not as a group, but as individuals with a universal dream that many of us can relate to, which is self-determination.

Production note

We are thrilled to partner with director Mayye Zayed again, following our successful collaboration on *Lift Like a Girl*, the Golden Dove winner at DOK Leipzig 2020, co-produced with ZDF *Das kleine Fernsehspiel*, and the first Egyptian documentary released on Netflix worldwide. Her new project, *ABC: One Letter At a Time*, is an intimate and urgent story that captures the lives of Arab immigrant women in Berlin learning to read and write for the first time.

This project offers a unique value proposition since it is both a quiet, powerful documentary and a planned immersive installation. Together, the two formats challenge stereotypes and offer a vital counter-narrative to rising anti-immigrant sentiment in Germany. The film's observational style is its strength, revealing the courage it takes to start over and the small, defiant victories of everyday life.

The film is still in early development, and our goal is to bring it to major international festivals and secure co-production and distribution with top-tier broadcasters who are committed to stories of migration, education, and social justice. At JYOTI Film, we are confident this project will not only resonate with audiences but also spark meaningful dialogue and inspire real social impact in Germany and across Europe.

Director

Mayye ZAYED

Filmography

Lift Like a Girl (2020)—Feature Documentary
Role: Director, Writer & Producer
- Co-produced with ZDF *Das kleine Fernsehspiel*.
- World premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival 2020.
- Winner of the Golden Dove for Best Film at Dok Leipzig 2020.
- Winner of 3 awards at the Cairo International Film Festival 2020
- The first Egyptian documentary to be released on Netflix worldwide.
- Screened at many festivals, including DOC NYC, Sheffield Doc Fest, Thessaloniki, Krakow, and Shanghai International Film Festivals.

Biography

Mayye Zayed is an Egyptian filmmaker based in Berlin. She founded Cléo Media, a production company focused on female-driven content and impact distribution. She is a Fulbright scholar who studied cinema and media studies at Wellesley College and Innovations in Documentary at MIT. She is an alumna of Berlinale Talents, Nipkow Program, Good Pitch, Documentary Campus Masterschool, and the American Film Showcase documentary program at the USC School of Cinematic Arts. She has also served as a jury member for organizations such as Hot Docs and the IDA Awards.

A Stroll Down Sunflower Lane (2016)—

Short Film

Role: Director, Writer, Producer & Editor

- World premiere at the Berlinale 2016

- Winner of the Best Experimental Film

Award at Sharjah Film Platform 2018

- Screened at many festivals, including

AFI Fest.

Producer

Jyoti Film Gmbh

Company profile

JYOTI, a name meaning "light" in Hindi, is a production company based in Hamburg and Berlin that lives up to its name by shedding light on untold human stories. The company, which was founded by Anke Petersen, is committed to producing immersive digital formats like games and virtual reality experiences in addition to captivating, socially relevant documentaries. Stories from and about women are particularly important to the all-female team, which places a strong emphasis on diversity and cross-media storytelling.

JYOTI Film has a proven track record of producing award-winning films that have been selected at prestigious festivals like the Berlinale, DOK Leipzig, IDFA, Visions du Réel, Hot Docs, Toronto, and True/False Film Festivals. Their projects demonstrate a commitment to inspiring audiences and opening new perspectives on internationally relevant topics.

Anke PETERSEN

Biography

Anke Petersen is a Hamburg-based film producer with over 19 years of experience, having initially worked as an executive producer in the commercial sector at Tony Petersen Film. In 2013, she founded JYOTI Film, focusing on international documentary and feature co-productions, along with digital projects. JYOTI Film is a member of AG Dok and ProQuote.

Anke is an alumna of Documentary Campus & a certified Green Consultant (IHK). She has dedicated recent years to producing documentaries with social impact, with multiple impact campaigns in development. Additionally, she produces the Young Director Award at Cannes Lions, supporting emerging talent.

Anke and director Mayye Zayed have formed a strong partnership since their collaboration on "Lift Like a Girl," which united them in their commitment to telling impactful and thought-provoking stories.

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PROJECT

After the Wall



Teaser

vimeo.com/1128871344?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci

Password :

Synopsis

Shortly after the Berlin Wall fell in the 90s, I dyed my hair red and went to punk concerts, while some classmates appeared in school skinhead style in bomber jackets and combat boots. Not long before, we'd sworn eternal loyalty to one another. The GDR's collapse left emptiness and disorientation. Our parents struggled with capitalism, factories closed, jobs vanished. 25 years on, I reconnect with my classmates to explore what shaped us, what drove us apart, and what still connects us today. This is an intimate exploration of friendship, ideology, and the fractures within society, asking: Can we bridge the gaps before they become irreparable?

Contact

Bianca LASCHALT

Producer

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After the Wall

GERMANY

25 years after graduating from high school, the director, once a rebellious punk, returns to her East German hometown Gera (in Thuringia) in search of her former classmates. How did the post-reunification years shape and divide her generation? And how is the past still present today?

Language

German

Length

90 minutes

– Feature Doc

Director

Claudia EUEN

Producer

Bianca LASCHALT

Contact without company
Brazil

Total budget of the film

520,860 €

Financing already in place

7,900 €

Detailed Budget

Themes

- Current Affairs/Investigation
- Human Interest/Family

Stage of development

Early development

Needs

- Distributors
- Sales Agents
- Co-producers
- TV
- Foreign TV Channel
- Regional funds

Format

- feature-length

Estimated date of shoot

2026

Deck

 [atw-dossier-251010-web.pdf](#)

Treatment

Most of my friends avoid class reunions – they have no interest in stories about big houses and perfect marriages. I felt the same until my mid-30s when curiosity brought me back. Suddenly there they were, with shaved heads and lives that felt foreign to me. Yet childhood bonds resurfaced, we laughed, shared stories, and I felt a surprising sense of belonging. That night, at a techno party, I said, “I’m going to make a film about us.” Everyone cheered – and the next morning I knew I had to take this journey.

There’s Jörg who never left Gera. He built a house, but lives alone after his wife leaving him. For 25 years, he has worked in the brewery’s bottling department. Though once into right-wing rock, he is hesitant about voting for AfD today.

Alex lives with his family in a hippie community in Brandenburg, where AfD support is high. He believes in dialogue, even with far-right neighbors from the so-called ‘citizens of the Reich’ movement, who deny the existence of the Federal Republic. His stance, however, meets resistance in his community.

Micaela, my only Black classmate, fled Gera during school holidays and swore never to

return. She lived as a punk in Hanover, and is now in rural Western Germany with her dogs. Adopted, she still feels rootless and searches for her identity.

Christian, once in the skateboarding scene, left after graduation. Today he lives in Munich, working as a curator for an art festival. He avoids his East German past and has no contact with old friends, seeking to grow beyond his roots.

Christiane, once my best friend, lives a comfortable middle-class life in Leipzig with her family. Her husband is a professor, she also works at the university. She looks back critically at our youthful radicalization, but also at the post-reunification era, which plunged her parents into a deep crisis.

These individual portraits drive the narrative. Each story reveals not only personal paths but also the fractures of our generation – showing how the upheavals of the 1990s shaped identities, friendships, and political attitudes.

The film begins with my return to my hometown Gera. In front of my old school, I restage an old class photo from twenty-five years ago. Holding the faded picture, I direct my classmates into place, observing how they joke, interact, and slip uneasily into old roles. Through voice-over, I recall why most people avoid reunions and what drew me back: a late-awakened curiosity about the bonds of childhood and the fractures of adolescence. These opening moments set the tone for a journey into the shared past and into my search for what still connects us today.

From here, the film unfolds through encounters with my classmates – at their homes, at work, or in smaller group meetings. These moments intertwine with memories of my youth: nights at punk concerts, weekends at Berlin's Alexanderplatz where I hung out with other punks, the fear of right-wing violence, and the unsettling indifference of adults toward violence and polarization. The perspective then widens: Some of our parents reflect on their struggles after 1989 – exhaustion, adaptation, and cautious hope. Personal memories and public history merge, showing how political transformation reshaped everyday lives. Along the way, conflicts arise. When Christiane and Jörg revisit a photo of him giving the Nazi salute, an old wound reopens and sparks a raw dialogue.

The film culminates in a collective reunion. In a neutral studio space, the classmates gather again. At first, the atmosphere is tense, polite, even stiff. Fragments of conversation reveal laughter, pain, and unresolved conflicts. The reunion becomes a mirror of larger societal divides in Germany today, where questions of belonging, ideology, and dialogue remain urgent and unresolved.

Today my hometown Gera struggles with decline. Since 1990 its population has shrunk, schools have closed, the university has relocated to Erfurt. Every week people gather at Monday demonstrations, a mix of anti-establishment and far-right protests, while the AfD now holds the majority in the city council. The mood is shaped by frus-

tration and decline – and yet, for me, Gera is also a place of deep attachment. Even after leaving, I feel defensive when my hometown is condemned. Where does this mindset come from, one seen as emblematic of the East's decline?

The film is told from my personal perspective, mixing styles and formats. Photos, home videos, letters, and diary entries and archive footage from the 1980s/90s will be interwoven with observational scenes and interviews. Key moments will be filmed on Mini-DV to evoke the look and feel of the era. My voiceover will guide the film, linking past and present. The sound design will combine folk songs from childhood, 90s grunge and techno, and new compositions – conjuring both nostalgia and unease. The tone is serious and reflective, yet also humorous – shaped by long-standing closeness to the protagonists.

As Germany's political landscape continues to shift, the film asks: how do personal lives and societal fractures intertwine? Why do we adopt certain worldviews so early? Can we bridge the gaps across generations and ideologies – before they become irreparable? And how do we measure our dreams against what we've become?

Director's statement

For me, as for many, school was a formative time. After reunification, I changed schools; my classmates became my first peer group. Some drifted into violent right-wing circles, others, like me, searched for belonging elsewhere. That tension – between closeness and estrangement – still shapes me today.

When I reach out to my former classmates now, not everyone welcomes it. I encounter mistrust, even rejection. But this is exactly why I feel compelled to make the film: to confront what divided us then, and what continues to divide us today.

Our generation grew up in the vacuum left by the collapse of one system and the uncertainties of a new one. The 1990s in East Germany were marked by far-right violence: Rostock, Hoyerswerda, Eberswalde. We saw it on TV and felt it nearby, yet there was no outcry. The gaze on the East has shaped collective memory. My friends were not Nazi thugs, but they were pulled into a milieu that has since become disturbingly normalized.

By revisiting my classmates and my hometown, I trace how these ruptures shaped identities and worldviews. Our class serves as a blueprint for a society where people from vastly different worlds collide - whether in Germany, Poland, Hungary, or the United States.

This film is not only about the past, but about the possibility of dialogue now. Can friendship survive when the private becomes political? Can remembering together help us build bridges before divides become unbridgeable?

AFTER THE WALL is my attempt to explore these questions with honesty and vulnera-

bility. By telling personal stories against the backdrop of historical upheaval, I hope to create a space where memory and dialogue connect - and perhaps even open paths toward a more unified future.

Production note

Germany is once again facing itself. With the far right gaining strength, the world watches a country wrestling with its divisions. This film explores these fractures from an intimate perspective — through the eyes of a generation whose youth was shaped by the collapse of an entire system.

Studies show that the so-called Wende generation — children or teenagers around 1989 — still carry psychological scars from that upheaval. These findings reveal how deeply historical ruptures echo within private lives. Across societies, we see growing mistrust, hardened ideologies, shrinking spaces for dialogue. These fractures appear daily — at work, among friends, within families. What happens when political divides erode even our closest bonds? This question reaches beyond Germany, resonating wherever populism and inequality threaten connection.

By focusing on Eastern Germans born in the late 1970s, the film gives voice to a generation rarely portrayed in cinema. Its strength lies in the tension between a deeply personal journey and the broader historical canvas it unfolds against.

The film targets audiences aged 30–50 from post-socialist regions who experienced similar transitions, as well as younger viewers (18–30) drawn to questions of identity, activism, belonging.

The project received funding for story development from the Cultural Foundation of Saxony and the Bremen Documentary Film Prize. We are now seeking further development support and exploring co-productions with countries that have experienced similar transformations. Production is planned for late 2026.

The film invites us to face the fractures of the past, reflect on how ideology shapes our bonds, and ask how we can reconnect — before divides become unbridgeable.

Director

Claudia EUEN

Filmography

current AFTER THE WALL, Documentary, 90 min - In Development
current MEIN KÖRPER, MEIN GEDÄCHTNIS, Documentary, 50 min - In Post-Production
2024 PSYCHO (eating disorders), ARTE,

Biography

Claudia Euen, filmmaker/author from Leipzig, was born in Gera/Thuringia in 1979. She studied European Media Culture in Weimar and Lyon. Stays abroad took her to the USA, Latvia and Vietnam, where she worked as a

Documentary Series, 30 min
2024 FEARLESS AGAINST THE RIGHT, Y-Kollektiv, Documentary, 30 min
2023 SCHEISSJOB LEHRER, Y-Kollektiv, Documentary, 45 min
2023 PSYCHO (grief), ARTE, Documentary Series, 30 min
2022 PSYCHO (attachment disorder), ARTE, Documentary Series, 30 min
2021 SARA, Short-Documentary, MDR, 15 min
2019 BAUTZEN, ARTE, Documentary Series, 10 x 30 min
2018 IN THE SHADE OF THE APPLE TREE, MDR, Documentary, 60 min

development worker. From 2009–2012 she was editor-in-chief of Leipzig's city magazine Kreuzer. Since 2012 she has produced texts, radio and TV reports for ARTE, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk, MDR, SWR, SPIEGEL ONLINE and DAS MAGAZIN. With support from the Cultural Foundation of Saxony she made her first documentary IN THE SHADE OF THE APPLE TREE (2015). Her current project AFTER THE WALL won the Bremen Documentary Film Prize for research.

Producer

Contact without company

Bianca LASCHALT

Biography

Bianca Laschalt is a graduate of the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg in International Producing. Her track record includes several award-winning films, such as WHERE TO, MISS? (Granit – Hof Documentary Film Prize 2015, German Human Rights Film Award 2016) and BACK FOR GOOD (Opening film Perspektive Deutsches Kino, Berlinale 2017). From 2018 to 2024 she led the Leipzig office of Kloos & Co., where she worked as producer and executive producer on films like ALL INCLUSIVE, HOSPITALity, and LOVE ALONE CAN'T MAKE A CHILD (Audience Award for Documentary, Max Ophüls Prize Film Festival 2024), which chronicles the ten-year emotional journey of the couple Maria and Christiane as they pursue their dream of having a child of their own. Further strengthening her international expertise, she is an alumna of EAVE PUENTES and EURODOC (Local Workshop Weimar). Now based in Leipzig, she works independently on fiction and documentary projects that are both artistically ambitious and socially relevant.

PROJECT

All F*cked Up



Teaser

[vimeo.com/1131697086/1d0cac8d89?
share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci#t=0](https://vimeo.com/1131697086/1d0cac8d89?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci#t=0)

Synopsis

'All F*cked Up' shows the process of coping with trauma during wartime in everyday civilian life. Director Ganna Iaroshevyh initially follows Mikael, a Danish architect, who is building a therapy garden for civilians suffering from PTSD. When his project falters, the story turns inward to Ganna herself. Through therapy sessions with a psychologist, Ganna confronts her own repressed trauma, giving rise to moments of irony and intimacy. Structured around the five stages of grief, the film explores how we survive the mental toll of war and how we can adapt, carry on, and find meaning and joy in unstable times.

Contact

Kateryna PTASHKA



All F*cked Up

UKRAINE

In wartime Kyiv, Ukrainian filmmaker Ganna sets out to document the construction of a Danish architect's 'healing garden'. But the story grows as she begins to recognise her own need for healing, awakening a journey into the emotional costs and invisible wounds that everyone around her must also find a way to survive.

Language

Ukrainian, English

Length

80 minutes

Director

Ganna IAROSHEVYCH

Producer

Kateryna PTASHKA
Alexandra BRATYSHCHENKO
Eleron Pictures
Ukraine

Total budget of the film

343,408 €

Financing already in place

15,072 €

Detailed Budget

[all-f-cked-up-detailed-budget.xlsx](#)

Themes

- Global Issues/Conflict
- Health
- Social Issues/Activism

Stage of development

Early development

Needs

- Distributors
- Sales Agents
- Co-producers
- Private Funds / Banks
- TV
- Foreign TV Channel
- Regional funds

Format

- digital
- feature-length

Estimated date of shoot

September 2026

Treatment

'All F*cked Up' seeks to explore the state of mental health in wartime Ukraine, seen through the intertwined personal journeys of two protagonists: Mikael, a Danish architect living in Kyiv, and Ganna, a Ukrainian filmmaker who becomes both the director and one of the subjects of the film.

The film begins with Mikael's idea to build Ukraine's first therapy garden - a public healing space designed to help civilians recover from PTSD. Mikael's arrival in Kyiv and his commitment to the idea spark Ganna's initial interest. She begins filming a story about rebuilding and resilience - one that seems safely outside herself. What begins as a film about someone else's story gradually turns inward. As the war continues and emotional strain deepens, Ganna finds herself unable to stay behind the camera. Her own mental health struggles become a central part of the narrative.

The film seeks to address the mental health crisis brought on by the ongoing war - something rarely discussed openly in Ukrainian society. While bombs, displacement, and physical destruction are widely documented, the emotional cost of surviving long-term war conditions often remains invisible. All F*cked Up creates a space where that invisibility is challenged - by using the personal to speak to the collective.

Ganna is the director of the film so she tries to have control over it, but she's also vulnerable, burnt out, struggling with anxiety and responsibility. Mikael is charismatic, chaotic, unpredictable and sometimes irritating. Their relationship in the film is collaborative, emotional, funny and sometimes tense. But it is also essential to the narrative arc, because they demonstrate human connection under pressure. These two people, each navigating their own inner chaos, collide and coexist during the war. Ganna and Mikael are not trying to "save" each other, they are simply witnessing each other, allowing the other's transformation to begin.

Around the unfolding narratives, the visual language will take a creative approach, using nature as a metaphor for healing as a nonlinear, seasonal process: sometimes slow, but always in motion. The film embraces contradictions of a war-life-balance Ukrainians have lived with since the beginning of war: humor coexists with grief, fear of being killed by a missile with the desire to go to a concert of a favourite band. Life must go on, even under the threat of death.

Film exposes recordings of Ganna's therapy sessions, while visually represented by images of nature. Against the emotional landscape, nature quietly continues its own rhythm, the seasons shift. Using nature as a timekeeper in the film subtly reminds us that life is moving forward, even when the protagonists of the film feel stuck. Nature is not always comforting, but it is constant - it becomes a kind of emotional metronome in the documentary.

All F*cked Up is a three-act documentary structured around the five stages of grief, divided into chapters that mirror the emotional journey of its protagonists.

Act 1: Denial

The film opens with Ganna behind the camera, focused on Mikael's therapy garden project. Ganna avoids acknowledging her own mental state, though it's evident in her refusal to plan ahead and her emotional distance. Mikael, driven and chaotic, pursues his vision to build Kyiv's first therapy garden, confronting bureaucratic and wartime obstacles with relentless energy. Their dynamic has moments of tension, often hidden behind jokes or distractions, hinting at deeper feelings they're not ready to talk about.

Act 2: Anger, Bargaining, and Depression

Ganna steps into the frame, revealing her inner struggles through therapy sessions and moments of vulnerability. The boundary between filmmaker and subject blurs as she confronts her burnout and anxiety openly. Mikael, meanwhile, keeps pushing the project forward, organizing interviews with Ukrainians about mental health and nature. He presses on with the garden's development but faces setbacks - declining volunteer support, funding challenges, and war's unpredictability - leading to frustration and slow-burning conflict with Ganna. Their collaboration strains under the weight of personal and external pressures.

Act 3: Acceptance

The therapy garden officially opens, receiving mixed reactions from the public. Ganna continues therapy and starts antidepressants, acknowledging the lasting impact of trauma. Mikael launches a new creative public space project and reconnects with his artistic drive. Their relationship shifts from tension to mutual support. In this final act, both characters stop resisting the emotional toll of war and begin to integrate it into their daily life. In a reflective moment alone in the garden, Ganna embraces the reality that healing is ongoing - there is no neat resolution - the trauma will stay with her, but it doesn't have to define her.

Director

Ganna IAROSHEVYCH

Filmography

Director:

2023 – Art in the Land of War. Anton Logov, short documentary - director, editor/ DocNoteFilms;
2023 – Art in the Land of War. Olha Pilyuhina, short documentary - director/ DocNoteFilms;
2021 – As far as possible, full-length documentary – director, producer/ TABOR Production;
2015 — Diana, short documentary – director/ Babylon'13;
2015 – Where's Our Home?, short documentary – director/ Babylon'13;
2014 – Hospital, short documentary – director/ Babylon'13;

Editor:

2023 – Flowers of Ukraine, full-length documentary - editor, 1st AD/ Gogol Film;
2022 – You know it is going to be about war, short documentary – editor/ MonteVideo Production;
2022 — Zoopatrul, short documentary - editor/ Babylon'13.

Biography

Ganna Iaroshevych is a Ukrainian film director and editor. A graduate of the Sergey Bukovsky Film Programme and the IDFA Academy alumna, she has worked with Babylon'13 since 2014, creating 14 short documentaries. Her debut feature, As Far as Possible (2021), was screened at international festivals and received the Andriy Matrosov Award at Docudays UA. Ganna is currently directing her second feature film, All F*cked Up.

Producer

Eleron Pictures

Company profile

Founded by Alexandra Bratyshchenko, a producer with 15 years in the industry, ELERON PICTURES has brought author-driven films to festivals such as Hot Docs, IDFA, and platforms such as Cannes Docs and Ex Oriente. With a focus on stories rooted in memory, identity, and resilience, ELERON PICTURES builds international co-productions and guides projects from idea to impact, always staying true to one principle: everything but indifference.

Our debut documentary, "Guests from Kharkiv," premiered at Hot Docs 2023 amid the full-scale invasion. Currently, we are actively engaged in several documentary projects, including "All Fucked Up" by Ganna Iaroshevych, and are developing the animation short film "Cherry Pierogy" by Olha Havrylova, as well as the fiction debut, "Fucking Sensitivity" by Tetyana Symon.

Kateryna PTASHKA

Biography

Kateryna Ptashka is an aspiring producer and experienced editor from Ukraine. In 2020, she accomplished the edit of the feature-length documentary *As Far As Possible* (dir. Ganna Iaroshevych). In 2022 Kateryna was engaged as a local producer in the filming of the short documentary *You Know It's Going to be About War* (dir. Olha Tsybulska). Last 2 years Kateryna worked on the producing of the documentary project *Unknown No1* (dir. Markiiian Miroshnychenko), participated in the ZagrebDox workshop, DocLab Go Poland, WEMW Inspirational Lab. In 2023 she took part in the EURODOC local session. Kateryna is currently enrolled on the Documentary Campus Masterschool's 10-month training programme with the documentary project *All Fucked Up*, directed by Ganna Iaroshevych.

Alexandra BRATYSHCHENKO

Biography

Alexandra Bratyshchenko is a Kyiv-based producer whose professional journey in narrative filmmaking began in 2010. Since 2014, she has focused on documentaries, joining the #BABYLON'13 collective. She produced *Fragile Memory*, featured in IDFA's Best of Fest (2022), and her company, ELERON PICTURES, debuted with *Guests from Kharkiv* at Hot Docs (2023). Alexandra has also contributed to films that premiered at the Venice Film Festival, Toronto IFF, and Warsaw IFF. She is a member of the European Film Academy and has participated in EAVE on Demand (2019, 2023) and EURODOC (2023).

Alexandra continues to work on projects that highlight important social issues and promote international co-production. In 2025, she collaborated with X-Filme Creative Pool and 2Brave Productions on the feature film *I Rarely Wake Up Dreaming*, directed by Isabel Stever.

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PROJECT

Beautiful Death



Teaser

[vimeo.com/1118362228/05d238e5e3?
share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci](https://vimeo.com/1118362228/05d238e5e3?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci)

Synopsis

Latvian palliative physician Līga Keiša-Ķirse faces a paradoxical task as a doctor: instead of saving lives, she must prepare each of her dying patients for the best possible death. Her journey interweaves with the work of neuroscientist Jimo Borjigin, who has observed bursts of clarity in the dying brain; cardiologist Pim van Lommel, whose studies suggest evidence of consciousness when brain function has stopped; and anthropologist Tawni T. Tidwell, who researches yogis whose bodies resist decay after death. The film bridges science and ritual, inviting us to face death with curiosity and hope.

Contact

Elza GAUJA
Producer/Writer
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Beautiful Death

LATVIA

What makes a beautiful death? Modern neuroscience meets ancient ritual to reimagine our deepest fear, as death increasingly proves itself not an endpoint, but a passage, both profound and unexpectedly blissful.

Language

English, Latvian, Tibetan

Length

90 minutes

– Feature Doc

Director

Andris GAUJA

Producer

Elza GAUJA
Andris GAUJA
Riverbed

Total budget of the film

731,525 €

Financing already in place

20,000 €

Detailed Budget

[📄 budget-top-sheet-
2025-09-10.pdf](#)

Themes

- Arts & Culture
-
- Environment/Nature/Conser
- Lifestyle
- Science/Knowledge

Stage of development

Late development

Needs

- Distributors
- Sales Agents
- Co-producers
- Private Funds / Banks
- TV
- Foreign TV Channel
- Regional funds

Format

- digital
- feature-length
- one-off

Estimated date of shoot

2026/11/01

Treatment

‘Beautiful Death’ is a cinematic journey into one of humanity’s oldest mysteries: what happens when we die. From the outset, the film takes an investigative lens — following neuroscientists, physicians, and masters of ancient traditions who each, in their own way, search for evidence that death is not an endpoint but eventually the greatest journey of life, transcending imagination, and perhaps even bringing joy.

At the center is Dr. Līga Keiša, a palliative care physician in Riga, Latvia, who confronts the paradox of her profession: in palliative care, the goal is not to rescue but to offer the best possible experience of dying. Her days unfold like investigations into the unknown: flood a patient with painkillers, or preserve clarity at the cost of pain? Should families stay close, or step back? And in moments of panic, could a guided psychedelic experience bring true relief? Līga’s quiet reflections and interactions, captured by an ever-zooming camera, become clues leading viewers into broader scientific quests redefining death itself.

The film is structured in three acts, always returning to Līga as its emotional backbone. With images sliding through neuroscience labs, palliative care units, and Himalayan rituals, Act One dismantles the view of death as a simple endpoint. Act Two uncovers insights reframing death as a process filled with mystery, awareness, even happiness. Act Three explores ritualized arts of dying and the Tibetan sky burial, revealing images never before shown on the big screen, testing whether death can

be seen not as an enemy but as a natural part of life.

In parallel, the film follows neuroscientist Dr. Jimo Borjigin of the University of Michigan, whose pioneering research into the dying brain has revealed startling data, showing surges of gamma activity — markers of conscious perception — after clinical death, alongside serotonin spikes, suggesting clarity and even euphoria. These findings challenge the idea of death as a sudden stop, showing instead a cascade of powerful experiences unfolding over 30 minutes or more. Now moving to China, to work directly with her next study participants — dying patients, Borjigin is the first scientist to show consciousness may not vanish with the heartbeat. Could this signal mind transcends body?

The investigation turns to Lama Choying Rinpoche, a Tibetan meditation master in Sikkim, India. His descriptions of the dissolution process — a final energy waterfall from head to heart — align with Borjigin's data. Rinpoche, in his ascetic room, meets his students, coming from different parts of world, and their conversations are simple, yet profound and filled with long silent pauses.

The inquiry deepens with Tukdam, the Tibetan meditative death state in which yogis remain seated, their bodies resisting decay for weeks after clinical death.

Anthropologist Dr. Tawni T. Tidwell (University of Wisconsin–Madison) investigates Tukdam with scientific tools, in collaboration with Tibetan monastics. Filmed in remote monasteries and Indian clinics, the puzzle starts to come together: scientists recording physiological markers, practitioners describing inner states, offering clues to a mystery science has yet to solve. In this view, consciousness is a continuum, not a brain product — a radical challenge to Western assumptions.

Dutch cardiologist Dr. Pim van Lommel extends the inquiry through decades of research on near-death experiences. His patients, clinically dead for minutes, report vivid perception, expanded awareness, and profound peace — the reports are illustrated by metaphorical shots. Van Lommel's hypothesis — that consciousness is non-local, transmitted through the brain — reframes death as transition into expanded awareness.

If mind is so powerful, can it help the dying body? The film turns to Dr. Richard Harris, a palliative care physician at the University of California, Irvine, who draws on shamanic traditions — drumming, music, and legal psychedelic therapy — to guide patients beyond pain management, opening consciousness for reconciliation, transcendence, and relief from despair. Harris's work, experimental, controversial and deeply emotional for his patients, brings us back to Līga Keiša who reflects on these perspectives, while constrained by the fixed parameters of Western medicine.

The final act turns outward, asking how cultures approached death when not hidden behind hospital walls. In Bhutan and Tibet, we witness vanishing sky burials, where bodies are offered to vultures — sometimes ground into porridge for birds, fish, and insects, the process observed by relatives. These rituals, raw yet poetic, reflect a world-view where death is return, even benefit to other beings — and where mind does not end but moves through forms we call lives.

Visually, 'Beautiful Death'; will be intimate, immersive, and poetic. The film aligns with the rhythms of its characters. Using cinematic language to translate scientific and spiritual complexity into visceral experience, frames shift from metaphorical imagery

to character-driven moments, with seamless zooms that feel like piercing layers of reality.

In conclusion, the film invites us to reexamine our greatest fear not as darkness, but as passage that may hold unexpected beauty — and perhaps even clues to who we really are.

Director's statement

The desire to explore death in my creative work is not new. 20 years ago I made one of my first documentaries, *Viktors* (2007), documenting a young person's journey toward death as he attempted coming to terms with life and his relationships.

Why return to this subject now? Firstly, life has steered me into the realm of scientific documentaries. Since the pandemic, I've developed and entered the production of *Beautiful Void*, a film about quantum physics. Meanwhile, I recently created a short scientific film, *The Art of Looking*, about a fractal pattern which repeats itself on every scale of the universe — the short film now serves as a prelude to the overarching *Beautiful Trilogy*, containing both *Beautiful Void* and this proposed project, *Beautiful Death*.

While working on *Beautiful Void*, where the theme of death was initially only a side topic, it became clear that death warranted a full-length feature in its own right. We had accumulated a substantial amount of material closely tied to death. The *Beautiful Death* story highlights the scientists we connected with and, potentially, the ordinary people who encounter death directly.

Thirdly, I have developed personal interest in Buddhist philosophy.

And last but not least, I have also adopted a stylistic approach I find oddly close and dear — juxtaposing seemingly disparate scientific perspectives in a mosaic, revealing new insights about our world. I've also embraced a specific formal strategy: a seamless zoom in every shot, symbolizing my desire to penetrate this reality to understand what it's made of—idealistic as it may sound. The film's overall aesthetic fuses narrative elements that attempt to answer the ultimate question— what is death?—with a visual exploration.

Production note

The film '*Beautiful Death*' is intended for international audiences, with a strategy to achieve wide geographic reach through global shooting locations, diverse characters, and an international co-production model.

Our partners from the first film of Andris Gauja's '*Beautiful trilogy*', '*Beautiful Void*', are returning for '*Beautiful Death*': Bulgarian studio Agitprop (producer Martichka Bozhilova), and Estonian studio Film Tower (producer Margus Õunapuu). Thus, the film has been a co-production since the very beginning.

Development of '*Beautiful Death*' has been underway for about two years. We've gathered valuable footage from protagonists such as Jimo Borjigin, Tawnie T. Tidwell, Robin Goldman, Pim van Lommel, the 17th Karmapa, and Dilgo Khyentse Yangsi Rinpoche, and filmed in visually striking locations like Kathmandu's open-air cremation site, the Riga Anatomy Museum, and Valmiera Crematorium. Additional filming is planned at the Drikung Kagyu Monastery in Tibet, the Forensic Anthropology

Research Facility in Michigan, and other. A research trip to the University of Michigan will allow us to film Jimo Borjigin at work in the Reanimation Department, as well as capture her in personal settings. Another trip was recently made to Bhutan, capturing research footage of the unique sky burial tradition, never shown on big screen before. Another trip to India is planned to join Tidwell and Goldman in scientific measurements around a lama's body that shows no decomposition.

We plan to participate in pitching forums (CPH:DOX, IDFA Forum etc.) as well as the World Congress of Science & Factual Producers, to take the project further, while simultaneously applying for national and international public funding.

Director

Andris GAUJA

Filmography

"The Art of Looking" (2024, short documentary) - Co-producer, Director, Writer

"Nothing Can Stop Us Now" (2019, feature film) — Producer, Director, Writer, Composer

"The Lesson" (2014, feature film) — Producer, Director, Co-Writer, Music Composer

"Family Instinct" (2010, documentary film) - Director, Writer, Co-Composer

"Victor" (2009, documentary film) — Director, Writer, Co-Composer

"3000 km to the Promised Land" (2006, documentary) - Producer, Director, Writer

Biography

Andris Gauja has written and directed documentaries (Family Instinct (2010, IDFA nomination, AFI Docs Grand Prix, Cinema Eye Honors nomination)) as well as narrative films (Nothing Can Stop Us Now (2019, nine nominations for the Latvian National Film Prize) and The Lesson (2014, Montreal IFF, Chicago IFF, Bergen IFF, etc.)). In his films, he often explores thought-provoking topics. Currently focused on scientific documentaries, Andris is a doctoral candidate in film studies. His recent science documentary short The Art of Looking premiered at Jihlava IDFF and has been selected for 26 film festivals.

Producer

Riverbed

Company profile

Riverbed is a full-service film production company based in Riga, Latvia, focused on auteur-driven storytelling with powerful imagery. Run by Andris Gauja and Elza Gauja, both filmmakers, Riverbed has produced documentaries and narrative films, with a

good score in international film festival selections, and showing success at the box office locally in Latvia. Riverbed is an active co-producer of internationally produced documentaries, partnering with Estonia, Bulgaria, Italy and other countries. Since 2023, Riverbed has also become active in the local theatrical distribution of quality films.

Elza GAUJA

Biography

Elza Gauja works as a producer, director, and writer. Her latest full-length feature film *A Postcard from Rome* (2024) was awarded the Best Feature at the Latvian National Film Awards and was selected for the Sydney IFF, Goa IFF and other IFFs. Her debut fiction film *Keep Smiling, Mom!* (2022) was successfully released nationwide and her feature documentary *Meanwhile in Lucavsala* (2022) was crowned the Best Debut at the Latvian National Film awards.

Andris GAUJA

Biography

Andris is a professional doctoral candidate in film studies, recognized for directing and producing award-winning documentaries like *Family Instinct* (nominated at IDFA and Cinema Eye Honors, the winner of AFI-Docs) and narrative films such as *The Lesson* (selected for multiple international film festivals). Currently focused on scientific documentaries, Andris recently premiered *The Art of Looking at Jihlava* IDFF and has his scientific feature doc *Beautiful Void* in the financing phase, with several countries already on board. He is now seeking broadcasting and distribution partnerships.

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PROJECT

Bodies Under Control



Teaser

vimeo.com/1129115624?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci

Password:

Synopsis

A new body ideal is spreading - marketed by pharma giants, amplified by black markets, spread by social media. Being thin is beautiful again. Bodies under Control investigates this shift through a web series and a social media project. What drives your body image? We meet people who lost half their body weight, artists using manga to fight for acceptance of overweight people, critical thinkers exposing one of the world's most powerful companies. At stake is more than beauty - it is autonomy, economics, and identity. But the story doesn't end here... It ends with the audience and their route to a self-determined body image.

Bodies Under Control

GERMANY

Who controls your body image? Is it really you... or somebody else? From slimming injections like Ozempic to black market drugs, from genetics to politics, Bodies under Control is a web series and a social media project. It is a road trip into the hidden forces shaping our body image – and to the people fighting to reclaim it.

Language

English

Length

0 minutes

– Doc Series

Number of episodes

7 episodes

Length of the episodes

23 minutes

Director

Lisbeth SCHRÖDER

Matthias ZUBER

Producer

Matthias ZUBER

Polyeides Medienkontor

Germany

Contact

Lisbeth SCHRÖDER

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Andreas MARTIN
Autentic GmbH

Total budget of the film
761,393 €

Financing already in place
0 €

Detailed Budget
[📄 budget-bodies-under-control-new.pdf](#)

Themes
– Digital-first
Content/Online
– Factual Entertainment
– Global Issues/Conflict
– Health
– Human Interest/Family
– Politics
– Science/Knowledge

Stage of development
Early development

Needs
– Distributors
– Sales Agents
– Co-producers
– Private Funds / Banks
– TV
– Foreign TV Channel
– Regional funds

Format
– digital

Estimated date of shoot
September 2026

Treatment

Body positivity is dead. Size-zero models are back on the runways, TikTok floods feeds with “Skinnytok” and the American Society of Plastic Surgeons declares we are entering the “ballet body” era.

Who is behind all this?

Let's embark on an investigative road trip around the world. At each spot, we ask the same question: Who controls your body image - how you see and feel about your body? At each spot we get a different answer that brings us one step closer to understanding the bigger picture. How much does culture, genetics, industry, the black market, social status and politics influence how we see our bodies? And what is the purpose of these forces?

BODIES UNDER CONTROL is a web series and social media project. We're following journalist and content creator Lisbeth Schröder as she tells stories of science and of our protagonists - people who struggle with their body image or fight for body positivity. Filmed by a flexible crew and Lisbeth's smartphone, we blur the line between documentary and social media.

Web series (7 episodes)

Each episode offers a different answer to the question: Who controls our body image? But every answer sparks a conflict, which carries us into the next episode.

1. Japan – Desire and Stigma

Meowko, a pole dancer and influencer with more than a million followers, guides Lisbeth through Japan's culture of thinness. Together they meet a scientist who explains why Japan, with only 4.5% overweight, has the thinnest population in the world — and how deeply the stigma of “fatness” is embedded in society. Meowko also shows Lisbeth strange phenomena and spaces of resistance: an agency that rents out “big people” for social events; the pop band Big Angel whose performances turn body size into a celebration; and manga artist Moyoco Anno, who depicts the struggles of living outside Japan's beauty norms. In Japan, the answer to our question is: CULTURE - but we meet people who invent alternative spaces in art, manga, and music.

2. Turkey – The Underground Market

WHO cites Turkey as a major source of counterfeit pharmaceuticals, often tied to human trafficking and prostitution. Lisbeth accompanies a police unit investigating organized crime and fake drugs. Along the way she meets a former prostitute forced to take counterfeit slimming injections and still suffering the consequences. With a pharmacist, Lisbeth explores how these counterfeits work and how people can be protected.

3. USA – Inequality and Ideals

In the US, Lisbeth sees how social status dictates health. We see “food deserts” in action where billboards for junk food dominate, while fruit and vegetables are absent. People with lower incomes are often affected by obesity. In the Bronx Lisbeth meets activist Tanja Fields, who left her corporate career to fight food injustice and build local farms. In parallel Lisbeth spends time with a disadvantaged woman who is struggling with obesity.

4. Germany – Tradwives and Populism

Lisbeth is confronted on the net by slim women and muscular men who speak about traditional roles, discipline and patriotism. She meets some of these influencers, like Anna Leisten, Caroline Deisler or Marie-Thérèse Kaiser, who are often closely con-

nected with extreme right-wing politics. When she meets members of the Junge Nationalisten and the Thüringische Jugend she discovers that the body is treated as a battlefield, where the ideal of the perfect body is politically charged with fascist and neo-Nazi ideology. And she also meets people resisting them.

5. The Netherlands – Between Nurture and Nature

Our DNA shapes our bodies and also what we find attractive. Lisbeth meets geneticists researching these fields as well as the Dutch artist Roos Tulen. Despite growing up in a family with a history of obesity, she once trained obsessively for a bikini contest. When she realized she could not win, she turned her struggle into art, inviting photographers across the Netherlands to portray her body through their eyes – naked, vulnerable, sometimes provocative. Now she wants to repeat this and be shown in one of the biggest galleries in the Netherlands. Through her Lisbeth will discover how to find real body acceptance.

6. Denmark – The Corporate Giant

The origins of the weight loss injection Ozempic. Lisbeth meets Lasse Sandborg, an investigative journalist researching one of the world leaders in slimming injections, Novo Nordisk. Its fund is bigger than the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Lasse shows Lisbeth how the company, in Denmark alone, is paying over a billion euros to promote science. Politics, interest groups and influencers worldwide are closely tied to Novo Nordisk. Lisbeth dives into the behind-the-scenes world of economy and politics. But big business is not invulnerable.

7. Germany - Reclaiming the Narrative

The series is accompanied by a TikTok and an Instagram channel: bodiesincontrol. Before production of the series begins, Lisbeth will discuss how body images influence us. The discussion will have a direct impact on the editorial. In the last episode Lisbeth will visit three of her followers and explore their route to a self-determined body image.

Director's statement

Lisbeth: Weight is more than a personal issue. For me, eating cake was once empowerment, a small act of feminism. But I watched the person dearest to me, my mother, suffer from the consequences of her weight. It grew harder for her to get up, to hike, or simply do what she loved.

Now, weight-loss injections like Ozempic are hailed as the answer. In my last film I spoke with scientists about them. Such drugs could reshape the world – airlines counting every kilo, food firms reformulating products, pharmaceutical giants spending billions to sway doctors.

These injections are changing our relationship to our bodies. As a scientist turned filmmaker, I want to uncover what drives this shift – industry, genetics, politics or something else? On a personal level, I want to know what this means for people like my mother. How it pressures people everywhere. And how we can protect ourselves.

Matthias: As a documentary filmmaker, I used to have pretty rigid opinions about social media videos. But when I became editor-in-chief of two social media formats, I got to see the other side. The channels that really work are authentic, funny, open,

and super close to their audience – and honestly, that’s something documentaries often miss.

I’ve always loved working with younger people, which is why a lot of video projects grew out of lectures I gave at journalism schools. That keeps me connected to topics that matter to a younger crowd, while still bringing in the perspective of someone with a bit of life experience.

Now, together with Lisbeth, we’ve got the chance to create a project that feels truly relevant, keeps surprising people, and fits perfectly with today’s viewing habits.

Production note

Over half of Europeans and 75 percent of US Americans are overweight or obese, while thinness is making a comeback through booming cosmetic surgery, fashion trends, and social media. With drugs like Ozempic – praised by celebrities and turning its manufacturer into one of Europe’s most valuable companies – scientists warn a new wave of injections will make body image one of the most pressing cultural and economic issues of the years ahead.

Bodies under Control responds to this moment with a cross-platform strategy:

- Web series (7 episodes) tailored for Gen Z and Millennials
- Interactive TikTok & Instagram project to build early engagement and involve audiences directly

Community participation is central. The hashtag #Bodypositive alone has more than 17 million posts on Instagram, showing the ongoing relevance of this debate. We also collaborate with influencers reaching hundreds of thousands to over a million followers, some of whom we have worked with before.

We bring documentaries to a new era, which is shaped by social media channels and their aesthetics and kind of storytelling. We develop a style which is close to the social media viewing habits.

Unlike earlier films that focus on individual stories of body positivity, our project takes a broader, investigative approach: exploring whether the return of thinness marks a societal shift, how pharmaceutical companies spend billions to influence doctors, and how politics, economics, and culture intersect in shaping beauty norms.

Bodies under Control is a globally relevant project for which we are seeking partners.

Director

Lisbeth SCHRÖDER

Filmography

Terra Xplore (ZDF) - 2024: Emotional Eating: Das hilft dir!
42 (arte) - 2024 – Die Antwort auf fast alles: Sind invasive Arten besser als ihr Ruf?

Biography

Lisbeth Schröder (1992) knows body image from both sides: the body-positive bubble where cake is empowerment, and the painful limits of obesity in her own family. A scientist by training, she is

re: (arte) - 2022 - Die große Dürre
beta stories (Bayerischer Rundfunk) -
2022: Pränataldiagnostik in der
Schwangerschaft: Wie Bluttests uns
verändern
Der Fall (funk) - 2021: Kampf um
Selbstbestimmung – Der Fall Britney
Spears

Matthias ZUBER

Filmography

[2020–2022 Editor-in-Chief of represent
and Der Fall (both for FUNK - web
videos); 2022–2024 Editor of 42 (arte)]

2021

- Musikvideo: „Komm schon klar“ (SLIME)
(3'30"); concept, camera, editing
- Du riechst nach Berlin (HD, 30'); RBB
(08.01.2021); writer, producer, camera,
editing

2019

- Documentation of the multiplier
seminar of the Polish Social Council
(23.11.2019); director, camera, editing
- Infosys Onboarding 2019 in Mysore
(India) for Infosys Germany (HD, 9');
editing
- Documentation of the state conference
of migrant organizations, refugee
initiatives and new organizations for the
Turkish Federation in
Berlin-Brandenburg e.V. (HD, 07.11.2019);
writer, producer, camera, editing
- Teaser for Teresa Bücker (HD, 3');
Süddeutsche Zeitung (28.08.2019); writer,
producer, camera, editing

2018

- Bombardier Polestar – Kickstarter (HD,
4'); concept, camera, editing
- Several films for TU Munich as part of
the 150-year anniversary celebrations;

drawn to weight-loss injections and the
forces behind them. A graduate of the
German School of Journalism, she co-
founded a narrative collective and joined
Documentary Campus. As a freelance
filmmaker, she produced award-
nominated films on medicine,
psychology, and the environment for arte
and ZDF, earning recognition from
Holtzbrinck and Naturvision.

Biography

Matthias Zuber (1965) is a journalist and
filmmaker. After training at the German
School of Journalism, Munich, he
founded polyeides medienkontor and
produced films for cinema, ARD, ZDF,
arte and other international companies.
His feature documentary „German Souls“
won several awards and screened in
cinemas. Other works include „Sing
Freedom“ about a female prisoner in
Russia and „Simon's War Against
Ukraine“ about the start of the conflict in
Donetsk. A former editor-in-chief at
FUNK's REPRESENT and DER FALL, he
teaches at journalism schools across
Germany. He now works again as a
producer and director.

concept, camera, editing

- Development of several documentary concepts with research shoots

2017

- Sehnsuchtsziel Wunschkind – Deutsche Baby-Touristen (HD, 45'); Bayerisches Fernsehen (11.01.2017); camera

2016

- Ein Zelt voller Geschichten – documentary (HD, approx. 10'); for Robert Bosch Stiftung and Berliner

Journalistenschule (Oct 2016); writer, director, camera, editing, production

- FakeNews erkennen (HD, approx. 15'); for Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung and Berliner Journalistenschule (Oct 2016); writer, director, camera, editing, production

2015

- Krieger Made in Germany – Simon im Kampf gegen die Ukraine (DVCPHD, 30'); ARD (first broadcast: 15.11.2015); writer, director, camera, editing, production

- Kinder in Uniform – Indiens Kinderpolizisten (DVCPHD, 13'); 3sat; auslandsjournal extra (first broadcast: 11.12.2015); writer, director, editing, production

- Film portraits of Angela Köckritz, Mark Siemons, Martin Gronemeyer, and Christine Adelhardt for the MERCATOR award ceremony (25.02.2015); writer, production

2014

- Image film for Gentner-Verlag about the study „f.ma Fachentscheider Gebäudetechnik SHK“ (DVCPHD, 3'); completed 21.09.2014; writer, director, camera, editing, production

- Fast Cast (DVCPHD, 7'); ZAPP, NDR (first broadcast: 29.10.2014); writer, camera, editing, production

- Fast Cast (DVCPHD, 10'); „Einblick“, BR (first broadcast: 02.11.2014); writer,

camera, editing, production

2013

- Vom Knast ins Showbiz – Alltag im russischen Frauengefängnis (DVCPPro HD, 45'); ZDFinfo (first broadcast: 28.11.2013);

writer, director, camera, editing, production

- Einsatz-Kamera-Trupp in Afghanistan (DVCPPro HD, 7'); ZAPP, NDR (first broadcast: 07.08.2013); writer, camera, editing, production

- Kampffilmer Bundeswehr (DVCPPro HD, 10'); „Einblick“, BR (first broadcast: 04.08.2013); writer, camera, editing, production

2012

- Reinalyn will raus aus dem Müll (DVCPPro HD, 30'); „Schau in meine Welt“, KIKA (first broadcast: 25.11.2012); writer, camera, editing, production

- Raus aus dem Müll (DVCPPro HD, 3'); „Erde an Zukunft“, KIKA (first broadcast: 28.10.2012); writer, on-site editor, camera, production

- Häuser und Jobs für die Ärmsten der Philippinen (DVCPPro HD, 9'); „Kulturmontag“, ORF2 (first broadcast: 15.10.2012); writer, camera, editing, production

- Der Kampf gegen die Lebensmittelverschwendung (DVCPPro HD, 6'); „Zwischen Himmel und Erde“, rbb (first broadcast: 06.10.2012); writer, camera, editing

- Culinary Misfits (DVCPPro HD, 5'); yourope, arte (first broadcast: 30.06.2012); writer, camera, editing

- Nackt auf dem Wasser (short fiction, RED EPIC, approx. 20'); shoot in January, production until summer; screenplay, director

- „Schwärmer – Schwindler – Scharlatane“ (book teaser for Böhlau Verlag; XDCAM HD, 5'); completed April; camera, editing

2011

- Editing work on „Traumtänzer“
- Urban Sound Design (XDCAM HD, 5'); Bauerfeind; ZDFkultur and 3sat (first broadcast: 17.07.2011); camera, editing
- Autoimmundefekte (two educational films with dramatized scenes for Biotest) (XDCAM HD, 40'); completed summer 2011; script, camera, director

2010

- 100 prozentig ostwärts – Portrait of fruit distiller Georg W. Schenk (XDCAM HD, 7'); ECO Schweizer Fernsehen (first broadcast: 20.09.2010); director, camera, editing
- Der Designer Jean Marie Massaud und sein Hüttenprojekt für die Bewohner der Müllhalde von Cebu, Philippinen (XDCAM HD, 8'); Metropolis, arte (first broadcast: 19.06.2010); writer, director, camera, editing
- Africa Calling – Der Fernsehsender A24 (XDCAM HD, 7'); ZAPP, NDR (first broadcast: 02.06.2010); writer, production
- DER BERGFÜRST by Philip Vogt (DVCPro HD); co-production with Bayerisches Fernsehen (editor: Petra Felber) and HFF Munich; funded by FFF Bayern; executive producer; opening film at DOK.fest Munich (05.05.2010); Jury and Audience Award at Provinziale Eberswalde 2010
- Balu und Du (XDCAM HD, 7'); blickpunkt, ZDF (first broadcast: 11.04.2010); writer, camera
- DIE TRAUMTÄNZER (RED 4K, approx. 90'); theatrical documentary; director, production

2009

- MEERKAMPF – WATT? theatrical documentary by Frank D. Müller; funded by Filmförderung Schleswig-Holstein; premiere at Hof International Film Festival 2009; camera
- Business by Heart – Bobby Dekeyser

(XDCAM HD, 9'); ECO Schweizer
Fernsehen (first broadcast: 28.09.2009);
director, camera, editing
- Ein Freund für alle Fälle – Wenn Kinder
einen Paten brauchen (XDCAM HD, 30');
MDR (first broadcast: 14.05.2009); writer,
director, camera, editing
- DEUTSCHE SEELEN – Leben nach der
Colonia Dignidad; premiere in
competition at Max-Ophüls-Festival,
Saarbrücken (29.01.2009); rated
"especially valuable"; co-production with
ZDF „Das Kleine Fernsehspiel“ (editor:
Christian Cloos); funded by Kuratorium
junger deutscher Film and Filmstiftung
Nordrhein-Westfalen; director,
production

2008

- Sprachlos mit einem Schlag – Leben
mit Aphasie (XDCAM HD, 30'); RBB (first
broadcast: 13.12.2008); writer, director,
camera, editing, production
- Der Beat von Berlin (DVCPHD, 8');
kulturzeit, 3sat (first broadcast:
01.10.2008); writer, director, camera,
editing
- Fashion Week London (DVCPHD, 5'30"); euromaxx, Deutsche Welle (first
broadcast: 19.09.2008); director, camera,
editing
- Marubi (DVCPHD, 6'); kulturplatz,
Schweizer Fernsehen (first broadcast:
12.09.2008); writer, director
- Die Zimbern (DVCPHD, 5'30"); Europa
aktuell, Deutsche Welle (first broadcast:
08.2008); camera, editing
- Bassekou Kouyaté (DVCPHD, 6');
Kultur 21, Deutsche Welle (first broadcast:
07.2008); writer, director, camera
- Ngoni Star (DVCPHD, 6'); kulturzeit,
3sat (first broadcast: 22.05.2008); writer,
director, camera
- Sauerkraut für Italien (DVCAM, 6');
Tracks, arte (first broadcast: 16.05.2008);
writer, director, camera

- Glashütte – Präzision aus Sachsen boomt in Fernost (DV CAM, 5'30"); Made in Germany, Deutsche Welle (first broadcast: 22.04.2008); camera, editing
- Wahl-Tag – Uwe Jäntsche (DV, 8'); Kulturmontag, ORF2 (first broadcast: 14.04.2008); writer, director, camera, editing
- Addio Pizzo (DV, 6'); Europa aktuell, Deutsche Welle (first broadcast: 26.03.2008); camera, editing
- Ein Mann rennt durch die Wüste (DVCPRO HD, 8'); polylux, ARD (first broadcast: 13.03.2008); writer, director
- Der Krieg ist noch nicht vorbei – Die Aufarbeitung des spanischen Bürgerkriegs vor Ort (DVCPRO HD, 9'); Lebensart, ORF2 (first broadcast: 07.01.2008); writer, director, camera
- Beginning production of the documentary „Der Bergfürst“ by Philip Vogt (DVCPRO HD); co-production with Bayerisches Fernsehen (editor: Petra Felber) and HFF Munich; executive producer

2007

- Filming for the documentary „MEERKAMPF – WATT“ in Brunsbüttel; production by Frank D. Müller; 2nd camera; funded by Filmförderung Schleswig-Holstein; premiere at Hof Film Festival 2009
 - Kummers Kummer – Wenn Borderline zu Literatur wird (DV Cam, 7'); Metropolis, arte (first broadcast: 12.05.2007); writer, director, camera, production, editing
 - Filming for the documentary „DEUTSCHE SEELEN – Leben nach der Colonia Dignidad“ in Chile; co-production with ZDF „Das Kleine Fernsehspiel“ (editor: Christian Cloos); director, production; funded by Kuratorium junger deutscher Film and Filmstiftung NRW
- 2006
- Start of filming for the documentary

„DEUTSCHE SEELEN – Leben nach der Colonia Dignidad“ in Chile; co-production with ZDF „Das Kleine Fernsehspiel“ (editor: Christian Cloos); director, production

- Image film for the association „Offene Häuser“; writer, director, camera, editing

- Image film for „out / here records“; writer, director, camera, editing

- Pop aus Mali (DV Cam, 8'); Metropolis, arte (first broadcast: 23.09.2006); writer, director, camera, editing

- Trendverlage auf dem Vormarsch (DV Cam, 8'); Metropolis, arte (first broadcast: 20.08.2006); writer, director, camera, editing

- Deutsche Feuerwehr in Santiago (DV Cam, 5'); Windrose, MDR (first broadcast: 30.04.2006); writer, director, camera, editing

- Bunte Tränen (DV Cam, 3'); Berlinale Studio, RBB (first broadcast: 17.02.2006); writer, director, camera, editing

- Ein Requiem für Kodachrome 40 (DV Cam, 6'); Kultur 21, DW-TV (first broadcast: 10.02.2006); writer, director, camera, editing

2005

- Several image films (including Jugendkirche Winterthur; Israel Museum, Jerusalem)

- Offene Häuser (DV Cam, 6'); nah dran, MDR (first broadcast: 29.09.2005); writer, director, camera, editing

- 100 Jahre Kunst in Israel (DV Cam, 7'); artour, MDR (first broadcast: 17.05.2005); writer, director

- Draußen – Alleinerziehende auf Partnersuche (IMX/DV Cam, 30'); RBB (first broadcast: 29.01.2005); writer, director, co-camera

2004

- Brüder zur Sonne – Stencil-Art tritt aus dem Schatten der Illegalität (Digibeta, 7'); Metropolis, arte (first broadcast:

18.09.2004); writer, director, camera

- Einbürgerung (Digibeta, 6'); Kontraste, ARD (first broadcast: 10.06.2004); writer, director

- Ghettokids (Digibeta, 7'30"); Tracks, arte (first broadcast: 20.05.2004); writer, director, camera

- Eine Deutschlandreise (corruption at Deutsche Bahn) (Digibeta, 8'); Kontraste, ARD (first broadcast: 01.04.2004); writer, director

- „Liebe tut weh“ – sexual abuse of the intellectually disabled (Digibeta, 30'); ARD (first broadcast: 15.03.2004); writer, director, camera

2003

- Bauen für Gott – modern church architecture (Digibeta, 30'); RBB (first broadcast: 20.09.2003); writer, director

- Kaminers Dschungelbuch (Digibeta, 6'); artour, MDR (first broadcast: 04.09.2004); writer, director, camera

- Techno im Jahr 2003 (Digibeta, 8'); Metropolis, arte (first broadcast: 26.07.2003); writer, director, camera

- Zeit für den großen Tritt – Ist Techno tot? (Digibeta, 4'); Kulturgalerie, Deutsche Welle (first broadcast: 12.07.2003); writer, director, camera

- Kaminer in den USA (Digibeta, 5'); artour/kulturzeit, MDR/3sat (first broadcast: 24.04.2003); writer, director, camera

- Sind noch Koffer in Berlin – Der Nachlass von Hildegard Knef (Digibeta, 7'); Kulturzeit, 3sat (first broadcast: 13.01.2003); writer, director

2002

- Tod vor der Geburt (Beta SP, 30'); Sender Freies Berlin (first broadcast: 26.10.2002); writer, director

- Abschiebung auf Verdacht (Beta SP, 6'); Kontraste, Sender Freies Berlin (first broadcast: 19.09.2002); writer, director

- Harry Mulisch zum 75. (Beta SP, 5');

Kulturjournal, NDR (first broadcast:

29.07.2002); writer, director

- Unter Druck – Mitch Frankes Traum vom Baseball (DigiBeta, 25'); Deutsche Welle TV (first broadcast: 10.06.2002); writer, director, camera

- Der Balkan erobert Hollywood (DV Cam, 8'); aspekte, ZDF (first broadcast: 05.07.2002); writer, director, camera 2001

- Hinter Kirchenmauern – Flüchtlinge suchen Asyl (Beta SP, 30'); Sender Freies Berlin (first broadcast: 22.12.2001); writer, director

- Mitch Franke (DigiBeta, 7'); ZDF Sportreportage (first broadcast: 02.09.2001); writer, director, camera

- Flüchtlingskinder (Beta SP, 8'); Kontraste, ARD (first broadcast: 03.05.2001); writer, director

- Illegale Kinder (Beta SP, 30'); Sender Freies Berlin (first broadcast: 24.03.2001); writer, director

- Kontraste, SFB/ARD – freelance contributor

2000

- That's a Woman and a Half – Hildegard Knef (theatrical documentary, 90'); dir.: Clarissa Ruge; Berlinale 2001; Deutscher Filmpreis nomination 2001; co-writer and directing consultant (Berlin, Munich, New York, Los Angeles)

1999

- Im Schatten der verbotenen Stadt – Beobachtungen in Wünsdorf (DigiBeta/Beta SP, 30'); Sender Freies Berlin (first broadcast: 02.10.1999); writer, director, production

- Ich bin stolz ein Deutscher zu sein – nationale Identität und Genforschung; Die Nation – Eine Idee und ihre Folgen (DigiBeta, 13'); writer, director

- „Reinrassig – erstklassig? Annäherung der Wissenschaft“ (DigiBeta, 17'); Forscher Fakten Visionen, Bayerisches

Fernsehen (first broadcast: 29.09.1999);
writer, director
- Vergewaltigt, Verschleppt,
Verschwunden – documentary by
Bayerisches Fernsehen and ARD
(DigiBeta, 45' and 30'); first broadcast:
ARD 25.04.1999; BR 27.04.1999; dir. and
book: Clarissa Ruge; collaborator
1996–1997
- Bayerischer Rundfunk – freelance
contributor on “Espresso”
1992
- Microsoft Windows Discovery Days 1992
(Beta SP, 20'); industrial film for Microsoft
Eastern Europe; script, director,
production; plus three trade-fair films for
Microsoft Eastern Europe (Beta SP, 4'
each); script, director, production
1982–1998
- Various experimental films

Producer

Polyeides Medienkontor

Company profile

Since 1997 we produce documentaries.

Matthias ZUBER

Biography

Matthias Zuber (*1965) founded polyeides medienkontor in 1997. He has written and directed award-winning documentaries for cinema and TV, including German Souls and Du riechst nach Berlin. His work spans stories from Russian prisons to Indian elders and the war in Ukraine. Zuber co-wrote A Woman and a Half on Hildegard Knef and produced The Flag Bearer. He lectured in dramaturgy and video journalism and, after leading Funk's REPRESENT and DER FALL and editing arte's 42, he is now back as a freelance producer, editor, and director.

Autentic GmbH

Andreas MARTIN

PROJECT

Daughter of Two Chinas



Teaser

drive.google.com/file/d/172c-XQwVpSL6WdP7DYVaIJXeeHfDdfu/view?usp=sharing

Synopsis

The brutal stillness of Shanghai's 2022 lockdown reawakens long-buried trauma for Weina —both familial and historic. Seeking freedom, she moves to Berlin and begins rebuilding her relationship with her mother while confronting the shadow of her troubled, deceased father. Reflecting on the past evokes echoes of the Great Famine and the Cultural Revolution, giving Weina a deeper understanding of her family history.

Weina is surprised to find her mother, now in her 70s, entering a new chapter of growth. Across distance, they embark on parallel journeys, reclaiming their voices as Chinese women and reimagining what freedom means to them.

Contact

Weina LI
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weinalipho@gmail.com

Daughter of Two Chinas

GERMANY

Amid the relentless echoes of history, both emotional and geographic, a mother and daughter – shaped by two different Chinas – embark on parallel, yet interwoven journeys of healing, rediscovery and growth.

Language

Chinese, English, German

Length

92 minutes

– Feature Doc

Director

Weina LI

Total budget of the film

605,511 €

Financing already in place

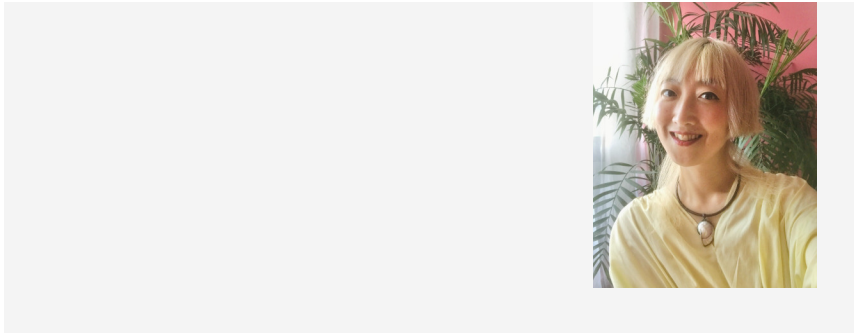
0 €

Detailed Budget

[documentary-budget-daughter-of-two-chinas-110925.pdf](#)

Themes

- Global Issues/Conflict
- History
- Human Interest/Family
- Social Issues/Activism



Stage of development
Early development

- Needs
- Distributors
 - Sales Agents
 - Co-producers
 - Private Funds / Banks
 - TV
 - Foreign TV Channel
 - Regional funds

Format
– feature-length

Estimated date of shoot
February 2025 to
November 2028

Treatment

Weina and her family

The film opens in Berlin with Weina writing in her journal—fragments of memory about her family's story. Her voiceover threads through shifting locations and seasons, from a bustling café to the canal, marking the passage of time and her ongoing search for freedom.

Weina grew up in a chaotic household. Her father, Baochun, whose alcoholism was rooted in the region's industrial decline of the 1990s, died in 2018, forcing her to confront the childhood trauma and the lasting legacy of her parents' generation. Though she had begun to heal, the 2022 Shanghai lockdown—turning the city into a silent, boarded-up ghost town—resurfaced old wounds, a stark reminder of history repeating itself. Friends and family shares bring Baochun's life to the screen, situating one family's pain within the wider currents of modern Chinese history.

Weina's journey starts from her hometown Shenyang to the UK, where she first encountered Western freedom and reflects on individuality—contrasting with her collective upbringing in China. After Shanghai, she moves to Berlin, continuing her search for autonomy. This journey unfolds through archival montage, weaving fragmented images of distant cities and shifting landscapes. From Berlin, she reaches across continents to rebuild her relationship with her mother, Chunling, who is also embracing a new chapter.

Chunling's journey

Chunling's life was forged in turbulence. Born in communist China, she survived the Great Famine, the Cultural Revolution and industrial collapse. Bound by her role as daughter, wife, and mother, she rarely lived for herself. In recent years, she has begun exploring her own freedom. The camera follows her doing yoga, meditation, dancing, painting, and laughing with friends—intimate glimpses of a woman learning to live differently.

Mother and daughter: Parallel Journeys

Mother and daughter embark on a trip of a lifetime across Europe, as they confront the ghosts of their past. At a cemetery in Berlin, they speak openly about life, death and Baochun's passing—taboo subjects between them. At the Berlin Wall, their fingers trace the rough scars of history, and together they reflect on the wounds that turbulent times left in both cultures. In former East Germany they meet friends whose family stories of communism and industrial decline resonate across cultures, revealing how economic collapse shaped community life and emotional legacies are universal.

In Birmingham (UK), they revisit the University campus, talk about identity beyond societal roles and how Western freedom of speech meets Eastern philosophies of inner peace. Ancient churches with shafts of light illuminate quiet moments of reflection on the sacred and the meaning of belief. In Rome, footsteps echo on cobbled streets, as they muse on the Roman Empire's legacy and compare it with China's Tang dynasty, uncovering historical parallels as they discover new sides of one another.

They are not seeking resolution but rather creating space for empathy and imagining futures beyond silence. Sometimes, Weina guides and protects Chunling through unfamiliar places; at others, Chunling lifts the mood with a quick joke or reassuring touch. Together, they shift and alternate—each becoming mother and daughter in turn.

After their transformative journey through Europe, Chunling returns home with a deeper understanding of Weina's choice to being in Berlin, yet the reality of living half a world apart looms as she grows older.

Their connection unfolds across screens and letters—intimate glimpses caught in videos and shared artworks that bridge the distance, they embrace themselves fully as independent women and as mother and daughter. Memories of their travel linger as a touchstone, inspiring them to explore new horizons.

Surrounded by a close circle of boisterous elderly women, each carrying her own history of resilience, Chunling and her friends migrate south each winter to escape the harsh northeast cold, bringing with them the humour of their region—direct, fast-paced and full of joy. They share tears and laughter as they recall difficult times that now feel distant. Yet, those hardships have shaped their strength, and today they live

fully, radiating energy and zest for life. Their positivity balances the film's heavier themes, showing how lightness and pain coexist.

Combining memoir, family portrait, road trip, history and universal concerns, they explore intergenerational trauma, resilience and the womanhood against the backdrop of modern Chinese history.

VISUAL STYLE

The film moves between intimate reflection and lively communal moments. Quiet, observational and bittersweet scenes capture Weina and Chunling's interactions and emotional ups and downs. Shot with natural light and ambient sound, the camera lingers on subtle gestures and glances, intimate close-ups, and gentle movements that reveal unspoken bonds.

The storytelling is fluid and associative rather than linear, unfolding in interwoven layers of memory and present. Scenes from different times interlace like fragments of thought, allowing emotion to build layer by layer. This approach mirrors how memory and trauma surface through reflection, repetition and contrast.

Archive footage, family photographs letters, and historic clippings—from Shenyang's frozen lakes, the Cultural Revolution, to abandoned factories—weave through the narrative, offering historical context without eclipsing its emotional heart.

Director's statement

This film is deeply personal, yet it speaks to millions of families shaped by immense historical upheaval. I never had the chance to reconnect with my father before he passed, and only later did I understand how his lifelong struggle with addiction was bound to broader economic shifts and systemic change. The emotional distance with my mother now offers me a second chance.

As women, my mother and I began our lives within roles society had written for us long before we were seen as individuals. This film traces the quiet, complex process of seeing each other beyond those roles. We come from two different Chinas, moving on separate but connected paths — gradually learning to support each other in becoming more fully ourselves.

Together, we face difficult questions: What does it mean to grow up as a woman in a patriarchal and communist society? How do we navigate intergenerational trauma? What does freedom mean for each of us, emotionally and politically?

Making this film is not only about capturing generational stories that are often overlooked; it is also a journey of rediscovery. In allowing long-buried emotions to surface, there may even be a quiet release for those who are no longer here — a softening, a lightening of what was left unresolved.

Coming from a background in photography and visual art, I am drawn to visualising the unspoken — the emotional weight of silence. This shapes the film's intimate, observational style, grounded in everyday moments that reveal larger truths.

For anyone who has felt that love and pain live side by side in family, for those navigating inherited silence or seeking connection across generations, this story offers a quiet space to reflect — and perhaps, to feel a little less alone.

Director

Weina Li

Filmography

Summer's Struggle (2023)

Director / Script Writer / Producer

Short film (9 minutes 46 seconds)

Eating disorders are increasingly common in China, influenced by cultural ideals that idolize slimness as the beauty standard. Yet, only two hospitals in the country specialise in treatment, and many patients face years of misdiagnosis. This film follows Summer, a young woman newly diagnosed, as she embarks on a long and challenging path to recovery.

Awards: First Prize at the 5th National Mental Health Science Popularization Competition, China

Cocoon (2019)

Director / Performer / Editor

Short film (2 minutes 56 seconds)

Cocoon is inspired by a haunting nightmare the filmmaker experienced during an artist residency in Shanxi, China. This experimental short uses performance art on a frozen ice river to explore personal trauma and fear. Through embodied movement, it examines the connection between body and mind, revealing vulnerability and

Biography

Weina Li is a Chinese filmmaker based in Berlin with a strong background in photography, journalism, and visual art. Bridging Eastern and Western cultures, she creates multimedia works exploring social issues, identity, mental health, and sensory experience. Her acclaimed projects—including “The 61 Silent Days,” “Nv Shu (Female Script),” “Growing Up in Shanghai,” and “Why Did You Leave Me Behind”—have engaged international audiences through exhibitions and publications. Skilled in research, concept development, and cinematography, she is dedicated to amplifying underrepresented voices by blending experimental approaches with social engagement

resilience. Cocoon invites audiences on an intimate journey investigating human endurance and healing.

Screened at:

* "Soulscape", group exhibition, Shanghai, China May 2021

* "Beyond Control", solo exhibition, Ruipin Image, Shanghai, China November 2020

* "Co-existence", solo exhibition, Sino Art Space, Shanghai, China June 2019

Invisible Invasion (2017)

Director / Cinematographer / Editor

Short film (5 minutes 8 seconds)

This experimental short explores human connection to sound within the serene backdrop of a Ming Dynasty traditional Chinese garden. Through intimate observations, the film captures interactions between visitors and ambient noise, revealing how sound shapes perception and experience. Transitioning from natural surroundings to a sound installation, the work invites audiences to reflect on the subtle dialogues between environment, noise, and human presence. It is an immersive study of sensory awareness, soundscapes, and cultural space.

Video Installation exhibited at:

"Wander in wonder", group exhibition, Gengle Hall, Suzhou, China November 2017

PROJECT

Echoes of The Gap



Synopsis

On Colombia's northern coast, the sudden halt of migration through the Darién Gap has left a community in suspension. Once fueled by the constant flow of people, Necoclí now faces economic collapse, uneasy environmental shifts, and stories of survival in the shadow of global policy.

Contact

Harry TATEM



Echoes of The Gap

UNITED KINGDOM

When the Darién Gap falls silent after U.S. border crackdowns, a Colombian town built on migration must confront economic collapse, environmental shifts, and the fragile lives left behind.

Language

Spanish

Length

90 minutes

Director

Harry TATEM

Total budget of the film

300,000 €

Financing already in place

0 €

Detailed Budget

[📄 20241217-documentary-budget-schedule-template-ida.pdf](#)

Themes

– Current

Affairs/Investigation

–

Environment/Nature/Conser

– Global Issues/Conflict

– Human Interest/Family

- Politics
- Social Issues/Activism

Stage of development

Early development

Needs

- Distributors
- Sales Agents
- Co-producers
- Private Funds / Banks
- Regional funds

Estimated date of shoot

2026

Deck

[tinywow-the-gap-deck-84302673.pdf](#)

Treatment

Synopsis

The Darién Gap, a treacherous jungle on the Panama–Colombia border, not so long ago saw over 300,000 migrants pass through each year in search of a better future. But in 2025 sweeping U.S. crackdowns and new enforcement deals brought crossings to a near standstill. The flow that sustained entire local economies vanished almost overnight.

Set in Necoclí, Colombia, the film explores the extraordinary situation of what happens when a migration route falls suddenly silent. Through its people, we show the collapse of livelihoods, fragile environmental shifts, and the on-going human stories long after the headlines fade.

Themes & Impacts

Necoclí is caught between survival and reinvention. Hoteliers face ruin. Fishermen, by contrast, enjoy cleaner waters, yet feel uneasy profiting from absence, and landowners reclaim soil scarred by waste. Meanwhile, reverse migrants return daily with stories of betrayal and crushed dreams.

The film asks: What happens when a town's identity is built on transit, and transit disappears? Should we condemn or sympathize with those who once lived from migration?

Narrative Structure

The story opens with chaos: archival footage of boats, torn camps, cries of exhaustion. Then silence. Necoclí appears - empty beaches, shuttered hotels, still waters.

From here, we follow interconnected arcs: a hotelier clinging to hope, a fisherman torn between prosperity and guilt, a landowner healing ruined ground, a trafficker forced into riskier trades, and reverse migrants heading back to broken futures. Together, they reveal the contradictions of a community suspended between collapse and renewal.

Characters

- Heroldo & Joaquín: A hotelier and shopkeeper left waiting for business that may never return. Arc: denial → hope → reckoning.
- The Fishermen: Benefiting from cleaner waters yet uneasy about their gain. Arc: relief → tension → uncertainty.
- Ayana: A landowner reclaiming soil scarred by camps and waste. Arc: trauma → relief → fragile renewal.
- Reverse Migrants: Returning south, broken but still demonstrating resilience. Arc: hope → failure → resilience.
- The Trafficker: Once guiding migrants, now pushed into riskier roles smuggling drugs or weapons. Arc: adaptation → escalation → danger.

Creative Approach

Visually striking yet intimate, the film blends cinematic digital footage with Super 8 textures and stills to reflect memory and silence. Carefully composed portraits contrast with raw observational scenes. Sound design will lean on ambience and atmosphere, where silence is as important as speech.

Production

A minimal crew - myself, an outstanding local fixer/camera operator, and trusted contacts - will ensure agility, intimacy, and community trust. I'm collaborating with journalist Oliver Schmieg, based in Colombia, whose expertise in migration and cartel reporting brings depth, safety and technical consistency.

Director's Note

My background is in self-shot documentaries tackling urgent, often overlooked issues. With this film, I'll bring the same immersive approach, rooted in long-term presence

and authentic storytelling. This story is urgent and timely—the media has left the Darién Gap, but its aftershocks are only just beginning.

Director

Harry TATEM

Filmography

Directing Filmography:

Skee - On Me (2023)

Calvin - Broad Daylight (2024)

House of Pharaohs - Space X (2024)

Jay G - Double Rs (2024)

SL - Pour Coke (2024)

An Insight Into Hillfields Estate (2025)

Nino Uptown - Haiti (2025)

Nino Uptown - Need For Speed (2025)

Editing Filmography:

Aitch – Close to Home (2022)

Aitch – Louis Vuitton (2022)

Aitch – Round 2 (2023)

Clavish ft Aitch – Tip Toes (2023)

Unknown T – Bon Appétit (2023)

Krept & Konan ft Popcaan – Smooth
Lovin (2024)

Kairo Keyz – Went Up (2024)

Aitch – Bounce (2025)

AJ Tracey ft Big Zuu – Paid In Full (2025)

Biography

Harry Tatem is a UK-based director and editor known for his dynamic visual storytelling. He's worked with Brit Award-winning artist Aitch on projects including the Close to Home album trailer and "Louis Vuitton," and directed videos for SL, Jay G, and Kirbs. His short documentary, An Insight Into Hillfields Estate, earned multiple national university awards. With over 20 music video projects and 30M+ views worldwide, Harry blends immersive, cinematic techniques with factual storytelling, consistently pushing creative boundaries in both directing and editing.

PROJECT

Glowing in the Dark Again - The Minimal Synth Revolution



Glowing in the Dark Again - The Minimal Synth Revolution

GERMANY

From underground innovation to global influence: how the Minimal Synth movement rewrote the rules of electronic music, blending synthetic sounds, drum machine beats, Do-It-Yourself ethos and a lust for creative freedom.

Language

English

Length

53 minutes

– Feature Doc

Director

Pietro ANTON

Producer

Pietro ANTON

T2 Pictures

Germany

Total budget of the film

308,000 €

Teaser

vimeo.com/pietroanton/glowinginthedarkagain

Synopsis

"Glowing in the Dark Again" is a love song to the Minimal Synth movement and a tribute to the first generation of wannabe musicians who started to create raw and futuristic electronic music in the late 70s from the isolation of their bedrooms. They applied the Punk Rock 'do-it-yourself' attitude to synthesizers and drum machines, with basic equipment and a rebellious spirit fighting the lack of authenticity of the mainstream music of their time. By combining apocalyptic visions and dark lyrics with danceable beats, they composed the ultimate soundtrack to the Cold War nightlife.

Contact

Pietro ANTON

Film Director/Producer

+49 174 6405589

pietro@t2pictures.com



Financing already in place
20,000 €

Detailed Budget
[budget-overview.pdf](#)

Themes
– Music

Stage of development
Early development

Needs
– Distributors
– Sales Agents
– Co-producers
– Private Funds / Banks
– TV
– Foreign TV Channel
– Regional funds

Format
– feature-length

Estimated date of shoot
2026

Deck
[gitda-deck-2e.pdf](#)

Treatment

I. The Birth of Minimal Synth

The documentary opens with an introduction to the music landscape of the late 1970s and the innovation brought by synthetic sounds. It sets the stage with the early Minimal Synth pioneers who, inspired by Punk's DIY ethos, tried to emulate its shocking impact using synthesizers, drum machines and home recording techniques, instead of the traditional rock instruments still played by Punks. Daniel Miller's 1978 underground hit Warm Leatherette (performing as The Normal) marks a defining moment in Minimal Synth's birth, its sparse arrangements, J.G. Ballard-inspired lyrics and robotic vocals, capturing the alienation and rebellion of the era.

II. The Rise of the Movement

Through interviews and archival footage, the film delves deeper into the early pioneers such as Fad Gadget, John Foxx, Crash Course in Science, Kas Product and Das Ding. These artists were connected by a shared belief in minimalism, not just as a musical style but as a form of artistic and cultural subversion. This section highlights the music scenes in cities like New York, London and Paris, where this sound first found

an audience in underground clubs and cassette tape swaps. The documentary emphasizes how this new form of music rejected mainstream patterns, opting instead for stripped-back, mechanical rhythms and raw, unpolished production.

III. Hibernation and New Life

By the mid-1980s, some key Minimal Synth figures (like Daniel Miller of Mute Records, who launched Synth Pop superstars Depeche Mode) became established names in the music industry. Most of them, however, released only a handful of tracks before vanishing, their ambitions left behind as they pursued other careers. The film highlights the crucial role of labels such as Minimal Wave in rescuing forgotten gems, once pressed in tiny cassette or vinyl runs, including the work of Andy Oppenheimer. In 1982, long before becoming a leading UK expert on security, terrorism and nuclear weapons, he released a Cold War-themed concept album. When the reissue label Minimal Wave reached out 25 years later, he was astonished to discover his music was now played in clubs and sought after by record collectors. Inspired, he revived his stage persona and returned to performing after an artistic hiatus lasting more than two decades.

IV. Contemporary Rebirth: A New Wave of Minimalism

The documentary film transitions to the present day, by when Minimal Synth has undergone multiple revivals. Contemporary artists like Martial Cantarel, Linea Aspera and Adult, who are heavily influenced by the genre's early pioneers, have begun to make waves on the electronic music circuits. The film explores how these artists combine vintage analog synths with modern production techniques, updating the sound while staying true to its minimalist roots. Interviews with these artists reveal how they are reinterpreting the genre for today's audience while maintaining its core ethos of spontaneity, rawness and authenticity.

V. The Legacy and Influence of Minimal Synth

The final act of the film examines the global influence of the Minimal Synth movement. What began as a fringe, niche scene has blossomed into a significant international cultural force, whose influence is evident in genres like Synthwave, Techno and Electronic Pop. Artists, producers and label heads reflect on how this movement continues to inspire new generations. The film closes by underlining Minimal Synth's enduring relevance, as a testament to passion, innovation and the power of art to challenge the status quo.

Director's statement

I was always fascinated by the way music documentaries can amplify voices, reveal hidden histories, and forge connections between different generations.

Driven by the urgency to tell visual stories about the music I love, I managed to self produce and direct two documentaries about Italo Disco and EBM, made with limited budget and resources but infinite passion.

Both films were very well received by the respective fan communities, getting screen-

ings all over the world, with dedicated dancing parties right after the projection. These films allowed me to dive in these two dynamic subcultures, bridging the past and present of electronic music.

In my next movie I want to explore the world of Minimal Synth, an electronic music style from the 80s, made of analog technology, bold visuals and creative experimentation. Underground but influential, avant-garde but still danceable at the same time. With this project, I aim to uncover the untold stories of the Minimal Synth movement: its origins, its innovators, and its lasting impact on contemporary bands. Using archival footage, interviews, and a visual style inspired by the movement's aesthetic, I want to create a documentary that resonates with music lovers worldwide.

Production note

"Glowing in the Dark Again" is currently in development.

We are seeking commissioning opportunities from broadcasters, as well as co-production and distribution partnerships.

Production companies who expressed interest in a co-production: Songbird (UK), Galaxie Presse (FR)

Sales/Distribution company who wrote a letter of interest: Taskovski Films (UK)

The film is expected to enter production in 2026 and be released by the end of 2027, both as long feature and TV version format.

Director

Pietro ANTON

Filmography

Producer/Director:

Italo Disco Legacy (2018), a documentary film about the 80's Italian dance productions and their impact on contemporary electronic music. The film premiered in January 2018 in Berlin at a sold-out Berghain club, attracted over 1.000 Italo enthusiasts from all around the globe. The screening was followed by an epic party with DJ sets and live performances from original Italo artists starring in the documentary, such as Fred Ventura and Rago&Farina. Italo Disco Legacy toured the world since, with over 70 screenings in 25 countries. Following a crowdfunding campaign, the film was released on DVD with a double vinyl soundtrack by the label Private

Biography

Pietro Anton, born in Magenta (Italy) in 1978, graduated in Film Studies at D.A.M.S. University in Bologna. After working in TV production in Milan for broadcasting companies such as Sky, MTV and Mediaset, he moved to Berlin, starting his career as Documentary Filmmaker with a special focus on music subcultures.

Records.

Electronic Body Movie (2024), the first documentary ever made about Electronic Body Music, featuring pioneering bands such as Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft, Front 242 and Liaisons Dangereuses. The film premiered at a sold-out Kantine am Berghain in September 2024, and is still touring internationally in clubs, movie theaters, music and film festivals (including Bordeaux, Bucharest, Turin, Moscow, Sydney, Lisboa, London) with over 50 screenings in 24 countries so far. ARTE G.E.I.E. made an offer to acquire the rights to programme the film on their web platform for one year in all available EU countries.

Producer

T2 Pictures

Company profile

T2 Pictures is a Berlin-based film production company founded by Pietro Anton (Producer/Director) and Giuseppe Boccassini (Post Production), with a shared history working on cult music documentaries such as Italo Disco Legacy& and Electronic Body Movie. T2 Pictures brings a fresh vision to documentary filmmaking, and is committed to delivering high-quality, innovative documentaries for international audiences.

The team's current project, Glowing in the Dark Again, is the first documentary dedicated to the minimal synth scene, exploring the pioneers, sounds, and stories at the heart of this influential music movement.

Pietro ANTON

PROJECT

KAMNOP: A Treasure is waiting for you



KAMNOP: A Treasure is waiting for you

UNITED STATES,
FRANCE, CAMBODIA

Kamnop is an exhilarating and transformative road trip, where a mother and daughter travel from Colorado to Cambodia in search of a long-lost treasure, buried during the first days of the Khmer Rouge genocide.

Language

English, Khmer

Length

90 minutes

Director

Kanitha HENG SNOW
Guillermo ROQUES

Producer

Christian POPP
Yami 2 (Christian Popp)
France

Kanitha HENG SNOW
Guillermo ROQUES
Kamnop LLC
United States

Total budget of the film
638,330 €

Teaser

vimeo.com/1103524049/ca2a96cb83

Synopsis

Kanitha (38) convinces her mother, Kanika (69), to return to Cambodia in search of a long lost family treasure that has haunted her since she fled the country fifty years ago. The kamnop, treasure, may still be buried beneath their old family home. While the home is still standing, it is threatened by a mysterious occupant and foreign developers.

What begins as a simple treasure hunt turns into an intergenerational journey across Cambodia's haunted landscapes and brutal past. It becomes a women's quest for healing and justice, where East meets West, dreams blur with reality, and rationality blends with spirituality.

Contact

Kanitha HENG SNOW
Director, Producer
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Financing already in place

38,333 €

Detailed Budget

[📄 kamnop-budget-doccampus.xlsx](#)

Themes

- Adventure/Travel
- Global Issues/Conflict
- Heritage
- Human Interest/Family
- Politics
- Social Issues/Activism

Stage of development

Late development

Needs

- Distributors
- Sales Agents
- Co-producers
- Private Funds / Banks
- TV
- Foreign TV Channel
- Regional funds

Format

- feature-length

Estimated date of shoot

Q1 2026

Deck

[📄 kamnop-dossier-for-halle-compressed.pdf](#)

Treatment

KANIKA is a 69-year-old Cambodian woman living in suburban Colorado. She is haunted by a recurring dream in which Buddha tells her that a 'karnop' (treasure) awaits her. She fled her country at 16 during the Khmer Rouge regime, but she remembers her father, before leaving, burying gold and jewels belonging to monarchs at their home.

She is one of her family's last survivors. Five of her siblings, along with her parents and multiple family members, were directly or indirectly victims of the Khmer Rouge genocide and its subsequent mental trauma. What began as a utopian dream of an

equal society became one of the most brutal and deadly episodes of mass killing in modern history. 1.7-2.2 million people were killed between 1975 and 1979, about a quarter of Cambodia's population.

Decades later she lives a quiet, withdrawn life under her son's roof. Like many survivors she still bears the weight of her past - suffering from PTSD and depression. She feels disconnected from her cultural roots and creative spirit, estranged from both her heritage and a joyful self she once knew.

Her daughter KANITHA (38), born in the U.S., has spent years trying to untangle her family's past and understand her mother, a relationship that has always been fraught and complex. Growing up, Kanitha often felt their roles were reversed, forced to care for her mother instead of enjoying the American childhood she so desired. For nearly 20 years she has been working on a memoir titled 'I Am My Mother's Mother: A Story of Birth, Death, and Reincarnation'. When she discovers that her mother's childhood home still stands she remembers her mother's recurring dream and obsession with the kamnop, and sees it as an opportunity.

Getting their legacy back could mean the family's last chance at justice and sanity, taking her mom out of her state of depression. But time is pressing - the house is currently occupied by a mysterious man, SEYHA, and risks being razed to the ground as foreign developers usurp land in this prime city-center location. Hell-bent on getting the home back, Kanitha convinces her mother that it's her last chance to find her long-awaited kamnop, breaking a cycle of silence and trauma that has haunted their family for generations.

What begins as a treasure hunt soon transforms into an intergenerational quest, where mother and daughter not only search for hidden jewels, but also for a deeper understanding of each other, and of their country's and family's past.

The film follows their departure from the ordinary world in Colorado descending into trials, a confrontation with their shadows, and finally a return, where the true treasure might not be possession but transformation, a return to the feminine through reconciliation, care and imagination.

As Kanika and Kanitha venture further into the unknown, they will encounter emotional and physical trials. In the search for the house, they wrestle with fatigue, their own internal demons, and their quirky and unexpected ways of treasure hunting.

Will Kanika's health keep up with the journey?

Will Kanitha's resolve hold as the difficulties mount?

Along the way, they'll follow clues, face challenges, and encounter unexpected allies: from blonde rock & roll shamans to sassy Christian guides, from tech-savvy Buddhist monks managing social media to Fast & Furious tuk-tuk drivers.

Their journey will take them through old escape routes from the Khmer Rouge era, past killing fields, and into massage parlours and hair salons. Together, they'll play the roles of spies and treasure hunters. Dream and reality, fantasy and memory, pain and joy will blend: the power of imagination enabling them to confront trauma, rewrite the past, and carve out the possibility of healing.

The dreams of material treasure could dissolve, depending on whether or not this duo of unlikely treasure hunters find physical gold and jewels. What remains certain is the journey itself: a mother and daughter confronting silence, history, and one another. They bring their humor, their imagination, and their own responses to their complicated history. Disconnecting at times, and then reconnecting.

Will they find the treasure?

Will the house offer healing - or only more unanswered questions?

Could the real treasure be their reconciliation as they inspired in one another the courage to search?

In the end, Kanitha and Kanika (and the audience) will discover something far more valuable than material treasure: the emotional reconciliation and healing they've been seeking all along.

Director's statement

KANITHA HENG SNOW, CO-DIRECTOR, PRODUCER, WRITER

When I first learned that my mother's childhood home was still standing, I knew there was a larger story that was waiting to unfold, and I also knew that I needed to document the journey I was about to embark on. Documentation is a way of bearing witness and archiving significant moments and experiences. I have always documented my family history through my writing, but I had yet to use film as a medium. I knew I wanted to make this story a film because I believe many children of immigrants, including those of the Cambodian second generation diaspora, will see themselves and their families in my family story.

GUILLERMO ROQUES, CO-DIRECTOR, PRODUCER

It's often said that each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. I'd say the same goes for weird families—each is weird in its own way. Or, more simply: all families are strange, and it's only through acceptance, laughter, and uncomfortable conversations that we begin to find our place within them. Kanitha's family reminds me of mine. Her dynamic with her mother mirrors ones I have with my own, and this journey reminds me of the ones I still hope to take with them someday. But this film also reflects our friendship—full of joy and laughter. We somehow attract absurdity, discomfort, and provocation.

Production note

CHRISTIAN POPP, LEAD PRODUCER

KAMNOP is one of the most original documentary projects I encountered in the past years. It borrows from genre films in an exuberant and exhilarating syncretism referencing narrative codes in order to better transgress them, while rendering the characters even more human and complex. It is funny and sad at the same time, light-hearted and profound, intimate and universal. There are many films, especially in France, that deal with the Cambodian genocide. On the 50th anniversary this year, a retrospective programmed more than 30 of them. I am all the more pleased that Rithy Panh saw KAMNOP not as a repetition, but as a new exploration of this tragedy and provided a letter of support. We also have the support of the Bophana Center and Cambodian Living Arts.

The project is a coproduction between France and the USA. We are going to expand it with a Cambodian co-producer and are in talks with Anti-Archive in Phnom Penh. And I am beginning to explore a co-production with Spain, where Guillermo lives. We are awaiting responses to funding applications from La Scam Brouillon d'un rêve, Catapult Film Fund and CNC Development, and we have been accepted to apply to the Sundance Catalyst program. We will be submitting grant applications to Firelight Film Fund, Aide au Cinémas du Monde, Eurimages, Perspective Fund, and Doha Film Institute. KAMNOP is in a critical stage in its development. The mentioned funds have long evaluation timelines and are highly competitive. Given Kanika's fragile health, we want to begin shooting in spring 2026, even if the funding is not 100% secured by then. Therefore we are looking for television and platform presales and an international sales agent.

Director

Guillermo ROQUES

Filmography

2023 – You Play My Father
Festival selections: Zinebi, Sarajevo, DocsMX, Fidba; Best Short Award at Huesca International Film Festival
A Srebrenica survivor and former UN Dutchbat soldier share the stage in a play about the 1995 genocide, performed before an audience of victims.

2019 – The Right to Rest (Feature)
Chronicles Denver's urban camping ban and the fight for the rights of people experiencing homelessness.

2012 – Pianola

Biography

Journalist by background, filmmaker by choice. I try to bring the best of both worlds in everything I do. My curiosity has led me to distant places: from covering terrorism in Corsica to Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria, ex-Soviet chess players in Southern Spain, and Navajo bullfighters in the Arizona desert. I have more than ten years of experience in documentary filmmaking and non-fiction projects, all centered around significant themes such as inclusion, community, housing, memory, and responsibility.

Best Movie and Best Actress at Fediscovi International Festival
Explores disability inclusion in performing arts through Marta's dance piece "Pianola".

In Production: The Dutchbat (2026)
International co-production (Spain, Netherlands, Bosnia)
Best Documentary Project at Zinebi;
Selected at Balkan Documentary Center, Cannes Docs
Examines Dutch Blue Helmets' guilt after failing to prevent the Srebrenica genocide.

Kanitha HENG SNOW

Filmography

2019 – The Right to Rest (Feature),
Scriptwriter
Chronicles Denver's urban camping ban and the fight for the rights of people experiencing homelessness.

Biography

Born and raised in Colorado, I am a writer, social impact leader, and first-time filmmaker. My work is anchored in the exploration of war, displacement, and their lasting impact on individuals and communities. I am particularly focused on supporting refugees and immigrants in increasing their sense of wealth, worth, and wellbeing. I also serve as the Executive Director of the Colgate Writers Conference, in addition to serving on several nonprofit boards. I received my MFA in Creative Nonfiction from Columbia University in 2012. My memoir, I AM MY MOTHER'S MOTHER: A STORY OF BIRTH, DEATH, AND REINCARNATION is forthcoming.

Producer

Yami 2 (Christian Popp)

Company profile

YAMI 2 is an independent film production company, founded in 2006. YAMI 2's credo is to create highly relevant films with strong editorial and cinematographic ambition.

With a catalog of more than thirty films and documentary series, YAMI 2 has been

developing internationally for the past 10 years, working in co-production or presales with many broadcasters (including ARD, ZDF, Rai, RTE, PBS, NHK). In partnership with the production company Upian, Yami 2 has also developed in non-linear, coordinating web campaigns with some forty partners around the world.

Four main thematic areas define the editorial line of YAMI 2: history, politics, social issues and culture.

YAMI 2 has won two Albert Londres awards (in 2010 for the documentary series Work sentenced to death directed by Jean-Robert Viallet, in 2012 for the film Zambia: good copper, bad copper? by Audrey Gallet and Alice Odiot), the CB News Media Grand Prix 2010 for The game of death and Prix Italia in 2014 for Generation W

Christian POPP

Biography

Christian Popp is a film producer and former commissioning editor with over 25 years of experience in the European film industry. Between 1998 and 2005, he served as a commissioning editor for ARTE. Over the past two decades, Christian has produced more than 50 documentaries, collaborating with leading independent companies such as Interscience Film, Docdays Productions, YUZU Productions, and TAG Film. In early 2025, he joined the French production company YAMI 2.

Christian's productions have been selected for major international film festivals, including Cannes (Becoming Cary Grant), Sundance (Sepideh), Berlinale (Beyond Punishment), Venice (Miyazaki, Spirit of Nature), Rome (Obsessed with Light), IDFA (Writing Hawa), CPH:DOX (The Eukrainian), Sheffield (Cuba & Alaska).

In addition to his production work, Christian has been a mentor at industry events and workshops such as IDFAcademy, EAVE, Ex Oriente, Documentary Campus, DOCLAB Poland and FIPADOC, among others.

Kamnop LLC

Company profile

KAMNOP LLC is a U.S.-based production company founded by co-directors and producers Kanitha Heng Snow and Guillermo Roques specifically to produce their debut documentary feature Kamnop: A Treasure is Waiting for You. The company's debut documentary exemplifies its mission to transform personal narratives into universal tales of hope and connection.

Kanitha HENG SNOW

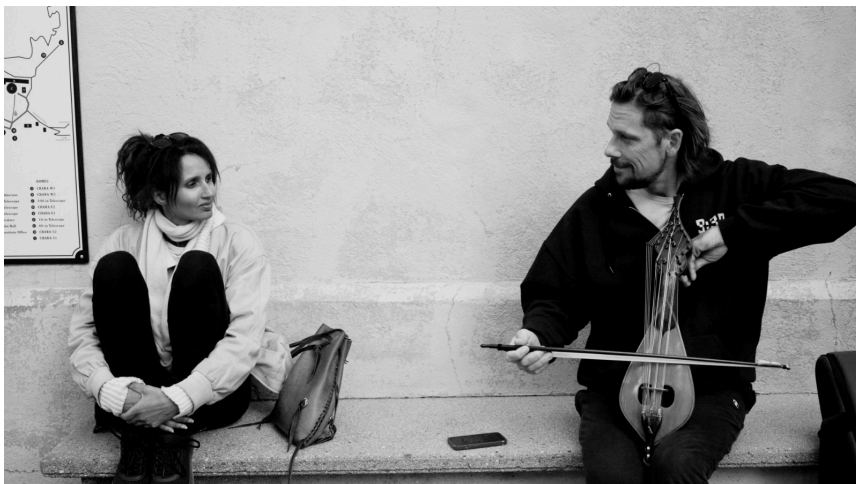
Guillermo ROQUES

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Documentary Campus | Maï & Miles, the jazziest story about physics ever told | FestiCiné

PROJECT

Maï & Miles, the jazziest story about physics ever told



Maï & Miles, the jazziest story about physics ever told

UNITED KINGDOM

French-Senegalese physicist Maï and American jazz musician Miles refuse to let Trump's immigration crackdown and defunding of science or the LA wildfires derail their dream of building a life and having a family. Their determination to create beauty and knowledge amid chaos reveals love's quiet power to resist in an increasingly hostile world.

Language

English, French

Length

90 minutes

Director

Lea HEJN

Producer

Sonja HENRICI

Lea HEJN

Sonja Henrici Creates Ltd

United Kingdom

Teaser

vimeo.com/1131494120?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci

Password :

Synopsis

Maïmouna is a brilliant French-Senegalese physicist; Miles, a gifted American jazz musician. Young and deeply in love, they've spent three years navigating a long-distance relationship between Paris and LA. We follow their journey over two years as they move mountains to relocate Maï's career and pursue their dream of starting a life and family in LA.

Set against the backdrop of LA wildfires, Trump's attack on the scientific community and crackdown on immigration, their journey becomes an act of quiet resistance. Their love story shows how beauty, creativity and connection can endure even in a fractured world.

Contact

Lea HEJN

Director/ Producer

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Stéphanie LEBRUN
Babel Doc
France

Total budget of the film
759,921 €

Financing already in place
25,000 €

Detailed Budget

[mai-miles-budget-130825-for-festicine.pdf](#)

Themes

- Arts & Culture
- Music
- Science/Knowledge

Stage of development

Late development

Needs

- Distributors
- Sales Agents
- Private Funds / Banks
- TV
- Foreign TV Channel

Format

- feature-length

Estimated date of shoot

Until mid-2026

Deck

[festicine-14-08-25-ma-miles-deck-lh-3.pdf](#)

Treatment

Story Overview

The film opens with Mai and Miles choosing love over distance, embarking on a journey to build a life together in Los Angeles.

Mai leaves her prestigious position at the Niels Bohr Institute in Copenhagen and heads to California, where she is invited as a visiting scholar at Caltech's quantum lab. But everything is uncertain until she secures her spousal visa...

In Pasadena, Miles unpacks boxes in their new home, unaware that just weeks later, the Altadena fires will ravage his old house, narrowly sparing his instruments and livelihood. Distraught, while the ashes are still hot, Miles cycles to his former street and composes a piece of music to raise funds for the community.

Back in Paris, as Maï submits her visa application, Trump is re-elected, deepening her concern about the tightening U.S. immigration policies. As months pass by, she witnesses Trump's systematic attack on the scientific community, and watches her Caltech laboratories descend in turmoil of uncertainty over the impact on scientific discovery and their future.

When Maï discovers she is pregnant before joining Miles, the emotional stakes rise even higher. Through fire, borders, and political uncertainty, their commitment to each other never falters. The film culminates in a moment of convergence either their wedding or a concert at the Mount Wilson Observatory celebrating jazz, physics, and their love.

Key Questions and themes

This film was born from a fascination with the intersection of science and art, and the intimate story of two people whose love and curiosity transcend borders, disciplines, and time. At its heart, it's an exploration of two extraordinary minds and the world they are building together: Maï, a physicist who navigates her field with grace and imagination; and Miles, a jazz musician with an insatiable curiosity for science.

Their improvised, deeply layered conversations capturing the intimacy and tone of Richard Linklater's *Before* trilogy guide the film, with irreverence and humor. Key themes emerge in their dialogues: sound waves in music and physics, the nature of curiosity in discovery, and the surprising parallels between jazz improvisation and scientific experimentation.

Thematically, the film delves into the human quest for meaning and beauty issues both timeless and urgent. As artificial intelligence increasingly shapes our world, we must ask: what remains distinctly human in an era dominated by technology? For me, the answer lies in our capacity for love, boundless curiosity, and the relentless pursuit of knowledge. This theme makes it the perfect moment to bring this story to life.

The film also highlights two brilliant, underrepresented protagonists one in science, the other in music. By centering a mixed-race, female physicist, the film challenges dominant narratives about who belongs in science and how they are portrayed, reclaiming space for voices often marginalized in STEM.

Visual Style & Score

My first visit to Mai's lab at the Niels Bohr Institute left a lasting impression. The space was intricate and hypnotic, at the cutting edge of experimentation. High-contrast black-and-white portraits of early 20th-century physicists lingered in my mind, leading me to choose a black-and-white visual style for the film. This approach strips away distraction, giving the story a timeless quality, and visually uniting the precision of science with the fluidity of jazz.

This documentary is a journey through those worlds. It moves between experimental physics laboratories and jazz clubs in Los Angeles and beyond, not to contrast them, but to reveal the deep resonance between them. Both are languages of exploration. Both are driven by improvisation, wonder and the pursuit of beauty.

Visually, the film draws inspiration from the French New Wave (especially Godard's *Breathless*) and the 90s classic *La Haine*, both known for their raw, high-contrast black-and-white style and rhythmic editing. These influences are adapted to the immediacy and intimacy of documentary filmmaking.

Beyond observational filming, I plan to build bridges between Mai's and Miles' worlds through crafted sequences, such as cymatic patterns revealing sound waves in liquids. Other visual motifs will include vibrating instrument chords in slow motion, ripples on water, and crashing waves. Sketch-like animations will depict phenomena beyond human sight at atomic and cosmic scales such as two celestial bodies merging into a black hole.

Miles will also contribute to the film's score: a romantic, dynamic, and jazzy composition that mirrors their shared journey. His music will be deeply integrated into the narrative, enriching the film just as their lives intertwine through love, science, and art.

This is a film about being human about love as a form of inquiry, creativity as a survival instinct, and the quiet, rebellious act of choosing connection, humor, science, and art in a time of political and cultural upheaval. Through this film, I hope to offer not only a portrait of two remarkable individuals but an invitation to see the world and perhaps even ourselves with renewed curiosity and care.

Director

Lea HEJN

Filmography

She was the assistant director of Emmy-winning director Nicolas Brown on *Blue Carbon* (Tangle Bank, CNN, HBO Max, Canal+), a documentary featuring Jayda G and Seu Jorge, blending music and science to advocate for coastal conservation. She also was the Assistant

Biography

Léa Hejn is a French-Danish filmmaker based in the UK, specialised in creative environmental and science documentaries and series. She studied Philosophy and Environmental policy at the London School of Economics and has a Masters in Wildlife filmmaking in

Director on Wilding; (Theatrical & Apple TV) at Passion Pictures, which screened at the BFI Film Festival, won Best Ecosystem Film at the Jackson Wild Festival 2024 and had a successful theatrical release in the UK. The film is a powerful docu-drama based on Isabela Tree's acclaimed book, chronicling the rewilding of the Knepp Estate, one of the UK's most inspiring conservation success stories. Her directorial debut short, Curupira, a docu-animation about the Amazon's mystical guardian: 'Curupira', was a finalist at Jackson Wild 2023 and Wildscreen 2024 and toured in multiple festivals worldwide.

partnership with the BBC Natural History Unit.

She has been working in the industry for almost a decade as a producer and assistant director on series and features for theatrical release and streamers National Geographic, Netflix, Canal +, HBO, Apple TV.

Producer

Sonja Henrici Creates Ltd

Company profile

Sonja Henrici Creates develops thoughtful and provocative documentary and fiction stories that transform how audiences see complex global issues. Founded in 2021 and Edinburgh-based, we collaborate internationally with filmmakers across multiple territories. Recent productions include Merkel (Netflix, Telluride), The Oil Machine (BBC, IDFA), and Love & Trouble (ARTE).

Current projects span documentary (Birds of War, Douglas Gordon by Douglas Gordon) and fiction (Invention of Color, Shore Leave) via international co-productions across Germany, France, Denmark, Sweden and North America.

Producer/Founder Sonja Henrici brings 25+ years experience, including Co-Director of Scottish Documentary Institute (2013-2020). Her films have screened in 60+ countries. AMPAS, BAFTA member and RSA Fellow. Our fiction expansion builds on proven partnerships whilst developing distinctive narratives for global markets.

Sonja HENRICI

Biography

Sonja Henrici - Sonja Henrici (Scottish Producer) is an award-winning German-British producer with extensive experience in international feature documentaries. Her impressive portfolio includes Tracing Light (DokLeipzig 2024 Opening Film & CPH:DOX), The Oil Machine; (Sheffield/IDFA/BBC), Merkel; (Telluride/IDFA/Netflix). As Co-Director/Executive Producer of Scottish Documentary Institute (2013-2020) and founder of its production arm (2007-

2020), she has been instrumental in establishing Scotland as a hub for documentary filmmaking. In 2021, she established Sonja Henrici Creates Ltd to focus on ambitious, international documentary productions. Sonja's track record of securing funding and distribution for significant documentaries will be invaluable to the project. She is an AMPAS and BAFTA member with a worldwide network.

Lea HEJN

Babel Doc

Company profile

Babel Doc was founded in 2007 with a clear mission: to produce ambitious films. With offices in Paris, Miami, Rio de Janeiro, and Delhi, we collaborate with our international partners on international co-productions. In recent years, our productions have been recognized with numerous selections at festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, IDFA, and Hot Docs. Babel Doc received an International Emmy Award for *Ressaca*, directed by Vincent Rimbau and Patrizia Landi. These recognitions are important sources of encouragement that motivate us to continue believing in films that truly make a difference.

Stéphanie LEBRUN

Biography

Stéphanie Lebrun (French Producer) is a French award-winning producer. In 2007, she co-founded the production company Babel doc for which she develops and produces documentary films and series for France Télévision, Arte, CANAL+ and international channels. In 2018, she exec produced '*Ressaca*' (Winner of the International Emmy 2020) a French-Brazilian creative documentary in black and white, directed by Vincent Rimbau and Patrizia Landi, about the struggle of employees of the Municipal Theater of Rio de Janeiro in the midst of the state's economic and political crisis.

PROJECT

Measuring the Sky



Teaser

vimeo.com/manage/videos/1077896199

Synopsis

In Chile, on the mountain peak of Cerro Pachon, the largest telescope on Earth is being built. The exciting story of the construction of the telescope will be juxtaposed with a romantic view of the sky and the most spectacular images of the Universe it will produce. What is the use of such a large telescope? Can it save us from deadly asteroids? Will it reveal the secret of creation of the Universe and the mystery of dark matter and dark energy? The person in charge of the project is Željko Ivezić, Croatian with an American address. He is living his life dream and it will come true by the end of 2025. We will be with him when that happens.

Contact

Sinisa JURICIC

Producer

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sinisa@nukleus-film.hr



Measuring the Sky

CROATIA

The Legacy Survey of Space and Time (LSST), the most powerful survey telescope in history, will start operations this year. As soon as it starts observing the sky, it will completely change the way we have studied the Universe so far. We follow Croatian astronomer Željko Ivezić, director of the LSST construction in his „dream comes true" journey.

Language

Croatian, English, French, Spanish

Length

90 minutes

Director

Petar ORESKOVIC

Producer

Sinisa JURICIC

Nukleus film

Croatia

Total budget of the film

361,674 €

Financing already in place

210,674 €

Detailed Budget

[mts-detailed-budget-august-2025-copy.pdf](#)

Themes

– Science/Knowledge

Stage of development

Late development

Needs

– Distributors

– TV

– Foreign TV Channel

Format

– feature-length

– one-off

Estimated date of shoot

2021-2026

Deck

[mts-deck.pdf](#)

Treatment

The story of the Vera C. Rubin Observatory is told through the eyes of Željko Ivezić, a Croatian-born astronomer whose life's journey mirrors the vastness of the cosmos he now studies. His path to the forefront of astronomical discovery began by chance. In the wake of the war in the former Yugoslavia, an unexpected scholarship opportunity in America led him to a new life.

Thirty years later, what started as an escape has blossomed into a remarkable career as a professor of astronomy at Seattle University and, most notably, the director of the Vera C. Rubin Observatory in Chile.

Since his childhood, Željko was looking into the stars and, while watching, he was also seeing fast objects crossing the night sky, objects that were occasionally falling down on the Earth. That made him curious and became his passion - he started tracing those objects and throughout his career he was trying to build perfect tool for the early warning – this tool today is the Vera Rubin observatory.

The project's origin traces back even further, to the visionary Tony Tyson, a mentor who began this ambitious endeavor three decades ago. The film captures a pivotal moment as Željko travels to Stanford University to meet with Tyson, seeking his counsel and reconnecting with the man he looks up to as a mentor. As the two discuss the genesis of the LSST, Tyson also shares his profound reflections on the project's potential to shape the next decade of astronomical discovery. Together they chart the project that sparks interest of two billionaires – Mr. Charles Simony and Bill Gates who

become first inventors.

The biggest camera in the world and its advanced technology allows it to simultaneously capture faint objects and those that change in brightness or position. The camera was installed on the Simonyi Survey Telescope in March 2025, marking a significant milestone in the observatory's development. The LSST Camera represents a major advancement in astronomical imaging, promising to revolutionize our understanding of the universe and we were lucky to be there during the painful process of the transport and installation of the camera.

What started as the small project grew into the project that won National Science Foundation grant of 1.5 billion among the four piers and managed to gather hundreds of scientists from all over the world, from Chile and Croatia to France, Italy and the USA. All of these people are represented in our film throughout five years of filming and slow paced growth of the fantastic project, a dream that came to reality.

But even a project of this magnitude is not without its earthly challenges. Željko's most pressing concern is the growing light pollution from the vast number of satellites launched as part of the Starlink project. The glare from these satellites threatens to compromise the observatory's sensitive images, a major obstacle that could undermine years of work. We follow Željko to a high-stakes meeting with Starlink, a confrontation that unexpectedly ends on a note of optimism. It seems the company is exploring solutions to the glare problem, but a successful outcome hinges on the cooperation of other satellite companies.

The sheer volume of information—including data on potentially hazardous asteroids—requires a coordinated effort on a global scale. Željko and asteroid expert Mario Jurić craft a strategy to enlist small observatories around the world, creating a network to help analyze the immense data sets produced by the LSST. For the past five years Željko travels to the number of countries all around the world to gather participants that will help him in this network, help build the net of protection for our planet.

Throughout last ten years, the crew of Rubin observatory encounters everything that is plaguing our planet, from civil unrest in Chile to the change of the political climate in the USA, struggle for the balance of the rights of all minorities, clearly marked in the decision to name the observatory with the name of one of the most important women in the history of astronomy.

We spent last four years following Željko on this road, that was often icy and cold, dusty from the trucks or filled with dangerous political balance that you need in order to run 1.5 billion dolar venture that is his life's legacy.

The film also delves into the deeper, philosophical questions that drive Željko. On a trip to a summer school organized by the Vatican Observatory, he engages in a profound conversation with astronomer and head of the observatory, Brother Guy Consolmagno. They explore what truly motivates human beings to endlessly explore the unknown—where does this innate curiosity come from? This discussion serves as the emotional and intellectual core of the film, connecting the technical and logistical challenges of the project to the timeless human desire to understand our place in the universe.

The film's emotional crescendo arrives with its final sequence: the moment the Rubin Observatory produces its very first images. It is a powerful scene where Željko and his

team will finally see their collective dreams come to fruition, a payoff for decades of relentless work and unwavering belief. The images revealed are unlike anything seen before, a truly breathtaking glimpse into the cosmos. What the observatory will ultimately reveal remains a mystery, but as Željko himself states, "This will not be the end of astronomy, just one big step in our understanding of the Universe".

Director's statement

We will build the film through the interplay of several visual approaches. Firstly, we will use the tracking camera method to follow the main protagonist and his closest collaborators during the trips to construction sites. The main action in the film is monitoring the process of building LSST telescope. From rehearsals with surrogate mirrors, tracking the path of the LSST camera from California to observatory site in Chile, through various measurements, software testing and final assembly of all components.

Although „Measuring the Sky” has astronomy and scientific achievements as its central focus, a good part of it will be getting to know our main character, Željko Ivezić. We will find out how much ambition, effort and perseverance it took to become the director of such a significant project. He is fully dedicated to his work and the scientific dreams he's had since elementary school. As the project nears its end, the stress grows, and this will be seen on his face.

Through interviews with dozens of experts in astronomy, engineering, and technology, we will create a complex story where the experts build upon each other, while also offering contradictory viewpoints and differing opinions on topics related to the Universe.

To capture the night sky, we use time-lapse photography with long exposures. Our goal is to portray the sky as it appears to the human eye, while also conveying a sense of motion. These shots will serve as an introduction to the images of the Universe that will soon begin to be produced by the Rubin Observatory.

We will reserve these images for the film's finale, as these will truly be the largest and most spectacular images of the Universe created by humankind.

Production note

This project represents a unique opportunity to bring to the screen not only the extraordinary scientific ambition of the Vera C. Rubin Observatory and the Legacy Survey of Space and Time (LSST), but also the deeply human and philosophical dimensions behind it. While the director's note outlines the creative and artistic approach, this producer's vision focuses on why this film matters now, its production strategy, and its international potential.

Meaning and Theme

At its heart, the film is about humanity's endless pursuit of knowledge and the humility that comes with it. The Rubin Observatory will redefine our understanding of the universe, but our story also shows the vulnerability, perseverance, and emotional journey of the people who dedicate their lives to this mission. By highlighting a Croatian scientist, Željko Ivezić, at the center of one of the world's most ambitious scientific projects, the film also reflects on migration, identity, and the global nature of science.

Why Now

The LSST begins operations in 2025, and with its arrival comes an unparalleled leap forward in astronomy. Capturing this moment as it happens is essential — a historical record and a cinematic experience that cannot be recreated later. The project resonates at a time when public trust in science is under pressure, and when the world is seeking narratives that unite rather than divide.

The film is designed for a wide circulation: international film festivals, educational platforms, and VOD/streaming services. Given its universal theme — humanity's search for meaning in the universe — the film transcends cultural and linguistic barriers. Željko Ivezić's story as a Croatian emigrant turned global scientist adds an additional layer of international

Director

Petar OREŠKOVIC

Filmography

2024. „Pepe, Bubi and Lu“ – children puppet tv series (20 episodes)
2022. „Colorful Pot“ – children tv series (30 episodes)
2016. „Transmania“ – one episode in feature omnibus
2016. „Rosemary Bush“ – short film (television)
2015. „The Hair full of Wind“ – documentary tv series (4 episodes)
2015. „The lost Bomber“ – feature documentary film
2015. „Holiday of Democracy“ – short film (in omnibus „Zagreb Stories vol. 3“)
2015. „Granny's Bilka“ – short film (television)
2014. „SpaceLab“ – children tv series
2014. „Visa-Samba of the World“ – short promo film
2013. „Simon Magus 3D“ – feature film
2011. „The Birthday“ – short film
2010. „The Periphery“ – sit com
2010. „Get a move on!“ – short film
2009. „Waste Youth“ – short film
2008. „One Take Film Festival“ – short promo film
2008. „Neighbors forever“ – sit com
2007. „F.R.K.A.“ – short promo film

Biography

Petar Orešković was born 1980. in Zagreb, Croatia. After finishing high-school and high-musical school he graduated film and tv-directing at Academy of dramatic Arts in Zagreb. He is an author of several short films („The holiday of Democracy“, „Get a move on“, „Waste Youth“, „Birthday“, „The End of the Game“), feature documentaries „Dead man walking“, „The lost Bomber“ and feature film „Simon Magus“. For his films he won prizes in international and domestic film festivals. He has great experience in directing television formats – sitcoms, documentary films and shows and children's series („Space Lab“, „Colorful Pot“, „Pepe, Bubi & Lu“).

2007. „Stay Alive“ – documentary series
2006. „Zimmer Fraj“ – sit com
2006. „Motovun Film Festival“ – short
promo film
2006. „Dead man walking“ – feature
documentary
2005. „In one moment“ – short film
2004. „Popcorn“ – short film
„G, D, A, E“ – short documentary film
2002. „Bouquet“ – short film
„The End of the Game“ – short film

Producer

Nukleus film

Company profile

In the past 20 years, Nukleus film has become a regional production company whose films crossed the regional borders, and were shown at important festivals such as Cannes, Berlin and Sundance and TV stations such as ARTE, WDR and HBO.

Nukleus is a member/participant of the European Film Academy, ACE Producers Network, Inside Pictures, EAVE (European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs), as well as a regular attendant of the coproduction and pitching forums. We attended training programs such as EAVE, EAVE+, Producers on the Move, ACE Producers Network, Producers Lab Toronto and Torino FilmLab.

Sinisa JURICIC

Biography

Born in 1965 in Zagreb , graduated in production from the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb in 2009. Founded Nukleus Film in 2002. My focus is on producing films by talented filmmakers from Southeast Europe. Over 50 films produced and have been awarded and financed in the country and abroad, winning awards in Cannes, Karlovy Vary and Berlin.

In 2012, I received the annual award of the Croatian Producers Association Albert Kapović for my contribution to the international promotion of Croatian film as the first producer to receive this award .

Member of European film academy and production networks EAVE, ACE (where I work. as member board) and Inside Pictures and regularly I teach and I hold master courses at the East European Forum/ exOriente workshops , Circle Training workshops and at the Academy o Drama Arts in Zagreb , Croatia, also on festivals like Karlovy Vary. I also read as an expert on Creative Europe-MEDIA and on funds such as Eurimages .

PROJECT

Out of Bounds - no fear, no limits



Out of Bounds - no fear, no limits

GERMANY

From chubby, knock-kneed German schoolboy to powerful rugby contender in New Zealand, Anton Segner chases his childhood dream of playing for the legendary All Blacks. A quest for belonging, self-empowerment and adventure.

Language
English

Number of episodes
4 episodes

Length of the episodes
10 minutes

Director
Max LANGFELDT

Producer
Marjorie MEYER
Fimtank
Germany

Total budget of the film
169,500 €

Financing already in place
10,000 €

Teaser

vimeo.com/1093847371?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci

Password :

Synopsis

Frankfurt, Germany, 2010. An overweight boy with knock-knees is bullied by other children, while his football coach tells him he should stop playing sports altogether. Meet Anton Segner. 15 years and a few knee surgeries later, 24-year-old Anton – now on the other side of the world in New Zealand – is on the brink of becoming the first German to join the world's all-time most successful sports team - the All Blacks, the New Zealand national rugby team. Will he make history - or will his lifelong dream slip away? A story to inspire young generations.

Contact

Marjorie MEYER

Producer

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Detailed Budget

[📄 oob-budget-vf.pdf](#)

Themes

- Digital-first Content/Online
- Sport

Stage of development

Early development

Needs

- Distributors
- Co-producers
- Private Funds / Banks

Format

- digital

Estimated date of shoot

February – July 2026

Deck

[📄 pitch-deck-dcm25-outofbounds-nofear-nolimits-final.pdf](#)

Treatment

This is the unbelievable but true coming-of-age story of Anton Segner, who – against all odds and contrary to the doubters – has already achieved so much in his sport, starting from the worst imaginable position: being born in Germany – a rugby wasteland. Yet, he is regarded as one of the best German rugby talents of all time, now playing in the Super Rugby Competition. So, even if he never makes the All Blacks, his story is nonetheless inspiring and demonstrates: We can overcome any challenge if we believe strongly enough, make sacrifices, and work hard to achieve our goals.

This story has two additional reasons to stay tuned: Firstly, through Anton, we travel halfway around the planet to discover New Zealand. From lived experience he knows what is most exciting when you enter the country for the first time. Not only beautiful places, but also simple things that tell a lot about a culture. Like a visit to the barber, local cuisine, hanging out with friends of Māori descent. Secondly, it is a gripping sports documentary. Rugby is growing steadily worldwide and appeals to a huge international audience of established and new fans with whom we learn to love the sport together. Not to mention that the Rugby World Cup 2027 is around the corner. There would be a lot of eyes on Anton – from Germany and all over the world!

A web-first limited series: After establishing the dramatic stakes and the hard-to-achieve goals we capture the past journey and highlight the upcoming challenges. We talk about Anton's new home. What is it like there? The country, the culture, the people. We look back at the early years: how hard was it, mentally and emotionally, to arrive alone as a 15-year-old? How challenging was it to earn the respect of the Kiwis? We meet important figures who helped him along the way. We follow Anton's everyday life as a pro and expat - the routines, the workouts, the go-to spots, the friends, teammates and coaches. We get ready for a new season, talk about the process. Finally, after revealing if he's received the decisive call or not, we look ahead and talk about what this news means for him. A career in the famed All Black jersey or a return to Europe to play in France or England?

First shoot: Winter 2025/26, we are in New Zealand. Pre-season has begun. Anton's team, the Auckland Blues, are trying to get back to their successes of recent years. They have already won the title four times and have produced some of the best-known rugby names. But in 2025 things did not go as expected.

Anton's career with the Blues has been a roller coaster ride so far. 2025, his fifth season with the franchise was promising: lot of match starts, great stats and wide recognition as an up-and-coming player. But for the team it has been a struggle with bitter losses, a below-expectations position in the standings, and then a nail-biter season-ending, crashing to defeat in the semi-finals. Bad luck with injuries added to their challenges.

Like American football, rugby is a full-contact sport but tougher, without helmets or shoulder pads. It ranks amongst the sports with the highest injury rates, involving trauma to the head, knees, spine, etc. Anton got injured himself. A tough break as he would have loved to help his team win. In the end, he was cleared through the concussion protocol, got injections against the pain in his shoulder and returned on the pitch.

It's been hard enough to even become eligible for the national team. In 2024 the World Rugby Council eased the eligibility rules. Non-native players can now be picked if they are registered exclusively with a club for at least 60 months. This opens the door to more rivals for Anton. 2026: new season, new hopes. Every match is another step toward the black jersey.

Visual approach: We aim for grand cinematic images to reflect the bigger-than-life feel of this coming-of-age story. Stunning, imposing natural landscapes to convey how overwhelmed Anton felt as a teenager. They make you feel small and lonely. Photographically composed images, paired with slow crane-like drone shots. We capture the excitement of the journey. No tripods, close-ups, super-close-ups, in faster-paced edits mirroring the confusion of new experiences. When Anton moves, we follow him. Centrally framed follow shots, over-shoulders, close-ups. Strong contrasts of rhythms and angles.

The whole story is emotionally charged. Leaving home at 15, not seeing his family during Covid – all for the lifelong dream he's staked everything on. We want to capture these emotions. We dare to include abstract super-close-ups to intensify empathy and emotional connection. We increase the cinematic feeling by breaking up every scene and every location going from close and super-close to at least one long shot or super long shot.

In every room, every location, we look for details that reveal something about the place and its people. Photos on the wall, house interiors, particular features of the city. No sterile interview set-ups. We work with both natural and artificial light, dare to use high-contrast and low-key lighting situations. The images look spontaneous and aesthetically pleasing. Finally, we plan hero shots of everyone who plays a role in the story. Framed centrally, with background depth, moving slightly towards the subjects, while they look directly into the camera and hold the gaze (except for slight, coached movements, like brushing hair behind the ear).

Director's statement

Sports documentaries have a special place in my heart as a director. Not just because I'm a sports fan, but because they have an inherent quality that makes them unique in the realm of documentaries overall. They bring a second-layer narrative story arc that adds to the suspense, tension and excitement of any main narrative. Questions like "Will the player win?", "Will he reach the next level?". You name it. Beyond the game itself, a sports story always provides tropes and metaphors that connect to real-life challenges and situations: injuries, pressure, conflicts, sacrifices, and the hard work needed to achieve goals or overcome obstacles.

Here, we have a story that is in itself already a gripping adventure, even without the sports aspect. Teenage Anton, suffering from his knock-knees, heavy build and bullying. He just wants to belong. So he follows a dream that takes him away from home and family to basically the furthest country he could find. His journey combines all the elements of a great coming-of-age story with those of an adventure tale. And now adding that he has a real shot: coming from the heart of rugby-nowhere in Germany to join one of the most successful sports team of all time. That is an explosive mix.

The fact that he gave up everything to try to become a professional rugby player, against all odds, even when his German soccer coach told him he would be better off doing anything but sports. He did achieve a pro level and many other things along the way. Today, he plays in New Zealand for the Auckland Blues – one of the best teams in one of the best leagues in the world. His story is an inspirational success story. And the opportunity to go even further and enter the All Blacks gives it an extra edge.

Production note

Anton's journey is more than a sports story. It's about defying expectations, trusting instinct and believing in your own power. It's a fresh insight into elite sport at a young age, that resonates with other areas of life and provides guidance. Authenticity is key. It's the essential ingredient for appealing to Gen Z, our main target audience. Gen Z has redefined how media is consumed: mobile, multiplatform, fragmented, shareable,

snackable. They don't watch sports live on TV or gather in stadiums - they stream. Besides, half of regular sports documentary viewers are more interested in content around individual athletes and players than the teams. 20% don't watch live sports events, considering them too long. We are creating a program that reflects these habits: a pilot web-series 4 x 10 mins that can also be combined in a single episode version and extended to a series featuring young German athletes abroad, like female hockey player Laura Kluge or teenager basketball talent Jack Kayil.

The potential reach of the pilot is huge. Rugby hype is growing rapidly: in 2023 the World Rugby association reported an 11% annual increase in player numbers, to over 8 million. An astonishing 57% are pre-teens. More than 1.3 million young women and girls came into contact with the game. There is a wide community of fans that can be found on social media, as well as clubs, federations, sports NGOs and brands helping spread the word, with potential to build an impact campaign. Rugby is indeed inclusive: big, small, heavy, lean are welcome on the pitch. Look at Anton, once the kid with knock knees who was told to quit sport – now a role-model rugby star.

Director

Max LANGFELDT

Filmography

He has been co-nominated for the Grimme Award three times. As a director for the online documentary series Science for Future (ARD) and Tru Doku (funk/Youtube) and as part of the editorial team for the ZDF TV program Kulturpalast. He was also selected as an Arthur F. Burns Fellow and went on to work at The New Yorker. He is currently filming a new sports documentary for ZDF, which will be released in early 2026.

Biography

Max Langfeldt is a visual storyteller. With 15 years of experience in the media industry. As a director, author, managing editor, and reporter, working for TV broadcasters, streamers, companies, newspapers, art institutions, and NGOs, he has created films, series, and videos for a diverse set of platforms. The formats range from documentaries over commercials, to music videos, and branded content.

Producer

Fimtank

Company profile

Stories can build bridges from a topic to people. FILMTANK is always building new bridges.

Since 2001, our locations in Berlin, Hamburg and Stuttgart have been producing award-winning works that open up new perspectives for our audience. We achieve this with high-quality, international documentary films for cinema and television, but also with innovative multimedia narrative forms: Virtual reality experiences, 360° 3D documentaries, games and immersive installations enable us to actively engage with

our audience on socially relevant topics. We also accompany selected productions with impact campaigns in order to achieve a greater impact on public perception. Many of our films are created as international co-productions and together with strong co-producers, broadcasters and funding bodies: including BBC Storyville, CBC Television, CBS, PBS, ARTE/ ZDF, SWR, 3sat, BKM, FFA, Medienbaord, MFG, MOIN, MDM, Creative Europe, Netherlands Film Fund, Canada Media Fund, Eurimages.

Marjorie MEYER

Biography

Born in France, Marjorie knows that Rugby is more than a sport. It´s a culture and a passion gathering lots of fans. She is currently developing the project "Out of Bounds – no fear, no limits" as one of the producers. She joined Filmtank Stuttgart in 2021, successfully working on international coproductions for cinema and TV like the Oscar longlisted documentary film Total Trust. Previously she was Office Manager at Pantaflix AG and ran her own PR Agency in France for 8 years.

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PROJECT

The Elements of Life



Teaser

vimeo.com/user18061701/download/1120776999/9e52e24865

Synopsis

Our existence is bound to the cycles of the elements. Nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium are among the most vital. Yet we have disrupted their flows, putting the very foundations of life at risk. How did we let this happen? In search of answers, we follow the elements — around the globe and through time, from the inner workings of a single cell to the balance of entire ecosystems, from overfertilized fields to the halls of politics. We discover how the story of these three elements is one of dazzling progress and devastating ecological shortsightedness, of colonial exploitation and global entanglements.

Contact

Valentin THURN

Producer

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The Elements of Life

GERMANY

Life on Earth runs on hidden currents. In "The Elements of Life" we follow three chemical elements – nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium: how they drive the growth of cells, fields, and civilizations, how they connect colonialism, climate and the world's food supply, and how learning from them can help us find our place in a sustainable future.

Language

German, English, Spanish

Length

90 minutes

Director

Kerstin HOPPENHAUS
Sibylle GRUNZE

Producer

Valentin THURN
ThurnFilm GmbH
Germany

Total budget of the film

400,000 €

Financing already in place

130,000 €

Detailed Budget

[250910-kalkulation-salze-der-erde.xlsx](#)

Themes

–

Environment/Nature/Conser

– History

– Science/Knowledge

Stage of development

Late development

Needs

– Distributors

– Sales Agents

– Co-producers

– Private Funds / Banks

– TV

– Foreign TV Channel

– Regional funds

Format

– feature-length

Estimated date of shoot

2026

Deck

[expose-salze-der-erde-englisch.pdf](#)

Treatment

Without nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, we cannot live. Neither humans, nor animals, nor plants - no one and nothing on Earth. We owe these three elements (along with a few others) everything: breathing, walking, thinking. And eating. Especially eating. For as the main components of all fertilizers, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium secure the world's food supply. Without them, the world would go hungry.

Yet these three elements bring not only nourishment and prosperity, but also destruction. Through reckless exploitation – and through our excessive consumption – we have turned vital nutrients into harmful pollutants. Lakes collapse, oceans die, forests and wetlands lose their biodiversity. Groundwater, climate, ecosystems—all are at risk. And with them, so are we.

The three elements confront us with existential questions: Can we feed humanity without destroying its very foundations? And even more fundamentally: How do we

want to live on this planet? How do we want to share and steward our common resources?

The forces that have brought us to this critical point are both alarming and fascinating. To understand them, we must journey with the three essential elements, tracing their great cycles around the globe and through time – from the tiniest cell to entire ecosystems, from the daily choices of a farmer in her field to the downfall of empires. Global catastrophes, colonial crimes, hunger and war – they are all part of our elemental story.

And yet, on this journey we also discover how Earth itself found ways to manage its resources over billions of years, becoming ever more diverse and abundant, surviving even the greatest crises. The planet shows us the way. The better we understand its methods, the more sustainably we can live—not only with nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, but with all the materials we use. In doing so, we can adapt our lives to the planet, and secure our long-term survival.

The Salts of the Earth brings us face-to-face with nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium – in all their facets, vividly, engagingly, and with a sense of wonder for the deeper connections. Not only factual and informative, but also sensory and emotional. We come to see: these three elements are not only immensely powerful – they touch us at our very core.

Our elemental journey unfolds in three parts: from a historical “catastrophically too little,” when nutrients were scarce and hunger was widespread; to today’s “catastrophically too much,” in which overfertilization and waste threaten our very survival; and finally, toward a future of “this might just work”. Along the way, we tell stories of industrial progress and ecological shortsightedness, of life-saving innovations and deadly mistakes, of colonialism and planetary entanglements, of people and plants, fungi and stones—and of diverse, often unexpected solutions. The journey with these seemingly ordinary elements leads us straight to humanity’s greatest questions today. And to some answers.

Few resources have accompanied us for as long as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Few are we so intimately bound to. From our experiences with this triad—as life-giving as it is deadly—we have much to learn for how we use resources today.

Cinematic Approach

We are curious travelers, seeking first-hand knowledge. Scientists, eyewitnesses, and activists guide us to places where we encounter the elements and their effects directly.

We follow how nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium flow through our world. Striking, sensual imagery leaves a lasting impression, just like conversations with deeply engaged and knowledgeable people in real, physical presence.

The film combines four interwoven cinematic elements:

- Animated sequences deliver essential factual information, explaining how and why these three elements became so crucial to life.
- Authentic reportage segments place us with experts in action at locations around the world, showing both the vital importance of these elements and the threats posed by their excess.
- Archival material reveals humanity’s historical mastery of these elements and the

major inventions that followed.

- Narrative illustrations visualize historical episodes and elemental flows on an “artistic wallpaper,” inspired by the opening of *White Lotus*, connecting stories and visual elements across time.

A strong, personal narrative voice ties it all together, situating events in a broader context and connecting them to individual experience. For the German version, actress and medical doctor Christiane Paul could serve as the narrator.

Through unusual visuals and a personal voice, “The Elements of Life” goes beyond a traditional science documentary. It aims not only to inform, but to shift perspectives, inspire reflection, and create a sensual, curious journey—a dance of the elements. Ultimately, it points to the future, urging a fundamental rethinking of how we manage these elements and all resources.

Director's statement

Travelling with the elements takes us straight into the magic of the world! When we humans say we are part of nature, we usually mean living alongside flowers and bees, or dolphins, as part of an ecosystem. Yet in truth, our bond with the Earth is far closer, more intimate, and more essential than we usually dare to imagine.

The flows of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium reveal how all things are woven together — and how we, too, are part of this weave. These elements do not only flow around us, but also through us, in everything we eat, drink, and breathe. I find that endlessly fascinating, and somehow also deeply moving. We are enfolded—tangibly and physically—within this vast and marvelous whole.

And yet, research shows that complex systems like Earth’s can shift swiftly and dramatically once certain tipping points are crossed. I feel we have an enormous responsibility, as individuals and as societies, to use what we now know and to keep these fragile relationships in sight with every decision we make

The good news is: We have proof that it can be done. The Earth itself shows us how. It has managed limited resources for billions of years, while becoming ever more rich and diverse in the process and surviving great crises along the way. The better we understand its methods, and the more sustainably we manage not only nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, but all the materials we use, the better we can align our lives with the planet, and secure our long-term survival. That fills me with great confidence and hope. And these I want to share in this film.

Production note

I was already familiar with the topic because I made a successful documentary “10 Billion – What's On Your Plate?” about the question how to feed the growing world population. But what Kerstin Hoppenhaus has done in her book “The Salts of the Earth” goes far beyond that.

Above all, because she turns the viewer's perspective upside down: instead of seeing the world as a collection of solid objects, we suddenly see it as a sequence of material flows that are constantly renewing themselves. And this helps us understand why nutrients that were once precious have now become toxins that are available in overabundance.

She also succeeds in finding exciting stories involving real people, both in colonial history and in the present day. This creates a picture of the world that allows us to understand the major ecological upheavals caused by modern agriculture.

Director

Kerstin HOPPENHAUS

Filmography

Projects (selection)

As an author, director, and producer, Kerstin Hoppenhaus has realized more than 50 film and media projects, including documentaries and documentary series for television, documentary films for cinema and online platforms, multimedia projects, animated films, corporate films, podcasts, websites, as well as various experimental and innovative journalistic formats. Since 2012, media projects have been produced by Hoppenhaus & Grunze Medien GbR, unless otherwise indicated.

2024 Die Salze der Erde (The Salts of the Earth)

A popular science book about the great nutrient cycles that sustain all life on earth, Hanser Verlag, Munich

Winner NDR Prize for Non-Fiction 2024

Nominee Wissenschaftsbuchpreis 2025 (Austria)

Nominee Wissenschaftsbuch des Jahres 2025

2021 - 2022 Container Lab: Mission No.1 - The Palm Leaf Profilers

Short documentary about the collaboration between research institutes in Hamburg and Puducherry, South-India

Centre of Manuscript Cultures, Hamburg University

Author, director

Biography

Kerstin Hoppenhaus is a science journalist and filmmaker based in Berlin, Germany. She has a master's degree in both, biology and directing film journalism, and works for national public television as well as national and international media like Die Zeit, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Arte, BBC Future (UK) and Undark Magazine (USA).

Since 2012, she has been one of the managing directors of the production company Hoppenhaus & Grunze Medien, specializing in the development and production of films and other audiovisual media for science.

Her work has received multiple awards, including the Peter Hans Hofschneider Prize for Science and Medical Journali

2020 - 2022 Podcast „Landleuchten“

Interviews with activists and other stakeholders about regional development in eastern Germany;

Author, director, producer

Commissioned by Neulandgewinnen e.V.

Funded by Robert Bosch Foundation

2020 - 2022 Phosphorama - Ein Jahr mit Phosphor

A series of multimedia reportages about the challenges of establishing a circular economy with a focus on phosphorus

Author, director, producer, In cooperation with Riffreporter

Funded by Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU)

2019 -

ongoing

Die Unkenpost

Hyperlocal participatory science magazine in rural eastern Germany

Project lead / Editor in chief

Funded by Robert Bosch Foundation's „Neulandgewinner“-programme

2018-2019 Phosphorus: The 'miracle mineral' the world needs

360° video reportage about sustainable phosphorus governance in

Malawi; Author and director, Funded by the European Journalism

Center's Innovation in Development Reporting Grant Programme

In cooperation with ZeitOnline and BBC

Future2017 Böses Erwachen (Rude Awakening)

About the return of a deadly wheat disease and the importance of resistance breeding and crop diversity

Author, Die Zeit; Awarded

Journalistenpreis Grüne Reportage 2018

2016 Erntetod (Ug99 – Rust never sleeps)

Documentary web series about the return of a dangerous wheat

pathogen and the potential threat for

global food security
Author and director
In collaboration with Süddeutsche
Zeitung and arte future
Funded by the European Journalism
Center's Innovation in
Development Reporting Grant
Programme
2014 HZBzlog – A logbook of everyday
science
An online platform documenting the
construction and implementation
of several large scale scientific
instruments
Idea, editorial concept, realization
Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin (HZB)
Deutscher Preis für
Onlinekommunikation 2014
2013 Significant Details – Conversations
with women in science
Author and director; in cooperation with
Spektrum.de
Funded by the Federal Ministry of
Education and Research
and the Robert Bosch Foundation
2013 I, EVA – 12 weeks in the making of
science
„Embedded“ Reporter at Max-Planck-
Institute für Evolutionary
Anthropology in Leipzig; in cooperation
mit Spektrum.de
2010-2012 More than Honey
Feature-length documentary for
theatrical and television release
Development and co-author
Producers: zero one film, Ormenis Film,
Thelma Film, Allegro Film
Bayerischer Filmpreis 2013, German
Television Award 2013
2009 24h Berlin – A Day in the Life
Documentary Program, 24 hours; Co-
Director
Producers: zero one film, rbb, arte
Project awarded Bayerischer Filmpreis
2010

German Television Award 2010
2008 Traces of the past (Die
Spurensucher)
Documentary series, 8x43min,
Development and director
Producers: zero one film, mfp, arte
2006 The stud (Das Gestüt)
Documentary series, 15x26min,
Development and director
Producers: zero film, arte
Awarded Best Reportage at Festival
Epona, France
2003 The Twist of Fate
Three short films about DNA on occasion
of the 50th anniversary of its
decoding; Development and director;
Producer: SWR Television
Supported by the Robert-Bosch-
Foundation
Heureka Prize for Science Journalism
2004
22002 Schwarzwaldhaus 1902 – Life and
livelihood in the Black Forest a
hundred years ago
Documentary series, 4x45min
Development and research
Co-producers: SWR, zero südwest
Project awarded Grimme Prize 2003
2002 Economic Shorts: Growth
Short film, 4min
Development and director
Producer: Filmakademie Baden-
Württemberg
German Economic Film Prize 2002

Sibylle GRUNZE

Filmography

Films/ Media Projects (selection)
Production of over 50 film and media
projects as a Producer and/or
Cinematographer including
documentary films, feature films,
animation series, corporate videos,

Biography

Sibylle Grunze is a freelance
cinematographer and media producer.
She studied at the Film Academy Baden-
Württemberg in the field of
cinematography (Diploma). Since then,
she has worked on over 50 film and

podcasts and websites.

Unless otherwise noted all projects since 2012 are with Hoppenhaus & Grunze Medien and Kerstin Hoppenhaus as the Author and Director.

2024 Container Lab (2022-2024)

Documentary film filmed over many years about the building of a laboratory in containers and their first mission to India, 22 min.,

Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures for the Excellence Cluster "Understanding Written Artefacts" at the University of Hamburg

Producer, story development, Director of Photography

2023 Zucht

Short documentary film about the animal husbandry at the Charité in Berlin for the Charité 3R, 12 min.,

Producer, story development, Director of Photography, Editor

2022 Ceramic

4 Documentary films, 8-12 min. for the Ceramics Museum in Zell am Harmersbach

Producer, Director of Photography

Discovery for tomorrow's medicine

Corporate film, 2 min. for the Max Delbrück Center

Producer, Director of Photography, Editor, Animator³

2021 Written Artefacts

2 Corporate films, 19 min. and 6 min., for the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures for the Excellenz Cluster

"Understanding Written Artefacts" at the University of Hamburg

Producer, story development, Director of Photography

2020 H2020 Oasis

Project documentation film 40 min.

media projects as a cinematographer and/or producer, including documentary films, feature films, animation series, corporate videos, podcasts, and websites for international media, research institutions, and universities. She also teaches filmmaking and science communication.

In 2012, she founded the production company Hoppenhaus & Grunze Medien.

She was awarded the Student Camera Award by the trade magazine Film & TV Kamera.

for the Potsdam Institute for Climate
Impact Research

Producer, Director of Photography

2019 BESSY II am HZB - Ein Blick in den
Maschinenraum der Forschung

Corporate video, 10 min.,

for the Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin für

Materialien und Energie GmbH

Producer, story development, Director of
Photography

2018 4 Explainers on Spintronic, Green IT,
Solar Hydrogen and Synchrotron

Explainers, animation films, 4 x 2 min. for
the Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin für

Materialien und Energie GmbH

Producer, story development

2017 A long and winding road

Documentary film, 12 min.

for the Max-Delbrück Center in Berlin-
Buch

Producer, story development, Director of
Photography

2016 Erntetod (Ug99 – Rust never sleeps)

Documentary web series about the
return of wheat stem rust as a threat to
global wheat production, 6 x 8-12 min.

In collaboration with Süddeutsche
Zeitung and arte future and Undark
magazine

Producer, Director of Photography,
Photographer

2015 26 Tesla – Constructing the world's
strongest magnet for neutron research

Documentary film, 8 min.

for the Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin für

Materialien und Energie GmbH

Producer, story development, Director of
Photography

2013 Impulse und Leben

Documentary film/ interviews, 17 min.
and 24 min.

for the Manfred Sauer Stiftung

Directors: Katrin Knigge and Ronald
Krapp

Producer, story development, Director of

Photography

2012 Three patient information films on cancer

Documentary film/3D animation, 3 x ca. 30 min.

for the Westdeutsche Tumorzentrum

Production: Teer + Feder Filmproduktion

Producer, story development, Director of Photography⁴

2008/2009 Mamas Milch

Documentary film with stop motion and 2D animation, 220 min.

Director: Katrin Knigge

Producer, story development, Director of Photography

2005/2006 Piratengeschichten 2

Puppet animation series 13x 3,30 min. for MDR und KIKA

Director: Andreas Strozyk

Director of Photography

K40

Documentary film, 47 min. for NDR und ARTE

Directors: Tristan Chytroschek und Jakob Kneser

Director of Photography

2003/2004 Piratengeschichten

Puppet animation series, 13 x 5 min. for MDR and KIKA

Director: Andreas Strozyk

Director of Photography

The Making Of...

Documentary film, 90 min. for Sreda Film

Director: Viola Stephan

Director of Photography

2001 MTV Celebrity Death Match for Germany

Puppet animation series, 11x 1:30 Min. for MTV

Director: Andy Kaiser

Director of Photography

2000 Ich werde Dich auf Händen tragen

Feature film, 61 min.

Director: Iain Dilthey

Director of Photography

Momente außer Kontrolle
Documentary film, 45 min.
Director: Katrin Huckfeldt
Director of Photography

Producer

ThurnFilm GmbH

Company profile

ThurnFilm, an independent production company for documentary films, was founded in 2003 by Valentin Thurn. The company focuses on nationally and internationally produced documentaries for TV and cinema and puts emphasis on current events. TASTE THE WASTE with more than 100,000 viewers and 10 BILLION with over 54,000 viewers were the most successful documentaries in German cinemas in 2011/12 and 2015.

ThurnFilm wants to offer new perspectives on socially significant issues by not only giving solutions to problems of our time, but also moving the audience.

Our films have been shown on international markets such as the IDFA or the BERLINALE and at renowned international festivals such as the CPH:DOX. They have been broadcasted in more than 40 countries around the world and won important awards such as the Justice Prize of the Santa Barbara International Filmfestival (USA).

Valentin THURN

Biography

Valentin Thurn is a director of documentaries for TV and cinema.

His documentary "Taste the Waste" won 20 international awards. It was a box office hit in Germany with more than 130,000 spectators and created impact in many cities with public cooking events. The film screened in over 30 countries worldwide on TV.

His film "10 Billion – What's on your plate?" won the German Nature Film Award and many others and was declared the most successful German cinema documentary in 2015.

In the last 30 years Valentin Thurn realized more than 50 documentaries, among them "I Am Al Qaeda" that has been nominated for the German TV Award in 2006.

He is co-founder of the association "Foodsharing", the Cologne food policy council and the International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ). He is responsible for the impact programme of the German association of documentary filmmakers, where he serves as a board member.

PROJECT

The Journey of Man: a Father's Love



Teaser

[vimeo.com/1131592612/cb33ba46c8?
share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci](https://vimeo.com/1131592612/cb33ba46c8?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci)

Synopsis

From fishermen to oil tycoons, Alessandro's family legacy is one of exploitation and loss. Now a father, he embarks on a deeply personal journey to confront his past, reconcile with his estranged father, and find hope for his son—unearthing truths about masculinity, family, and our fractured relationship with nature.

Through a cinematic and personal lens, the film examines how generational legacies, shaped by industrial ambition, can ripple through families and ecosystems alike.

At its heart, this documentary film reflects on the urgent need for balance—between humanity and nature, tradition and progress, the past and the future.

Contact

Alessandro BELLELI
Director

The Journey of Man: a Father's Love

NORWAY, ITALY

Set against the breathtaking landscapes of Arctic Norway and the Italian Alps, "The Journey of Man: a father's Love" is a deeply personal journey exploring the intricate connections between masculinity, fatherhood, and environmental responsibility.

Language

Norwegian, Italian

Length

75 minutes

Director

Alessandro BELLELI

Producer

Åsne HØGETVEIT
Koko Film AS
Norway

Total budget of the film

463,000 €

Financing already in place

95,795 €

Detailed Budget

+47 95 49 32 81
alel@hotmai.com



[dcm-deliv-detailed-budget.xlsx](#)

Themes

- Environment/Nature/Conser
- Global Issues/Conflict
- Heritage
- Human Interest/Family
- Social Issues/Activism

Stage of development

Late development

Needs

- Distributors
- Co-producers
- Private Funds / Banks
- Regional funds

Format

- feature-length

Estimated date of shoot

2026

Treatment

Prologue

The film opens on a fog-covered mountain in the Italian Alps. Alessandro reflects on his childhood fear and rejection of this place, for him a symbol of traditional masculinity: dominance, severity, hierarchy. The mountain becomes a metaphor for inherited expectations and the harshness of ambition, it resembles Giovanni, his father.

Alessandro travels in search for balance and inspiration, to find out what man he wants to become. For his new life, he settles in the Norwegian Arctic as he believes it is the only place left in Europe where humans and nature are in balance.

This sets the tone: masculinity, nature, and the struggle to redefine both in a changing world.

Act1

Alessandro becomes a father. He experiences limitless love for his son, Leo, that he has never felt before. But this serenity is quickly accompanied by anxiety. The realization of Norway's further development of fossil fuel economy in Tromsø and Northern Norway, the drastic effects of changing climate around him, increasingly encroach as he embraces his new-found responsibilities.

He wonders: what kind of world will Leo inherit? How can he best prepare him for an uncertain future? What kind of father does he want to be? He wrestles with guilt: his

surname, Belleli, also the company name of his family's business, marks the largest oil rigs globally.

Moved by these emotions, he decides to travel and meets people embodying the Norwegian Arctic's conflicting future: Morten, an oil worker and father, sees extraction as prosperity; Ingvild, a singer, fights to protect nature and youth; Paul, a grandfather and fisherman, defends ancient fish spawning areas from drilling.

Alessandro sees echoes of his own lineage—fishermen turned oil entrepreneurs.

Act2

Burdened by memories and responsibility, Alessandro returns to the Italian Alps to meet his estranged father, Giovanni. Could the family's petrochemical legacy have caused not only environmental damage but an indelible generational trauma that Alessandro still carries.

All Giovanni's life was driven by an unfulfilled desire to join the family company and contribute to "propel humans in their journey toward the future." His obsession with development and idea of manhood left Alessandro without a father.

Alessandro invites him to Mantua, their ancestral city, to confront both the industrial past of their family and Giovanni's absence. Giovanni initially engages, but ultimately retreats, leaving Alessandro feeling abandoned again.

Seeking closure, Alessandro returns to Mantua alone. There, he meets: Gloria, a doctor treating victims of pollution. Fabio, a saxophonist who lost his mother to toxic fumes. Claudio, an activist and son of one of the last fishermen.

On Claudio's boat, Alessandro learns about the broken bond between Mantua's lakes and its people—once fishermen, now disconnected due to industrial destruction.

He sees parallels between Mantua's past and Northern Norway's present: at a crossroads between preserving nature as fishing heritage and embracing extractive development.

Act3

Back in Norway, Alessandro invites Claudio to meet Paul, the fisherman. The two elders, connected through their family's fishing legacy, share stories of protecting the balance between humans and water. Their warmth inspires Alessandro to focus on the present with Leo. Together, father and son explore nature, forging moments of connection and hope.

One day, Alessandro gazes at Tromsdaltinden, Tromsø's mountain, and recalls his fear of the Alpine mountain. Drawn to Tromsdaltinden's gentle strength, he cycles toward it, each pedal stroke bringing peace. He embraces the mountain as a symbol of his own fatherhood.

Empowered, Alessandro returns to Italy with Leo to meet Giovanni again—this time with compassion. They travel to Mantua, where the upper lake, once banned for swimming, is now recovering. People and waters are slowly reconnecting.

In the final scene, three generations—grandfather, father, and son—swim together in the lake where their ancestors once fished. The moment is joyful and symbolic: Giovanni's anger dissolves, Alessandro's guilt lifts, and Leo plays freely. Healing is possible, even if the past remains unresolved.

Style

The film's visual language alternates between poetic nature shots and intimate interviews. Alessandro's reflective voiceover accompanies scenes of landscapes and daily life. Archival footage from Alessandro's childhood, Leo's early years, and the Belleli family history adds emotional depth.

Warm, evocative tones foster intimacy. Using a Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera, Alessandro alternates between stabilized contemplative shots and immersive hand-held moments. The original score blends ambient soundscapes with emotional melodies.

Cast

Alessandro is the central figure, with Leo and Giovanni as key characters. Leo symbolizes creativity and hope; Giovanni represents tradition and the consequences of industrial ambition. Supporting characters—Morten, Ingvild, Paul, Gloria, Fabio, and Claudio—offer diverse perspectives on the film's themes.

Director's statement

As a director and main character, I am in a position with access to a unique story that is both personal and universal. I come from a fishing family that a few generations ago became businessmen in the oil and energy sector. They created thousands of jobs, accumulated extreme wealth, but at the same time helped to destroy the very ecosystem they used to live on – the lakes they fished in. Through gigantic industrial projects, my family contributed to the spread and dependence on fossil fuels in the world. That is, we helped to create the climate changes that now threaten the existence of our life on earth as we know it today.

The analogies between the past of the region I come from in Italy and Norwegian plans for extraction in the north of Norway are too clear for me to ignore. The family's history of industrialization is part of the larger cultural and economic history of Italy. This is a story that has many similarities with Northern Norway. The ecological and ideological conflict between younger and older generations about climate and the economic system is felt in Norway, in Italy and in the rest of the world. This conflict is reflected in deep and personal ways in my family, especially in the relationship between my father and me.

The film questions the fascination of humans – and especially men – with our own journey into the future, around the belief in infinite development, unlimited use of natural resources, and the terrible consequences such thinking have on the relationship between humans and nature, as conflict between generations.

I feel a responsibility to make this film towards my son and his generation: to help remedy the generational conflict and ensure a new balance.

Production note

The project has been in development since 2017, when Alessandro learnt he was going to be a father, and then Koko Film joined as the production company last year.

This Summer and Autumn Alessandro has travelled and filmed in Italy, in Northern Norway, while continue filming himself, his son, and other participants.

The film has recently been selected to be part of the IDFA Arctic Film delegation.

We have already secured the editor Lucio Basadonne. head of production, we are actively looking to secure agreements with a composer, sound designer, colorist, and distributors, and to develop a graphic profile that we can use both in marketing and on the film poster.

For these reasons, we are working on finding an Italian co-producer, preferably in the region of origin of the director, in order to apply for different funds from the Trentino Film Commission.

The director established a collaboration with Chalmers University, with Professor Martin Hultmann and Paul Mark Pulé and the linked worldwide network of Men Engage Alliance. This strengthens and inspires the film and secures a tight link with a highly engaged audience.

The film project has been developed into a successful workshop, tested within the framework renowned program “The Norwegian Cultural Schoolbag” with youth of between 12 to 19 yo.

We plan to enter into production in late 2026.

Director

Alessandro BELLELI

Filmography

As an anthropologist photographer and filmmaker, Alessandro has been working in Denmark, Western Greenland, Brazil, Northern Norway and California. His works (visual and written) have been shown and published on the National Italian TV RAI, the National Norwegian TV NRK & by the Italian Polar Institute.

He holds a bachelor in Economics with a specialization in social studies and international cooperation at the University of Trento (2007), a Master in Cultural Anthropology at the University of Genoa (2011) and a Master in Visual Anthropology of the Arctic University of

Biography

Born in Trentino (IT) in 1983, Alessandro Belleli is an Italo-Norwegian (double citizen) anthropologist of the arctic(s), photographer and filmmaker with (among the others) a big weak side: a profound and systematic attraction towards the South. Coming from a middle ground, an area in between cultures, he has always been divided-attracted by two opposite directions. Since his first trip, in the last 20 years he has lived, studied and worked in various places, including San Diego (CA,2001 and 2024), Utrecht (NL,2005), Genoa (IT, 2008-2010), Copenhagen (DEN,2010-2012),

Norway (2015). He now teaches ethnographic film and multimodal anthropology at the Arctic University of Norway.

Kangerlussuaq (GL,2011), San Paolo (BR.,2013-14) Tromsø (NO,2013-now)

During his M.A. in Visual Anthropology as part of my Master's thesis, he made an anthropological film "São Paulo, an internet life" that focuses on the visual and digital representation of two young Brazilian, their process of social navigation from the periphery to the center of the urban metropolis. The film was published by the National Norwegian broadcaster NRK in 2017.

During the previous and following years he worked mainly in the Arctic(s) with photos, writing (publications), collaborations as with different multimedia projects (as multimedia exhibitions) and short videos.

Since 2017 he started to focus on documentary, by filming and writing for "The Journey of Man: a father's Love", first just when he could due to his work at the creative hub Tvibit and his sons' Leo young age, later one day a week. From the middle of 2022 this film became 50% of his working time and the project started to develop much more rapidly.

While working at Tvibit he developed different projects as Blackout festival/visual art adventure (2021-now). In 2024 he started to work on a new documentary film between California and Mexico, called "Couch Stories" that received development support by the regional center for cinema, Arctic Film Norway.

In 2024 he was appointed Honorary Consul of Italy in Troms, Finnmark and

Svalbard.

When he is not in his studio working with the two projects, Alessandro teaches Ethnographic Film and Multimodal Anthropology at UiT, The Arctic University of Norway

For more details about his work/projects in his personal webpage alessandrobelleli.com/

Producer

Koko Film AS

Company profile

Koko Film AS, established in 2013 and based in Tromsø, in Northern Norway, is a dedicated documentary film production company. It specializes in producing original documentaries, encompassing both films and series, from initial concept through to final production.

The company is led by Trude Ottersen, who serves as the owner, managing director, producer, director, and photographer, bringing a rich background in visual anthropology, photography, and art history to her work.

Jenny Andersen, who joined the company in 2017, contributes her expertise as a director and photographer, enriched by her experience in art projects and photography education.

Starting in 2024, Åsne Ø. Høgetveit enhances the team as a producer, leveraging her academic background in Russian cinema and her professional experience from UiT – The Arctic University of Norway.

Åsne HØGETVEIT

Biography

Åsne Høgetveit is a creative producer at Koko Film in Tromsø, Norway.

As a producer, she brings with her a dedication for compelling storytelling, analytical abilities and an interest for societal issues.

She is currently working on her first film projects, and has a background in academia and politics. She holds a PhD in Russian Cinema, from UiT - The Arctic University in Norway (2019).

At 17 she became Norway's youngest elected representative as a member of the

Telemark County
Parliament in 2003.

Powered by
FestiCiné

PROJECT

The Potato Heads



Teaser

vimeo.com/1129168346?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci

Password :

Synopsis

In Spring 1992 an article appeared in the New York Times appealing for help to find a new home for Washington's much loved 'Potato Museum'. But it was too late. The owners - Tom and Meredith Hughes - had already packed their 2,000 potato artefacts away, along with their dreams, and moved it to New Mexico. 2024, a call from an upmarket auction house in New York asking where the collection had gone suddenly lit a new flame in our passionate potato- heads' hearts. This film follows irreverent, heartwarming retirees Tom and Meredith on one last push to realise their dream and secure their legacy in a sustainable, state-of-the-art potato museum.

Contact

Alison MILLAR

Director

+44 7973 316871

alison@ericastarling.com

The Potato Heads

UNITED KINGDOM

Tom & Meredith Hughes are on a mission to find a permanent home for their legacy: the world's most-celebrated collection of potato artefacts. Their heartwarming quest draws us into a kaleidoscopic potato world, unravelling an inspirational story of love, aging, and the energising power of dreams - that takes us to the Moon and beyond.

Language

English

Length

52 minutes

Number of episodes

1 episodes

Director

Alison MILLAR

Producer

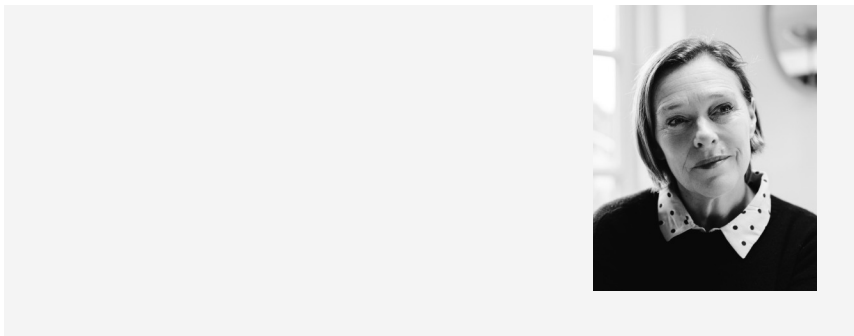
Callum ROBERTS

Erica Starling Productions

United Kingdom

Total budget of the film

544,348 €



Financing already in place

34,521 €

Detailed Budget

[the-potato-heads-budget-top-sheet-finance-plan.xlsx](#)

Themes

- Adventure/Travel
- Arts & Culture
-
- Environment/Nature/Conser
- Factual Entertainment
- Health
- Heritage
- History
- Human Interest/Family
- Lifestyle
- Politics
- Science/Knowledge
- Social Issues/Activism

Stage of development

Early development

Needs

- Distributors
- Sales Agents
- Co-producers
- Private Funds / Banks
- TV
- Foreign TV Channel
- Regional funds

Format

- one-off

Estimated date of shoot

November 2025

Deck

[potato-compressed.pdf](#)

Treatment

Opening sequence: Tchaikovsky's 'Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy' plays below wide, painterly shots of a sun-drenched backyard in Albuquerque. Two elderly figures

emerge from the shadows - Tom and Meredith Hughes - dressed as potatoes, planting tiny spud seeds in the dusty soil of their hacienda-style garden.

Tom's voice, soft and whimsical, drifts in: "Once upon a time, there was a mighty little tuber..."

Meredith cuts in, eyes twinkling: "It had many eyes, but no mouth - so that's where we came in."

They embrace, turn to camera, then hold up a single, wrinkled potato like a holy relic.

Title appears: The Potato Heads

The mood is 'fairytale' - Wes Anderson meets Wizard of Oz - a magical tone that will flow through the film.

Tom and Meredith are on a mission. For 40 years, the couple have been the heart of the global potato community; collectors, educators, authors, advisors - even stars of '90s potato-chip commercials. Their obsession has taken them around the world - from Brussels to Ethiopia; from conferences to TV talkshows. But now, in their 80s, they're on one final, urgent quest: to find a permanent home for their extraordinary potato collection - a Potato Museum - a fanciful yet sincere temple to the spud.

Plans have been drawn, but need funding - and time is running out. A recent health scare and their son's fear of inheriting their "10 tons of potato stuff" have forced the couple into action.

Firstly, in a huge room their friend has given them short term access to, they will meticulously catalogue their entire collection to enable them to reach out to US and European 'Potato Empires' who have shown interest in the past.

Then, to cut their extortionate storage unit costs, they will split the collection and drive half of it to temporarily be housed at their son's home in Washington. Along the way they will gain publicity doing 'pop up' Potato shows.

As they prepare, the film leans into stylised sequences: The couple, in lab coats, itemising artefacts bathed in golden light.

Their collection is as eccentric as it is priceless: potato-themed art, farming tools, old cookbooks, toys, wart cures, folk relics - even a first-edition Mr. Potato Head. Each object peels back a new layer: a 1950s toy commercial; a Peruvian wedding ritual; a tragic famine; a scientific breakthrough. We travel into the history, mythology, politics, and future of the world's most humble yet mighty crop.

But, there is an antagonist - Jacob, a rival collector. He offers support but wants some of the pair's most valuable pieces and can't wait for them to sell up.

Throughout Tom and Meredith's quest, a love story quietly unfolds creating

an uplifting, funny and inspirational warmth to their struggle.

They met as students fleeing the Vietnam draft. On a ship to Europe, Meredith played piano under the stars; Tom watched her, spellbound. Years later, in Iran with the Peace Corps, Tom sent her a letter: "Leave everything. Marry me." So, she did.

Their potato museum began in '70s Brussels, where they lived as Tom taught. Tom has asked former students to help find a home for the collection in Belgium, where his environmental workshops show how the crop is changing lives - from climate-resilient farming in Ethiopia, to its role in developing low-carbon bio-concrete.

We will discover more revelatory facts via their YouTube channel and their artefacts. Their infectious enthusiasm feels urgent, noble, even romantic. Their love - for each other and for their tuberous muse - becomes a lens to see the extraordinary in the ordinary.

We follow them observationally on the road doing pop-up shows in small-town libraries, rural museums, and roadside diners. Audiences are bemused and enthralled. In the midst of it, Tom reveals his dream - to return the collection to Ireland, where the potato is sacred.

We shift to a poetic, intimate tone. Tom and Meredith in Washington on their son's veranda, the sun low. Their mission isn't over, but the path is clearer. Maybe, just maybe, their Potato Museum will come to life - rooted not just in soil, but in love, memory, resilience.

A glimmer of hope arrives: a major Irish potato business wants to meet, having seen Tom's work. Could this be the final chapter?

VISUAL STYLE:

Warm, cinematic, painterly. Inspired by *The Truffle Hunters*, *SET!* and Agnes Varda's whimsical realism. Surreal interludes meet grounded, observational documentary. Animation, archive, commercials, and home videos mix with vérité moments of deep emotional honesty.

THEMES:

- Love and legacy
- Obsession and meaning
- Climate change and sustainability
- Globalisation, migration, and memory
- The beauty of the overlooked

The Potato Heads isn't just potatoes, it's about dreams, what we need in life and what we leave behind.

Tom and Meredith take us on a compassionate, warm and educational journey to show us that small things - silly, starchy, sublime - connect

Director's statement

I am best known for my award winning - hard hitting , dark and challenging films. Often about murder, missing people and the conflict in Northern Ireland. The Potato Heads is a heart -warming , uplifting film with strong fun characters and a cracking storyline. Part road movie / part love story - it is my dream film. In these dark times - I want to bring into the homes of a global audience - some hope, fun and light.

Director

Alison MILLAR

Filmography

Selected Filmography:

The Disappearance of Captain Nairac
(2025) Screenings :Docs Ireland, Cork
International Film Festival (November
9th 2025) BBC :TX 10th November 2025

LYRA (2022)- Director- CH4/Ni Screen-
Winner of 19 International Awards,
including; the Grierson for best
Documentary, Prix Europa best European
documentary , Giffoni International
award, Cork International Film Festival
Audience award, Millennium Docs
Against Gravity and the Tim
Hetherington award at Sheffield
International Film festival.

Searching for Shergar (2018)- Director-
BBC/RTE- Prix Europa Runner up for Best
Documentary in Europe.

Dispatches: Kids in Crisis (2015)- Director-
CH4- Winner of Royal Television Society
award Current Affairs, Nominated for Prix
Europa.

The Disappeared (2013)- Director-
BBC/RTE- Winner of Irish Film and
Television Academy award: Best
Documentary, Special commendation

Biography

Alison Millar is one of the UK and
Ireland's leading documentary
filmmakers, acclaimed for her
emotionally powerful and fearless
storytelling. A BAFTA, Grierson, Prix
Europa ,Prix Italia and Irish Film and
Television award winner - in 2010 she
founded Belfast based, Erica Starling
Productions. Her intimate 2022 feature
documentary Lyra, about her friend, the
murdered journalist Lyra McKee, won 19
International awards. In 2025 she
premiered her latest feature, The
Disappearance of Captain Nairac at Docs
Ireland and it will next screen at Cork
International Film festival in November
before TX on the BBC.

from the Prix Europa: Best Current Affairs film, Royal Television Society and Celtic Film awards.

This World: The Shame of the Catholic Church (2012)- BAFTA Winner: Best Current Affairs. RTS award winner , Celtic film award, Irish Film and TV academy nomination best director - Special Commendation Prix Europa awards.

The Father, The Son and the Housekeeper (2009)- Director- BBC- Winner of the Prix Italia: Best Documentary Nominated for BAFTA: Breakthrough Talent, winner of Irish Film and Television Award : Best Documentary

Producer

Erica Starling Productions

Callum ROBERTS

Biography

Callum Roberts is a Belfast-based emerging producer with Erica Starling Productions. He holds a first-class degree in Economics but discovered his passion for forging meaningful relationships through filmmaking. Assistant Producer 'The Ban'; 2024 , premiered Tribeca , Big Sky , IDFA , CPH : Dox winner London FF , Big Sky and Focal awards. 2026 (due release) Producer 'Relic';. Production assistant BBC3 Accused: A Mother on Trial, A British Guide to the End of the World, and The Chargin' Times of Ike White. Shooting AP - The Hearth, a feature documenting Belfast's history through the voices of its people. 2025 - Archive Producer and Associate Producer on the BBC feature documentary The Disappearance of Captain Nairac. Callum is also on a NI Screen Producer mentor / leadership course with mentor & Emmy award nominated Producer Eimhear O'Neill.

PROJECT

Time Suspended



Teaser

vimeo.com/1131652425?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci

Password :

Synopsis

On 15th October 2011 Rome is in flames. Amidst tear gas and water cannons a helicopter films my 19-year-old brother throwing a pole at a police van. Those images are seen around the world and a few months later he's arrested. After an 11-year wait, the final sentence is six and a half years in prison. In 2022, as I accompany him to turn himself in, a long-hidden secret is revealed, the reason behind his red-mist violence. At its core, the film reveals the unspoken truth of a generation that turned to street violence as its only available language, intertwining it with my family's story to explore the eternal clash between youth and authority.

Contact

Lorenzo SPINELLI

Director

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lorenzo.spinelli@hotmail.it



Time Suspended

ITALY

During a protest in Rome in 2011, my brother committed a violent act that would change his life forever, triggering an 11-year trial and ending with a sentence of six years six months in prison. The film explores the anger and silences behind that act, seeking to understand a historic moment that marked an entire generation.

Language

Italian

Length

80 minutes

Director

Lorenzo SPINELLI

Total budget of the film

345,179 €

Financing already in place

4,500 €

Detailed Budget

[bdg-suspended-time.pdf](#)

Themes

- Current Affairs/Investigation
- DocuDrama
- History
- Human Interest/Family
- Politics
- Social Issues/Activism

Stage of development

Early development

Needs

- Distributors
- Sales Agents
- Co-producers
- Private Funds / Banks
- TV
- Foreign TV Channel
- Regional funds

Format

- feature-length

Estimated date of shoot

2026 / 2027

Treatment

I will never forget the moment when my brother was made to get in a car and be taken to the police station. Four vehicles sped away at full throttle. I stood silently on the balcony, watching them leave. The sun had already risen, but the street below was still empty. Alone with my mother and father, none of us dared to say a word. As if it were any other day, I packed my school bag and left for class, pretending nothing had happened. My mother wrote in her diary: “suspended time.”

Between 2008 and 2012 the world was shaken by political and economic crisis. In Italy this meant social unrest, student protests and violent street clashes. On 15th October 2011, more than 200,000 people gathered in Rome to protest against Berlusconi's fourth government and its austerity policies. My brother Giacomo, then 19, threw a wooden pole at a police officer, an act captured on video by a police helicopter. Months later, a trial drawing intense media interest began, lasting 11 years. In 2022, by then in his thirties, Giacomo finally received his sentence: six years, six months in prison.

After serving more than two years behind bars, he was released to complete his sentence under community probation. During all those years there was never truly a chance to speak about that day, nor about where that violence came from. My deci-

sion to tell his story starts here. Not to justify his act, but to understand the roots of a rage that I too shared in adolescence. In tracing his past, I discovered a secret he never revealed to anyone - like embers hidden beneath ashes - that pushed him towards the blind violence which marked all of our lives. I realised that violence worked like a system of communicating vessels: from family arguments to street clashes, anger rose in equal measure. The absence of dialogue, with its explosive force, overwhelmed an entire family, confronting it not only with its own weaknesses, but also with those of its time.

The film explores the contradictions of a generation that used anger as its language, with 15th October 2011 as a turning point. It shows a "before", where collective violence had a social function, and an "after," where it transformed and moved elsewhere. As Shoshana Zuboff reminds us, in those particular years physical rebellion gave way to a more subtle power: that of algorithms and digital surveillance. 'Time Suspended' aims to give a voice and complexity to a generation long excluded from film, while also speaking to Gen Z, who are today also forced into extreme acts just to be heard.

Now, as his sentence nears its end, Giacomo is writing a book about our grandfather, Veniero Spinelli, a revolutionary antifascist fighter and younger brother of Altiero, one of the founding fathers of the European Union. A common thread is emerging in the writing between two rebellious destinies - the grandfather and grandson. What was a long-hidden secret for Giacomo, for Veniero became an opportunity to separate himself and break with his paternal authority figure. Veniero too, at 19, was sentenced to six years, five months in prison. In both cases it was conflict with the father figure that marked the beginnings of emancipation from authority. This historical account becomes a way to reshape our path as brothers, seeking a symbolic link between the fractures of the present and the radical choices of the past.

The film is a hybrid documentary that blends direct cinema, archival material, and animation.

The filming of Giacomo's daily life, begun in 2022, does not simply record events but inhabits his search for meaning. Each gesture, each silence, reveals a man weighed down by questions he has never been able to resolve, who turns to writing and memory as if they could offer a way out. This path inevitably brings him back to our father, to a confrontation long avoided.

Around him, the rest of us move like echoes: mother, brother, grandfather, friends. None of us directly scarred by that day, yet all carrying its invisible imprint. We inhabit a time suspended, unable to move forward, as if the weight of his story held us in place.

Archive footage is central - original sequences from 15th October 2011, taken from court evidence and never seen before, offer an opportunity to replay that day and its historical context from a unique perspective. The footage - shot from a police heli-

copter - enables the protest of 200,000 people to be dissected and reconstructed in multiple ways. As writer Elias Canetti suggests, violence interrupts time. The film develops this insight, building a visual grammar capable of restoring that rupture. The use of archives is also inspired by Bill Morrison's *Incident* (2023), where a multiplicity of perspectives destabilises the notion of a single, fixed truth.

Animation, on the other hand, will embody the intimate bond with our grandfather Veniero. Its style is inspired by Andrei Ujica's *TWST – Things We Said Today*, where animation does not decorate but gives shape to the inner gaze, putting past and present, private and public, into dialogue.

Ultimately, the film is a journey of reconciliation: with the past, with others, and with oneself. A story rooted in a personal wound, yet opening to broader reflections on youth anger and violence - often silenced, rarely understood, and never truly confronted.

Director's statement

During the research for this film, my brother Giacomo and I returned to the Stadio Olimpico, a symbolic place of our adolescence. Between the ages of 13 and 19, we stood together in the Curva Sud every time Roma played at home. That space had its own rules, far removed from the outside world. It was a place where I felt grown-up, accepted, different. And above all, free: I could release all the emotions and chaotic energy that lived inside me.

Giacomo was my point of reference, even if often, when we were together, we ended up fighting. Violent, physical fights, where we truly hurt each other. My body still bears the marks of those moments. We didn't talk. I knew nothing about his life beyond our home's walls. Then came his arrest. And something shifted. For the first time, we understood how much we loved each other. From that moment, we never touched again. And we stopped going to the stadium.

I often asked myself: what if it had been me in his place? At times, I even wished for that role—the guilty one, the condemned one. It seemed easier to inhabit than the role of the one left outside, waiting. That's when the need arose in me to return to those years, to ask: what was he doing then? Where did that anger come from? What are the most violent things he reached? A sincere, direct confrontation, leaving nothing unspoken.

Director

Lorenzo SPINELLI

Filmography

Director
Bones and Wax / Italy / 38' / 2021

Biography

Lorenzo Spinelli (1994) is a film director with a formation in anthropology. He

Kutaisi Sport Place / Georgia / 10' / 2022
Letter to Grandchild / Georgia / 10' / 2022
A Breath Partial But Complete / Italy / 17'
/2023
Brigas / Italy / 15' / 2025

Editor

Prometheus / Italy / 85' / 2022 (Simone
Mannino)

Tribute to Patrizia Cavalli / Italy / 2024

52 Is A Machine / 20' / Italy / 2025

(Gregorio Sassoli / Alejandro Cifuentes)

graduated from the CSC documentary
school in Palermo and specialises
audiovisual archives creative reuse. He
directed “A breath partial but complete”
(Zavattini Award and Best Short Film at
the Turin Film Festival), the podcast
“Suspended Time” (Special Mention
Lucia Award 2024) and “Brigas” (2025). He
collaborates with the AAMOD Archive
and Unarchive Found Footage Fest.

“Time Suspended” was developed in the
Milano Film Network (InProgress) and
Documentary Campus programs, and
won the 2025 Solinas Award.

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PROJECT

Toni - Exposing the Whole Picture



Toni - Exposing the Whole Picture

GERMANY

My grandfather volunteered for in the Waffen-SS. When my mother reveals this long-hidden family secret to me, a personal, intergenerational search for truth begins - and the struggle for the memory of a loved one. Intimate details of his legacy become a multi-layered portal into an unknown past, posing questions of repression, guilt and identity.

Language

German, English

Length

90 minutes

Director

Martin KIESSLING

Producer

Michael KALB
Michael Kalb
Germany

Total budget of the film

Teaser

vimeo.com/1114867006?share=copy

Password:

Synopsis

My grandfather chose to serve in the elite Waffen-SS. When my mother reveals this long-hidden family secret, I dive deep into a legacy preserved but never examined with a critical eye. Letters, documents, photos become intimate portals into an unknown past of love, violence, fragile dreams and great disillusion. Through investigations in archives and on location, interviews and emotional confrontations, my search for truth brings to light biographical ruptures, ambivalences and entanglements in Nazi terror. New certainties force us finally to face repression, guilt and fear of painful discoveries, all passed down through generations.

Contact

Martin KIESSLING
Writer/Director
[+49 176 10327410](tel:+4917610327410)
info@martinkuessling.de



600,000 €

Financing already in place

15,000 €

Detailed Budget

[📄 20250810-documentary-toni-martinkiesling-budget-schedule.xlsx](#)

Themes

- Current Affairs/Investigation
- DocuDrama
- Heritage
- History
- Human Interest/Family

Stage of development

Late development

Needs

- Distributors
- Sales Agents
- Co-producers
- Private Funds / Banks
- TV
- Foreign TV Channel
- Regional funds

Format

- feature-length

Estimated date of shoot

2026-2027

Deck

[📄 251028-toni-exposingthewholepicture-treatment-v4-english.pdf](#)

Treatment

Protagonists & Setting

Hans "Toni" Weindl (1918–1985) was born in Munich. His youth spanned the Weimar Republic and Hitler's rise. In 1938, lured by a career in customs, he joined the Special Disposal Troops of the SS and served as a soldier across Europe. After the war he was charged with membership of a criminal organization and declared a "Mitläufer" (Nazi

follower). Released from captivity, he struggled with poor health, built a modest career and had a daughter, Beatrice. Like most of his generation he remained silent about his role in the Nazi system.

Beatrice Kießling-Weindl (b. 1955) grew up in Munich in the fall-out of dictatorship, but rarely sensed her own connection. In postwar Germany, repression was the norm - she learnt not to ask. In the 80s she moved to Franconia to start a family. The sudden death of her father just before the birth of her son, Martin, came as a shock. Decades later she entrusted him with the challenging legacy of her father. She embodies the dilemma of the second generation: loyalty to her parent, yet fear of painful discoveries.

Martin Kießling (b. 1985) grew up in Franconia, drawn to creativity and history, also shaped by family war stories. After moving to Munich, he pursued a career as a filmmaker. Though he never met his grandfather, he had been given a positive image of him. Discovering his ancestor had actually elected to be in the elite SS, initial shock turned to curiosity. As the first descendant to uncover it, he feels compelled to confront head on what was hidden.

Munich frames this family story, linking the lives of its protagonists to the rise of National Socialism. In Franconia the heirloom-filled family home becomes a center of remembrance, where memories and hidden traces lie side by side. The Bavarian Alps and Lake Chiemsee embody generational retreats and counterpoints to violent discoveries of the search, like the former concentration camp Buchenwald.

Creative Vision

TONI is a subjective, intergenerational journey into reckoning with the past, strong family bonds and fragile memories. Rather than retelling historical events, it explores how repression is inherited, how silence becomes legacy, and how truth emerges from linked fragments. The film weaves family dialogue and confrontation into the broader historical landscape, creating an immersive experience which invites reflection.

Its guiding question: How do we reconcile love for a family member with the knowledge of his participation in Hitler's military elite and murderous regime? The past and present are examined using a bottom-up approach and strictly personal lens that focuses on the everyday lives of ordinary people. A multi-layered story emerges, contrasting the fates of perpetrators and victims, bridging the gap between collective and personal remembrance.

My grandfather's biography is a treasure trove of insights, both for the protagonists and for an international audience. His story stretches from Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, the Balkans, Ukraine and Russia, to Great Britain and the USA.

Dramaturgy

Act 1: Family bonds and stakes are set: while I, Martin, press for clarity, my mother oscillates between honesty and fear. Tension rises between searching and suppressing. My grandfather's letters, photos and documents spark questions: What really happened? Why the SS? Why the silence? First hints of war crimes deepen the suspense.

Act 2: Research broadens into public archives and history. I learn more than my mother knows and am torn between protecting and confronting her. Family fragments interlace with well-known events, while narratives for self-protection collapse. Victim and perpetrator realities sharpen, and my grandfather's role grows clearer. Insights into my mother's childhood and relationship with her father reveal why she's never been able to take a critical stance.

Act 3: Evidence of complicity emerges; confrontation is unavoidable. My mother admits she withheld details to shield her father. Shock gives way to fragile openness. Family silence and historical repression give way to a more complex memory, ending with a new, shared perspective.

Narrative approach

The journey of discovery is guided by my reflective voice-over - openly subjective, rejecting omniscience. Montage emphasizes gaps, ruptures and contradictions. Tension arises from dramatic questions: What has been revealed? What remains hidden? What does confrontation endanger - or create?

The family archive anchors the film: documents, photographs, letters. These once-undiscovered materials reveal a microcosm of society, a complex web of personal connections. Private lives are linked to the public realm. Voices of different life realities (teachers, Jewish doctors, lovers, family members) add contrasting perspectives, while icons of collective memory - Kristallnacht, concentration camp backgrounds - situate TONI's biography and family history within broader contexts.

Handheld observation is combined with quiet, static shots. Movement and stillness mirror searching and reflecting. Wide views contrast with close studies, bridging past and present. Archival materials echo in new footage and appear both physically and cinematically - magnified, overlaid, distorted - to visualize memory's gaps. Family conversations reveal emotion, conflict and defense mechanisms. In the spirit of cinéma vérité, as filmmaker and family member I interact openly with participants.

Director's statement

My interest in National Socialism began in childhood when TV images of the Second World War collided with my grandparents' stories of danger, hardship, flight and loss. Only later did I realize these accounts focused on their own suffering, with little mention of Nazi crimes. The gap between personal and collective memory became clear and it is this gap that TONI seeks to confront.

Fragments of the past often surfaced: a dented mess tin with a swastika, a 1936

Olympics album, a map of Silesia. They stirred questions, but by the time I was old enough to ask my grandparents had died. I came to see that open engagement by my parents was blocked by loyalty to their own parents and social conditioning, leaving an inheritance of silence.

I believe the personal and familial perspectives hold unique potential for addressing the Nazi past, especially from descendants of perpetrators - voices rarely heard in cinema. Through my grandfather's belongings and other traces, deceased witnesses regain their voices. By foregrounding my mother, I highlight the perspective of postwar children, shaped by fear of painful truths.

Across three generations - grandfather, daughter, grandson - a reflective and critical reckoning unfolds. Its universal character lies in its nature as a family story: the link between loved ancestors and violent histories recurs in many societies.

By embedding one family narrative into broader patterns of denial, the film reflects on how propaganda, opportunism and exclusion persist. At a time of resurgent far-right ideologies, confronting this legacy is vital - not only to understand the past, but also to resist present authoritarian tendencies. How do we face what still shapes us, how can we reveal and heal?

Production note

Dear Sir or Madam,

I would very much like to accompany Martin Kießling's documentary film with the working title 'Toni' and support the director and author from the treatment stage through to production.

Toni addresses a variety of exciting and socially relevant topics based on the director's grandfather's Nazi past. It not only focuses on the question of guilt and 'why', but also on the generational conflict within an otherwise harmonious family. It explores the fear of discovering something versus the duty to ask more questions, and how the past still imposes responsibility on us today, ensuring that 'never again' is more than just a phrase.

As the protagonist and narrator in the film, director Martin Kießling explores many of these questions and builds a bridge to viewers who may have experienced similar situations or are even experiencing them again today in their family environment, as right-wing populism is on the rise worldwide.

Having already delved deeply into historical material and the question of remembrance culture in the documentaries *Die letzten Zeitzeugen* (The Last Eyewitnesses) and *Heute ist das Gestern von morgen* (Today is Tomorrow's Yesterday), I, as a producer, feel it is important to continue this series with this film. Toni examines the influences, perpetrators and followers within the family environment, asking uncomfortable questions about one's own actions.

We would be delighted if you could support this project and help us contribute to the 'Never Again' cause with this documentary film.

Kind regards,
Michael Kalb, Producer

Director

Martin KIESSLING

Filmography

Writer/Director

2021 - A Fragmented Mind - Short
Documentary - 5 min

2019 - Südstadthelden / Southside
Heroes - Feature-length Documentary -
86 min

DoP/Cameraman

2024 - Europa, die Wahl und Wir - TV
Documentary - ZDF - 45 min

2022 - Die Erfindung des Rassismus in
Farbe - TV Documentary - ARTE - 52 min

2021 - Fußball verbindet!? - Eine Reise
durch Europa vor der Fußball-EM - TV
Documentary - ZDF - 45 min

2020 - Zu Besuch bei Patient Sport - Ein
Streifzug durch Deutschland - TV
Documentary - ZDF - 45 min

2019 - Geheimnisvolles Tokio - TV
Documentary - ARD - 2x45 min

2019 - Alte Bündnisse, neue
Bedrohungen - Deutschlands Rolle in
der NATO und der Welt - TV
Documentary - ZDF - 45 min

2019 - Die Story im Ersten: Das
Atomwaffenkartell - TV Documentary -
ZDF - 45 min

2019 - Die Macht des Drachen - Chinas
globale Militärstrategie - TV
Documentary - ZDF - 45 min

2017 - Das Spiel mit der Bombe -
Nordkoreas Weg zur Atommacht - TV
Documentary - ARTE - 52 min

Biography

Martin Kießling, born 1985 in Bavaria, is a trained Audiovisual Media Designer and has worked for production companies and broadcasters in camera, lighting, production and directing for almost two decades. In 2011 he received a Hollywood Scholarship and later earned a BA in Design at Ohm University Nuremberg, specializing in Film & Animation. His first feature documentary Southside Heroes screened at international festivals and won Best Director at the Guko International Kids Film Festival in Seoul (2022). Martin works internationally as cameraman, editor, writer and director, creating documentaries, fictional formats and commercial films.

Film Editor

2024 - Berghütten mit Markus Fahn - TV

Documentary Series - BR - 2x30 min

2023 - Gib Frieden eine Chance - TV

Documentary - ZDF - 45 min

2020 - 37Grad - Jetzt bestimme ich! - TV

Documentary - ZDF - 45 min

2019 - Südstadthelden / Southside

Heroes - Feature-length Documentary -
86 min

Producer

Michael Kalb

Company profile

Michael Kalb (*1989) is a freelance producer and director based in Bavaria. His work spans the intersection of narrative and documentary filmmaking, often with a socio-political focus. He has realized projects in close collaboration with broadcasters such as ZDF, ARD (particularly BR), arte, and ORF, and is a member of Producers of Germany e.V. (PROG).

Kalb is an alumnus of various festival labs and producer programs, including the Producers Network of the Marché du Film – Festival de Cannes, the Berlinale Co-Production Market, the Zürich Film Festival Academy, the Emerging Producers Programme, and the East-West Talent Lab. Starting with several local film awards as a teenager, his productions are now presented at renowned international film festivals. After completing a Bachelor's degree in Business Informatics (B.Sc.) at the University of Augsburg, he studied producing at the University of Television and Film Munich (HFF). He has worked as a production coordinator at the Beta Film Gr

Michael KALB

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FestiCiné

PROJECT

Wind Chasers - The Untold Origins of Kitesurfing



Teaser

youtu.be/EJXEpXf7als

Password :

Synopsis

How did Kitesurfing evolve from a daredevil experiment into a global sports phenomenon? In the 60s a few fearless pioneers pushed the limits of physics to ride the wind - a dream no one but them believed in.

This film reveals the fragile beginnings of a movement that would one day reshape coastlines and lives, growing into a billion-dollar industry and an Olympic discipline. Exclusive archive and intimate interviews with these pioneers shows kitesurfing's evolution through the eyes of those who lived it, visionaries who sacrificed everything. A rip-roaring tale of human struggle and chasing what no one else dared to imagine.

Contact

Judith MILLECKER
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judith.millecker@gmail.com

Wind Chasers - The Untold Origins of Kitesurfing

GERMANY, UNITED KINGDOM

A handful of fearless visionaries risked everything to chase a dream no one believed in. Against all odds, these stubborn individuals turned a daredevil experiment into a billion-dollar sport and an Olympic discipline. Who shaped the destiny of Kitesurfing and at what personal cost?

Language

English, German, French

Length

95 minutes

Director

Agnieszka MAZUR

Producer

Judith MILLECKER
Jumilli Productions Ltd.
United Kingdom

Total budget of the film

571,213 €



Financing already in place
8,000 €

Detailed Budget
[📄 wind-chasers-budget.pdf](#)

Themes
– Adventure/Travel
– History
– Lifestyle
– Sport

Stage of development
Late development

Needs
– Distributors
– Sales Agents
– Private Funds / Banks
– TV
– Foreign TV Channel

Format
– feature-length

Estimated date of shoot
February to September
2026

Deck
[📄 wind-chasers-full-pitch-1-3-converted.pdf](#)

Treatment

A 90-minute cinematic feature for the big screen.

Introduction

"Wind Chasers" opens in stunning, high-resolution quality. Drones sweep over an excited crowd in Nazare, Portugal, as James Carew prepares to ride a 90 feet wave. He is attempting a world record where a surfer died last year. In parallel, we see British athlete Ellie Aldridge in her final, intense preparations for the Paris Olympics. Their high-stakes, modern quests are built on the dreams of forgotten visionaries. With kitesurfing's Olympic debut in 2024, the sport has finally arrived on the global stage. But how did it evolve from a reckless experiment to a global phenomenon?

Act 1: Crazy experiments

To answer this, we travel back in time. Our visual style shifts to a grainy, nostalgic aesthetic. Through the pioneers' private Super 8, VHS, and photo archives, rendered in warm sepia tones, we witness the raw, unpredictable nature of the early days.

We landed back in the 1970s - on snow. Dieter Strasilla is a lone figure against the majestic Swiss Alps, his daring experiments captured with a deliberately shaky, immediate camerawork. We interweave this with a present-day cinematic interview with his 90 years old brother Udo, who continues the legacy and reflects on his brother's passion and sacrifices. In New Zealand, we see Peter Lynn's joyful but risky experiments, using his own children as test subjects at a time when safety features were non-existent.

Act 2: The breakthrough and the wall

In the 80s and 90s, kitesurfing was such a difficult sport that very few people were able to do it. It was much faster than windsurfing and the jumps looked phenomenal, but the equipment was too unwieldy to make it an accessible sport. In 1984, the French Legaignoux brothers invented the revolutionary inflatable kite, a design that should make kiting accessible to the mass market. But their success hits a wall. The American windsurfing industry, fearing the competition, blocks and lampoons them. The brothers, brilliant engineers but poor salesmen, will spend 13 years without earning a penny, trying to do it all themselves but failing to commercialise their invention. Their dream appears to be over.

The story of the breakthrough and subsequent rejection is told by the pioneers themselves, filmed in quiet, personal settings in their workshops and on original locations on the French Atlantic Coast. Our camera remains steady and observant as they reflect on their struggle.

Act 3: The turning point and the betrayal

The fate of kitesurfing hit a turning point in Hawaii in the late 90s. This marks a shift in our visual style. The story accelerates, visualized with fast-paced montages, split-screens, and a smartphone aesthetic to capture the growing media buzz.

The Legaighoux's stubborn solo effort gained little traction. What they needed was a famous name, a watersports authority who would embrace kitesurfing. By the mid-90s the rivalry between the windsurfers and the first kitesurfers was in full swing, with name-calling between the "planks" and the "kooks". That's when the Hawaiians Pete Cabrinha and Don Montague convinced the reluctant Robby Naish of kitesurfing's potential. Robby was THE windsurfing superstar who had just started his own brand, Naish Sails. When he started selling the Legaighoux's kites, the windsurfing community felt deeply betrayed. But for kitesurfing this was the turning point: Robby's name and fame got thousands of people excited about this new sport. This collaboration finally opened up the mass market.

End

We return to the present day in full cinematic quality. Extreme slow-motion and dynamic underwater shots capture every detail of Ellie Aldridge's nerve-racking Olympic final. As the crowd in Marseille and Paris celebrates her victory, we use a cinematic vis-

ual bridge—the sound of the wind, the texture of water—to cut to the quiet tension of Nazare. James is pulled up a swelling mountain of water. As the water rises so does the tension.

Will he break the record?

In short: "Wind Chasers" is the story of passionate, obsessed, and sometimes stubborn inventors, the risks they took, the mistakes they made, and the fleeting nature of fame. It's a film about how the power of collaboration can make a dream come true, told as a visual journey through times and landscapes.

Director

Agnieszka MAZUR

Filmography

Galileo Xplorer - Abenteuer Coolcation (Pro7)/ 2025/ 50min/ Director
Mensch Polizist (Pro7, prime-time)/ 2024 / 2x90min / Director
AFRICAN FLOWER / 2024 / 90min / Director, Cinematography (indie doc)
What If You Said YES? / 2024 / 30min / Cinematography (award-winning indie doc)
Die Energie von Morgen / 2024 / Doc-series / Cinematography
Notruf Malediven (Joyn) / 2024 / 45min / Director, Camera & Editor
ZDF: Formel 1 auf Sand / 2023 / 7min / Director, Camera, Editing
Der Green7 Report (Pro7, prime-time) / 2021 / 90min / Co-Director
Human Footprints / 2021 / 30min / Director

Biography

Agnieszka Mazur (director/co-producer) is a German filmmaker with 13 years of global experience focusing on prime-time TV and feature-length documentaries. She has a talent for building deep, authentic connections with her subjects, bringing an intimate and character-driven approach to her work for big broadcasters (ZDF, Pro7). Beyond storytelling, her other great passion is kitesurfing and it was only a matter of time before she combined the two. She now wants to take audiences on the exhilarating journey to uncover the pioneers who shaped the destiny of kitesurfing.

Producer

Jumilli Productions Ltd.

Company profile

Jumilli Productions is specialising in female-led and impact-driven filmmaking and focussing on international co-productions and feature formats.

A committed social and environmental activist, Judith has always been an activist in grassroots movements such as the London charity Women + Health which makes holistic therapy accessible to unprivileged women.

Judith MILLECKER

Biography

Judith Millecker (producer) has 13 years experience in international project management of multimillion dollar projects in the private and public sector. She has since turned to filmmaking, living and working between London and Munich, and concentrating on international co-productions. As a keen outdoor adventurer who has hiked, cycled, and paddled across six continents, Judith was immediately drawn to WIND CHASERS.

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