



OFF WORLD & ZEPPERS FILM
present

DESERT HAZE

A FILM *by* SOFIE BENOOT

PRESSKIT

DESERTHAZE

a film by SOFIE BENOOT



The American West. We have arrived in a world where human life would seem to be impossible: an arid, mythical landscape characterized by absence. Absence of water, trees, life. In the beginning there was nothing. But then traces start appearing.

Desert Haze tells the many-layered story of human presence in the American Desert. The traces of the past are like geological strata in the desert. The film becomes a mosaic of various stories, merging in a peculiar chronicle of America at the crossroads of present and past, myth and reality.

From astronauts preparing for future missions to Mars to Japanese country singers, archeologists hunting for the remnants of military test airplanes, the mysterious death of John Wayne...

WORLD PREMIERE

28/04/2014 FEATURE LENGTH COMPETITION VISIONS DU RÉEL, NYON, SWITZERLAND

www.visionsdureel.com

FESTIVAL SELECTIONS

2014	DOCVILLE, LEUVEN, BELGIUM
2014	FILM FESTIVAL OSTEND, BELGIUM
2014	DOK LEIPZIG, GERMANY
2014	CAMDEN IFF, USA
2014	ESCALES DOCUMENTAIRES, LA ROCHELLE, FRANCE
2014	SIGNE DE NUIT, PARIS, FRANCE

www.docville.be
www.filmfestivalooostende.be
www.dok-leipzig.de
www.camdenfilmfest.org
www.escalesdocumentaires.org
www.signesdenuit.com

DISTRIBUTION

BELGIQUE CINEMA DISTRIBUTION BY DALTON DISTRIBUTION - release 11/09/2014

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Shooting format **HD**
Screening format **DCP - 5.1 surround English, French or Dutch subtitles** Length
109 minutes (1 hour, 49 minutes) @ 25 fps
113 minutes (1 hour, 53 minutes) @ 24 fps

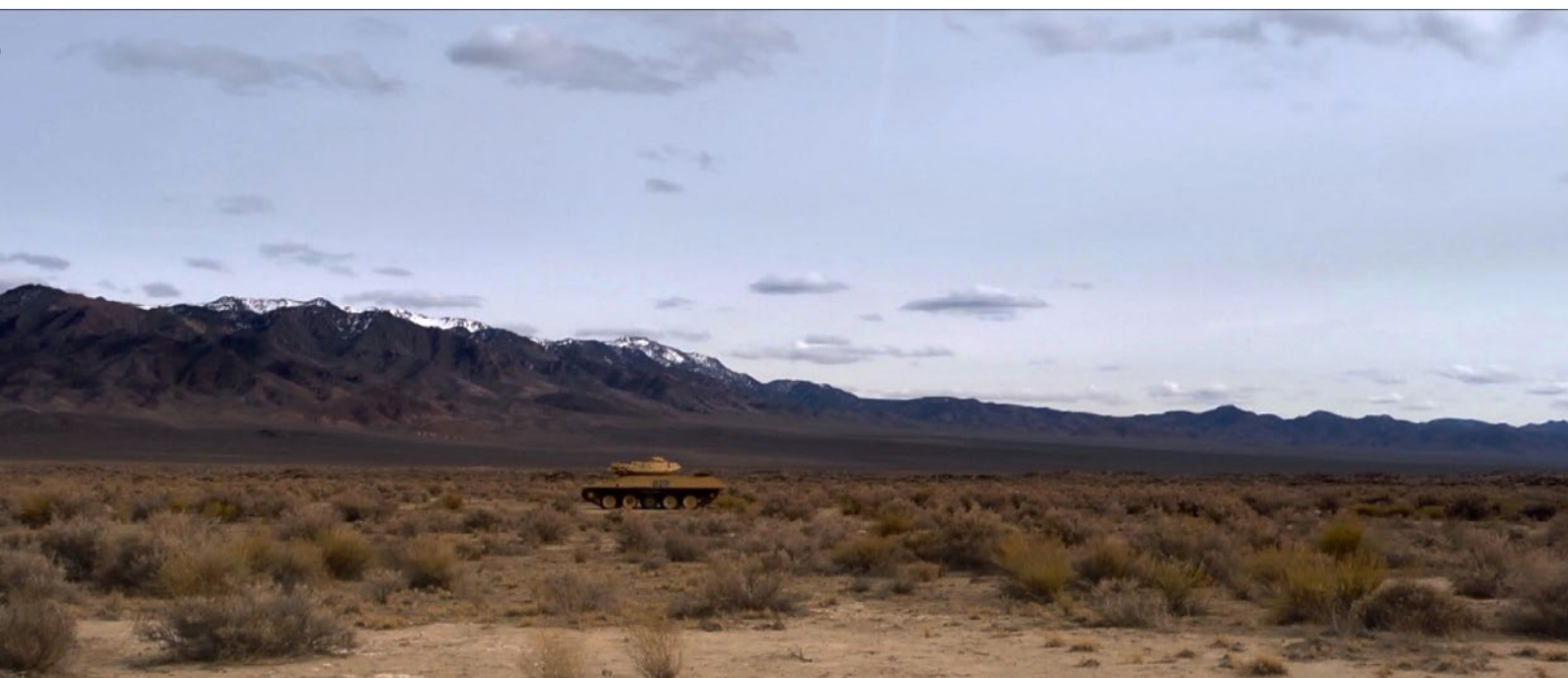
Written & directed by **Sofie Benoot**
Photography **Fairuz**
Sound engineer **Kwinten Van Laethem**
Edited by **Nico Leunen**
Sound mix **Michel Schöpping**
Co-producer **Frank van den Engel (Zeppers Film & Tv)**
Producers **Eric Goossens & Frederik Nicolai (Off World)**
Supported by **The Media programme of the European Union**
The Flanders Audiovisual Fund
The Netherlands Film Fund
The Tax Shelter of the Belgian Federal Government



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Watch trailer on vimeo

DIRECTORS STATEMENT

"I got places to go and country to put behind me"

John Wayne in Angel and the Badman. 1947

I admit: I always loved Westerns. However, I am not interested in demythologizing the genre. This has been done already before and although it is still interesting to dislodge the embedded one-sided elements from the myth, I have worked out another strategy. Why not infiltrating the genre of the Western, using its endless energy and creating a metaphoric format in order to tell a new and different story about the West?

For the pioneers, the West of the US was unexplored territory, waiting to be discovered and won. The border between the Wild West and the civilised East, the so-called Frontier, was continually shifting as the United States expanded its territory further towards the West Coast.

The West is the place where America was able to begin its own chronicle and finally shake itself free of its European past. The stories from the West gave America an individual character, bringing forth a new identity and national myths. Every human community has a creation myth, a tale explaining where its members come from and why they are special. The desert of the west became the territory where those creation myths took place. Myths show us who we are, and even more importantly, who we want to be. For me, the western became the creation myth of the United States.

What does the myth about the frontier mean to us today and how would a new myth about the West of America manifest in the contemporary society? The film has become the search for a new myth about America, a new version of an old story. Stories create hope, and hope lies in creating alternative realities.

The original movement of the pioneers towards the West is reproduced in my film. My personal motivations and feelings are often the same as those that brought the pioneers to the West: curiosity, awe and the will to master and control my subject. These are the driving forces that led me to make a Western documentary. Both genres, documentary and Western, confront reality. Westerns are satisfying the ultimate hunger for making contact with something extremely real. Hence, as a documentary maker, it is not so strange to use the Western as a source of inspiration. I plunged into a rich tradition and tried to create a highly personal interpretation of a much-used genre. It's the longing to step into the unknown and to confront the outside world with my thoughts and feelings. As a filmmaker, the unknown stimulates my imagination and broadens my view of the world.

Being intrigued by the creation myth of the West, Desert Haze is also questioning some of its assumptions. In the American imagination, the desert is an empty place, ready for humans to conquer. The western tells this story. 'In Desert Haze, I don't see this desert as empty and dead, but full of human traces. These traces encompass migration and colonization, tourism and property speculation, internment camps and bomb tests.

I carried out extensive research to identify specific stories and people who could tell this occupation of the desert. Like a mosaic, all the different stories are tied up and connected to each other. The film can be compared to a pattern which exists out of multiple, different little rocks. Together they become one. It treats stories from Indians who still stand ground in Death Valley to Mormon reenactors but also about astronauts preparing themselves for a journey to the new frontier. The human tracks in this landscape are like the different layers of sandstone in the desert. Layer after layer there is a search for associative connections. All together, they try to tell a story about the human presence in this landscape.

Desert Haze is my third documentary journey through the US. My fascination with America, its relationship between place and identity, myths and history, led to Fronterismo, a film about the border between the US and Mexico, and to Blue Meridian: a documentary road movie along and on the Mississippi, straight through the Deep South of the United States. The trilogy will be presented as 'American Water. It will reveal places where disappearing fantasies and dreams of the country are continuously reanimated. But it will also show the dormant counterparts of the American dream.



ABOUT SOFIE BENOOT

Sofie Benoot (Bruges, Belgium) is a young promising filmmaker. She's been studying film school in Brussels since 2003 and graduated in 2007 as a Master in audiovisual arts, at St-Lucas Brussels, specialized in documentary. Ever since, she's investing all her passion and talent into her very personal and precious projects.

Her graduation film project *Fronterismo* (2007) won the VAF Wild Card Award at the Leuven International Film Festival and has been widely exhibited at international film festivals such as Cinéma du Réel (Paris, France), Festival International de cine de la frontera (Juarez, Mexico), Alexandria Film Festival (VA, US), DocsDf (Mexico D.F, Mexico), Leeds international Film Festival (Leeds, United Kingdom), Torino Film Festival (Torino, Italy), International Women's Film Festival (Dortmund / Cologne, Germany) and art institutions such as Argos and Beursschouwbourg in Brussels. *Blue Meridian* was her first film project after graduating. It was one of the 13 projects selected for the first edition of FIDlab during FID Marseille 2009 where it won the first award. Meanwhile she enlarged her experience by working as a creative coordinator for 'Berlin', a renowned theater and film collective, and by being a production-assistant and assistant- director for different film and art projects. If there's any time left, Sofie gives guest lectures on documentary subjects she's been confronted with.

Her latest film *Desert Haze* is starting its very promising career in april 2014 in the feature lenght competition at Visions Du Réel, Nyon, Switzerland.



COMPANY PROFILE ZEPPERS FILM

Zeppers Film is an independent film production company based in Amsterdam. It has produced over 100 films in the last 20 years and is specialized in creative documentaries. Our documentaries are generally co-produced with Dutch and international public broadcasters. Many of these films travelled the world to international festivals and arthouse cinema's and some films have been awarded at festivals including: IDFA's prizes for best Long Documentary and best Mid-length Documentary, Grand Jury Prize at the Tribeca Film Festival and Golden Calfs at the Netherlands Film Festival. For full filmography, visit www.zeppers.nl.

Frank van den Engel (1956, Rotterdam) started Zeppers Film & TV in 1997. Nowadays he combines production work with the development and realization of his own film projects, and with the coaching of first time directors. His debut *Normaal - I always come back* (82 mins) was theatrically released in 2002. *Between Heaven and Earth* (70 mins) was released in the cinema in 2007. His latest documentary is a portrait of Dutch photographer Gerard Fieret: *Photo & Copyright* by G.P. Fieret.

ZEPPERS FILM - Ruysdaelkade 223 bg - 1072 AW Amsterdam - The Netherlands
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COMPANY PROFILE OFF WORLD

Off World is an independent production company based in Brussels, capital of Flanders, Belgium and Europe. Eric Goossens founded Off World in 1995, joined by Frederik Nicolai in 2002.

Off World focuses on the production of international author documentaries. Over the last 10 years, the company has built up a large portfolio and a solid reputation as delegate producer and co-producer of many creative documentaries. Besides a long-term collaboration with their national broadcasting companies VRT-Canvas, Lichtpunt and RTBF, Off World has established an international network as well and is collaborating on a regular base with foreign broadcasting companies, producers, distributors and sales agents.

Off World's trademark is a contemporary and wayward look on the world, which springs from the passion and creativity of the documentary authors. Starting from its own clear and sometimes narrow context, Off World wants to tell stories with a broader truth, with a universal value, reaching people across all borders. We have specialised in recent years in producing very personal but at the same time transnational creative documentaries that analyses society from the inside and shine a new light on truths that have become mere cliché's. Off World has build up a long term collaboration with renowned and distinguished documentary authors. However, Off World is also consistently investing in young filmmakers, as a creative investment for the future.

Eric Goossens // studied communication sciences at the Catholic University of Leuven. Afterwards, he was an intern for a year at the Centre for Audiovisual Arts of CUL. He organised several national and international workshops at FEMI (Flemish Media Institute), under the artistic supervision of Frank Daniel (American producer/screenwriter) and Stephen Peet (BBC). In 1990, Eric Goossens joined Little Big One as a television producer to work on various projects for the VRT, RTBF and Canal+. In 1995, Eric Goossens founded the production company Off World. Together with Anton Roebben, an exceptional animation expert, Eric founded the production company Walking The Dog, which produces creative animation films and series. Eric Goossens is also the vice chairman of anim.be, the association of Belgian animation producers.

Frederik Nicolai // has been sharing his love for documentaries with Eric Goossens since 2002. Frederik started his career by executive producing fiction series, feature and short films in Belgium and the Netherlands. Then he completely dedicated himself to author documentaries and collaborated with broadcasters like VRT, NPS, VPRO,... Some successful films from that period were: 4 Elements (Jiska Rickels, opening film of the International Documentary Film Festival of Amsterdam 2006) and Filming without boundaries (about George Sluizer, by Hans Heijnen). After years of commuting between Bruxelles and Amsterdam, Frederik chose Brussels as his home. Besides producer Frederik is also a direction coach for young filmmakers.

Selected filmography: **Red Star Line**, a film by Daniël Cattier and Fabio Wuytack, in co-production with VRT- Canvas, RTBF, Eklektik, RSL Museum – sold in more than 10 countries // **Rêve Kakudji**, a film by Ibbe Daniels and Koen Vidal, in co-production with VRT- Canvas - Official selection IDFA 2013 // **Reinhoud, my sculptor**, a film by Blaise D'Haese, in co-production with RTBF (3 awards) // **Little Heaven**, a film by Lieven Corthouts, in co-production with DG-D, Lichtpunt – IDFA 2012 (+20 festival selections/ 3 awards) // **The Boy is Gone**, a film by Christoph Bohn, in coproduction with Simple Production, VRT-Canvas, BRF, RTBF (BE) and SeriousFilm (NL) // **The Last Passage**, a film by Iurre Telleria en Enara Goikoetxea, in coproduction with RTBF (BE) Moztu Filmak, ETB (ESP) and Amo Film, France Télévisions (FR) // **Kongo**, a film by Samuel Tilman, in coproduction with Eklektik (BE), RTBF, ARTE, VRT-CANVAS // **Leaving Mandela Park**, a film by Saskia Vredevelde, in coproduction with Zeppers Film & TV, IKON (NL) and Lichtpunt (BE) // **La Royale Harmonie**, a film by Manu Bonmariage, in coproduction with RTBF // **The Promised Land** (La terre Promise/Arm Wallonië), a film by Luckas Vander Taelen and Pascal Verbeken, in coproduction with Canvas and RTBF // **Paul Dujardin, The Long March** a film by Manu Riche, in coproduction with Canvas, RTBF, & ARTE // **My Future**, a film by Lieven Corthouts, broadcasted by ARTE, TV5 MONDE, TV3, TVI24,...
for complete filmography, visit www.offworld.be

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INTERVIEW SOFIE BENOOT

Interview with director Sofie Benoot by Ian Mundel for the Flanders Image Magazine spring edition 2014. (www.flandersimage.com)

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TRACKING THE DESERT

SOFIE BENOOT'S FASCINATION WITH THE USA HAS TAKEN HER ALONG THE BORDER WITH MEXICO IN *FRONTERISMO* AND DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI IN *BLUE MERIDIAN*. NOW HER NEW DOCUMENTARY, THE VISIONS DU RÉEL SELECTED *DESERT HAZE*, GOES TO THE SOURCE OF AMERICA'S IDENTITY.

TEXT **IAN MUNDELL** PORTRAIT **BART DEWAELE**

'In our western imagination the desert is an empty place, ready for humans to conqueror,' she says. 'I believe this is where America first took its real distance from Europe. The east coast resembles Europe, but in the desert they were able to set a new story for themselves that is more about individualism, optimism and the male as a hero. It's like their creation myth.'

While she is intrigued by this myth, Benoot also sets out to question some of its assumptions. 'I don't see this desert as ahistorical, empty and dead, but full of human traces,' she explains. These traces encompass migration and colonisation, tourism and property speculation, internment camps and bomb tests, country music and, of course, the Western movie.

In each case Benoot carried out extensive research to identify specific stories and people who could tell them. For example, the desert internment camps set up to hold Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbour are represented by the story of the archaeologists working to recover the camp's gardens. The Western comes through in the true story of tumbleweed and a less certain suggestion that John Wayne developed cancer after shooting a film in a part of the desert used for testing the atomic bomb. Then there are unexpected traces, such as the 'astronauts' simulating a mission to Mars in the desert sands.

Nico Leunen

Most of her research was done remotely, but Benoot also spent two months travelling in the desert with a small team, looking for leads. 'Stories come and go throughout the whole process of the film, from the beginning to the editing. We filmed a lot more subjects than there are in the film,' she says. 'I see it as a puzzle. I make that puzzle at the beginning, then at each stage it changes and becomes more complex.'

The editing is particularly important in deciding which stories remain in the puzzle. 'It's about how stories communicate with each other. That's really how the film works for me, the connection of one subject with another, not in a line but in geological layers.'

Editor Nico Leunen has been a presence in all of Benoot's films, but this is the first time they have worked closely together. 'He has the biggest influence on the movie outside myself,' she says.

They discussed the stories in advance and then sifted through around 200 hours of rushes that Benoot brought back from the USA. 'He is very quick to see patterns,' she says. 'He can influence your film a lot, but he never wants to make his own film from the material. He always looks at the film through your eyes.'

Another important collaborator is Fairuz, the cinematographer. 'I know how I want to frame and shoot each scene, and she really understands that,' Benoot says. 'She is very particular and very precise, and I need that kind of person behind the camera.'

The sound design begins with Kwinten Van Laethem, making recordings in the desert. 'We had hundreds of takes that are just the wind, and hundreds of takes of insects and other things he found.' This material was then passed to sound designer Michel Schöpping, who has a close working relationship with Leunen, for example on films such as *The Broken Circle Breakdown* and *The Fifth Season*. 'They can surprise you so much with sound design,' Benoot says.



Archibelge!

Desert Haze, which is produced by Off World, completes her trilogy on America, although it remains a presence in her next project, *Solid Ground*. 'It's about the ground beneath our feet, about rock and stone, and how everything that we see as stable and reliable in the ground may not be as solid as we think.'

Like *Desert Haze* it will be a mosaic of stories, ranging from newly born islands near Iceland to sinkholes in Florida, from earthquake predictors in California to a kidney stone collector in Berlin.

While preparing this film, Benoot is working on *Archibelge!*, a documentary series, also made by Off World about the quirks of Belgian building. In one strand she will be looking at the chaotic mix of architectural styles that have spread along Belgium's highways, while another examines the wall of high-rise apartments built along the country's relatively short coastline.

While these landscapes are different, there is a link with her previous work. 'It brings a lot of stories together, and it's about the relation of people with buildings,' she explains. 'It's a puzzle.' ①



Curriculum Vitae **SOFIE BENOOT**

Sofie Benoot (Bruges, Belgium) is a young promising filmmaker. She's been studying film school in Brussels since 2003 and graduated in 2007 as a Master in audiovisual arts, at St-Lucas Brussels, specialized in documentary. Ever since, she's investing all her passion and talent into her very personal and precious projects.

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Her latest film Desert Haze is starting very promising career in April 2014, in the feature length competition at Visions Du Réel, Nyon, Switzerland.

Filmography

DESERT HAZE 2014 109 min

World premiere **International competition, Visions du Réel**, Nyon, Switzerland, 2014

Official selection young directors competition, **Dok Leipzig**, Germany, 2014

Official selection **Docville**, Leuven, Belgium, 2014

Official selection **Camden International Film Festival**, USA, 2014

Official selection **International Festival Signes de Nuit**, compétition internationale, Paris, 2014

Cinema release in Belgium from 11-09-2014

BLUE MERiDIAN 2010 80 min

Awards:

VAF Wild Card, International Short Film Festival, Leuven, Belgium, 2007

Prix du FIDlab, FID Marseille, France, 2009

Selections:

Official selection **Camden Film Festival**, Camden, USA, 2009

Official selection **Doclisboa** Lisbon, Portugal, 2009

Official selection **ânûû-rû âboro** Pwêêdi Wiimîâ, 2008

Official selection **Margaret Mead Film Festival**, New York, USA, 2009

Official selection **Alternativa** Barcelona, Spain, 2009

Official selection **Forum Saint-Pierre**, Genève, Switzerland, 2009

Official selection **It's All True**, International Documentary FF, São Paulo/Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2009

Official selection **Courtisane Festival Gent**, Belgium, 2009

Official selection **Documenta Madrid**, Spain, 2009

Official selection **Docville**, Leuven, Belgium, 2009

Official selection **BAFICI** Buenos Aires, Brazil, 2009

FRONTERISMO 2007 40 min

Official selection **Het grote ongeduld**, Brussels, Belgium 2007

Official selection **International Film Festival Leuven**, Belgium 2007

Official selection **Cinéma du Réel**, competition international, Paris, France, 2008

Screened at **Filmplatform Zone**, Antwerp, Kortrijk, Gent, Belgium 2008

Official selection **Dochouse**, Brussels, Belgium 2008

Screened at **Black Box, no place like home**, Argos, Brussels, 2008

Official selection **Festival International de cine de la frontera**, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico 2008

Official selection **Courtisane Festival**, Gent, Belgium, 2008

Official selection **Alexandria film festival**, VA, USA, 2008

Official selection **DocsDf, contemporary Mexico**, Mexico D.F, 2008

Screened at **Bdocs, Kranfilm**, Brussels, Belgium 2008

Official selection **Leeds international Film Festival**, UK 2008

Official selection **Torino Film Festival**, Turin, Italy 2008

Official selection **Play doc film festival**, Tui, Spain 2009

Official selection **International Women's Film Festival**, Dortmund Cologne, Germany 2009

Screened at **L'Hybride**, Lille, France, 2010

FILMOGRAPHY OFF WORLD

RELEASED // 2014

DESERT HAZE a film by Sofie Benoot in co-production with Zeppers Film (NL), supported by Flanders Audiovisual Fund, Media+ program of the European Union, the Netherlands Film Fund and the Belgian federal government Tax Shelter.

Desert Cantos is a documentary western. In this film, the western film genre is analysed to portray modern day America in a relevant and intriguing manner. It is a tale of a country on the verge of history and current events, of myth and reality.

'115 | WORLD PREMIERE AT FEATURE DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION VISIONS DU RÉEL 2014

Official selections 2014: Docville, DokLeizig, Camden IFF, Signes Des Nuits, Escales Documentaire (La Rochelle). Cinema distribution by Dalton Distribution



LOST IN TIME, a film by Marc Schmidt, in co-production with seriousFilm, with support from the Flanders Audiovisual Fund and the Netherlands Film Fund.

How can a human being experience time when the contact with the outsider world is fading away? An experimental documentary on isolation at old age.

'30 | release: end 2013



THE 2 WARS OF ALAN TURING, a film by Denis van Waerebeke, in c-production with Films d'Ici, ARTE and RTBF, with support from the Media programme of the European Union, Procirep, CNC, la région Poitou-Charentes, Sofica, le centre du cinéma de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles et de VOO, and Universciences.

Alan Turing, a brilliant mathematician and forgotten hero of the Second World War, played a huge part in the Allied victory by breaking the Germans' codes... before persecution related to his homosexuality drove him to suicide. It's fairly uncommon for a scientist to have such an influence on the course of history - and then pay such a heavy price for his success! His life, which brings together the history of warfare and the history of ideas in a pretty unique way, also offers an opportunity to discover a little-known aspect of World War II.

1 x '52



SO YOU WANNA BE..., a children's documentary series by Benoit Van Wambeke, in co-production with VRT- KETNET, in collaboration with Agentschap Ondernemen (Flemish government)

Which kid does not dream about a future full of adventures, discoveries and emotions: "when i'm grown up, I'll be cowboy, firefighter, pilot, lumberjack..." Social environment and education are maybe powerful elements to give children an idea on what their future will be and what kind of opportunities they will find. But they are not the only ones: desire and pleasure could also help to make a decision!

26 x '13



2014 // EN PRODUCTION

ARCHIBELGE, a documentary series by Gilles Cotton, Sofie Benoot et Olivier Magis in co-production with VRT-Canvas, RTBF, Playtime Films, with the support from VAF-Media, le centre du cinéma de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Screen Flanders, and programme Media+ de la communauté européenne.

'Archibelge' takes an unusual look at the thought behind and the lifestyle of people living in everyday Belgian architecture. We travel through the countryside and through towns until we reach the Belgian coast in search of unusual buildings seen through the eyes of people who use them on a day-to-day basis.

3 x '52 & 1 x '90 | release : beginning of 2015



THE AGE OF DEATH, a film by Christopher Yates & Benjamin Colaux in coproduction with Playtime Films, supported by le centre du cinéma de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles et de VOO, le WIP, Media+ program of the European Union and the Flanders Audiovisual Fund.

"The Age of death" follows five Potosí miners, ages 21 to 54, through the ghosts and legends that haunt them, revealing the fragility of man and his surroundings. These men burrow every day through hellish mines, abandoning the majestic landscape of the Bolivian Andes for the mine's dark confinement. Their identities fade as they enter this obscure world full of history and ghosts. By taking time to observe the physical details and the tools that make mining work so palpable, we journey into a past handed down along generations of miners through the continuous repetition of a single physical gesture. This film gets underneath the skin. It is a sensory journey through fears, dreams, legends and indigenous superstitions as they come up against the reality of daily life.

'70 | release: mid 2014



IN THE TRACES OF ROBERT VAN GULIK, a documentary film by Rob Rombout in co-production with Zeppers Film & TV (NL), with the support from the Flanders Audiovisual Fund, le centre du cinéma de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, the Nederlands Film Fund

Robert van Gulik (1910-1967) is one of the world's most popular Dutch writers, but relatively unrecognized in his own country. A diplomat, Chinese specialist and scholar, he became famous with his detective series about Judge Tie, which in many ways, are projections of his own life: a permanent duality between his real life and the hero in his books...

1 x '90 | release : beginning 2015



MY RAS TAFARI ROOTS, a documentary film by David Verhaeghe, in co-production with Zeppers Film & TV (NL), with the support from the Flanders Audiovisual Fund, the Belgian Federal tax Shelter.

David Verhaeghe goes in search of the truth behind a big family mystery, together with his mother Concetta: is he great-grandson to the legendary emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, born Ras Tafari Makkonen, divine and pivotal figure of a religion named after him? This documentary shows the fascinating and intensive search of a young European and his Ethiopia-born mother who go in search of David's African roots via forgotten family members in Italy and Cyprus and in old archives in Rome and Addis Ababa. In the end, the natural mysticism of the Jamaican Rastas is the most important driving force that sets David on the trail of the imperial family. Will he succeed in discovering the truth about his origins?

1 x '90 | release : mid 2015



RELEASED // 2013

RÊVE KAKUDJI, a film by Ibbe Daniëls & Koen Vidal *in coproduction with VRT-Canvas, supported by Flanders Film Fund, Media+ program of the European Union, le centre du cinema de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, DG-D the Belgian Development Cooperation, in coproduction with VRT-Canvas & Casa Kafka Pictures. Developed at Eurodoc 2011. Prebuy by RSF. Bought by NTR.*

Serge Kakudji is a twenty-year-old Congolese counter tenor who fell in love with opera as a young boy, listening to cassette tapes of opera recordings in his room in Lubumbashi. He later travelled to Europe to achieve his dream of becoming a top opera singer. Although Serge's artistic ambitions are pure and uncomplicated, the reactions among his environment and audiences are often ambiguous and divided. While some people respect and acknowledge his artistic vocation, others see him as an exotic oddity, or complain that his African timbre jars with classical opera. Serge refuses to be discouraged by any of this. On the contrary, he wants to hold up a mirror to Western culture and confront it with its underlying beliefs. He also wants to use his story and experiences in the west to bring opera to Congo. Together with his countrymen and women, he wants to found a Congolese opera tradition based on African stories that will inspire people to follow their dreams.

'63 & '54 | release: april 2013 | Official selection IDFA, VERA FF



RED STAR LINE, a film by Daniël Cattier & Fabio Wuytack *in co-production with Eklektik, Casa Kafka Pictures, VRT-Canvas and RTBF, with support from VAF-Media Fund, le centre du cinéma de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles et de Voo, Wallimage-Bruxellimage, the RSL museum. Prebuy by RTS, TVP, LTV, Ceska Televize, Planète Poland. Bought by YLE.*

Between 1873 and 1934, the Belgian-American shipping company Red Star Line, transported 2.7 million migrants from Antwerp to New York. What makes the Red Star Line unique in the history of shipping European migrants to America is that the majority of its passengers were Eastern Europeans, amongst whom many Jewish people. In such a context, Antwerp became the most important transit city in Europe. By using the story of the Red Star Line as a narrative vessel, this documentary will use a mosaic of human destinies to explain why migrants left their European homes behind, detailing their journey to Antwerp, their trip across the ocean and how they dealt with their new life in America. The Red Star Line project will deconstruct the past, to better understand the present.

1 x '90 & 3 x '52 | release: September 2013



DREAMCATCHERS a film by Cédric Bourgeois & Xavier Séron in co-production with Novak Prod and RTBF, with the support from the Flanders Audiovisual Fund, le centre du cinéma de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles et de Voo, and le Centre Audiovisuel de Bruxelles. Prebuy by VRT-Canvas.

A group of trainee wrestlers spurred on by the energy of Salvatore Bellomo (age 60) trains relentlessly in the back room of a café in the Borinage district (former mining region in Belgium). Tarzan, the Gigolo, Andynamite, Priscilla, La Rage, Eddie Dark... they all dream of becoming professional wrestlers, like their teacher. Salvatore fought with top wrestlers for more than 30 years, particularly within the prestigious WWF. Today, he has decided to bring his students to the U.S to follow the traces of his past. Waiting for the big day, they live out their passion together, sometimes taking foolish risks to satisfy the local audience and lay out their future.

'52 | release: july 2013



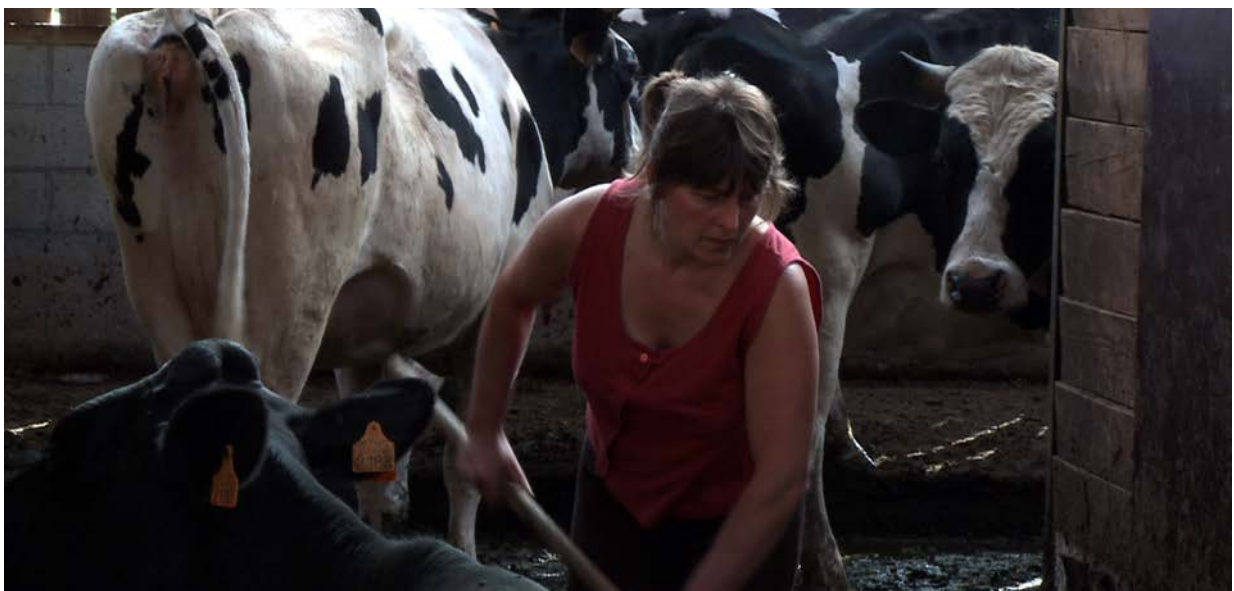
RELEASED // 2012

LA TERRE AMOUREUSE, a film by Manu Bonmariage in coproduction with Iota productions, RTBF. supported by le Centre du cinema de la communauté française de la Belgique, Media+ program of the European Union and Flanders Audiovisual Fund. Prebuy by VRT-Canvas.

Things are not going well in our agricultural industry. This was once the engine that fed our society, and today an increasing number of farms are disappearing due to industrialisation and globalisation. In our country just 3% of the population still work as farmers. 3% of the population who have to feed the remaining 97%.

Four stories of farmers seen from the angle of their passion for their beloved countryside and the passion of these farmers for the very badly needed love of a woman. Because farming life is above all a family affair, where men and women survive together. Fields, like women, need to be sown when they are fertile. Is it possible to have the same passion for the land as for a woman? We go on a journey through all the seasons throughout a whole year in search of the woman behind the farmer and we ask whether a farmer can work his fields without the love of his wife.

'70 & '63 | world premiere at IFF Namur October 2012



REINHOUD, MY SCULPTOR, a film by Blaise D'Haese *in coproduction with VRT-Canvas et RTBF.*

Blaise D'haese, the director of this film, lost his father, the sculptor Reinhoud in 2007. He filmed his father during the last two years of his life. Blaise feels a void in his life. Reinhoud, although he was a very public man and member of the Cobra movement, never spoke about his painful past family life, nor about the ambiguous relationship he had with his native country Belgium, which he left at the age of 30. When Blaise was born, his father was already old. Blaise searches through all the interviews and numerous archive photos and videos to get to know his father better and understand his work.

'55 | release: spring 2013 | selected at Journées Internationales du Film sur l'Art au Louvre | Festival International du Film Metiers D'Art, Montpellier



THE ONLY SON, a film by Simonka de Jong, *in co-production with IDtv-docs, De Dutch Buddhist Broadcast company, with support from the Dutch Film Fund, The Dutch Media-fund, the Dutch coBo-Fund, the Flanders Audiovisual Fund.*

The balance within a Tibetan family spread over several continents comes under strain when son Pema is forced to marry a girl from his native village.

'70 | world premiere: IDFA 2012



THE BOY IS GONE, a film by Christoph Bohn in coproduction with Simple Production, VRT-Canvas, RTBF, BRFB (BE) and Serious Film (NL). Supported by le Centre du cinema de la communauté française de Belgique, Dutch Film Fund and Flanders Audiovisual Fund.

Christoph Bohn grew up during the sixties in Kortrijk a small Flemish town. However, German was the language spoken at home rather than Flemish. Christoph's father originated from Eupen, in the German speaking part of Belgium. These 'German-Belgian' roots made his youth anything but easy: he was the 'kraut's' kid.

One day, Christoph discovered something which turned his entire world upside down: an old photograph of his father as a Fourteen-year old in a German uniform, complete with a swastika arm band. They never talked about it. His father died in 2001, taking to his grave all his secrets. Today Christoph Bohn returns to Eupen to investigate and disentangle his father's true story and the history of the German speaking region. Using fascinating testimonies, unseen archive material and shockingly animated scenes, the web of this little known piece of history is unravelled in a riveting manner.

1 x '55 | release: world premiere at Docville 2012



RELEASED // 2011

LITTLE HEAVEN, a film by Lieven Corthouts in coproduction with Lichtpunt, (BE), supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation and Flanders Audiovisual Fund.

This is the harrowing tale of an extraordinary orphanage in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital city. On their thirteenth birthday, children in this particular orphanage are told that they were born with HIV. It is a hard and confronting story, but also a hopeful one thanks to the children's and their caretakers' zest for life.

1 x 70 & 1 x 52 World premiere at IDFA (International Documentary Festival Amsterdam) Netherlands, 2011 Special mention at Docville, Leuven, Belgium, 2012 | Best film award at Miradasdoc 2012 | audience award Anû-rû âboro, New Zealand, 2012 | Official selection Movies That Matter, Den Haag, Netherlands, 2012 Official selection Opendoek festival, Turnhout, Belgium, 2012 Official selection Planete +Doc Film Festival, Warsaw & Wrocław, Poland, 2012 Official selection Human Rights Watch Film Festival, London (UK) & New York (USA), 2012 Official selection Addis Film Festival, Ethiopia, 2012 Official selection Seoul Human Rights Film Festival, South-Korea, 2012 Official selection L'Alternativa Festival de Cinema Independent de Barcelona, Spain, 2012 Official selection Filmfestival Oostende, Belgium, 2012 Official selection Anthropological Film Festival, Tel Aviv, 2012 Official selection Festroia International Film Festival, Spain, 2012 Official selection Anû-rû âboro, New Zealand, 2012 Sold to RAI (Italy), Channel 8 (Israel) Theatrical distributed in Belgium during the Vlaamse Documentaireweken and in the US and Canada by Human Right Watch.



THE LAST PASSAGE, a film by Lurre Telleria & Enara Goikoetxea in coproduction with RTBF (BE), Moztu Filmak, ETB (ESP) and Amo Film, France Télévisions (FR), supported by Diputacion Foral de Gipuzkoa – Euskara, the Basque Government, Diputación Foral de Guipuzcoa (Human Rights), ICAA, GFA - Cultural Department Media+ program of the European Union, Région Aquitaine, the Belgian federal government Tax Shelter and Flanders Audiovisual Fund. Prebuy by VRT-Canvas.

The Last Passage revisits one fateful night in a farmhouse in the Pyrenees, when six strangers from five different countries were arrested. Each person's story weaves together to show the wider picture of the hundreds of ordinary people who formed a vast escape network across Europe during WWII.

1 x '70 | World premiere at the San Sebastian Film Festival 2011



RELEASED // 2010

BLACK HEART, WHITE MAN (KONGO), a film by Samuel Tilman in coproduction with Eklektik (BE), RTBF, ARTE, VRT-CANVAS. Supported by Wallimage, le Centre du cinema de la communauté française de Belgique, and Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (3 x '52 & 1 x '90)

An ambitious and original project about one of the most turbulent African countries: Congo. This film is completely edited from original archive footage and new animation sequences.

Broadcasted by RTBF (Belgium/Wallonia) VRT-Canvas (Belgium/Flanders), ARTE (France), Planète (France), Ceska TV (Czech Republic) TV3 (Spain/Catalunia) LTV (Letvia) RSI (Swiss/ Italian region)



HOME & AWAY, a film by Ann Van de Vyvere in coproduction with Globe Aroma, the Kaaithheater, Supported by Koning Boudewijn stichting. ('75)

A documentary film about residing, home, privacy and precious objects. Which object are you always taking with you when you're constantly on the road or homeless? The film examines the relationship between human beings and objects, and more specific form the point of view of homeless people, expats, refugees, adventurers, and their most precious possession.



LEAVING MANDELA PARK, a film by Saskia Vredevelde in coproduction with Zeppers Film & TV, IKON, Lichtpunt. Supported by Dutch Film Fund, Cobo-fund, Flanders Audiovisual Fund.('70 & '50)

a documentary about children in the South-African townships with a special drive to escape, however briefly, the drabness of everyday reality. Their dreams do not stand on their own. They are a metaphor for the hopeful future of a country trying to drag itself up from a mire of poverty and violence.

Nominated best documentary film at the Dutch Film Festival (Gouden Kalf), official selection IDFA. Audience Award Russian Antropological Film Festival (RAFF) Jekaterinenburg, official selection DOCSDF International Film Festival (Mexico) Teatrical distribution by Cinema delicatessen



LA ROYALE HARMONIE, a film by Manu Bonmariage in coproduction with RTBF, supported by le Centre du cinema de la communauté française de la Belgique, and Flanders Audiovisual Fund.

Is Belgium a sick country? Manu Bonmariage puts these questions to a host of political figureheads, in the aim of drawing out their personal comments on the Belgian political dead-end that has made headlines around the world for months.



THE PROMISED LAND, (LA TERRE PROMISE) a film by Luckas Vander Taelen and Pascal Verbeken in coproduction with Canvas and RTBF. Supported by le Centre du cinema de la communauté française de la Belgique, and Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (1 x '55 & 3 x '50)

A historical road movie about the Flemish immigrants in the Walloon part of Belgium. Witnesses tell us the stories of the Flemish families that migrated from poverty-stricken parts of Flanders to the Walloon side during its industrial heyday. Now, this region is one of the poorest in Western Europe, whereas Flanders is one of the richest.



RELEASED //2009

GHISLAIN LIBART, THE LUMBERMAN, a film by Manu Riche, in coproduction with Canvas and Simple production. Supported by le Centre du cinema de la communauté française de la Belgique, and Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (FROM THE DOCU SERIES HOGE BOMEN)

Ghislain Libart is a modest lumberman from the Belgian Ardennes, who became world player in international wood trading. European cut trees are transported to Egypt, to make 'neo-antique' furniture for the Chinese market. A humble woodcutter who comes to symbolize economic globalization.

LOOKING FOR DRAGONE, a film by Manu Bonmariage in coproduction with Canvas and RTBF, supported by the Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (FROM THE DOCU SERIES HOGE BOMEN)

The story of Franco Dragone, who put his small Belgian town of La Louvière on the world map by becoming the world's most famous big show art director... **Official selection World Film festival, Montreal, 2009**

GLENN AUDENAERT, a film by Steve Thielemans in coproduction with Canvas, supported by Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (FROM THE DOCU SERIES HOGE BOMEN)

After many scandals that shook the Belgian political and judiciary system in the nineties, Glenn Audenaert became the new chief of the federal police. A portrait of this eccentric policeman and his colossal responsibilities.

MONSEIGNEUR LEONARD a film by Mieke Struyve in coproduction with Canvas, supported by the Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (FROM THE DOCU SERIES HOGE BOMEN)

On Bishop André-Mutien Léonard's stance on the confrontation taking place between the conservative and progressive wing of the Catholic church.

PAUL DUJARDIN, THE LONG MARCH, a film by Manu Riche *in coproduction with Canvas and Arte Belgium, supported by Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (FROM THE DOCU SERIES HOGE BOMEN)*

Paul Dujardin is the general director of the Belgian Institute of Fine Arts (Bozar). Dujardin introduces the political and cultural stakes that lie beyond the art itself. Even the art world has given in to the politics of globalization. Paul Dujardin plays the field in great style, using his astute and refined understanding of the use of art to influence cultural and political policy-making both at home and abroad. This takes Dujardin all the way to the Forbidden City, the secret of modern fine arts...

ARNE QUINZE, CREATOR OF a film by Tim De Keersmaecker *in coproduction with Canvas, supported by Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (FROM THE DOCU SERIES HOGE BOMEN)*

Arne Quinze, a rising star of art and design, and his relationship with Barbara Becker, have propelled him to international celebrity. Besides focusing on Arne Quinze's life and work, this film also mirrors the value of modern art, and the construction of an artist in the world of art, design, money, business, and glamour... Art can be very lucrative, and many businessmen look to invest in young artists in hope of a potential goldmine...

RELEASED // 2008

MY FUTURE, a film by Lieven Corthouts *in coproduction with Lichtpunt, supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation and Flanders Audiovisual Fund. ('50)*

Hagere Selam, a small village in the North of Ethiopia. A seventeen-year old girl has to choose between leaving her village to attend high school in the big city, or staying, get married and having children like the other girls in her village.

FIRST AWARD BEST DEBUTE FILM, Miradasdoc (2009), Official selection New York International Independent Film & Video Festival 2009), Docville Leuven Belgium (2009), Trois continents Film festival, Nantes, France, (2009), Belgrade international short and documentary film festival, (2009), international film festival of Huesca, Spain (2009), international short and documentary film festival, Edic Doc, Edinburgh, UK, (2010), Ethiopian film festival, Addis Abeba, (2010). Broadcasted by ARTE (France, Germany), TV3 (Spain), CIRTEF/TV5 MONDE (Conseil International des Radios-Télévisions d'Expression Française), TVI24 (Portugal)



RELEASED // 2007

BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH, a film by Frank van den Engel and Masha Novikova in coproduction with Zeppers Film & TV, IKON, VAF. Supported by Media Fund and Flanders Audiovisual Fund. ('50)

On the long journey of many months along the ancient Silk Road from Europe to China, the circus was the only entertainment along the way. In Uzbekistan, currently under dictatorship, the circus tradition is thriving, just as it was in the days of Genghis Khan, and the circus acts have changed little. Two circus artists must choose between continuing the old circus tradition and political involvement. Their choices have a serious effect on their lifelong friendship.

World premiere Rotterdam Film Festival, Official selection Tribeca International Film Festival(New York, USA) Golden Apricot (Armeria) Melbourne International Filmfestival (Australia) Louis Vuitton Hawaii International Film Festival (USA) Vancouver International Film Festival (Canada) Sevilla Festival de Cine (Spain), 1001 Belgesel Film Festival (Turkey) Forumdoc.bh, (Brazil), Watch Docs Festival (Poland), One World IFF (Czech Republic) FIAAP International Film Festival of Performing Arts - International Jury I Documentary Prize of the Official Selection University Jury I Documentary Priz (Portugal), Taiwan International Documentary Festival (Taiwan), Document 6 International Human Rights Documentary (US)



RELEASED // 2006

JOHAN VERMEERSCH – THE PRESIDENT, a film by manu Riche, in coproduction with Canvas, supported by Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (FROM THE DOCU SERIES HOGE BOMEN)

Johan Vermeersch is manager and president of football club Brussels. After his career as a football player for RWDM (the former name of Brussels FC), he became one of the most successfully real estate developers in Brussels. Today, he succeeds bringing FC Brussels into the first division. This film follows Vermeersch and his club during their first and difficult year in the Belgian first division.

PANAMAJUMBO, a film by Elise Nys, in coproduction with Canvas, supported by Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (FROM THE DOCU SERIES HOGE BOMEN)

About the micro cosmos of a Flemish entrepreneur family, lead by an ambitious businesswoman who married the famous artist Panamarenko, whose art is cleverly put to use to sell the family products.

FERNAND HUTS – MARCHAND, a film by manu Riche, in coproduction with Canvas, supported by Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (FROM THE DOCU SERIES HOGE BOMEN)

Fernand Huts and his wife Karine form one of the most succesfull business couples in the city of Antwerp. They open the door into the heart of the Antwerp port and its economy. Besides their business, they are also notorious art collectors. In many ways they are a renaissance couple of the 21th century.

THE HORSE RACE, un film de Mieke Struyve, in coproduction with Canvas, supported by Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (FROM THE DOCU SERIES HOGE BOMEN)

The Horse Race depicts a festival at the annual horse races in Western Flanders that exceeds folklore and, instead, becomes a story of tradition, old-fashioned social classes, and friendship.

STEVE STEVAERT – THE POLITICIAN, a film by manu Riche, in coproduction with Canvas, supported by Flanders Audiovisual Fund. (FROM THE DOCU SERIES HOGE BOMEN)

The portrait of one of Belgium's current key politicians. Nowadays, politics have become a media reality, a story with good and bad actors. Steve Stevaert is the most eloquent phenomenon amongst them.

4 ELEMENTS, a film by Jiska Rickels a *Fu Works* production in co-production with NPS, Dutch Film Fund, YLE and Canvas. ('90)

A poetic visual essay about man's uneasy relationship with fire, water, earth and air, as seen through the experiences of fire-fighters in Siberia, king crab fisherman on the Bering Sea in Alaska, German mineworkers and Russian cosmonauts preparing a launch to the international space station. **Grand prix jury award Trento Film Festival, 2008 (Italy)** official opening film IDFA, Amsterdam, 2006 (The Netherlands), Best Photography award Chicago International Film Festival, 2007 (USA), DDG Award Nederland (Dutch Directors Guild), Christal Film Holland Film Festival, 2007 (The Netherlands), Special Mention International Environmental Film Festival Ecocinema, 2008 (Greece), **official sélections:** Femina Film Festival, Rio de Janeiro, 2007, Brazil / Film Festival Athene, 2007, Greece / Mar Del Plata Film Fest, 2007, Brazil / Seattle International Film Festival, 2007, Etats-Unies / Festival International de Ciné en Guadalajara, 2007, Mexico / International Festival of New Film Split, 2007, Croatia / Architectuur Film Festival Rotterdam, 2007, The Netherlands / Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, 2007, Czech Republic / B-side Festival Genius Hot Doc's, 2007, Canada / Open Doek Festival Turnhout, 2007, Belgium / Madcat Women's International Film Festival, 2007, Californie, USA International Environmental Film Festival Ecocinema, 2008 / Big Sky Documentary Festival, Missoula, 2008, Montana USA / Rhodos International Films and Visual Arts Festival, Rhodos, 2007, Greece / Talinn Black Nights Film Festival, Talinn, 2007, Estonie / Iran International Documentary Film Festival, Teheran, 2007, Iran / Film Festival of Bangkok, 2007, Thailand



ABOUT OFF WORLD

Off World is an independent production company based in Brussels, capital of Flanders, Belgium and Europe. Eric Goossens founded Off World in 1995, joined by Frederik Nicolai in 2002.

Off World focuses on the production of international author documentaries. Over the last 10 years, the company has built up a large portfolio and a solid reputation as delegate producer and co-producer of many creative and original documentaries.

Besides a long-term collaboration with their national broadcasting companies VRT-Canvas, Lichtpunt and RTBF, Off World has established an international network as well and is collaborating on a regular base with foreign broadcasting companies, producers, distributors and sales agents.

Off World's trademark is a contemporary and wayward look on the world, which springs from the passion and creativity of the documentary authors. Starting from its own clear and sometimes narrow context, Off World wants to tell stories with a broader truth, with a universal value, reaching people across all borders. We have specialised in recent years in producing very personal but at the same time transnational creative documentaries that analyses society from the inside and shine a new light on truths that have become mere clichés.

Off World has build up a long term collaboration with renowned and distinguished documentary authors. However, Off World is also consistently investing in young filmmakers, as a creative investment for the future.

Besides being a key player in the industry, Off World also works to usher Flanders into the global documentary industry. In 2009, the production company cofounded the professional organisation Flanders Doc along with fellow Flemish documentary producers. Flanders Doc unites creative forces in order to enhance the level of performance, professionalism and globalisation of the Flemish documentary industry. Off World is also an active EDN member.

Eric Goossens studied communication sciences at the Catholic University of Leuven. After his career as producer in the companies Little Big One and Trix, Eric Goossens founded in 1995, together with his French partner Michel Guimbard the company Off World specialised in high end commercials for the international market.

Off World started to produce documentary films from 2003 to become today one of the most active documentary producers in Belgium with an average output of 5 films and 1 documentary series a year.

Off World has developed a strong partnership with documentary production companies in The Netherlands, Spain, France, Luxemburg, Poland and Germany.

Aside the company Off World, Eric Goossens founded in 1999 together with his partner, Anton Roebben, his own animation production company named Walking The Dog.

Walking The Dog based in the centre of Brussels produces creative animation films and series. First project WTD was involved in was the Oscar nominated animation film "The Triplets of Belleville" from the French director Sylvain Chomet. The second Oscar nominated film WTD worked on was the film "The Secret of Kells" from the Irish director Tomm Moore. Aside the co-production of animated series ("Kika& Bob", "Picknick with Pie",...) WTD co-produced with EuropaCorp the CGI movie "A Monster In Paris" from Bibi Bergeron.

Recently Walking The Dog also worked as co-producer on the 2D animation features "Pinocchio" from Enzo d'Alo and "Le Jour des Corneilles" from JC Dessaint. Last month the animation company finished his work on "The Congress" from Ari Folman and just started the production of "La Mécanique du Coeur" from Mathias Malzieu and Stéphane Berla in co-production with EuropaCorp.

Eric Goossens is founding member of Flanders Doc, the association of the independent documentary makers, and also the vice chairman of anim.be, the association of Belgian animation producers, guest lecturer at the Media Arts Design Faculty of the KHLim.

Frederik Nicolai (1977, Hasselt, Belgium) started his career in 2001 by executive producing short films in Belgium, such as "Haun, 'Carlo' by Michael R. Roskam. In 2003 he moved his activities to the Netherlands where he was working for many fiction series and feature films. In 2004 he completely dedicated himself to author documentaries and collaborated with broadcasters like VRT, NPS, VPRO,... Some successful films from that period were: 4 Elements (Jiska Rickels, opening film of the International Documentary Film Festival of Amsterdam 2006), Filming without boundaries (about George Sluizer, by Hans Heijnen), Panna (Nordin Iasfar),... After years of commuting between Bruxelles and Amsterdam, Frederik chose Brussels as his home. Ever since, he has been collaborating with Eric Goossens to establish a stronger Flemish documentary industry and last but not least producing international creative documentaries, such as Red Star Line (Daniel Cattier & Fabio Wuytack, 2013), Re ve Kakudji (Ibabe Daniels & Koen Vidal, 2013), Little Heaven (Lieven Corthouts, 2011), Kongo (Samuel Tilman, 2011), and many others. For those projects their company Off World collaboration with many international producers and broadcasters (VRT, RTBF, ARTE, NPS, IKON, RAI, France5, WDR, Ceska Televize, TVP, TV3,...)

Besides producer Frederik is also a direction coach for young filmmakers and lector at DocNomads (International masters project by three European film schools)



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