

PHANTASIESÄTZE

by DANE KOMLJEN

SYNOPSIS

Many years ago, the cities by the river were gripped by a contagion. Things started to change and everything slowly became something else. It was not clear if transformation was a symptom of the disease or a way to escape it. The contagion touched everything and everyone: animals and plants, stones and soil, men, women and children, their thoughts, their dreams, their memories. An old woman once told me how all memories turn into trees, I could hardly make out what she was saying. She said she could hear the trees singing: To be a body, to be any body. After the years of contagion ended, the cities appeared untouched. One had to look hard to see the traces of the previous time. If one could listen to the trees, what would they say? A way out, a way out?



THE DIRECTOR

Dane Komljen, born in 1986 in SFR Yugoslavia, studied film directing at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Serbia and contemporary art at Le Fresnoy, France. His short films have been shown and awarded at the Locarno Film Festival, IFF Rotterdam, FID Marseille, Festival de Cannes, Sarajevo FF and the Lincoln Center in New York.

All the Cities of the North, his first feature, premiered last year at Locarno Film Festival.

FILMOGRAPHY

Phantasiesätze, 17' (2017)
All the Cities of the North, 100' (2016)
All Still Orbit, 23' (2016)
Our Body, 15' (2015)
A Surplus of Wind, 25' (2014)
Tiny Bird, 30' (2013)
Bodily Function, 40' (2012)
I Already am Everything I Want to Have, 35' (2010)





Technical Information / Credits

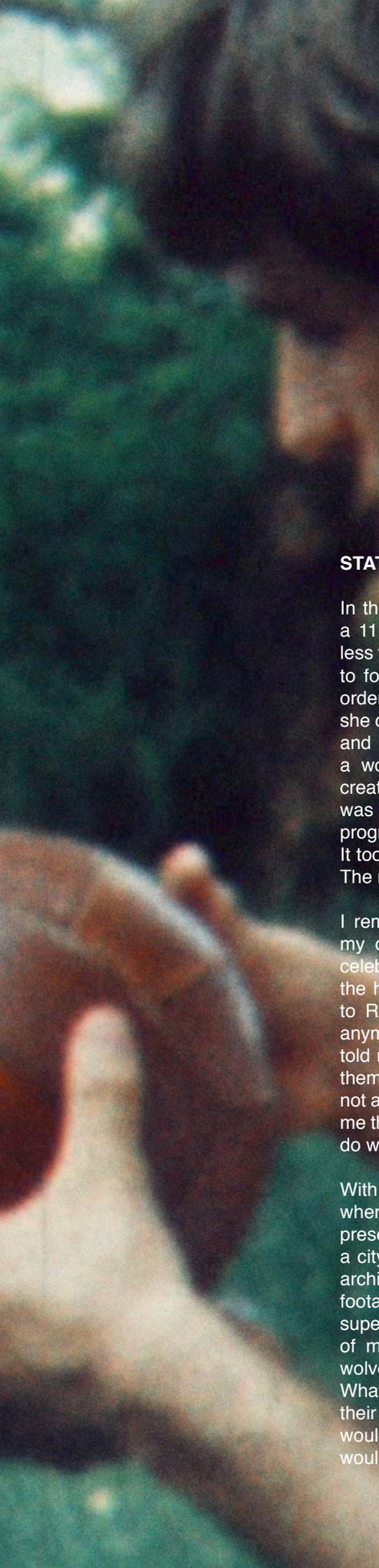
Original and international title.....Phantasiesätze
English title.....Fantasy Sentences

Germany / Denmark 2017 | DCP | 1:1,85 with Pillarbox
Original Format 4:3 | 5.1. Mix | 17 Min

Director, Writer, Editor.....Dane Komljen
Producer.....Zsuzsanna Király
Image.....Jenny Lou Ziegel
Sound.....Simon Apostolou
Music.....Aaron Hemphill
Archive.....Anatolij Gora

Commissioned by CPH:Lab; with the support of BKM and
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Production Company.....Flaneur Films



STATEMENT

In the late 1920s, Walter Benjamin played a game with a 11-year-old girl. He would give her a few words, not less than five, not more than ten. She was then supposed to forge sentences out of these lexical groups, to give order to the arbitrary, to generate sense. The phrases she came up with were less about creating one meaning, and more about producing a state of flux. They were a work of moving and arranging, sliding and linking, creating a space where nothing was left out. The game was broadcast as a part of Walter's Aufklärung für Kinder program and was later published in Die Literarische Welt. It took decades for the text to be translated into English. The name of the game was Phantasiesätze.

I remember carnations very well, their scent pervades my childhood. I saw them on the table during family celebrations, on TV screens, before lecterns, in parks, in the hands of lovers. Others saw them too, from Bosnia to Romania and Ukraine, in countries that don't exist anymore, in the SFRY, in the GDR, in the USSR. Others told me they remember those red flowers as well. I saw them again in the footage Yuliia's father shot in the 80s, not a sign of a certain era, but a thing of beauty. She gave me those images of the carnations as a gift, like you often do with flowers.

With Fantasy Sentences, I also played a game, one where you imagine a habitat where humans are only present via all the many things they left behind. What if a city consists of nothing, but coexisting traces? Family archives of black and white photos, Super 8 and Hi8 footage as repositories of memory. Housing blocks and supermarkets, bars and cinema theatres as repositories of memory. What about trees and bushes, birds and wolves, dust and concrete? How do they remember? What would they make of images of friends spending their time by the river? How would they read them? Who would do the translating? What would echo? And what would echo back? That was where our fantasy took us.

