



SYNOPSIS





Jonasz studies insects and fishes, Signe leaves and herbs. After a day spent in gardens and libraries, they meet, take the train and leave the city, pitching their tent on the shores of a lake. As they read, eat fruit, wander the forest and swim in the cold water, the outside world feels further and further away. A stranger appears and a trio is formed. But there are also other trios, other lakes, different places, different times.





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Vila Amaury was a city built in 1959 in Brazil by the workers employed to construct the new capital Brasília, to house them and their families. Assembled from the discarded materials found on the nearby construction sites, it grew rapidly until it was submerged one year later, by the artificial lake created to alter the region's dry climate. This story doesn't appear in *AFTERWATER*, but it is where the film started. While diving in the shallow waters of Lago Paranoá, where the remains of the city can still be found, I made images that found their way into a couple of my previous projects. The people that saw them then shared stories of their own in turn, about other lakes they knew that were also hiding ruins beneath their surfaces. The shape of the film to come began to emerge, lake by lake.

G. Evelyn Hutchinson was an ecologist, zoologist, and biologist. He established a whole new academic discipline, that of limnology, which is dedicated to the physical, biological, and chemical characteristics of lakes and other inland bodies of water. His key work to this end is called *A Treatise on Limnology*, which was published across four volumes between 1957 and 1993, and in which he writes: "Lakes seem, on the scale of years or of human life spans, permanent features of landscapes, but they are geologically transitory, usually born of catastrophes, to mature and to die quietly and imperceptibly."

Encountering Hutchinson's work transformed what had begun as a film about submerged settlements and drowned histories into one about lakes themselves, both as biotopes and as repositories of imagination. How does one imagine something at once near and out of reach, in thrall to the elements, the surface of its water offering nothing but a clear mirror? Fictions overflowed. There was Miguel de Unamunos's 1931 "nivola", San Manuel Bueno, mártir that describes a fictional village on the edge of a lake, inspired by Lago de Sanabria in Zamora, which they say holds a submerged town in which all the problems and crises that govern life on the surface no longer apply. There was also Theodor Fontane's novel Der Stechlin written between 1895 and 1897, impossible to separate from the Brandenburg lake of the same name. There were Slavic folk tales about water spirits, the poems of Wislawa Szymborska, and the texts of Anna Tsing.

With these different currents pulling in all directions, the idea took hold to make a film as fluid as water itself, to begin one story and make it flow seamlessly into another, drifting out ever further as parallels, rhymes, and echoes appear. I saw cinema as a tool to capture a multiplicity of species, languages, materials, temporalities and ways of being together. Shifting from present to past to future, from digital to celluloid to analogue video, from community to community and body to body, floating through a certain type of landscape: a reflective surface onto which one projects images and stories. On it, by its side, and around it we gathered friends – including one from my previous films – alongside actors from an entirely different cinematic universe and performers from the world of dance, uncertain if what we were making was narrative, experimental, or something else entirely. These were liquid images. Springing from the experience of floating in cold water and that feeling of being touched by everything, this is a film that forages for links between what we are, what we have forgotten, and what we can't yet see.

As we were finishing the film in March of 2020, I went dancing a couple of days before the spread of the COVID-19 would make it impossible to do so for years to come. As I was surrounded with thousands of spinning bodies, enveloped in steamy air; weary, but oblivious of what laid in front of us, a thought crossed my mind: time is a riddle, and the answer is now. After this last dance, it seemed that everything but time stopped. When I think about AFTERWATER now, it appears as if not coming from some other time, but being about time itself, about water and time, the feeling that we're running out of water and that we're running out of time. Where to go to? What to do?

Dane Komljen







WATER

Wisława Szymborska





A drop of water fell on my hand,
drawn from the Ganges and the Nile,

from hoarfrost ascended to heaven off a seal's whiskers,
from jugs broken in the cities of Ys and Tyre.

On my index finger,
the Caspian Sea isn't landlocked,

and the Pacific is the Rudawa's meek tributary,
that same stream that floated as a little cloud over Paris

in the year seven hundred and sixty-four
on the seventh of May at three a.m.





There are not enough mouths to utter
all your fleeting names, O water.



I would have to name you in every tongue
pronouncing all the vowels at once

while also keeping silent for the sake of the lake
that still goes unnamed



and doesn't exist on this earth, just as the star
reflected in it is not in the sky.



Someone was drowning, someone dying was
calling out for you. Long ago and, yesterday.





You have saved houses from fire, you have carried off
Houses and trees, forests and towns alike.

You've been in christening fonts and courtesan's baths.
In coffin and kisses.

Gnawing stone, feeding rainbows,
In the sweat and the dew of the pyramids and lilacs.

How light the raindrop's contents are.
How gently the world touches me.



Whenever wherever whatever has happened
Is written down on the waters of Babel.



View with a Grain of Sand
Translated by Stanisław Barańczak and Clare Cavanagh
© Faber & Faber, 1996

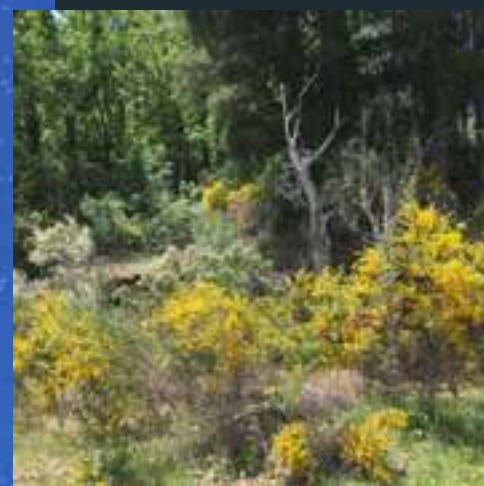
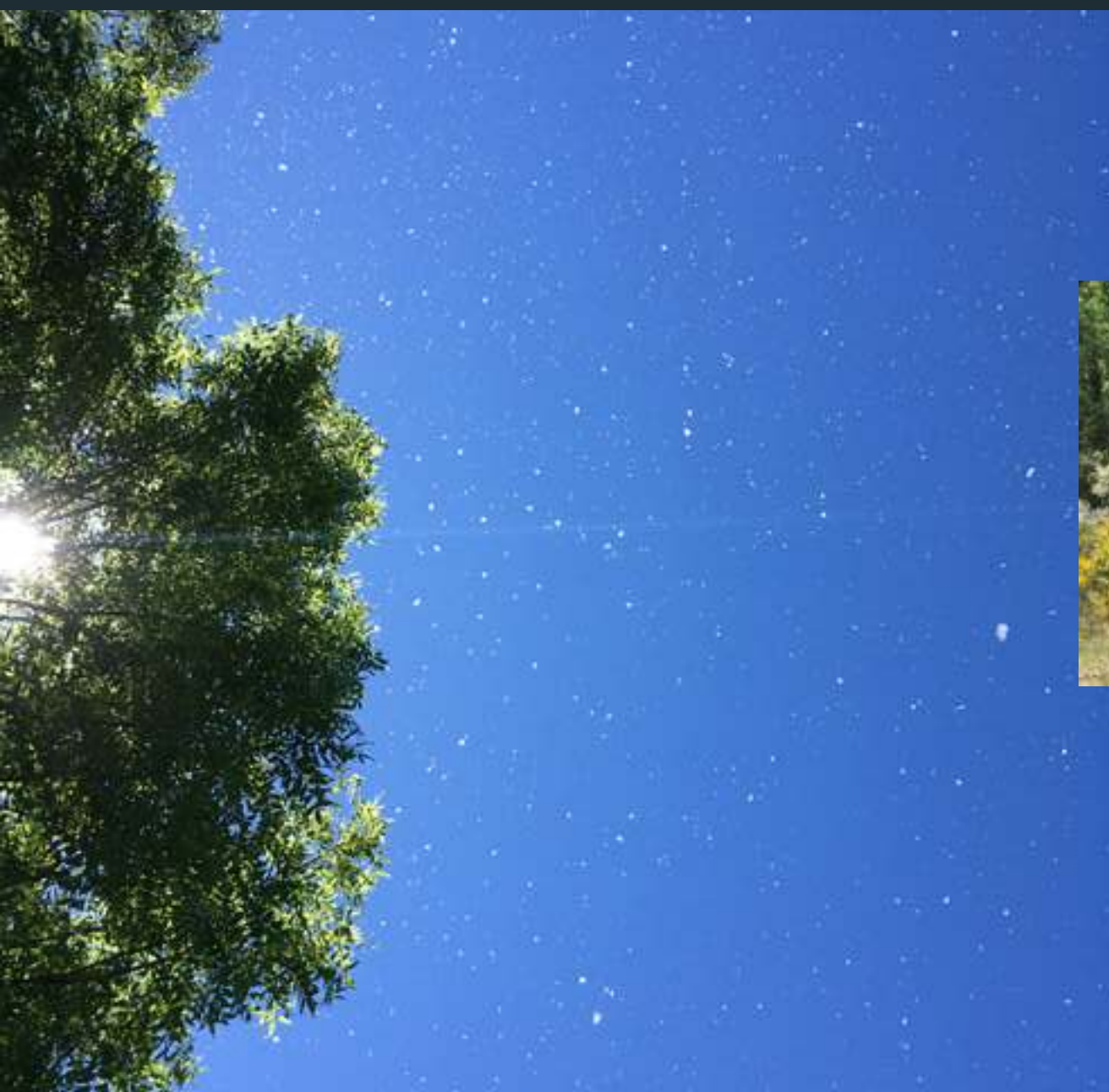






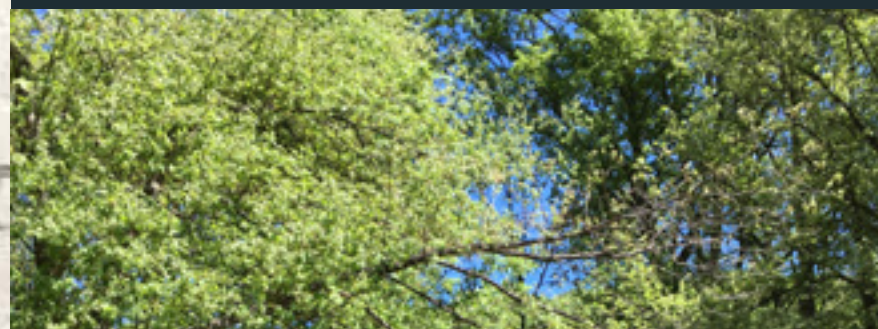
SAINT MANUEL THE GOOD, MARTYR

Miguel de Unamuno





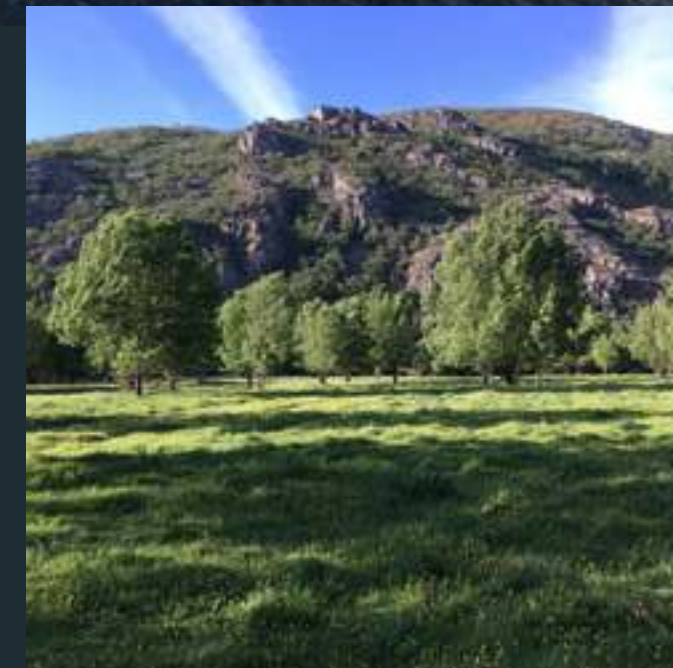
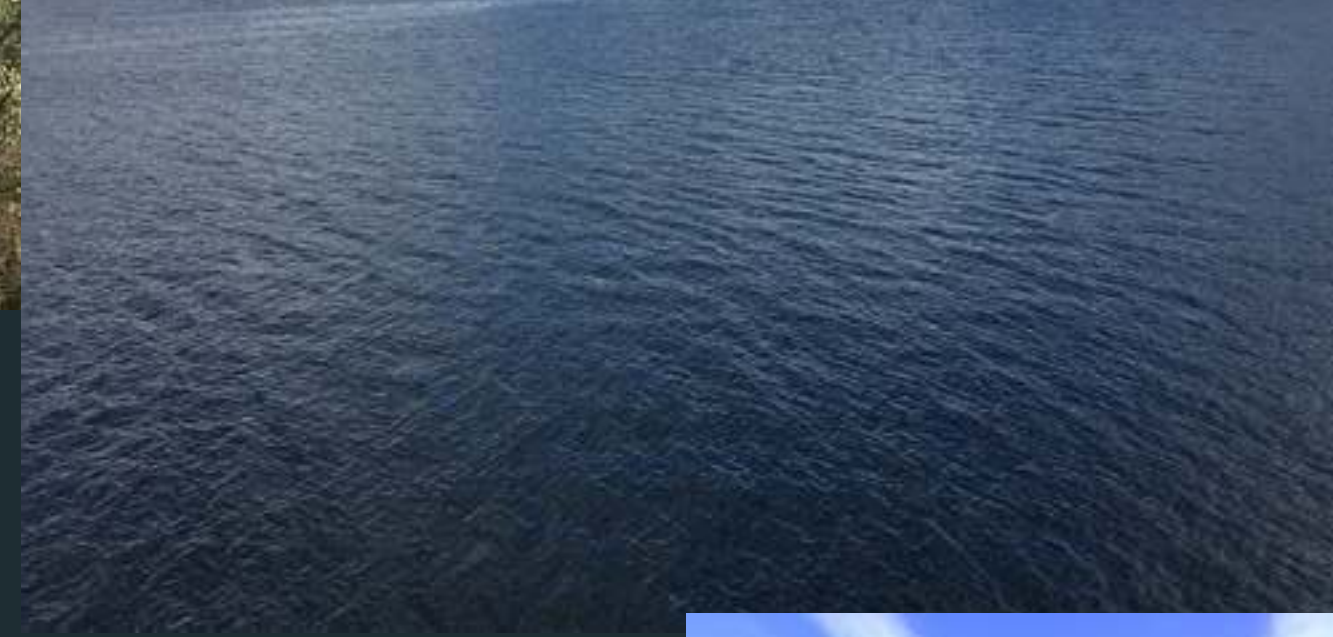
“Yesterday, strolling on the banks of the lake, he told me, ‘Here is my greatest temptation.’ And as I asked him with a look, he added, ‘My poor father who died at nearly ninety, spent his life, as he confessed to me himself, tortured by the temptation of suicide, that came to him he knew not whence, from his race he used to say, defending himself from it. And that defense was his life. Not to succumb to the temptation he took great care to conserve his life. He told me of terrible scenes.
It seemed craziness to me. And I have inherited it.





And how that water calls me with its apparent quietude, the current runs inside, a mirror to the sky. My life Lazaro is like a continuous suicide, a combat against suicide that is the same, but let them live, let our people live. And then he added, 'Here the river eddies into the lake for a while, going down to the tableland, then hastening into falls, rapids and torrents through the ravines and gorges next to the city, and so does life eddy, here, in the village. But the temptation of suicide is greatest here, next to the eddy that mirrors the stars at night, not next to the falls, that make one frightened.

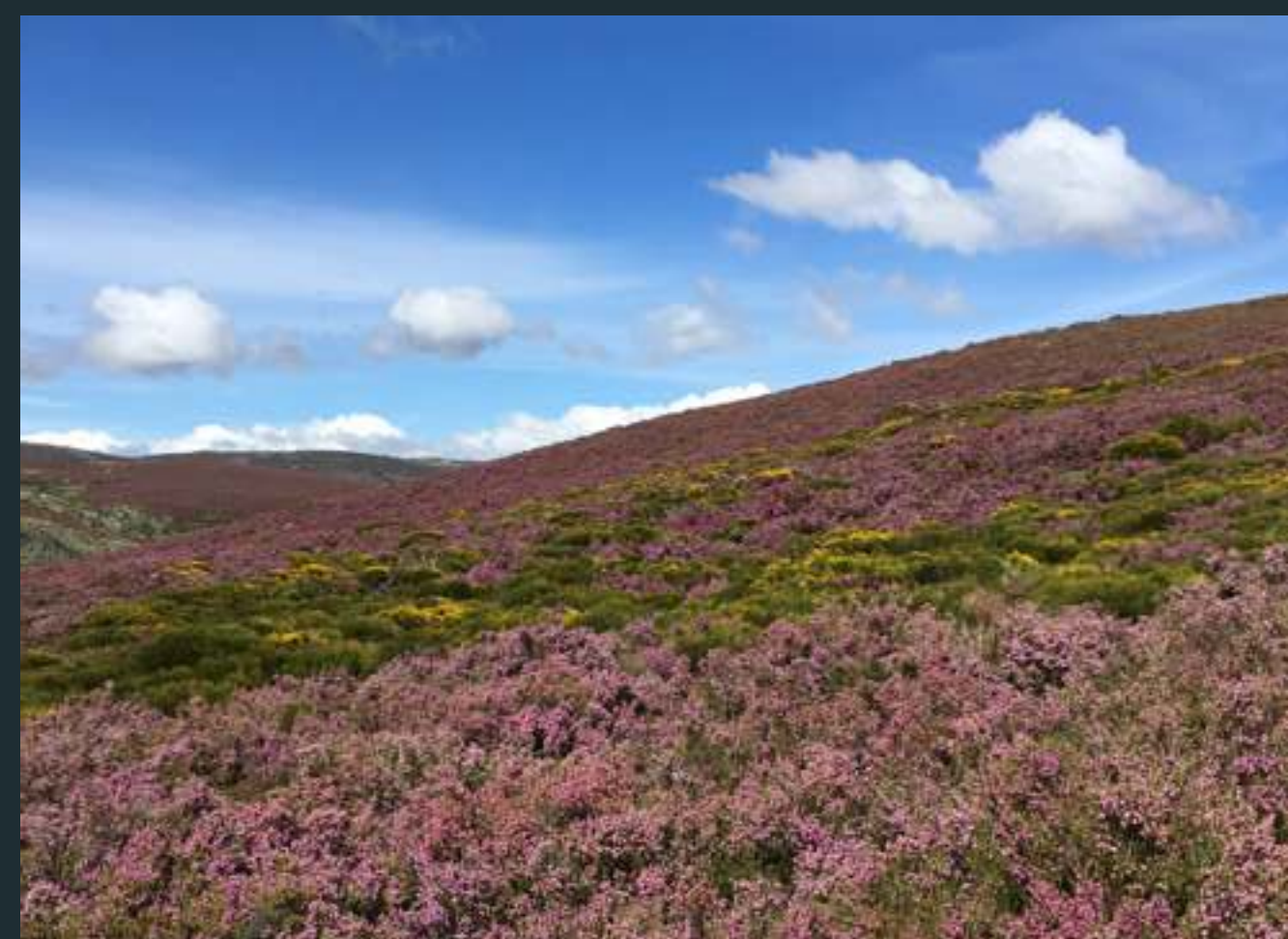




See, Lazaro, I have helped poor villagers in the last rites who were ignorant, illiterate, who had scarcely left the village, and I have been able to know from their lips, and when I didn't guess it, the true cause of their mortal illness, and I have seen there at the head of their death bed, all the blackness of the abyss of the tedium of life. A thousand times worse than hunger. Let us continue then, Lazaro, committing suicide in our work and in our people, that they may dream this life, like the lake dreams the sky.'



Translated by Nancy Mayberry





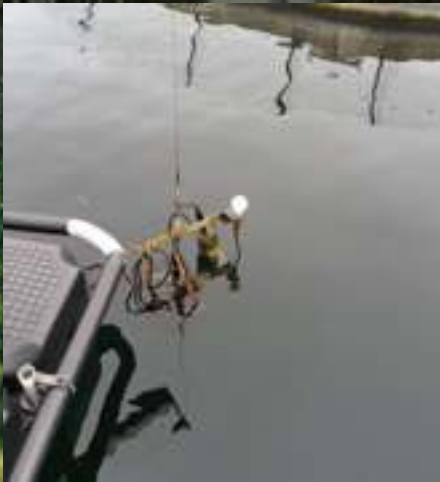




LET'S GO SWIMMING

Arthur Russell







To the north part of that
That country I am swimming to
'Cause where you been I go
That's where you always go
I'm banging on your door
Up in the big blue sky





When you let the water in
When you let the water in, yeah
When you let the water in,
I'm on the sand that's hot
When you let the water in
When you let the water in,
I'm on the sand that's hot
Oh yeah, I'm on the dot
I'm on the sand that's here

World of Echo

© Audika Records LLC / Rough Trade Records Ltd., 2004



B I O G R A P H I E S



Jonasz Hapka

lives in Berlin, is studying to become a social worker and works as a youth football coach.

Signe Westberg

lives in Stockholm, studies Interior Architecture and Furniture Design and works putting on art workshops for children at the House of Culture.



Boban Kaluđer

lives in Banja Luka, works as a safety coordinator and plays drums in the band Çivot.

Ton Gras

lives in Barcelona, makes a living as a translator and acts in theatre and film productions from time to time.

Gorka Martin

lives in the Catalan countryside, building a house and taking care of two baby piglets.

Clàudia Robert

lives in Barcelona and works as a producer all around the world.



**Rose-Anabel
Beerman**

lives in Berlin and works as a freelance choreographer, director, dramaturg and also as a research assistant at the Institute for Applied Theater Studies in Gießen.



Alice Heyward

lives in Berlin and works as a dancer, choreographer and teacher whose practice develops through diverse collaborations, as both author and interpreter, constructing situations of exchange and connection.

Orlando Rodríguez

lives in Berlin and works as freelance dancer and performer and strives to find specifics ways of addressing emotions and body language in regards to the pulse of the time.



Jenny Lou Ziegel

works as a cinematographer in Berlin and the rest of the world.



Isabelle Lange

is a costume designer, artist and tailor whose research-based practice centres around creating and producing new textile materials and garments.

**Johannes
Schmelzer-Ziringer**

lives in Europe and works as a sound recordist, sound designer and music composer for documentary and fiction films and audiovisual artworks.



Jordi Ribas

is a production sound mixer and sound designer from Barcelona. Jordi owns a studio.

Jakov Munižaba is a sound designer and radiophonic enthusiast who works and teaches in Belgrade and beyond.

Linus Nickl is a sound tinkerer, loves to collaborate with other tinkerers of any kind and is dedicated to good sounding movies.

Montse Triola lives in Barcelona. Montse set up the production company Andergraun Films.

Nataša Damnjanović is a producer and editor from Belgrade currently based in The Netherlands. Nataša loves good films, good wine and good company and hopes to see a better and more just world.

Vladimir Vidić is a film producer, editor and director from Belgrade. Vladimir is the managing director of the production company dart.film. Vladimir plays tennis and drums.

Zsuzsanna Király lives in Berlin, produces films with Flaneur Films and is part of the editorial team of Revolver, Zeitschrift für Film. Zsuzsanna loves to read novels, poetry and letters.

Dane Komljen lives in Berlin and works as a filmmaker. Scorpio rising.



FLÂNEURFILMS

Jeonju
Cinema
Project

A F
ANDERGRAUN FILMS

dart.film

medienboard
BerlinBrandenburg



Vorarlberg
unser Land

SQUARE
EYES