Comrades and lovers Amer and Raghda met in a Syrian prison cell 15 years ago. When Sean McAllister first meets their family in 2009, Raghda is back in prison leaving Amer to look after their four boys alone; but as the ‘Arab Spring’ sweeps the region, the family’s fate shifts irrevocably. Filmed over five years, the film charts their incredible odyssey to political freedom. For Raghda and Amer, it is a journey of hope, dreams and despair: for the revolution, their homeland and each other.

Director’s statement

I first went to Syria in 2009, curious about its secularism and booming tourist industry. Under Bashar Al Assad, the young ‘reformer’, tourism was generating millions of dollars a year. I met Amer, drinking a beer in a bar. Here was someone who wanted to show the world the truth of the Syrian people away from the glitz of the tourist quarters in old Damascus. My love affair with Syria had begun...

Amer’s family moved 15 times during filming, but at each stage I was always welcomed in − I always had a place at the dinner table and a place to stay in their home. I didn’t know Raghda when I started filming – as she was in prison – but I never expected that she would end up taking centre stage of this film. At first – just as Amer had been – she was very stilted with the camera and naturally untrusting. But the longer I stayed with them the closer I got. The closeness became difficult at one stage as their relationship really broke down and Raghda would call me and ask me to come over to help make sense of their lives and their faltering relationship. It was as if they had both stepped into the film and used it for their own means. It is this involvement in the process of filming that I find most fascinating and I’m always surprised as a filmmaker to witness the brutal honesty of people when they are naked and open in front of your camera. It is a painstaking process – it takes years to get inside, so that people are not just acting out their lives in front of your camera but using you and a projected audience to help make sense of the world they find themselves in.

We weren’t commissioned or supported to make the film until quite late in the process so I didn’t really know if the film would ever see the light of day but I kept going back to see them as friends and filming – I couldn’t stop myself. In retrospect, this gave the film its longevity and story arch and has made the experience of making this film more like a life I adopted, or a family that eventually adopted me. It’s an absurd hobby I call a job; it kills me most of the time but has the small significant reward of seeing my characters championed on the screen and stepping forward defiant in their lives through their involvement with the film. I feel proud and happy for Amer, Raghda and their beautiful wonder family, and very honoured that they gave so much to make this film – it is the most special film I have made to date in my career.
ABOVE AND BELOW

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY: Nicolas Steiner
PRODUCED BY: Brigitte Hofr, Cornelia Seitler & Helge Albers
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Markus Nestroy
EDITOR: Kaya Inan
SOUND DESIGNER: Tobias Koch
ORIGINAL SCORE: Lars Voges, Jan Miserre & John Gürler

Switzerland, Germany
118 min.

Nicolas Steiner was born in 1984 in Switzerland and grew up in a small village in Valais, the Southern Mountain part of Switzerland. During his time in high school he worked as a gravedigger, played drums in various bands and did his military service as an army percussionist. In 2005/06, he attended the European Film College in Denmark before studying Ethnology and Film Studies for a year at the University of Zurich.

Far, far away and out of sight, that’s where April, Dave, Cindy, Rick and the Godfather are creating life on their own terms. From the depths of the flood channels under Sin City, to a reclaimed military bunker in the middle of dusty, heated Californian nowhere land, to beyond the stratosphere where Mars now lives on earth. Each individual has been flung into perilizing circumstances on this rollercoaster ride called life. Through the hustle, pain, and laughter, we are whisked away to an unfamiliar world where we discover its inhabitants to be souls not unlike our very own.

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ABOVE AND BELOW

Festival Participation:
Athens IFF
BAFICI Buenos Aires
CPh:PIX
Durban IFF
Edinburgh IFF
Hot Docs Canadian Intl Documentary Festival (Toronto)
IFF Rotterdam
IFF “Message to Man” St Petersburg
Karlov Vary IFF
Locarno IFF
Rotterdam IFF
Vancouver IFF
Visions du réel – IFF (Nyon)
Warsaw IFF: Millennium Award
Dok Fest München: German Documentary Music Award

Nicolas Steiner

Portrait by: Laura Killian

Filmography:
2009 THUNDERBOLT AND WIND
DEBAUCH, doc.
2010 IT’S ME. HELMUT, short
2011 BATTLE OF THE QUEENS, doc.
ALL THINGS ABLAZE

This film is not about the revolution that changed Ukraine this winter. Not exactly. It rather shows a universal pattern of a particular kind of uprisings – those ones that end with bloodshed. At first, the noble endeavour for freedom collides with the dark force of repressive rulers. Then eventually, after much confusion and chaos, the righteous anger of people changes to pure outrage. And when the first casualties on both sides fall, no matter how black and white it seems from the outside, the border between good and bad blurs when one looks from the epicentre of a battle. And finally, all things ablaze.

Directors’ statement
The recent Ukrainian revolution proved to be unique in many ways: long months of thousands of people standing stubbornly in the snow; long months in which fellow citizens of all social backgrounds supported each other with unprecedented gestures of care such as sharing food, warmth and medical assistance for free; long months of unbelievable patience and dignity.

However, the Ukrainian experience also proved that something at the core of most revolutions is ultimately the same. From the very beginning, the mainly peaceful protesters tried to prevent any manifestations of violence. The longer this protest lasted, the harder it was to keep this up. On one hand, the surreal carnival atmosphere of the Maidan became more and more lightheaded with every small victory. On the other hand, the immensely cynical and cruel government of gangsters carried on devising even meaner methods to fight against its own people. Step by step, all this led to lots of incidents that looked like a senseless farce. That eventually resulted in total distrust and chaos. Until one day the heady air of what was still a peaceful confrontation exploded into violence – a violence that seemed to have broken free from the darkest depths of human nature. The subsequent events recalled a snowball of fire that unavoidably led to a tragedy, even though nobody expected the scale of it – over a hundred people killed, thousands injured, and many others still listed as missing.

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AMY

DIRECTED BY: Asif Kapadia
PRODUCED BY: James Gay-Rees
EDITOR: Chris King
ORIGINAL SCORE: Antonio Pinto

Featureing extensive unseen archive footage and previously unheard tracks, AMY tells the incredible story of six-time Grammy-winner Amy Winehouse. At the same time it shines a light on the world we live in, in a way that very few can.

A once-in-a-generation talent and a pure jazz artist in the most authentic sense, Amy wrote and sang from the heart using her musical gifts to analyse her own problems. The combination of her raw honesty and supreme talent resulted in some of the most original and adored songs of the modern era.

Her huge success, however, resulted in relentless and invasive media attention which coupled with Amy’s troubled relationships and precarious lifestyle saw her life tragically begin to unravel.

Amy Winehouse died from alcohol poisoning in July 2011 at the age of 27.

Directors statement

AMY is the story of a complex, intelligent girl with an incredible sense of humour, told through her own words. I wasn’t a particularly huge fan before I made the film, but I really fell in love with her during the three years I spent being a part of her world.

Most people knew Amy had an amazing voice but this film is just as much about Amy’s incredible talent for writing, people didn’t stop to listen carefully enough to her songs, we didn’t realise how important her lyrics were and how personal they were, the lyrics essentially provided the map and structure for the story. During the production, I conducted over 100 interviews with the key people that knew Amy Winehouse; her friends, family, former-partners, her producers and members of the music industry that worked closely with her, the film tells the essence of the findings from these interviews. Ultimately, I feel AMY is a film about love, about a person who wants to be loved, someone who needed love, but didn’t always receive it.

Asif Kapadia

BAFTA − winning filmmaker Asif Kapadia has an interest in exploring the lives of ‘outsiders’, characters living in timeless, extreme and unforgiving circumstances or landscapes. Born in Hackney, London, in 1972, Asif studied filmmaking at the Royal College of Art where he first gained recognition with his short film THE SHEEP THIEF (1997), telling the story of a gifted street-kid.

His distinct visual style continued with his first feature THE WARRIOR, shot in the deserts of Rajasthan and the Himalayas. Asif Kapadia’s FAR NORTH (2004), shot in the high Arctic, had its world premiere at the Venice IFF. His universally acclaimed SENNA, about Formula One legend Ayrton Senna, is the highest-grossing UK documentary of all time.

Asif Kapadia is currently in production on the new drama feature ALI AND NINO for Archery Pictures.

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BOXING FOR FREEDOM

Directed, Produced and Written by: Juan Antonio Moreno & Silvia Venegas
Director of Photography: Alberto González
Editor: Nacho Ruiz Capillas

Produced by: 10Ft Films Ltd
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Director's statement

BOXING FOR FREEDOM is a film in favour of individual freedom and against the traditions imposed by society. We met Sadaf Rahimi in 2011 in Kabul during the production of another documentary in Afghanistan. Her story and personality, along with her parents’ and sisters’ characters, made her an extraordinary Afghan young girl. To such an extent that when she was 13 she joined the brand new Afghan boxing team without the consent of her parents.

Sadaf Rahimi is the best female boxer in Afghanistan, but she must deal with her country’s traditions, fear and her own fate in order to be a free woman. Sadaf and her sister Shabnam joined the newly created women’s boxing team at the age of 13, when they returned to their country after being refugees in Iran. Her boxing and academic achievements will turn Sadaf into an example for many Afghan young women, but her path will not be without threats and difficulties.

BOXING FOR FREEDOM is about women's empowerment and so the directors gave to Sadaf a camera to film part of her story. The documentary brings together the voices of the most progressive Afghan women in a turning point for Afghanistan because the rights of women are retreating. The documentary was filmed on location in Kabul (Afghanistan) during 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Sadaf Rahimi is not only the best female boxer in Afghanistan, but she also represents the empowerment of a new generation of Afghan women. It is not common to meet girls like Sadaf in Kabul, much less in the rest of the country. Besides, her personal story is linked with the last 20 years of Afghan history.

Sadaf is not only young, but brave and humble, that is why she became a symbol of struggle for the human rights of Afghan women and she has also been recognised by the most progressive women in the country. Our documentary brings together the voices of these women that they are also mothers, teachers, activists or sportswomen.

We decided to give Sadaf a camera during the shooting to empower her even more so that she could decide what to film and show us. The shooting began when Sadaf was 17 years old and it has finished four years later. During this time Sadaf has been aware of her role in the Afghan society and she has faced her destiny becoming a model for other young girls.

Spain
74 min

Festival Participation:
Madrid Int’l Dox FF
Malaga FF: Silver Biznaga

Director: Juan Antonio Moreno

Silvia Venegas
DANCING WITH MARIA

María Fux is a 90-year-old Argentinian dancer. In her studio in the heart of Buenos Aires she is still dancing, teaching and conserving the elegance and the energy of a young performer. She accepts all kinds of people in her classes forming integrated groups of dancers. She gives everybody the possibility to develop their own way of expressing themselves and gets out the talent from dancers of all ages and conditions. After a period of training with her, a lot of them spring out, as if something new is waking up. They take part in one of the most ancient human struggles: the battle of human beings against their limits. María Fux is not an exception. She is pushing her old body to the limits, but there’s an unknown force coming from inside that drives her students to a concrete change and still keeps her dancing.

This film wants to tell about the power of that force.

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I personally met María Fux in February 2010. My wife has been her student for about five years and she approached her after losing her mother. The dance was the main resource with which she managed to overcome that grief, when she was still very young. At that time, María Fux, not even knowing her, became an important person in my life and I have seen first-hand how the dance can change not only the body but also the intimacy of individuals.

For this reason, I want my film to tell about María Fux and the changes her dance brings to people's lives: no great revolutions that change society, but intimate awareness that changes individuals.

Although her personal story has very interesting episodes, I have decided not to make a biographic film, but to concentrate on some interesting aspects of her work today, which I myself have been able to experience in the studio. Through this, I could enrich my personal relationship with her, gain her trust and expand my access to her personal world. Evidence of that is the fact that I was the first filmmaker allowed to film her workshops.

I chose to follow some secondary characters to tell how dancing with María changes their lives. Their stories are the pieces of a single mosaic from which emerges the image of people who, despite the difficulties imposed by life, have managed to find a way to overcome their limitations and grow as human beings. It is a hard road and whoever takes it, needs a guide.

Following this road, we will find out that María Fux and her world are impregnated with art and poetry and how important it is to find a teacher in some crucial moments of life.

Ivan Gergolet

Ivan Gergolet was born in Italy in 1977 and graduated in Cinema from Bologna University. Since 2001 he wrote and directed award-winning short films, documentaries, industrial videos and worked as assistant director and production assistant in several projects.
Over the course of more than three years, Camilla Nielsson has been up close in the inner circles of politics in Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwe. With the process of creating Zimbabwe’s new constitution as the film’s narrative backbone, DEMOCRATS tells the unique story of the political elite in Zimbabwe fighting the battle over the founding principles defining the country’s possible future.

Director’s statement
We in the West sometimes have a hard time understanding why it is so difficult to create a viable democracy in other parts of the world. The democratic values we ourselves accept in a democracy as a matter of fact – that there are three branches of government, that we have freedom of expression and assembly, our civil rights generally – are not taken for granted everywhere on the globe. DEMOCRATS is a sort of a primer – a form of basic research – into how difficult it is to create democracy.

Camilla Nielsson is trained as a documentary filmmaker at Tisch School of the Arts and holds an M.A. in Visual Anthropology from New York University (NYU). Since 2007 she has collaborated with the Israeli video artist Yael Bartana on the trilogy AND EUROPE WILL BE STUNNED (Venice Biennale 2011) and RE:CONSTRUCTED LANDSCAPES (National Gallery of Denmark/CPH:DOX 2012).
DRIFTER

DIRECTED BY: Gábor Hörcher
PRODUCED BY: Marcell Iványi, Gábor Hörcher, Marieke Böttner, Jonas Weydemann & Jakob Weydemann
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Kristóf Becsey & Gábor Hörcher

EDITOR: Thomas Ernst
SOUND DESIGNER: Rudolf Várhegyi
ORIGINAL SCORE: Csaba Kalotás
MAIN CAST: Richárd Steinbach

The young rebel Ricsi lives his life on the edge. 'Trouble' is his middle name. He is unruly, restlessly scarifying problem after problem. Driving cars without a license, theft, and escaping from the cops are all just a part of his daily routine much to his parents’ despair. Ricsi won’t stand for routines nor the expectations of his deadbeat father. Afterall, where was he when Ricsi needed him the most?

DRIFTER was shot over a period of five years and is a portrait of a unique young man who takes life in his own hands.

Hungary, Germany
72 min.

Gábor Hörcher
Gábor Hörcher was born in 1980 in Budapest, Hungary. He attended the University of Psychology, Law and the University of Film Studies, and has worked as a waiter in London, and as a mixer and bartender in Greece. He has lived in the US, France and Cambodia, where he taught courses on Human Rights at a local university.

He started filmmaking and working with director and producer Marcell Iványi early 2008. They run KraatsFilm together producing films and theatre performances.

DRIFTER

Festival Participation:
IDFA Amsterdam: Best First Appearance Award
Documenta Madrid
goEast Wiesbaden
Sarajevo FF
Sofia IFF

Filmography:
2009 Peach (short fiction)
2010 Served Cold (short fiction)
2014 Ricsi (short fiction)

Production & Press:
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**ELECTROBOY**

**WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY:** Marcel Gisler  
**PRODUCED BY:** Anne-Catherine Lang  
**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:** Peter Indergand  
**EDITOR:** Thomas Bachmann  
**PRODUCTION DESIGNER:** Anne-Catherine Lang

**ELECTROBOY** tells the breathtaking true life story of a young man who leaves his claustrophobic Swiss surroundings for the wide world in search of fame and recognition. In a series of success stories he re-invents himself time and again, changing settings and careers like other people change their shirts.

**Director’s statement**

Why this movie? In order to find answers to the question of who is behind the iridescent façade of this elusive, multi-talented glamour boy. Who is Florian Burkhardt? Daredevil, artist, or imposter? Phoenix or fallen Icarus? The cinematic journey with Florian led us to an entirely different place than expected.

Marcel Gisler

Born in 1960 in Altstätten (SG), Switzerland, Marcel Gisler completed a degree in Theatre Studies and Philosophy at Freie Universität Berlin. In 1985, he made his first feature film DAY THIEVES (writer and director), which was awarded the Silver Leopard at Locarno IFF. All his further films − ROSIE, FÖGI IS A BASTARD, THE BLUE HOUR and SLEEPLESS NIGHTS − earned Marcel Gisler awards and remarkable box office successes. From 2003 to 2007, he wrote exclusively for the Swiss TV series LÜTHI & BLANC, 35 episodes in total. He has been a guest lecturer at ESAV (Geneva), écal (Lausanne) and F+F (Zurich) since 1999, and he has been teaching direction and script development at dffb (Berlin) since 2008.

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GOOD THINGS AWAiT
SÅ MEGET GODT I VENTE

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY: Phie Ambo
PRODUCED BY: Malene Flindt Pedersen
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Phie Ambo & Maggie Olkuska
EDITOR: Theis Schmidt
SOUND DESIGNER: Rasmus Winther Jensen
ORIGINAL SCORE: Johann Egill Johannsson

Niels is one of the last idealistic farmers in the agricultural country of Denmark. He makes some of the world’s finest products, praised by the consumers, prized by the world’s best restaurant, NOMA in Copenhagen, and nursed in harmony with the universe. But Niels’ ways of farming in accordance with the planets and the primal instincts of the animals are not too popular with the authorities. They are threatening to withdraw his license to keep cattle, the buildings are deteriorating, and with no successor to take over, Niels risks seeing his life fall apart.

Niels one year ago because I was visiting his farm with my children and I immediately fell in love with the warm and sensitive way Niels and his wife Rita run the farm. They live in a devoted pact with everything in our universe from the smallest microorganisms to the plants that surround us. I also felt that Niels was a great character because behind his cosy Santa-Claus-look there is a stubbern anarchist. Niels wants to respect and preserve the cattle’s natural instincts which for instance means that they are drinking from big bathtubs instead of running water in cups. This is prohibited in modern organic farming.

This is a film about re-discovering the joy that most people experience in their childhood when you’re just being present in nature. I want to give the audience the same profound feeling of being alive that I experienced when I first came to the farm. I wanted to make a film that reminds us to live our everyday lives with devoutness so that one day we won’t wake up realising that we never lived.

Phie Ambo

Phie Ambo graduated as a documentary film director from The National Film School of Denmark in 2003, at which point she had already achieved international recognition for her film FAMILY by winning the Joris Ivens Award at IDFA in Amsterdam. She has made films on a variety of subjects – all of which are popular amongst both festival boards and people the world over. She is co-founder of Danish Documentary Production, which is co-owned by directors Eva Mulvad, Pernille Rose Gønkjær and Mikala Krog, with producer Sigrid Dyekjær as well.
GROZNY BLUES follows a few people around Grozny, the capital of war-torn Chechnya, where daily life is defined by political repression, constricting customs, forced Islamification and the failure to come to terms with recent history. The film revolves around four women who have been fighting for human rights under worsening conditions for many years but get more and more disillusioned with the situation in Putin’s Russia. The building where they work is also home to a Blues Club that is frequented by a group of young people. Having only vague memories of the Chechen wars in the 90s, they try to make sense of the strange things that are happening in their country. In linking the personal and intimate to the political, Nicola Bellucci shows in a dramatic and yet very poetic way what it means to live in a divided society that navigates a no-man’s land between war and peace, repression and freedom, archaic traditions and modern life.

Nicola Bellucci
Nicola Bellucci, born 1963 in Arezzo (Italy), studied Philosophy, Literature and Film at the University of Florence. In 1988 he obtained the directing diploma at the Istituto di scienze cinematografiche in Florence. By 1992 he was working as an author and director of photography in Italy. Four years later, he moved to Basel (Switzerland) where he has lived ever since. In the year 2010, Bellucci realised his first documentary feature, NEL GIARDINO DEI SUONI, which won numerous international awards.
In Iran, since the revolution of 1979, women are no longer allowed to sing in public as soloists – at least in front of men. Defying censorship and taboos, the young composer Sara Najafi is determined to organise an official concert for solo female singers. In order to support their fight, Sara and the Iranian singers Parvin Namazi and Sayeh Sodeyfi invite three female singers from Paris, Elise Caron, Jeanne Cherhal and Emel Mathlouthi, to join them in Tehran and collaborate on their musical project, re-opening a musical bridge between France and Iran.

But are they going to succeed and finally be gathered in Tehran, sing freely, side-by-side, in front of a mixed audience and without restrictions, and to open a door towards a new freedom of female voice in Iran?

Director’s statement
My sister Sara has been making music since the age of four. Watching her go through the challenges of being a female musician in Iran, and the first woman to get a diploma of composition in Iran, has led me to an awareness of the difficulties facing Iranian women in music in my country today. In this film, I want to shed light on the problems faced by a new generation of Iranian musicians. Sara’s love of music is the most important element in her everyday life. The concert that she wants to organise for and with her friends, is a group effort to confront ourselves with a dream which could finally become reality.

Ayat Najafi
Born in Tehran in 1976 and currently living between Berlin and Iran, Ayat Najafi first studied scenography. In 1995, he set up a company for student theatre at the University of Tehran. He worked on several theatrical productions as director, writer, actor and designer. In 2003, he founded Arta Atelier, focusing on an interdisciplinary and multimedia approach to theatre, and made short experimental and documentary films. In 2005, he participated in the Berlinale Talent Campus with his short film MOVE IT (2004). As a student at the University of Konstanz (2008-2009), he presented his play “Stories” of women with mustaches and men in skirts. “Lady Tehran”, his second theatrical production in Germany with an international team, premiered in Berlin in 2009, followed by “Pakistan [Does not] exist”. In 2008 he made his first feature documentary, FOOTBALL UNDER COVER.
Jairo Fuentes is the young leader of the community of Tamaquito, a village in the forests of northern Colombia. Here, nature provides the people with everything they need to survive. For centuries, they’ve hunted in the mountains, foraged for fruit and reared hens, sheep and cattle. But the Wayúu community’s way of life is being destroyed by the El Cerrejón coal mine. This vast chasm extends for 700 square kilometres, making it the world’s largest open-cast coal mine. Every day, the pit gets deeper, gnawing away at the previously unspoilt landscape. The coal is exported all over the world. In Germany, the UK and Israel, in the Netherlands, Turkey, Japan and the USA, coal from El Cerrejón feeds the power stations which generate the electricity to keep our lives fast-paced, bright and warm.

Determined to save his community from the forced displacement which has already swept away other villages, Jairo Fuentes sets out to negotiate with the mine’s operators. They’re backed by powerful commodity companies such as Glencore, Anglo American and BHP Billiton. The companies promise the villagers the blessings of progress, but the Wayúu place no value on modern, electrified houses – on the so-called “better life”.

Instead, they embark on a fight to save their life in the forest, which soon becomes a fight to survive.

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Director’s statement
Do we depend on growth? I came across the concept of “el buen vivir”, the philosophy of the native indigenous people living along the Andes in South America. I studied it with great interest. It contains all (and a lot more) of what we call “sustainability”.

The German “Energiewende” caused a significant increase of steam coal imports to Germany; in fact, almost all industrialised countries have increased their coal imports. Countries like Germany, Great Britain or the U.S. are shutting down their costly coal mining industry and instead import cheap coal from abroad. Mining companies such as Glencore plc, BHP Billiton or Anglo American exploit the natural resources. Colombia produces high quality steam coal at a very low price, thus it became one of the largest exporters of coal.

What happens to the native Colombians, in this case the Wayúu people, who have been living on the ground above the coal for centuries? It’s a disturbing story of neo-colonialism at its best. The Wayuus are forced to move and give up their way of life and have no other choice but to live by the rules of the so-called modern civilisation. It’s their “good life” against ours, an unequal competition full of madness. In the end, mankind suffers an outrageous defeat.

Jens Schanze
Born in 1971 in Bonn (Germany), Jens Schanze studied in the documentary department of the Film School Munich. In 2002 he launched the production company Mascha Film GbR, in 2005 graduated. He has been teaching Film & Video Design since 2014.

THE GOOD LIFE
LA BUENA VIDA
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY: Jens Schanze
PRODUCED BY: Jens Schanze & Frank Matter
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Börres Weiffenbach
ORIGINAL SCORE: Victor Moser & Rainer Bartesch
EDITOR: Bernd Euscher
SOUND DESIGNER: Carlos Ibañez, Marc Parisotto & Daniel Dietenberger

Jairo Fuentes is the young leader of the community of Tamaquito, a village in the forests of northern Colombia. Here, nature provides the people with everything they need to survive. For centuries, they’ve hunted in the mountains, foraged for fruit and reared hens, sheep and cattle. But the Wayúu community’s way of life is being destroyed by the El Cerrejón coal mine. This vast chasm extends for 700 square kilometres, making it the world’s largest open-cast coal mine. Every day, the pit gets deeper, gnawing away at the previously unspoilt landscape. The coal is exported all over the world. In Germany, the UK and Israel, in the Netherlands, Turkey, Japan and the USA, coal from El Cerrejón feeds the power stations which generate the electricity to keep our lives fast-paced, bright and warm.

Determined to save his community from the forced displacement which has already swept away other villages, Jairo Fuentes sets out to negotiate with the mine’s operators. They’re backed by powerful commodity companies such as Glencore, Anglo American and BHP Billiton. The companies promise the villagers the blessings of progress, but the Wayúu place no value on modern, electrified houses – on the so-called “better life”.

Instead, they embark on a fight to save their life in the forest, which soon becomes a fight to survive.

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Director’s statement
Do we depend on growth? I came across the concept of “el buen vivir”, the philosophy of the native indigenous people living along the Andes in South America. I studied it with great interest. It contains all (and a lot more) of what we call “sustainability”.

The German “Energiewende” caused a significant increase of steam coal imports to Germany; in fact, almost all industrialised countries have increased their coal imports. Countries like Germany, Great Britain or the U.S. are shutting down their costly coal mining industry and instead import cheap coal from abroad. Mining companies such as Glencore plc, BHP Billiton or Anglo American exploit the natural resources. Colombia produces high quality steam coal at a very low price, thus it became one of the largest exporters of coal.

What happens to the native Colombians, in this case the Wayúu people, who have been living on the ground above the coal for centuries? It’s a disturbing story of neo-colonialism at its best. The Wayuus are forced to move and give up their way of life and have no other choice but to live by the rules of the so-called modern civilisation. It’s their “good life” against ours, an unequal competition full of madness. In the end, mankind suffers an outrageous defeat.

Jens Schanze
Born in 1971 in Bonn (Germany), Jens Schanze studied in the documentary department of the Film School Munich. In 2002 he launched the production company Mascha Film GbR, in 2005 graduated. He has been teaching Film & Video Design since 2014.
**THE LOOK OF SILENCE**

**DIRECTED BY:** Joshua Oppenheimer  
**PRODUCED BY:** Signe Byrge Sørensen  
**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:** Lars Skree  
**EDITOR:** Niels Pagh Andersen  
**SOUND DESIGNER:** Henrik Garnov  
**MAIN CAST:** Adi Rukun

Through the filmmaker’s work filming perpetrators of the 1965-66 Indonesian genocide, a family of survivors discovers how their son was murdered—and the identity of the man who killed him. The family’s youngest son asks how he can raise his children in a society where survivors are terrorised into silence, and everybody is terrorised into treating the murderers as heroes. In search of answers, he decides to confront each of the surviving killers involved with his brother’s murder. And thus begins, through cinema, an unprecedented dialogue.

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**Filmography:**  
1997 **THE ENTIRE STORY OF THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE**  
1997 **THOSE PLACES WE LEARN TO CALL HOME**  
2002 **THE GLOBALISATION TAPES**  
2012 **THE ACT OF KILLING**

**Director’s statement**

**THE ACT OF KILLING** exposed the consequences for all of us when we build our everyday reality on terror and lies. **THE LOOK OF SILENCE** explores what it is like to be a survivor in such a reality. Making any film about survivors of a genocide is to walk into a minefield of clichés, most of which serve to create a heroic (if not saintly) protagonist with whom we can identify, thereby offering the false reassurance that, in the moral catastrophe of atrocity, we are nothing like perpetrators. But presenting survivors as saintly in order to reassure ourselves that we are good is to use survivors to deceive ourselves. It is an insult to survivors’ experience, and does nothing to help us understand what it means to survive atrocity, what it means to live a life shattered by mass violence, and to be silenced by terror. To navigate this minefield of clichés, we have had to explore silence itself.

The result, **THE LOOK OF SILENCE**, is, I hope, a poem about a silence borne of terror—a poem about the necessity of breaking that silence, but also about the trauma that comes when silence is broken. Maybe the film is a monument to silence—a reminder that although we want to move on, look away and think of other things, nothing will make whole what has been broken. Nothing will wake the dead. We must stop, acknowledge the lives destroyed, strain to listen to the silence that follows.

Joshua Oppenheimer

Born in 1974 in the USA, Joshua Oppenheimer is based in Copenhagen, Denmark, where he is a partner at the production company Final Cut for Real. He has worked for over a decade with militias, death squads and their victims to explore the relationship between political violence and the public imagination. Educated at Harvard and Central Saint Martins, his debut feature-length film was **THE ACT OF KILLING** (2012). Joshua Oppenheimer is artistic director of the International Centre for Documentary and Experimental Film, University of Westminster.
TOTO AND HIS SISTERS

TOTO SI SURORILE LUI

Written & Directed by: Alexander Nanau
Produced by: Valeriu Nicolae, Hanka Kastelicova, Alexander Nanau, Catalin Mitulescu & Marcian Lazar
Director of Photography: Alexander Nanau

Editor: Alexander Nanau, George Cragg & Mircea Olteanu
Sound Designer: Matthias Lempert
Main Cast: Toto Ilie Nicusor Gabriel Horvath, Andreea Petre, Ana Maria Badulescu

TOTO AND HIS SISTERS is an astonishing family story set in Romania. During their mother’s imprisonment for dealing drugs, Toto passionately learns street dancing, reading and writing, while his sisters try to keep the family together in a world that has long forgotten what the innocence of childhood should be. But in the same world, the children discover that they can get from life more than their family could offer.

TOTO AND HIS SISTERS

Festival Participation:
Docaviv
DOK Leipzig
Donostia San Sebastian IFF
Espoo Ciné
Guadalajara IFF
Hot Docs Toronto
IFF Rotterdam
Melbourne IFF
Moscow IFF
Namur IFF
One World Int’l Human Rights Doc. FF
Premier Plans Angers FF: Grand Prix
Sarajevo FF: Heart of Sarajevo (Best Int’l Doc.)
Stockholm IFF
Transilvania IFF
Tribeca FF
Vilnius IFF
Warsaw FF: Best Int’l Doc.
Yamagata IDff
Yerevan IFF
Zurich FF: Best Int’l Doc.

Alexander Nanau

Born in Romania, German-Romanian film director Alexander Nanau studied directing at the Film and Television Academy Berlin (DFFB). His feature documentary, THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ION B was awarded an International Emmy Award in 2010. It travelled to over 70 festivals world-wide. His first feature documentary, PETER ZADEK INSZENIERT PEER GYNT (2006), premiered at the Munich IFF in the New German Cinema section and was released in cinemas across Germany and Austria in 2006. During 2007 he was a scholarship holder of the Academy of Arts Berlin.

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TOTO AND HIS SISTERS

Director’s statement
I am convinced that we are who we are ever since the day we are born, with our very own personality and potential. The question and the central issue in this film is what exactly is shaping us during childhood into what and who we eventually become. After six months of research, I have decided to tell the story of Toto and his sisters, a story that deals with the difficulty of children of different ages to grow without adult guidance, in an environment dominated by poverty, violence and drug abuse, yet finding the strength to see the richness of life beyond all that.

The fact that some are born in the places and circumstances of the film’s protagonists is, from my perspective, an accident of fate and has nothing to say about the abilities and aspirations one has. More crucial for the development of one’s perspectives and imagination are the models chosen and the kind of life pursued.

The focus is the development of three young lives of different ages within a year. Whether it is their life in the ghetto, the struggle at the Children’s Club, going to school, struggling to live up to the performing and discipline demands of the street dance teacher, visiting their mother in jail, court sessions or fights with their uncles, each one is waiting for their mother’s return from prison in his or her own way.

Learning and dancing become dominant in Toto’s world. Words, reading, numbers, dance moves take over his mind and his behaviour and make the nights he spends at home just fragments of a faraway reality.

An important element sustaining the story’s intimacy is the video material that the younger sister, Andreea, shot herself, documenting their life. It was important for me that their story would be told in a film made with them, not only about them.

Alexander Nanau

Filmography:
2006 PETER ZADEK INSZENIERT PEER GYNT
2010 THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ION B
Founded in 1988, the European Film Academy (EFA) now unites more than 3,000 European film professionals with the common aim of promoting European film culture. Throughout the year, the EFA initiates and participates in a series of activities dealing with film politics as well as economic, artistic, and training aspects. The programme includes conferences, seminars and workshops, and a common goal is to build a bridge between creativity and the industry. These activities culminate in the annual presentation of the European Film Awards.