CAHIER AFRICAIN

A FILM BY HEIDI SPECOGNA
Synopsis

It all started with a small school exercise book. But instead of being full of vocabulary, the pages were checkered with the courageous testimonies of 300 Central African women, girls and men. They reveal what Congolese mercenaries did to them between October 2002 and March 2003 in the wake of armed conflict. On their own initiative, they gathered together their testimonies in this book to record the crimes committed against them.

As a result of rape, Amzine, a young Muslim woman, gave birth to a child. Looking at her now 12-year-old daughter Fane is a daily reminder of the suffering she entrusted to this book.

Arlette, a Christian girl, has agonised for years due to a gunshot to the knee that did not want to heal. After a successful surgery in Berlin, she holds on to hope for a pain-free existence.

cahier africain is a long-term observation that begins accompanying its protagonists in the village of PK 12 in 2008. But while they try to master their difficult daily lives with confidence – and while, in The Hague, the legal prosecution of crimes committed during the last war is still in progress – the next war breaks out in the Central African Republic. Amzine, Fane and Arlette must once again face a maelstrom of violence, death and expulsion. At their side, the film bears witness to the collapse of order and civilization in a country torn apart by civil war and coup d’états.
Remarks by the director

*cahier africain* is a personal film. On a research trip and by chance, I came upon this book, which led me to seven years of filming. We visited and accompanied the people who described their suffering and shame in the book.

Today, the book – along with thousands of other pieces of evidence of war crimes – is locked in the vault at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. The fate of the women and their children begotten by force is a tragedy the world turns a blind eye on. It’s estimated that, in the Central African region in recent years alone, more than 100,000 women have been violated during armed conflict. By way of comparison, after the Rwandan genocide, approximately 20,000 children were brought to life with this background.

The film was originally dedicated to the difficult attempts of women to regain a foothold after experiencing violence. However, the renewed outbreak of war in the Central African Republic abruptly rewrote the script.
Heidi Specogna

Born in Switzerland. 1982-88 Film Studies at the Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie (dffb) in Berlin, Germany.
Since 2006 lecturer in Documentary Filmmaking at the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg in Ludwigsburg, Germany.

1991 TANIA LA GUERRILLERA (documentary)
1993 DECKNAME ROSA (documentary)
   Bern Film Prize for Best Documentary
1995 Z-MAN’S KINDER (fiction)
1996 TUPAMAROS (documentary)
   Coral Award at the Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericana Havana
2002 KAPRUN (documentary)
2004 ZEIT DER ROTEN NELKEN (documentary)
2005 EINE FAMILIENANGELEGENHEIT (documentary)
2006 THE SHORT LIFE OF JOSÉ ANTONIO GUTIERREZ (documentary)
   Swiss Film Prize for Best Documentary
   2007, nominated for the German Film Prize
   2007, Germany’s Adolf Grimme TV Prize 2008
2010 THE GOALGETTER’S SHIP (documentary)
   Public Award 2010 Duisburg and Youth Award Leipzig 2011
2011 CARTE BLANCHE (documentary)
   Best documentary 2011 in Duisburg.
   Catholic media Prize 2013
2012 ESTHER AND THE SPIRITS (documentary)
   German Human Rights Film Award 2012
2014 PEPE MUJICA, LESSONS FROM THE FLOWERBED (documentary)
2016 CAHIER AFRICAIN (documentary)
Peter Spoerri

For over 45 years in the film business as production manager, Peter Spoerri founded PS Film GmbH in 1994 in Zürich. PS Film produces feature and documentary films for cinema and television.

Selection of films produced

DAS KURZE LEBEN DES JOSE ANTONIO GUTIERREZ
by Heidi Speegona (Documentary for Cinema)
Best Swiss Documentary Film 2007
Adolf Grimme Prize, Best Documentary 2008

MEERDOLEN by Peter Guyer (Documentary)
Music Award 2006

ES LEBE DAS KABARETT! by Werner Zeindler (Documentary)
HUNKELER MACHT SACHEN by Markus Fischler (Fiction -TV-Movie)
ZU FUSS NACH SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA by Bruno Moll (Documentary for Cinema)

GEORGE GRUNTZ by Werner Zeindler (Documentary for Cinema)
PIZZA BETHLEHEM by Bruno Moll (Documentary for Cinema)
Best Documentary 2010 Zurich
Best Documentary 2010 Bern

YYSERÄINÄ – EINER VON UNS by Bruno Moll (Documentary)
CARTE BLANCHE by Heidi Specogna (Documentary for Cinema)
3sat Award for Best Documentary 2011

EL ENCUENTRO by Norbert Wiedmer/Enrique Ros (Documentary for Cinema)
INSIDE EL PORVENIR by Erika Harzer/Rainer Hoffmann (Documentary for Cinema)
DIE RUHIGEN FRAUEN by Damaris Lüthi (Documentary for TV)
ALPSEGEN by Bruno Moll (Documentary for Cinema)

HOHLER, FRANZ by Tobias Wyss (Documentary)
DÄLLEBACH KARI by Xavier Koller (Fiction for Cinema)
ZUM SÄNTIS MIT FRANZ HOHLER by Tobias Wyss (Documentary for Cinema)
DAHEIM IN NÄKKÄLA by Peter Ramseier (Documentary for Cinema)
ARLETTE – MUT IST EIN MUSKEL by Florian Hoffmann (Documentary)
DER GEIST RUFT AUS DER FERNE by Rainer Hoffmann and Erika Harzer (Documentary)
Stefan Tolz

Based on a long experience in filmmaking Stefan Tolz and Thomas Riedelsheimer joined forces to produce documentaries for cinema and TV in 2002. Their production company Filmpunkt GmbH operates out of Cologne and specializes on visual story telling and author-driven content.

Selection of films produced

CAHIER AFRICAIN by Heidi Specogna
CH/D 2016 - 117 min., HD
Prod. PS Film/Filmpunkt with ZDF/3sat

THE COLOR OF YEARNING
by Thomas Riedelsheimer
D 2016 - 89 min., HD
Prod. Filmpunkt with WDR/BR

FULL SPEED WESTWARD – GEORGIA IN SEARCH FOR ITS FUTURE by Stefan Tolz
D 2013 – 90 min., HD
Prod. Filmpunkt with WDR/ARTE

BREATHING EARTH - SUSUMU SHINGU’S DREAM by Thomas Riedelsheimer
D/UK 2012 - 90 min., HD
Prod. Filmpunkt/Skyline with WDR/ARTE

SOUL BIRDS by Thomas Riedelsheimer
D 2009 - 90 min., HD
Prod. Filmpunkt with WDR

TRADERS’ DREAMS – THE WORLD OF EBAY
by Marcus Vetter and Stefan Tolz
D 2006, 90 min, HD
Prod. Filmquadrat/Filmperspektive with ZDF/NDR/Arte

THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS by Annette Dittert
D 2005, 4 x 53 min., HD
Prod. Filmquadrat with WDR

ARJEPLOG - LAPLAND BETWEEN ICE AND HIGH TECH by Claudia Seifert
D 2004 - 43 min, DigiBeta
Prod. Filmquadrat with WDR

TOUCH THE SOUND by Thomas Riedelsheimer
D 2003, 93 min., S16,
Prod. Filmquadrat/Skyline with BR

ON THE EDGE OF TIME – MALE DOMAINS IN THE CAUCASUS by Stefan Tolz
D 2001, 90 min, S16
Prod. Applaus Film with SWR/ARD/Arte/WDR/MDR
Johann Feindt

Documantries as DIRECTOR (Selection)

1979  IRRECONCILABLE MEMORIES
      (together with K. Volkenborn and K. Siebig), ZDF
1981  HOPE DIES LAST – LIIDICE, ARD
1983  THE ATTEMPT TO LIVE, ZDF
1987 / 88  NIGHTHAWK, ZDF
1993 / 94  GANGRENE (with Didi Danquart, DOP), ARTE
1997 / 98  MY FRIEND, THE MINISTER, WDR
1999  SPLINTERS OF WAR – KOSOVO
2000  PROTOCOL OF AN RESEARCH – SOLDIERS
      (together with Tamara Trampe)
2002  SEBNITZ-DIE PERFEKTE STORY, ARTE
2003  M.I.A. – MISSING IN ACTION, ARTE
2002/05  WHITE RAVENS – NIGHTMARE CHECHNYA (together with T. Trampe)
2009  LULLABIES (together with T. Trampe)
2012/14  MY MOTHER, A WAR, AND ME (together with T. Trampe)
2016  SLASHER (work in progress, production: zero one film)

DOP on Documentaries (Selection)

1989  MY WAR (Director: Thomas Kufus)
1992  PROFESSION NEONAZI (Director: Winfried Bonengel)
1997  THE RED HAND OF ULSTER – NORTHERN IRELAND (Director: Hans Erich Viet)
1998  MATERNITY UNIT (Director: Thomas Kufus)
2000  THE CHANCLER (Director: Thomas Schadt)
2001  A CHILD FROM ABROAD (Director: Caroline Goldie)
2005/2006  SEPP BIERBICHLER - ein Portrait (Director: Regina Schilling)
2005/2007  PAINFULL PEACE (Director: Anne Thoma)
2009/10  GERHARD RICHTER – PAINTING (Director: Corinna Belz)
2010  CARTE BLANCHE (Director: Heidi Specogna)
2010  THE TRAITOR (Director: A.K. Hendel)
2011  MILES AND WAR (Director: Anne Thoma)
2013  TITOS BRILLE (Director: Regina Schilling)
2013/14  CAHIER AFRICAIN (Director: Heidi Specogna)
2014  WAR AND GAMES (Director: Karin Jurschick)
2016  SKIN by SKIN (Director: Mechthild Gassner, Production: Gassner Films)

DOP on Feature Films (CINEMA) (Selection)

1994  DIE VERGEBUNG (Prod. Ostfilm, Director Andreas Hönsch)
1998  VIEHJUD LEVI (Prod. zerofilm, Director: Didi Danquart)
2005  OFFSET (Prod.: noirfilm, Director: Didi Danquart)
2006  FREISCHWIMMER (Prod.: typhoon film, Director: Andreas Kleinert)
2009/10  BITTERE KIRSCHEN (Prod.: noir film, Director: Didi Danquart)
2012  DIE FRAU VON FRÜHER (Prod.: Peter Heirath Filmprod., Director: Andreas Kleinert)
2014  DANCING FREDDY – Tatort Köln (Director: Andreas Kleinert, Production: Colonia Media)
2015  THE HEROES JOURNEY (Director: Andreas Kleinert, Production: Eikon Film)
      GOSTER (Director: Didi Danquardt, Production: HR)
2016  HEDDA (Director: Andreas Kleinert, Production: Broadview)

AWARDS

Emmy Award (Mein Vater), German Film Award (The Attempt to live), Nomination for
the German Film Award (The Black Box), Nomination for German Camera Award
(Kelly-Bastian), German TV-Grimme Award for best documentary (Missing in Action
and White Ravens), Arte Award for best German documentary (White Ravens),
Golden Dove International Docfilmfestival Leipzig (Irreconcilable Memories)
Kaya Inan, son of Turkish immigrants, was born in 1983 in Muri, Switzerland. At the age of 19, after attending a street casting, he landed a part as an actor in one of the most successful Swiss comedies, READY, STEADY, CHARLIE. This experience launched his interest in filmmaking. Immediately after high school he started to do internships on several film sets. In 2005, he became an editing assistant on feature length fiction and documentary films such as DAS FRÄULEIN, DIE HERBSTZEITLOSEN and HIDDEN HEART. He was accepted into the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg in Ludwigsburg, Germany in 2006 to study Film Editing. He also participated in an exchange program where he studied film for two semesters at the Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada. During his studies, he edited three feature films - 180°, BATTLE OF THE QUEENS, and TRANSPAPA. Since graduation, he has been working as a freelance editor for fiction and documentary films.

A selection of films:

- 2007 Schichtende (10’)
  Fiction; D: Matthias Günter
- 2008 Jetzt wir zwei (20’)
  Fiction; D: Kolya Reichart; P: Filmakademie B-W
- 2009 180° (94’)
  Fiction; D: Cihan Inan; P: C-films AG
- 2009 Battle of the Queens (70’)
  Documentary; D: Nicolas Steiner, P: Filmakademie B-W
- 2011 Du + Ich (20’)
  Fiction; D: Esen Isik; P: Maximage
- 2012 TRANSPAPA (90’)
  Fiction; R: Sarah Judith Mettke; P: UFA Fiction
- 2012 The Cage Door Is Always Open (80’)
  Documentary; R: Daniel Young; P: Hessegreutert Film
- 2012 Letzte Runde (20’)
  Fiction; D: Kerstin Polte; P: Maximage
- 2014 Pepe Mujica - Lessons from the flowerbed (90’)
  Documentary; D: Heidi Specogna; P: Ma.Ja.De Filmproduktion
- 2014 Above and Below (120’)
  Documentary; D: Nicolas Steiner; P: Maximage & Flying Moon
- 2015 Wonderland (90’)
  Fiction; D: several; P: Contrast Film
- 2016 Cahier Africain (117)
  Documentary; R: Heidi Specogna; P: Filmquadrat & PS Film

Swiss Film Award 2016:
Best Film Editing for “Above and Below”
A film by Heidi Specogna

Director of photography Johann Feindt, bvk

Editor: Kaya Inan
Music by Peter Scherer
Additional Music: Christian Halten
Narrated by Salena Godden, German Version by Eva Mattes
Producers: Peter Spoerri, Stefan Tolz
Lineproducer: Katharina Jakobs
Script consultants: Raimund Barthelmes, Bernd Lange
Commissioning editor: Katya Mader - 3sat

Location sound: Karsten Höfer, Thomas Lüdemann, Bernd von Bassewitz, Jule Cramer, Florian Hoffmann, Andreas Turnwald

Additional Camera: Thomas Keller
Re-recording mixer: Matthias Lempert
Sound designer: Kai Tebbel
Colourist: Patrick Lindenmaier - Andromeda

Technical Details:
Germany/Switzerland 2016
Length: 119 minutes
Format: 1:1,78, 25fps
Sound: 5.1

Produced by PS Film GmbH and Filmpunkt GmbH
In co-production with ZDF / 3sat

supported by:

BAK Bundesamt für Kultur Schweiz
Zürcher Filmstiftung
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suisseimage
SRG SSR
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Migros Kulturprozent
Amnesty International
george foundation
UBS Kulturstiftung
Filme für eine Welt
FFA Filmförderungsanstalt

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