

THE SUBSTANCE

Albert Hofmann's LSD



Un film de
Martin Witz

Durée: 89 min.

Sortie: le 25 avril 2012

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SYNOPSIS

“ Three drops of this colorless, odorless, tasteless liquid would put you out of your mind for hours! – If you haven't heard of LSD, you will! “

En 1943, le chimiste Albert Hofmann fait dans son laboratoire bâlois la découverte d'une substance jusqu'alors inconnue. La testant sur lui-même, il prend conscience de l'extrême puissance de ce principe actif permettant de modifier radicalement la perception humaine. Il ignore encore que son LSD va changer le monde.

Dans les années 1950, les psychiatres recourent au LSD comme médicament et celui-ci devient un outil d'exploration de la psyché humaine. Le phénomène prend toute son ampleur lorsque cette « bombe atomique de l'esprit » se propage hors de l'hôpital au début des années 1960 : le LSD semble fait pour les gens en marge de la société d'abondance.

Au début des années 1970, cette substance à l'effet traître est mise sur liste noire. À l'heure où certaines drogues psychédéliques pourraient être utilisées dans un cadre légal, s'apprête-t-on à reconsidérer aujourd'hui le LSD comme un médicament, à l'instar d'Albert Hofmann ?

THE SUBSTANCE raconte l'histoire de notre relation trouble avec le LSD, depuis ses origines jusqu'à aujourd'hui.



FILM CREDITS

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Written & directed by | Martin Witz |
| Camera | Pio Corradi |
| Editing | Stefan Kälin |
| Sound USA | Russ Jaquith |
| Sound CH | Balthasar Jucker |
| Picture Design | Patrick Lindenmaier |
| Music composed by | Marcel Vaid |
| Sound Design | Roland Widmer |
| | Stefan Willenegger |
| Sound Mixing | Guido Keller |
| Titles | Paul Avondet |
| Commissioning Editors | Silvana Bezzola Rigolini |
| | Luisella Realini |
| Coproducers | Carl-Ludwig Rettinger |
| | Peter Luisi |
| Producers | Elda Guidinetti |
| | Andres Pfaeffli |
| Production | Ventura Film |
| In coproduction with | RSI – Radiotelevisione svizzera |
| | Teleclub |
| | Lichtblick Filmproduktion |
| | Spotlight Media Productions |
| With the support of | Bundesamt für Kultur (EDI) |
| | Zürcher Filmstiftung |
| | Fachausschuss Audivision & Multimedia |
| | Basel-Stadt und Basel-Landschaft |
| | Kulturfonds Suissimage |
| | FilmPlus della Svizzera italiana |
| | Succès cinéma |
| | Succès passage antenne |
| and | George Foundation |
| with | Stanislav Grof |
| | Martin A. Lee |
| | James S. Ketchum |
| | Franz X. Vollenweider |
| | Carolyn Garcia |
| | Ralph Metzner |
| | Nick Sand |
| | Roland Griffiths |
| | Clark Martin |

FILM INFO

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Country of production | Switzerland |
| Year of production | 2011 |
| Running time | 89 minutes |
| Sound | Dolby SR-D |
| Original language | German, English |
| Format | 35mm |

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Né en 1956, Martin Witz signe au début de sa carrière plusieurs scénarios de fiction dont WENDEL (1987), DREISSIG JAHRE (1989) - présenté au Festival de Locarno - et AM ENDE DER NACHT (1992) - sélectionné au Festival de Cannes - trois films de Christoph Schaub, ainsi que les scénarios de FILOU (1988) de Samir et LUDWIG 1881 des frères Fosco et Donatello Dubini (1993), les deux présentés à Locarno en compétition.

Plus tard, Martin Witz se tourne vers le documentaire en signant les scénarios de NOEL FIELD (1997) et VON WERRA (2000), deux films de Werner Schweizer.

Egalement monteur et preneur de son (entre autres: WAR PHOTOGRAPHER de Christian Frei, ANGRY MONK de Luc Schaedler et DAVID WANTS TO FLY de David Sieveking), il débute dans la réalisation en tournant deux documentaires pour Arte: MALARIA (2002) et INDISCHE REGEN-ERNT (2005), avant de diriger en 2007 son premier film destiné au grand écran, DUTTI DER RIESE, présenté en première mondiale au 60^{ème} Festival du Film Locarno.

FILMOGRAPHY MARTIN WITZ

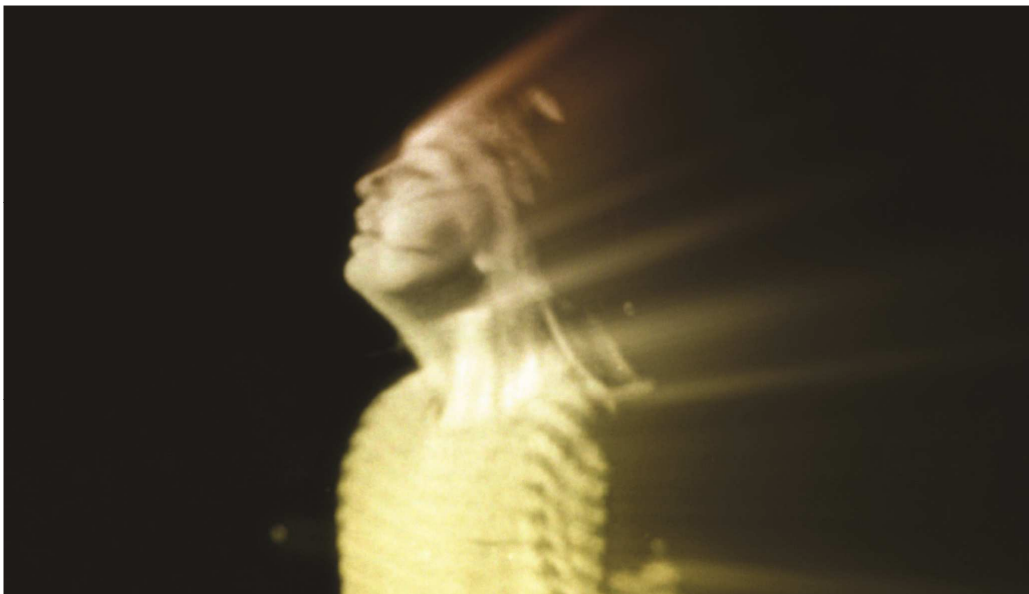
DIRECTOR

- 2011** **THE SUBSTANCE–Albert Hofmanns LSD** – director & screenplay
Documentary (90 min.)
Première Festival del Film Locarno 2011
- 2007** **DUTTI DER RIESE** - director & screenplay
Documentary (93 min.)
Première Festival del Film Locarno 2007 - Zürcher Filmpreis 2007
- 2005** **INDISCHE REGEN-ERNT** – director (with Adrian Zschokke) & editing
Documentary (45 min.)
- 2002** **MALARIA** - director (with Adrian Zschokke) & Editing
Documentary (45 min.)

SELECTION AS SCRIPTWRITER, EDITOR

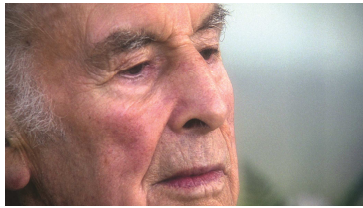
- 2010** **HUGO KOBLET - PEDALEUR DE CHARME** - Screenplay
DocuFiction (90 min.) by Daniel von Aarburg
Première Festival del Film Locarno 2010
- 2009** **DAVID WANTS TO FLY** – text narration
Documentary (85 min.) by David Sieveking
Première at the Berlinale 2010 (Panorama)
- 2008** **LETTER TO ANNA** – text narration
Documentary (85 min.) by Eric Bergkraut
Vaclav Havel Preis - première 'Cinema for Peace' Berlin 2008, nomination Grimme Preis 2009

- 2006** **ANGRY MONK** – editing, text narration
 Documentary (92 min.) by Luc Schaedler
Sundance Film Festival (World Cinema Competition)
- ELISABETH KÜBLER-ROSS** – text narration
 Documentary (100 min.) by Stefan Haupt
Nomination Schweizer Filmpreis (best documentary)
- 2000** **DER WEISSE WAL** – text narration
 Documentary (72 min.) by Stephan Koester
première Film Festival Locarno (Semaine de la Critique)
- 1997** **MARTHAS GARTEN** – screenplay (with Peter Liechti)
 Feature film (100 min.) by Peter Liechti
première Film Festival Locarno (Competition)
- NOEL FIELD** – Der erfundene Spion – text narration
 Documentary (100 min.) by Swiss Schweizer
Egon Erwin Kisch-Preis, 3-sat Dokfilmpreis (u.a.)
- 1993** **LUDWIG 1881** – screenplay (with Fosco & Donatello Dubini)
 Feature film (90 min.) by F. & D. Dubini
première Film Festival Locarno (competition)
- 1992** **AM ENDE DER NACHT** – screenplay (with Christoph Schaub)
 Feature film (90 min.) by Christoph Schaub
Cannes Film Festival (Quinzaine de réalisateurs)
- 1989** **DREISSIG JAHRE** – screenplay (with Christoph Schaub)
 Feature film (90 min.) by Christoph Schaub
première Film Festival Locarno (competition), Filmfestival Berlin



THE PROTAGONISTS (SELECTION)

ALBERT HOFMANN (1906-2008)



The father of LSD, a last extended interview with the 100-year-old man. Looking back on his life the Swiss chemist comments on the crazy story about his „problem child“. A life as a researcher which has changed him personally: from a scientist into a natural philosopher.

“It was indeed a miracle drug during the first ten years. It was such an important support for patients in psychiatry! And I was always convinced: LSD would still come, its proper application. It cannot fail, this would be impossible.”

“The science shows what it is about, objectively and effectively for everyone. But, one has to see it and one has to think about it, about the secrets and the objective secrets. And I think that a chemist who is not a mystic is not a real chemist. He hasn’t got it yet.”

STANISLAV GROF



Among the first ones worldwide, Stan Grof began with the clinical LSD studies in the Prague psychiatry of the fifties. In 1968 he emigrated to the U.S. and has been exploring altered states of consciousness ever since. Grof is a pionier in this field and his books have given rise to contradictory debates.

“My first LSD experience was extremely powerful. It completely changed my life professionally and also personally. And I said this is by far the most interesting thing you can do when you are a psychiatrist, to study this nonordinary states of consciousness.”

NICK SAND



When Nick Sand is being asked about his job he then says that he is an alchemist. According to his account he has fabricated altogether over a quarter of a billion trips of the brand Orange Sunshine in his various underground laboratories and he doesn’t regret a single one of them! For almost 20 years the FBI was after Nick and they finally did catch him. He is now free again, his first extended interview.

“I was doing this from my heart, out of faith that this was the right thing to do! And everywhere I went I gave it away and I saw what it did to people and I said: This is good!”

“You know, five thousand doses of the Orange Sunshine was a little teeny bag like that. That’s a whole division of soldiers! We sent hundreds of thousands of tablets to Vietnam for free. We were supporting all the war protestors ... so why not support our brothers, same age, who have been drafted and dragged to be killed in Vietnam ...! Why not give them the same medicine that was causing the movement back home!”

JAMES S. KETCHUM



In his function as Colonel James S. Ketchum in the U.S. Army Medical Corps in the sixties he was the physician in charge for the planning and implementation of the military LSD tests with the soldiers. Ketchum makes a point that all military regulations have been observed at any times and that he has worked exclusively with voluntary test persons.

“The idea of being able to subdue the enemy without harming him or killing him was very appealing. LSD was of interest because it was the most powerful drug available at that time – the psychedelic effects and so on! ... or to alter peoples behavior, which the CIA was interested in doing. And we weren’t interested in either of those things. We were interested in finding something that would impair performance in the battlefield!”

FRANZ X. VOLLENWEIDER



At the Zurich psychiatric university hospital Prof. Franz X. Vollenweider heads a research team which explore the human brain function ‚life’ with the latest image-guided method. Which brain area happens to change under the influence of hallucinogenic substances and how? Today, thanks to his work, Vollenweider is at the front line worldwide.

“We can find out where such substances take effect within the brain. We are able to locate the psychological changes, we are able to observe which networks are active.”

“LSD or Psilocybin are structurally and chemically related to the neurotransmitter within the brain. They take effect in one part of the brain while the other part of the brain supervises. And thus LSD can be very effective also with the smallest dosage.”

CLARK MARTIN



The hallucinogenic substance as a relief within the psychotherapy field meant for cancer patients. Clark Martin was a voluntary participant in the latest research project of the John Hopkins University in Baltimore.

“The beginning of the effects started in about ten minutes. And it’s like your brain is going offline, you know one part at the time ... If you’re out in the open ocean and you were to fall off your boat, you turn around and the boat is gone and then pretty soon the water is gone ...and then you’re gone!”

CAROLYN GARCIA



As a member of the legendary group The Merry Pranksters and as the spouse of Jerry Garcia (The Grateful Dead) Carolyn Garcia was part of the psychedelic Californian 'counter-culture' from the very beginning on, a sort of Mother Courage of Haight Ashbury. For Carolyn the hippie project has remained a piece of home until today.

“We had some LSD, that was in a package. And we had to create doses out of it, and that was very difficult to do. We wanted to make small doses, not so big. That was really hard to do. So in trying to create a way to distribute this to other people, we sort of got very deep into it ourselves. You know, sort of magic carpet rides inside of our own minds. And couldn't help to talk about these things and so the minute you start to talk about this, everybody wants some.”



PRODUCTION COMPANY

Ventura Film produit, essentiellement en collaboration avec des partenaires européens, films de fiction et documentaires. Depuis ses débuts, en 1991, le but principal a été de se concentrer sur des productions qui, aussi bien dans la forme que dans le contenu, explorent et franchissent des nouvelles frontières.

SELECT FILMOGRAPHY

- 2011 THE SUBSTANCE - Albert Hofmann's LSD** by Martin Witz, 35mm, 89'
Co-produced with RSI, Teleclub, Lichtblick Film, Spotlight Media Productions
Official Selection Locarno Film Festival 2011, Filmmakers of the Present Competition
- GLAUSER** by Christoph Kühn, HD, 72'
Co-produced by SRF-Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen, SRG SSR
Official Selection Locarno Film Festival 2011, Out of Competition
- 2010 LE QUATTRO VOLTE** by Michelangelo Frammartino, 35mm, 88'
Co-produced with Vivo Film, Invisibile Film, Essential Filmproduktion, RSI, Eurimages
Official Selection Cannes Film Festival 2010 - Directors Fortnight
Awards: Cannes Film Festival 2010 - Quinzaine des Réalisateurs, Europa Cinemas Label: Best European movie; Palm Dog: Special Jury Prize - Nastro d'Argento 2010: Special Silver Ribbon - FilmFest München: Cinevision Award - Bobbio Film Festival: Gobbo d'Oro - Era New Horizons FF: Audience Award - Motovun FF: FIPRESCI Award - Reykjavik IFF: Golden Puffin, FIPRESCI Award - Festival du Cinema italien d'Annecy: Special Jury Prize, CICA Award - Festival du Nouveau Cinéma Montréal: Prix de l'Innovation - IIFF 2Morrow: Grand Prix - Bergen IFF: Best Picture Award - IFF Bratislava: Grand Prix - CPH:DOX Copenhagen: DOX:Award - Festival del Cinema Indipendente Foggia: Critics Award - Sulmona Cinema Film Festival: Ovidio d'Argento Best Film - Istanbul AFM Int.Independent Films Festival: Best director & Turkish Critics Association Special Prize - Montevideo IFF: Best Film & FIPRESCI Mention - Nominations David di Donatello 2011: Best Director, Best Producers, Best Sound
Festival selections: Karlovy Vary - Sarajevo - Toronto - San Sebastian - New York - Pusan - Flanders Ghent - London - Philadelphia - Viennale - Sao Paulo - Tokyo - Journées Cinémat. de Carthage - Los Angeles - Nordelijnk - Torino - Thessaloniki - Cinéma Européen de Les Arcs - Festival du Film de Vendôme - Tallin Black Nights - Filmmaker Doc - Starz Denver - Festival du Cinéma Européen en Essonne - Haifa - Santa Fe - Palm Spring - Tromsø - Berlin - Sofia - Hong Kong - San Francisco, Sidney...
- MY REINCARNATION** by Jennifer Fox, Digital Betacam, 100'
Co-produced with Zohe Film Productions, Lichtblick Film, Vivo film, Buddhist Broadcasting Foundation, RSI-Radiotelevisione svizzera, ZDF/ARTE
Awards: CINE Golden Eagle Award 2011 - IDFA Top 20 Audience Award
Festival selections: *Dok Leipzig 2010* - Festival dei Popoli Florence - IDFA Amsterdam - Solothurn - ZagrebDox - One World Int. Doc. FF Prague - Hot Docs Toronto - Munich DOK.fest - Asian Buddhist Film Festival Singapore - Krakow - Sidney Film Festival - New Zealand Int. FF
- 2009 MIRNA** by Corso Salani, Digital Betacam, 75'
Co-produced with Vivo Film, Corso Salani, RSI-Radiotelevisione svizzera
Locarno International Film Festival 2009, Filmmakers of the Present Competition
Festival selections: Annecy Cinema Italien - Incontri Cinematografici di Stresa - Der Neue Heimatfilm Filmfestival Linz - Premio Libero Bizzarri Doc Film Festival - Festival dei Popoli 2010
- CUSTODI DI GUERRA (Gatekeepers of war)** by Zijad Ibrahimovic, Digital Beta, 52'
Co-produced with RSI-Radiotelevisione svizzera
Official Selection Locarno Film Festival 2009, Ici & Ailleurs
Awards: Silver Eye Award 2009 Nomination
Festival selections: Jihlava International Documentary FF - IDFA, Docs for sale - FIPATEL Biarritz - Solothurn - Cinéma du reel Paris, First Film Competition

- THE SOUND AFTER THE STORM** by P. Soergel & R. Fenson-Hood, HD, 52' + 82'
 Co-produced with RSI-Radiotelevisione svizzera, Hill Film, Dirk Manthey Film
Official Selection Zurich Film Festival 2009, Documentary Competition
Awards: Zurich Film Festival, Best Documentary
Festival selections: IDFA, Docs for sale - Planet Doc Review Warsaw - Aster Film Festival Macedonia - Nordic Film Days Lübeck - Augenweide Film Festival Kiel - Message to Man, Russia - Festival des Libertés Brussels - IASI Int. Film Festival, Romania
- 2008** **SEGRETI E SORELLE (Secrets and sisters)** by Francesco Jost, HD, 85'
 Co-produced with RSI-Radiotelevisione svizzera
Festival selections: Solothurn Film Festival - Bergamo Film Meeting, competition - FIPATEL Biarritz 2010
- 2007** **FUORI DALLE CORDE (Out of bounds)** by Fulvio Bernasconi, 35mm, 86'
 Co-produced with itc movie, bianca film, Rai Cinema, RTSI. Dev. with EKTRAN.
Official Selection Locarno Film Festival 2007, Competition
Awards: Locarno: Silver Leopard for Best actor to Michele Venitucci - Brooklyn IFF: Best Cinematography - Santa Marinella FF: Best Film - Festival International du 1er Film d'Annonay : Best Music - Nomination: Swiss Film Prize for Best feature film
Festival selections: Trieste - Festival del Cinema Europeo di Lecce - Festroia (competition) - Shanghai - Moscow - MedFilm Festival Rome - Osaka European Film Festival - Tallin Black Nights - Arras - Tofifest (Torun)
- VOGLIAMO ANCHE LE ROSE** by Alina Marazzi, 35mm, 81'
 Co-produced with Mir Cinematografica, Rai Cinema, RTSI
Official Selection Locarno Film Festival 2007, Piazza Grande
Awards: Nomination David di Donatello: Best Documentary
Festival selections: London - IDFA Amsterdam - Torino - Filmmaker Doc Milan - Seattle - Feminale Women's Film Festival - Festival dei Popoli Florence - Bergamo Film Meeting - DokFest Munich - Annecy Cinema Italien - Rome Int. Film Festival - Festival du Film Italien de Villerupt - New York Documentary Film Festival - Genova
- DUTTI DER RIESE** by Martin Witz, 35mm, 94'
 Co-produced with RTSI, Teleclub
Official Selection Locarno Film Festival 2007, Ici & Ailleurs
Awards: Filmprize City of Zurich - Nomination Prix Walo **Festival selections:** Deutsches Historisches Museum, Kinematographie heute: Schweiz
- SALATA BALADI** by Nadia Kamel, Digital Betacam, 104'
 Co-produced with Snooze Productions, Les Films d'Ici, Citizen Production, RTSI
Official Selection Locarno Film Festival 2007, Ici & Ailleurs
Awards: San Francisco Arab Film Festival: Best Documentary - Mumbai International Film Festival: Best Long Documentary & FIPRESCI Award - National Film Festival, Egypt: Certificate of Merit
Festival selections: Locarno - Middle East IFF Abu Dhabi - Paris Grand Ecran - Cinema East Film Fest, New York - IDFA Amsterdam - Solothurn - Women FF Alexandria - Ljubljana Documentary FF - Festival Docatunis, Tunisia - Internationales Dokumentarfilm Festival München - Beirut Docudays - DocLisboa - Les Etats généraux du Documentaire de Lussas - London Int. Documentary Film Festival
- 2006** **JUVENTUDE EM MARCHA (Colossal Youth)** by Pedro Costa, 35mm, 155'
 Co-produced with Contracosta, Unlimited, ARTE, RTP, RTSI
Official Selection Cannes Film Festival 2006, in competition
Awards: Los Angeles Film Critics Association Award: Independent/Experimental Film&Video Award
Festival selections: Torino - Toronto - Belgrade - San Francisco - Rotterdam - New York - Adelaide - Ljubljana Documentary FF - London - Melbourne - Sao Paulo
- VOLEVO SOLO VIVERE** by Mimmo Calopresti, 35mm, 75'
 Co-produced with Shoah Foundation, Rai Cinema, Gagè, Wildside media, RTSI
Official selection Cannes Film Festival 2006, Out of Competition
Awards: Capri Hollywood Festival: Peace Award - Agave di cristallo, Lerici: "La memoria come presente" Award - Nomination David di Donatello for Best Documentary - Nomination Nastri d'Argento for Best Documentary
Festival selections: Bellaria - Jerusalem - Festival des Films du Monde de Montreal - Annecy Cinema Italien - Palm Springs - Göteborg - Wisconsin Film Festival - Solothurn - Festival de Cine Italiano de Madrid

- 2005** **DIE GROSSE STILLE (Into great silence)** by Philip Groening, 35mm, 164'
 Co-produced with Philip Gröning Filmproduktion, BR, ARTE/ZDF, SSR/RTSI
Official selection Mostra Internazionale del Cinema di Venezia 2005, Orizzonti
Awards: Sundance: Special Jury Prize - Bayerischer Filmpreis 2005: Best Documentary film - German Critics Award - Deutscher Filmpreis Nomination - Prix Arte Best European documentary 2006 - Deutscher Kamerapreis - Premio Ennio Flaiano: Best Camera & Best Film - German Films: Film of the year - Sao Paulo Int.Film Festival: Jury Prize - Preis der deutschen Filmkritik Berlin: Best Documentary
Festival selections: Toronto - Leipzig Documentary Film Festival - Hong Kong - New directors/New Films, New York - San Francisco - Rotterdam - Infinity Film Festival
- 2004** **LOS MUERTOS** by Lisandro Alonso, 35mm, 78'
 Co-produced with 4L, Fortuna Films, Slot Machine / ARTE, RTSI
Official Selection Cannes Film Festival 2004, Quinzaine des Réalisateurs
Awards: Torino Film Festival, Best Film - Cinédécouvertes (Bruxelles): Golden Age Award - Viennale 2004: Standard Reader's Prize & FIPRESCI Prize - Karlovy Vary International Film Festival: Czech Television Award for the Forum of Independents' Best Film - International Yerevan Film Festival: Special Jury Prize - International Film Festival Santiago de Chile: Best Film - Festival Paysages de Cinéastes de Chatenay Malabry: Special Jury Prize & Best Photography - Lima Latin American Film Festival: Critics Award
Festival selections: Buenos Aires Int. Fest. of Independent Cinema - La Rochelle - Edinburgh - Sarajevo - Toronto - Vancouver - Pusan - Sao Paulo - Rotterdam - Miami - Guadalajara - San Francisco - Hong Kong - Jerusalem - Melbourne - Biarritz La Cita - Flanders - Bergen- Indie Lisboa - Tromsø - Solothurn - ERA New Horizons
- 2002** **ANGEL ON THE RIGHT** by Djamshed Usmonov, 35mm, 89'
 Co-produced with Fabrica Cinema, ArtCam, Asht Village, RTSI, Rai Cinema
Official Selection Cannes Film Festival 2002, Un certain regard
Awards: London Film Festival: FIPRESCI Prize - Tokyo Film Festival: Jury Prize - Angers Film Festival: Jury Prize - Singapore Film Festival: Best Director - Bratislava Film Festival: Best Film, Best Actor & Ecumenical Prize - Tromsø Film Festival: Aurora Award and Don Quixote Award - Nika Award 2004 - Wiesbaden Go East: Special Mention - Best CIS and Baltic Film 2002
Festival selections: Vancouver - Rotterdam - New Directors/New Films - Hong Kong - Mar Del Plata - Melbourne - Istanbul - Durban - Sydney - Warsaw - Sao Paulo - Cottbus - Brugge Cinema Novo - Ljubljana - Haifa - Thessaloniki - Budapest Titanic IFF - Göteborg - Copenhagen - Cinemania - Fajr - Wisconsin FF - Febio - Buenos Aires
- 2000** **NO QUARTO DA VANDA** by Pedro Costa, 35mm, 169'
 Co-produced with Contracosta, Pandora, RTP, ZDF, RTSI
Awards: Cannes Film Festival 2002: France Culture Award, Foreign Cineaste of the Year -Locarno International Film Festival 2000: Prix du jury des jeunes, Special Mention Official Jury, Mention Jury of Cinéclubs - Cinéma du Réel Paris: Prix de la Bibliothèque - Yamagata Int. Documentary Festival: FIPRESCI Prize - Valencia Film Festival: Best Cinematography
Festival selections: Torino - Buenos Aires Festival of Independent Cinema - Copenhagen Int. Documentary FF - Rotterdam - Festival dei Popoli Florence - Lussas - Viennale – Helsinki

