



Festival del film Locarno
Concorso internazionale



La Suisse n'existe plus.

HEIMATLAND

A film by

MICHAEL KRUMMENACHER JAN GASSMANN LISA BLATTER GREGOR FREI BENNY JABERG

CARMEN JAQUIER JONAS MEIER TOBIAS NÖLLE LIONEL RUPP MIKE SCHEIWILLER

Artistic Direction MICHAEL KRUMMENACHER & JAN GASSMANN

Overall Dramaturgy MICHAEL KRUMMENACHER

A person wearing a dark hoodie and a balaclava is shown in a dark, industrial setting. They are holding a lit flare in their right hand, which is illuminated by a bright light source from the left. The background is dark and blurry, suggesting an indoor environment with some structural elements.

LOGLINE

A hurricane of catastrophic proportions is brewing over Switzerland. The country is in a state of emergency. Ten directors from a new generation of filmmakers imagine how the Swiss would deal with the worst possible disaster: the downfall of their country.



SYNOPSIS

It is autumn and getting colder in Switzerland. Suddenly an inexplicable and frightening cloud is over the country. Its origin is a mystery to the experts, who merely state that it is growing continuously, and its unloading is only a matter of time. It is still calm outside, but the cloud hangs over the country like the sword of Damocles.

HEIMATLAND uses this state of widespread uncertainty for a current snapshot of Switzerland: ten young film auteurs from the French and German-speaking parts shine a light on people, mentalities, and social environments in one of the world's wealthiest countries and weave these personal episodes into one large, joint story.

The people react very differently to the impending storm: some ignore it, others barricade themselves, and yet others again celebrate the end of the world. But the storm is also a uniting force: it exposes authentic needs, fears and hopes, and step by step reveals the consequences of political and societal isolation of the country.

HEIMATLAND is neither neutral nor democratic or representative – it is a subjective, self-critical snapshot from the point of view of a new generation of Swiss filmmakers.

Switzerland/Germany 2015 • 99 mins • drama • Arri Amira • 16:9 • Dolby Digital
Languages: OV GERMAN+FRENCH/english

A NOTE BY THE PROJECT INITIATORS

In recent years much has changed in cosy and well-protected Switzerland: the fortress of bank secrecy has fallen, and the so-called magic formula in politics has been cracked. And when Sunday voting is over, there follows a rude awakening: absurd referendums get accepted, while human rights and humanitarian values are dropped – in favour of an immense cheese dome increasingly threatening us with slow death by suffocation.

In the midst of these social upheavals and changes, we attempt to take a clear and personal look at our country. A look which does not represent an analysis of the current political landscape, but which seeks to go behind the cleansed and always freshly renovated facade of Swiss “ideologies”. Our interest lies in the people that give this country a face and make it what it is. Switzerland is not known for its self-reflection, but despite this or maybe for this very reason we wanted to attempt the venture.

However big our ideas and plans were, one of the two of us always cursed: “Heimatland!”. It’s not easy. As soon as you deal with a complex construct such as a state, the personal mixes with the political. Everyone associates something else with his or her home, this country, our state, which some of us – without at all cursing – call homeland. That’s how the idea came about to have not one filmmaker, but a group of filmmakers, who all more or less are at a similar stage in their development, to make a joint film. The most diverse faces of our country were to be presented side by side in order to produce a complexity which gives us an idea of what connects us all.

Out of this a frame narrative emerged which on the level of content was to hold together the individual films: the brewing hurricane, the threatening breakdown of Switzerland, and the fear of it. We started phoning around in the young Swiss film scene and told people about our idea. What we had feared to be an arduous approach turned out as a fruitful getting to know each other. Very quickly intensive and engaging talks developed which made us realise that this project met with great interest among our colleagues. Everyone saw the necessity of making this film. Within the following months we received twenty-three outlines. We were enthusiastic.

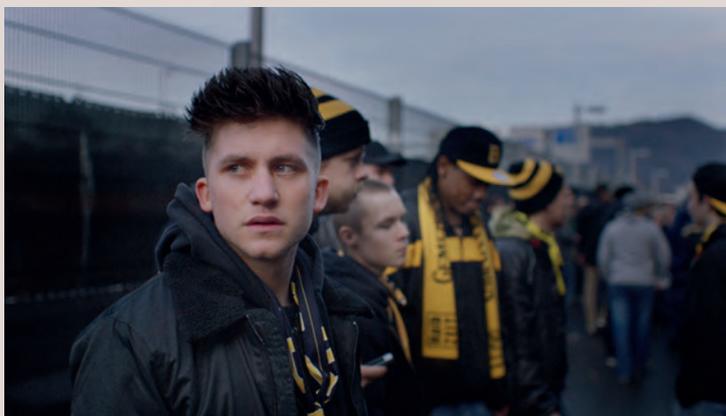
Upon first meeting in the new constellation in an alpine chalet, far from civilisation, we were surprised by our own courage. But this was only the beginning of the work ahead. In strenuous, democratic discussions that were continuously interrupted by short-lived dictatorial coup attempts, the basic pillars of the film and the ultimately nine stories were jointly worked out. Always with the goal of trying to avoid one of these notorious “Swiss” compromises, but to risk something. An enterprise which, with ten directors from two different language regions, can only be regarded as trying to square the circle.

Now the circle is a square and the result has been achieved. To us HEIMATLAND is a political film. Because politics nowadays no longer takes place at sit-down strikes with colourful banners. We are not part of a movement, let alone a political party. In an age in which revolutions are no more than historical references, politics to us consists in taking a close look, in critically questioning our own actions and in challenging society.

MICHAEL KRUMMENACHER & JAN GASSMANN

Project initiators and directors





AN INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKERS

WHY DO WE NEED THIS FILM HEIMATLAND?

TOBIAS NÖLLE

So that we see what happens when the storm comes. And the storm will come: oh Switzerland, you whore of Babylon.

LISA BLATTER

In Swiss filmmaking something has to change. We need more films taking a stance. HEIMATLAND is one of them.

GREGOR FREI

Yes, we need more films which tackle difficult issues bluntly and devoid of complacency. That show ambivalent characters without forcing them into a corner. Films which seek out threats that are within and one's own, not outside and in what is foreign.

MICHAEL KRUMMENACHER

HEIMATLAND, however, is not a moralistic directive towards a better Switzerland, but a film which encourages viewers to reflect – about our country and about their own attitudes.

CARMEN JAQUIER

It is very enriching to work together, between French-speaking and German-speaking Swiss. We need to be able to dream together collectively, with projects of multiple visions, because we need films that are a little bit crazy in order not to be put to sleep by a system of production and directing which promotes conformity.

LIONEL RUPP

In Switzerland it is not the freedom of the press that is lacking. The problem lies much deeper. There is a general propensity to censor oneself. We had to make great efforts to leave behind this pattern of self-complacency. Which is really difficult in a country that views itself as a model nation. That's why this film is very important, because it shows a generation of directors capable of presenting their country as it is or as it could be in their imagination.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN THEMES OF HEIMATLAND?

JAN GASSMANN

The key word is isolation: we are forced to become Swiss more and more, and by that I don't only mean the permanent flags that appear all over. No, we are also losing touch with Europe, even though we live in its midst and connect three different language regions. We are distancing ourselves from the outer world, which we subsist on, however, and through which we have obtained our wealth.

BENNY JABERG

Apart from Switzerland's isolation from other countries I also consider the isolation from our fellow human beings as one of the film's themes: the threat of alienation in an oversaturated, frequently all too comfortable country. The often absurd, in part grotesque triumph of supposed individualism – which is enhanced by the social media – forges ahead in lonely self-centredness. Ubiquitous egocentrism allows for solidarity or empathy solely when one happens to have time. If at all. Add to this the creeping and lately increasingly obvious hatemongering of the political right, which appears as more and more trenchant and dangerous. Under the cover of an alleged patriotism, and fuelled by huge amounts of money and hence partially purchased power, it threatens the stoically grown democracy and life together in Switzerland.

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN MAKING THIS FILM?

GREGOR FREI

To do justice to the demands of the overall film without neglecting one's individual artistic signature. It quickly became clear that we didn't want to merely string together a series of short films. At the same time, I wanted to create something personal, with true colours and distinct focus. The balancing of personal ideas and consideration for the overall film made working on the script more difficult. I felt like a football player who is prompted to dribble fast forward on his own while constantly being asked by his teammates to pass the ball.

IVAN MADEO

It was the squaring of the circle: making a collective film without compromises. Basically impossible. Which is why our film hasn't become not round, but has a real edge.

TOBIAS NÖLLE

Compromises are the biggest enemy of an individual voice and signature. To remain true to your vision within this framework was as difficult as building an igloo in a desert. Fortunately from time to time we also drank some brandy and sang songs in Mr. Gassmann's kitchen.

CARMEN JAQUIER

There is real difference in the way of thinking and doing between the French-speaking and the German-speaking directors. At first that surprised and almost disappointed me, but I said to myself our generational common ground should be able to reunite us. And ultimately, that's what made for the complexity and richness of this project. It is that which forced me to reconsider and question what makes me Swiss. This issue of identity was exciting to explore.

HOW DIFFICULT WAS IT TO NEGOTIATE WORK IN THE TENSION BETWEEN COLLECTIVE ENTERPRISE AND INDIVIDUAL VISION?

JAN GASSMANN

In my view this collective film posed a great challenge to us as people. Both concerning communication, but also in our culture of debate. It was not our aim to always find a compromise, but a powerful solution instead. That was often very strenuous and a lesson in democracy for all of us. You keep the whole in mind, that was our overarching goal, but you still want to do justice to your characters and the world you have created in the screenplay.

LISA BLATTER

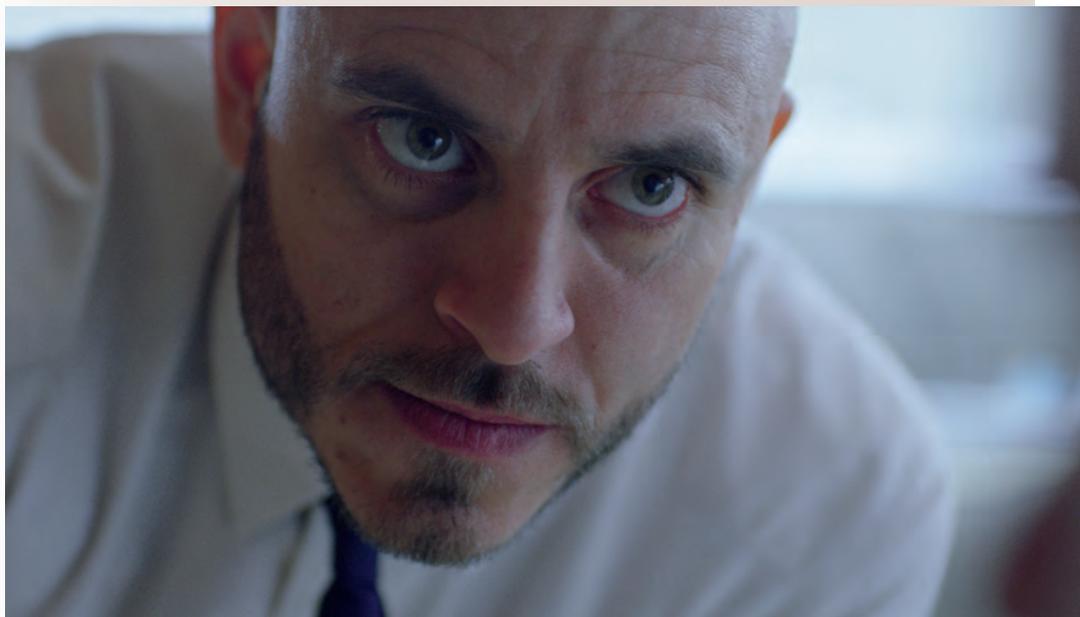
To me the most difficult aspect of collaborating was not the different visions, but the varying willingness of participants to engage with the overall film.

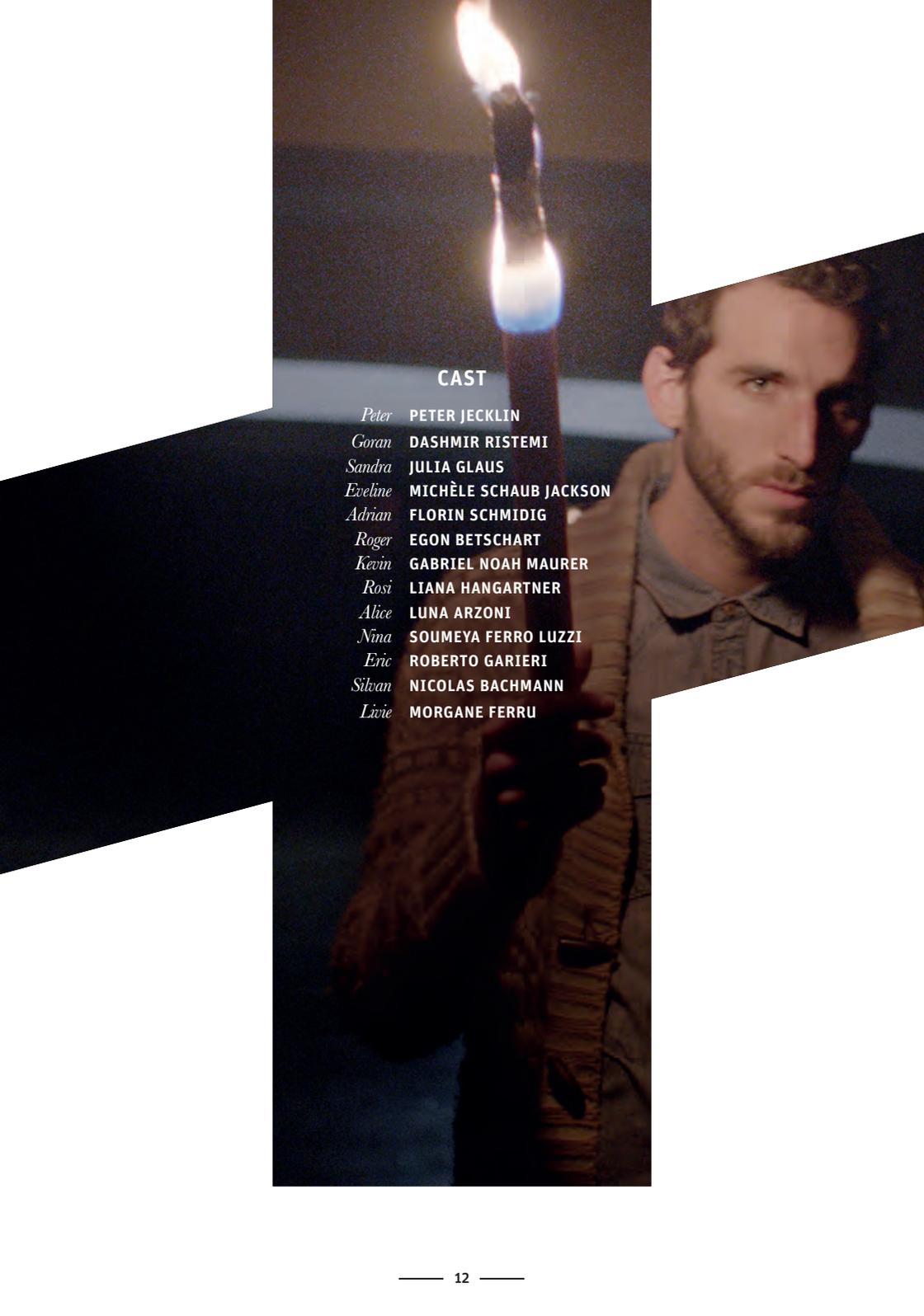
LIONEL RUPP

For me, HEIMATLAND was more a kind of political arena. If during our meetings the roles of Michael and Jan mainly concerned order and mediation, the role of the directors was to generate powerful ideas without making concessions. In this sense, this film was a kind of federal parliament building. It's also part of a contemporary movement which one can also see elsewhere: a renewed interest in the politicisation of art, and in this sense HEIMATLAND is very timely.

STEFAN EICHENBERGER

As it was impossible to include all the directors' individual wishes, there were frequently tears, reproaches, and tantrums. That of course didn't leave us unaffected. But since we were not afraid of maybe failing resoundingly with this project, we somehow managed to overcome all the difficulties.



A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a dark jacket, is holding a lit torch. The torch has two distinct flames, one larger and brighter than the other. The background is dark and indistinct. The man's face is partially visible on the right side of the frame, looking towards the camera.

CAST

<i>Peter</i>	PETER JECKLIN
<i>Goran</i>	DASHMIR RISTEMI
<i>Sandra</i>	JULIA GLAUS
<i>Eveline</i>	MICHÈLE SCHAUB JACKSON
<i>Adrian</i>	FLORIN SCHMIDIG
<i>Roger</i>	EGON BETSCHART
<i>Kevin</i>	GABRIEL NOAH MAURER
<i>Rosi</i>	LIANA HANGARTNER
<i>Alice</i>	LUNA ARZONI
<i>Nina</i>	SOUMEYA FERRO LUZZI
<i>Eric</i>	ROBERTO GARIERI
<i>Silvan</i>	NICOLAS BACHMANN
<i>Livie</i>	MORGANE FERRU

CREW

LISA BLATTER *Direction & Screenplay*
GREGOR FREI
JAN GASSMANN
BENNY JABERG
CARMEN JAQUIER
MICHAEL KRUMMENACHER
JONAS MEIER
TOBIAS NÖLLE
LIONEL RUPP
MIKE SCHEIWILLER

JAN GASSMANN & MICHAEL KRUMMENACHER *Artistic direction*

MICHAEL KRUMMENACHER *Overall dramaturgy*

SIMON GUY FÄSSLER *Cinematography*
DENIS D. LÜTHI
GAËTAN VARONE

KARIN GIEZENDANNER *Art direction*
SILVAN KUHL
ANNE WEICK

MARINA AEBI *Make-up*

BERNHARD ZITZ *Sound recording*

PETER DEMMER *Gaffer*

DOMINIK BLUMER *Music*

KAYA INAN *Editing*

MAURIZIUS STAERKLE DRUX *Sound design*

GIORDANO CANOVA *VFX*
ADRIAN SUTER

STEFAN EICHENBERGER *Producer*

IVAN MADEO *Executive producers*
JULIA TAL

CONTRAST FILM BERN GMBH (CH) *Production company*

2:1 FILM GMBH (CH) *In collaboration with*
PASSANTEN FILMPRODUKTION GBR (DE)

10 DIRECTORS, 1 FILM



LISA BLATTER

Lisa Blatter, born 1979. She studies filmmaking at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) from 2002 to 2008. Her short films made there, *TRAURIGE JUNGS TANZEN*, *WENN NIEMAND HINSIEHT* and *NACHGLÜHEN*, are successfully shown at various film festivals, including Locarno 2008. Lisa lives in Zurich und together with Julia Tal and Jan Gassmann runs the production company 2:1 Film. She is currently in the midst of shooting her debut film *SKIZZEN VON LOU*.



GREGOR FREI

Gregor Frei, born 1984, takes his first steps at the TV collective «VideoGang». In 2005 he founds the production company hiddenframe. From 2008 until 2011 he studies cinema at the Cantonal School of Art ECAL in Lausanne. His diploma film *HANDSCHLAG* wins several prizes, including the Bern Film Award. Gregor still works for hiddenframe as director, screenwriter, and cinematographer.



JAN GASSMANN

Jan Gassmann, born 1983, comes from Zurich. In 2004 he begins studying documentary film direction at the HFF Munich. His first feature film *CHRIGU* is shown at the 57th Berlin Film Festival and plays successfully in the cinema. In 2008 Jan Gassmann wins the Bern and Zurich Film Awards for *CHRIGU*, and in 2009 the Prix Walo. Subsequent films are *OFF BEAT* (Berlin Film Festival 2010) and *KARMA SHADUB* (International Jury Award Nyon). Jan lives in Zurich and together with Julia Tal and Lisa Blatter head of the production company 2:1 Film.



BENNY JABERG

Benny Jaberg, born 1981, studies film direction at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). His MA diploma film *DANIEL SCHMID—LE CHAT QUI PENSE* premieres in 2010 at the Berlin Film Festival, subsequently being shown at numerous international film festivals and in the cinema. Benny's short documentary *THE GREEN SERPENT—OF VODKA, MEN AND DISTILLED DREAMS* (2013) wins the Boccacino d'oro at Festival del film Locarno as well as the Zurich Film Award and Swiss Film Award for the Best Short Film.



CARMEN JAQUIER

Born in Geneva in 1985, Carmen Jaquier studies cinema at the l'Ecole Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne. Her first film LE TOMBEAU DES FILLES in 2011 wins a Pardino d'argento at Locarno International Film Festival, as well as the Reflet d'Or for the best Swiss short film at the Festival Tous-Ecrans de Genève. Shot in the Canton of Valais, LA RIVIÈRE SOUS LA LANGUE is her most recent short film, to be presented at Locarno (2015) in the competition Pardi di domani.



MICHAEL KRUMMENACHER

Michael Kruppenacher, born 1985 in Schwyz. In 2005 he attends the Filmmaking Workshop at Columbia University in New York, before beginning to study direction at the HFF Munich. There he gets to know Peter Baranowski, with whom in 2009 he founds the production company Passanten Film. In the same year, he completes his first feature film HINTER DIESEN BERGEN, which premieres at the International Rotterdam Film Festival in 2010. His short WENN ALLE DA SIND is nominated in 2012 for the German Short Film Award, and his diploma film SIBYLLE premieres in 2015 at the 65th Berlin Film Festival.

JONAS MEIER

Jonas Meier, born 1978. From 2002 to 2006 he is enrolled in the department Video at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU), obtaining his diploma in 2006. His short films ALICE IN THE SKY, SUPER BOOST and MÜRNERS UNIVERSUM are shown at many festivals.

Today, Jonas lives and works in Winterthur as a free-lance film director of commercials and documentaries. He is co-founder of the production company zweihund.



TOBIAS NÖLLE

Tobias Nölle was born in 1976 and grew up in Zurich. After completing a four-year film programme at the School of Visual Arts in New York, today he works as director, screenwriter, and editor. His short film RENÉ wins among other prizes the Golden Leopard at Locarno and the first prize at Tampere. In 2015, his first feature-length film will celebrate its premiere.

10 DIRECTORS, 1 FILM

LIONEL RUPP

Lionel Rupp, born in 1983. He makes several short films, such as LE POISSON, ESKAPOP and LA FORÊT which are shown at various international festivals and win numerous prizes. In 2012 he completes his first feature film QUAI OUEST. Since 2008 he has been working in the transdisciplinary cooperative Zooscope, where he collaborates with fine artists, directors, and musicians.



MIKE SCHEIWILLER

Mike Scheiwiller, born 1978 in Zurich. After studying history and film science at the University of Zurich, he starts working in journalism in 2008, writing for various products of the Ringier media company. Since 2010 he has also been picture editor for a press photo agency. Until 2014 he has been involved with several projects of 2:1 Film as a free-lance writer, including Lisa Blatter's debut film SKIZZEN VON LOU.





PRODUCTION COMPANIES

CONTRAST FILM combines the passion for artistically demanding films with marketing know-how. That's how their cinema and television films on socio-politically relevant themes reach a broad audience. Contrast Film is run by Ivan Madeo, Stefan Eichenberger and Urs Frey. They jointly develop and produce documentaries and feature films, and also collaborate in international coproductions. In 2013 the three producers win both Student Academy Awards for Switzerland (with UN MUNDO PARA RAÚL and PARVANEH), and in 2014 they are present at the 64th Berlin Film Festival with two feature films (THE CIRCLE and NEULAND), and compete for the Oscars with a feature and a short film (THE CIRCLE and PARVANEH). In March 2015 they win four Swiss Film Awards for their feature THE CIRCLE. In August 2015 they present their newest feature film HEIMATLAND in the International Competition of Locarno Film Festival.

2:1 FILM (Lisa Blatter, Julia Tal, Jan Gassmann) is an independent production company of young film auteurs. The first feature-length documentary KARMA SHADUB by Ramòn Giger and Jan Gassmann celebrates its premiere in 2013 at the festival Cinéma du Réel in the International Competition and wins the Jury Award. Together with Lichtblick, 2:1 Film produces DIE BÖHMS—ARCHITEKTUR EINER FAMILIE by Maurizius Staerkle Drux. The film wins, among other awards, the main prize at the 33rd international Film Festival sur l'Art in Montreal, as well as the prize of the Goethe-Stiftung at Dok Leipzig. Currently in production is the fiction film SKIZZEN VON LOU by Lisa Blatter. EUROPE, SHE LOVES by Jan Gassmann is in postproduction. Z'BÄRG by Julia Tal gets its cinema release in winter 2015/16. HEIMATLAND includes the participation of Julia Tal as executive producer, Lisa Blatter as director, and Jan Gassmann as artistic director (together with Michael Kruppenacher).

PASSANTEN FILMPRODUKTION is founded in 2009 by Michael Kruppenacher and Peter Baranowski while studying to become directors and with the goal of having greater creative freedom in the production of their own films. From the beginning, the independent production company has been located in Munich, realizing apart from several internationally successful short films such as RAUSCHGIFT (Locarno 2011,ardino d'Oro) and WENN ALLE DA SIND (nominated for the German Short Film Award 2012) also Michael Kruppenacher's feature fiction films HINTER DIESEN BERGEN (Rotterdam 2010) and SIBYLLE (Berlin Film Festival 2015, Moscow 2015). Currently Peter Baranowski's documentary DIE TEMPERATUR DES WILLENS is in production.



**CONTRAST
FILM**

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