

**FESTIVAL INFO
PRESS KIT**



LOST PARADISE

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PRODUCTION OUTLINE

TITLE	Lost Paradise
GENRE	Documentary
LENGTH	62 Minutes
LANGUAGE	English/Russian/Portuguese
SUBTITLES	English/German
SHOOTING TIME	April - July 2007
LOCATIONS	Ukraine: Kiev and Pripjat Brazil: Jundiai and surroundings
SHOOTING FORMAT	16mm, Super-8, colour
SCREENING FORMAT	Digital Betacam, 16:9
TEAM	Sebastian Heinzl, Script/Direction Stefan Kochert, Cinematography Julia Karg and Michael Timmers, Film Editing Natalia Dittrich and Michael Hecht, Original Music Christian Heck, Sound Design and Mixing Ben Braun, Art Direction Igor Dovgal and Linda Krämer, Production
PRODUCED BY	Baden-Württemberg Film Academy and Essence Film
SUPPORTED BY	FFA German Federal Film Board Honorary Consulate of Ukraine in Germany LBBW Landesbank Baden-Württemberg Robert Bosch Foundation
PRODUCTION COUNTRY	Germany
PRODUCTION YEAR	2008

LOST PARADISE

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SYNOPSIS

“Memory is the only paradise we can’t loose.” Olga, a young journalist from Kiev, remembers her childhood as a wonderful time: she used to live in Pripyat, a young town, full of children, mushrooms and flowers. The only problem: Pripyat is located next to the reactor of Chernobyl. At the age of eight years Olga was evacuated with her family. 22 years later she returns with her Brazilian husband to the place of her childhood, which is now a ghost town.

A film about the loss of home, the second generation after Chernobyl and the question if it is still dangerous to eat daisies?



PROTAGONISTS

OLGA AND IVAN

Olga is a child of Chernobyl. Before their evacuation her father worked in the power plant. He died because of the after effects of the catastrophe. The family still suffers from this loss. As her mother Olga is concerned with health problems because of the radiation. Sometimes she is worried that one day her children will have these problems as well. Olga now works as a journalist.

Ivan seems like a gift from heaven, a compensation for the tragedy that happened to Olga's family. That's how Olga sees it. As big fans of Pink Floyd Olga and Ivan met on a fansite in the internet. They wrote each other love letters for two years. Then Ivan had saved enough money to come to Kiev. He married Olga and gave up his friends, his family and a farm in Brazil. Now he lives with Olga, her mother and her sister in a so-called „Chernobyl House“ in the concrete desert of Kiev.

Ivan would accompany Olga anywhere, even to a place like Chernobyl. Since 1986 she has not returned to Pripyat. On the one hand Olga does not want to destroy her memories, on the other she is eager to confront herself with this part of her history. But so far she did not dare to go.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

"These days nuclear energy is again the talk of the day. All over sudden politicians and economists claim that nuclear power plants will save the world from a dawning climate change. A dangerous illusion. Nobody mentions Chernobyl anymore. Though this name of a small Ukrainian town became a landmark in our collective memory - comparable to the attacks of 9/11.

In Germany people started to panic when they heard about the accident at first. Everybody has his or her own memory connected to Chernobyl. I wasn't allowed to eat daisies anymore, other children shouldn't play in the sandbox. From this moment on my perception of nature radically changed. The world was a different one. No longer the pure paradise I had imagined it to be.

I was interested in people of my age who experienced the catastrophe at first hand. This was the starting point for our research in the Ukraine. We did not expect to end up with shooting parts of the film in Brazil. But for Olga Ivan is the direct compensation for the trauma she had experienced in Pripyat. And truly: Ivan's Brazil seems like the paradise Olga has lost in her childhood. The love story of Olga and Ivan leaves a trace of hope in this tragedy. It is told from the perspective of the second generation - people who want to start a life free from radiation. But it is important to remember how easy it is to destroy our own paradise."

Sebastian Heinzl, July 2008



BACKGROUND

We went to Kiev and surroundings to research thoroughly for this film. We talked to people who are personally concerned with the catastrophe of Chernobyl. Many of the workers, liquidators and their family members have described their life in Pripyat before the tragedy as a paradisiacal state. Work in the nuclear power plant was well-paid, new flats easy to get. Young families from all over the Soviet Union decided to leave their old homes for the dream of progress and prosperity in Pripyat. Also Olga's family moved with great hopes from Kirghizia to the Ukraine. After the catastrophe the dream became a trauma. New homes were destroyed in one moment, beloved people died. The beautiful nature and life at the banks of the river Pripyat now seem like a surreal memory. The second generation still has to deal with this immense loss. These „Children of Chernobyl“ grew up in an area that today is called the "Zone".

The Zone is a 30-km-wide, fenced-in area around the reactor. Although it is prohibited for the public, there are guided tours for tourists, journalists and researchers. Pripyat is now a ghost town, directly located at the reactor of Chernobyl.



DIRECTOR'S VITA



Sebastian Heinzl was born in Kassel in 1979. After graduating from secondary school in 1998 and doing alternative national service in Philadelphia (USA), he studied Theatre, Film and Television Sciences in Cologne. At the same time he started directing films.

His feature length documentary films “b24 - 24 Hours Berlin” and “89 Millimetres” which he both directed before he was accepted at Film Academy Baden-Wuerttemberg in Ludwigsburg, won numerous awards internationally and were theatrically released in Germany and Austria.

In his documentary films at the film academy he often balances with the borders of fiction and non-fiction. His short documentary „Samagon“ won awards at international festivals and was acquired by various TV-broadcasters, „Verbündungshaus Forst“ won the German-Polish short film award „Germany - Poland: A user's manual“ and was broadcasted on ARTE. Sebastian Heinzl will graduate from Film Academy Baden-Wuerttemberg in 2009.

FILMOGRAPHY [Selection]

LOST PARADISE D 2008, 62 min., Documentary, 16mm

VERBÜNDUNGSHAUS FORST D 2006 (ARTE), 12min, Documentary, DV

Winner of the shortfilm competition «Germany-Poland: A User's Manual»

89 MILLIMETRES D 2005 (Theatrical), 79 min. Documentary, DV

Honourable Mention, International Competition, DOKFEST Kassel 2004

Award for “Best Editing”, SEHSÜCHTE Festival, Babelsberg 2005

Award for «Best Cinematography», DOKUFEST, Prizren, Albania 2005

SAMAGON (ARTE) D 2004, 12 min. Short Documentary, 16mm

Best Documentary, International Competition, Interfilm Festival Berlin 2004

Grand Prix, Best Short Film, International Competition, DOCLISBOA, Lisbon 2005

b24 - 24 HOURS BERLIN D 2003 (Theatrical), 60 min. Documentary, DV

Audience Award, Achtung Berlin Film Festival 2005

PRODUCTION COMPANIES



The Baden-Württemberg Film Academy is a real success story. Within a mere 15 years, the Academy has managed to establish a name for itself beyond national borders also succeeding in positioning the German Southwest as a significant film location.

Practice-oriented training, flexible organisation and meeting students' changing requirements and the demands of the industry has meant that the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg, its associated animations institute and the Masterclass Ludwigsburg/Paris now belong to the best and most innovative film academies in Germany.

www.filmakademie.de



Essence Film is a young production company located in Switzerland, Germany and Ukraine. Essence Film works with selected freelancers to realise cinema, TV and corporate film projects that connect entertainment with ambitious contents.

www.essence-film.com

SUPPORTERS



*Honorarkonsulat
der Ukraine*



*Почесне Косультво
України*

LB \equiv BW

Stiftungen
Landesbank Baden-Württemberg

Robert Bosch **Stiftung**