



I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER



A Hannes Lang Film

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Documentary / D/I-2014 / 93' / DCP / Farbe

Electronic Press Kit will be available on
www.petrolioilm.de.

International Press Contact:
PETROLIO FILM GmbH
Augustastrasse 21
51065 Cologne/ Germany
T +49 (0)221 261 392 53
office@petrolioilm.de
www.petrolioilm.de

International Distribution:
Deckert Distribution GmbH
Marienplatz 1
04103 Leipzig
Germany
T +49 (0)341 215 66 38
info@deckert-distribution.com
www.deckert-distribution.com

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“AFTER ONE LOOK AT THIS PLANET
ANY VISITOR FROM OUTER SPACE WOULD SAY:
I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER.”

William S. Burroughs

PETROLIO miramonte film ZDF arte Film und Medien
Stiftung NRW BLS.

DEUTSCHER FILMFÖRDERFONDS RAI Südtirol A38 REALFICTION

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FACT-SHEET

Production:
PETROLIO FILM GmbH
Augustastr. 21
51065 Cologne / Germany
T +49 (0)221 261 392 53

Co-Production:
MIRAMONTE FILM OHG
Rafensteinweg 12
39100 Bozen / Italy
T +39 (0)471 323 902

ZDF/ ARTE

Cooperation: RAI Südtirol

Producer: Hannes Lang

Executive Producer: Mareike Wegener

Co-Producers:
Valerio B. Moser, Andreas Pichler

Commissioning Editor:
Kathrin Brinkmann, ZDF/ ARTE

Supported by:
Film- und Medienstiftung NRW
Business Location Südtirol
Deutscher Filmförderfond DFFF
Gerd-Ruge-Projektstipendium
Autonome Provinz Bozen Südtirol –
Deutsche Kultur
A38 Produktionsstipendium

Genre: Documentary

Running Time: 93 minutes

Screening Format:
DCP | Pro Res | HD Cam | Blu-Ray

Shooting Format: 4K

Shooting: 53 days in 2013

Locations:
Uyuni (BOL), Caracas (VE), Detroit
(USA), Pompeii (IT), Chiang Mai
(THAI), Mumbai (IND), Peking (CHN)

Original Languages:
English, Chinese, Thai, Spanish

Language Versions (ST):
English, German, French, Italian, Spanish

German Distributor:
Real Fiction Film Distribution

Press Contact:
PETROLIO FILM GmbH
Augustastr. 21
51065 Cologne / Germany
T +49 (0)221 261 392 53
office@petroliofilm.de
www.petroliofilm.de

Distribution Contact:
Deckert Distribution GmbH
Marienplatz 1
04103 Leipzig / Germany
T +49 (0)341 215 66 38
F +49 (0)341 215 66 39
info@deckert-distribution.com
www.deckert-distribution.com

CREW

Written by:
Mareike Wegener, Hannes Lang

Director and Visual Concept:
Hannes Lang

Cinematography and Steadicam:
Thilo Schmidt

Film Editing: Stefan Stabenow

Sound Recordist:
Peter Rösner, Achim Fell

2nd Unit Camera: Johannes Klais

Set Manager: Manuela Wilpernig

Sound Design: Peter Rösner

Producer: Hannes Lang

Executive Producer: Mareike Wegener

Co-Producers: Valerio B. Moser,
Andreas Pichler

Production Assistant: Julia Meyer

Postproduction Supervisor:
Niko Remus

Associate Producers:
Kriti Productions
Visual Arts Factory
Beijing Torrent Film
Giant Eel Production
Red Balloon Film
VETA 21

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

In the light of the current transformations within the global power structure, I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER traces the linkage of economic ascent and decline in seven paradigmatic episodes. India, Bolivia, China, USA, Italy, Thailand, Venezuela – each place

contains fragments of another; each episode bears testament to the hopes and fears of its protagonists. By juxtaposing these local experiences in the face of global economy, I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER questions the notion of rise and decay.

SYNOPSIS

Ever since humankind has developed the notion of ownership it has been devided into those who possess, and those who possess not. For a long time this devision manifested itself in the opposition between “industrialized“ and “emerging“ economies – a supposed balance of power, which seemed solid and inviolable for almost three centuries. But then, the so-called 1st World began ailing. What started out as a discontinuity of economic growth soon became a permanent crisis that today confronts the old industrial nations with their own termination. And now, that the known order is out of balance, economic ascent is generated elsewhere. A catch-up process is underway.

I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER is a documentary about the shift in geopolitical power. The film examines interconnected fragments of a globalized world, and thus enables a transfer of a rather theoretical subject into vivid and tangible scenarios. Meanwhile the film understands the different worlds it portrays not as polar opposites, but as development stages of one and the same system.

In seven paradigmatic episodes I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER examines the following central questions: What makes

the Indian broker think that investments into western markets will become unprofitable in the near future? Which hopes do people in Bolivia have due to the discovery of lithium? Why do people in Bejing have to win a lottery in order to be allowed to buy a car from their own money? Which desires show through the efforts of US-American scientists to overcome biology and perfect the human body by technical advancement? What is left of Europe’s once so glorious past – what happens to the ruins of the ancient high cultures? What do European Alzheimer patients do in Thailand? And why do squatters live in one of the highest skyscrapers of Caracas?

I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER depicts the contradiction between the universal human need for stability and safety, and the predominating fragility of the system that dominates our globalized world. In merging a multiplicity of perspectives, the film creates a panoramic mediation, which broadens the view with each episode. This is how I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER offers a new and comprehensive look at today’s geopolitical changes and at the same time shows how they translate into the individual experience of every-day life.



development stages of one and the same system simultaneously at different places in this world. The locations of I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER are thus to be seen as mutually referencing stations in the human fight for survival. Each one contains fragments and outlines of another. This makes common elements visible and reveals the familiar in the strange.

This – the familiar – can also be called universality. Because, even if I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER follows very specific, particular situations, it shows that – despite all differences and variations – the same basic values nevertheless hold true. People share the same desires, hopes and fears. It is this closeness that the film shows in its seven episodes:

India is a land with potential for growth. This is where the first episode takes place, preparing the way for the rest of the film: the power of the “developing countries” is increasing, while the formerly great industrial nations are losing in influence. The geopolitical balance is tottering.

We then visit Bolivia, a nation that is still awaiting major growth. The discovery of lithium – the oil of the future – has given rise to justified hopes of wealth and prosperity. What do people dream of now that everything might finally turn out for the good? How do they deal with these promising resources? And can we trust these hopes at the bottom end of the development spiral? How worthwhile is it actually to become a “global player”?

The economic growth of China has on the other hand been so explosive that it is now threatened by collapse. As a symbol of this overstretch, the third episode of the film shows how increased prosperity, reflected in the boosting sales of cars, has to be restricted as existing infrastructures become totally over-burdened.

The fourth episode is concerned with a place that is already broken. In Detroit, former home of the American automotive dream and largest municipal bankruptcy case in the U.S. history, the search for a way out is underway – one which escalates into the realms of science fiction. Here it is possible

WRITER’S NOTE

I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER is a film about the so-called complexity of the world. Mumbai, Uyuni, Beijing, Detroit, Pompeii, Chiang Mai and Caracas – what connects these places? What can be shown by juxtaposing these local experiences? Can a film tell the story of the whole world? And what insights should such a project generate?

The thesis underlying this film is not unknown, yet it is provocative. Our “crisis” has become a permanent state of affairs. In many ways the western, early industrialised world is reaching its limits. Only recently we had full employment, growth and an economic miracle – now we have our backs to the wall. How could that happen? And what sort of shadow does this cast on our future?

The history of mankind tries to prove simultaneous prosperity and progress for all impossible. There seems to be an unwritten law whereby some people must do badly so that others can enjoy their life to the fullest. If one profits, another one is being exploited elsewhere. Progress and destruction seem to require one another; they are of the same origin. Crisis, boom, recession, renewal, stop, reform, end, beginning, full stop.

In addressing our “permanent crisis”, this temporal displacement and the anticyclical momentum in capitalism help us see the relationship between poverty and wealth. We do not need history books because we can observe the

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to be frozen after one's death so that, should the situation return to tranquillity and a computer-generated utopia be achieved, one can finally lead a happy life. This kind of exodus describes how undimmed human hope can be and what excesses of faith in a better life, perfected by technical progress, makes possible.

The fifth episode shows the situation in old Europe. Written off as a "cultural theme park", it seems as if it cannot even manage this function any more. The historical ruins of Pompeii are disintegrating and with them any form of (self) confidence. What is left of Europe, once so glorious? What importance does it have in a globalized world? How do its residents live in the face of such impermanence?

The sixth episode deals with a business model that was made possible through the crisis in Europe. The welfare state is at the end of its tether: excessive costs mean that the care of the elderly must be outsourced. Is this a moral problem, or must we pragmatically accept this as a fact if we want to maintain our economic competitiveness? And can Thailand actually profit from the fact that northern Europe can no longer afford such care? How does this care look like? Who benefits and who is exploited?

The film ends in Caracas, in the largest building ruin in the capital of Venezuela. A bank was in fact intended to move in

but, as the financial system collapsed, the multi-storey building was never finished. Today this skyscraper is occupied. The episode, despite its frightening starting point – the admission of the absolute failure of capitalism – has nevertheless a hopeful undertone.

How can people become masters of the situation and once more take over the reins of their lives?

I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER is a film that neither recognizes the dictates of complexity nor the paralyzing rhetorics of the crisis. We will never get to see the manager, because there is none. But nor is there any over-complicated chaos from which no meaning can be derived.

Mareike Wegener, Hannes Lang

ABOUT THE WRITERS

HANNES LANG
*1981

Born and raised in the Italian Alps. After a two-year training as a carpenter, Lang received a technical diploma as a draftsman. He worked as a film production assistant in South Tyrol until enrolling at the Academy of Media Arts, Cologne in 2004, where he studied Media Arts prioritizing in the field of artistic documentary filmmaking. Since his graduation with the documentary short LEAVENWORTH, WA in 2008, Lang has been working as a freelance cinematographer and director. His first feature-length documentary PEAK won him the Goethe Institute Documentary Film Award. 2011 Lang received the Gerd Ruge Grant for I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER.



MAREIKE WEGENER
*1983

Born and raised in Westphalia/Germany. 2003 - 2008 Media Arts Studies at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne, focusing on painting and documentary filmmaking. Diploma summa cum laude for her documentary AL HANSEN – THE MATCHSTICK TRAVELLER. In 2007 she received a scholarship to attend the New School in New York. She has been working as a freelance writer, director and editor for documentaries since 2008. In 2009 her debut MARK LOMBARDI – DEATH-DEFYING ACTS OF ART AND CONSPIRACY received the Gerd Ruge Grant.

In 2013 she was awarded the advancement prize for young artists of the state NRW in the section film directing. Wegener currently is enrolled at the European Graduate School in Switzerland to obtain her Ph.D. in Media and Communication.



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FILMOGRAPHY HANNES LANG

PEAK

Documentary, D/I 2011,
Kino, 90 min, 35mm, Farbe

produced by unafilm (DE)
in co-production with
Movimento Film (IT) and ZDF/
Das kleine Fernsehspiel
(Jörg Schneider)
funded by Film und Medienstiftung
NRW, DFFF, Business Location
Südtirol, Autonome Provinz Bozen
Südtirol – Deutsche Kultur
World Sales: Rise and Shine
German Distribution: Farbfilm
Premiere:
DOK Leipzig, November 2011
Theatrical Release: March 2013

Festivals: IDFA, Amsterdam | Filmtage
Bozen | Planete + Doc, Warsaw
Trento Filmfestival | Doc Point Helsinki
Full Frame Int. Documentary Film
Festival | Ecco Cup Moscow | Lessinia
Film Festival | Mountain and Adventure
Film Festival Graz etc.

Awards: Best Documentary Award by
Goethe Institute, DOK Leipzig |
Best Documentary, Lessinia Film
Festival | Grand Prix Graz, Mountain
and AdventureFilm Festival Graz

LEAVENWORTH, WA

Documentary Short, D-2008,
29 min, 35 mm, Farbe

produced by the Academy of
Media Arts Cologne
funded by Film und Medienstiftung NRW
and Autonome Provinz Bozen Südtirol –
Deutsche Kultur
Premiere: Hofer Filmtage, 2008

Festivals: Plus Camerimage, PL |
Landshut Film Festival, D | Independent
Days, D | Hamburg Documentary Film
Festival, D | Full Frame Documentary
Film Festival, USA | AFI Silverdocs,
USA | Filmtage Bozen, I | Silhouette
Film Festival Paris, F | Kurzfilmtage
Oberhausen, D | Video Festival
Bochum, D | Stranger Than Fiction
Dokumentarfilmfestival, D | Kassel Dok
and Video Fest, D | Interfilm Festival
Berlin, D | Film Festival Muenster, D
| Cork Film Festival, IRL | Short Film
Festival Flensburg, D | Int. Film
Festival Luenen, D

Awards: A38 Production Grant,
Kassel Documentary and Videofest
and Werkleitz |
Best Short, Video Festival Bochum |
Best Short, Landshuter Filmtage

THE FAST BREEDER

Documentary Short, D 2007,
18 min, DV, color

produced by the Academy of
Media Arts Cologne

Premiere: Documenta Madrid
Festivals: Kassel Documentary and
Videofest

A MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY

Documentary, D 2006, 42 min,
DV, color

produced by the Academy of Media
Arts Cologne



Established in 2012 PETROLIO is a filmmaker's production cooperative founded by the auteurs Hannes Lang, Carmen Losmann and Mareike Wegener.
Lang's I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER is the production debut of PETROLIO.

