SEARCHING EVA

FEATURE DOCUMENTARY 2019

DIRECTED BY PIA HELLENTHAL
WRITTEN BY GIORGIA MALATRASI AND PIA HELLENTHAL

69th International Filmfestival Berlin
ICREDOX
DOC AWARD 2019

WITH

EVA COLLE
“THE REASON THEY MADE A MOVIE OUT OF MY LIFE IS THAT ONE DAY I’M SHOOTING UP IN A PUBLIC TOILET AND THE NEXT I’M BLEACHING MY TEETH IN A JACUZZI”

posted by Eva Collé Dec 2nd, 2017, @5:05pm

SEARCHING EVA

Feature Documentary
84 min / Germany 2019 / 1:1,85 / 5.1 / 2K
Original Language: English, German, Italian
English Subs
Written by Pia Hellenthal & Giorgia Malatrasi
Edited by Yana Höhnerbach
Produced by CORSO Film
World Sales Syndicado

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Eva – 25, drifter, Berliner, poet, pet-owner, sex worker, virgo, recovering addict, housewife, feminist, model – declared privacy an outdated concept at the age of 14.

This is the tale of a young woman growing up in the age of the internet, turning the search for oneself into a public spectacle, challenging you on what a woman „should be“. Through her fragmented personalities you see the emergence of a generation, in which the concept of a fixed identity has grown old.

A portrait of modern existence.
When in 1996 the lyricist of The Grateful Dead announced that Cyberspace will bring „a civilization of the Mind“, F. was four years old. A few years later she declared privacy as an outdated concept, renamed herself Eva and published her first diary entry online. Quickly Eva became an Internet star, allowing the world to watch her grow up. Today Eva is in her early twenties, fluctuating between her offline life, where she recently defined herself an anarchist vagabond and a feminist sex worker and her online persona, iconified as an archetype of authenticity.

**SEARCHING EVA**

is the tale of a young woman growing up in the age of the internet, turning the search for oneself into a public spectacle, challenging you on what a woman „should be“.

The Film dives into Eva’s constantly changing life over the course of three years, following her through Berlin, Italy, Mexico and Greece like flipping through her Instagram profile. You meet her lovers, her dad’s new kids and her mom who is still living in her teenage room at her parents’ house. You see her walking fashion shows, meeting sugar daddies in bourgeois hotel rooms, shooting up ketamine in bathtubs, ironing her girlfriend’s hair, playing with her cat. Instead of following a straight line the film circles around current topics that Eva’s lifestyle naturally brings up – questioning your sexuality, your gender, the concept of work, the idea of a „fixed identity“.

All of this is juxtaposed by her followers, commenting on Eva’s life, her new hairstyle, judging her actions, praising her person.

Online – where Eva showcases the most private parts of her life – reality and fiction seem to be inseparable. And so **SEARCHING EVA** floats between artificial staging and documentary observation, combining Eva’s blog – which leads as a voice over through her online published introspection – with everyday scenes, always followed by her online fans.

A portrait of modern existence.
One day in 2014, my Co-Author Giorgia Malatrasi came up to me, giving me an URL with the words: „Read this, I’m not sure if I’m crazy or if this is really special.“ And so I read, finding myself not being able to stop.

A young, very smart woman, sharing her life – meticulously and brutally honest – with kids from all over the world. The way she stripped naked physically and mentally, repelled and intrigued me at the same time. To me, it felt like her blog captured our time in a nutshell.

When we then first met Eva she told us things that one simply doesn't tell people you meet for the first time. It was not because she particularly trusted us – it was simply that the censorship of privacy didn't exist for her.

It threw us off, leaving us with our own judgements, our own categories that we found ourselves trying to squeeze her into to making sense out of her. We found ourselves unable to put her and what she did to us into words – so we decided to make a movie.

Starting out was a constant battle of trying to put the finger on the right spot. It felt paradox: Eva is constantly changing and escaping every definition. She is watering down every boundary that helps to identify as something, as someone. So how can you put someone into a film who constantly escapes your attempts to narrate her?

Along the way, Eva was always one step ahead of the game, posting the always changing summary of the film online when we ourselves had no idea yet what we were doing.

Throughout the process I found myself more and more reflecting upon the fact that my whole sense of me as a woman, as a person was shaped by society around me, influencing my most private life to its very fundament. It was like lifting a veil, more and more realizing how deeply I had internalized hatred against women, against sex workers, against queer and non conformist living – how it was written into my bones, my language, my view on the world.

Working on this film felt like getting rid of the bullshit – one bit at a time. A bit like when you figure out that there is actually a second picture in the optical illusion. After that you just never not see this second picture. It was not before finishing the edit, that I understood that the film for me is really about freeing yourself from the gaze of the others, of the expectations of who you should be – especially as a woman.

„When we no longer have any secrets, we no longer have anything to hide. It is we who have become a secret, it is we who are hidden.“

deleuze
Pia Hellenthal is a Cologne based writer & director working in fiction and documentary. 2013 Hellenthal graduated from Academy of Media Arts Cologne with a Diploma in Media and Fine Art. Her short films screened at various international film festivals like Karlovy Vary, New York and Oberhausen and received prizes like the Prix H. R. Giger „Narcisse“ for best short. Next to her own films, Hellenthal has been working for publications like VICE, where her work got nominated for the Lovie Awards and licensed to international TV Stations.

For her debut film SEARCHING EVA she received the 2016 Gerd Ruge Scholarship from Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, the Goethe Institut Film Residency in Beirut and took part in the dok.incubator Workshop 2018.

SEARCHING EVA
Cinema Documentary / 84 min / 2019 / Produced by CORSO Film / Co-produced by ZDF–Das kleine Fernsehspiel, in cooperation with VICE. Funded by: Gerd Ruge Stipendium, Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, BKM , Goethe Institut Libanon

ANONYMOUS ASKS
3-channel-video-installation / 12 min / 2018 / Fotomuseum Winterthur / Situations

REBORN BABIES
Documentary / 25 min / 2015 / Nomination Lovie Awards, Licensed for TV Stations (including USA, Greece, Netherlands)

TRAUERKANTATE IN SECHS ARIEN
Short Film / 25 min / 2014 /Cinema Ergo Sum / Sponsored by Film und Medienstiftung NRW

PALIM PALIM
Short Film / 23 min / 2013 / DSCHOINT VENTSCHR & Kunsthochschule für Medien Cologne / Funded by Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, BKM, Bundesamt für Kultur Schweiz, SF1

GANOVEN
Short Film / 25 Min / 2012 / Kunsthochschule für Medien Cologne / Funded by the Freundeskreis der KHM
“A FILM ABOUT A GIRL
ON A PROCESS OF SELF
ABOLISHMENT. THE
 GIRL ISN’T ME CAUSE
REPRESENTATION IS A LIE.
BUT LIES CAN BE GOOD. LIE
MORE Y’ALL. CHEAT, STEAL,
HIDE IN THE CRACKS.”

eva collié, sep. 2018

There was a time when I was caught in the loop of constantly reading Eva’s blog while talking to her in real life about filming her. I was terrified she eventually would write something about me. That’s when I recognized her power of being able to create truth. Truth was what was written on that page in that moment. “Representation is a lie”. This is what gave me personally the key to eventually imagine our film and fully embrace it.
Searching Eva did not only captivate me in the editing room but also apart from it. While I (sometimes desperately) tried to find a form for the material, to somehow bring it into a structure, the film crept into my life and gradually began to affect and slowly dissolve any structure in it.

Searching Eva has given me the opportunity to rephrase antiquated words, to challenge concepts and sometimes just go blindly into uncertain terrains. And I never go anywhere blind. I love lists, I have two legs, and they are always on the ground. My head is firm and has no place in the clouds. But Searching Eva made me sweep across all my doubts and fears while dancing and frantically flailing my arms.

Because Searching Eva contains a part of me, and I contain a part of Eva.
Whilst the shooting team followed Eva around the world, I obsessed over her blog, reading it in between office meetings, at the playground, in the middle of the night. Being one of the few that hadn’t met her, it was important to me to keep my „follower“-perspective, based on my projection rather than on personal experience with Eva. Each of us went through our own, unique process of self-reflection that together took on an important role as an experimental, unconventional approach throughout the creative and editing process of this film. This project made me question my view of myself and opened up an ongoing dialog around me of what it means to be a woman.

„A BOARD GAME THAT DEPICTS THE LIFE OF A WOMAN IN OUR CENTURY: THERE’S A TRACK WITH CONSECUTIVELY NUMBERED SPACES AND YOU THROUGH YOUR DICE AND END UP ON STUFF LIKE »MANIPULATIVE BOYFRIEND, SPEND 2000 ON THERAPY AFTER YOU BREAK UP«, OR »SEXUAL ASSAULT«, GO 5 STEPS BACK, »GET A CHILD« - SKIP 2 TURNS, »EATING DISORDER, LOOSE 3 LIFE POINTS« ... YOU WIN IF YOU EVER GET ALIVE TO THE END.“

posted by Eva Collé August 3rd, 2015, @6:06pm
Marcus Zilz, media generalist from Cologne, is concerned with rooting sound design, music, experimental sound and animated film in a practical sense. If he gets employed, then only for the best projects shown at the best festivals (festival list). He is currently building the Cologne Studio für Experimentalton, where anything is possible.

Yana Höhnerbach lives and works as a freelance editor and lecturer in Cologne. Since her Bachelor’s degree at ifs internationale filmschule köln in 2014, she has edited some feature films, but mainly documentaries. When asked, whether she prefers editing documentaries or fiction films she instantly responds: I prefer editing stories. In 2018, she was awarded the Bild-Kunst Schnitt Preis at the Filmlplus festival for her work on BRUDER JAKOB (R. Eli Roland Sachs). She always talks about going on vacation this year, but she never does.

Giorgia Malatrasi is a Berlin based author and creative producer who graduated from the University of Bologna with a degree in Communication and Semiotics. She has lived and worked in Milan and Berlin, where she spent ten years of her career in content creation, working in the areas of short and long-form documentary at a global media company, while simultaneously developing her own personal work on storytelling in the field of photography. She has a three-year-old son, who was born while Searching Eva was being made. She currently floats between a handful of identities, while learning to embrace each one of them.

Lisa Reisch lives and works in Berlin, overseeing the development process of documentary films and series at Vice Germany. She studied Social Anthropology and Directing at the University of Television and Film in Munich. She worked for various TV documentary formats as a freelance author and director and as commissioning editor at the public broadcasting channel ZDF. Lisa has supported Searching Eva as dramatic advisor and executive producer for Vice Studios Germany. Currently she aims at melding her work as producer and the growing of her two children in the most dialogic and least contentious way.

Yana Höhnerbach
EDITOR

Giorgia Malatrasi
WRITER & CREATIVE PRODUCER

Lisa Reisch
DRAMATURG

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MARCUS ZILZ
SOUND RECORDIST & SOUND DESIGNER

YANA HÖHNERBACH
EDITOR

LISA REISCH
DRAMATURG

GIORGIA MALATRASI
WRITER & CREATIVE PRODUCER
Daniela Dieterich, based in Cologne, Germany. Studied media, communication sciences and sound studies at Friedrichs-Willhelms-University in Bonn. While studying and in the years after finishing her studies she was earning her livelihood as a musician with various German bands. In 2015 she started working as a production manager for various feature films as well as for advanced film- and camera-seminars at KHM, the University of Media Arts Cologne. Permanently employed as creative producer and production manager for CORSO Film in Cologne since 2017.

Erik Winker, born 1973 in Stuttgart, holds a Master degree in TV Production from the University of Manchester and a diploma in film directing from the Academy of Media Arts Cologne. Since over 15 years he has been working in the field of documentary both as a director and a producer. After working as a creative producer for Lichtblick Film for several years he co-founded the production company HUPE Film in 2008 which is running under the new name CORSO Film since 2016. Besides his work as a producer Martin is also working as theater manager for the Odeon cinema in Cologne.

Janis Mazuch lives and works in Cologne as a cinematographer and author for scenic and documentary film projects. Studied „Audiovisual Media“ at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne 2004-2011. His diploma film „Tage in der Stadt“ celebrated its premiere at the Berlinale 2012, was broadcast on WDR and ran at numerous international festivals. His feature film debut JETZT.NICHT, developed together with Julia Keller, celebrated its premiere in the competition of the Max-Ophüls-Preis 2017. Besides his work on SEARCHING EVA, he also worked on Tamer Jandali’s EASY LOVE (opening film of Perspektive Deutsches Kino, Berlinale 2019) in 2018.

Martin Roelly, born 1977 in Kassel, Germany. Studies in film direction at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne from 1999 to 2004 where he graduated with a Masters degree with „Böse“ („Evil“), a short film developed for children. Afterwards Martin worked as an independent head of production for various short films and as producer of music videos and corporate films. In 2008 he co-founded the production company HUPE Film which has been running under the new name CORSO Film since 2016. Besides his work as a producer Martin is also working as theater manager for the Odeon cinema in Cologne.

Erik Winker, born 1973 in Stuttgart, holds a Master degree in TV Production from the University of Manchester and a diploma in film directing from the Academy of Media Arts Cologne. Since over 15 years he has been working in the field of documentary both as a director and a producer. After working as a creative producer for Lichtblick Film for several years he co-founded the production company HUPE Film in 2008 which is running under the new name CORSO Film since 2016. Erik Winker holds teaching assignments at the University Of Applied Sciences Mainz and the ifs Cologne and is working as a tutor for international workshops like Dok.Incubator and Documentary Campus beyond others. He is a former chairman of the regional filmmaker’s association Filmbüro NW and a member of the German Film Academy.
The beginnings of CORSO Film lie in the year 2008 when Erik Winker, Martin Roelly and Andreas Brauer founded the production company HUPE Film in Cologne/Germany. With increasing success the company produced documentaries and fiction films for the national and international market. Until today the team considers intensive plot development and close cooperation with the authors most important. The films of the company are screened regularly on festivals worldwide and have been awarded several times. Since August 2016 Martin Roelly and Erik Winker are running the company under the new name CORSO Film. In December 2017 the company launched a new office in Stuttgart in South-Germany, led by Ümit Uludag.

The credits of CORSO Film include successful films such as WORK HARD PLAY HARD by Carmen Losmann (FIPRESCI Prize DOK Leipzig, Prize of the Ecumenical Jury DOK Leipzig, Grimme Award), FIGHTER by Susanne Binninger (German Camera Award, preselected for the German Film Awards) or HAPPY by Carolin Genreith (German Critics’ Award, Best Documentary Film Festival Bozen, preselected for the German Film Awards) and international co-productions like A WOMAN CAPTURED by Bernadett Tuza-Ritter (Documentary Competition Sundance, Main Competition IDFA, nominated for the European Film Awards), „15 CORNERS OF THE WORLD” by Zuzanna Solakiewicz (Award of the Semaine le la Critique Locarno, International Competition DOK Leipzig) or AIDA’S SECRETS by Alon Schwarz (HOT DOCS Toronto, Audience Award Doc Aviv).
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Pia Hellenthal

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Giorgia Malatrasi
Pia Hellenthal

DRAMATURG
Lisa Reisch

PRODUCERS
Erik Winker
Martin Roelly

CREATIVE PRODUCER CORSO
Daniela Dieterich
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DOP
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SOUND RECORDIST
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Lucas Schmidt
Christian Cloos
Max Schaffer
ZDF - Das kleine Fernsehspiel
WITH
Eva Collé

produced by CORSO Film
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in association with VICE Studios and Ryot Films
in collaboration with Pia Hellenthal and Giorgia Malatrasi
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