

PETER VOLKART

6

Subotika – Land of Wonders

Zimmer 606

Ja ja, Nein nein

Monsieur Sélavy – The Way It Is

Terra Incognita

Suburban Wildlife

SHORTS

[2006 - 2015]

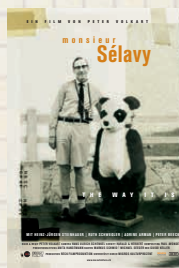




fig.1

89° 15' north 113° 73' east

**„REALITY IS ONLY
PART OF THE POSSIBLE.“**

Friedrich Dürrenmatt


In the fantastical short films of Peter Volkart, the viewer rubs his eyes in wonderment and does not know to what category they belong. Are they retro-science fiction, or films of the absurd? The poet Raymond Roussel greets us from afar (and yet at the same time so close) – a precursor of the Surrealists whose imaginary travels through Africa could have been their inspiration and initiation.

If we were to throw Dadaist photomontage, surreal collages and the hallucinatory visions of a Roussel into a kind of digital hat – or perhaps into an electronic mincing machine – and then add the aesthetic heritage of socialism (especially of the musty, GDR kind) and spice up the whole mixture with a generous portion of found-footage clips from weekly newsreels: then we would achieve the most abstruse visual concoctions that are typical of Volkart.

The director invites his viewers along on a poetic journey of exploration. Boundaries are explored, crossed, and left behind us. With intellectual verve we penetrate together that intermediary zone between the unconscious and real consciousness; the space-time continuum is interrupted and parallel universes open themselves up to the time-travelling dabbler. In these animated projections, forgotten spaces are opened up and the viewer soars away into never-discovered wonderlands beyond existence. The unsuspecting voyager/voyeur visits transcendental cities and imaginary landscapes until he reaches a zero gravity point and is swallowed up into a black hole.

Volkart's digital icon sampling in the computer corresponds to the writing technique developed by Raymond Roussel that is based on word plays and sound associations. The pataphysical creative potential of Peter Volkart – film-maker and image-maker – breaks the bounds of the sedate Swiss average to an astronomic degree. His magical films are like amber stones in which insects have been trapped for millennia, and they delight one like the white Alba truffles whose taste reveals itself only to connoisseurs.

Thomas Pfister
Media scientist, cultural mediator, curator, publicist
Head of Cinema at the Bern Art Museum 1983-2003
Lecturer at the Bern/Biel School of Design



Zimmer 606 – Room 606
Staff Lounge

We are happy to serve you.

Camp

MR. VOLKART'S CABINETS OF WONDERS

In the capital city of Surabaya, hotel meals are delivered directly to the room via pneumatic post. A little farther north, in the small town of Petrograd, the surrounding region is so rich in mineral resources that hair oil and shoe polish is pumped directly out of the ground. And at the Lunaport aerospace base, steam-driven rockets are waiting for their first mission into space.

Welcome to the outlandish island of Subotika, the most recent destination in the repertoire of the Swiss world explorer Peter Volkart. What Volkart has created in his award-winning films is fantastic in every respect: they are journeys of the mind that transport us to imaginary realms. This man from the small country of Switzerland fabricates in his short stories entire worlds sweeping so far they rarely fit on a map.

The town of Novosuburbia
in "Terra incognita"

Kurt Bachofen, first artist on the moon in
"Yea yea, nay nay" (Heinz Jürgen Nutz)



In most cases, his characters are explorers, at times even explorers against their will. For instance, the inventor of the "Magnetodrom" in quest of the legendary anti-gravity ("Terra Incognita," 2006). Or the eccentric artist from the Swiss provinces who, on a failed self-experiment, catapults himself to the moon, where he henceforth grows vegetables and works on his sculptures made of lunar basalt, far removed from the public eye and state support for culture ("ja ja, nein nein," 2010). Or the travelling salesman peddling glass eyes who manages to get the last vacant room in a run-down hotel. Unbeknownst to him, the inner workings of the apparatuses in this establishment are covert, for dwelling inside the clock and television are tiny beings that keep them running, like in a miniature totalitarian state ("Zimmer 606," 2012).

This is typical for Volkart, this surreptitious surrealist of Swiss filmmaking: "Zimmer 606" is a convoluted masterpiece made up of parallel universes. It feeds on an old childhood fantasy – the notion that dwarf-like beings crouched inside the radio are making the music and reciting the news. Volkart utilises the small scale of the short film to navigate through a cosmos that unflinchingly pushes the boundaries of what we learned to call reason and reality.

In the case of his latest film “Subotika” (2014), Volkart goes back to his own fictitious geography: an island called Subotika had already appeared in “Terra Incognita.” The fact that he has now bestowed an entire cinematic journey upon this island is due to a Bulgarian tourism film from 1979 he accidentally stumbled across on the Internet in 1979. The seemingly random sequence of touristic impressions underscored with tacky easy listening music inspired him to create a remake, as he puts it. And sure enough, Volkart’s remake is more like a fantastically skewed, yet tender persiflage on tourism advertising which in fact completely defeats the purpose – but in an absolutely sublime manner.

Thus we accompany Elfriede and Herbert, newlyweds on their honeymoon here in this country improbably suitable for romantic forays. Although the narrator in voiceover stoically maintains the contrary, he himself does not seem to really believe the hackneyed tourism marketing slogans he continually discharges. Furthermore, the black crater in the Subotikan mountains with, reportedly, a tunnel leading straight through the earth directly to Paris. This, too, is to be taken symbolically: Subotika, the flip side of the city of love; a dismal, yet somehow enchanted spot on the other side of the world.

Like in all of his films, Peter Volkart conceived the enchanting gloom surrounding Subotika in magnificently faded colours. In doing so, he kindles nostalgia for a world in a post-Soviet look, appearing anything but paradisiacal. His films are a bit like the exquisite animated canapés that Igor, the Subotikan chef, serves in his bistro: everything looks as if it were preserved in aspic.

A confirmed nostalgic? Volkart answers with a smile and pretends he has not heard the question. Wearing his flat cap, he looks a little like the friendly clerk in a fantasy government agency that would still need to be invented. But Volkart is not simply an ingenious fantast. He is a collector who is talked into some of his stories, so to speak, by the objects he gathers. In his films he fabulates entire worlds from findings that only exist in his head. In the past, he frequented flea markets to buy old photographs and film reels from private archives and then ascribe his own stories in the montage; nowadays it’s a lot more convenient via Internet.

It comes as no surprise then that to a large extent “Subotika” is also made up of stock footage of landscapes which he composed on the computer, creating these fantastic tableaux vivants



in which hidden charms can still be discovered even upon third and fourth viewing. As in the case of *Plutonia*, the cruise liner run aground in “*Subotika*” with a reservoir tower and a dilapidated tenement rising up from the deck, but actually have no business being there, at least according to our mundane logic. Could one say that Peter Volkart is a tinkerer? “There is a more elegant word for it,” he corrects, kindly. “I prefer *bricoleur*.” And it is indeed closer to the *esprit* of the surrealists, tangible in all of his films.



This *esprit* can also be felt in his studio at the edge of Zurich, comprised of an editing room and a spacious atelier. As a visitor, it feels at times as if one might have slipped through a wormhole and entered a wonder cabinet. Under the elegantly ornate nameplate from Igor’s bistro, a prop from “*Subotika*,” one also finds a small aquarium, jutting out from the wall. In it floats an eyeless, whale-like chimera, and if you get too close, it lets a few air bubbles loose.

But how does Peter Volkart find the balance between commissioned works and his own short films? Very simple: “I work on the commissions in the morning, and on my films in the afternoon.” He learned the craft of filmmaking long ago in New York: in the early eighties he studied art at the School of Visual Arts, in addition to attending film courses at the New York University. After that, he found his way much later from object art to film – also thanks to digitalisation. For however nostalgically fitted out his films may be, Volkart raves about the abundance of digital tools on the computer affording him complete freedom in image processing. “But in the atelier,” he says, pointing over there, “the wood shavings still fly.”

Impressions of Volkart’s studio, located on the outskirts of Zurich

The films by Peter Volkart therefore celebrate a wondrous marriage of digital technology and analogue craft as well. And apropos of nothing, he also refutes two persistent prejudices about makers of short films: he is no longer that young, nor does he dream of a feature-length work. He is beginning to feel a little strange when applying for grants: "A lot of people still consider short films a student's medium." Such being the case, his latest film was also a godsend for him, because he was able to finance



"Subotika", a co-production with Swiss television, almost solely with prize money and incentive payments: "If I had had to submit a grant application for the remake of an old Bulgarian tourism film, it would never have gone through!"

Florian Keller

(born 1976) is a film critic and culture editor at WOZ - Die Wochenzeitung, a Swiss weekly based in Zurich. He is the author of "Andy Kaufman: Wrestling with the American Dream" (University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

"Room 606"
Small-scale model of escape raft



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Suburban Wildlife

SCHICKES TIERLEBEN

Short Film, without dialogue, color, super-8, 3 min, 1983 remastered 2007



A rare glimpse into the life of a suburban mouse, living the lavish and sumptuous lifestyle of the rich and famous. Nifty architecture, high life and romance at its best. The film is the documentation of an installation that was exhibited in a New York gallery in 1983. Legendary Kodachrome Super-8 movie from the early 80ties. A restored and digitally remastered version from the Institute of Pataphysics. 100% Scientific & romantic!

Aus dem Leben einer in Saus und Braus lebenden Vororts-Maus. Schicke Architektur, Highlife und Romantik vom Feinsten. Der Film ist ein Dokument einer Installation, die 1983 in einer Galerie in New York gezeigt wurde. Legendärer Kodachrome Super-8 Kultfilm aus den 80er Jahren. Restaurierte und digitalisierte Fassung des Instituts für Pataphysik. 100% Scientific & romantic!

Scènes de la vie d'une souris périurbaine menant grand train. De l'architecture superbe, des goûts de luxe et du romantisme pur et dur. Le film est un document d'une installation exposée dans une galerie new-yorkaise en 1983. Un film de culte légendaire en Kodachrome Super-8 datant des années 80. Version restaurée et numérisée par l'Institut de Pataphysique. 100 % scientifique & romantique !



Terra Incognita [2005]



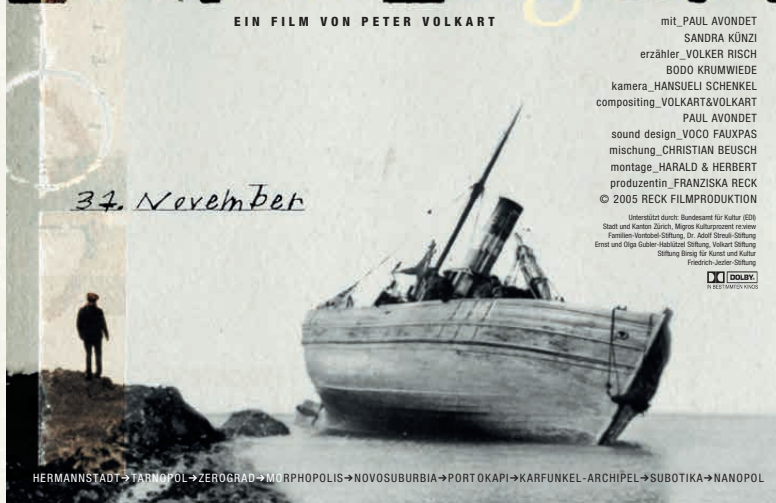
H O M M A G E R A Y M O N D R O U S S E L

Terra incognita

EIN FILM VON PETER VOLKART

mit PAUL AVONDET
SANDRA KÜNZI
erzähler VOLKER RISCH
BODO KRUMWIEDE
kamera HANSUELI SCHENKEL
compositing VOLKART & VOLKART
PAUL AVONDET
sound design VOCCO FAUXPAS
mischung CHRISTIAN BEUSCH
montage HARALD & HERBERT
produzentin FRANZISKA RECK
© 2005 RECK FILMPRODUKTION

31. November



HERMANNSTADT → TARNOPOL → ZEROGRAD → MORPHOPOLIS → NOVOSUBURBIA → PORT OKAPI → KARFUNKEL-ARCHIPEL → SUBOTIKA → NANOPOL



HOMMAGE À RAYMOND ROUSSEL

Terra incognita

Short Film, Fiction, German, 35mm, 18 min, Switzerland 2005
Production: Reck Filmproduktion, Zürich



He was in the headlines for a brief period in the late 1920s:
Igor Leschenko, the young physicist from Hermannstadt, whose bizarre experiments cast doubt upon the law of gravity. The debacle at the pataphysicist convention leads to a secret expedition to the point of zero gravity. Rare film documents of a hazardous journey beyond Zentropa through the Karfunkel archipelago.
Will Leschenko ever find the Nanopol island?

Ende der 20er Jahre war er kurz in den Schlagzeilen:
Igor Leschenko, der junge Physiker aus Hermannstadt, der mit seinen bizarren Experimenten das Gesetz der Schwerkraft ins Wanken bringt. Das Debakel am Kongress der Pataphysiker führt zu einer geheimen Expedition zum Antigravitätspunkt. Rare Filmdokumente einer Reise jenseits von Zentropa durch den bedrohlichen Karfunkel-Archipel.
Wird Leschenko die Insel Nanopol je finden?



Il a brièvement fait les gros titres à la fin des années 20:
Igor Leschenko, le jeune physicien d'Hermannstadt qui avait ébranlé la loi de la gravité avec ses expériences bizarres, c'est lui. La débâcle au congrès des pataphysiciens fut suivie d'une expédition secrète jusqu'au point d'anti-gravité. Des films documentaires rares retracent un voyage au-delà de Zentropa à travers l'archipel menaçant de Karfunkel.
Igor Leschenko découvriera-t-il l'île Nanopol?



Terra Incognita participated in over 80 international festivals and received more than 15 prizes:

Winner BEST SHORT FILM, Festival Int. des Films du Monde - Montréal 2005
Winner Swiss Film Prize 2006 BEST SHORT FILM
Winner BEST SHORT FICTION FILM, Festival Int del Cortometraggio di Siena 2005
Nomination MÉLIÈS D'OR (European Fantastic Film Festivals Federation-EFFFF)
Winner BEST SHORT FILM, Festival Int. du Film Fantastique de Neuchâtel 2005
Winner BEST SHORT FILM Zürcher Filmpreis 2005 - Zurich Film Award 2005
Winner BEST SHORT FILM - FIPA D'OR, Festival Int. FIPA Biarritz 2006



Monsieur Sélavy - The Way it is [2008]

EIN FILM VON PETER VOLKART

monsieur
Sélavy



RECK
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C

THE WAY IT IS

MIT HEINZ-JÜRGEN STEINHAUER | RUTH SCHWEGLER | ADRINE ARMAN | PETER BEECK

BUCH & REGIE PETER VOLKART KAMERA HANS ULRICH SCHENKEL SCHNITT HARALD & HERBERT COMPOSITING PAUL AVONDET
PRODUKTIONSLEITUNG ANITA HANSEMANN BAUTEN MARKUS SCHMID | MICHAEL SEEGER MIX GUIDO KELLER



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monsieur
THE WAY IT IS
Sélavy

Short Film, Fiction, 35mm, 10 min, Switzerland 2008
Production: Reck Filmproduktion, Zürich

*On the move with **Monsieur Sélavy**.
A film diary about the vicissitudes of existence and how to encounter
them with dignity. A journey in which space and time coordinates
become a bit tangled...*

*Unterwegs mit **Monsieur Sélavy**.
Ein Filmtagebuch über die Wechselfälle und Schieflagen des Daseins
und wie man ihnen mit Würde begegnet. Ein Reise, bei der Raum-
und Zeitkoordinaten etwas durcheinander geraten...*

*En route avec **Monsieur Sélavy**.
Un journal filmé sur les vicissitudes de la vie, les aléas des parcours et
la manière de les aborder avec dignité. Un voyage où le temps et l'espace
se conjuguent au-delà des coordonnées...*



Monsieur Sélavy participated in over 45 international festivals
Nominated for Swiss Film Prize 2009 – BEST SHORT FILM

Ja ja, Nein nein [2010]

EIN FILM VON ULRICH SCHAFFNER & PETER VOLKART

Ja ja nein nein

EIN STÜCK SCHWEIZER KULTURGESCHICHTE

➤ 6

➔ 6A

MIT HEINZ-JÜRGEN STEINHÄUER AKA KURT K. BACHOFEN | ERZÄHLER WOLFRAM BÉRGER | SPECIAL GUESTS LÉON HUBER | SUSANNE WILLE

BUCH UND REGIE ULRICH SCHAFFNER & PETER VOLKART KAMERA HANS ULRICH SCHENKEL REGIEASSISTENZ ANITA HANSEMANN COMPOSITING PAUL AVONDET
SOUNDDSIGN & MIX GUIDO KELLER STIMMEN HANS-RUDOLF TWERENBOLD | JOSHUA ABBEY PRODUZENTEN NICO GUTMANN & ANDREA BÜRGI

COOP MEDIA EINE PRODUKTION DER UNICO FILM ZÜRICH FINANZIERT DURCH DAS AARGAUER KURATORIUM UNTERSTÜTZUNG DURCH SWISSFILMS



A FILM BY PETER VOLKART & ULRICH SCHAFFNER

Ja ja, nein nein

Short Film, Docu-Fiction, German, HDcam, 19 min, Switzerland 2010
Production: unico film, Zürich in cooperation with the Aargauer Kuratorium

Should the government get involved in promoting and funding the arts? In the Sixties this question was avidly discussed in the small, sedate Swiss Canton of Aargau.

Ja ja, Nein nein (yea yea, nay nay) – A film about a visionary patron of the arts, a performance artist who mysteriously disappears and a unique arts funding scheme.

Soll sich der Staat in die Kulturförderung einmischen? In den sechziger Jahren wurde diese Frage im beschaulichen Schweizer Kanton Aargau hitzig diskutiert.

Ja ja, Nein nein – Ein Film über einen visionären Kulturförderer, einen verschollenen Aktionskünstler und ein bahnbrechendes Kulturgesetz. Ein Stück Schweizer Kulturgeschichte.

Le gouvernement doit-il s'impliquer dans la promotion de la culture? Dans les années soixante, cette question était au cœur d'un débat ardent dans le doux Canton suisse d'Argovie.

Ja ja, Nein nein (oui oui, non non) – Un film sur un promoteur visionnaire de la culture, sur la disparition mystérieuse d'un artiste performer et une loi culturelle révolutionnaire.



Ja ja, nein nein was the winning project commissioned by the Aargau Endowment for the Arts 2009 to celebrate its 40th anniversary.

Ja ja, nein nein participated in the official selection of Clermont-Ferrand 2010, Huesca 2010, Zinebi Bilbao 2010, Interfilm Berlin 2010, Expression en Corte, Mexico 2010 (among others)

Zimmer 606 [2012]

ZIMMER 606

EIN FILM VON PETER VOLKART

19 01

PHIL HAVES | MAX MERKER

FRANCESCA TAPPA | HELMUT VOGEL | HEINZ-JÜRGEN STEINHAUER | PETER BECK

BUCH & REGIE: PETER VOLKART
REGIEASSISTENT: ANITA HANSEMANN HAUER | HANS-BLONDI SCHNECKEL
SET DESIGN: MARKUS SCHMID | VALENTIN KEMMNER
LICHT: SALVATORE PIAZZITTA | MONTAGE: HARALD & HERBERT
MUSIK: BLEHMUSIK & NIRAID HRISTANBEOVIC | ORKESTER BEN JEBER
SOUND MIX: GUIDO KELLER | POSTPRODUKTION: PAUL AVONDIET | PRODUKTION: FRANZISKA RECK
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ZIMMER 606 [ROOM 606]

CHAMBRE 606

Short Film, 35mm, 15 min, Switzerland 2012

Production: Reck Filmproduktion, Zürich in coproduction with SRF-SRG



The travelling salesman Jonathan Fisch peddles glass eyes. His journey takes him to the edge of the province, where he checks in to a run-down hotel. The attic room number 606 has its pitfalls. Something rather peculiar is happening beyond the wall. Jonathan Fisch can expect a very turbulent night. A night that begins one evening in late autumn and doesn't end until spring.

Der Handlungsreisende Jonathan Fisch hausiert mit Glasaugen. Die Reise führt ihn an die Ränder der Provinz, wo er in einem heruntergekommenen Hotel absteigt. Das Mansardenzimmer Nr. 606 hat seine Tücken. Denn jenseits der Wände geht Sonderbares vor sich. Eine unruhige Nacht steht Jonathan Fisch bevor, die im Spätherbst beginnt und erst im Frühling endet.

Le représentant de commerce Jonathan Fisch fait du porte-à-porte pour vendre des yeux de verre. Ses déplacements le conduisent aux confins de la province, où il passe la nuit dans un hôtel miteux. La chambre mansardée numéro 606 lui réserve quelques fourberies. De l'autre côté des murs, il se passe en effet de drôles de choses. Jonathan Fisch doit s'attendre à une nuit agitée, qui commence à la fin de l'automne et se termine au printemps seulement.

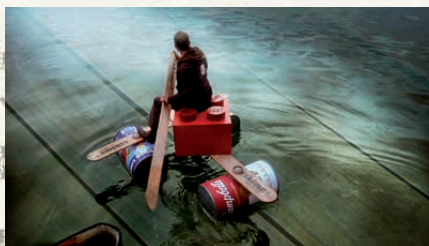
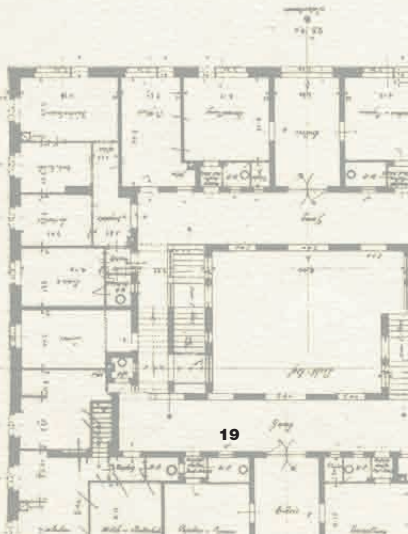
Zimmer 606 participated in over 50 international festivals and received more than 8 prizes:

Winner - BEST SHORT FILM, Neuchâtel Int. Fantastic Film Festival NIFFF 2012

Winner - BEST EUROPEAN FANTASTIC SHORT FILM 2012, Sitges 2012

Nomination - BEST SCRIPT 6th, Grand OFF World Independent Film Awards 2012

Winner - BEST SHORT FILM, Hong Kong International Film Festival 2013



Subotika – Land of Wonders [2015]



A SHORT FILM BY PETER VOLKART

SUBOTIKA

LAND OF WONDERS

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Subotika, the holiday destination that lives up to its promises.



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BUCH & REGIE: PETER VOLKART | REGIEASSISTENT: ANITA HANSEMANN | KAMERA: HANS ULRICH SCHENKEL | SET DESIGN: ELJANE BERTSCH | STYLING: KARLALD & HERBERT |
MUSIK: SEDJANKA SOUND | MIT GUIDO KELLER | POSTPRODUKTION: UELI NUESCH | PRODUKTION: FRANZISKA RECK | EINE RECKFILM PRODUKTION IM VERBUND MIT SRF | SRG

MIT FINANZIELLER UNTERSTÜTZUNG VON BUNDESGÄRTEN FÜR MEDIEN, ZÜRCHER FILMSTIFTUNG, MEDIEN KUNSTPROJEKT, SUCCES PASSAGES ANTONIUS, SUCCES ZÜRICH, FILMSTIFTUNG KOLLEKTIV FFM

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SUBOTIKA

LAND OF WONDERS

Short Film, Fiction, DCP, 14 min, Switzerland 2015
Production: Reck Filmproduktion, Zürich

Subotika, a little-known island on the other side of the globe. Endeavouring to step up tourism in the Republic, the Foreign Minister commissions an advertising movie. An enchanting country with extraordinary sights, grand visions and a couple of minor problems.

Subotika, eine kaum bekannte Insel auf der anderen Hälfte der Erdkugel. Um den Fremdenverkehr der Republik anzukurbeln, gibt der Aussenminister einen Reklamefilm in Auftrag. Ein Filmwerk über ein zauberhaftes Land mit aussergewöhnlichen Sehenswürdigkeiten, grossartigen Visionen und ein paar geringfügigen Problemen.

Subotika, une île peu connue de l'autre côté du monde. Désireux de renforcer le tourisme dans la République, le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères passe commande pour un film publicitaire. Un pays charmant: des vues extraordinaires, de belles perspectives... et quelques problèmes mineurs.



CARTE SUBOTIKA

pour servir à l'Émission de Li, Bureau des Émissions

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Subotika Land of Wonders participated in over 20 international Festivals
Winner BEST SOUND AWARD, Sapporo International Short Film Festival 2015
Nominated for Zurich Film Prize 2016 – BEST SHORT FILM
Nominated for Swiss Film Prize 2016 – BEST SHORT FILM
Official Selection Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2016



PETER VOLKART studied visual arts and filmmaking in Zurich and New York. In addition to making independent short films and documentaries for television, he worked as art director and editor. He has created many trailers and commercial shorts and collaborated on numerous feature film projects. Since 2002 he runs a graphic design studio in Zurich specializing in motion graphics, special effects and all kinds of mixed media productions. Besides working commercially, Peter Volkart has had various exhibitions in art galleries and art museums in Switzerland and abroad.

FILMOGRAPHY

- Subotika – Land of Wonders** (short film, fiction, 13 min, 2015)
Zimmer 606 (short film, fiction, 15 min, 2012)
Ja ja, Nein nein (co-director, docu-fiction, 20 min, 2009)
Monsieur Sélavy – The Way It Is (short film, fiction, 10 min, 2008)
Terra Incognita (short film, fiction, 18 min, 2005)
En Route... (short film, TV-documentary, 25 min, 2001)
Crosstown (short film, TV-documentary, 25 min, 1994)
Der junge Eskimo (short film, experimental/fiction, 40 min, 1986)
Mongolia (short film, experimental/fiction, 28 min, 1984)
Ein Zwischenfall (short film, experimental, 28 min, 1983)
Suburban Wildlife (short film, experimental/documentary, 3 min, 1983)



The image shows a wall covered in floral wallpaper with a pattern of pink and red roses on a light beige background. In the center of the wall, there is a circular hole. A keyhole is cut into the wall directly below the hole, with a dark, shadowed interior. The text 'ВИХІД EXIT' is printed in a bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the wall, partially overlapping the hole and the keyhole.

ВИХІД EXIT

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