



THE FIFTH POINT OF THE COMPASS

A film by Martin Prinoth





"A very great experience to see this movie!"

Dietrich Kuhlbrodt



THE FIFTH POINT OF THE COMPASS

D/I 2017 | 78min | DCP 2K | 5.1 Dolby Surround
German, Portuguese, Rhaeto-Romanic

DIRECTING, WRITING, EDITING & SOUND **Martin Prinoth**
CINEMATOGRAPHY **Jytte Hill**
MUSIC **Max Andrzejewski, Marco Mlynek**

RESEARCH **Ana Figueira, Renata Reis**
INTERPRETER BRAZIL **Renata Reis**
SCRIPT CONTRIBUTIONS **Akin E. Şipal**
ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTIONS **Martina Mahlknecht**
DRAMATURGICAL CONSULTING **Jan Eichberg, Andreas Pichler**

COLOUR GRADING **Florian Geiser**
SOUND MIXING **Stefano Bernardi**
VOICE RECORDINGS **Roland Musolff**
ASSISTANT EDITOR **Victor Majarres**
EDITORIAL CONSULTING **Gisela Gondolatsch, Nela Märki**

TITLES, GRAPHICS **Magdalena Akantisz**
RESEARCH FOOTAGE **Moritz Bonatti**
TRANSLATIONS **Gareth Norbury, Georg Zeller, Azra Fetahovic**
ADDITIONAL TRANSLATIONS **Nicole Pozzi, Veronika Mussner, Irene Kostner**
SUBTITLES **Georg Zeller**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **Arne Körner**
FILM MANAGEMENT **Frank Scheuffele**
PRODUCERS **Valerio B. Moser, Andreas Pichler, Martin Prinoth**

A PRODUCTION BY **Against Reality Pictures & Miramonte Film**

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"A powerful and complex documentary."

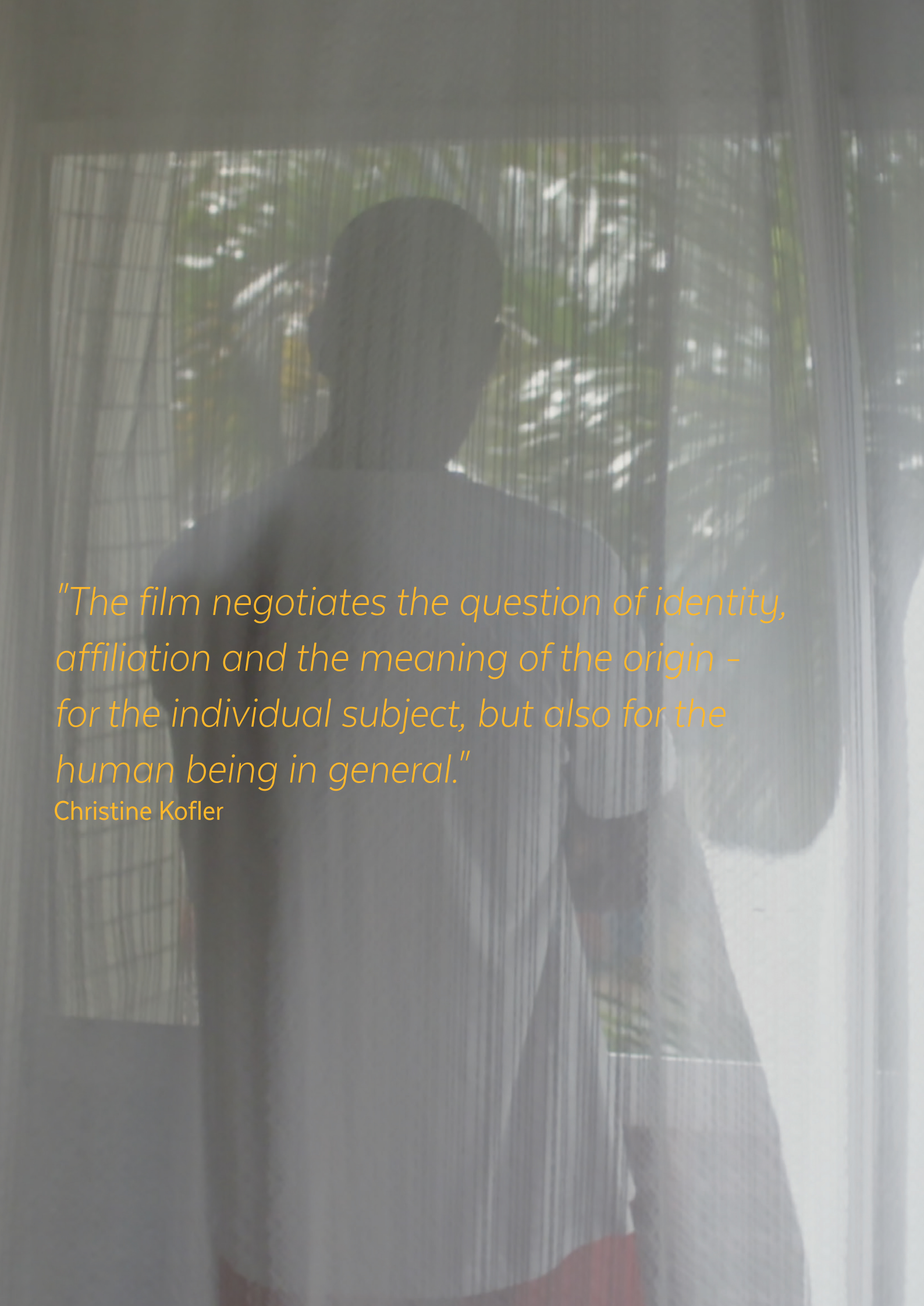
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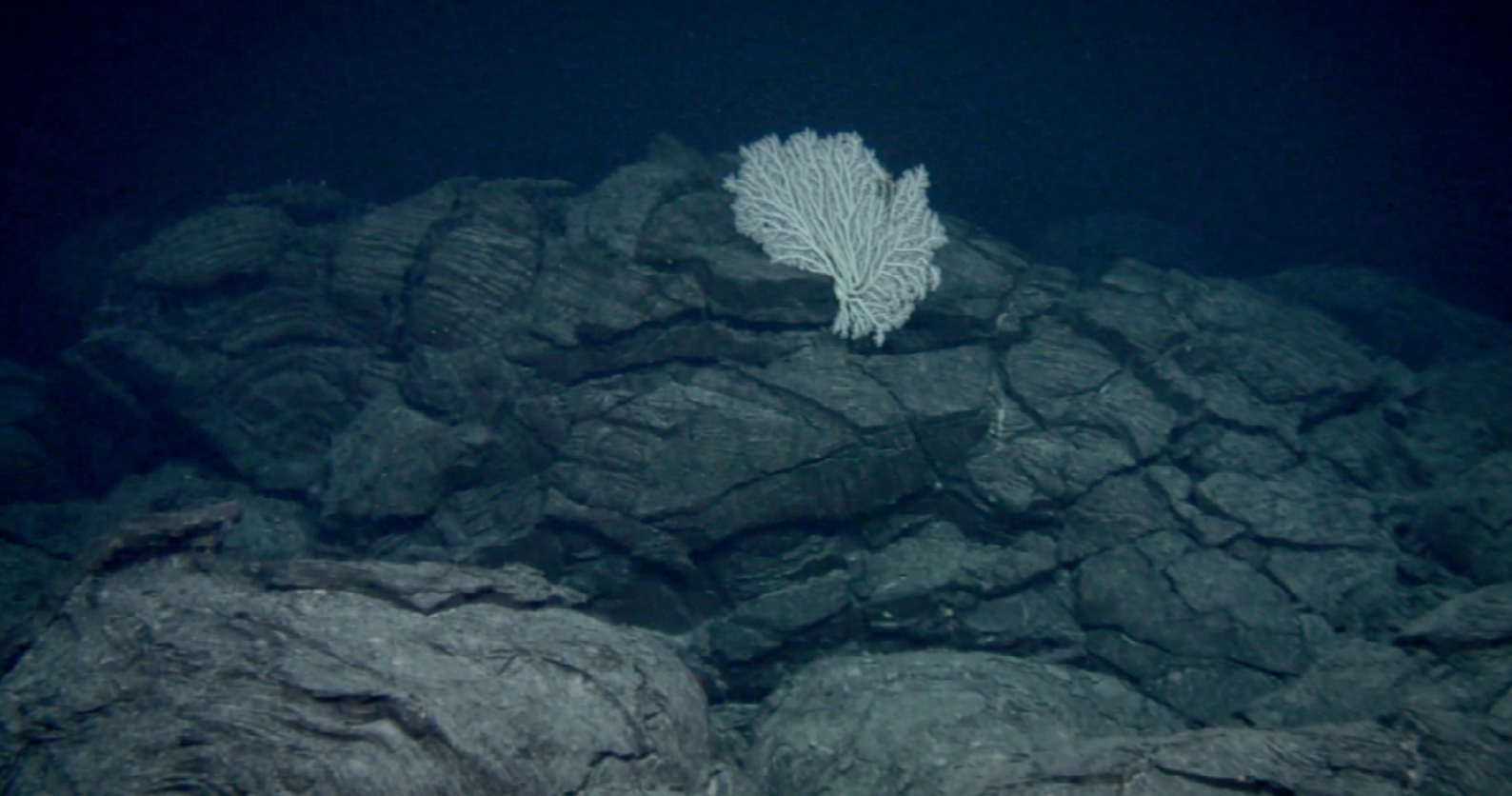
SYNOPSIS

On 1 June 2009 a passenger plane crashed into the Atlantic Ocean. My cousin Georg, returning from Brazil, was among the 228 dead. He grew up as an adopted child in a small Italian village in the midst of the Dolomites; he had travelled to the city of Salvador da Bahia on the coast of Brazil in search of his biological mother. Seven years later his adoptive brother, Markus, crosses the ocean to follow Georg's footprints into his own past.

A person's silhouette is seen from behind, looking out a window. The window has a grid pattern, and the view outside shows green trees and foliage. The scene is dimly lit, with the light coming from the window.

"The film negotiates the question of identity, affiliation and the meaning of the origin - for the individual subject, but also for the human being in general."

Christine Kofler



ON THE FIFTH POINT OF THE COMPASS

The drama is reflected in geological dimensions and prehistoric depths. Where does it come from, our desire to know how the world was created? Where do we come from? The rocks from the depths of the ocean contain the stardust, the primal matter, the answer to the question. The origin of all life can be explored; but not necessarily the origin of one specific life.

Martin Prinoth has taken his film down to the bottom of the sea, to where the primary rock is located, and to where the body of his cousin Georg sank when he died in a plane crash over the Atlantic in 2009. Georg, just like his brother Markus, was an adopted child. They were born in Brazil and were brought as small boys to a village in the Dolomites – without knowing anything about their origins, or even who their biological mothers were or are. With a special sensitivity and attention, “The Fifth Point of the Compass” goes in search of the roots and identities of its protagonists – from South Tyrol to Brazil, and finally to the bottom of the sea.

Lukas Stern



SEARCH AND SUBSTITUTION - INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN PRINOTH BY LINA PAULSEN

/ You have known Markus and his story for a very long time now. What was for you the point when you decided to make a film about him and his search? /

It is both right and wrong to say that I have known Markus and his story for a long time. We both grew up in the same village community, went to the same school and had friends in common. But over time our ways parted and we saw each other less and less. When Markus and his brother Georg finally moved away at the age of 14 or 15, we practically stopped seeing each other. I believe it was during this time when we lost contact that my interest in the story of the two brothers began to grow. I realised that hardly anyone in the village knew what they were now doing or where they lived. That made me curious. I believe that curiosity is an important and strong impulse in making a film. I was particularly interested in things that I did not know about, but that I only learnt about while making the film and was thus able to explore more deeply. The curiosity to approach the unknown plays a very important role here. The trigger for making a film about the two brothers was without doubt the moment when the plane carrying Georg crashed into the Atlantic. The tragedy of a person who did not know where he came from or who was his mother, and who was now missing in a place where nothing more can be done, moved me so much that I had to tell this story.

/ Language plays an important role in your film. You yourself use the term “mother tongue”. Since Markus obviously also speaks German, it would also have been an option to film the interviews and conversations in German. Is the decision to use Ladin personally or aesthetically motivated? /

It took some time, but in the end I decided to do the interviews with Markus and his mother in the Ladin language. The main reason was indeed that it is our mother tongue and I wanted to address this idea in the film. What does our native language mean for our sense of self? How much are we shaped by the language that we hear and speak from an early age? Something I also find interesting here is the fact that the language we grow up with is called our mother tongue, not our father tongue. That means that the link between a child and his or her mother reflects a very deep relationship. On the other hand I found the exotic factor of the Ladin language to be very stimulating. As far as I know, no other documentary film has been made in this language for the cinema. It is a very old, small language, spoken by only around 30,000 people worldwide. The third point for me was the astonishing similarity between Ladin and the Portuguese that is spoken in Brazil. Although both languages have completely different vocabularies, they sound very similar.

/ Sometimes the Rhaeto-Romanic language does in fact sound very similar to Portuguese. The theme of substitution or surrogacy, where something seems similar to the original but cannot completely replace it, appears in general to play a major role. Adoptive parents who take the place of parents, Markus who takes the place of Georg, a mother who in place of Markus's mother tells us why she gave up her children. Was this motive planned, or did it just happen? /

That is an excellent association to make. During the making of the film it became clear to me that it had to find a way to fill in the gaps and spaces in the biographies. This fact was not however completely divorced from the fear of failure. Because how do you tell the story of a missing brother, of a mother that nobody knows and of children about whose origins nothing is known? It was a voyage into uncharted territory. And for Markus it still represents a huge uncertainty.

/ The landscape images are impressive, with the aesthetic tension between the mountains and the sea demonstrating the difference between the two worlds of Brazil and the valley in the Dolomites where you grew up, while emphasising both the beauty and the constrictions of this mountain valley. How does the geographical location of where we grew up mark the way we think and feel? /

I believe that we are very strongly influenced by the geography of a place, and particularly the place where we spent our childhood, perhaps

even more strongly than the traditions and history of a place. As a child I cannot escape from a particular landscape. On foot or by bike I can only make it as far as the next village, which then looks just like my own. I only manage to discover new landscapes as a youth or an adult. As a child I can internally accept or oppose the traditions or history of a community. The decision to move from the mountains of South Tyrol to the flatlands of Hamburg was not only a major geographical change for me: it also changed me very much as a person. Only in Hamburg did I realise that from our room as children we could not see the sky, but only the mountain forests that stood like a wall outside. The mountains hem us in and can make us feel small, but they also offer us unbelievably distant views when we climb them and perceive their size and nature. Wide open spaces however immediately show us that there are no boundaries as far as the eye can see. I also believe that people who grow up in flat areas see the world around them more openly – which is not to say that they also automatically think more openly.

/ In a flat landscape you can see everything coming from a distance, be it the weather or an unannounced visit, so there are no nasty surprises to fear. While (in positive and negative ways) mountains always conceal the uncertain, a plain or the flat sea next to which Markus stands in Brazil actually promise clarity. On the other hand the sea is of course also a boundary beyond which we cannot go and behind or in which something or someone may be lost (literally, in the case of Georg). At the end of



the film Markus realises that he will never find clarity. By means of this twist, the focus of the film for me shifts from action (which would provide material for some five melodramas) to character. At the moment when the tension is released in the aftermath and the hope of a possible “happy ending” is dashed, Markus once again comes into focus and we can now put ourselves in his position without any narrative to divert us. How important was it for you to maintain this tension, and how difficult was it in this situation to find an end that fully reflects both the complex actual situation yet at the same time represents an end? /

It is never clear at the beginning of a journey how it will end (unless you book an all-inclusive trip from a travel agency). It could have come about that we found reference points that could have told us more about Markus's past. But we gradually realised that this endeavour would be difficult as only a few of the people and institutions concerned were ready to speak openly and above all truthfully about it. When we returned from Brazil we had no more illusions. A year passed during which I sat at the cutting table and had almost finished the film, but I could not find an end for the story. One day Markus called me and told me that he had go back to Salvador and wanted to speak with me. This discussion then became the epilogue for the film. I had the feeling that the time between our filming up until now had given Markus the chance to view his situation from another, perhaps wider perspective, and to see things more clearly. It was important for me at the end of the film to offer a glimmer of hope and show that while Markus could not make his wish come true, he nevertheless remained optimistic that he would someday find answers to his questions; and this last discussion offered just that.

/ Towards the end of the film it is also clear that tensions for the first time arise between the two of you. How was it working together? How is Markus getting on today and how is your current relationship? /

The subject of the film inevitably also provokes situations where there are personal arguments and tensions. Too much is at stake for Markus and the matter is too important for him for the trip to his native land to be a relaxed event. The emotions that welled up in Markus during the filming in Brazil could only to a certain extent be foreseen and I had always reckoned with the possibility of halting the project. I find the conflicts that can be seen in the film are actually characteristic of documentary film-making as a whole. The question is how to find a con-

stant balance in the relationships between protagonists and filmmaker. Sometimes, either consciously or unconsciously, you can cross the line and reach a point where you come out with what you had not previously had the nerve to say or show. We reached this point several times, but then we would always once more find common ground. For me this working relationship was not easy, but it was also very rewarding and I know from Markus that he views it in the same way.

/ You are audibly present in the film for a long time before your argument. By doing the voiceover yourself, you reveal and open up your commanding/narrative position that could otherwise have been hidden behind the montage. At what point during the creative process did you make this decision as regards form? /

I made the decision relatively early on. The story of Markus, Georg and myself is directly connected to the place where we grew up. I thought it was important to make known my perspective on the place and the circumstances of that time. If I had remained in the background I would have concealed an important point of the film – namely that I too am part of this reality – and that cannot be. My view is at first that of the “locals”, reflecting the views of the population. I also however take a position and offer an approach to discussion that, in my opinion, was always lacking.

/ A voiceover always breaks into the impression of direct reality. In addition there is your personal family involvement and a screenplay that places Markus' search in a wider context, in a way that you also seem at some point to become a kind of substitute for Markus in his search, or perhaps the other way round? /

Filmmaking for me means undertaking a search. As in every artistic engagement, I am also undoubtedly looking for myself and I think that it is important to make this process clear to the viewer. A documentary film is in my view not so very different from a feature film, an animated film or even experimental cinematic forms. It concerns the narration of a story, a situation, an experience, a feeling, etc. I think it is wrong if a documentary film acts as if it were conceivably neutral and independent of the filmmaker. I think it is important for the author to remain “visible” behind his or her work. Clearly this opens up a line of attack that might also be uncomfortable, but what else should a film be other than a trigger for discussion of and engagement with the narration we have experienced in the cinema?



LEADING TO OURSELVES

With his film “The Fifth Point of the Compass”, Martin Prinoth goes in search of his own roots while at the same time leading us into the world outside. In an impressive, very intimate fashion we take part as spectators in a cinematic expedition, at the centre of which fate stands and becomes almost microscopically visible. Why do we live where we live? Into which life are we born and where does it lead us? Which circumstances guide us into a life that then becomes ours? These are questions that the film also asks of us as viewers. Once we begin to follow these trails, the mysterious, the incomprehensible becomes ever clearer. We try to search out a mosaic that might perhaps make sense in order however to understand ever more clearly on our way there that we will probably only obtain a vague idea of it.

The filmmaker offers his protagonist this film as a medium and a means of transport to delve into his own life story. We experience the emotional process between the two men and hope along with them that the hidden may be revealed, just as the mountains at the beginning the film emerge from the clouds to reveal the setting. The film’s two languages, Ladin and Brazilian Portuguese, could hardly be geographically further apart: the one spoken in the enclave formed by a South Tyrolean mountain valley, the other on the coast of a distant continent. And yet I can feel how close together they are and interweave with one another through the biographies of two children. The emotional strength of Martin Prinoth’s film lies in its obstinate search to get to the origins of the story and find an answer to numerous questions. The Fifth Point of the Compass leads to ourselves.

Nicolas Humbert



BIOGRAPHIES

// Martin Prinoth

Martin Prinoth was born in 1983 in Bolzano, Italy. Originally studying Communication Studies in Salzburg, Austria, he went on to attend the Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg (HFBK), Germany, where he graduated in 2013. His shortfilm LE CREATURE DEL VESUVIO was shown on several international film festivals. His first feature length documentary THE FIFTH POINT OF THE COMPASS, was produced by his production company Against Reality Pictures based in Hamburg.

// Jytte HILL

Jytte Hill was born in Hamburg, Germany. She studied Biology and Photography before she started film making. She graduated from Film Studies at the Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg in 2009. Since then she works as a freelance cinematographer and director in fiction and documentary.

// Max Andrzejewski & Marco Mlynek

Max Andrzejewski is a 31 year old drummer and composer, living in Berlin. His energetic musical work between Jazz, Rock, Improvised Music and contemporary composition brings him all over Germany and the world, and appears on numerous albums on Traumton, Act, Pirouet, Wizmar, Unit, Jazzhaus, NWog, Whyplayjazz. He studied drums at MHS Cologne and JIB Berlin. His own band HÜTTE won the „Neuer Deutscher Jazzpreis“ 2013.

Marco Mlynek is a composer and multi-instrumentalist based in Cologne, Germany. He is currently active as a solo-performer and with the art-pop project Cast Glass. Further he works regularly for theatre, film and other interdisciplinary projects.

// Against Reality Pictures

The production company was founded in 2013 by Arne Körner, Martin Prinoth and Akin Şipal.

//Miramonte Film

Miramonte Film develops and produces documentaries and other audio-visual products in different formats for the local and European markets. The company was founded in 2004 by Andreas Pichler and Valerio B. Moser.

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Ulrike Kostner



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