



STACHOVIAK!

"The moon like a knife in the sky, full all of a sudden, and no transition, no warning, like a fit of rage. I am lying in my bed, can't sleep, and rage explodes in me to such an extreme that I want to bite my hands to pieces, tear the sheet and slit someone open with pieces of broken glass"

STACHOVIAK!

a film by Philip Gröning



Contents:

The story of the good citizen and postworker Bernhardt Stachoviak, who ends up running amok.

Others would say: Out of his immense hatred towards mankind.

He would say: Against his own will.

He had no intentions for all of this.



STACHOVIAK!

Concerning the film.

This is a sad story. Because the film deals with a very simple desire - to be like the others and to be happy with it - and one who fails with this desire, very cruelly fails. A man whose desire to be well adapted has cut his ways of access, towards himself as well as towards the others. Until the solitude turns into fear, into threat, into destruction. Against which he is taking to defend himself. And this resembles hatred. But it is rather a last, failing attempt of rescue, of deliverance. For the runner amok does never just blow apart the others, he always blows apart the knot which is himself.

On a cinematic level STACHOVIAK! is the attempt to get even closer towards the nature of experience and experiencing in order to provoke both within the spectator. This became to be a journey into a more and more complex structure, and to me this is where the beauty of the strongest parts of the film lies, too. For I consider the main pleasure of filmmaking to lie there, in the creation of such complex correlations, which of all the arts only the film is capable of representing.

This film is an assault.

Because it does not tell about Stachoviak, it is Stachoviak, it is the inside of a head that is breaking.

It has to be looked at just like a painting.



Synopsis.

All things considered, Stachoviak is just a perfectly normal citizen. He has no illness. And he considers, that with him everything is just as it is with anybody else - except for a little bit more precise.

And this is his story. The story of one who wants to be just like the others, at all cost. But things are getting out of hand for him, or maybe they always were out of hands. Stachoviak, 33 years of age, postal worker, bachelor, living by himself, is afraid. And full of rage. Or rather: Hatred. Which grows within him. Because they are trying to play tricks on him. Provoke him.

He tries to control himself. HE DOESN'T WANT TO DO IT!

But they are trying to force him. A world twirls inside his head. He refuses. Locks himself up in his room. But even so he must go out again.

Obscene amorphous waves of crowd around him, bodies touching and he nearly faints. Light strikes his eyes destroyingly and the world, with one jerk, nearly disappears.

Fat white stomach coming just in time for him.





STACHOVIAK!

About the making of the film.

This film was made by very much work for very little money, and I have to thank the actors and team for this. We shot the film in days and nights, We shot in winter. I wanted the film to look like summer and so, gracefully, it was the warmest winter for the last 50 years. We shot in Munich. I didn't want the film to look like Munich and so we shot in a building about to be torn down. The result looks roughly the way things look in all cities except Munich. We wanted it to be a wild film and so we worked like crazy.

Interestingly enough the mail official refused us permission to shoot in the post offices. With a most interesting argumentation: Not the fact that a postworker will become a murderer would do damage to the image of the postal office. But the fact that a more or less crazy person is being shown to work behind the counter, could evoke the impression in the spectator that these things actually happen. And in this case - well, the spectator might get the impression that under such circumstances the secrecy of the post might not be guaranteed. Secrecy of the post! Not a word about six bullets into a stomach.

Confronted with such a jewel of official logics we gave up. The 20 second scenes in the post office became very expensive. But we understood the psychology of Stachoviak a good deal further.

The film is the result of an excellent collaboration, above all with Peter Csieslinski, the lead actor, and with Hito Steyerl-Kuribayashi, camera woman. It is important to me to mention this, as the pictures in the film all look so "found", so casual, but still it must be rea-

lized that all of these images had to be actually created, and were created. The fact that to my feeling there are no "wrong" images in the film, that there is never a lighting that gives up the smudgyness of the images for an effect, never a framing that would not fit organically with the story is a great achievement of camera work. The same applies to the art directing, all rooms were completely created by the art director, Barbara Becker.

The film was shot on high speed super 8 material, then blown up to 16mm. I did the blow up together with Hito, and this is an experience not to be recommended. Days and night in the darkness next to a very old and very slow machinery. As the stop-, slow- or speed effects had all been calculated and planned before, we had immense lists to follow, which frame will be printed how often to 16mm, which will be eliminated etc, staggering lists against the threat of pure chance, which would have ruined the rhythm of the film.

But that was still easy compared to the editing. The main problem in cutting was that the film draws its quality from the fact of being so complexly structured in any moment. But that meant that there was no way of speeding work up. There were no scenes, consequently no rough cut, no structuring frame which could have been pulled up very quickly and then be refined.

Each moment of the film had to be "woven" slowly. Because any shortcut would have ruined the organical quality of the world of insanity that I wanted to create.

It cost extremely much energy to arrive at the final cut that you see now. On occasions the film has brought me very close to a brim.

And the cutting of it very often was like a samurai battle, hitting it, slicing it apart in one blow, at the precise point, in order not to lose the fight against it.

Biography Philip Gröning

Born 1959 in Düsseldorf, raised there.

1977 Graduation, travels to South America

Since 1978 numerous jobs on the technical staff of film and TV productions.

1979-1981 studies of medicine and psychology, at the same time further jobs on production teams.

Since 1981 assistant to Peter Keglevic. Script writing, research for documentaries.

Since 1982 studies at the Munich Filmschool.

Filmography

1983: "Vom Trockenschwimmer" (The Swimmer). 8 Min., 35mm, B/W. Student Filmfestival 83 Karlovy Vary, BAFTA 87

1985: "Das letzte Bild" (The last picture taken), 32 min, 16mm, col. Filmfestival Valladolid 86.

1986/7: "Sommer" (Summer), 105 Min, 16mm, B/W, feature.

Filmfest Munich 86, Melbourne, Montreal, Amsterdam (all 87), San Francisco, Bergamo, Chicago (88)

Kodak Award Amsterdam, Annual Film award of the city of Munich, Golden "rosa camura" Bergamo.

1987/8: "STACHOVIAK!" (STACHOVIAK!), 37 min, Super 8 and Video transferred to 16mm, col. and B/W.

Filmfest Munich 88, Montreal 88.

STACHOVIAK !

Actors:

Stachoviak: Peter Cieslinski
Whore: Tessie Tellmann

Staff:

director of photography: Hito Steyerl-Kuribayashi
Lighting: Kastor Hahn
Electrician: Andreas Eicher
Art Director: Barbara Becker
Property master: Susanne Gensheimer
Make up and costumes: Inge Baumgartner
Production manager: Michael Schech
Production assistant: Ira von Gienanth
Soundrecordingist: Alex Erdl
Sound Mix: Michael Kranz
Assistant director: Karsten Mohr
Continuity: Britta Glatzeder
editing consultant: Julia Lindig
Rolf Basedow
assistant editor: Kirsten Lilly
Screenplay consultant: Ralf Zöllner
Simon Werle
Screenplay, editing, directing: Philip Gröning
Production: Philip Gröning Filmproduktion/
WDR in collaboration with
Munich Filmschool

37 Minutes, Super 8 (colour) and video (black and white)
transferred to 16mm.

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