

STEFAN HAUPT

Stefan Haupt was born in Zurich in 1961. He attended the Zurich Drama School from 1985 to 1988, obtaining a degree in Theater Education. Since 1989 he has worked as a director and independent filmmaker. In 1998 he founded his own production company, Fontana Film, in Zurich. His feature film debut **Utopia Blues** was honoured with the Zurich Film Prize and the Swiss Film Prize, among others. **Elisabeth Kübler-Ross** remains the most successful Swiss documentary film to date, with some 300,000 viewers throughout Europe. From 2008 to 2010 Stefan Haupt was president of the Swiss Filmmakers Association, and has been a board member of the foundation of SWISS FILMS, the promotion agency, since 2007. Stefan Haupt is married to actress Eleni Haupt; they live in Zurich with their four children.



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It's impossible to categorise him. He's neither the absolute auteur filmmaker nor feature film director or documentary filmmaker: "The form for telling the story always comes to me with the initial idea for a film," explains Stefan Haupt. And in actual fact, all of his feature films could also be viewed as documentary films – and vice versa. Are films like **I'm Just a Simple Person** or **Elisabeth Kübler-Ross – Facing Death** conceivable then as emotionally profound biopics, as fictional biographical films? Of course! Just like **Utopia Blues** could have been superbly realised as a documentary account of a phenomenal mental situation or **How About Love** as an examination of conflicting experiences made by voluntary aid workers on an emotional roller coaster, vacillating between their protected existence at home and their life as a volunteer in the place of action.

However diverse the themes Stefan Haupt tackles, he always does it in his own way, and very intuitively in the first instance. Initially, there is the core of an idea, encapsulated with increasingly condensed layers of plots and subplots that are researched with meticulous precision over the course of weeks, months and occasionally years. Even for his feature films Haupt collects material like a documentary filmmaker, whereby his fiction is realistically anchored. His clarity and precision notwithstanding, Stefan Haupt is first and foremost tremendously artistic. He's someone who brings his tremendous sensitivity into question, pensively deliberating until he finds his way back to that certainty which renders his films so candid and realistic.

"The form for telling the story always comes to me with the initial idea for a film." Stefan Haupt

Perhaps his grip on reality combined with a poetic vein stems from his background. Stefan Haupt's family on the maternal side was a family of teachers: his great grandfather managed a reform school in the village of Grabs in the Rhine Valley, which would later serve as the point of departure for a touching love story in Haupt's first documentary film **I'm Just a Simple Person**. His great aunt, his uncle and mother all worked in education. Everyone in the Haupt family played music intensively in their free time. All four sons played an instrument, all sang in the choir. Their passion for music, however, stemmed from their father, a precision engineer by trade who conducted church choirs and orchestra concerts in Zurich. In their late adolescent years, the brothers founded the "teatro del cuore," an independent theatre group with which they toured during the summer holidays in villages throughout the Lower Engadine and later in Southern France as well. "Music and theatre enabled us to discover and develop our personalities," reflects Stefan Haupt on these formative years.

FILMOGRAPHY

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- 2010 **How About Love**, fiction
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- 2006 **A Song For Argyris** (Ein Lied für Argyris), documentary
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- 2004 **Downtown Switzerland** (co-director), documentary
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- 2003 **Moritz**, fiction
-
- 2003 **Elisabeth Kübler-Ross – Facing Death** (Elisabeth Kübler-Ross – Dem Tod ins Gesicht sehen), documentary
-
- 2001 **Utopia Blues**, fiction
-
- 2001 **Inceschantüm (Heimweh)**, documentary
-
- 1998 **I'm Just a Simple Person**, documentary

AWARDS

A Song For Argyris (Ein Lied für Argyris)
Swiss Film Prize: Nomination for Best Documentary Film; Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival 2007: Audience Prize; Los Angeles Greek Film Festival 2007: Public Award; Erasmus EuroMedia Award 2008: Country Medal for Switzerland

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross
Quality Award, Swiss Federal Office of Culture 2003; Swiss Film Prize 2004: Nomination for Best Documentary Film

Utopia Blues
Zurich Film Prize 2001; Swiss Film Prize 2002: Best Fiction Film and Best Actor; Max Ophuels Prize Film Festival 2002, Saarbrücken: Screenplay Award, Interfilm Award, Best Newcomer Actor; International Film Festival Molodist 2002, Kiev: Grand Prix "The Scythian Deer"

I'm Just a Simple Person
Study Award, Swiss Federal Office of Culture 1998

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Although his great passion at that time is the theatre, Stefan Haupt starts out as a primary school teacher in a wealthy suburb of Zurich. Art and culture are, in accordance with the family tradition, relegated to the realm of hobbies for the time being. But already at that time there are those who advised him to pursue an artistic career. And naturally there are doubts: "I just had the feeling I was too young, too "unready" to already be disciplining the pupils as a father figure and urging them to stay within the lines," he explains with his typical mixture of resoluteness and modesty. Just because Stefan Haupt doesn't like being the focus of attention does not mean that he is easily dissuaded from his position, however.

In those days he continues touring with his theatre group throughout the country every summer. When his younger brother asks him for help in preparing for acting school, he plucks up his courage and also signs up for the entrance exams. He is accepted in the theatre education department and thus drops his career as a primary school teacher – against his parents' will. As a sideline, he gives courses and also works as a choir director. The eighties are often described with amateur theatre, encounter groups and role-playing games being in vogue. "It was a very intensive time, and we did the craziest things," recalls the director retrospectively.

Haupt brings his tremendous sensitivity into question, pensively deliberating until he finds his way back to that certainty which renders his films so candid and realistic.

From theatre to film

Shortly after completing his studies at the Zurich Drama School he shoots his first film. It is a commissioned film for WWF and Pro Juventute: **Parkzeit läuft** aims to demonstrate how to get youth more involved. An acquaintance asks Stefan Haupt whether he would like to direct the film. And he accepts, even though he doesn't have any real experience in film. Behind the camera is Jann Erne, who will go on to work as the cameraman in the director's future films. The young filmmaker knows that he is just as comfortable working with amateurs as with professional actors not only because of his work as a course leader, but also his experience with his own theatre group "Theater Lunis." Working with video in the theatre had already been going on for quite some time. However, the fact that he has such a sure feeling for the language of film only now becomes apparent. In retrospect, **Parkzeit läuft** appears to be the experimental field of a gifted child playing with all the tricks of the trade – blithely, heedlessly, but with a steady hand. Rapid, abrupt cuts characterise the dramatic scenes, while slow motion is used for scenes of personal moments of real delight. And already here Haupt's sense of dramaturgy is evident, as well as his courage to scatter throughout the narrative scenes seemingly devoid of action that convey much more with their visual language than commentaries and dialogue could ever impart.

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Only a few months later a cousin visiting from Canada triggers the idea for **I'm Just a Simple Person**: since his exchange year in the USA he is the designated English speaker in the family and thus the 35-year-old director shows the young woman the country of her forefathers. She tells him about her grandmother – his 90-year-old great aunt Kathrin Engler who, as a young woman, followed a letter that led her into the unknown. "It was immediately clear to me that I wanted to capture this story on film," recalls Stefan Haupt. Thanks to his gentle persistence, he is able to get his great aunt to overcome her modesty to a certain degree and tell her story. Kathrin Engler was one of the children who grew up in the reform school managed by his great grandfather in Grabs. She wasn't there because she was a difficult child, but because there was nowhere else for an illegitimate child to go after the death of her mother. The orphan child fell in love with the headmaster's son, but he had left his parents' home due to a conflict and immigrated to Canada. Five years later she received his marriage proposal in his first and only letter to her. Without hesitation, the young woman, who spoke neither French nor English and barely 20 years old, boarded the next boat to the New World to begin a new life.

Stefan Haupt revives the family saga in luminous images set in winter landscapes. Despite the personal reference, he creates a universal story about the oftentimes hard life of an emigrant couple as well as a tribute to the power of trust and love. Once more, the director leaves an ample amount of space

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between conversations for viewers to fill with their own thoughts, without for one moment the vastness of the Canadian forests coming across as boring or tiresome.

Luck is with the young filmmaker: someone recommends that he show his film to This Brunner, the former manager of the art-house cinema in Zurich, who actually arranges for a Sunday matinee at the "Studiokino Nord-Süd." Then a preview in the press praising the film works a minor miracle: on the day of the screening a long queue begins forming in front of the cinema and it soon becomes clear that there would never be enough seats for everyone. On the spur of the moment, the stunned director organises a second screening right afterwards – and it also sells out. **I'm Just a Simple Person** goes on to become the documentary film discovery of the year in 1998, filling cinemas for a number of weeks.

This success enables Stefan Haupt to pursue a long-cherished project. In his "adoptive home," the Lower Engadine, where he had spent his holidays as a child and he had performed theatre with his brothers in the villages, a place he returns to time and again as an adult to find peace and quiet, he comes across the "Fränzli da Tschlin": a group of musicians that successfully combines tradi-

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tional folk music from the region with contemporary compositions. With support from the Romansh Television, Stefan Haupt creates the documentary film **Inceschantüm (Heimweh)** in 2001. It is in this film that his deep rootedness in music also manifests itself. His film extends far beyond a portrait of musicians. It also portrays the atmosphere of the Engadine and an attitude towards life shaped by a melancholic love of the homeland. The word "Inceschantüm" means to long for one's home. According to legend, the people from the Engadine all have one thing in common: even while still in their native land they suffer from homesickness. Similar to the music by the Fränzlis, the film also shifts between nostalgia and the present, without favouring one or the other.

International success

By now the filmmaker is confident that he wants to make a living from his metier. Until now he has managed to keep his head above water by giving theatre courses and voice lessons. Attending some of these courses was a woman whose son had suffered emotionally for years and ultimately committed suicide. Stefan Haupt forms the idea of processing his fate as a feature film. **Utopia Blues**, starring Michael Finger in the leading role, becomes the second unexpected success. The sensitively rendered feature film debut was honoured with the Zurich Film Prize in 2001 and the Swiss Film Prize 2002 for Best Fiction Film as well as Best Actor. Three further awards followed at the Max Ophuels Prize Film Festival in Saarbrücken.

The success of his feature film debut gives a long-dormant project new impetus: "Sometimes you're just lucky enough to embark on something at the right time," describes the director when he started filming **Elisabeth Kübler-Ross – Facing Death**. Although the renowned expert on the process of dying is already terminally ill, she agrees to allow Swiss filmmaker, unknown to her, to visit her in her home in Arizona. The conversations with Kübler-Ross are central to the compelling biography. They impressively demonstrate how, thanks to Stefan Haupt's perseverance and serenity, moments can be created that would otherwise never have been conveyed. He patiently provides space for the shifting moods of this maverick and, at times, obstinate protagonist, thereby enabling a rapprochement in which even contradictions have their place. At the same time, Haupt's rigorous research brings to light a plethora of archive footage that depicts both the private family history and academic success of the main character, serving to elucidate her remarkable journey through life.

The documentary rapprochement on the internationally celebrated and equally controversial figure becomes a magnet for the audience: some 300,000 viewers see the film in cinemas in Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Spain – a figure that no other Swiss documentary film has ever attained. Stefan Haupt's success takes him by surprise: "Emotionally, I was still in the early stages

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of filmmaking and was suddenly celebrated as a successful filmmaker. I felt a great deal of pressure not to fail with the next film.”

Perhaps this is one reason, among others, that the next film by the budding star on the Swiss filmmaking horizon does not deal with a story written by him. Instead he directs a film for television. *Moritz*, based on the screenplay by Christa Capaul, is also the only film by Stefan Haupt that was not screened in the cinema. It is about a young boy whose mother has to go to the hospital; this causes a stir in the village because **Moritz** is entrusted to the care of his gay neighbours. **Moritz** ranks among the most successful films in Swiss dialect produced by Swiss Television. This success is certainly due to, apart from the reconciliatory plot and the appeal for more tolerance and mutual understanding, the film’s authentic dialogues – on which Stefan Haupt had taken an active part – and his assuredness as a director, which he has been honing since his time in the theatre, all of which lends the resulting film a high degree of naturalness.

Political engagement

One could have the impression that Stefan Haupt’s films are apolitical. But that would mean failing to go beyond the surface. There is at least one socio-political dimension to the themes in all of his films. Hence, the increasing aggravation of the social climate and tightening of political dealings in Switzerland lead to his next film. In 2004 he asked three director colleagues – Fredi M. Murer, Kaspar Kasics and Christian Davi – whether they would be willing to venture a film experiment with him: each would author their own contribution to the film, taking stock the general atmosphere in their native Zurich, the epicentre of banking, Switzerland’s metropolis of culture and commerce. The experiment succeeds, resulting in the loosely composed anthology film **Downtown Switzerland**. It can be viewed as a statement against the right-wing populist politics that is gaining ever more ground even in the “red-green” Zurich with its vote of no confidence and slogans designed to create fear. Concomitantly, it is an extremely fascinating experience for the four involved to discover what directors are able to achieve concertedly, “democratically” artistically – and where this collaboration sets boundaries when opinions diverge too greatly. The bonus material on the DVD provides further facets of the production, for example, how Stefan Haupt succeeds in inducing statements from politicians in lengthy interviews, rarely heard in this form, that reveal their real motives.

But Stefan Haupt’s most political film in the conventional sense is **A Song For Argyris** in 2006. This documentary film also has a longstanding back story: Haupt has known the Greek author Argyris Sfountouris, the main character in his film, since working as a course leader and theatre director. Insightfully, and again this time based on in-depth research and an abundance of archive

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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footage, he depicts Argyris’ attempt to reconcile his fate shaped by a war crime. The focus of the film deals with recounting the Distomo massacre in which the author’s well-nigh entire family fell victim: in 1944 German troops occupied the Greek village and slaughtered anyone who stood in their path. Above and beyond the historic reprocessing, Haupt’s documentary film is also a blazing denunciation against the inhumanity of every war and an appeal to the governments involved to acknowledge past injustice in order to pave the way for reconciliation.

His film **How About Love** (2010) also deals with a political theme in the background. Ostensibly, it deals with the identity crisis of a successful, middle-aged Swiss surgeon facing the emotional conflict which ensues in a refugee camp in Thailand on the Burmese border. Stefan Haupt travelled throughout the troubled region for numerous weeks in order to come as close as possible to the reality of the situation. A number of roles are cast with victims, members of the Karen folk group who had to flee from persecution by the Burmese regime. Despite the fictitious story, **How About Love** achieves an extraordinary authenticity, not least due to Stefan Haupt’s tremendous sensitivity and empathy. Notable is also the fact that in this very film, which examines family relationships intensively, the director casts his wife, actress Eleni Haupt, and two of his four children in supporting roles. In the film, he was able to combine the private and professional – important poles in Stefan Haupt’s life.

Despite the fictitious story, *How About Love* achieves a remarkable authenticity, not least due to Stefan Haupt’s extraordinary sensitivity and empathy.

This too is one of the filmmaker’s character traits: there is no half measure. When he takes on a task – be it assuming responsibilities as a father, shooting a film or the serving as president of the Swiss Filmmakers Association ARF/FDS from 2008 to 2010 – then he devotes his entire attention to it. Because the time required to deal with the conflicting Swiss film policy in the manner he regards proper, however, Stefan Haupt passed on this function to a successor, not least to be able to devote the time to his film projects and his production firm Fontana Film. It comes as no surprise that he is already occupied with several new projects: **Sagrada**, a documentary film, and **Der Kreis**, a feature film – and thereafter a children’s feature film. Author: Nina Scheu. The interview with Stefan Haupt was conducted in September 2010.

Written and directed by: Stefan Haupt
Cinematography: Jann Erne
Sound: Dieter Lengacher

Editing: Kathrin Plüss
Music: John Abercrombie, Ralph Towner, Emma und Gregor Huber-Schäpper, children's choir Grabs

Production: Fontana Film, Zürich;
Schweizer Fernsehen; SRG

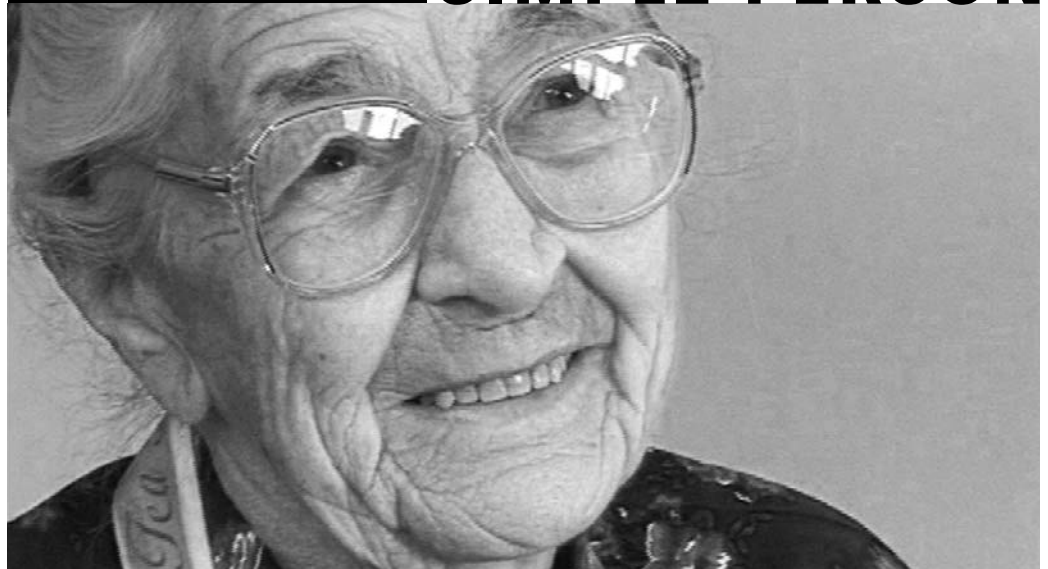
World Rights: Fontana Film, Zürich
Original Version: English/German
(german subtitles)

"Haupt's documentary film about the ordinary and simple life of a Swiss woman is so tender that you leave the cinema with a sense of pure joy in your heart." *Zürtipp*, 19.02.1999

"The face of the aged yet beautiful woman captures the viewer's complete attention. (...) *I'm Just a Simple Person* is a film of rare simplicity in terms of content and form – and therein also lies the beauty and richness of this masterful portrait." Andreas Stock, *St. Galler Tagblatt*, 17.06.1999

"The portrayed woman's attitude towards life has a direct impact on the formal epitome here, as well as on the rhythm. That's hard to find these days. (...) The viewer is simply moved by the manner in which the 90-year-old woman is able to tell her life story in just a few words and slow pace. The power of the film feeds on the aura of her entire being." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 28.10.1998

I'M JUST A SIMPLE PERSON



| 1998 | Beta SP | colour | 49'

Kathrin Engler, an orphan from the St. Gallen region of the Rhine Valley, was just 22 when she accepted her childhood boyfriend's marriage proposal and immigrated to Canada in 1929. The portrait of this extremely modest 90-year-old woman not only reveals a fascinating piece of social history and Swiss emigration history; it also unveils a wonderful, fairytale-like love story – one that came within a whisker of not happening.

Written and directed by: Stefan Haupt
Cinematography: Hans Schürmann

Sound: Thomas Thümena
Editing: Myriam Flury

Music: Ils Fränzlis da Tschlin
Production: Fontana Film, Zürich;
Telesium Rumantscha

World Rights: Fontana Film, Zürich
Original Version: Romansch
(german subtitles)

“Stefan Haupt succeeded brilliantly in capturing the spirit of the “Fränzlismusik.” When the camera holds to the music on the flowing Inn, you feel how harmoniously the region and music have bonded here. (...) A captivating docu-musical.” Gerhart Waeger, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 19.01.1998

“Broad subject matter rendered coherent by the wonderfully melancholic music.” Elio Pellin, *Berner Zeitung*, 31.01.2001

“In a calm narrative flow, Stefan Haupt portrays the history and origins of this music: he uses it and the five musicians in an associative montage as an opportunity to listen closely to not only the folk music, but also to the Engadine soul.”

Andreas Stock, *St. Galler Tagblatt*, 15.02.2001

INCRESCHANTÜM (HEIMWEH)



| 2001 | Beta SP | colour | 68'

“Increschantüm” is the Romansch word for homesickness; it also means longing. “Ils Fränzlis da Tschlin” is the name of a group that plays folk music from the Engadine. The name refers to Franz Josef Waser, a legendary blind fiddler credited with having perfect pitch. He coined the term “Fränzlismusik” with members of his family in the second half of the 19th century. When the Fränzlis perform, it is often said that the people of the Engadine all have one thing in common: they suffer from homesickness even while still in their native land. Indeed, a longing for home seems to be deep rooted in the souls of those who come from the Engadine. A film about the spirit of this music and the people who perform it and those who listen to it, about their culture and history. It is also a film about region these people come from as well as about the love and longing for this homeland.

Written and directed by: Stefan Haupt
Cinematography: Stéphane Kuty
Sound: Patrick Becker
Editing: Stefan Kälin

Music: Tino Ulrich
Cast: Michael Finger, Babett Arens,
Tino Ulrich, Ettore Cella, Bruno
Cathomas, Jaap Achterberg, Muriel
Wenger, Andrea Schmid

Production: Triluna Film, Zürich;
Fontana Film, Zürich; Schweizer
Fernsehen; SRG

World Rights: Triluna Film, Zürich
Original Version: Swiss-German

“Michael Finger impressively embraces the love of life and unbridled life force of a young person radically and without restraint. (...) *Utopia Blues* is stunning due not only to the screenplay polished right down to the last detail, but also to the performance by a very convincing cast.” Richard Walder, *Bündner Tagblatt*, 30.08.2001

“Cinematographer Stéphane Kuty succeeds in creating magical sequences for a stirring film which Stefan Haupt, as the screenwriter, renders into a sensational feature film.” Rolf Mühlemann, *Tele*, 34/2001

«*Utopia Blues* is a serious, reconstructed story illustrating how youthful creativity can suddenly change into psychosis. (...) Haupt's scenes demonstrate how strenuous a raving everyday life can be, as well as the state of uncertainty associated with mania and the right tone of lonely desperation.”

Christoph Schneider, *Tages-Anzeiger*, 23.08.2001

“Haupt's film possesses a strong poetic-musical component. It is a story about powerlessness and rage, fears and hopes, crashing and yearning, but above all about vitality and a zest for life. Not forgetting the music, which at once frees and inhibits. *Utopia Blues* is one of the best Swiss feature films in recent years, because it's coherent and boundless.” Rolf Breiner, *Bündner Zeitung*, 09.07.2001

UTOPIA BLUES



| 2001 | 35 mm | colour | 97'

The film tells the story of Rafael, an adolescent on the verge of manhood who attempts to make his dream of total freedom become reality in spite of the demands made by society. He is utterly determined to conquer the world with his Utopia Blues Band, at any cost and on his terms – impatient, sly, charming and radical. But his aspirations get out of hand and he gets off track. Rafael is forced to recognise how close freedom and separation really are.

Written and directed by: Stefan Haupt
Cinematography: Jann Erne,
Christian Davi, Patrick Lindenmaier

Sound: Thomas Thümena,
Martin Witz
Editing: Stefan Kälin

Music: Klaus Wiese, Peter Landis
Production: Fontana Film, Zürich;
Schweizer Fernsehen, SRG

World Sales: First Hand Films, Zürich
Original Version: English/German/
Swiss-German (german subtitles)

ELISABETH KÜBLER-ROSS –

FACING DEATH

“Stefan Haupt does not have a heroine’s biography in mind. Also due to his sources: the two sisters, his most important interview partners, and especially Kübler-Ross herself, speak so unadorned, directly and freely about real life that notions of mystification cannot even arise. (...) As a filmmaker, he is especially interested in her personality – and her own confrontation with society’s taboo theme of death and dying.” Kathrin Halter, *Tages-Anzeiger*, 17.01.2003

“Stefan Haupt’s documentary film is not only entertaining and touching, but surprisingly frequently witty as well.” *Thurgauer Zeitung*, 27.03.2003

“After visiting the woman who has struggled for a dignified death and now herself awaits death, the film chronologically traces a life that has placed a calling above family duties and propagating the message above academic research, all in an astute concentration of characteristic situations.” Eleonore Frey, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 17.01.2003

“Facing Death is the tender rapprochement of an exasperating person. Haupt forgoes singing a simple song of praise and instead unfurls a broad range of contradictions. (...) He has precisely carved out the most important stations in the life of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. His visual language is memorable, the images have a clear cadre and are swiftly edited.” Hans Jürg Zinsli, *Mittelland Zeitung*, 16.01.2003



| 2003 | 35 mm | colour | 98' | Elisabeth Kübler-Ross – Dem Tod ins Gesicht sehen

The film centres on conversations with the Swiss doctor Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, who passed away in 2004 after having lived many years in seclusion in the Arizona desert following a number of strokes and, as she herself said, awaiting death. Born in 1926 in Zurich, she studied medicine against her parents’ will. Later she battled for recognition as a psychiatrist in the USA and attained international fame with her book “On Death and Dying.” Now she looks back on her life, tells of her childhood, her work and how she herself attempts to deal with ageing and dying. Interviews with her sisters, friends and colleagues combined with archive footage provide insight into the life’s work of this extraordinary woman.

Directed by: Stefan Haupt
Written by: Christa Capaul, Stefan Haupt

Cinematography: Stéphane Kutry
Sound: Patrick Becker
Editing: Stefan Kälin
Music: Roman Glaser

Cast: Jonas Rohr, Anatole Taubman, Rudolph Straub, Lilian Fritz, Heidi Diggelmann

Production: Triluna Film, Zürich; Schweizer Fernsehen
World Rights: Telepool, Zürich
Original Version: Swiss-German

“Director Stefan Haupt succeeds in holding on course the various threads of this melodrama, written by him and Christa Capaul. He offers suspense with numerous twists and even surprises with a cathartic portion of humour, at the latest when the events threaten to lapse into tragedy or kitsch. (...) There is also young acting talent to discover here – with the ten-year-old Jonas Rohr leading the way in his impressive mastering of the title role.” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 26.10.2003

“*Moritz* adeptly plays with clichés, without self-righteous garrulity or a sense of educational urgency. The film takes up a subject, still taboo for many, and simultaneously delivers excellent entertainment.” *Berner Zeitung*, 24.10.2003

“Film and figures are set in an environment that depicts a blend of rural and urban, and actually quite typical for today’s Switzerland: no longer the country idyllic, but also not yet the urban metropolis. An intermediate stage, so to speak, without cynicism or ridicule. In a nutshell: everyday life in Switzerland.” *Press release Swiss Television*



| 2003 | Beta SP | colour | 87'

A single mother has to go to the hospital for an indefinite length of time. Diagnosis: a brain tumour. The care of her 10-year-old son Moritz is entrusted to the neighbours, a gay couple who look after him with the best of care. It doesn't take long before rumours begin circulating in the village. When the boy's grandmother arrives to take Moritz home with her, he rejects the idea. He wants to stay with Andi and Ralph.

Written and directed by: Christian Davi, Stefan Haupt, Kaspar Kasics, Fredi M. Murer

Cinematography: Pio Corradi, Jann Erne, Kaspar Kasics, Pierre Mennel, Filip Zumbunn
Sound: Christian Davi, Jann Erne, Matteo Pellegrini, Lukas Piccolini

Editing: Stefan Kälin
Music: Tomas Korber, Galoppierende Zuversicht, Minimetall & Luxus
Production: Fontana Film, Zürich; extra-Film Zürich; FMM Film, Zürich;

Zürich; Hugofilm Productions, Zürich
Original Version: Swiss-German/German/English/French (german subtitles)

"They weren't intending on portraying the Zurich idyll, nor a depressive documentation of blatant grievances; they weren't looking to simply document their own images of Zurich, but instead really find out about the condition and mood in their city. The delighted reactions to *Downtown Switzerland*, but even more the criticism, prove they have indeed succeeded. (...) The authors have achieved something that Swiss filmmaking has nearly lost: they react collectively and practically instinctively to their surroundings, they perceive them in a manner that leads to (re)cognition."

Michael Sennhauser, *Der Bund*, 03.11.2004

"*Downtown Switzerland* can be understood as a sort of reality check and leaves behind a deliberately ambivalent impression. With such successful associations and fragmentary reflection, the question arises as to which 'Zurichs' are real. And a craving for more. (...) Hence, this politically motivated auteur film, realised without much ado, has achieved its aim and lives up to the golden age of Swiss documentary film." Marcel Elsener, *Die Wochenzeitung*, 21.10.2004

"The extraordinary thing is that this is not an anthology film comprised of four parts. On the contrary, four signatures converge here to form a single, amusing and absolutely eye-opening 'text' about Zurich. Thanks to the editor Stefan Kälin, the four or five main argumentative threads are interwoven to form an overall impression with a surprisingly homogenous effect." Christoph Egger, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 22.10.2004

DOWNTOWN SWITZERLAND



| 2004 | 35 mm | colour | 94'

Zurich in the autumn of 2003: an insidious change in political climate prompts filmmakers Christian Davi, Stefan Haupt, Kaspar Kasics and Fredi M. Murer to embark on a trail-hunting tour of their city. They follow the pulse of life in the Swiss metropolis of culture and commerce and weave their collected footage into a collective film: four filmmakers, four cameras, four points of view. The resulting cinematic chronicle looks over the shoulders of global players and political refugees, small-scale businessmen and trendsetters, bus drivers and tram drivers, artists and young politicians of the right-wing Swiss People's Party and portrays the passions of totally average Zurich citizens. The observations of everyday life render the film a mirror of Switzerland as a whole.

Written and directed by: Stefan Haupt
Cinematography: Patrick Lindenmaier
Sound: Martin Witz

Editing: Stefan Kälin
Music: Tomas Korber, Jorgos Stergiou
Production: Fontana Film, Zürich;

Schweizer Fernsehen; RSI Radiotelevisione Svizzera, Télévision Suisse Romande, SRG

World Rights: Fontana Film, Zürich
Original Version: German/Swiss-German/Greek/French (german subtitles)

“Stefan Haupt works together with the protagonist to chart his convoluted journey through life (...) and creates the moving story of a man shaped by the horror of his childhood, not broken by it but instead championed to do more for humanity.” Geri Krebs, *Der Bund*, 03.11.2006

“With a tremendous amount of sensitivity, Haupt has assembled Argyris’ story in images and a wide range of interviews. But he tells more than historic facts. Like Argyris, he continues to question how one deals with grief and the historic guilt of a folk. (...) And the life story of this man is, despite all its gravity, also a catharsis and an excellent example of how one’s own life can be inspired by that of another.” Sonja Wenger, *ensuite kulturmagazin* Nr. 47, 11/2006

“Sfountouris calls the film ‘my testament’. But actually the touching film is a testament to those who could not make their farewells, and it is also a hymn to life.”
Christiane Schlötzer, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 16./17.05.2007

“*A Song For Argyris* cannot render the inconceivable comprehensible. But the gentle human voice resounding in this cinematic hymn refuses to go unheard. This is not a film like many others. Not because it is so rendered, but because it retreats entirely to reveal a remarkable man and his unbearable fate.” Stefan Volk, *Filmbulletin* Nr. 8, 11/2006

A SONG FOR ARGYRIS



| 2006 | 35 mm | colour | 105' | Ein Lied für Argyris

Four-year-old Argyris Sfountouris survived a brutal massacre committed by the German occupying forces in the Greek village of Distomo in 1944. He loses his parents and 30 relatives; more than 200 village inhabitants are slain within less than two hours. Argyris is sent to the Pestalozzi Children’s Village in Switzerland by Red Cross as an orphan and later obtained his PhD in mathematics and astrophysics at the ETH Zurich.

A man of winning charm and melancholy cheerfulness, he has spent his entire life tackling the horror he had to go through as a little boy. He has not tried to come to terms with it emotionally, but instead has attempted to live with it and do his utmost to prevent it from happening again. A film about dealing with personal grief – and historic guilt.

Written and directed by: Stefan Haupt
Cinematography: Parick Lindenmaier
Sound: Marco Teufen
Editing: Stefan Kälin

Music: Michel Wintsch
Cast: Adrian Furrer, Martin Hug,
Andrea Pfaehler, Jorm Leun Hkam,
U Thein Win

Production: Triluna Film, Zürich;
Fontana Film, Zürich; Schweizer
Fernsehen; Teleclub

World Rights: Triluna Film, Zürich
Original Version: Swiss-German/
German/English/Thai/Karen (german
subtitles)

"Although the story is fictitious, it seems to be authentic. This has to do with the 49-year-old director, Stefan Haupt, who dispenses with images aiming to appeal to tourists and with clichés – an everlasting, lurking danger when filming in exotic, faraway places. (...) The striking cast performs cogently, also in the supporting roles. Adrian Furrer credibly plays the role of a Protestant doctor who deserts his principles when Eros leverages his rationale. (...) A drama that delicately touches on the fundamental issues of life." Christian Jungen, *NZZ am Sonntag*, 29.08.2010

"Painstakingly and plausibly (...) Stefan Haupt tells us, against the backdrop of a real, ongoing catastrophe, of the value and limitations of engagement and of the helplessness of a helper." Christoph Schneider, *Tages-Anzeiger*, 24.08.2010

"How About Love impressively succeeds in taking stock of our western weariness of civilisation." Alexandra Stäheli, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 25.08.2010

"The images, carefully composed with a great deal of sensitivity for colour moods and lighting, surround this desire to immerse ourselves and allow the European body to take part in the dark lushness of the Southeast Asian vegetation for a certain time. (...) It is a remarkable feat for a film to conjoin a complex psychological issue – the precise commingling of a personal mission with a desire for existential intensity and ultimate clarity – with the resulting excessive demands." Bettina Spoerri, *Filmbulletin*, 03.08.2010



| 2010 | 35 mm | colour | 100'

Fritz Reinhart is a successful surgeon in Zurich suddenly faced with the suffering in a refugee camp on the Burmese border during his holiday in Thailand. Being a doctor, he is confronted with the issue of providing immediate emergency aid. He has no idea that this is going to last an entire year and that as a "helper" he will be caught in a turmoil of emotions that challenge his existence as a family man, even his entire life, abruptly and radically.