

Born in 1940 in Beckenried by Lake Lucerne, at the age of 17 Fredi M. Murer moved to Zurich, where, from 1959, he studied technical drawing at the School of Design. After two years, he transferred to the specialist photography class run by Serge Stauffer (later founder of the independent arts school F+F) and Walter Binder (later curator of the Swiss Photography Foundation). In 1964 he was responsible for the design and realization of the large-scale slide projections in the "Schooling and Education" pavilion at the national EXPO 64 exhibition in Lausanne, also publishing the collection of photographs "Youth 13-20" and making the films **Pacific**, **Chicory** and **Bernhard Luginbühl**. Murer embarked on his career as a freelance film-maker in 1967. In 1970 he and his family went into "exile" in London for a year, where he served as a visiting lecturer at the Guildford Arts School. In 1971 he returned to Switzerland and shot **We mountain people in the mountains**. That same year, he founded the Nemo Film GmbH production company, together with Alexander J. Seiler, Georg Radanowicz, Kurt Gloor, Claude Champion, Yves Yersin, Hans-Ulrich Schlumpf and Ywan Schumacher. In 1975/76 he went to the USA for a study visit. Since 1995 Murer has lived and worked in Zurich. From 1992 to 1996, he was President of the Swiss Film-Makers Association. As an innovative and independent film-maker, Murer has made a major contribution to the renaissance of the Swiss cinema. Winner of the City of Zurich Arts Prize in 1995 and the Central Swiss Cultural Prize in 1997, in 2005 he was honoured by the Zurich Foundation for Western Ethics and Culture with a lifetime achievement award. This was the first time the prize had been conferred on a film-maker, the position of his work in the world of the Swiss cinema being described as "exemplary for the power of its message".

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### A visual thinker

// He was, and is, a superb illustrator, an inventive photographer, a tightrope walker and a magician. He could just as easily have become a conjurer as a painter or a photographer. Speech was never his primary means of communication."

His first films were "silent" in the sense that they were filmed without dialogue, not least for economic reasons. There is, however, sound – music, mainly – and some speech, albeit very little, which apply shades of colour to a dynamic, purely

pictorial narrative in which grammar is superfluous. Artist friends provide the actors, playing themselves, living out an anarcho-dadaist rebellion against the cosy, bourgeois way of life: the friends in the ramshackle villa and artists' colony "Pacific", iron sculptor Bernhard Luginbühl with his family, the young poet and underground activist Urban Gwerder (in **Chicory**, with which Murer caused a furore in old-school Oberhausen), the painter Alex Sadkowsky, whom Murer interprets as a vision-obsessed, ceaseless wanderer, a day-dreamer with a gypsy spirit.

"I made my first few films as a happy amateur... As my own producer and sponsor, I used to see myself as a sort of conjurer... My last few films I've made as a grim professional."

Fredi Murer, *Das Magazin*, 1980

The medium-length film **Swiss Made 2069** is an attempt to synthesize that first period of creativity. In Murer's vision, Switzerland is a fully computerized Big Brother state where every last detail of people's lives, including their sex lives, is organized from on high and where he and his kind, the nonconformist cranks and blind seers, have been herded into reserves. A "blind and deaf" extraterrestrial, created by his friend H.R. Giger, who was later to design *Alien*, records the life of a society that has devised for itself eternal order and eternal peace in the shadows. This society is annihilated by a catastrophe of its own making, and only the underground survives: **Swiss Made 2069** is an angry, sarcastically visionary film.

Murer's anarchic visions, the playful way he uses the medium – a prime example being **Vision of a Blind Man**, which he filmed "blind" on the longest day of 1968 – have been widely underestimated, by conservatives and the new generation alike. His early films are a unique, sensory plea to the world to surrender to the power of imagination.

In 1970, disheartened by the lukewarm reception of his work and the constraints of the hopeless market situation of "independent film", Murer decamped to London, where, "in an alien place", the seeds of a desire to discover his own roots began to germinate. So, Fredi M. Murer returned to Switzerland, to the scene of his youth and, with tremendous patience and an incred-

## FILMOGRAPHY

1962	Marcel
1965	Pazifik – oder die Zufriedenen
1965	Balance
1965	Sylvan
1966	Chicorée: Elf schizofragmentarische Aufzeichnungen über das Leben des Comte Ivan Merdreff
1966	Bernhard Luginbühl
1967	High and Heimkiller
1969	Vision of a Blind Man
1969	2069 – oder dort, wo sich Futurologen und Archäologen gute Nacht sagen
1969	Sad-is-fiction
1972	Passagen
1973	Christopher & Alexander
1974	Wir Bergler in den Bergen sind eigentlich nicht schuld, dass wir da sind
1979	Grauzone
1985	Höhenfeuer
1987	Sehen mit anderen Augen
1990	Der grüne Berg
1998	Vollmond
2004	Downtown Switzerland (Co-Director)
2006	Vitus

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ible amount of empathy, produced his first major documentary film, **We mountain people in the mountains aren't actually to blame for being here**. But is this really a documentary? In terms of the absolute authenticity of the chronicling, the answer is yes; but in terms of the image and sound structure, the way it is edited into cyclical units, and the prosody of its individual parts, Murer has taken his cue from the direct, narrative style of modern European cinema.

The basic premise is the magical "ring" that holds the world – the village, the family, the mountain region – together. At the centre of the film, the ring is evoked by the prayer song of a shepherd in front of a cabin and in the family circle, but the film itself essentially conjures it up throughout. Of course, the vulnerability of this "circle of peace" does not escape the filmmaker, yet, without suppressing his sorrow, he still manages to recreate the "ring" in his own way, without nostalgia, from its surviving elements and through his cinematic gestures. **The Green Mountain**, one of Murer's two major documentary films from the heart of Switzerland, can be seen as a more sombre echo of **We mountain people in the mountains...** The planned construction of a storage facility for radioactive waste brings the vulnerability of the "ring" into painful relief. This film depicts the complex issues at stake when the generation of go-getters and the civilization of the protectors and nurturers clash head-on. F. M. Murer dedicated this film, which is only saved from being an apocalyptic vision by the hope it places in the next generation, to the children and children's children of the mountain farmers on the Wellenberg. Its central theme was to come to the fore again eight years later, in **Full Moon**.

People who've got something to tell usually have a stock of stories, regardless of what sets them going. Murer's stories are picture stories characterized by quiet observation and stimulated by strong memories.

Walter Ruggie, 1995

The three feature films in Murer's filmography are, in terms of theme and iconography, almost inseparable from his documentary work and each other – in short, they are inextricably bound up with the job of film-making.

**Zones** expands on **Swiss Made 2069** and also picks up the thread of the first film about mountain people. The main character, Alfred, whose job is to spy on others, becomes a sleuth and saves himself in the nick of time by finally listening to his own inner voice. The deaf boy in **Höhenfeuer** (Alpine Fire) (1985) lives in a world of touch and sight; only his sister, Belli, understands and loves his heightened sensitivity, and the two are forced to save each other, the life of their unborn child and their world. With incredible boldness of dramatic invention and a magical clarity of vision and sensitivity, Murer champions the cause of nature, life and the future. In extremis, parricide and following our own infallible intuition become the only options. This is the point of departure of **Full Moon**, Fredi M. Murer's latest film: twelve children disappear without

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a trace and confront their parents with an ultimatum: “We want the earth on earth – if you don’t, the earth will carry on revolving without us.” **Full Moon is Zones, The Green Mountain, Alpine Fire** and all our modern-day arrogance and fears rolled into one. As the modern-day audiovisual production line relentlessly gathers speed, Fredi M. Murer’s work progresses slowly by contrast, in what one might call “interim balances”.

The fury and the fears are always the same; the settings vary, but the simple plea does not: “More make-believe, less violence.” This appeal would seem strange – not to say ridiculous – if it weren’t for Murer’s imagination as a film-maker, which keeps him from straying onto the well-trodden path of the typical, well-intentioned, “worthy” film. It is this cinematic invention that has earned him the status of a much admired (and, in some quarters, envied) standard-bearer for Swiss film, right from the days of his first films, when he overcame production constraints with such playfulness and when necessity was the mother of invention, and since he first turned his conjurer’s skill to the documentary film, with his authentic chronicling style, and to the feature film, with his complex interweaving of themes, symbols, sentences and gestures. Fiercely resisting the conventional “talkiness” of cinema at the start of his film career, Murer said that he could only speak in images and sounds. Not so, of course, as since then he has also explained his stance in his writings and seminars – and he pens his own screenplays. Even so, only the films, with their unique, unmistakable alchemy, reveal “the whole truth”.

**“I have to make films where they speak my language. Films need a sense of home.”**

Fredi M. Murer, 2005

Martin Schaub, 1998

## INTERVIEW

**Seven questions to Fredi M. Murer by Irene Genhart**

**What does Switzerland mean to you?** Switzerland is the country into which I was born – I had no say in the matter – and the country that, in terms of language, mentality and thinking, has shaped me to a degree I would never have thought possible. When I was asked, as a child, what I wanted to be when I grew up, apparently I always said: a foreigner. As a teenager, I refused to say “I’m Swiss” and would declare defiantly: “I am a person.” As an adult, I then realized, to my horror, that I had become Swiss first and a human being second. Despite this, I never stopped fighting against that overt “Swissness”, which in itself is a very Swiss attribute, or at least typical of my generation of ‘68. To me, Switzerland is, to quote the playwright Dürrenmatt, the “most open of prisons”, a place that, in my insatiable wanderlust, I have kept on leaving – I’ve visited almost every continent – only to return placated and with a greater sense of affection: I have shot every single one of my films in Switzerland.

**What do the children we encounter in your films, from MARCEL to FULL MOON, represent?**

If only I knew that myself. The main character in my new film is a twelve-year-old boy, too... Clearly, children make good “projection characters”. I certainly don’t see them as angels or saints: they make love to their sisters, do away with their parents or disappear without a trace... to my mind, children are the most credible representatives of intellectual honesty. The absoluteness and radicalism of their thinking is still undiminished, perhaps because they don’t distinguish between reality and make-believe. I still believe that we reach our intellectual peak at the age of around twelve, and then, as we pass through school and the authorities get hold of us, we begin the process of conforming to social norms, sliding inexorably into safe normality.

My childhood, which I spent in a large family in Nidwalden and Uri, provides me with an inexhaustible source of archetypal images and recollected feelings, which to this day are the lifeblood of my artistic work: the “raw material” of all my films is provided by this early phase of my life. By choosing film as my medium, I have managed to smuggle a wonderful “sandpit” into my adulthood: on the screen, I can make my characters do and say things that I never would have got away with as a child.

**What do the three phrases: Artist – Art – Creativity/Artificiality mean to you?** As a young boy, I was a talented gymnast, so I also felt like an artist. The way I saw it, there was an element of art involved in contorting your limbs into unnatural positions. But I was equally drawn to the show aspect. When I was older, I learned poems and Nietzsche texts by heart, and recited them at opportune moments for dramatic effect. So, I felt like an artist at a very early age and thought that school

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was a complete waste of time. When I was a young film-maker living in Zurich, almost all my closest friends were poets, sculptors, musicians or painters, and they populated my early films as protagonists. These rather experimental films were always a kind of “portrait of the artist”, although not in the conventional sense. Rather, they were creative duels between me behind the camera and them in front of the camera, and we were always very careful to keep the line between documentary and fiction fluid.

Getting back to the original question, what has always fascinated me so much about the film medium is the blurred line between reality and invention, in other words the creative handling of art and artificiality: we sit in a cinema, staring at an artificially created image on the white screen and shedding real tears. Admittedly, that has a lot to do with the creativity and imagination of the viewer, too.

***Your films frequently contain utopian scenarios that hint at pessimistic apprehensions.***

***What lies at the root of these fears?*** I believe that, since time immemorial, the desire to live, or to survive, has been inextricably bound up with fear. If that is the case, we must clearly have a certain desire for fear. How else can you explain why there are so many disaster films? At any rate, imagination and creativity know no bounds when it comes to portraying, evoking or even cultivating these fears. I, for example, would rather be struck down by lightning than by a neighbour. Which leads me to conclude that I feel less threatened by forces of nature than I do by violence perpetrated by people, particularly when that violence takes the guise of economic or social achievement or technical progress.

We all know that we can try to exorcise fear by giving it a face or by exposing its source or originator, and I have tried to do this in a number of my films. **Zones** anticipated the surveillance files scandal in Switzerland – which, by the way, exceeded even my darkest imaginings – ten years before it happened. **The Green Mountain** questions the ethical responsibility of nuclear technology vis-à-vis future generations, **Full Moon** evokes our everyday apathy towards environmental issues and hands out a stark warning. But I would like to think that I have never succumbed to dogmatism or fanaticism in the cinematic portrayal of my personal fears, that I have used humour, irony, sarcasm and, perhaps, poetry instead.

I have certainly always sided with minorities and championed the cause of nature. Actually, I have my own pet theory about what “nature” is. The way I see it, there is a “first nature” and a “second nature”. “First nature” is the environment that has evolved organically from the dim and distant past, in other words before humans began leaving their mark. At which point “second

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nature" would be the environment influenced, changed or even newly created by the hand of man. This includes everything from the bright green, fertilized fields, the felled rain forests and the animals born of selective breeding, to the avenues of poplars lining straightened rivers and the skyscrapers of Manhattan. When I stand on top of the Eiffel Tower, for instance, I am surrounded as far as the eye can see by "second nature". And although, as a film-maker, what I produce is always "second nature", I hope that my childlike wish – that I might be able to see the area that is modern Switzerland as it was before man appeared in the Holocene period – will be fulfilled, if only in a dream. The paradox is that, in fighting against the disappearance of "first nature", we are inevitably fighting against ourselves.

***Your films often portray gifted people with disabilities, or to put it another way: characters with one "handicapped sense"...*** Although the medium of film indisputably appeals to our visual and aural senses, and the interplay between image and sound creates marvellous fusions, as a film-maker I have always been particularly fascinated by the secret of the symbiotic relationship between image and sound. In my experimental film **Vision of a Blind Man**, I covered my eyes and filmed "blind" for a whole day, with the camera on my shoulder. At the same time, I talked into the microphone, recounting what I was hearing, touching or feeling, or what I saw in my imagination. For an audience watching the film, the discrepancy between the actual image and what I was seeing in my mind's eye couldn't be more stark. **Vision of a Blind Man** was also a kind of "pure research" for me. The recurring themes of blindness, deafness and muteness in some of my films – the deaf boy in **Alpine Fire**, or the portrayal of blind people in the documentary **Seeing through other eyes** – reflect the fact that, to me, the act of film-making is always a reflection on seeing and hearing too.

***Children know you for your 1001 little magic tricks. Why didn't you become a magician? What is reality?*** I am a magician! Film-making has a lot in common with magic, both literally and metaphorically: you're constantly trying to outsmart what passes for reality. Film-makers use a box of magic tricks. We work with illusion, fakery, sensory deception: the artificial becomes realistic and the realistic is revealed as artificial... Cooking, film-making and conjuring are, to me, closely related. There's also the show effect, and a showman is nothing without a public to perform to: a magician without an audience to enchant is just as tragic a figure as a chef with no guests or a film-maker without an audience.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Martin Schaub (1937 – 2003) was one of the leading Swiss writers on films. He contributed to Swiss and foreign newspapers, magazines and books. From 1968 he was an editor at the Tages-Anzeiger, a leading Swiss daily. Schaub was also co-founder and, for ten years, publisher of the Swiss film magazine CINEMA. Besides writing, he also worked on films of his own, including *Die Insel* with John Berger.

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Irene Genhart studied film, German language and literature, and philosophy at the universities of Zurich and Berlin. She writes for Swiss newspapers, film magazines, catalogues and encyclopedias as a freelance journalist. She is a board member of the Swiss film journalists' association and has been co-organizer of Critics' Week at the International Film Festival of Locarno.

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**When people discuss your films, they often talk about their “voicelessness”. Why do you think they are viewed in this way?** Actually, that’s news to me. I don’t feel voiceless, in any event. I love to write and talk. My early films were silent in the literal sense, but that was more for technical and financial reasons. Admittedly, back then as a photography student making films, I tended to think more in pictures than in spoken sentences. But even during my silent film phase, I began putting creative soundtracks to my films. Later, as soon as I could afford to hire a “geplimte” 16mm camera, I added speech. The fact that the performers in my documentary films or fictitious characters in my feature films are often mute, or taciturn, is an entirely separate issue. In **We mountain people in the mountains...** I managed to persuade the mountain people, who are generally said to be unforthcoming, to open up in front of the camera. And as Alfred the professional spy says in **Zones**: “My father was taciturn, but he wasn’t mute.” There is a difference.

Interview and transcription: Irene Genhart, Zurich 2004

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Fredi M. Murer  
Editing: Fredi M. Murer

Cast: Sylvan Guntern, Jean-Marc Seiler,  
Erich Frei, Mario Berretta, Augustin  
Erb, Daniel Bamert, Fredi M. Murer

Production: Fredi M. Murer  
World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: IT

Award: Quality Prize of the Swiss  
Federal Department of Home Affairs

“An untamed, strong will is at work here, a will that is able to shake off all fetters and, in places, the constraints of form, achieving a liberation that pushes back the creative boundaries of a film of universal relevance. Effective close-ups, striking overexposures, sharp cross-cuts, clever angles and a dynamic handling of the camera, which seems to revel in the joy of filming instead of just taking photographs, create tension and force.”

*Basler Nachrichten*

“That Murer is able to extract so much grotesqueness and jovial absurdity from reality with only the leanest resources, while at the same time meting out the odd jolt to the senses, is testament to the great talent of this still young illustrator and director...”

*Berner Tagblatt (R. Welten)*



| 1965 | 16mm | b/w and hand-coloured | 60' | Pazifik – oder die Zufriedenen

**T**he setting: the condemned Villa Pazifik on the Zürichberg. Its occupants: seven men aged around twenty, one of whom is the film-maker. At the centre of **Pacific – or the Contented** is a table in the garden at which the friends eat and drink, and it is these sessions that provide the backdrop for the film's portrayal of the phantasmagoria and dreams of the gathered company. One is trying his hand at tightrope walking, another is digging up a balloon at the cemetery. A third is playing piano, while a pair of ladies' and men's shoes dance together. **Pacific – or the Contented**, made in 1965, is a cinematic depiction of anarchic nonconformism. Shot on silent 16mm, with choppy camerawork, the film combines slapstick interludes with “live” and animated sequences. Every so often, Murer has coloured in a detail by hand, while elsewhere he has edited the negative itself. Originally almost four hours long and shown with a live soundtrack, the version of **Pacific – or the Contented** that exists today has been cut by Fredi M. Murer to 60 minutes and has a soundtrack as experimentally playful as its images.



Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Fredi M. Mure

Assistants: Renzo Schraner,  
Christian Kurz

Production: Fredi M. Murer  
World Rights: Fredi M. Murer

Original Version: IT

“But it’s not about gags. It’s not about how the blind film-maker gets it all wrong. It’s about the attempt to conceive a film without using one’s eyes, and to illustrate it with sound. If anything, it is sound that is illustrated in this film...”

It is not the audience that is most strongly affected by experiments like *Vision of a Blind Man*, but the film-maker’s art.” Martin Schaub, 1969



| 1969 | 16mm | colour | 45'

**V**ision of a **Blind Man**, explained Fredi M. Murer at the premiere of what is by far his most experimental film, was “a cinematic form of pure research”: on 21 June 1968, at half-past-five in the morning, Murer pulls a pair of non-transparent welder’s goggles over his eyes and hoists a 16mm Ariflex onto his right shoulder. During the course of the day, he is driven by two friends to twenty-one unfamiliar locations, where he films “by ear” and records the thoughts running through his head. Within Murer’s workography, **Vision of a Blind Man** marks the departure from surrealism and prefigures much that is still to come: the extraterrestrial with its built-in camera and tape recorder, who romps through **Swiss Made 2069**; the bugging specialist in **Zones**, the blind piano tuner in **Full Moon** – but also the blind people and their dogs whom we meet in Murer’s 1987 commissioned film **Seeing through other eyes**.

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Hans Liechti  
Sound: Florian Eidenbenz

Editing: Rainer Trinkler  
Music: Mario Beretta, Beo Oertli  
Cast: Giovanni Früh, Olga Piazza, Peter

Siegentaler, Walo Lüönd, Janet Hauffer,  
Mathias Gnädiger, Michael Massen,  
Ernst Stiefel

Production: Bernhard Lang AG  
World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: Swiss German/  
German

"Fredi Murer's images are stunning, in both the literary and the cinematic sense. The overall vision of the trapped human being and individuality stifled by conventions is interspersed with a series of stand-alone shots: Venetian blinds, partitions, walls, architectural features that restrict and confine, fences, doors, borders of all kinds, railings, balustrades. Confinement isn't proclaimed, it's demonstrated. Murer says he was most acutely aware of this confinement after his experience in America, 'where you can sit in a train for seven hours and, now and then, see a small house with two gaunt cows nearby, then nothing else for miles.'"

*Cinema* 1/79 (Werner Jehle)

"... I saved the best film at Locarno till last, as a delicious treat: *Zones*, by German-Swiss film-maker Fredi M. Murer. From the reports I have heard, he is the 'father' of new Swiss film; after just one viewing of *Zones* (the soundtrack alone is a minor masterpiece) I would concur with this assessment. He is probably Switzerland's foremost film-maker, alongside Godard, who, to quote Murer, 'is neither a French film-maker nor a Swiss film-maker, but 'Mister Cinema'...'"

*Cahiers du Cinéma*, 304, 1979 (L. Skorecki, "Drei Postkarten aus Locarno")



1979 | 16mm | b/w | 99' | Grauzone

**Z**ones is Fredi M. Murer's first full-length fiction film, which Murer himself has described as a "fictitious documentary". All of the action takes place over a long weekend. It is the "drama of passing time", as Murer calls it, that determines the editing. On Friday evening, upon leaving his place of work, Alfred M., a bugging specialist for a large combine, witnesses a suspected abduction. On his way home, he learns from the radio of an anonymous announcement that a mystery epidemic has been sweeping the country. At home, Alfred omits to tell Julia about the abduction, just as he has hidden his secret life from her. The anonymous announcement plunges the entire country into crisis. To prevent mass hysteria, the Federal Council imposes a reporting ban, but a few pirate stations continue to broadcast information and most people spend an uneasy Saturday evening at home. Over the next two days, Alfred meets a number of characters who are defending themselves against the "epidemic". Finally, in a dreamlike, visionary moment, Alfred discovers that he was infected by the "epidemic" long ago. With its densely atmospheric black-and-white images and clever multi-layered soundtrack, **Zones** is a fairly accurate reflection of the depressive climate of conformism that shaped Switzerland shortly before the youth uprisings of the 1980s. As a part of Murer's oeuvre, **Zones** sits somewhere between **Swiss Made 2069** and **Full Moon**, and in terms of its realism it can be seen as anticipating the surveillance files scandal that sent shockwaves reverberating across Switzerland a decade later.

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Pio Corradi  
Sound: Florian Eidenbenz

Editing: Helena Gerber  
Music: Mario Beretta  
Cast: Rolf Illig, Dorothea Moritz,

Johanna Lier, Thomas Nock,  
Jörg Odermatt, Tilli Breidenbach  
Production: Bernhard Lang AG

World Rights: Bernhard Lang  
Original Version: Swiss-German

"In *Alpine Fire*, Fredi M. Murer presents a film that is more than just a repetition or a reworking of his earlier attempts, more than just an advance on those earlier works; it is in fact the sum of everything that the film-maker, in more than twenty years of resolute, uncompromising work, has achieved: a complete film. This film by the 45-year-old poet of the New Swiss Cinema is, without doubt, the most sumptuous and vibrant Swiss film of the year. Along with Tanner's *Jonas*, Yersin's *Les petites fugues* and Imhoof's *The Boat Is Full*, it will go down as one of the most important post-war films to come out of Switzerland."

*Cinema 31*, 1985



1985 | 35mm | colour | 117' | Höhenfeuer

The first sketch of **Alpine Fire** was conceived – as one episode in a multi-episode film on the subject of sexuality that was never made – in 1979, six years before it was shot. But after **Zones** he seriously doubted his ability to direct actors, so he took some time out from his creative endeavours, earned a living as an editor and attended a drama course with Lee Strasberg. A six-month stay in Iceland restored him to the right of frame of mind, and, on his return, Murer developed the sketch into a fifteen-page narrative. At that time, he wanted to try his luck as a screenplay writer; he also intended for the film to be set in the isolation of Iceland. However, financing and production constraints brought the project back to Switzerland and, in the end, Murer himself also directed the film. The film is a tale of incest played out on a remote Swiss mountain farm located just below the tree line. This is where the boy, who was born deaf and remains nameless for the duration of the film, lives together with his elder sister, Belli, his father and his mother. The family keeps itself to itself. They have no eye contact with their nearest neighbours and the walk to Mass or to the market in the village in the valley means a whole day's outing. The boy has been sent high up into the mountains by his father to clear the ground of rocks. When Belli visits her brother in his isolation, the two become lovers. Back on the farm, the siblings live alongside their parents, keeping their love a secret, until Belli's pregnancy betrays her and a tragedy becomes inevitable. **Alpine Fire** was awarded the Golden Leopard at the 1985 Locarno Film Festival and is Fredi M. Murer's most successful film to date. It is impressive for its ethnological accuracy, the silent beauty of the mountain landscape and above all – in common with all of Murer's films – for its polished, dense, "natural" soundtrack.

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Pio Corradi, Patrick  
Lindenmaier  
Sound: Henri Maikof

Editing: Loredana Cristelli  
Music: Mario Beretta

Cast: Hanspeter Müller, Lilo Baur,  
Benedict Freitag, MarieBelle Kühn,  
Joseph Scheidegger, Verena Zimmer-  
mann, Soraya Goma, Max Rüdinger,  
Sara Capretti

Production: T&C Film Zürich  
World Rights: T&C Film Zürich  
Original Version: Swiss-German

"*Full Moon* is a complex, metaphorical film about the mood of our times and our society. The story, which is dramatic and ironic in equal measure, is a heartfelt plea for more imagination, for us to break free from the constraints of logic and our obsession with feasibility, and to hang on to that element of the unknown that allows us still to hope."

*Zoom* 3/98 (Martin Schlappner)

"Twenty years down the line from his visionary portrait of an era, *Zones*, Murer has pulled off another great feat, not just of sincerity but also of ironic, everyday wisdom. His magical-realistic, candid feature film, which is full of odd twists, is both utopian and realistic, Swiss and European, in the way in which it presents a world in which child-like imagination, understanding and trust have been lost. An amusing and resonant incitation to give our imaginations free rein, to reflect and to react."

*Appenzeller Zeitung*, 16 March 1998 (Rolf Breiner)



| 1998 | 35mm | colour | 156' | Vollmond

Almost thirteen years pass before, on 22 May 1998, Fredi M. Murer presents **Full Moon**, his second-longest feature film after **Alpine Fire**. The fictitious case on which the film is based did later happen in real life, to the horror of the Swiss population. On a full moon night in the spring of 1998, twelve ten-year-old children go missing in Switzerland. Detective Inspector Wasser, who investigated the disappearance of Toni Escher by Lake Greifen, discovers the true magnitude of the disaster while surfing the Net: **Full Moon** could not be further removed from the leisurely timelessness that made Murer's **Alpine Fire** a pièce de résistance of Helvetic cinematography. Highly topical and contemporary, **Full Moon** – which takes society to task in the same way **Zones** did back in 1979 – takes a kaleidoscopic look at the prevailing mood of Swiss society. What kind of parents, asks Murer, do today's children have, what are the circumstances of their formative years? The most important question, however – and this is where Murer the sceptic comes to the fore once more – is: Is the world in which our children live actually worth living in? Wasser, a detective as they are often imagined in books, takes on the baffling case with care and concern. In **Full Moon**, Murer employs an unruly, jigsaw-like narrative approach, serving up a New Age-style potpourri, a chaotic mix of genres in which individual fates combine into a mass tragedy. "We want the earth on earth" is the children's demand. Murer was prompted to make **Full Moon** by his daughter Sophia, who, after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, asked her father to make a "film about how dangerous grown-ups are". Murer also knows from personal experience that nothing is more alarming to a parent than a lost child: years ago, he lost sight of his other daughter, Sabina, in the middle of London for fifteen minutes. Today, Murer describes the experience as the worst fifteen minutes of his life.

Camera: Pio Corradi, Jann Erne, Kaspar Kasics, Pierre Mennel, Filip Zumbrunn

Sound: Christian Davi, Jann Erne, Matteo Pellegrini, Lukas Piccolin  
Editing: Stefan Kälin

Music: Thomas Korber, Galoppierende Zuversicht, Minimetal & Luxus  
Production: Fontana Film, eXtra-Film, FMM Film GmbH, Hugofilm GmbH

Original Version: Swiss-German/  
German/English/French  
World Rights: Frenetic Films

"Angered by the political situation, four film directors each went out, armed with their cameras, to track down evidence, and then pooled their material to make a film. The result, *Downtown Switzerland*, is an impressive image of the city of Zurich in the winter of 2003/04.

*Blick*, 20 Oct. 2004 (Rico Bandle)

"Film-makers are a bit like climatologists. Whether consciously or not, they take the pulse of their surroundings and measurements of the social climate. Films on the local ethnological climate, with their 'journeys into the interior' have a certain tradition in Switzerland. *Zones* is a case in point, a film by Fredi M. Murer some years ago that takes a disquieting look at the anonymity of Zurich. Now Murer is one of the four who, with pent-up anger, as they all admitted, set out in 2003 to investigate their surroundings. The grey zones have long since given way to bright colours, the city is basking in the trendy role of *Downtown Switzerland*. If only this label used by Zurich Tourism were somewhat less arrogant... But is it wrong? Like it or not, Zurich is the country's trendsetter – also in matters of harshness and increasing aggressiveness. On the other hand, this downtown may still, in its characteristics, be more closely related to the rest of the country than it is willing to acknowledge. Its attempts at cosmopolitan grandeur regularly fall flat. Zurich is contradiction live, which fits the concept of having four film-makers with very different approaches put forward and amalgamate their momentary views of the city.

*NZZ am Sonntag*, 17 Oct. 2004 (Martin Walder)

## DOWNTOWN SWITZERLAND



| 2004 | 35mm | colour | 94'

In autumn 2004, Fredi M. Murer, in collaboration with Christian Davi, Stefan Haupt and Kaspar Kasics, presents **Downtown Switzerland**. This is not one of a series of films, but a stand-alone portrait of a city in which the Swiss metropolis is subjected to a reality check from varying perspectives. Some of the people who give their views in **Downtown Switzerland** use adjectives such as "urban", "brilliant", "gorgeous", "cosmopolitan, dynamic, colourful", "vital, fun and multicultural" to describe Zurich. Others, however, think that the city that was home to Zwingli is now a dirty and aggressive place, and they talk of how they are afraid to walk through Zurich's streets at night. Conversations with Zurich's residents, with people on the streets, with shop-owners, politicians, foreigners and natives, children and adults, tram drivers, captains of industry and sociologists paint a – political – mood that reflects the existential orientation of the people who live, work and play in Zurich. The interviews are complemented by journeys through and panning shots across the city. When asked what the "reality check" carried out in **Downtown Switzerland** means to him, Murer says: "For me, it was about discovering my city and satisfying my curiosity. I live in District One, in the village. My Zurich is what, as a villager, I can reach by foot within ten minutes. To many of Zurich's residents, my Zurich is a harmless idyll. They say that the real Zurich is elsewhere. So where is it? Driven by curiosity, I set about discovering, with my camera, the Zurich beyond my walking radius. As a villager, I have no idea what's going on in District Nine or Eleven. That's what motivated me, with my camera running and spurred on by curiosity, to make expeditions to the margins of Zurich – where I encountered the real Switzerland."

Script: Peter Luisi, Fredi M. Murer,  
Lukas B. Suter  
Camera: Pio Corradi

Sound: Hugo Poletti  
Editing: Myriam Flury  
Music: Mario Beretta

Cast: Teo Gheorghiu, Bruno Ganz,  
Julika Jenkins, Urs Jucker  
Production: Vitusfilm GmbH

World Rights: Vitusfilm GmbH  
Original Version: Swiss-German/  
English

"If *Alpine Fire* was a classical tragedy that was also a film of earth and fire, and *Full Moon* was a Rousseau-like exercise in civilisational criticism with resonances of water, then *Vitus* is a film about air. Not only does the boy realize his grandfather's dream of flying – in a work that deliberately leaves a great deal hanging, flight can assume many forms. It is encountered as a metaphor or myth extending even into the musical and economic realms. Murer carries on the threads of his earlier films. They, too, were always appeals for a type of perception that transcends the superficially visible and audible."

Reto Baumann, WOZ, 2 February 2006

"*Vitus* tells a story of assimilation and resistance, and its director would not be called Fredi M. Murer if the whole enterprise were not characterised by a gently subversive approach. With subtle irony, the film traces the birth of a piano virtuoso out of the spirit of guile. (...) The idea of the double life with which *Vitus* outwits the people around is intriguing. All the more as the director succeeds in doing practically the same thing with us, his viewers."

Nicole Hess, Tages-Anzeiger, 1 February 2006



| 2004 | 35mm | colour | 100'

**V**itus is the story of a childhood, or more precisely, the story of an almost unimaginably gifted boy called Vitus, alias Teo Gheorghiu, whose parents have laid challenging and ambitious plans for him: they want him to become a pianist.

Twenty years after his internationally acclaimed masterpiece **Alpine Fire**, Fredi M. Murer once again places a very special boy at the centre of a film: Vitus possesses enormous musical and mathematical gifts and career hopes to match. But he soon tires of the tedious role of being a young pianist and child prodigy and makes a dramatic escape into a double life.

**Vitus** is a universal story, a declaration of love to childhood and music, told with humour and poetic grace. With its thematic focus on a multi-talented (young) person who defies social conventions and its cinematographic interest in the world of the senses, it is a "typical Murer film".

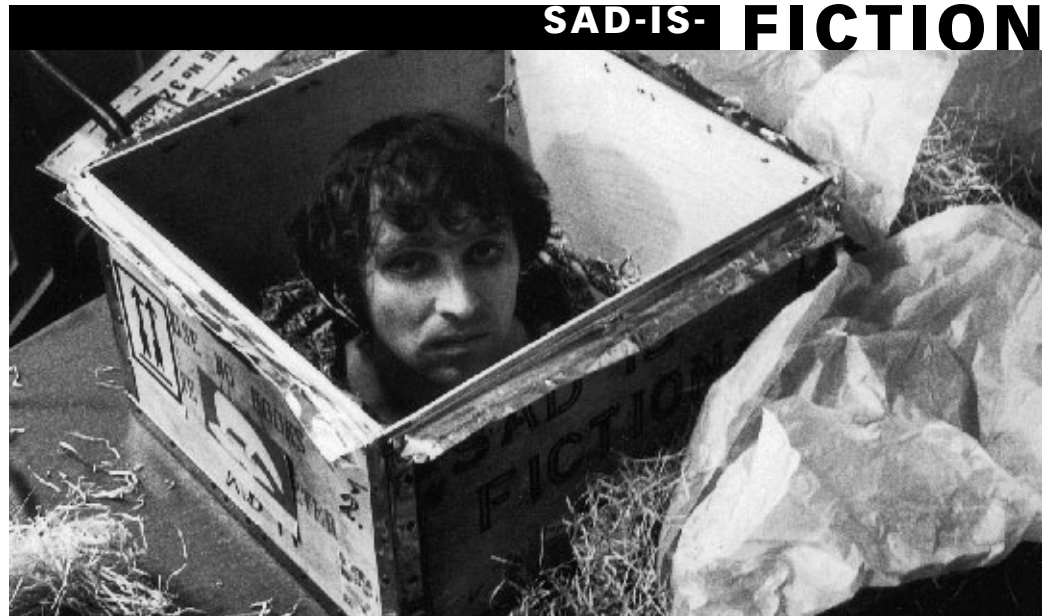
"All grown-ups were once children – although few of them remember it," writes Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in his introduction to *The Little Prince*. Murer pursues a similar idea: "The question is how the potential of every child can be kept alive into adulthood." **Vitus** is one answer to that question.

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Fredi Murer, Fritz E. Maeder  
Editing: Renzo Schraner,

Fredi M. Murer  
Music: The Minstrels, The Coincidence  
Actor and text: Alex Sadkowsky

Voice: Alex Sadkowsky  
Production: Fredi M. Murer

World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: German



1969 | 16mm | colour | 43' | A metaphysical portrait of the painter Alex Sadkowsky

**S**ad-is-fiction, Fredi M. Murer's third artist film, takes as its subject the Zurich-based painter and poet Alex Sadkowsky. "Modern man leans neither to the right nor to the left; he just keeps walking" runs the start of the programmatic introduction – and, for the rest of the film, Sadkowsky does just that. He wanders through aeroplanes and through London, and leaps across rocky landscapes. Whenever he feels lonely, he carries with him an "animal metaphysicum", which originated in his paintings. **Sad-is-fiction** portrays Sadkowsky as a visionary dreamer who – although he is in fact a father, artist, lover and, above all, a man with, to put it mildly, a gift of the gab – resists being pigeonholed in any way. In **Sad-is-fiction**, Murer works for the first time with direct sound and, for the first time, employs a colleague in the shape of cameraman Fritz E. Maeder.

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Fredi M. Murer

Sound: Benny Lehmann  
Editing: Yves Yersin, Fredi M. Murer

Cast: H.R. Giger (artist/painter)  
Production: Nemo Film, WDR, Cologne

World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: German

"In *Passages*, Murer makes... a bold attempt to comprehend an idiosyncratic artist from the perspective of his own life experiences and fixed ideas."

*Luzerner Neueste Nachrichten*, 7 Feb. 1973



## PASSAGES

| 1972 | 16mm | colour | 50' | Passagen

**P**assages, dating from 1972, is Fredi M. Murer's fourth and, to date, last artist film. It was the first film that Murer shot with Nemo Film AG, the group of writers and producers that he co-founded, and – because a television company is involved – it differs markedly from his earlier artist portraits. Instead of filming the artist and his work in a wildly experimental vein, in **Passages** Murer delivers an in-depth analysis of Giger's work, supported by the opinions of various experts. The film focuses on the creative process, the correlations between Giger's inner worlds and his pictures. "Does the artist have a role to play in society, or is he nothing more than a seismograph tracking the Zeitgeist?" is the question asked in **Passages**. Yet again, this points to the themes of Murer's feature films such as **Zones** and **Full Moon**: the obligations to the world of the individual in general and of the artist in particular.



Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Fredi M. Murer,  
Iwan Schumacher

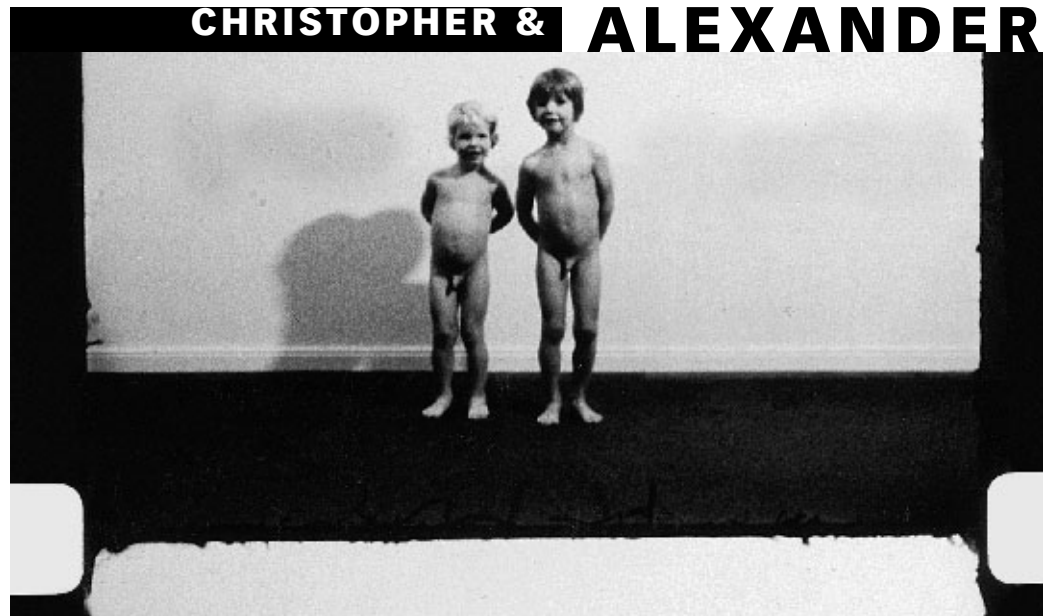
Sound: Benny Lehmann  
Music: Jonas C. Haefeli

Production: Nemo Film AG Zurich,  
Artco-Film SA Geneva, Eric Franck

World Rights: Artco-Film SA Geneva  
Original Version: French

“Murer, himself a father to two little girls, has reciprocated with appealing and sensitive portraits of children. In his film *Christopher & Alexander...* he deliberately chooses not to denounce the wealthy environment in which the two boys grow up; the film is not about class struggle. ‘I don’t want to have to make a statement in every film,’ he says. In a spirit of solidarity with the children, he made the film for them, so that ‘they can look back and see what they used to be like.’”

Züri Leu, 15 Feb. 1974 (René Bortolani)



| 1973 | 16mm | colour | 46'

**F**redi M. Murer was right in the middle of preparing to film **We mountain people in the mountains...** when he got an offer from a Zurich private banker to make a cinematic portrait of his three- and five-year-old sons. Murer accepted the task, mainly because he relished the chance to look behind the hedge of a grand villa. What resulted was a film in two parts. The first part shows the course of an ordinary day in the life of the two boys. The second part deals with the main events on the family calendar, such as birthdays and holidays, which give definition to the year. For a while, **Christopher & Alexander**, which received mixed reviews, was carefully omitted from Murer’s workography. Today, Murer describes the dual portrait as one of his ethnographic films, and considers **We mountain people in the mountains...** and **Christopher & Alexander** to be complementary works.

Script: Fredi M. Murer, Jean-Pierre Hoby, Georg Kohler  
Camera: Iwan P. Schumacher

Sound: Luc Yersin  
Editing: Fredi M. Murer, Eveline Brombacher

Production: Nemo Film AG, with the support of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs, Migros, the Canton of Uri and further private funding

World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: Swiss-German

"This time, Murer has abandoned all the formal gimmicks and effects that often played such an important role in his earlier films, and instead has given the stage over to these mountain people, their existence and their troubles. Murer's attitude is most apparent in the way he has made the film, and his personal stance is probably best reflected by the music he has used for individual sequences – György Ligeti for the tunnel images at the beginning, an unknown piece by Prokofiev when an avalanche disaster in the Schächental is mentioned, and so on... As a document of modern Switzerland, Murer's film has great cultural and political value. Not least, it is a challenge to the credibility of our much-vaunted federal solidarity."

Zoom 15/74 (Franz Ulrich)



1974 | 16mm | colour | 108' | Wir Bergler in den Bergen sind eigentlich nicht schuld, dass wir da sind

Originally he wanted to set five legends from the Uri mountains in the present. But after more than six months' local research, Murer was forced to admit that the old world of myth and legend had all but vanished from modern-day Swiss culture. In conversations with locals, the talk is of present-day problems caused by the industrialization of the mountain canton of Uri, such as the migration of young people to the cities. It also became clear to Murer that he didn't want to make a film about the mountain dwellers, but that he wanted to give these people – who, in the modern world, are increasingly at risk of being denied a voice – the chance to speak. Thus **We mountain people in the mountains...** turned into an ethnographic documentary film in three movements, along the lines of a symphony. The three movements reflect the three differing stages of development co-existing within the mountainous canton. In Göschenen, at the foot of the Gotthard, which straddles Europe's North-South axis, industrialization took hold long ago, and the mountain farmers of old now work in offices and factories. In the Schächental, however, the traditional family-centric mountain economy survives. Meanwhile, the village of Bristen in the Maderanertal is in the throes of upheaval: while the traditional farming communities still exist, nigh on 250 inhabitants leave the area daily to go to work or school. With **We mountain people in the mountains...**, Murer finds himself for the first time outside his familiar territory of "cinéma copain". The subject matter and formal characteristics are the same: like the artists and nonconformists of his earlier films, the mountain farmers live on the fringes of society; and, in terms of form, **We mountain people in the mountains...**, with its gentle camerawork, organic editing and clever soundtrack, has much in common with a long ballad or a poem.

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Pio Corradi

Sound: Tobias Ineichen and Florian Eidenbenz

Editing: Kathrin Plüss  
Production: Bernhard Lang AG

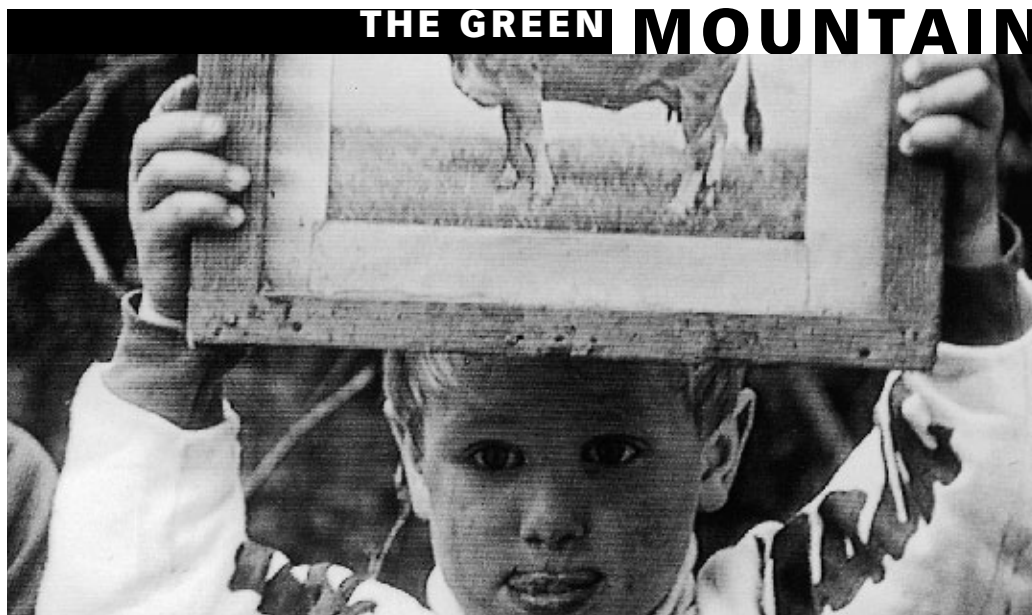
World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: Swiss-German

“As Bertrand Russell put it, the question right now is how to overcome ‘the unwillingness of the human race to acquiesce to its own survival’. This same question reverberates through Fredi M. Murer’s film *The Green Mountain*. It is not, however, an attempt to persuade, but a cinematic ‘Landsgemeinde’, a form of grassroots democracy addressing big and small issues to do with the disposal of radioactive waste... On all levels, the democratic spirit is maintained. Despite the complexity of the subject, despite the differing positions and despite the ‘for and against’ split, Fredi M. Murer and his excellent team, headed by cameraman Pio Corradi, have succeeded in creating a cinematic whole which avoids arrogant interrogation, gives people time to reflect and presents the encounter to the audience in a way that invites us to form our own opinion. *The Green Mountain* is an outstanding work, which pursues its formal, artistic goals and its message with the same single-mindedness. This film, whose geographical and thematic focus is the Wellenberg, becomes a mirror of modern-day Switzerland.”

*Der kleine Bund*, 16 June 1990 (Fred Zaugg)

“In the last few decades, there has been a sore lack of Swiss documentary films that have dealt convincingly with contemporary Swiss reality. With *The Green Mountain*, Fredi M. Murer has not only tackled a highly topical theme, but picked away at the seams between what we are told and the real truth.”

*NZZ*, 1 June 1990 (Christoph Egger)



1990 | 16mm | colour | 128' | Der grüne Berg

While researching and shooting *Alpine Fire*, Fredi M. Murer becomes acquainted with the country and people around the Wellenberg in the Wolfenschiessen area of Nidwalden. When, in 1988, tensions escalate over plans by NAGRA (the national radioactive waste removal company) to build a permanent nuclear waste disposal site at the foot of the Wellenberg, Murer is so affected that, without even thinking about a film, he travels to Nidwalden at the weekends and starts talking to the people there. The political impotence of the farmers of Wolfenschiessen, who are affected by the plans, so enrages Murer that, with a view to the forthcoming national poll (September 1989) on the “Say No to Nuclear Power Stations” initiative, he decides, together with cameraman Pio Corradi, to shoot a roughly 20-minute long “intervention film”. The result of this undertaking is more than two hours of documentary film, which Murer laconically subtitles a “cinematic people’s assembly”. The documentary provides a forum for experts, representatives of the political authorities and NAGRA, and, above all, for the directly affected locals – families for whom the Wellenberg has been home for generations and whose land and existence is to be cut from under them. These people have formed a regional action group to fight the project. In Murer’s film, they sit around the regulars’ table of their local pub, the children nearby, and talk with grave concern about radioactivity and Chernobyl, about how the little people are being fleeced by industry, technology and capital. Fredi M. Murer dedicated *The Green Mountain* to the “children and children’s children” and confronts the grown-ups who are in charge today with the next generation. Seen in this light, *The Green Mountain* comes across as a preliminary study for *Full Moon*, which came eight years later.

## MARCEL

| 1982 | 8mm | b/w | 18'

A boy – eleven-year-old Marcel – plays with a glider. He launches it into the air, runs through the fields in pursuit, picks it up, launches it into the air once more. A train briefly interrupts his game. Then the glider flies away. The boy falls into a gravel pit. He becomes absorbed in playing with stones, water, reeds and an old car tyre, investigates the machines that stand round and about, explores the factory building, finds his glider again and moves on. Fredi M. Murer shot his first film in black-and-white, on Super-8, with no

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Music: Edgar Varèse  
Production: Fredi M. Murer

World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: IT

sound, taking his cue from the silent classics. “With my photography background,” says Murer today, “what interested me back then was the moving picture, cinematography.”

“I had to leave traditional Swiss cinema behind in order to discover something different. I started reading the works of Pudowkin and my first film was a plagiarism of Eisenstein in Super-8.”

Fredi M. Murer (from O. Ceresa and I. Lambelt, *Fredi M. Murer. Zytglogge, Berne 1981*)

## BALANCE

| 1965 | 16mm | b/w | 12'

Like **Sylvan**, **Balance** is a surreal, 12-minute short taken from the originally 4-hour-long **Pacific – or the Contented**. A man stretches a tightrope in the forest and puts on makeup for his entrance. A military march strikes up, the man balances on the tightrope. A young woman in a white night-dress appears, holding a pistol in her hand. She squeezes the trigger; “I’m ready – you can do me in,” says the man, and falls

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Fredi M. Murer  
Editing: Fredi M. Murer  
Cast: Augustin Erb

Production: Fredi M. Murer  
World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: IT

from the tightrope as the woman lowers the pistol. He lies on the ground, a cat sitting on his chest; suddenly, two men in black suits are standing beside him. The woman screams, the image shudders as war rages all around, the two men carry the dead man away on a stretcher. In the midst of battle, they try to bury him, but he rises up...

## SYLVAN

| 1965 | 16mm | b/w | 12'

**Sylvan**, like **Balance**, is a 12-minute short taken from the originally 4-hour-long **Pacific – or the Contented**, and takes its cue from German expressionism. It tells the story of a dead father and his three sons, with Sylvan von Guntern playing all four roles. Shortly after quarrelling at their father’s deathbed about his mysterious purse, the sons confront each other in a deadly showdown on the roof of the house. The first son dies in the noose of a water-hose, the second breathes

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Fredi M. Murer  
Editing: Fredi M. Murer  
Cast: Sylvan Guntern

Production: Fredi M. Murer  
World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: IT

his last under the blazing sun, while the third just manages to get hold of the purse before falling from the roof to lie dead in front of the door to the house. With his three sons only minutes dead, the father rises from his deathbed. He steps outside the house and, smiling with pleasure, opens the purse, which contains glass marbles. At this point, the black-and-white film becomes colour. We see a husband and wife dressed in old-fashioned clothes. Crouched at their feet is a young boy, who

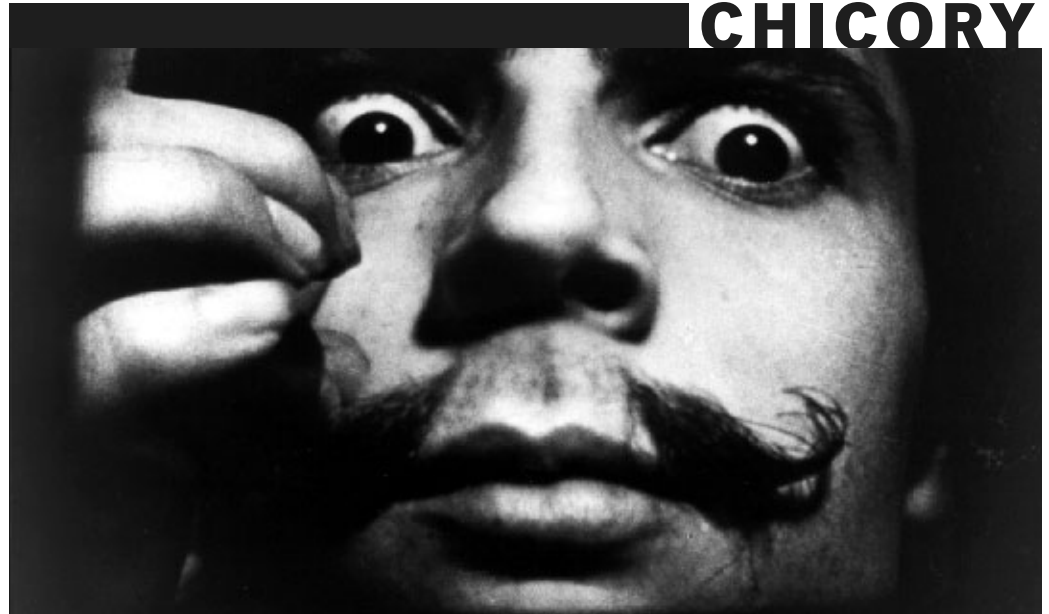
Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Fredi M. Murer  
Editing: Fredi M. Murer

Music: Celly Patorini  
Cast: Urban Gwerder (the poet himself), his wife Tina, his son Wanja

Production: Fredi M. Murer  
World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: IT

Award: International Movie Short Day  
Oberhausen, International Jury Prize

“What an exhilarating cinematic treat to kick off the evening: a funny and vibrant film by Fredi M. Murer, mockingly precise in its editing, a visual practical joke with ambiguous pictorial humour, affectionate, playful and yet at the same time resilient in its reliance on the resources available to a film venture founded primarily on idealism... The next encounter, whenever that may be, with film man Fred Murer is undoubtedly a prospect to savour.” *Der Bund*, 3/4/1966



1966 | 16 mm | colour | 27' | Chiorée: Elf schizofragmentarische Aufzeichnungen über das Leben des Comte Ivan Merdreff

**C**hicory is the first of three artist portraits filmed by Fredi M. Murer between 1966 and 1969. The protagonist is Zurich-based poet Urban Gwerder. Associatively edited, drawing on religious themes and distinctly surrealist in tone, **Chicory** serves up everyday scenes from Gwerder's family life in black-and-white, while his flights into the world of his dreams are in full colour. Gwerder dreams he is Salvador Dalí, the Beatles and Frank Zappa. Walking backwards through the Easter peace march bearing a placard with the words “Do you want to be urbanized into oblivion?”, he sneers at conventional forms of social protest. **Chicory** reaches its climax in an “action painting” scene, at the end of which Gwerder jumps through the canvas and lands in the mud. Originally, **Chicory** was shown to a live soundtrack of organ and percussion; today, there is a version of the soundtrack with the music of Jelly Pastorini.

“Because our work demanded so much intense concentration, we drank gallons of black coffee. It was when I was sipping at yet another cup of the muck, which was extremely bitter and undoubtedly laced with chicory, that Fredi, my wife and I – almost all at the same time – had the idea of calling our film **Chicory**.” Urban Gwerder talking to Samuel Plattner, *Tages-Anzeiger*, 17 February 1967

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Fredi M. Murer

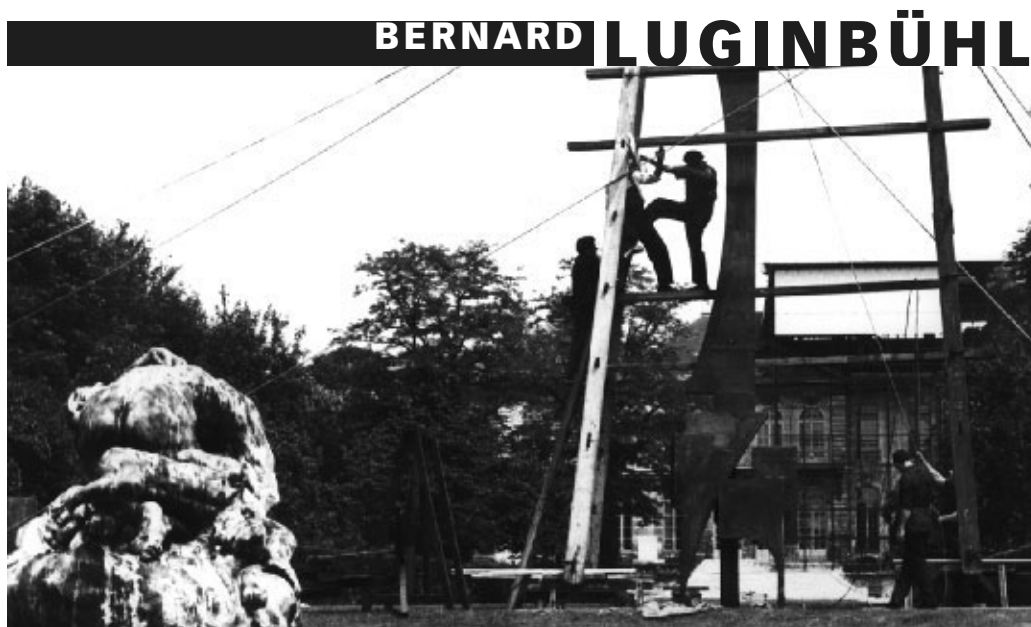
Sound: Fredi M. Murer  
Editing: Fredi M. Murer

Music: Irène Schweizer Quartet  
Production: Fredi M. Murer

World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: IT

"He shot *Portrait of Bernhard Luginbühl* as cinéma-direct, an extraordinary film about art and an artist – in this case, the well-known Berne-based metal sculptor – which, by taking a wonderfully wry look at everyday comings and goings in the artist's household, clearly reveals the full meaning of Luginbühl's sculptural work."

*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 1967



| 1966 | 16 mm | b/w | 25'

Fredi M. Murer refers to his artist portraits as "duels" between himself and the people he is portraying. Berne-based sculptor Bernhard Luginbühl's weapons are the felt-tip pen, iron, fire, hammer, a poker face with a smoking cigarette, and the family. Murer spent ten days living with the Luginbühls, and his film takes its structure from the evolution of a sculpture. Stylistically, **Bernhard Luginbühl** is a departure from Murer's earlier works. Owing much, in photographic terms, to documentary realism, and with the music of jazz pianist Irène Schweizer's quartet for its soundtrack, **Bernhard Luginbühl** has shades of cinema vérité. Murer, however, resented being lumped by the press into a cinematic genre, insisting that he didn't make "cinéma vérité" but "cinéma privé". This is true inasmuch as, in **Bernhard Luginbühl**, it is not so much a case of the work describing the artist as of the bosom of his ever-present family providing the inspiration for his work. "My eldest brother is a sculptor. In a way, he was always my role model: he was thirteen years older than me and – no matter what I did – always thirteen years better. Subconsciously, in making the film about Luginbühl, who is about the same age as my brother, I actually made a film about my brother and, in so doing, 'caught him up'." Fredi M. Murer in *Kommunikation & Gesellschaft*, 9, 1979, p.3

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Fredi M. Murer

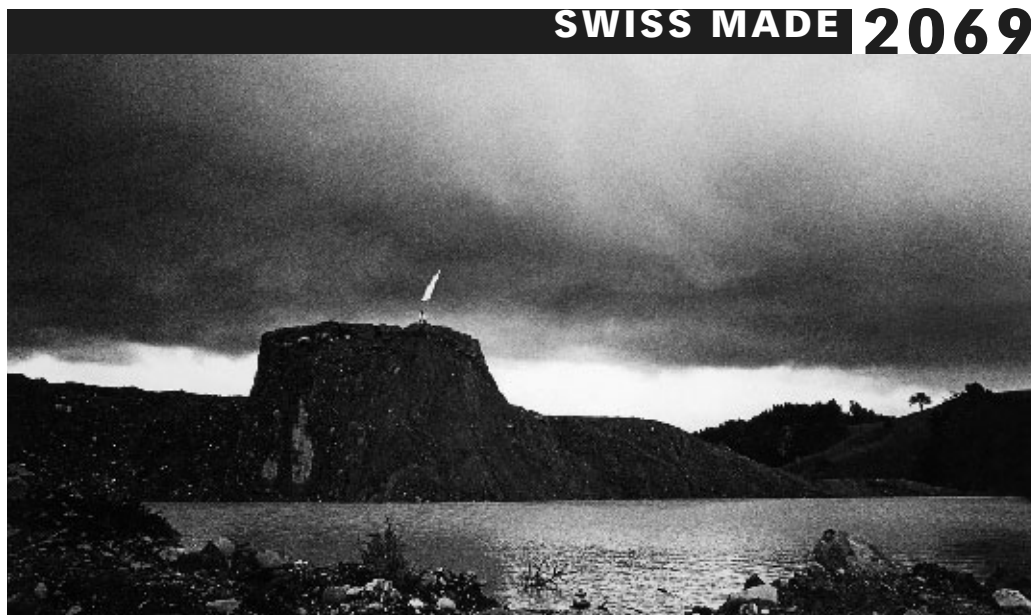
Sound: Christian Kurz  
Editing: Fredi M. Murer

Production: Yersin-Maeder-Murer with  
the support of the Schweizerische  
Volksbank

World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: German

“With these futuristically exaggerated yet undeniably timely elements, Murer – albeit in rather a superficial way – is playing an intelligent game. In this game, however, political comment takes second place: clearly, Murer’s overriding concern here is the aesthetic impact, the originality of the images, rhythmic effects and colours. Admittedly, in Murer’s case these concerns are such a direct expression of an undiminished and almost naïve pleasure in making films that he cannot in any way be accused of formalism.” *Tages-Anzeiger*,

16 May 1969 (Pierre Lachat)



| 1969 | 35 mm | colour | 34' | 2069 – oder dort, wo sich Futurologen und Archäologen gute Nacht sagen

**S**wiss Made 2069 is Fredi M. Murer’s contribution to *Swissmade*, a series of films produced with Fritz E. Mäder and Yves Yersin. The theme of the series is “Switzerland according to us”. In Murer’s contribution, it is the year 2069, and an “integrated citizen with latent tendencies towards being an unintegrated citizen” is given the task by the “Brain Centre” of producing a film report on the unknown mission of an alien being. The “alien being” in question is an extraterrestrial with a built-in camera and tape recorder – created by H.R. Giger – who, in the year 2069, treks across the earth to find out how modern people live their lives. The film reporter is Murer himself. The aim of the mission is to monitor a few nonconformists who are trying to incite anarchy on the fringes of the Big Brother state. **Swiss Made 2069**, Murer’s first film shot on 35 mm, is a cynical “Big Brother Is Watching You” vision, which can also easily be interpreted as a warning.

## HIGH AND HEIMKILLER

1967 | 16 mm | colour | 10'

In retrospect, **High and Heimkiller**, a 10-minute short filmed by Fredi M. Murer in 1967, seems like a preliminary study for the artist portrait **Passages**, which was made five years later and was all about the illustrator and draughtsman H.R. Giger. Accompanied by the psychedelic music of C. Lange, Fredi M. Murer lets his statically gliding camera roam across H.R. Giger's early drawings.

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Fredi Murer  
Production: H.R. Giger, Fredi M. Murer

World Rights: Fredi M. Murer  
Original Version: IT

## SEEING THROUGH OTHER EYES

1987 | 16 mm | colour | 38' | Sehen mit anderen Augen

**Seeing through other eyes** by Fredi M. Murer is an information film about guide dogs and their significance in the lives of blind people. It introduces five blind people, asks them questions, shows how they interact with their guide dogs and what the animals mean to them. The film also explains how the dogs are prepared for their delicate role as guides, how they are trained and how their blind owners learn how to handle them. The Swiss Guide Dog Training Foundation lent its support to the film. Thus the dogs take centre stage, in fresh and very direct images, rather than the people, whom Murer also introduces but whose exact circumstances and life experiences are only revealed in snippets. The brief encounter with a theology student, whom we see

Script: Fredi M. Murer  
Camera: Otmar Schmid  
Sound: Florian Eidenbenz

Production: Bernhard Lang AG  
Original Version: IT

playing sport and in the university lecture theatre, hints at what a more probing look at these people might have yielded.

**Seeing through other eyes** is a solid, honest documentary film with a clearly planned structure." *Cinema* 33/1987, p 165

"Director Fredi Murer, from Central Switzerland, who made his name primarily with *Alpine Fire*, has shot a commissioned film for the Swiss Guide Dog Training Foundation in Allschwil. The result is more than just a film that asks for understanding and donations – in its brief 38 minutes, it gives us a surprisingly in-depth insight into the sensory world of blind and partially-sighted people and the intimate relationship of trust that they have with the dogs who lead them, not just through the streets and round the supermarkets, but also to a new self-awareness." *Nordschweiz / Basler Volksblatt*, 29 Oct. 1987 (Heinz Weber)