

StadtkinoFilmverleih

MALFUNCTIONS #0

LOW DEFINITION CONTROL

EIN FILM VON MICHAEL PALM

REGIE, BUCH, KAMERA, SCHNITT: MICHAEL PALM // PRODUZENT: JOHANNES HAMMEL // RECHERCHEN: MICHAEL PALM, CLAUDIA LEUTSBB // MUSIK: TREVOR BUNDAN, MAURICE RAVEL
TONMISCHUNG: SABINE MAIER // LICHTBESTIMMUNG: KARL KOPECEK, MATTHIAS TOMASI // KOPIERWERK: ANDEC FILM BERLIN, SYNCHRO FILM WIEN
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ORF



sixpackfilm



LOW DEFINITION CONTROL

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A film by Michael Palm

Technical data:

Country: Austria 2011
Duration: 95 Minuten @ 25fps
Format: 35mm CinemaScope 1: 2,35, b/w and color, shot on Super-8 and HD Video
Sound: Dolby SRD 5.1
Original language: German, English
Subtitles: English
Genre: documentary
World premiere: VIENNALE 11, Vienna, Austria

Credits:

Director, Writer, Cinematographer, Editor, Sound Designer: Michael Palm
Music: Trevor Duncan, Maurice Ravel
Producer: Johannes Hammel (hammelfilm)
Research: Michael Palm, Claudia Leutgeb
Sound Mixer: Sabine Maier (Synchro Film Vienna)
Filmscan, Color Grading: Karl Kopecek, Matthias Tomasi (Synchro Film Vienna)
Support: Innovative Film Austria, ORF Film/Fernseh-Abkommen, Wien Kultur, Kulturamt OÖ

Featuring:

Susanne Asenbaum (Neurologist, Med. Uni. Vienna)
Andrea Berzlanovich (Coroner, Med. Uni. Vienna)
Judith Binder (Healthcare Center „Trotula“, Vienna)
Josef Philip Bischof (Lawyer, Wien)
Markus Clabian (smart systems Team, Austrian Research Centers GmbH, Vienna)
Adrian Dabrowski („Quintessenz“, Vienna)
Josef Deutinger (Gynaecologist, Vienna)
Wolfgang Ernst (Professor for Media Studies, Humboldt-University, Berlin)
Helmut Fuchs (Professor for Criminal Law, University of Vienna)
Leon Hempel (Center for Technology and Society, Technical University Berlin)
Dietmar Kammerer (Graduiertenkolleg InterArt, Free University Berlin)
Christoph Koss („Neustart“, Vienna)
Reinhard Kreissl (Sociologist, Vienna)
Thomas Kritzer (Dpt. for Subway, Wiener Linien GmbH. & Co KG)
Walter G. Kropatsch (Pattern Recognition and Image Processing Group, TU Vienna)
Aldo Legnaro (Sociologist, University of Hamburg)
Thomas Lemke (Political Scientist, Goethe-University, Frankfurt/M.)
Irene K. Lichtscheidl (Dpt. for Cell Imaging, University of Vienna)
Jiri Matas (Center for Machine Perception, Czech Technical University, Praha)
Jörg Metelmann (Center for Leadership and Values in Society, University of St. Gallen)
Ewald Moser (MR Center of Excellence, Med. Uni. Vienna)
Winfried Pauleit (Inst. for Media, communication, information, University of Bremen)
Barbara Prainsack (Centre for Biomedicine & Society, King's College London)
Daniela Prayer (Radiologist, Med. Uni. Vienna)
Eric Töpfer (Center for Technology and Society, Technical University Berlin)
Matthias Wittmann (Inst. for Media Studies, University of Basel)
Hans G. Zeger („ARGE Daten Privacy Service“, Vienna)

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SYNOPSIS

Low Definition Control is a film about images. Surveillance cameras, ultrasound detectors and MRI images in medicine are fabricating models of conformist behaviour and healthy bodies but as well of anomalies, suspicion and hidden risks. In times of terrorist threat, risk prevention and all-embracing control phantasms these images foreshadow a possible future.

Low Definition Control is a film about this future.



LOW DEFINITION CONTROL

Regardless of where we walk or where we stand, we're being watched: In a society in which the public space is primarily regarded a source of risks, nearly everything depends on constant surveillance. And so the most banal of activities (such as eating a sandwich or carrying a suitcase), when performed in inner cities of the developed world, are filmed and decoded by grid programs.

The fact that security and risk prevention now represent "political superglue" prompted Michael Palm to reflect on the implications of the growing mechanization of perception, in both the public space and the field of medicine. The method Palm chose for his film, *Low Definition Control*, is repeatedly expanding upon a theory in fragments by means of unreal, grainy images of everyday scenes. From off-screen, scientists and intellectuals from a wide variety of disciplines (neurology to media sciences to theology) can be heard discussing the question of what's appearing on history's horizon, which is a result of increasing panopticism and the disappearance of the assumption of innocence in contemporary society: a complete "evacuation of the real" and loss of the "idea of naturalism."

Low Definition Control is science fiction in a literal sense: a visionary anticipation of biopolitical/governmental processes that began some time ago, in which technology is so deeply inscribed into human behaviour that a disciplinary and control society could at some point be replaced by one comprising disembodied, predictable interface subjects.

Bert Rebhandl

RESPONSE:

Science Fiction or 'science fact'? Michael Palm's dizzyingly ambitious and monumentally dystopian work discusses the politics of the visible in contrasty black-and-white Cinemascope images, which are made directly for the unique space of the cinema - and which has to be experienced here. Low Definition Control is a solid, visionary and sharply conceived film - and possibly the greatest aesthetic triumph of the year.

CPH:DOX (DK)

Extraordinary in every respect among the films of the VIENNALE is Michael Palm's feature length essay: a fascinating examination of tendencies in the surveillance society which have become enforced and accepted since 9/11. A highlight of the VIENNALE.

DIE PRESSE (A)

Michael Palm's excellent documentary science fiction essay confronts us with questions of perception between risk prevention and biopolitical visions - an unsettling survey.

FALTER (A)

Low Definition Control is a meaty philosophical encounter, something which discusses our position in an observed world with an honest line of enquiry, searching for the root of our reclusiveness since the turn of the millennium. Of course, these discussions are necessary in film, experimenting with cinema's position in documenting our anxieties and conditioning, and at the same time, exploring how we can address these issues.

Andrew Latimer, TVBOMB, UK

A fascinating film that makes a virtue of its intellectual standpoint - asking serious questions about the watched and the watchers in society and offering no easy answers.

Amber Wilkinson, Eye for Film, UK

Low Definition Control explores aspects of contemporary control society without occupying a knowledge position of control by itself. That's the tightrope walk of Palm's aesthetics.

Winfried Pauleit, KOLIK FILM (A)

Film maker Michael Palm has chosen a very special form and provokes thought and discussion. Who is entitled of determining what is suspicious?

Heleen van Lier, VOLKSKRANT (NL)

Low Definition Control is an ambitious and thought provoking film, a filmic gem which enables you to see more and makes you wiser.

Erik Jensen, POLITIKEN (DK)

A documentary science fiction film as archeology of images of the future, shaped as virtuoso cinematographic essay.

Marcelo Alderete, OTROS CINES (ARG)

Prescient.

Andréa Picard, The Best of 2011 in Avant-Garde Film, INDIEWIRE.COM



It appears that modern mass society depends on the predictability – i.e., manipulation – of all individual responses and behavior patterns which are socially significant. We have already gone far in preconditioning people's attitudes; should society carry on this way, the so-called „personality“ would dwindle to a mathematical point – man, that is, would become a statistician's dream. Siegfried Kracauer, *History – The Last Things Before The Last* (1969)

Ten years after 9/11 the spectre of the *sleepers* has not only led to an extension of the police's scope of action in the framework of surveillance and prevention scenarios in the „war on terror“; it also haunts technical images of the human body and the governance of public health. It transforms perception into a paranoid gaze, looking for potentials – either ticking time bombs which need to be disarmed or future options which need to be fathomed. In short, the *sleepers* has not only become the uncanny pop icon of menace but a general metaphor for the uncertain futures of a society full of risks.

Low Definition Control explores how far the *sleepers* has changed knowledge produced by imaging systems which are used in medicine and surveillance technology. Binary terms like security/risk or prevention/control are the starting point of a cinematic reflection about the state of technical images and their embedment into neo-liberal concepts of subjectivity and self-governance.

Low Definition Control pervades this transformation of the gaze as an immediate cinematic experience: grainy documentary images of human movements and everyday gestures in public spaces as well as virtual images made by medical apparatus are counterpointed by an interdisciplinary scientific conference on the soundtrack. The experts focus on imaging procedures discerning between conformity and delinquency, health and disease, normality and deviance. The unfolding disputation between image and sound provokes a re-evaluation of one's own bias, thus making palpable the subtle changes in human perceptions, social actions and biopolitics which images of control have caused.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My new film deepens the archaeology of images which took off with my first film *Sea Concrete Human - Malfunctions #1* (A 2001). While *Sea Concrete Human* was about human's vanishing out of the image, my new project sets off with precarious modes of coming-into-the-image under the auspices of a „scientized“ control gaze. My interest is the process of how this gaze is *defining* (rather than just *uncovering*) the difference between normality and deviance, health and disease, conformity and delinquency, innocence and guilt; and further, how this definition is leading to certain pragmatic consequences causing techno-ethical double binds. In *Low Definition Control* I want to sketch the ruptures of a political rationale which calls for „democratization of knowledge“, „responsibility“ and „governance of the self“ as cardinal virtues of a neoliberal economy.

I think that these ruptures can be distinctly outlined in the light of the „old“ media film and cinema. For the audio-visual abundance of the cinematic image is ambiguous: it is control and storage of movement AND evidence of a possible plot; it is a scientific instrument AND aesthetic experience. Especially appealing for me is the collision of image and sound, of the scientific conference with documentary images which seem to be „innocent“. What is preserved in these images? What is their added value? Is it happiness which occasionally flashes up and which can be seen in the images, as Chris Marker puts it in the beginning of *Sans Soleil*? Is it the „little moments of life“ which are redeeming physical reality by letting us re-evaluate life and pervade reality as such as Siegfried Kracauer puts it? And: Are those „little moments“ possibly identical to the suspicious small gestures, features and movements seen by surveillance cameras which are turning us in?

Michael Palm

THE „MALFUNCTIONS“ SERIES

MALFUNCTIONS is a series of films developed by producer Johannes Hammel and director Michael Palm which fathoms the twilight zone between science fact and science fiction. Focusing on technological progress and the social dilemma but as well the hidden „creative“ potential produced by it, the series started in 2001 with Michael Palm's *Sea Concrete Human – Malfunctions #1*. The series is to be continued in loose order.

MICHAEL PALM

<http://members.inode.at/michaelpalm/>

Biography:

Born 1965 in Linz, Austria.

Michael Palm graduated from the Film Academy in Vienna and took further studies at the University of Vienna, focusing on philosophy, film and media studies. Since 1988 he is working as freelance editor and sound designer, since 2001 as director. More recent works as editor include *I Am From Nowhere* and *Calling Hedy Lamarr* by Georg Misch, *Silent Resident* by Christian Frosch, *Jobcenter* by Angela Summereder, *Night Shifts* by Ivette Löcker and *The Trial* by Gerald Igor Hauzenberger.

Michael Palm is the author of numerous lectures and articles on theory and aesthetics of film and cinema. A former film critic (*Der Standard*, *Falter*) he is a lecturer at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna where he also lives.

Films:

2012	Set in Motion (mit Willi Dorner) – Kurzfilm
2011	Low Definition Control – Malfunctions #0 – Dokumentarfilm
2009	Laws of Physics – Kurzfilm body trail (Choreografie: Willi Dorner) – Kurzfilm body trail CCTV (Choreografie: Willi Dorner) – Kurzfilm
2005	Mozart Sells – Kino-Kurzfilm im Auftrag des „Wiener Mozartjahres“
2004	Edgar G. Ulmer – The Man Off-screen – Dokumentarfilm
2003	Sim Movie – Kinotrailer für das Filmfestival DIAGONALE 03
2001	Sea Concrete Human – Malfunctions #1 – Kurzfilm

Awards:

- *Second Prize Original Full-length Film*, Documenta Madrid 2012 for *Low Definition Control*
- *Certificate of Merit*, Film Festival of Fine Arts 2010, Szolnok, Ungarn, for *body trail*
- *Best Editing (Documentary)*, Diagonale 2010 for *Jobcenter* (Regie: Angela Summereder, A 2009)
- *Innovative Cinema*, Diagonale 2009, Graz, for *Laws of Physics*
- *1st Prize, Choreographic Captures Competition*, Munich 2009 for *body trail CCTV*
- *Certificate of Merit*, Category „New Visions“, 45th San Francisco International Film Festival 2003, USA, for *Sea Concrete Human*.
- *Honorable Mention*, Category „Fiction“, New York Expo of short film and video 2003, USA, for *Sea Concrete Human*.
- *Innovative Cinema*, Diagonale 2002, Graz, for *Sea Concrete Human*

JOHANNES HAMMEL

Biography:

Born 1963 in Basel, Switzerland. Johannes Hammel graduated from the Film Academy in Vienna. He lives and works in Vienna as freelance film maker, cinematographer and producer since 1986. In 1998 he founded his own production company HAMMELFILM focusing on the development and production of offbeat film projects.

His more recent camera work includes *Way of Passion* by Joerg Burger, *In die Welt* by Constantin Wulff, *Zuoz* by Daniella Marxer and *Volver la Vista* by Fridolin Schönwiese. After a number of short films Hammel made his debut as a feature film director with his 2010 film *Follow Me*.

Films as producer:

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|-----------|---|
| 2011 | <i>Low Definition Control – Malfunctions #0</i>
Essay film by Michael Palm |
| 2011 | <i>Jour sombre</i>
Experimental short by Johannes Hammel |
| 2010 | <i>Folge mir / Follow Me</i>
Feature film by Johannes Hammel |
| 2003 – 05 | <i>Trilogy: Die Badenden / Die Liebenden / Abendmahl</i>
Experimental shorts by Johannes Hammel |
| 2001 | <i>K.aF.ka fragment</i>
Experimental feature by Christian Frosch |
| 2001 | <i>Sea Concrete Human – Malfunctions #1</i>
Short by Michael Palm |