

Script: Thomas Imbach  
Camera: Peter Liechti  
Sound: Rolf Büttikofer

Editing: Dominique Freiburghaus  
Music: Koch-Schütz-Studer-Lauterburg, So Nicht

Cast: Christine Lauterburg, Roger Nydegger, Sylvia Wetz, Roland Amstutz, Sibylle Courvoisier, Brigitta Javurek a.o.

Production: Bachim Film, Zurich  
World Rights: Bachim Film, Filmkollektiv  
Original Version: Swiss German, French

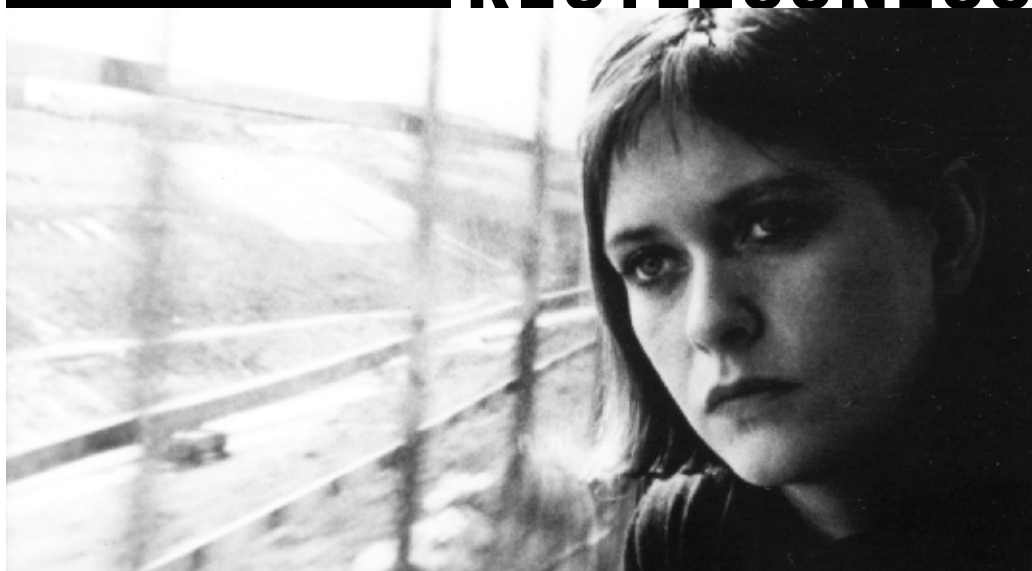
"The anonymity of the big city operates as an atmospheric space. In *Restlessness*, the almost indistinguishable urban, station and track landscapes and the way the film is edited suggest possible relationships between the protagonists. Conceivable that they might meet in the course of time, the course of the film. To the contrary: we are the ones to come across the jazz singer several times, at rehearsals, at recording sessions, or to encounter Anne, the young French-Swiss woman who travels back and forth between cities, or Max, who has just left prison and is loath immediately to start marking time by taking a job. All of them are constantly on the go, constantly restless. Children of a mobile society. Always on the move, but with no arrival ending in permanence. The train is in motion. The landscape flies by. The destination stations are interchangeable. Interchangeable but authentic. Imbach's film was shot in the Berne-Basle-Zurich triangle. It is not the characters who hold the story together, but the places and locations. The protagonists move through them."

*Basler Zeitung*, 26 January 1991

"The way the film is made, the interwoven story of the restlessness and helplessness of Anne, Nina and Max in the golden railway triangle of Zurich-Berne-Basle, recalls Godard but it is very personal in communicating today's mood of purposeful lack of orientation: this is also a means for Thomas Imbach to allow surface perfection to reflect the present day."

*Der Bund*, 25 January 1991

## RESTLESSNESS



| 1991 | 16 mm | colour | 56'

Anne, Nina and Max are three individuals constantly shown on train journeys – independently of one another – in the “golden triangle” between Zurich, Berne and Basle. Their existence is a sort of permanent limbo between these cities, always on the move without ever arriving. Arrival at their destination merely signals the start of the next trip. Cities are reduced to stations, places of restlessness and constant motion, whose *raison d’être* is to justify the sense of going somewhere and being nowhere. Three lives lived somewhere between three cities.

"Thomas Imbach's second longish film seems, at first sight, to convey a visual fascination with the phenomenon of railways. The restlessness expressed by the title no doubt refers to the main characters' everyday lives, fragments of which are introduced in the course of the film. And yet it is the trains that symbolise this restlessness most forcefully, constantly rushing, without clearly stated aim or purpose, through anonymous landscapes. (...) One of the qualities of this film is that it shows the anonymity of the Swiss 'Mittelland' landscape along the main rail axes, and yet give viewers momentary glimpses of identification and verification."

Christoph Egger, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 6 September 1991

Script: Thomas Imbach, Peter Purtschert, Jürg Hassler  
Camera: Jürg Hassler, Thomas Imbach

Sound: Peter Bräker  
Editing: Thomas Imbach, Jürg Hassler  
Music: Sir Henry, Peter Bräker

Cast: Linda Olsansky, Herbert Fritsch, Angelika Waller, Sir Henry, Ingrid Sattes, Stefan-Hyun Wanner, a.o.

Production: Bachim Film, Zurich  
World Rights: First Hand Films, Zurich  
Original Version: German

“ ‘The bullet’, says the Petra Kelly figure in this film, ‘manages with one intensely warm sensation to dislodge everything in a single moment. It makes its home inside me – that must have been the moment I briefly lifted off.’ Likewise, the images of Thomas Imbach’s film seem to thrust aside everything you thought you knew about this historic and mythical couple. The film observes death from the inside. In this long moment of death, the I starts to wonder. Not about death, but about the inability to live. Not about futility, but about the fact that all these exhausting efforts have not brought the world and this I one inch closer to one another. In these sequences, too, as in the documentary episodes and the fragmentary reminiscences, *Happiness Is A Warm Gun* is as radically political as it is radically physical.”

*epd-Film*, 10/2002, (Georg Seesslen)

“Imbach’s film is essentially an interpretation, a variation on a true story, as he himself says in the introduction, and thus a vehicle conveying a specific view. He is not afraid to show the ugly side of his subject, but it is something else that is important. His film is also a declaration of love: the two protagonists, especially Petra, are wonderful. In his typically detailed shots, which draw attention to things that are normally taken so much for granted that they go unnoticed, he marvels at Petra’s lips, the hollow at the bottom of her neck, her gentleness as she carefully and silently washes the exhausted Gert who stands naked before her.”

*Tages-Anzeiger*, 12 November 2001, (Mathias Heybrock)

## HAPPINESS IS A WARM GUN



| 2001 | 35mm | colour | 92’

**P**etra Kelly, the Green-Party freedom fighter of the 1980s, is shot by her partner, former army general Gert Bastian, while she sleeps. Shortly afterwards he shoots himself. Was it murder or did she want this to happen?

What happens in Petra’s mind from the moment Gert’s bullet enters her skull until the moment it lodges there and she dies? She experiences a flash forward to the present day and awakens in the glassy transit zone of an international airport. As she passes through this modern purgatory, Petra struggles with Gert and other people from her life to understand the meaning of the gunshot. Eventually, she recognizes the power of her own absolute, over-the-top desires.

### Director’s comments

On 20 October 1992 I read in the paper that Gert Bastian had shot Petra Kelly. It hit me like a bolt of lightning, even though I was no great admirer of Kelly. It was the gunshot that fascinated me; I wanted to find out more. I was not satisfied by the wild speculation in the media – rumours of a nuclear mafia, the Chinese secret service, jealousy, etc. – or by the general outcry about an ex-general shooting her while she was asleep. It was clear to me from the start that the shooting was a consequence of her own love story, that Petra herself had been partly responsible for his pulling the trigger. I wanted to resurrect her in a film and, as it were, give her a chance to understand her own death. After a long period of hesitation, I finally decided to embark on this experiment in 1998.

Script: Thomas Imbach  
Camera: Jürg Hassler

Editing: Thomas Imbach, Jürg Hassler  
Music: Peter Bräker, Balz Bachmann

Cast: Milan Peschel, Barbara Maurer,  
Noah Gsell, Barbara Heynen  
Production: Bachim Film, Zurich

World Rights: Bachim Film  
Original Version: German/Swiss  
German

“Imbach weaves the tale of a driven explorer of life, an in all likelihood doomed love and a tender father-son relationship. He also highlights the absurdities of modern, mundane tourism and presents a stereotype symbol of Switzerland in a new light. The Matterhorn takes on a mystic quality, becomes a protagonist in its own right, telling of nature and the difficult nature of mankind. And this tragicomic drama set in the mountains is also one of the most sensuous Swiss-based films in recent years.”

*Berner Zeitung*, 23 January 2006, (Madeleine Corbat)

“Form and content mutually drive each other on. Each frame seems to imply something more, with Lenz (a Swiss variant of the Cobain-like suicidal character in *Last Days*) getting stuck in the snow time and again, and at the same time showing himself capable of all sorts of pranks in his snowy surroundings. Imbach applies all the tricks of the trade: moments of self-reflection, chronological shifts, documentary passages and a gripping soundtrack. Interspersed are intensely comical moments and witty dialogues, and the Matterhorn, shown in unfamiliar fashion, exerts a powerful allure, comparable to the sea in Andrej Tarkovsky’s film *Solaris*.”

*Aargauer Zeitung*, 23 January 2006, (Hans Jürg Zinsli)



| 2006 | 35mm | colour | 96'

**T**he film-maker Lenz has left his native Berlin for the Vosges to research the story behind Georg Büchner’s novel fragment Lenz. But he soon trades the Alsatian landscape for higher altitudes: the urge to see his nine-year-old son Noah takes him to the Swiss ski resort of Zermatt. With Noah’s help, Lenz stages a reunion with his ex-wife Natalie, whom he still loves. The newfound closeness to his son and the rekindled love for Natalie form a brief idyll. But the fantasy of a happy family life is short-lived, overshadowed by Lenz’s increasingly erratic behaviour. Noah and Natalie return to Zurich, and Lenz remains in the mountains, alone. Just as Büchner based his novel on a real episode from the life of the German poet Lenz (1751–1805), Thomas Imbach freely mixes fact and fiction. Like his literary counterpart, the modern-day Lenz is a tortured visionary caught between euphoria and desperation. Imbach’s film captures these mood swings with its eclectic visual and aural style. Lenz’s turbulent inner states are mirrored by the elemental beauty of the natural landscape. The emotional drama of the main characters plays against a background of kitsch global tourism – provided by the authentic Zermatt locations and real people appearing in the village scenes. The intimately filmed scenes of romantic and family life provide a telling glimpse into the realities of contemporary relationships.

An unconventional, stormy portrait of a man whose life motto echoes the Romantic poets: Genius writes its own rules.

Script: Thomas Imbach, Eva Kammerer, Jürg Hassler  
Camera: Jürg Hassler, Thomas Imbach

Editing: Thomas Imbach, Jürg Hassler, Patrizia Stotz  
Music: Peter Bräker, Balz Bachmann

Cast: Beat Marti, Laura Drasbaek, Anne-Grethe Bjarup Riis, Sandra Medina, Helena Af Sandeberg, Mellika Melani, Lale Yavas, Angelica Biert

Production: Bachim Film, Pandora Film  
World Rights: Bachim Film, Zurich  
Original Version: Swiss Germn/English/Danish/Swedish

Thomas Imbach dares to tackle unusual topics each time. In *I Was A Swiss Banker*, which according to Imbach evolved as a light-hearted twin brother of *Lenz*, the director ventures on the reformation of a stressed banker in a paradise-like, magical Switzerland inhabited exclusively by beautiful women. *I Was A Swiss Banker* is a film about Switzerland without false nostalgia or a sense of home. [...] Marvellous as always is the camera work of Jürg Hassler and Thomas Imbach: poetic and artful, yet never tacky; the underwater photography is of spherical magic. Sarah Stähli, *Der Bund*, August 30th, 2007

Thomas Imbach has an unparalleled sense of subtle moods; his sense of visual harmony and dissonance, his eye for unknown beauty and the threat of the familiar as well as his courage to address the metaphysical make him a great lyrical talent among Swiss film directors. Christoph Schneider, *Tagesanzeiger*, August 29th, 2007

Thomas Imbach stage-manages Swiss landscapes in a way hardly ever seen in films before. Not simply beautiful, but archaic, mystic, sensuous, foreign and fascinating. *Art-tv*, 08/2007



| 2006 | 35mm | colour | 85'

**R**oger is a young, dashing banker full of boyish self-confidence. He has a highly successful business, smuggling black money across the border for reinvestment. But then a split second reaction changes his entire life. Flagged down one day by a customs officers, Roger loses his cool and makes a run for it. His only means of escape: diving headlong into Lake Constance, thereby catapulting himself out of his life as a banker and into a totally new universe, populated with shy mermaids decked out in Lara Croft gear, and cunning magpie witches in helicopters. As in a Grimm Brothers fairy tale, Roger has to pass three tests to cast off the witch's curse and find happiness. His underwater journey through an intoxicatingly beautiful Switzerland is enhanced by the enchanting songs of sirens – a fable full of lust for life and love.