

**E.C.G. EXPOSITUS**  
**(the broadcast and**  
**the artistic media)**

**A film by Michael Brynntrup**

**Germany 2004**

**Original Version (German) with English subtitles**  
**DVD Video | 101 minutes**

**Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin 2004**  
**Internationales Forum des jungen Film**

**Released in Germany by**

**GMfilms**

# The Players

Doctor  
TV reporter  
Nurse  
TV journalist  
Film Maker

Bernhard Bieniek  
Jochen Paul  
Petra Krause  
Tim Lienhard  
Michael Bryntrup

as also

Reinhold Fischer  
Ralf Grunwald  
Heiko Wittbold  
Simon Blum  
Mirko Lukas  
Aron Neubert  
Marcel Steger  
Björn Melhus  
Ingmar Skrinjar  
Alex Mayer

# Synopsis

Immanuel Kant Hospital in Neukölln, Berlin. Midnight. A patient is being admitted. TV journalists are on the spot. The beginning of a story that tells itself. And a self-portrait in broadcast and artistic media.

If TV shoots me, then I'll shoot TV!

**E.C.G. EXPOSITUS** includes three short films:

**AIDE MÉMOIRE – Gay Document For Remembering  
HEART.INSTANT/IATION II (Self-generated Manipulations)  
LOVERFILM – An Uncontrolled Dispersion Of Information**

# The Director On His Film

Everyman sees the material before himself,  
the reward is found only by he who has something to add,  
and the form is a secret to most.

*(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)*

**E.K.G. EXPOSITUS** conducts basic research: the object of investigation is the image, and the engagement with images under the conditions of contemporary media reality. It's about the (latent) self-referentiality and momentum of (visual) media. It's about the staging of media experiences. „E C G EXPOSITUS“ poses ethical questions concerning the image. It's about the authenticity of images: truth/falsehood, and about the privacy of images: soul-stealing. And it's always about the expectant positionings of the spectator. In this investigation, **E.K.G. EXPOSITUS** employs not scientific, but artistic methods: in this respect, the standpoint of the film is a highly subjective one. The material is not only researched, but also experienced; the reward is associatively connected; and the form is the actual artwork, which could certainly be hypertextually deciphered, but in the end, likely remains a secret (and obviously can only be insufficiently formulated in words!).

*(Michael Bryntrup, from the grant proposal, February 1998, translation Wayne Yung)*

**E.C.G. EXPOSITUS** includes three short films:

## **AIDE MÉMOIRE – Gay Document For Remembering** (16:00 Min. | 1995)

Photographer Jürgen Baldiga (1959-1993) and filmmaker Michael Bryntrup, privat discourses and personal investigations of how to deal with images of life and death.

**AIDE MÉMOIRE**, a 16-minute short, is decidedly not a documentary about Baldiga's life and work. Twice Bryntrup visits his friend at home, who is sick with AIDS, to ask a few informal questions and to get him on tape. This „Gay Document For Remembering“ („schwules Gedächtnisprotokoll“), as Bryntrup subtitles the film, is full of gaps: it reproduces few of Baldiga's photographs and mentions only a couple of dates from his life, one of which is his death in December 1993. This reticence, even omission, makes the photographer's life seem all the more transient and the loss that much more poignant.

*(„The Queer German Cinema“, Stanford University Press, July 2000 – Alice Kuzniar)*

## **HEART.INSTANT/IATION II (Self-generated Manipulations)** (7:15 Min. | 1996)

A medium is not an abbreviation that brings one thing to another, but rather a third added to two. A medium is not static, not a bridge, but develops a life of its own whenever activated. The ECG of metempsychosis (from the genes to the zodiac). Electrographics of the 4th Dimension.

**HERZSOFORT.SETZUNG** is under no circumstances a mindless rehearsal of various mediaforms. In spite of different forms like Super8, CD-Rom, VHS-Video, colour copy or computer print, that are presented sometimes in an absurd manner, the single generation of the pictures are linked by the pleasure lying in – the uncertainty of the process, also in the formulation of the question. What remains from the transformed man after his bath in the media?

*(Filmwinter, Festival Catalogue 1996 – Ulrich Wegenast)*

## **LOVERFILM – An Uncontrolled Dispersion Of Information** (21:30 Min. | 1996)

This film is based upon true occurrences. Any resemblance to individuals, dead or alive, is not only intentional, but unavoidable. The viewer is also responsible for images made public. Excerpts from my Diary and the relevant books of German law.

Noted German experimental filmmaker Michael Brynntrup tantalizes us with his diaristic account of his many lovers. What seems at first to be an extended exercise in ego, gradually becomes a powerful social record of gay life in the years spanning gay liberation and the aids-crisis.

*(Best Experimental Work / New Screen Section, Images Festival of Independent Film and Video Toronto 1998)*

furthermore

## **KEIN FILM | NO FILM** (1:20 Min. | 2000)

One film – two originals: the internet version in online quality ([www.brynntrup.de/nofilm](http://www.brynntrup.de/nofilm)) and the 35mm version: coming soon to a film festival near you! „Film is no longer what it should have been.“ (Rhythm in the age of its digital producability, an oscilloscope loosely based on Eadweard Muybridge).

Brynntrup's film that actually is not a film (and therefore on 35mm) reproduces the motions of the human body, alluding to 100 years of filmmaking. Now follows – apocalyptically spoken – the odyssey as a computer-controlled dream.

*(Catalogue Circles-Of-Confusion, Berlin 2001 – Thomas Kliche)*

# Michael Bryntrup, Director

Born in Münster, Germany, 1959. Studied in Freiburg, Rome and Berlin. Master degree Fine Arts at the Braunschweig School of Art in 1991.

Experimental poems, texts, paintings, photography, photocopies, performances, installations and exhibitions since 1977. Over 60 experimental short films and videos since 1981, three feature films. Digital art in interactive media since 1995 (CD-ROM, DVD and internet).

Film exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art New York (1987, 1992 and 1999). Numerous international exhibitions and film awards.

Organisation of avantgarde and gay film events for museums, institutions and international film festivals. Publications on Super8 and Off-Off-Cinemas. Several guest lectures since 1990, workshops, project advising and apprenticeship counselling in the area of media production and film.

The artist lives and works.

# Filmography (Selection)

- 2003 **E.C.G. EXPOSITUS (the broadcast and the artistic media)**  
(101 min | 16mm/DigiBeta)
- 2002 **STUMMFILM für Gehörlose**  
(online) (5:40 min/flash)
- 2001 **ACHTUNG – die Achtung**  
(14 min | 35mm)
- 2000 **NETC.ETERA – der Film zum Film**  
(13:20 min | CD-ROM/DV)
- 2000 **KEIN FILM | NO FILM**  
(1:20 min | 35mm/flash)
- 1998 **TABU V (wovon man nicht sprechen kann)**  
(13 min | 16mm)
- 1996 **LOVERFILM – An Uncontrolled Dispersion Of Information**  
(21:30 min | 16mm/BetaSP)
- 1996 **HEART.INSTANT/IATION II (Self-generated Manipulations)**  
(7:15 min | BetaSP/16mm)
- 1996 **HOMO ERECTUS**  
(77 min | 16mm) [Kurzfilmprogramm 3]
- 1995 **AIDE MÉMOIRE – Gay Document For Remembering**  
(16 min | BetaSP+16mm)
- 1994 **KAIN UND ABEL – eine Moritat**  
(10 min | 16mm)
- 1993 **PLÖTZLICH UND UNERWARTET: DER ELEFANT AUS ELFENBEIN**  
(75 min | 16mm) [Totentanz-Zyklus]
- 1993 **ALL YOU CAN EAT**  
(5:30 min | 35mm)
- 1991 **LIEBE, EIFERSUCHT UND RACHE**  
(7 min | 16mm)
- 1990 **DIE STATIK DER ESELSBRÜCKEN**  
(21 min | 16mm)
- 1989 **NARZISS UND ECHO**  
(14 min | 16mm, Rätselfilm)
- 1988 **ISS DOCH WENIGSTENS DAS FLEISCH AUF**  
(75 min | Super8+16mm) [Kurzfilmprogramm 2]
- 1987 **HÖLLENSIMULATION – frei nach Platons Höhlengleichnis**  
(8 min | Super8)
- 1986 **JESUS – DER FILM**  
(125 / 84 min | Super8+16mm, Monumentalfilm) [Spielfilm in Episoden, 20 Mitspieler / 2 Versionen]
- 1986 **TESTAMENTO MEMORI**  
(8 min | Super8/16mm)
- 1985 **SO SIEHT EINE PRISE AUS (1987)**  
(78 min | Super8) [Kurzfilmprogramm 1]
- 1984 **HANDFEST - freiwillige Selbstkontrolle**  
(18 min | Super8)
- 1983 **DER RHEIN – EIN DEUTSCHES MÄRCHEN**  
(12 min | Super8+16mm)
- 1982 **SEPTEMBER, WUT – EINE REISE**  
(85 min | Super8)

# Interview With The Filmmaker

*Michael Bryntrup:* Testing, testing, one, two, three. Welcome to the Michael Bryntrup show. It's the 5th of January 2004.

*Stefanie Schulte Strathaus:* Your film has two layers. On the one hand there is the level of your biography and filmography, on the other there is your involvement in public broadcasting and your thoughts about your films on television. In this way, you have doubled – so to speak – the autobiographical element that is in all your films, while also making a selection of your films. How did this come about?

*M.B.:* I had been thinking about the **E.C.G. EXPOSITUS** project for several years; in fact, ever since I made the short films that are shown full-length in the film. In my view, these films are very closely linked. I wanted to analyse the images, to question them. All three of the short films relate to that in very different ways. There is **AIDE MÉMOIRE**, a documentary and a classic interview, then **HEART.INSTANT/IATION II**, a quasi material-based analysis of images and their potential replicability, and finally **LOVERFILM**, which looks at how images live on, what remains of images, and how and under what circumstances they become documents, historical. But not only the images are questioned; the audience is too. That is particularly clear in *Loverfilm*, in which the audience is addressed directly and collaborates in its own voyeurism, so to speak. All three films were made in 1995 and 1996.

*S.S.S.:* In your film you say that art always focuses on the artist himself. In your case, would you say that your biography and filmography reproduce each other? What role do repetition and quotations play in your film? Incidentally, many experimental filmmakers are currently bringing together several short works to make one longer one.

*M.B.:* Each of the three films elicited a reaction from the public. I was surprised that radio and television stations contacted me to report about short films. And when the television crews came to visit me, I thought that they fitted into my analysis of images perfectly. So I filmed and depicted the media teams that came to visit me. I added this moment – in which a television crew films me and I film the television crew – as a further element in the analysis of images. After all, it's also a part of the question of what happens to images and how they live on. And if journalists report about a film, they also quote it. That's an approach I also take, so the setting as a whole was perfect. For me, the entire film is not only a review of my filmography, but also look back over the Nineties. My look at how the media processes individual lives in public began in 1988 with the bank robbery in Gladbeck, then there was O J Simpson, the car chase and the broadcasts from the court, and ended in the year 2000 with *Big Brother* and the container [in which contestants lived]. In between there is *Lady Di*, the paparazzi debate and the fake Michael Born documentaries; examples of current events that have prompted the media to discuss themselves. The media spoke about themselves. And that brings us to the next big theme of my short films, but also of the long one: the question of ethics. I raise ethical questions. It's about authenticity, truth and lies, in other words, what a replicatory medium can really do: What aspects of images can you still believe? And it's also about privacy, about whether the media should exercise restraint, i.e. about how far images can go. The film considers why everything got out of hand in the Nineties.

S.S.S.: That means that your recordings of private life in the Nineties clashed head-on with the social reality of the time, so to speak. In the framework of EKG Expositus, this kind of crash is expressed in the filmmaker being taken to hospital after encountering a camera crew. But you don't then satisfy the curiosity this triggers in the viewer. You don't specify what actually – ie physically – injured him.

M.B.: First of all, I don't think „framework“ is the right word. It's more a kind of hypertext structure than the structure of an omnibus film with a linear arrangement of separate parts. I was keen to create clever links between the elements. For me, it was important to interweave the individual short films. I tried to produce smooth (where possible), but primarily associative transitions. The actual „framework“ begins with the filmmaker's arrival at the hospital and ends the moment the patient is anaesthetised. In other words, it's more a moment than a story. Although **E.C.G. EXPOSITUS** has a dramatic structure (I call it a „dramatic ethic“, but that is also a concession to the narrative form, to the rules of filmmaking), I nevertheless tried to make the film into a kind of patchwork so that you can jump associatively from the top right to the bottom left just like on a panel and thereby create links. Therefore, if you tell the story, you can only say that there is a moment when a man becomes unconscious. You can't see what really happened to his body. Even so, an off-camera voice announces that a patient has been taken to hospital with a minor cerebral haemorrhage and serious internal injuries. Of course you can read that somewhat metaphorically.

S.S.S.: The worlds that collide and lead to disaster apply equally to attitudes towards privacy and towards experimental filmmaking. The TV reports highlight sensational scenes that are clearly about sexuality and thus fail to satisfy anyone. Experimental films are considered „hard to stomach“.

M.B.: Yes, hard to digest, which really means they make you sick.

S.S.S.: You have pointed to the disastrous state of public broadcasting and art, but not the cinema.

M.B.: That's an interesting point. Maybe the cinema is too sacred to me to draw it in too. That would be an implosion. I have to stop and think about that. The film began when the TV crew arrived at my door. I always make a link to what I'm experiencing at the time and use that to develop a film. But why not consider the cinema?

S.S.S.: It almost seems as if experimental filmmaking really doesn't a space all of its own, as if you depend on reactions outside the cinema; reactions that have little to do with your intentions. That's tragic. It's a tragic film.

M.B.: I hope it's also very humorous. Of course it's also tragic. It's ambivalent, like so much in life. I'll leave the audience to decide on that one. If I make a stand (an issue I'd like to come back to), I see this as a bridge for the audience, which can see me as an example – even though I mean the audience itself. The audience can reflect on itself, or rather, on how it identifies with the hero. (...) The viewer can't fade away, even when the theatre lights are dimmed. He remains sitting on his seat facing the screen. He has to grapple with the images he sees, just like he grapples with the reality he encounters out on the street. Perhaps that creates a dialogue, communication between the audience and the film, the moment the viewer perceives it. Since you've seen the film, I shouldn't really have to explain anything, because the film says all that I'm telling you now. That's basically how I try to work. A film should be congruent with the world outside the film. It is about formulating reality, and nothing else need really be said.

S.S.S.: About your personal stand: You use tautologies like „MBC shows a film by a filmmaker“ and „I'm a gay filmmaker because I'm gay“. This playing with labels distances you from your audience again as if you were summoning up an existing system of coordinates. Did you discuss the meaning of privacy in any way with the reporters?

M.B.: Yes, in so far as I told them, „If you film me, I'll film you. Perhaps I'll make a film about you too.“ Interestingly enough, they referred to that in their reports.

S.S.S.: That flattered them.

M.B.: Yes, they felt flattered, but it also released them a little from the chains of their schematic thinking: „Now we'll go over there. We've done this a hundred times before. We'll sit him somewhere over there, use nice lighting, ask him three questions, cut out a half-sentence of that to use, then all we need is a pan and a still from the film and it's in the can.“ That's how it's done. When I turned up with my camera in my hand, it was certainly unusual, but permissible for me as a filmmaker. And they mentioned it in their reports: A TV crew films a filmmaker filming a TV crew making a film about him. So perhaps experimental films do have an influence (Laughs) on television, if only a little and at the end of the broadcasting day.

S.S.S.: As opposed to North America, Germany doesn't have an experimental filmmaking tradition of using private lives as a form of artistic expression. And yet, your films are different to those in North America, which stem from the autobiographical filmmaking tradition, precisely because they aren't one-to-one representations of your own story. I would even go so far as to say that knowing your films doesn't tell me much about your biography. The representation of private lives plays a greater role in your films. Aside from these television reports, how do people react in Germany?

M.B.: Viewers who see my films at home like them. They can handle someone opening the curtains and standing on the screen saying, „My name is Michael Bryntrup.“ I suspect that people who have difficulty with such bold subjectivity also have problems with themselves. After all, individual freedom is our society's number one premise. In other words, individuality is a value in itself, provided it also produces unique beings. It's important to remember that the western concept of society is only our point of view, our way of life, our small, modest world. That's always on my mind when I turn such subjectivity outwards. I call a film about myself an „ego complex“ (in the sense of „military industrial complex“), and I'm always keen to specify that I'm taking about human beings in general. There are a number of possible reasons why my films are shown more often abroad than in Germany. (...) Experimental filmmaking doesn't have a continuous, unbroken history in Germany. Maybe it even has something to do with the gap that existed under the Nazis. When Maya Deren began making her films in the United States in the Fifties, nothing comparable existed here. But even our film promotion system doesn't focus on experimental filmmaking. I experience experimental filmmaking as a kind of pure research that can benefit everyone else. As meta-films, experimental films are essentially self-reflection; films about filming. EKG is an example of how we can address social issues and reflect their presentation in the media. And I see the link to the idea of the meta-film in the way I present myself, ergo self-reflection.

S.S.S.: You include Selbstporträt mit Kronleuchter as a kind of „B-movie“: You're under the chandelier playing with the glass beads when someone from the television calls, while another television crew films you almost losing yourself in the chandelier. In so doing, you are portraying a strong covetousness in spite of your criticism of the media.

M.B.: Yes, that's also why the scene that begins with *Aide mémoire* is also interesting. I ask Jürgen Baldiga whether he had any utopian dreams before he tested HIV positive. He laughs and says he once wanted to become a pop star. Of course, being infected with HIV has narrowed his perspectives drastically. And of course the chandelier and the way I stand below it reaching for the stars is also meant to be tongue-in-cheek. After all, television is no longer as important as it was when I grew up. Appearing on television used to be like being blessed by the Pope. That's no longer the case. Television has become relatively banal. But of course it felt good to realise that the public was interested in me and my work. However, my financial survival and the ability to make my own images are more important than appearing in the media.

S.S.S.: How did you finance the film?

M.B.: As you know, I like to show how my films came about. In *Die Statik der Eselsbrücken* I said, „This film was made with a 21,500 mark grant from the film board of North-Rhine Westphalia. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the film board.“ This scene comes up in the middle of the film. It's a similar situation in **E.C.G.** I was given quite a large grant, but still didn't know how the film should start. At least, that's what I say right at the beginning of the film. It's not quite true, but the sentence shows that at the start of such a long-term project you never know where it's going to take you. For instance, I didn't know from the outset that I would spend so much time on the Internet during the five years I spent working on the film. Or that I would include *Kein film*. That was the outcome of open research. I was simply lucky that my very open concept won me a filmmaking grant and I therefore got the chance to stick to one issue for a longer period of time. That is why I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the cultural film promotion board of the state of Lower Saxony. But times have changed. Today you can't get money for a concept like that anymore. Nowadays you have to first convince the television that your material deserves to be promoted before you can even approach a film board. You can only apply for a grant if you get the nod from television. Of course television editors have completely different criteria than independent film boards. I worked on the film continually for five years. From that you can work out that I spent a certain number of weeks shooting and days in the cutting room. I only hope that film boards will allow such work to continue. It won't hurt them: Images that can only be created in this way reproduce themselves and have a knock-on effect. It is only through such open creativity (in terms of the outcome) that the culture of filmmaking can advance.

Addendum by e-mail on 9 January 2004:

M.B.: I just realised: We didn't talk much about homosexuality, etc.

S.S.S.: That's right, after all it creates the whole setting. But I didn't have any questions about it.

M.B.: That's OK. Others will have enough to say about it.

The interview was conducted by Stefanie Schulte Strathaus in Berlin on 5 January 2004

# Credits

## **E.K.G. EXPOSITUS (die öffentlichen und die künstlerischen Medien) | E.C.G. EXPOSITUS (the broadcast and the artistic media)**

101 Min. | 2003 | video (16mm+DigiBeta) | col | sound [MBCFILM#60]  
(Fernsehfilm) | (TV movie)

Idee, Regie | concept, director  
Michael Bryntrup

Darsteller | actors  
Bernhard Bieniek (Arzt), Jochen Paul (Reporterin), Petra Krause (Krankenschwester), Tim Lienhard (TV-Journalist) sowie Michael Bryntrup (als Filmemacher)

weitere Darsteller | appearances  
Reinhold Fischer, Ralf Grunwald, Heiko Wittbold, Simon Blum, Mirko Lukas, Aron Neubert, Marcel Steger, Björn Melhus, Ingmar Skrinjar, Alex Mayer

Kamera | photography  
Uwe Bohrer u. a.

zusätzliche Kamera | additional camera  
Volker Ehlers, Björn Melhus, Uwe Rosentreter, Wayne Yung, Michael Bryntrup

Regieassistenz | assistant director  
Björn Melhus, Ingmar Skrinjar

Mitarbeit, Mitwirkung | production assistant  
Mario Bandemer, Bodo Schlecht, Jan-Rasmus Heumann

Standfoto | stills photography  
Aron Neubert, Marcel Steger

Maske | make-up artist  
Romahn Effekt Berlin (Unfallmaske)

Aufnahmeleitung | production manager  
Björn Melhus, Ingmar Skrinjar, Michael Bryntrup

Computeranimationen | animation  
Ilja Köster, Rainer Grams, markus, Michael Bryntrup

Musik, Tonbearbeitung | music, sound design  
Yref, Jay Ray, Frank Bretschneider

Sprecher | narrator  
Tim Lienhard, Michael Bryntrup

Schnitt | editor  
Michael Bryntrup

Avidschnitt | avid operator  
Philip Grossmann

Übersetzungen | translations  
Wayne Yung

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Produktion | production  
MBC-Filmproduktion Berlin

Produktionsförderung | production funding  
kulturelle Filmförderung des NDR in Niedersachsen (1998)