

Retreat

A film by Leon Schwitter





Synopsis

On a holiday in the mountains, an estranged father and son get to know each other better. Sheltered by the rocky landscape, Michael believes that he and his son are safe from the outside world, which is crumbling under the impact of environmental destruction and economic crises.

Technical Specs

82 Mins.

DCP 1.85:1

Color, 2K, 25FPS

VO Swiss-German

Subtitles English, German, French, Spanish, Greek

Digital 5.1

Switzerland

2022

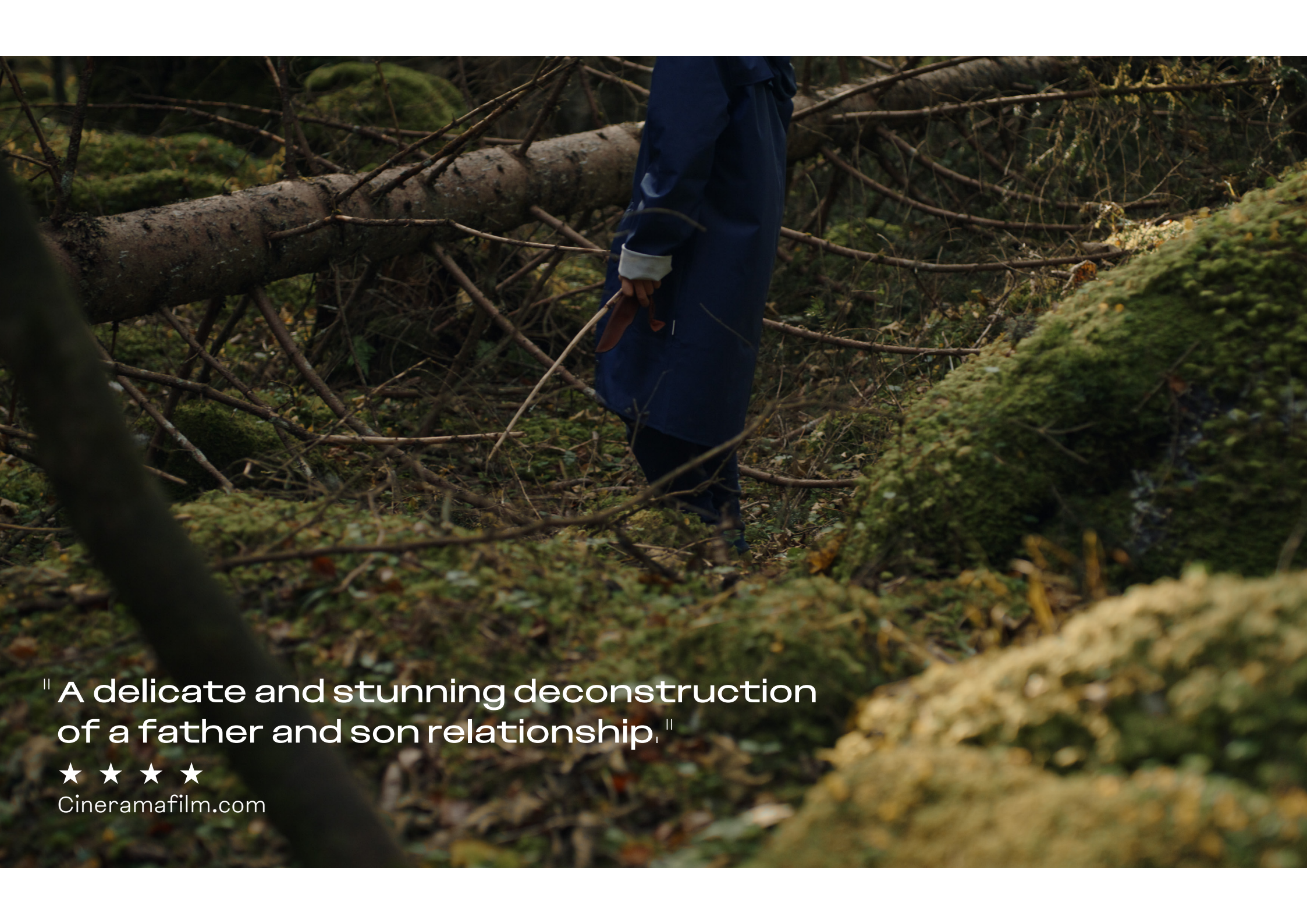
Festivals & Awards

AWARDS

The Golden Alexander Award - Film Forward Competition - 63rd Thessaloniki International Film Festival, FIPRESCI Prize - 32nd Filmkunstfest Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, First Look Award - 74th Locarno Film Festival

FESTIVALS

(WP) 37th Mar del Plata International Film Festival, (EP) 63rd Thessaloniki International Film Festival, 58th Solothurner Filmtage, 44th Filmfestival Max Ophüls Preis, 38th Santa Barbara International Film Festival, 32nd Filmkunstfest Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 49th Seattle International Film Festival



" A delicate and stunning deconstruction
of a father and son relationship. "

★ ★ ★ ★

Cineramafilm.com



" Meticulously crafted and impressively mature debut from a young filmmaker. "

The Film Verdict

Director's Statement

We are increasingly confronted with a collapsing planet and have to ask ourselves questions about our lives and the lives of future generations. It would take a global paradigm shift to make our society sustainable and future-proof. This cannot be achieved by technological change alone, but also means giving up comfort and privileges. This is a dilemma that we humans do not like to face. More and more voices are emerging that have less and less hope for a brighter future. Dealing with these problems divides our society into countless factions. While some seek access to nature and strive for a life with fewer resources, others see humanity at a fragile point and have already given up hope in a collective solution. One growing current in this regard is the so-called doomsday prepper movement. Driven by various fears, these people often feel abandoned by the state and society and prepare themselves to be able to protect themselves and their loved ones in the event of an emergency.

If one wants complete security, one must isolate oneself from one's community and go into seclusion. The myth of the mountains as a place of retreat is deeply rooted in Swiss history. Even before the Second World War, work began on hollowing out the Alps and fortifying them with countless bunkers, where a small percentage of society would have retreated in the event of an invasion. The name of these bunkers was *Réduit national*.

I chose a place near these bunkers to tell the story of a distant father-son relationship. Retreat isn't meant to be a classic survival film. There are no extreme disasters to deal with and the character of the father is not an experienced survivalist, but an inexperienced, soft man who does not fit the stereotype of the genre. In a diary-like structure, we follow father and son as they slowly get closer. They don't know each other well, yet feel a connection. Their relationship is fragile and much needs to be made up for. During this time of getting to know each other, the son becomes more and more aware that his father is hiding a side from him that is dominated by fears. Vacation transforms into imprisonment, nature as friend turns into nature as enemy, and love transforms into violence.



About the Production

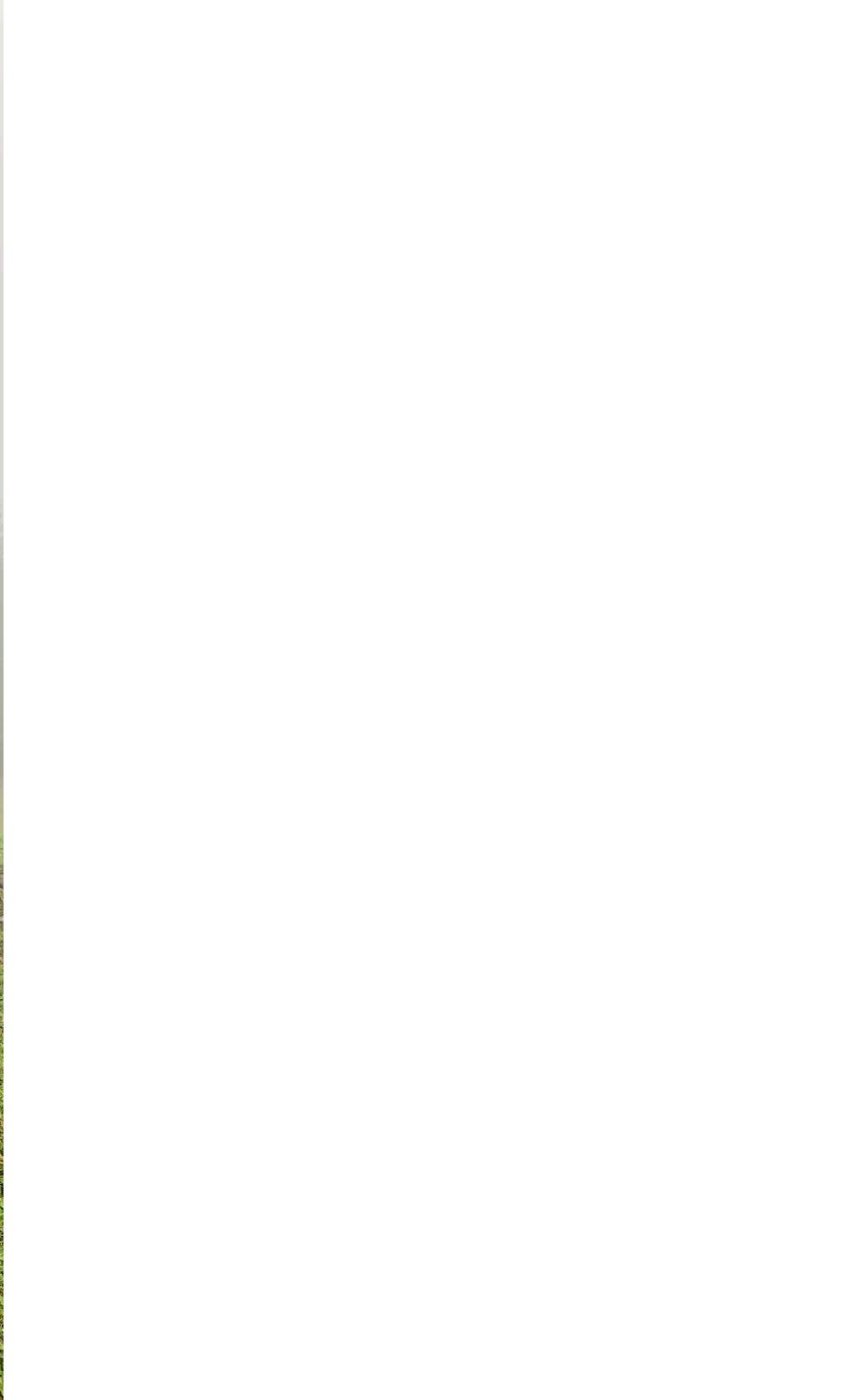
Retreat is the first feature-length project of our own production company EXIT Filmkollektiv. We aim to create a very cinéma copin*e (filmmaking with friends) structure that allows us to make films with a different social and economic foundation. The recipe is simple: a small group of very close people, less resources, more shooting time.

The film was shot on a mountain called *Haldi* in the Swiss canton of Uri. Over a four-month period, we shot for two months in different weather conditions, going through similar struggles as the characters in our film. Our goal was to shoot the film chronologically so we could experience time and isolation in sync with Benny and Michael. More and more we realized that the nature that surrounds us is much stronger than we are and will strongly influence our shooting process.

Visually, we wanted to work a lot with natural light for the outdoor scenes and small practical light sources for the indoor scenes. Since our location was surrounded by a high chain of rock formations, the amount of direct sunlight would diminish over time. This peaked during our second block of shooting in January, when there was no direct sunlight at all. Because of these natural coincidences, the look and feel of the film also became its own chronology.

These environmental conditions also had a strong influence on the construction of many scenes. Even though there was a written script as a basis, many scenes had to be adapted in interaction with the environment. We were in constant dialogue with the nature of the location, which led to the discovery of new and more realistic moments.







Biography



Leon Schwitter (*1994, Lenzburg, Switzerland) Leon studied film at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) and completed his Bachelor's degree with a focus on screenwriting.

In 2019 he cofounded the production company EXIT Filmkollektiv with four other filmmakers, where he works as a producer and director. Retreat is his feature film debut and the collective's first feature film project.

2022 Réduit / Retreat (Feature)

2021 So weit, so gut / So far, so good (Short)

" A completely individualised,
intimate formulation of the actual. "

La Agenda Revista Buenos Aires



Cast

CAST

DORIAN HEINIGER
PETER HOTTINGER

TEAM

Directed by
LEON SCHWITTER

Screenplay by
LEON SCHWITTER, MICHAEL KARRER

Production
CAROLINE HEPTING, REA TELEVANTOS,
LEON SCHWITTER, MICHAEL KARRER

Cinematography
ROBIN ANGST

Edited by
MICHAEL KARRER

Sound
FLORIAN HINDER, DOMINIC CURSERI

Production Design
VICKY SARA RAMSAY, JACOPO GIULINI

Costume Design
JEANNE-VERA BOURGUIGNON,
REBECCA ZESIGER

Original Music by
HORA LUNGA

Sound Design
MARKUS KENEL

Additional Sound Design and Mix
PETER VON SIEBENTHAL

Color Grading
RAMÓN KÖNIGSHAUSEN

Visual Effects
DAS ALTE LAGER

Visual Effects Artists
ROBIN DISCH, ENNIO RUSCHETTI
LUKAS BIERI

Production
EXIT FILMKOLLEKTIV

In Co-Production with
SABOTAGE KOLLEKTIV

With the Support of
SWISS FEDERAL OFFICE OF CULTURE
(OFC)

AARGAUER KURATORIUM

SWISSLOS KANTON URI

DÄTWYLER STIFTUNG

FONDATION EMMY INEICHEN

GAMIL STIFTUNG

HIBOU STIFTUNG

JOSEF MÜLLER STIFTUNG MURI

KATHARINA STREBEL STIFTUNG

STIFTUNG ANNEMARIE SCHINDLER

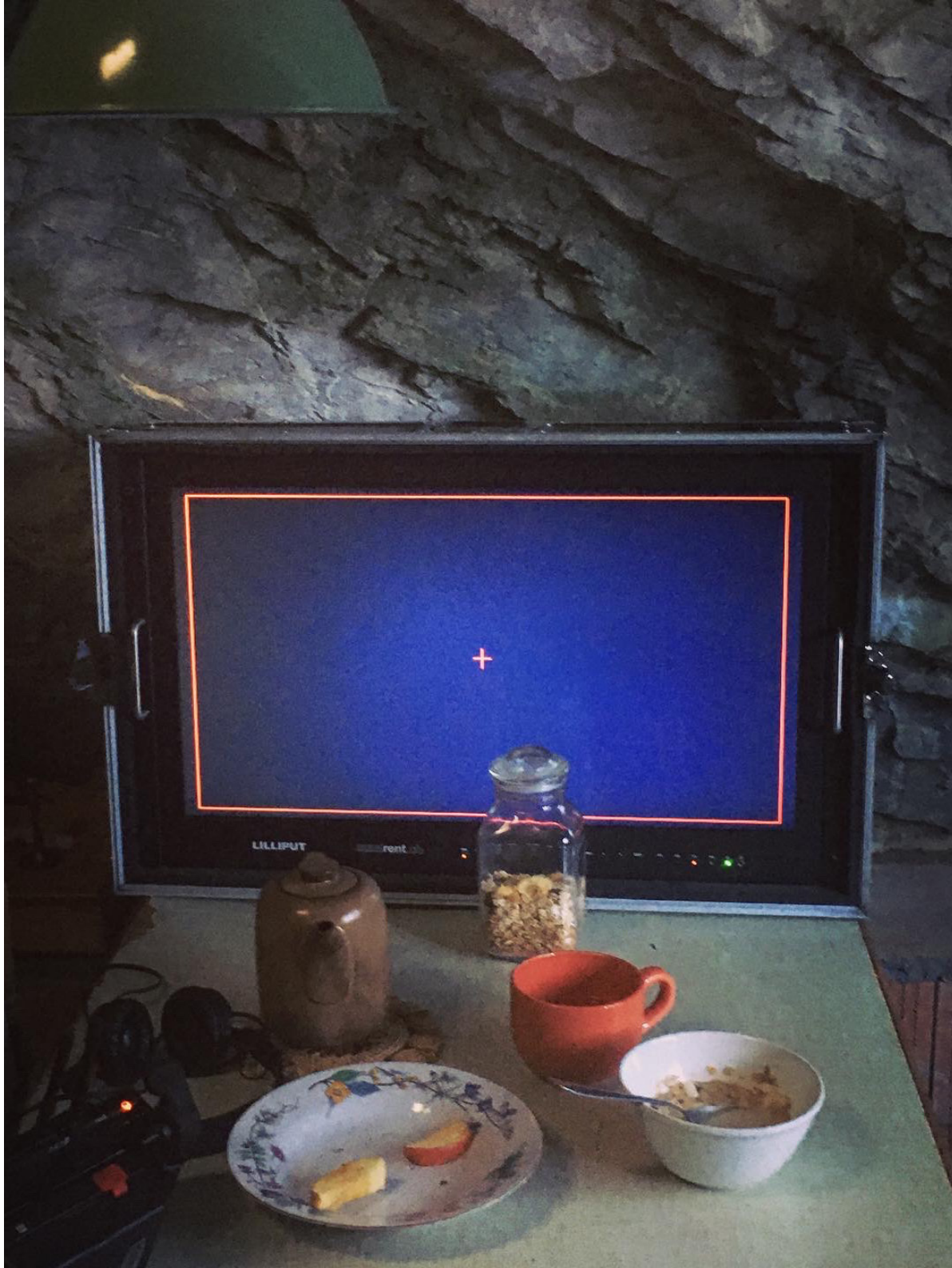
STIFTUNG EDITH MARYON

STIFTUNG MANO

VOLKART STIFTUNG

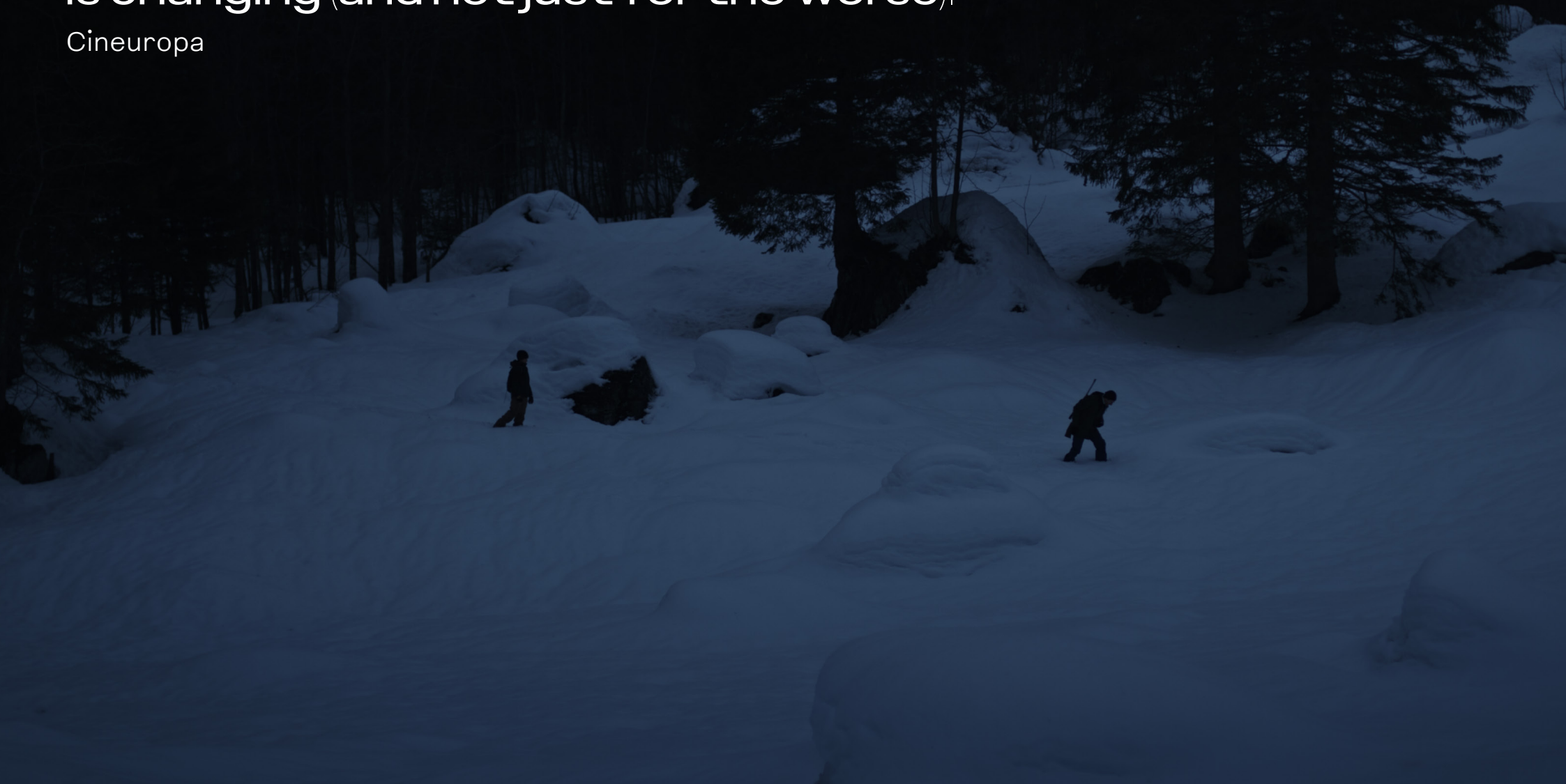
And
LOCARNO FIRST LOOK
SWISS FILMS





" Leon Schwitter depicts a generational clash with great expertise, revealing just how lucky we are that society is changing (and not just for the worse), "

Cineuropa



" A precise comment on the world
we are living in. "

Jury statement,
63rd Thessaloniki International Film Festival



Contact

PRODUCTION

EXIT FILMKOLLEKTIV GMBH
Dienerstrasse 40
CH-8004 Zürich
Switzerland

LEON SCHWITTER
leon@exit.ist

CO-PRODUCTION

SABOTAGE KOLLEKTIV GMBH
Neugasse 33
CH-8005 Zürich
Switzerland

MICHAEL KARRER
mail@sabotagekollektiv.ch

INTERNATIONAL SALES

ALIEF
40 Rue Alexandre Dumas
75011 Paris
France

BRETT WALKER
President
brett@alief.co.uk

+33 (0)6 61 79 64 37 (M)
+33 (0)9 81 03 50 95 (O)

MIGUEL ANGEL GOVEA
Partner
miguel@alief.co.uk

+33 (0)6 60 50 87 62 (M)
+33 (0)9 81 03 50 95 (O)

DISTRIBUTION SWITZERLAND

SISTER DISTRIBUTION
4 rue des Marbriers
CH – 1204 Genève
Switzerland

contact@sister-distribution.ch
+41 22 808 08 63