

Rotterdam, September 23, 2021

BERG

a film by Joke Olthaar



logline

A journey at high altitude seen through the eyes of three mysteriously connected hikers. After their coincidental meeting we follow these three on their personal odysseys. The levels of concentration they exhibit in trying to avoid mistakes makes their experience of the overwhelming landscape even more intense. BERG is a highly aesthetic landscape experience, with a spiritual charge.

synopsis

BERG is a visual experience of a vast mountain landscape and the insignificance of man in it. A trip of concentrated black and white images with a minimalistic soundtrack forms a primal memory of a universal mythical mountain.

The film opens with a series of stones, rocks and peaks, sometimes wide, sometimes in close up. Shadows moving over the surfaces. Your eyes follow the lines, the holes that have eroded over the years. You lose your sense of scale. Suddenly emerging small black human figures give away the real proportions.

The weather conditions are getting worse. Rising and hanging fog. Thunderstorm and falling rain. Huge clouds overwhelm the peaks. A roaring helicopter as a sign of danger.

Dated film footage of a rescue team during salvages after fatal accidents, suddenly interrupts the majestic flow of the silent landscape. Despite their gruesome content, these moments have a strangely enchanting beauty, igniting a deep respect for everything around us.

biography

BERG is the first feature film by Joke Olthaar. Her music documentary '[Here is Harry Merry](#)', was a success at the International Film Festival Rotterdam 2013 and described by de Volkskrant as 'a true gem'. Together with André Schreuders she made the absurdist short film '[Duet of three idiots](#)'.

Joke has a rich experience as a theatre maker. All her performances are about nature and / or performed in nature. In filmmaking she is fascinated by the way people move physically in different lives. By following their movements closely she tries to bring her audience in another state of mind.

filmography

2021 – BERG - 81 min.

2015 – Duet of Three Idiots – 18 min.

2013 – Here is Harry Merry – 40 min.

director's statement

The mountain is mythical and majestic. It lures and repels. The mountain calls me, and once I start hiking, there is no way back. I translated that indescribable attraction to the mountain into a film experience. I am interested in the mountain as it presents itself to any mountain hiker. Many mountain films are about extreme experiences, alpinists or spectacular sports. To me, they ignore the essence of the mountain.

During a hike you follow your own footsteps. You let go of your thoughts. It brings peace and you encounter the beauty as a Buddhist. You allow yourself to be led through the environment. Weighed down with only your backpack, you want to achieve the ultimate - that which you have not achieved before. The landscape overwhelms you.

Walking in the mountains can seem safe and serene. And yet danger is everywhere. This you realize when you find yourself unable to move forwards or to turn around. In these moments the danger lies in overestimation or choosing a route that is above one's capabilities or perhaps fear of heights.

This sense of togetherness connects all who share in this pursuit. Nature has me in its grip. The feeling that I am small and insignificant is spellbinding and overwhelming. Here I want everything to stop.

general information

duration **79:23 mins**

aspect ratio **4:3**

black & white | color

director **Joke Olthaar**

cinematography **André Schreuders**

editing **Katarina Türler**

music **Rutger Zuydervelt**

sound design **Hugo Dijkstal**

grading **Reinier van Brummelen**

delivery **Laurent Fluttert**

script coach **Sander Blom**

producers **Koert Davidse | Marc Thelosen**

distribution **Windmill Film Distribution**

supported by the **Netherlands film Fund | City of Rotterdam** visual arts | **Cinecrowd**

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media

website www.berg-film.nl

teaser <https://vimeo.com/535478082>

instagram https://www.instagram.com/berg_film/

<https://see-nl.com/artikel/20210531-iffr-bright-future-berg>

<http://www.lepolyester.com/critique-berg/>

<https://www.cinemaescrito.com/2021/07/roterda-iffr-2021-diario-6/>

IFFR audience award

Final standings IFFR 2021 June programme

- 1 **Mi chiamo Francesco Totti**
4.548
- 2 **BERG**
4.524
- 3 **Persona Non Grata**
4.394
- 4 **Fabian oder Der Gang vor die Hunde**
4.347
- 5 **Time**
4.281
- 6 **The World to Come**
4.233