



IT WORKS! MEDIEN PRESENTS

ICE AGED

A FILM BY ALEXANDRA SELL

PRESS KIT

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Documentary
Germany 2024
110 mins

CONTACT

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SYNOPSIS

Back in the swinging 60s young Linda from the streets of South London skipped school for the ice disco and was discovered on the spot. Soon to be the three-time British pairs champion, in 1968 she flew into the Olympics as the “Pocket Rocket”. Half a lifetime and two cruel twists of fate later, Linda returns onto the ice at 70 – when nothing less than her life is at stake.

Alexandra Sell's touching documentary ICE AGED follows six men and women from all over the world for the best part of three years, tracing their dedication to training at local ice rinks up to the big performance at the World Hobby Figure Skating Championships at Oberstdorf in Bavaria.

ICE AGED shows that the dream of skating is a battle-cry against the march of old age and the glorification of youth. Our well-aged heroes go beyond their limits for that all-important moment. On our way through their years and their tears, we witness deep pain, intense joy and unbreakable courage which takes our breath away.



CREW

Cinematography

Alexandra Sell

Additional Camera

Sophie Krabbe

Martin Farkas (BVK)

Sound Recordist

Jesús Casquete, Oliver Prasnikar, Antje Volkmann

Marc Parisotto, Nic Nagel, Lorenz Kainz

Edited by

Sven Kulik (BFS)

Rune Schweitzer (BFS)

Alexandra Sell

Music Supervisor

Jens Quandt

Composer

Rainer Oleak

Executive Producer

Annekatriin Hendel

An

IT WORKS! MEDIEN GmbH

Production

In Co-Production with

Bayerischer Rundfunk

Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg

In Collaboration with

Arte

Commissioning Editors

Petra Felber BR

Fatima Abdollahyan BR

Monika Lobkowicz BR/ARTE

Jens Stubenrauch rbb

Funded by

Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg,

Filmförderungsanstalt,

Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für

Kultur und Medien,

FilmFernsehFonds Bayern,

Deutscher Filmförderfonds

WITH

Elena Rickmann

Sissy Krick

Roland Suckale

Toos van Urk

Nadia Colbourne

Linda Bernard





THE DIRECTOR

Biography

Alexandra Sell, director, cinematographer, and photographer, was born in 1968 in Hamburg. She studied Fine Arts and Photography in Berlin and London (DAAD Scholarship, MA Fine Art Goldsmiths College), as well as film directing in Cologne. Her films, including the award-winning documentary *DURCHFARTSLAND* and her feature film debut *DIE ANFÄNGERIN*, have been shown at numerous festivals and received international accolades. She lives in Berlin and is a mother of one.

Selected Filmography

GOLDSTAUB (AT) – Feature documentary in development. Script, direction, cinematography: Alexandra Sell and Sophie Krabbe.

ICE AGED 2024 – Feature documentary, script, direction, cinematography, (co-)editing: Alexandra Sell, produced by Annekatrin Hendel, IT WORKS! Medien GmbH.

DIE ANFÄNGERIN 2017 – Feature film, 99 min., script, direction, (co-)editing: Alexandra Sell, production Flarefilm, opening film of the Festival des Deutschen Films, “Award for Best Director” at the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festivals, Florida, USA.

DURCHFARTSLAND 2005 – Feature documentary, 91 min., script and direction: Alexandra Sell, production 2pilots, premiere: Berlinale (Forum), Awards: “Prix Europa” from RBB/European Parliament, “Special Award” from the Festival des Deutschen Films.

DAS AVON PROJEKT 2001 – Documentary, 45 min., script, direction, editing: Alexandra Sell, production: Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln, in co-production with FACT Liverpool/Arts Council of England, premiere: International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animation Film.

HE SMILED AT HER AND SHE SMILED BACK 1997 – 30 min., experimental film, script, direction, cinematography, editing: Alexandra Sell, production: Goldsmiths College London. Awards: “The New Contemporaries UK 1998.”



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Elena Rickmann, from Duisburg on the Rhine, with three degrees in engineering, squats in hot pants on the carpet, sewing bead after bead onto her freestyle costume for the World Amateur Figure Skating Championships. She moves with the bearing of a cat; negotiating the dangling sequins, ruffles and glittering stones. I crouch next to Elena, not quite so cat-like, my legs now asleep and my camera rig on my increasingly aching shoulders. Elena raises her eyes, and I meet her childlike gaze, as she speaks directly into the camera's lens: 'Time is the most precious thing we have in life.'

I was in my mid-twenties when I travelled to the depths of the British countryside on assignment for a cosmetics company to photograph Avon ladies. One of them, an ageing hairdresser, had a singular great love: hobby figure skating. As I skated across the ice behind her, freezing in my trainers, I lost my heart to this courageous woman who carried away her dreary life out into the cold, who had dared to pirouette in front of my camera at, what seemed to me then, a positively neolithic age.

She was 52 years old. I am now 55. The photo from back then hangs in my hallway, every day I walk past it, every day as the years pass. As I passed 40 and the age gap between me and the ice-skating Avon lady shrank alarmingly, I decided to dedicate a feature film to her: THE BEGINNER. At the age of 55, my fictional heroine ventured out onto the ice. I felt great tenderness for her and all the 'older' people over 50, who had become, like all of us 'normal old people': invisible.

It was at the premiere of THE BEGINNER that I met an older gentleman who was closer to 70 than 50 and anything but invisible. With striking blond hair and a forthright desire to enlighten the cinema audience, that my feature film only shows the tip of an international iceberg and that he himself represents the United States of America - at the World Amateur Figure Skating Championships in Oberstdorf in the Allgäu. Age restriction: none.

The blonde gentleman's name was Roland Suckale and he took me into his world. I visited the Hobby World Championships. I came, saw and marvelled: 600 women and men from 36 nations. This was no fancy-dress ball for sprightly pensioners, this was a competition and everything was real. Real judges, real medals, real thrills and real spills. Roland, in his white dinner jacket, his face white with tension, stepped into a pair of timeworn skates, which he had saved up for stacking tins in a supermarket half a century before. Thunderous applause arose from the stands. Roland slid onto the ice and the years fell away from him. He became the first protagonist of ICE AGED. Soon five more of his companions on ice joined had us.

Before long, we were ready to start filming, ready for the grand performances, primed for the theatrics of competition. That was in January 2020 and, as you know, things turned out a little differently. Despite, or perhaps even because of Corona, it was the most touching shoot I have ever I have ever experienced. The world stood still and with it the ice. Twice the World Championship for amateur figure skaters was cancelled. Our protagonists were sitting next to an hourglass. We sat beside them. Almost 3 years of filming, 3 years of hoping, waiting and yearning. We became very close during our long time together in our dens, in front of the camera and behind the camera.

In the first lockdown, our protagonist Elena found an old VHS tape with footage from her youth in Russia. In front of our camera, Elena watching her trauma, the story of a little girl in the Arctic winter who had been beaten to within an inch of her life because she skipped piano lessons to skate. These were intimate moments for our deliberately minimal crew. I was the director and camerawoman rolled into one, so that I could move intuitively, directly without deviations and hesitations.

Once on the ice, ice stars on skates took over on camera: Marina Kielmann a runner-up in the European championships became a living Steadicam, Marina had a great feel for the human movements of our skaters. We worked completely without drones and gimbals, the camera breathed naturally. For me, closeness doesn't mean constantly getting close to faces and emotions. Sometimes you need to take a step back. Visually, in montage and on an auditory level. Together with the protagonists, we explored ways to tell their stories in as much deed as word.

We dispensed with talking heads. In a world of testimonials, our approach was to tell the story between the lines. 'This is not a documentary film, it's a fairy tale,' Roland said happily when he saw the final cut. I was happy too, because in my voiceover I was able to tell the stories of my heroes without commenting on them, as if we were all seated around a campfire.

By the time the Skating World Championships were finally able to take place two years later, the atmosphere was electric. Our protagonists were on the edge of their seats and I was there with them. I was so excited that I could barely hold the camera.

Now ICE AGED is celebrating its premiere. I've been older than the ice-skating Avon consultant in the photo in my hallway for a long time. Next to her hangs a self-portrait of my son from art class wearing a corona mask. That's also a thing of the past. My son was a child and now he's a young man. The world has become a different one alas not a better one. The courage and resilience of the protagonists of ICE AGED help me to find my way in it: 'Time is the most precious thing we have in life'.

ELENA RICKMANN
SISSY KRICK
ROLAND SUCKALE
TOOS VAN URK
NADIA COLBOURNE
LINDA BERNARD
DAVID MARZELL

ICE AGED

a film by ALEXANDRA SELL



Foto: Alexandra Sell / Gestaltung: Marlene Bölinger

Cinematography ALEXANDRA SELL, Additional Camera SOPHIE KRABBE, MARTIN FARKAS (BVK), MARINA KIELMANN, Sound Recordist JESUS CASQUETE, OLIVER PRASNIKAR, ANTIJE VOLKMAN, MARC PARSOTTO, NIC NAGEL, LORENZ KAINZ, Edited by SVEN KULIK (BFS), RUINE SCHWEITZER (BFS), ALEXANDRA SELL, Composer RAINER OLEAK, Music Supervisor JENS QUANDT, Post Production Sound K13 STUDIOS/ MICHAEL KACZMAREK, Post Production Image PANOPTIMO, Production Manager HEIKE GÜNTHER, Producer LISA ELSTERMANN, Executive Producer ANNEKATRIN HENDEL, IT WORKS! MEDIEN GmbH, in Co-Production with BAYERISCHER RUNDUNK, RUNDUNK BERLIN-BRANDENBURG, in Collaboration with ARTE, Commissioning Editors PETRA FELBER, FATIMA ABDOLLAHYAN, MONIKA LOBKOWICZ, JENS STUBENRAUCH, Funded by MEDIENBOARD BERLIN-BRANDENBURG, FILMFÖRDERUNGSANSTALT, DIE BEAUFTRAGTE DER BUNDESREGIERUNG FÜR KULTUR UND MEDIEN, FILMFERNSEHFONDS BAYERN, DEUTSCHER FILMFÖRDERFONDS, Distributed by MAJESTIC

