Love is the best thing in life... until it’s over
I have a reputation for finding my subjects in the most inaccessible and dangerous places in the world. In war zones. In Afghanistan and in outer space. Yet no territory has seemed quite as frightening, demanding and gripping to me as the world of the heartbroken.

Christian Frei | Author and Director
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Love is the best thing in life... until it's over. We've all been there. The soul-crushing stomach-twisting depths of despair... You've just been dumped.

Academy Award® Nominated Swiss Director Christian Frei takes you on a journey with the heart-broken.

Often laughed off as nothing more than an affliction of adolescence, heartbreak becomes the topic of a sensitive and compelling documentary film. Christian Frei and cinematographer Peter Indergand dive into the frenzied nights of the newly rejected. Nights full of pain and tears, yet also wakefulness and creativity. An anthropologist researches the astounding and profound processes that are unfolding in the brain of the lovesick. Has nature overdone it? The film explores the difficult path out of self-destructive obsessive behaviour, toward a new self. And it wonders about the unwavering desire – despite it all – for love.

If I close my eyes I remember how he smells... That drug... I just want a hit. Just one fix of that smell.

Alley Scott I Rejected four days ago...
I could see a future with him and now I can’t see anything.
Alley Scott | Rejected four days ago...

I have a life to rebuild whatever the fuck that means.
Michael Hariton | Rejected two weeks ago...
When he grabbed my hand I could feel my uterus going «Yes, I’m gonna have your babies. I wanna have your babies.»

Rosey La Rouge | Fell in love at the Mermaid Parade

When you get rejected in love you still continue to love this person. In fact you love them even harder.

Helen Fisher | Anthropologist
**FILM STILLS**

*Why am I passing by her house almost every night? Sometimes I even park on her street. Why do I do this?*

Michael Hariton I Rejected two weeks ago...

*It's quite a remarkable human being who can stay away from somebody who's just dumped them.*

Alley Scott I Rejected four days ago...
If I close my eyes I remember how he smells... That drug... I just want a hit. Just one fix of that smell.
Alley Scott I Rejected four days ago…

When he grabbed my hand I could feel my uterus going «Yes, I’m gonna have your babies. I wanna have your babies.»
Rosey La Rouge I Fell in love at the Mermaid Parade

Love is one of the most powerful brain systems ever created.
Helen Fisher I Anthropologist

The romantic fantasy world in my brain. It’s probably unfortunate that I live there most of the time.
Rosey La Rouge I Fell in love at the Mermaid Parade

It’s quite a remarkable human being who can stay away from somebody who’s just dumped them.
Helen Fisher I Anthropologist

Why am I passing by her house almost every night? Sometimes I even park on her street. Why do I do this?
Michael Hariton I Rejected two weeks ago…

What in the world did we do before Facebook? I look at his profile probably twice a day. In the first week it was a million times a day. I mean how else can you stalk your lover all the time?
Rosey La Rouge I Fell in love at the Mermaid Parade

When you get rejected in love you still continue to love this person. In fact you love them even harder!
Helen Fisher I Anthropologist

I could see a future with him and now I can’t see anything.
Alley Scott I Rejected four days ago…
Throughout history, mankind has loved love and been terrified of love.
What is this thing called love?
Helen Fisher | Anthropologist

I wonder why I don’t seriously consider the easy exit.
I have a life to rebuild whatever the fuck that means.
Michael Hariton | Rejected two weeks ago...

Nobody gets out of love alive. Unless you don’t play the game at all!
Nobody gets out of love alive.
Helen Fisher | Anthropologist
LOVE – A JOURNEY BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL

After War Photographer, The Giant Buddhas and Space Tourists, you are now documenting a journey into the inner world of broken hearts. How did you come to this topic?

For a long time, I used to think of love as something that was a given. A secondary priority after career and profession. But a few years ago, turmoil in my private life brought me to a point that made the dimension and the power of love immediately and powerfully clear. During that same period, I came across a little article in the journal «Bild der Wissenschaft» («Image of Science») about Helen Fisher’s research on the lovelorn. And I thought: If it’s possible to put people in the actual condition of heartbreak into an MRI scanner... to look at what this grief does inside the brain... then it might also be possible to capture this in a documentary. Thus the idea for the film was born.

What’s makes heartbreak so interesting?

Heartbreak is one of the strongest emotions we know. Even being in love isn’t pure «walking on air». It’s a strange mixture of euphoria and agony. Another person suddenly becomes incredibly important and precious to you. There’s an invisible force at play here. It opens up to a new universe! A feeling like being on drugs. One moment you feel like in you’re in seventh heaven and the next, you fall into abysmal despair the second he or she doesn’t answer back or when the feelings aren’t fully reciprocated. Even in this euphoria of love, agony is built right in! The happiness can turn to hell. A human being cannot feel any more lost or wretched than this.

And this isn’t something that just happens to teenagers!

Exactly. Without the phenomenon of love, how can you explain human cultural history at all? And yet...why did nature invent love? For the purposes of reproduction and evolution, sexuality is enough. What is the purpose of a system that consumes so much energy and in its irrationality can even turn homicidal and dangerous?

Why is it that when we are heartbroken we only love that much more? Why is it so hard to accept rejection? Why does heartbreak paralyse us so?

In the brain of a person in a state of acute heartbreak, the same regions are activated as are those during the state of experiencing the greatest love. This explains the deep desire, this longing, the yearning. It is indeed an addiction. People in love are addicted – and that’s a wonderful feeling. But the longing but can become even stronger when you are left, rejected, abandoned. And that’s when you are truly in hell. It’s just horrible.
How did you find people in this hellish condition who were willing to make themselves available for a documentary film?

We posted flyers in gyms, bars and places where university students hung out and worked extensively with social media and the Internet. You could see it in big black letters everywhere...

«Have you been rejected in love and can’t let go?»

Yes. This sentence got about. Take Alley Scott for instance, one of the three lovelorn in the film. On the third night after she got dumped, she went out to dinner with a friend who then told her about my film. She went home and in the middle of the night writes me an email and I called her right way. The first few seconds that I ever saw this woman on Skype are also in the film!

Did all three protagonists make it into the film just like that?

No. We had a significant number of participants. On our dedicated website «Lovelorn in New York» they could keep a separation diary, a dialogue with themselves. We called it a «logbook of feelings». Just getting down everything that came to them. Writing was really helpful for them. And for my part, I learned a lot about the dynamics of heartbreak.

Were these extensive separation diaries?

Oh yes! Protagonist Rosey La Rouge, for example, wrote hundreds of pages. Over months. I always read all her entries with interest. Rosey is a burlesque dancer... an exciting and exotic world. And then she described how she had fallen madly in love at the annual Mermaid Parade on Coney Island – with the event’s Guest of Honour: King Neptune himself! And how they kissed in front of the shark tank at the New York Aquarium. At that moment, there was nothing to lead you to suspect heartbreak was in the offing...

No. But in the days after the Mermaid Parade, King Neptune never even contacted her. And Rosey could not write this night off as a harmless flirtation, just be happy about it and let it go. No. In him she saw the Man of her Life and she spiralled into a massive, serious heartache.

It’s the same energy, just polarized differently?

Absolutely. Helen Fisher’s research confirms this. At root, every heaven has its hell. I was able to see this dynamic directly with Rosey: A mermaid caught King Neptune’s eye and he kissed her. That’s it. For him, that’s all it meant. For her, this kiss changed her life: she fell madly in love. And it took her more than six months to get over this unhappy and one-sided love.
And in her separation diary she described this process of re-finding herself.

I wanted to work with people who were also wondering about this crazy state somehow, who could and wished to articulate it in their own words. The separation diary entries gave me a deep knowledge about their everyday lives, their worries and friends, about their degree of loneliness and their living arrangements, occupations and so on. I learned a great deal directly, without asking. For instance, Michael, the third protagonist. I learned from his diary that he doesn’t have many friends. But his cello teacher is an important person for him – and he loves music. And that led directly to a scene that is very important in the film!

**How important is your cameraman Peter Indergand?**

He’s immensely important. I’ve worked with him on all my feature films. He’s my «partner in crime», my eyes. He has an extremely high emotional intelligence, coupled with the highest technical and craftsmanlike precision. That’s something that can’t be overestimated. And thanks to this long collaboration we’re also a «well-oiled» team.

**What did he say when you presented him with this idea for the first time?**

He was surprised that there’d never been any documentary films about heartbreak before! Terra incognita. Both of us really love a challenge. The easy road isn’t for us.

**So you set yourself a real technical challenge and built a special mirror for the shots in the New York subway.**

We wanted to show the intensity of this loneliness in New York. And we wanted to show it where New York is crowded and hectic and the people are the least alone: on the subway. This is the city’s central nerve cord, where everyone is extremely close physically and yet entirely out of contact from each other.

«It is lonely when you’re among people, too,» [«On peut être seul aussi chez les hommes»], as Saint-Exupéry put it?

That was the idea. To shoot this, we focussed on the human gaze in a months-long experimental phase. How does one solitary person see other solitary people? We worked with silver Christmas balls and even mirrors. While experimenting, we realised that there are two contradictory optical laws: the point of focus is entirely different. Therefore, we combined a ball and a straight mirror surface and, with complex research, calculated the transitions. The result is a spherical mirror that was ground in an ultra-precision optics company in Germany.

**And why New York?**

Because New York is the singles capital, because New York is an ideal laboratory for me. The more extraverted culture, relative to Europe, actually accommodates the film’s
Looking back: was this a hard film for you to make?

«Sleepless» is by far the hardest film I've ever done. It was a real challenge in terms of storytelling and dramaturgy. All these raw emotions! Not easy to handle these on film. But heartbreak is, however, not only terrible and perilous and life-threatening. In many cases, it also releases an incredible energy and creativity; it has something cathartic about it. Of the great works of art in human history... how many were created in this feverish state?
Love is one of the most powerful brain systems ever created.

Helen Fisher PhD | Biological Anthropologist

Helen Fisher might be the closest that we have ever come to having an expert of love. Affectionately called «Dr Love» by colleagues and reviewers, Fisher maintains that romantic love is a universal phenomenon with mechanisms that have been established over hundreds of thousands of years of evolution.

She studies the evolution, brain systems (fMRI) and cross-cultural patterns of romantic love, mate choice, marriage, adultery, divorce, gender differences in the brain. She has written five internationally best selling books: Why Him? Why Her?, Why We Love, Anatomy of Love, The First Sex and The Sex Contract.

An important chapter in her work is formed by the research of romantic rejection and the lovesickness associated with this condition.
Alley Scott (31) | Rejected four days ago…

Michael Hariton (51) | Rejected two weeks ago…

Rosey La Rouge (35) | Fell in love at the Mermaid Parade

And many other New Yorkers sharing their breakup story.
A film by
Christian Frei

Director of Photography
Peter Indergand scs

Music
Max Richter, Eleni Karaindrou, Giya Kancheli

Editor
Christian Frei

Assistant Editor
Lara Hacisalihzade

Sound
Judy Karp

Sound Design & Mix
Florian Eidenbenz (Tonstudio Magnetix)

Colour Grading
Patrick Lindenmaier (Andromeda Film AG)

Special Mirror Subway Sequences
Kugler Precision Gmbh Salem, Germany

Production Assistant New York
Simone Eymann

Production Consultant New York
Tanja Meding

Participants Casting New York
Maria Luisa Gambale, Caroline Sinclair

Producer
Christian Frei – Christian Frei Filmproduktionen GmbH

Co-Producers
Martin Pieper ZDF/arte, Urs Augstburger SRF, Sven Wälti SRG SSR
Christian Frei | Author, director and producer

From the very start of his career, Christian Frei established a reputation as an exacting documentarist, with a perfect grasp of his subjects. He follows his protagonists closely, always in search of authentic moments, and always keeping the whole picture in mind. His films are considered humanistic and universal, as much as subtle and insistent. The Swiss author, director and producer is one of the most successful documentary film directors in the world.

Born in 1959 in Schönenwerd (Switzerland), he studied television at the Department of Journalism and Communications of the University of Fribourg. In 1981, he directed his first documentary short film, Die Stellvertreterin. After co-directing FørtFørhen with Ivo Kummer in 1984, he became an independent filmmaker and producer. He made another short film, Der Radwæchsel. Then he moved on to feature length documentaries with Ricardo, Miriam y Fidel (1997). With this striking portrait of a Cuban father and his daughter, torn between faith in the revolutionary ideals and the desire to emigrate to the United States, Christian Frei takes a critical look at Cuban society. Carefully avoiding taking sides, he leaves it up to the spectator to form his own opinion.

War Photographer marks a turning point in his career as director in 2001. Due to the Oscar nomination for Best Documentary and numerous prizes worldwide he had the international break through. For this feature length documentary, Christian Frei spent two years accompanying war photographer James Nachtwey to different war zones around the world. The film shows his protagonist to be a shy and reserved man, far from the hothead image associated with his profession. Frei intelligently plays with the role of the spectator, confronting him with the ambivalence of war photography and the role of the media. The documentary appeals to the spectator’s sense for compassion and thematically approaches the issue of war itself. Still popular with audiences and critics today, the film has become a classic.

With The Giant Buddhas, Christian Frei once again deals with a subject of strong political and global interest. The film revolves around the destruction of the two giant Buddha statues in Afghanistan’s remote Bamiyan Valley. «I see my film as a hymn to the diversity of opinion, religion and culture», says Christian Frei. The film turned out to be a documentary that filled a necessary gap of knowledge far from the everyday media reportage.

At the Sundance Film Festival in 2010 Christian Frei won the «World Cinema Directing Award» for his latest film Space Tourists (2009). The documentary juxtaposes the journeys of the extremely rich tourists traveling with the astronauts in to space with the poor Kazakh metal collectors risking their lives in search for rocket waste fallen down in to the planes once the space shuttle has left. As a result, the film turns out to be a humorous and poetic declaration of love for planet earth. Critics acclaimed this film for it’s...
breath-taking imagery and richness of insights, having strengthened Frei’s reputation as one of today’s most original and innovative directors.

Christian Frei’s newest film *Sleepless in New York* is looking at the agony and dynamics of romantic rejection.

Since 2006, Christian Frei has been an associate lecturer on Reflection Competence at the renowned University of St. Gallen (HSG).

From 2006 to 2009 he was president of the «Documentary Film Commission» for the film section of the Swiss Ministry of Culture.

Since August 2010 he is president of the Swiss Film Academy.

**Filmography (Selection)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Die Stellvertreterin</td>
<td>(50’)</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Fortfahren (Co-director)</td>
<td>(40’)</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Der Radwechsel</td>
<td>(24’)</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Ricardo, Miriam y Fidel</td>
<td>(90’)</td>
<td>Feature length documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Kluge Köpfe</td>
<td>(53’)</td>
<td>TV Documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>«Bollywood» im Alpenrausch</td>
<td>(52’)</td>
<td>TV Documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>War Photographer</td>
<td>(96’)</td>
<td>Feature length documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>The Giant Buddhas</td>
<td>(95’)</td>
<td>Feature length documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Space Tourists</td>
<td>(98’)</td>
<td>Feature length documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Sleepless in New York</td>
<td>(92’)</td>
<td>Feature length documentary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peter Indergand | Director of Photography

Peter Indergand was born on 26 February 1957 in Crest, France. He is a Swiss citizen and currently lives in Frauenfeld, Switzerland.

He obtained his secondary school degree, followed by six semesters of art history and English studies at the University of Zurich. He then attended the American Film Institute AFI in Los Angeles, where he completed his degree in cinematography in 1982.

In 1984, Peter Indergand and Rolando Colla founded the film production company Peacock in Zurich. In 1989, Indergand left Peacock to concentrate on his work as director of photography.

He continued his collaboration with Rolando Colla with the feature films LE MONDE À L’ENVERS, OLTRE IL CONFINE and L’AUTRE MOITIÉ. The films of director Christian Frei have played a significant role in Peter Indergand’s career. He shot Frei’s documentary RICARDO, MIRIAM Y FIDEL, followed by WAR PHOTOGRAPHER which gained great acclaim. In addition to other awards, Peter Indergand has received an Emmy nomination for his work. Other films with Christian Frei have been THE GIANT BUDDHAS and SPACE TOURISTS.

Peter Indergand’s work includes collaboration with directors such as Markus Imboden, Miguel Alexandre, René Heisig, Marcel Gisler, Christoph Schaub or Julian Benedikt. The result of these collaborations are films such as the award winning GRÜSSE AUS KASCHMIR, the feature film GRAN PARADISO or PLAY YOUR OWN THING, a film about the history of jazz in Europe.

The most recent films shot by Peter Indergand are the feature films LÄNGER LEBEN by Lorenz Keiser as well as the documentaries FORBIDDEN VOICES by Barbara Miller, WISDOM OF CHANGE by Bettina Wilhelm, JOURNEY TO THE SAFEST PLACE ON EARTH by Edgar Hagen, WILD WOMEN – GENTLE BEASTS by Anka Schmid, and ELECTROBOY by Marcel Gisler.

Peter Indergand has received numerous awards for his work as a cinematographer, such as the Gold Panda Award at the Sichuan TV Festival and the award for Best Photography at the Beldocs International Documentary Film Festival.

Since 2011 Peter Indergand has been a regular lecturer at the Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft in Chur, Switzerland.

Website: www.indergand.com
Filmography (Selection)

2013  Sleepless in New York – documentary by Christian Frei
2013  Wild Women – Gentle Beasts – documentary by Anka Schmid
2013  Electroboy – documentary by Marcel Gisler
2013  Journey to the Safest Place on Earth – documentary by Edgar Hagen
2012  Stolberg – TV thriller, 2 episodes by Peter Payer
2012  Anna in Switzerland – documentary by Chantal Millès
2012  Forbidden Voices – documentary by Barbara Miller
2011  Wandlungen (Wisdom of Change) – documentary by Bettina Wilhelm
2010  Länger leben (To Live Longer) – feature film by Lorenz Keiser
2009  Ein starkes Team – Falsches Spiel – feature film by Markus Imboden
2009  Space Tourists – documentary by Christian Frei
2008  Ein starkes Team – La Paloma – feature film by Markus Imboden
2007  Stolberg – TV thriller, 2 episodes by Markus Imboden
2007  L’autre moitié (The Other Half) – feature film by Rolando Colla
2006  Kleine Fische (Small Fry) – feature film by Petra Volpe
2006  Nebenwirkungen (Side Effects) – feature film by Manuel Siebenmann
2006  Play Your Own Thing – documentary film by Julian Benedikt
2005  Störtebeker – feature film by Miguel Alexandre
2005  The Giant Buddhas – documentary film by Christian Frei
2004  Grüße aus Kaschmir (Greetings from Kashmir) – feature film by Miguel Alexandre
2003  Sternenberger – feature film by Christoph Schaub
2003  Ni olvido ni perdón (No Forgetting, No Forgiving) – documentary film by Richard Dindo
2002  Oltre il confine (Beyond Borders) – feature film by Rolando Colla
2001  War Photographer – documentary film by Christian Frei
2000  Heidi – feature film by Markus Imboden
2000  Gran Paradiso – feature film by Miguel Alexandre
1997  Ricardo, Miriam y Fidel – documentary film by Christian Frei
1995  Der Nebelläufer – feature film by Jörg Helbling
1993  Gasser & Gasser – documentary film by Iwan Schumacher
Christian Frei Film Productions GmbH in Zurich
Production of feature length documentaries

To date...

RICARDO, MIRIAM Y FIDEL (1997)

Invited to 21 International Film Festivals

2000 Basic Trust International Human Rights Film Festival

Won Public Award

2000 Swiss Ministry of Culture

Won Quality Award
COMPANY PROFILE

W A R  P H O T O G R A P H E R (2001)

Invited to 41 International Film Festivals

2002 Academy Awards, USA
Nominated for Oscar for Best Documentary, Features

2002 Cologne Conference, Germany
Won Phoenix Award for Best Non-Fiction Program

2002 Encounters South African International Documentary Festival
Won Audience Award for Best Film

2002 Gent Viewpoint Documentary Film Festival, Belgium
Won Canvas Prize

2002 Osaka European Film Festival
Won City of Osaka Award

2002 Rehoboth Beach Independent Film Festival
Won Audience Award for Best Documentary

2002 Doc Aviv International Documentary Festival, Israel
Won Award for Best International Documentary

2002 Durban International Film Festival, Australia
Won Award for Best Documentary

2002 Swiss Film Prize, Switzerland
Nominated for Swiss Film Prize for Best Documentary
2003 Adolf Grimme Awards
*Won Special Prize of the Ministry for Development, Culture and Sports*
*Nominated for Adolf Grimme Award for Best Cultural Documentary*

2003 European Documentary Film Festival, Norway
*Won Eurodok Award*

2003 One World Documentary Film Festival
*Won Audience Award*

2003 New York Swiss American Film Festival, USA
*Audience Award for Best Documentary Feature*

2003 Dokufest Film Festival, Kosovo
*Won Award for Best Documentary*

2004 Emmy Awards, USA
*Nominated for Emmy Award for Outstanding Individual Achievement in a Craft: Cinematography*

2004 Peabody Awards, USA
*Won Peabody Award*
THE GIANT BUDDHAS (2005)

Invited to 49 International Film Festivals

2005 Leipzig DOK Festival, Germany
*Won Silver Dove for Best Documentary*
*Opening Film*

2005 Art-TV, Switzerland
*Won Swiss Movie Pearl for One of Five Best Swiss Films*

2006 Sundance Film Festival, USA
*Nominated for Grand Jury Prize for World Cinema - Documentary*

2006 Swiss Film Prize, Switzerland
*Nominated for Swiss Film Prize for Best Documentary*

2006 Dokufest Prizren, Kosovo
*Won Award for Best Feature Documentary*

2006 Tahoe/Reno International Film Festival, USA
*Won Award for Best of the Fest - Documentary*

2006 Banff Mountain Film Festival, Canada
*Won Special Jury Mention*

2006 International Leipzig Festival for Documentary, Germany
*Won Silver Dove*

2006 Trento Film Festival, Italy
*Won Silver Gentian*
SPACETOURISTS (2009)

Invited to 50 International Film Festival

2010 Sundance Film Festival, USA
Won World Cinema Documentary Directing Award

2010 Beldocs International Documentary Film Festival, Serbia
Won Best Photography Award

2010 Eurodok Festival, Norway
Won Eurodok Award

2010 Art-TV, Switzerland
Won Swiss Movie Pearl for One of Five Best Swiss Films

2010 EBS International Documentary Film Festival Seoul, Korea
Won Special Jury Award

2010 Internationales Berg + Abenteuer Filmfestival, Graz
Won Grand Prix Graz

2010 Regiofun International Film Festival Katowice, Poland
Won 2nd Prize

2011 Cervino CineMountain Film Festival
Won Grand Prix Dei Festival

2010 Swiss Film Prize, Switzerland
Nominated for Swiss Film Prize for Best Documentary

2011 Documentary Channel «Best of DOC»
Won Jury Award «Best of DOC»
Sleepless in New York

A film by
Christian Frei

with
Helen Fisher
Alley Scott
Michael Hariton
Rosey La Rouge

Switzerland 2013
Original Theatrical Version 92’
English spoken
www.sleepless-in-new-york.com

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