

tempo ideal
Dieter Meier presents:

Surfing Einstein

A Film By Meritxell Campos Olivé

TECHNICAL DETAILS:

Run Time:

1 h 15 minutes

Project Type:

Experimental
Documentary

Producers:

Meritxell Campos Olivé
Dieter Meier

Country of Origin:

Germany

Country of Filming:

Italy

Language:

Italian

Shooting Format:

digital

Aspect ratio:

16:9

Film Color:

color

CAST

(In Order of Appearance)

Pia Astone
Alessandro Bile
Sabrina D'Antonio
Sergio Frasca
Stavros Katsanevas
Iuri La Rosa
Adele La Rana
Paola Leaci
Ettore Majorana
Simone Mastrogiovanni
Andrew Miller
Federico Muciaccia
Cristiano Palomba
Maurizio Perciballi
Ornella Juliana Piccinni
Lorenzo Pierini
Paola Puppo
Piero Rapagnani
Akshat Singhal

CREW

DoP

Marcus Bronst

based on an idea of

Meritxell Campos Olivé
Margherita Cappelletto

Music

Philip Weber

Choreography

Meritxell Campos Olivé

Editor

Marcus Bronst
Meritxell Campos Olivé

Scientific/artistic advisor

Margherita Cappelletto

Set Photography

Daniil Parniouk

Tech. Assistant

Serena Gradari

Consulting Producer

Peter Rommel

Graphics

ONIMO-Studios
Yue-Shin Lin
Katharina Schwarz
Sara Brescacin

Sounddesign

Laura Matissek

Sound Mix

Karl Matissek
Aufnahmestudio
Studio Mitte

Narrator

Sandro Cappelletto

Dubbing

Voice Sound Recording,
Igor Fiorini, VDM Records

Script

Meritxell Campos Olivé
Margherita Cappelletto

Producer/ Coproducer

Meritxell Campos Olivé, Tempo Ideal
(Berlin, Gemany)
Dieter Meier (Zürich)

Postproduktion

Martin Schmidt
MGS Media

Grading

Ingo Schulten

STORYLINE

One hundred years after Albert Einstein formulated the theory of relativity and predicted the existence of gravitational waves, a team of physicists is detecting them. In this artistic documentary, Meritxell Campos Olivé shows the scientists' search for the waves through the movement of their own bodies, which, according to Einstein, also emit waves.

SYNOPSIS

Surfing Einstein is an artistic documentary film, which deals with a group of physicists, who in 2016 proved the phenomenon of gravitational waves predicted by Albert Einstein. Taking the scientific story as a background, the film itself focuses on the human aspect of the research, the moments of frustration and joy, as well as togetherness and the unique forms of collaboration within the collective. The plot unfolds in the Physics Department of the Sapienza University in Rome and the Virgo Research Center near Pisa, portraying the everyday life and routine of the international group of scientists. However, unlike an interview, the stories they are sharing are communicated through dance – the endless performance smoothly flowing from working cabinets and laboratories to spacious halls and technical premises. The director Meritxell Campos Olivé, whose work as a filmmaker is deeply interspersed with her performative practice, has worked out very personal ways of movement with every protagonist in the film – the actual scientists that have never expressed themselves through dance and acting. In "Surfing Einstein", community, intuition, continuous learning, imagination and perseverance are shown as values that can be set against today's advancing egoism and hyper-individuality.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I was interested in showing the human side of science: teamwork, perseverance, confidence – qualities that are essential not only in academia, but for the survival of society as a whole. I was fascinated by physicists who, despite their work on the smallest details, always look upward, to the bigger picture, the universe. Dance seemed to me an ideal form of expression to communicate with them. For many reasons: How we understand words depends on our own expectations and conditioning, while dance opens the spectrum of interpretation radically. Body language sometimes explains things quicker, connecting people very honestly. And very obviously: physicists understand the whole universe as movement. It is everywhere and makes everything work - not only on a cosmic scale, but inside the human body and brain. Through that lense, dancing is the most natural thing that exists. In this film it allowed for an authentic and direct connection not only with me as a director - but the audience as well.

- Meritxell Campos Olivé

PRE-HISTORY OF CREATING THIS MOVIE

The story of the creation of 'Surfing Einstein' began with the idea of creating a dance piece about the phenomenon of gravitational waves. A team of physicists from the Rome Sapienza University and Virgo Research Center in Pisa had long discussions with Meritxell Campos Olivé, the director and choreographer, about what lies behind the term 'gravitational waves' and how to show it. In the end, a new approach to the idea was found: to dance the story of what it means to be a team that hunts for gravitational waves and finally succeeds.

FACTS ABOUT THE CAST

- The main characters of the film are physicists who analyze data related to gravitational waves, as well as experimental physicists, a physics historian, and a mechanical designer. They are all part of the Gravitational Waves Group of the University of Rome Sapienza, working at the Virgo Research Center, also known as the 'ear of the waves'.
- About the technique of Meritxell and how she works with people through dance Meritxell Campos Olivé's working technique as a director and choreographer is linked to a willingness to discover the natural poetry in bodies, to increase confidence that poetry is always there. My work is to look at the person with a bit of intuition, a bit of instinct, a bit of soul. To see which way we can go together to discover that poetry and then to keep it, like taking a photograph. In 'Surfing Einstein', working with a moving body has a clear logic: 'Physicists understand the whole universe as movement. It is everywhere and makes everything work - not only on a cosmic scale, but also inside the human body and brain. Through this lens, dance is the most natural thing that exists.'

TRIVIA

- Gravitational waves are waves of the intensity of gravity that are generated by the accelerated masses of an orbital binary system and propagate as waves outward from their source at the speed of light. Gravitational waves were predicted in 1916 by Albert Einstein on the basis of his general theory of relativity as ripples in spacetime. Later he refused to accept gravitational waves. (Source: Wikipedia)
- The first gravitational wave was detected on September 14, 2015, at 9:50 AM, by physicists from the Rome Sapienza University. In 2017 the Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded for this detection.
- Throughout the film, the characters read letters written by members of the Virgo Research Centre team on Einstein's behalf. At the very beginning of the work, Meritxell asked the team to imagine what exactly Albert might write to them, creating an imaginary dialogue between the creator of the theory of gravitational waves and the people who faithfully carry on his work.
- Part of the film was shot at the Virgo Research Centre and part at the Rome Sapienza University in real offices and laboratories where physicists work every day. The educational process was not interrupted during the shooting of the film, so the students had the chance to see their teachers dancing throughout the whole process of the performance.

QUOTES FROM THE FILM

- 'Can you hear me? Yes, it's me, Albert. Am I alive? I would say so! The whole universe is deeply connected, every smallest part of it is connected to every biggest part. When you move, think, act, or in short, when you live, you emit waves that spread throughout the Universe interacting with it for all eternity. I guarantee that even humans emit those waves even if they can't measure them. Gravitationally yours, Albert Einstein.'
- 'We feel an immortality that precedes our birth and goes beyond our death.'
- 'Move, think, stop, observe. Move, think, stop, observe. Move, think, stop, observe.'

BIO FILMMAKER

Meritxell Campos Olivé | Director, Writer and Choreographer

Meritxell Campos Olivé is a film director, choreographer and performer. Her artistic method lies at the intersection of these disciplines, taking improvisation as a main instrument for storytelling and exploration of human nature. The interaction of people with each other and with space is the main leitmotif of her works, where spontaneity and naturalness of movements serve as a starting point for choreographic content and forms. To create an authentic, living environment, she brings her works into public spaces: streets and squares, barbershops and supermarkets, administrative buildings and museums thus become dance research laboratories and stages.

Meritxell Campos Olivé's early artistic practice is rooted in choreography and performance. She directed the dance theater pieces *Speculum* (2010), *Vertigo* (2011) and *Animal erectus* (2013, together with Harald Martenstein). In 2012, she created the community dance theater project *Human loops* that has been shown for several years in Germany (Rotes Rathaus Berlin, Deutsches Hygienemuseum Dresden), Spain (Sant Feliu de Guíxols) and Italy (Roma Action Poetry Festival). In 2015, she started focussing on video and film projects and realized the film *7 One Shots*, a series of improvised one-take videos interpreting music of Dieter Meier. Her first feature film *Santa Inocencia* premiered in 2018, investigates in the spirit of the absurd, the neurosis and fears of everyday life, its constant projections into the past or the future and the inability to experience the present. In 2023, she directed her latest experimental dance feature film *Surfing Einstein*.

She held a teaching position at the Zentrum für Tanz und Kreativität Berlin, Seneca Intensiv Berlin and other institutions, where she specialized in Contemporary Dance, Improvisation, Dance Theatre and Choreography.

In 2018, for her feature film *Santa Inocencia* she was awarded for the Best Narrative Feature at the Los Angeles Film Awards, Best Experimental Feature at the Santa Cruz Film Festival, Special Festival Mention at the India Cine Film Festival, Honorable Jury mention at the The Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival and was part of the Official selection at the International Festival of Films on Art and Sarasota Film Festival. In 2006, she was mentioned as Selected Berlinale Talent at the Berlin Film Festival Program.

BIO FILMMAKER

Dieter Meier | Producer

Dieter Meier is a Swiss musician, composer, singer and actor. He is known worldwide as the lead singer and founding member of the electronic music band “Yello” with Boris Blank. Meier began his music career in the late 1970s when he and Blank formed Yello in 1979. Since then, the duo has released several studio albums, including “Stella” (1985) and “One Second” (1987). Their distinctive, avant-garde style fuses electronic pop with elements of jazz and classical music, making them pioneers in their genre. One of their biggest hits, “Oh Yeah” (1985), became a cultural phenomenon and was used in numerous films and commercials. In addition to his career in music, Dieter Meier has proven to be a multi-disciplinary artist with a strong background in film and television. He has appeared in numerous film and television productions in Switzerland and abroad. His acting debut came in 1981 with the movie “Jetzt und Alles”, followed by “Drama” (1984), “In Gefahr” (1994), and “Männerpension” (1996), among others.

Dieter Meier and Meritxell Campos Olivé have worked together on several projects. In Campos Olivé’s short film “7 One Shots”, seven songs by Dieter Meier were interpreted in improvised one-take videos. He also produced their experimental feature films “Santa Inocencia” same as “Surfing Einstein”.

BIO FILMMAKER

Marcus Bronst | Camera

Marcus Bronst has been a documentary and cultural camera operator and film editor since 2017. Since 2007, he has been a freelance camera assistant at the ZDF Hauptstadtstudio. He has been a camera operator for Deutsche Welle, Chapter One, Meritxell Campos Olivé Production - Tempo Ideal, Lodown Magazine, Sunlight Pictures, Nemo Film, EIKON Nord, Hermann Film, and ZDF. In the past, he also worked with AV Medien (2010 - 2015) and Cine Impuls Berlin (2008 - 2011).

Since 2014, he has also been a lecturer for filmmaking at MAZ, the Swiss School of Journalism. Marcus Bronst has worked with Meritxell Campos Olivé as director in her video works such as Lunar, C8-Brücke, and others, and as editor in her feature films “Santa Inocencia” and “Surfing Einstein”

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