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# Virgin TALES

a film by MIRJAM VON ARX



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ican films

SRF

SRG SSR

arte

ZÜRCHER  
FILMSTIFTUNG

MIGROS  
kulturprezent

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FILMSTIFTUNG  
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*"Von Arx manages to capture moments of pure gold"*

**Indiewire**

*"Ah! A well made film...scary for some, comforting for others...."*

**Huffington Post**



2012, 87 min

## Synopsis

Evangelical Christians are calling out for a second sexual revolution: chastity! As a counter-movement to the attitudes and practices of today's culture, today one in eight girls in the US has vowed to remain "unsoiled" until marriage. But the seven children of the Wilson family, founders of the Purity Ball, take this concept of purity of body and mind one step further; even their first kiss will be at the altar. For two years the filmmakers follow the Wilson's as some of their children prepare for their fairytale vision of romance and marriage and seek out their own prince and princess spouses. In the process, a broader theme emerges: how the religious right is grooming a young generation of virgins to embody an Evangelically-grounded Utopia in America.

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## Background Information about the Purity Movement

Virginity is a cultural construct that has been purposefully applied in order to control and regulate what people think, feel, how they behave and sometimes even if they live or die. Even today. But those who think only of honor killings in radical Islamist states or ultra-orthodox Jews and their matchmakers are wrong. In so-called advanced, western nations in particular, the virginity cult is experiencing an outright boom in popularity.

Like a lot of trends, this one is also from the United States. Every eighth girl in the United States makes a vow to remain chaste until marriage. Notable politicians support this attitude to counteract today's supposed moral decay. Instead of sex education, schools are placing more emphasis on abstinence education. Evangelists that form the core of this movement make up a quarter of the U.S. population and are strongly represented in the government thus significantly influencing world politics.

In Europe, their influence is not to be underestimated either: there are approximately 400,000 evangelists in France, one and a half million in Germany, and even five million in Great Britain.



### The Wilsons – The First Family of Purity

Our protagonists, the Wilson Family, founders of the Purity Balls, could be called the "First Family of Purity". At this annual event that is awaited with as much anticipation as the prom, girls as young as four dressed in ballroom dresses come on their fathers' arm and pledge to remain chaste until marriage. In the United States around 5,000 of these Purity Balls were held so far in Colorado and 47 other states. And Europeans are increasingly succumbing to the fervour. People from 17 countries, including Great Britain, France, Finland and Germany, have approached the Wilsons' to organize such events in their countries.

Randy Wilson, head of the Wilson clan, is the key to this global purity movement. The press presents the Wilsons as the picture perfect family of the new purity movement. The five Wilson daughters are exemplars of virginity in the United States: young, pretty, charming and vowing to not even exchange the shyest of kisses before marriage. Even the eldest of the two brothers had his first kiss at the altar..

The two eldest daughters Lauren and Khrystian already found, married, and kissed their fairytale princes. Next in line is 20-year-old Jordyn who is desperate for a husband at her side and - like her own father, brothers or brothers-in-law: family-friendly, God-fearing, and good looking ("he has to be easy on the eyes"). She has agreed to shoot a video diary over the course of the production and her testimonials reflect a growing desire for a fairy-tale prince of her own.

## The Wilson Family

### RANDY, 54



Randy Wilson is the patriarch and an extremely charismatic man. He comes from a deeply religious Evangelist family. Professionally, Randy is the National Field Director for Church Ministries at the Family Research Council, a Christian political organization dedicated to preaching the values of marriage and family through its presence in the media, schools, and in the political arena where it sets out to influence law making (abortion law above all). Randy particularly enjoys teaching and advising ministers on dealing with family issues –

including, of course, the virtues of virginity.

### LISA, 53



Lisa met Randy in her early twenties in a church choir. Since then they have been married for 30 years and have seven children. When she speaks about the love for her family, tears quickly well up in her eyes. At the same time she talks about the hard times she went through: excessive demands of seven children she also home schools and money concerns that come with having such a large family. Lisa wants to help her children develop a healthy self-esteem through their outward appearance. She is the one who supports her daughters with fashion and make-up

tips and teaches them how to smile in front of a mirror. She is also the one who strongly influenced the appearance of Purity Balls as princess events. Her daughters should be sexy virgins, not plain Janes.

### LAUREN, 27



Lauren is the oldest of the Wilson children. In 2007 she moved to Idaho to live with her husband Brett, a member of the Air Force. She met her husband, who was in training, when she went with her brother Colten to visit the Air Force Academy in 2006. Lauren was the first of the Wilson children to wait until after the wedding for not only sex, but also the first kiss – a decision that even her mother Lisa labelled with amusement as “radical.” She and Brett did not even hold hands until after they married because they thought it would distract them from getting

to know each other’s heart. Lauren’s fate is to follow her husband to whatever the military sends

him and then to wait for him for months since he is sent regularly to the front. But as of late she does not have to wait alone: Lauren is the proud mother of two children.

### **COLTEN, 25**



Colten is like a young Randy clone: charming, charismatic and self-confident, through and through a God-fearing golden boy who knows exactly how things are done. On a DVD of some of the family rituals that the Wilsons distribute as illustrative material, a fifteen-year-old Colten leads a public prayer. Even back then he spoke and moved exactly like his father. Unlike his sisters, Colten attended a Christian college. And he was not dependent on his father when he married either: on his own initiative he met a girl at college who became his wife in 2009. But Colten and his wife

Anna still observed the commitment to abstinence: the first kiss was exchanged at the altar.

### **KHRYSTIAN, 24**



Khrystian is the model virgin of the family: beautiful, sexy, self-confident – and overjoyed with her fate. She lives with her husband Chad in Tennessee. Her 31-year-old husband is a deeply religious Christian, attractive, charming, with hazelnut colored eyes and a smile that still makes Khrystian weak in the knees. He is gentle; a poet who writes beautiful love poems for her – and at the same time has the power and strength of a real warrior. After all, he is a regular in the military, and has already reached the rank of captain. “God led this man into the kitchen of a family we’ve never met,”

explains Khrystian, “and on their refrigerator was a photograph of us because someone in the family read our book. And now Chad is my husband. I am happier than I could have ever dared imagine in my fondest dreams. And I had nothing to do with it. I just had to wait until God executed his plan.” Chad and Krystian’s father emailed each other for a while back and forth. After only six days, Chad asked Randy if he could come by over the weekend to meet Khrystian. Randy agreed and then everything went considerably quickly. Three days after his first visit, Chad asked Randy for his daughter’s hand in marriage. Up until this point, he and Khrystian had spent only four and a half days together.

## JORDYN, 23



Jordyn is more of a shy young woman and as the fourth oldest she is next in line to marry, exchanging her father for a husband and thereby losing her virginity. She anxiously awaits this event. "It would be so great if I could marry this year!" she gushes. Asked about her fairy prince, she does not need long to think it over: "He has to love God and my family, of course, because those are the two things are most important to me in life. Then he should be easy on the eyes and well-behaved." What does that mean? "Well, he should intuitively behave properly. He should ask

my father first if he may meet me. To be honest, if he came directly to me then he wouldn't have a chance." In 2010, Jordyn started the SCHOOL OF GRACE, classes and lectures where young women learn how to create lovely environments of welcome and beauty and the basics of etiquette, grace and hosting.

## LOGAN, 16



Ever since Colten moved out, Logan is - after his father Randy - the only other man at home. Essentially Logan is a normal teenage boy: insecure, awkward, and not really certain what he should do with his suddenly super long arms and legs. Coming out of that is a charming mix of childish shyness and unconvincingly macho behaviour. Logan dreams of a career in the military and the opportunity to face the enemy. Like his older brother, Logan will also go to college and will be able to pick his future bride.

## KAMERYN, 15



The abundantly self-confident and audacious Kameryn demonstrates, in spite of her innate energy, how to master the rules of behaviour perfectly in this family even at a younger age one. She is no longer a child, but a young woman through and through. And right now she is being painstakingly initiated into womanhood. On her thirteenth birthday her mother and sisters showed her how to apply makeup, what she regularly does since then. At fourteen Kameryn celebrated the "Chayil", her transition from child to woman. A favourite Kameryn statement is: "I don't need to go to bars or discos. I've chosen a high

standard for my life. And you can become so mediocre if you're not careful."

**KAALYN, 9**



The little Kaalyn is a darling – impetuous, lively, full of childish innocence, saucy, in short: sweet as sugar. And above all she is, appropriate for her age, honest, direct and very naive. One notices that she has not yet internalized the rules or what one does and does not say in the family, as her siblings have. At the same time she shows how early the children in this family are piled with rules of virginity – at an age when one does not really know what sex is. So Kaalyn tilts her head, smiles and starts off as if she were reciting a poem: “If a girl dresses sexy, then men want to conquer her.

If a girl is modest and dresses that way, then men want to protect her.” – “Exactly!” her parents say with delight. They stroke Kaalyn on the head and radiate pride, and her siblings nod their heads appreciatively.



The Wilson daughters Jordyn and Khrystian teach young girls about purity and love.

## Director's Statement

What is virginity? Something physical? Spiritual? Or perhaps even something political? Not only in the Middle Ages was the subject a topic of lively debate, even today it has maintained its meaning. Whether eagerly awaited, feared or supposedly without shame, today losing one's virginity is still connected to emotion. Shaped by culture, religious affiliation and one's own character, this important step on the path from childhood to adulthood is experienced by each of us very individually—regardless of how detailed a sexual education one has had.

I became interested in the subject as a filmmaker almost ten years ago, after an animated dinner party amongst women, and began to search for literature in the US and Europe to learn more about the cultural, psychological and physical background behind virginity and deflowering. With amazement, I realized that very little has been (and is) written about this subject. There were either books written by psychologists concentrating primarily on psychoses connected to the loss of virginity, or sociologists, anthropologists or evolutionary theorists who hypothesized on the subject. I found very little information about why so many youths today consciously choose a chaste life until marriage and to what extent this decision is supported or even demanded by their environment.

People who are open to the subject of virginity, quickly realize how unbelievably fascinating and complex it is. “A big issue about a little tissue,” joked a friend from New York who outed herself as an early seductress on the evening of that fateful dinner party, when I became aware of the subject. At first, others said: “It wasn't anything special.” But the longer the evening lasted, the more honest the stories became. “I was 14. Actually I didn't even want to have sex, but my boyfriend was a few years older and pressured me until I let him talk me into it.” – “My boyfriend broke up with me because I wouldn't go to bed with him.” – “At some point, I didn't care who my first lover was. I just wanted to get it over with.”

Deflowering (or losing one's virginity) is a once in a lifetime event that cannot be repeated. Virginity is thus considered a gift, award, barrier or taboo. Virginity only has meaning amongst humans. Not even our closest relatives in the animal kingdom, whose sexual behavior and social structures are often strikingly similar to our own, are interested in the slightest in virginity or let it influence their decisions. We invented and developed it, propagate it through our cultures, religions, legal institutions, through art and scientific work, and we have made it into a patriarchal instrument that defines and controls the social role of women even today.

I am interested not only in what way this power is exercised, but also how young women today deal with this behavioral corset that one has tied on them. And I wanted to look into this by observing the Wilson family, the founding family of the Purity Balls. After a short period of time I noticed that even the Wilson children have dreams, desires, vanities (not only passed down from their father)—and sometimes question their faith.

What made this family ideal for such long-term observation was the ambivalence they trigger. It is not an intellectual ambivalence—I have a very clear personal opinion and know how to evaluate their statements—but more an affective one. As an observer, one is thrown back and forth, finds them likeable and then insulting. During filming it was extremely difficult for us to talk about anything else in the evenings or during meals. Our conversation always returned to the Wilsons. Our all-female and consistently feminist crew was unbelievably fascinated by this family who provoked contradictory and alternating emotions: sympathy as well as aversion. For me, that made them even stronger protagonists for our film.

My world—my philosophy, religion and attitude towards sexuality—is completely different than the Wilsons', and won't adopt the family's ideas, sympathize with them or trivialize them. I am, however, convinced that exactly these feelings of ambivalence one develops when meeting the Wilsons provokes the audience to try to understand this

family's cosmos and to think about their own choices and beliefs.

I am very grateful to the Wilsons for allowing me and my crew to observe their world for two years. I respect them and their way of life, even though I am unable to accept it for myself. All the same, it was important to me that they—like all protagonists in my films—are treated with respect and dignity and not put on display and made laughable. I am convinced that one can scrutinize a way of life without trivializing it. To trivialize it would mean not taking seriously the political influence that this movement possesses; a movement that places its persuasive power in mythical and symbolic “bait” and a call for primordial longing.

Thus, it is of particular importance to me that the film release be accompanied by discussion led by representatives of all philosophies and religious orientations. The subject is not only cause for ardent discussion in the US where the religious right exercises their political power and pushes for abstinence education as part of their political campaign. In other countries, including Switzerland, sex education and the choice of literature in schools has become subject of heated emotional debates.

I hope that VIRGIN TALES can become impetus and catalyst for many interesting discussions and a serious examination of a topic that decisively shapes the lives of a large number of women, and men as well.

Mirjam von Arx



Photo session with some of the Wilson children in the Garden of the Gods, Colorado Springs.



## Press Reviews

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There's something indescribably creepy about watching teenage girls at father-daughter purity balls pledge to marry men just like Daddy, which is why Mirjam von Arx's scrupulously respectful stance in "Virgin Tales" is the wisest position she could take.

VARIETY

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Von Arx manages to capture moments of pure gold

INDIEWIRE

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Ah! A well made film...scary for some, comforting for others....

HUFFINGTON POST

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Fascinating in parts, chilling in others

SCREEN INTERNATIONAL

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Because the film documents rather than demonizes, the issues become clear and unclouded for everyone watching, and make this the sort of film more documentaries should aspire to be.

THE WASHINGTONIAN

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A Top 10 Film Worth Going Out of Your Way For!

NPR

Mirjam von Arx does not parade the Wilsons in front of the audience; she creates an impartial and respectfully reserved portrait.

TAGES-ANZEIGER

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«Virgin Tales» is a cleverly staged, powerful documentary film that has triggered heated debate simply because von Arx takes the chastity-obsessed seriously, instead of putting them on exhibit (which would have been far too easy).

NZZ AM SONNTAG

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Von Arx does not make the Wilsons and their way of life seem ridiculous. She proves to possess tact and assume the role of pure observer—the audience can and must form its own opinion.

20 MINUTEN ONLINE

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The strength of «Virgin Tales» rests in its fascinating proximity to the protagonists. An immense authenticity that filmmakers can achieve only when they accompany their “actors” over months and thus build a great relationship of trust. A documentary worthy of being watched by anyone interested in expanding spiritual-existential horizons. Watching «Virgin Tales» one does not need to know anything about the subject to end up brooding about it afterwards...

MEIN KINO.CH

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It is the great strength of the film that it allows the questions to emerge on their own. To this end it really needs no confrontation and no active questions from the filmmaker.

DRS4 NEWS

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Mirjam von Arx has achieved an extraordinary film that opens doors on political, spiritual and personal levels to a world that is just as fascinating as it is irritating. A brilliant contemporary document!

ART-TV

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Virgin Tales is an intimate and non-judgmental portrait of the Wilson's, a Colorado family like many others save the fact that the Wilson's are the founders of the "Purity Balls"—Masonic-like rituals that waltz adolescent daughters into the virtues of a chaste await for marriage. Speaking to the current political climate against women in the U.S.A, the film provides an important glimpse into fundamentalisms' modus operandi and their preferred battleground: Women's bodies. Without insisting on the contradictions and moral turpitude of conservative Christians in the US, Virgin Tales successfully captures the inner workings of masculinist supremacy, its coding as religion awakening, and its dressing in gowns and tuxedos.

CLAUDIA BRAZZALE, PH.D

GLOBAL SCHOLAR,

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY.

## **INTERVIEW WITH LISA, JORDYN and RANDY WILSON**

The following are excerpts from interviews filmmaker Mirjam von Arx conducted with the Wilson family between 2009 and 2011 while producing the documentary **VIRGIN TALES**.

**INT: Lisa and Randy, can you tell us about the origin of the Purity Balls, how and why it started?**

**RANDY:** We were looking at culture and there was nothing we saw that was celebrating the father-daughter relationship. Our oldest daughter was turning thirteen. We were asking, OK, here's the next stage in life for our oldest – how can we be purposeful in walking through life with her? And we wanted to be there for her and have her excel in those years, knowing who she is, walking in great confidence. And so we came up with the father-daughter purity ball.

**LISA:** We just sat down and said, well, why don't we make it a public event in a beautiful hotel? And it just evolved from there. And when you do it in a public setting with beautiful symbols, it is rich, it brings honor to a culture, to a nation. And, we just did it – we had no clue what we were doing!

We just did it! And here we are today. And we're very excited to see that fathers are getting it. And they're stepping up to their place – we've had fathers restore relationships with daughters, we've had fathers restore marriages, because there was a place to look at – this is what honor looks like.

And I think around the world, except for military settings, we don't know how to honor. And we need to learn how to honor. Because relationships are so valuable.

**RANDY:** We started this event because we wanted to invest in our daughter. And through word of mouth this has spread, not just city-wide, but across the country and now around the world over the last ten years. We are amazed and quite stunned at what has occurred. You can see there's quite a deficit in this arena between the father and the daughter. And a neediness, that fathers, daughters and families have to run to an event like this.

**INT: Lisa, have you ever thought about creating a mother-daughter ball? Because women are heroes, too!**

**LISA:** No, I've never thought of a mother-daughter ball. I don't think the context of a ball would really be the way for a mother to bond with her daughter. I think there are other events which we do as a family. We have a womanhood celebration, our daughters prepare for months. It is in a home rather than a ball. I invite other mothers and women who are incredibly strong and beautiful and successful in their lives: leaders and who love God. And they speak into her heart and her life and tell her who she is, how beautiful she is and how God designed her.

**INT: Or a mother-son ball?**

**LISA:** A mother-son ball I don't think would be appropriate either, because I think there are much more powerful ways for a mother to call her son to a higher place than a ball.

The father-daughter ball is just so conducive to a little girl's heart – the beauty and the ball gown and, I don't think little boys are going to be all excited about being in a tux! And they're not going to plan ahead and they're not going to lose sleep over it! I mean, they're just created completely differently, they need a more masculine setting. And my place as a mother is to call them higher and to fill my sons' hearts with the dignity that I see in their dad and what I expect from them as young men. And to pore over books of great literature and give them heroes in history – I can do all of that as a mom. I can give them models of masculinity, but I can't model that for them. And so masculinity is passed from the father to the son. And a ball would not be conducive to that, I don't think.

**INT: Jordyn, what is most exciting to you about the Father-Daughter-Purity Ball?**

**JORDYN:** It's probably wearing my dress - getting all dressed up. And I always love just spending time with my dad at the ball too. Just watching him as he signs that covenant that he will be there to model purity and integrity for me. The fact that he goes through this whole event for me speaks a lot of value and worth to my life. What he lives during the Purity Ball and what he says to me and how he affirms me. He does that every day too, but at the ball it's more pointed. It's just a beautiful place and setting for him to speak that.

**INT: You said that this is the eleventh time, so you were nine when you went to your first ball. Did you understand what the ball was about?**

**JORDYN:** I didn't fully understand the grandeur of this event, but I knew it was a celebration between fathers and daughters and I loved that because I love my dad and loved coming and being on his arm and just spending time with him, and when he signed that covenant I remember just taking it in and wondering, what is the bigger picture of this? And at that age purity for me was just making the right decisions every day. Just living in integrity and being careful what I thought about, that's what purity meant to me at that age.

**INT: What does purity mean to you today, and what does your father signing the covenant mean to you now?**

**JORDYN:** Purity to me now is still integrity of the whole woman. It's not just about virginity but it's about my mind, my heart and my soul. It's so huge, just because I know that he is signing that covenant that he will be a man of integrity and that he will treat me with honor and respect and model to me what integrity looks like and how I should be treated. And that's huge. Because we don't see a lot of that in our culture today. We don't see fathers stepping up for their daughters and saying: "Hey, all right, watch me in this situation. You know, I'm going to model what integrity looks like, so you just watch and learn and I'll be there for you to answer your questions." So it's huge, and I see Dad at home day in and day out as he makes those choices, and he does it wonderfully, not perfectly, but he does it really well. And I just feel so honored and valued, that he would do that for me each year, just over and over again. And the fruit of that has been just feeling so cherished and valued by him to this day. And knowing that his love for me will never change. Ever.

**INT: Does the Father-Daughter ball reinforce anything in you?**

**JORDYN:** I think it does every year. The huge decision to remain pure. Because so much of culture has gone the opposite way for years. And every year, just the beauty of the event and how we've created it to celebrate that relationship. It makes me really, really grateful for my relationship with my dad and my relationship with the Lord that is very strong. It reinforces it each year. I know there is an incredible man who's going to find me. So I can't wait for my man to be in my life. Maybe he will not come to the purity ball but he will just be there so I can tell him about it and what it means to me and how we started this and everything that's happened, the lives that have been changed and the stories that come out of it. So, I can't wait.

**INT: Have you ever been criticized for your choices in life?**

**JORDYN:** My sisters and I especially have been criticized in our choice for purity. People just saying - how can you stay pure? How are you ever gonna find someone? And then how are you gonna fight off all the temptations? And that has been huge in our life and we've been ready for it. We've been prepared for it because a choice for purity is radical, especially in our day and age. But it is probably one of the most beautiful things you can do: saving yourself - totally and completely for that one person for the rest of your life. I've watched all of my older siblings have this standard and it played

out beautifully and they married someone who was pure as well and it was just totally orchestrated by the hand of God. And that is the reward that I'm waiting for. That I wanna see in my life. And they all say it's totally worth it and I believe them and I see that it's worth it in their lives.

**INT: How easy or difficult is the season of waiting for your man?**

**JORDYN:** It can get pretty difficult. But it can also be easy, it just depends on what I focus on. If I'm focusing on where's my man gonna come from? How am I gonna meet him? Where is he? Should I look for him? Should I stay here? If I'm anxious and worried about it, I lose my focus and I'm not settled and at rest. But, if I just let that go and understand that God will bring him into my life just as he did for my other siblings then it's easy and I can focus on my family and focus on my relationship with the Lord, and everything else on my plate that I need to do. So it just depends.

**INT: What sort of man would you like to meet?**

**JORDYN:** Oh goodness, I would love to meet a man similar to Lauren and Khrystian's husbands, and my dad and my brother. They are just incredible men of integrity. They just have this amazing strength that they carry, and they treat their women with respect and with honor and that's what I deserve, too. I mean I'm too valuable to be disposable. I don't want to give my body away to someone before he understands what my heart and my personality are and what I like. He needs to understand me as a whole woman first. So I'm just looking for someone who will live in integrity and adore me and love me for who I am. And he has to be a godly man, because I've been raised on just the word of God, and that relationship with God is very important to me, so for him to have that relationship, too is crucial.

**INT: How important is romance for you?**

**JORDYN:** It's very important. As women we're created to respond. And I'm really looking forward to seeing how my man initiates our relationship, and I don't want to just jump in with both feet right at the beginning, I want to have a lot of physical boundaries, just so that I don't awaken anything before I get married.

**INT: What does that mean, physically?**

**JORDYN:** Holding hands and sitting real close, I would rather hold off on that until - until I know that he's the one because when you get physical - that's when distraction comes and you lose getting to know the other person's heart, so I want my heart to be understood and I want to know his heart and who he is before we get physical.

**INT: Randy, what sort of man do you think will be worthy of your daughter Jordyn?**

**RANDY:** One that's honorable, one that's full of life, one that I can see will love her as I have loved her. That is something that I have seen in her older sisters as these two young men have come into our world. I see and watch them interact together and they love my daughter as I love them, what more can a father ask for? Someone to take care of them, the way I would take care of them. That's what I want for Jordyn, that's what I'm looking for Jordyn, and I want to get to know that individual as much as well. I want to have long conversations with him about his life and where he's come from, what his dreams and desires are as well, because I want to bring everything that I have to make him a success, because that will benefit my daughter. And so who would be worthy of my daughter? A strong man, who loves well, and understands relationship well.

**INT: How important would it be for you that your dad meets your man first?**

**JORDYN:** That would be really important because I really value my dad's opinion in my life, and I want his approval for the man that I'm gonna marry. So I would love it, if he went to my dad first before he asked about me just because that's really important to me. My dad and I are really close so

that would be really great if he did that.

***Update 2012:***

The end of April 2012, Randy Wilson sent Mirjam von Arx an email announcing the following news:

**RANDY:** Jordyn is now engaged to be married to the man she's been longing and praying for. They met while serving at church together. We began to invite him over to get to know him and over a few months Jordyn began to fall in love with this kind and noble man. He met with me and stated his intentions. Brooks and Jordyn will be married the end of this month.



The Blessing – a regular ritual at the Wilson's house

## Interview with Director-Producer Mirjam von Arx

This interview was conducted on May 31, 2012 by Bijan Tehrani, Editor and Publisher of Cinema Without Borders and was first published on [www.cinemawithoutborders.com](http://www.cinemawithoutborders.com)



Director-Producer Mirjam von Arx, ©Peter Hauser

**Bijan Tehrani: How did you first encounter the idea and the subject of "Virgin Tales"?**

**Mirjam von Arx:** I was interested in the subject of virginity for a number of years. And it was really important to me that my documentary talks about all different aspects of virginity, the physical, the spiritual as well as the political. I thought about this for a long time, how to make a great film, that would not just be bits and pieces from all different places. So when I met the Wilson family I knew that they were the perfect protagonists because all of the qualities I was looking for are present in this family.

**Bijan Tehrani: How challenging was it to make this film and to get the people on the camera and working with them?**

**Mirjam von Arx:** We had a number of long discussions before we started filming because as a filmmaker I knew I wanted to follow them over a couple of years and so I wanted to make sure that they knew what that really means. Plus, as a producer, I did not want them to drop out after half a year because that would have been a problem for me financially. Right from the start the Wilsons were quite open. I believe they felt at ease because they knew I was honestly interested in learning about their philosophy and their rituals although I am not religious and have a very different point of view to theirs.

I also have to say I had a really brilliant documentary film crew that made working and shooting as stress-

free as possible. We visited the Wilson family over the course of two years and it was getting easier and easier for us to blend in and become a fly on the wall because we really wanted this film to be observational.

**Bijan Tehrani: You managed to make this film without being judgmental, how did you do that?**

**Mirjam von Arx:** From the start I wanted to show the Wilsons in their world and I was confident that their characters were strong enough to speak for themselves. I always knew I wanted to make this film without any voice-over or commentary. My aim was for the audience to be able to make up their own minds. My role as a filmmaker is to try and truthfully present what I experienced while filming but not tell the audience what they should think.

When we premiered the film at Visions du Reel in Switzerland the audience's reactions were very emotional: some people were crying others got upset and or even cursed. This full range of reactions again confirms to me that people bring their own culture, their own philosophy and their own baggage to watch a film and therefore will react differently and take different things from it.

That's what initiates discussions and healthy debates. To me that is way more important than delivering my point of view or telling the audience what to think.

**Bijan Tehrani: Did you find any rebels in this purity community that had changed their minds or were totally against it?**

**Mirjam von Arx:** They certainly exist and when I started filming I was looking for people like that. But eventually, I decided to stay with one family and immerse myself into their lives. If someone in their circle had dropped out while we were filming, then I would have included that. But that didn't happen. And I didn't want to go and find someone who was not connected to the Wilson family and their community, just to have an opposing voice in the film.

I also always thought that it would not add that much to the film if I introduced an expert voice that puts things into a broader perspective. As an audience you already do that in your own mind, when one of the protagonists says something you don't agree with.

In one of the first interviews with the parents Lisa and Randy Wilson I asked how they would react if one of their children changed their mind, broke out and had a sexual relationship without being married. They reacted really surprised because for them that was not a reality. I was a little cocky, because statistically, it seemed to be very likely that one of their seven children might break out. But the more time I spent with them, the more I realized that there was in fact a good chance that they would stay "with the program," so to speak. It is really all they know. They are being home schooled, their siblings are their best friends and all their other friends are members of the same church. They do not really have any other encounters or exchanges with people of a different mindset. They grow up in a kind of bubble and it would take a lot to break out of that.

**Bijan Tehrani: Do you plan to continue making films on this subject because I think that this is a very interesting subject to be followed maybe in other parts of the world and from different angles. Do you have any plans like that?**

**Mirjam von Arx:** There is nothing planned right now, but I am definitely still interested in the subject. Now that the film is released and I get to travel with it and show it to different people from different countries, my education continues: Virginity is one of the very few experiences we all share, regardless of our upbringing, religion and culture, but we all deal with it very differently depending on where we come from.

I would definitely consider another film about it. Maybe not in the next couple of years but I would be

interested in going back to this family in ten years' time when the youngest daughter turns 18, to see how things have evolved – and find out whether all their fairy tales worked out as princesses and knights in shining armor.

**Bijan Tehrani:** Any chances **VIRGIN TALES** will be released in the United States?

**Mirjam von Arx:** I very much hope so. These are very interesting times right now with the upcoming Presidential elections in November. There are discussions that need to take place and this documentary could be a platform to allow people from all different backgrounds and completely opposing sides to come together and talk. So it would be great to find a distributor.

But to start with I am very happy that **VIRIGN TALES** will screen in the International Competition at the upcoming AFI-Discovery Channel **SILVERDOCS** Festival from June 18 to 24. I am very excited to be able to present the film personally in Washington and see how Americans will react to it.



Purity Ball in Colorado

## Sex Work: In Bed with the Religious Right

By Dagmar Herzog

June 11, 2009

The following is reprinted with permission from Religion Dispatches. Read more at [www.religiondispatches.org](http://www.religiondispatches.org).

*Is American sexual culture schizophrenic? Yes, and this has everything to do with the sexual politics of the religious right. Sexual opportunity is everywhere, but sexual rights have, at the same time, been concretely eroded.*

*An Interview with Dagmar Herzog, Author of Sex in Crisis: The New Sexual Revolution and the Future of American Politics (Basic Books, 2008)*

### What inspired you to write *Sex in Crisis*? What sparked your interest?

*Sex in Crisis* has a great deal to do with my prior book, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (2005), which offered a major revision of our assumptions about the Third Reich's sexual politics and its aftermath, including close attention to the complicity of the Christian churches under Nazism. In his book *American Fascists*, Chris Hedges had drawn direct parallels between the religious right in the United States and the Nazis, but I thought that was not the point. As a Holocaust scholar, I'm deeply uncomfortable with direct parallels, but what I did learn from studying the Nazis was that they were quite pro-sex for their own followers, while denigrating "Jewish" sex as dirty and immoral. They had it both ways, and that was a significant key to their appeal. Intuitively, I thought there was a comparable dynamic going on with the religious right.

While I was researching and writing *Sex in Crisis*, I was continually struck by the extent to which there was a massive misperception of what the religious right stood for. So many saw only the puritanical and homophobic side of the religious right coin; they didn't see the Christian vibrator Web sites or the detailed evangelical sex advice manuals. At the same time, the religious right was indeed doing tremendous damage, gutting sex education in US schools and eroding HIV prevention in Africa—all in the name of morality.

As someone who was raised in the Bible Belt South, in a deeply religious family, I was horrified by the religious right's new distortion of Christianity and its deleterious impact on national and international health policy. I wanted to make sense of how the religious right had succeeded in redirecting the national terms of conversation about sex: spouting ugly homophobia, reshaping women's sexuality in particular, increasingly going after contraception and not just abortion, insisting that sex before marriage would have horrible consequences (even though 95 percent of Americans have had premarital sex), and mocking the moral values of self-determination and consent.

### What's the most important take-home message for readers?

The religious right has been enormously sophisticated in reshaping the national conversation on sex not least by creatively adapting aspects of the old sexual revolution of the 1960s-70s—and also the women's movement's push for "orgasm equity"—for its own sexually repressive ends. Three points are especially important:

1. Far from being uptight, the religious right is lasciviously explicit. And far from being anti-sex, it is very pro-sex; within heterosexual marriage, that is. The religious right promises, to those who will follow its rules, decades of spectacularly blissful marital orgasms. ("It's like having a million tiny pleasure balloons exploding inside of me all at once," as one evangelical women's advice book puts it; another says: "Orgasm is an integral part of God's design for sex.") Repression alone, in short, is not sufficiently appealing. Sex

sells—also for conservatives. Without the promise of pleasure, the religious right would not have found nearly as many adherents as it has.

2. The religious right succeeded above all by secularizing its message. It sounds paradoxical, but it's vital. Part of the move had to do with physical health: exaggerating the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases and lumping treatable and untreatable, bearable and unbearable, diseases together for maximum scare value (all the while mendaciously denigrating the effectiveness of condoms). But the biggest move was capturing the terrain of therapy-speak about psychological

health. It's not about hellfire anymore. Repression has now been repackaged as promotion of mental well-being. Suddenly everything is about low self-esteem: homosexuality, abortions, pornography, premarital sex. The Bush administration mandated in 2006 that high school curricula dependent on federal funding (and at that point 46 of the 50 states took federal funding for abstinence ed) *must* inform students that sex before marriage could lead to *depression* and *suicide*.

3. The religious right plays on the most elemental fears about the relationships (or lack thereof) between bodies and emotions, performance and intimacy, lust and love. A big reason for the success of conservative arguments in the Bush years had to do with the extraordinary panic that was unleashed in the media around the prospect of the death of postmarital desire. The panic was that not just women but also *men* were too tired after a long day of work; weren't attracted to their boring, naggy, imperfectly-bodied spouses; would rather masturbate to porn on the computer, etc. Conservatives rushed in with feministseeming arguments about how even when two people were in bed with each other, their heads and hearts were really elsewhere; they spoke to widespread feelings of emotional alienation and anomie, also specifically within marriage, and about how too many wives feel like sperm depots for emotionally insensitive husbands. The manufactured anxiety about the death of postmarital sex explains a great deal about the sudden incapacity of Americans to defend premarital sex.

### **Is there anything you had to leave out?**

In retrospect, I wish I'd included more on people's perceptions that American culture is hardly conservative but rather loose and free: full of alcohol-fueled hookups and Craigslist-facilitated trysts, and that nobody adheres to the conservative rules and rhetoric anyway, including the conservatives themselves (see Ted Haggard or Sarah Palin). So why be alarmed by the religious right, and/or (and this is in some ways the opposite argument) the perception that sex quite apparently is not so happy-making for many people, and thus that the conservatives have a good point when they try to be more restrictive and protective and didactic. Also, many people think the religious right is by now just a paper tiger, and they love lecturing me (as though I hadn't spelled this out myself in the early pages of the book) on how evangelicals are increasingly turning toward what had been traditionally 'left' concerns, like the environment, economic justice, war, or global health. So I wish I'd make it clearer that I think American sexual culture is schizophrenic, that sexual opportunity is indeed everywhere, but simultaneously sexual rights have been quite concretely eroded. That we have the highest rates of STDs and unwanted pregnancies in the industrialized world, and the lowest contraceptive use, and sex ed in this country is in tatters. That someday we will wonder how the country went crazy for eight years and allowed itself to be bullied over these most intimate aspects of human life.

### **What are some of the biggest misconceptions about your topic?**

That the religious right is a Make War Not Love crowd, rather than a Make War And Love crowd. That you can't understand the rise of the religious right if you focus only on virginity rings; you have to look at the astonishingly graphic advice on how to make your partner come, or the recommendations for spanking and light bondage, etc., in online Christian advice sites like **The Marriage Bed**. Another big misconception is that the best way to resist conservatism is to expose conservative hypocrisy. One of the most important things I learned in researching evangelical sex advice and therapy culture (which is a multibillion dollar industry) is how crucial exhibitionist, preemptive confessionality has become. Evangelical advice-givers like to brag about the wild promiscuity of their youth, and their many adulterous misdeeds, or to confess in anguish the abortions they forced on girlfriends or the porn they once so frequently indulged in, before moving on to advise others how to get onto the straight and narrow. It's titillating. But it also preempts in advance any traditional liberal strategy of muckraking exposé of titillating. But it also preempts in advance any traditional liberal strategy of muckraking exposé of conservative incoherence. There's nothing to expose; the sins have all been luxuriously confessed.

### **Did you have a specific audience in mind?**

There had been many books on the religious right, but none had analyzed its sexual-political strategies in detail. So in that sense I was writing for general readers who cared and worried about the rightward

drift of American culture. But I'm pleased that also evangelical conservatives read the book and took its findings seriously; I was privileged to be on radio talk shows discussing the issues with evangelical theologians and ministers. Above all, though, I had my own incredible undergraduate students at Michigan State, where I taught for many years, in mind. They were so morally searching and perceptive, and the book is primarily a tribute to them. I'm thrilled that the book is being read and debated now in university classrooms.

**Are you hoping to just inform readers? Give them pleasure? Piss them off?**

I hate pissing people off; it's my least favorite thing. I'm actually quite conflict-averse. My biggest goals were to communicate just how malicious (and by no means moral) the religious right's effects have been, to show how people's deepest longings and fears around sex and love can be so easily manipulated, to remind Americans how rapid the onslaught has been and how recently we actually had a great deal more selfconfidence in defending our sexual privacy and rights, and to help people imagine alternative ways of organizing sexual cultures that are more generous and curious rather than punitive, and far more respectful of individual diversity and self-determination. Obama winning the last election was a very good thing. But the damages done in the past years are lingering on, and the religious right is still having a big impact on global health policy as well as policy and education at the state level.

**What alternative title would you give the book?**

*How the Religious Right did the Sex Work for the Republican Party*

**What's your next book?**

I just finished an edited collection, *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*—which ranges from the Armenian genocide in the 1910s via Auschwitz and Algeria to Bosnia in the 1990s. The horrific sexual violence in the former Yugoslavia, and the international recognition that the rapes were war crimes, has prompted more research into sexual violence in prior wars. But wars have often also provided opportunities for joyful consensual romances and topsy-turvy crossing of boundaries. Both sides of sexuality need to be better understood.

**About the Author**

Dagmar Herzog is Professor of History and Daniel Rose Faculty Scholar at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. She has written and edited several books and many articles on the history of religion, especially Jewish-Christian relations, on the histories of gender and sexuality, and on the Holocaust and its aftermath. During the 2008 elections, she wrote a weekly column on U.S. politics for the *Tageszeitung* (Berlin, Germany).

### **Mirjam von Arx, Director and Producer**

Mirjam von Arx, was born 1966 in Weinfelden/TG. After studying at the Ringier School of Journalism, von Arx worked for 18 years as an editor and freelancer for a number of German language magazines. In 1991, she moved to New York and produced the road movie *BLUESIANA* together with Polo Hofer. In addition to regular contributions to Swiss television, von Arx executed two documentaries for SF and Sat1. In 2001, she moved to London and began filming the documentary *BUILDING THE GHERKIN*. In 2002, she founded the production company *ican films gmbh*. In 2003, her first documentary *ABXANG* was shown in cinemas. In 2005, *BUILDING THE GHERKIN (CH, DE, UK)* followed. In 2006/7 she produced the documentary *SIEBEN MULDEN UND EINE LEICHE* for Thomas Haemmerli, shown in cinemas in 2007. The film was awarded the Zurich Film Prize 2007 and was nominated for the Swiss Film Prize 2008. Her documentary *SEED WARRIORS* was theatrically released in autumn 2010. *VIRGIN TALES* will be theatrically released in Switzerland in June 2012.

### **Michèle Wannaz, Author**

Michèle Wannaz studied film, journalism, and contemporary German literature in Zurich. Alongside her studies she trained as a script consultant. She worked as film editor for the news magazine *Facts*, was responsible for conception, casting, and research for the documentary series *DIE SPURENSUCHER* for arte / zero one film Berlin, and worked as dramaturge for Micha Lewinsky, Markus Imhoof, Xavier Koller, and Pipilotti Rist, among many others. She is currently project director at the W.I.R.E. think tank, where she manages exhibition and book projects, as well as being a member of the Zurich Film Foundation film commission.

Publications: “Dramaturgy in Auteur Film: Narrative Patterns of Social-Realistic Arthouse Cinema” (Schüren, 2009), “Mind the Future: Compendium of Contemporary Trends” (Coauthor, Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2011).

### **Kirsten Johnson, Cinematographer**

Kirsten Johnson works as a director and a cinematographer. She recently shot the Sundance 2012 Audience Award winner, *THE INVISIBLE WAR*. In the last year, as the supervising DP on Abby Disney and Gini Reticker's series, *WOMEN, WAR AND PEACE*, she traveled to Colombia, Bosnia, and Afghanistan. She shared the 2010 Sundance Documentary Competition Cinematography Award with Laura Poitras for *THE OATH*. She shot the Tribeca Film Festival 2008 Documentary winner, *PRAY THE DEVIL BACK TO HELL*. Her cinematography is featured in *FAHRENHEIT 9/11*, Academy Award-nominated *ASYLUM*, Emmy-winning *LADIES FIRST*, and Sundance premiere documentaries, *FINDING NORTH*, *THIS FILM IS NOT YET RATED*, *AMERICAN STANDOFF*, and *DERRIDA*. A chapter on her work as a cinematographer is featured in the book, *THE ART OF THE DOCUMENTARY*. She is currently editing a documentary on sight that she shot and directed in Afghanistan. Her previous documentary as a director, *DEADLINE*, (co-directed with Katy Chevigny), premiered at Sundance in 2004, was broadcast on primetime NBC, and won the Thurgood Marshall Award.

### **Claudia Raschke, Cinematographer**

Award winning cinematographer Claudia Raschke-Robinson has photographed independent feature films and documentaries for over 20 years. She is best known for her smooth hand-held camera work and natural lighting style. Her background training is in dance, martial arts and fine arts. Claudia lives with her husband, who is a personal trainer and football coach and her two children in New York City.

Notable documentaries include Oscar-nominated GOD IS THE BIGGER ELVIS (HBO) Peabody Award winning documentary BLACK MAGIC (ESPN), A SEA CHANGE (Discovery), WHAT'S YOUR POINT, HONEY? (Lifetime), MAD HOT BALLROOM (Paramount), Oscar-nominated MY ARCHITECT (add'l DP), Oscar-nominated SMALL WONDER (add'l DP), Oscar nominated SISTER ROSE'S PASSION (add'l DP) as well as indie features like KISS ME GUIDO, WALKING ON THE SKY and FRAME OF MIND.

### **Sabine Krayenbühl, Editor**

Sabine Krayenbühl, has worked in both the United States and Europe editing documentaries and features. Her work includes the critically acclaimed documentary MAD HOT BALLROOM, distributed by Paramount Classics and the Oscar-nominated feature length documentary MY ARCHITECT; A SON'S JOURNEY, for which the American Cinema Editors nominated her for an Eddie award in 2004. Other works include the controversial doc THE BRIDGE, PICASSO AND BRAQUE GO TO THE MOVIES on which she collaborated with feature film director Arne Glimcher and established producers Robert Greenhut and Martin Scorsese, and AHEAD OF TIME, about 97 year old journalist-activist Ruth Gruber. Sabine recently finished the theatrical documentary MY REINCARNATION with director/producer Jennifer Fox about the high Tibetan Lama, Choegal Namkai Norbu and his Italian born son Yeshe. The film will open the 2012 POV series on PBS, USA.

### **Judy Karp, Sound**

Judy Karp has travelled around the world recording sound on documentaries and independent feature films for over 30 years. Her credits include Paris is Burning, The War Room, Hotel Terminus and seven feature films with John Sayles. She currently lives in Brooklyn with her husband, Jaime Reyes.

### **Adrian Frutiger, Composer**

Born 1971. Studied Set Decoration at the Zurich University of the Arts. Since 1991, Frutiger has composed soundtracks for numerous theatrical and TV productions; in addition he has contributed music to various music concepts, shows, animations and postproduction. He has been honored with 6 Awards for his film compositions.

## ican films, Production Company

Founded in 2002 by filmmaker and producer Mirjam von Arx. ican films is a Zurich based production and distribution company for international documentary films. ican films aims to use a film's emotional power to throw light on the unusual – or supposedly familiar – by illuminating it from a different angle. Interested in a broad thematic spectrum, ican films seeks collaboration with directors who want to film unexpected stories. Since 2002, ican films has produced many award winning films, including BUILDING THE GHERKIN (2005), SEVEN DUMPSTERS AND A CORPSE (2006), SEED WARRIORS (2010) and von Arx's latest feature length documentary VIRGIN TALES (2012). In addition to Mirjam von Arx's latest project ALIVE, currently in production are Aya Domenig's feature documentary THE DAY THE SUN FELL and Mehdi Sahebi's THE LAST FIELD.

- 2014**      **ALIVE, produced by ican films gmbh, in co-production with SRF SRG SSR, BR and ARTE**  
*Director:* Mirjam von Arx  
HD, 90' / 52'  
In production  
Supported by Zurich Film Foundation, Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Suissimage
- 2013**      **THE LAST FIELD, produced by ican films gmbh**  
*Director:* Mehdi Sahebi  
HD, 90' / 52'  
In production  
Supported by Federal Office of Culture, Switzerland, Zurich Film Foundation, Filme für eine Welt
- 2013**      **THE DAY THE SUN FELL, produced by ican films gmbh**  
*Director:* Aya Domenig  
HD, 90' / 52'  
In production  
Supported by Federal Office of Culture, Switzerland, Zurich Film Foundation, Pacte de l'Audiovisuel
- 2012**      **VIRGIN TALES, produced by ican films gmbh, in co-production with SRF SRG SSR, ARTE G.E.I.E.**  
*Director:* Mirjam von Arx  
HD/35mm, 87' / 57'  
**Winner Zurich Film Prize 2012**  
**Finalist Maysles Brothers Award, Starz Denver International Film Festival, 2012**  
**Honorable Mention, Sabine Krayenbuehl, Best Editing of a Feature Documentary, Woodstock Film Festival, 2012**  
*Distribution:* Films Transit International  
*Theatrical Release:* Praesens-Film AG (Summer 2012, Switzerland)  
*Broadcasters/DVD:* SF 1, ARTE, YLE Finland, CBC Canada, DR Denmark, Sky Network New Zealand  
*Festivals:*
- Visions du Réel, Nyon 2012
  - AFI/Discovery Channel Silverdocs Festival, Int. Competition 2012
  - Festival del Film Locarno 2012, Appellation Suisse
  - Vancouver International Film Festival 2012, Nonfiction Features
  - Woodstock Film Festival 2012, Int. Competition
  - 46. Internationale Hofer Filmtage 2012

- DOK Leipzig 2012, Int. Programme
- 36. Duisburger Filmwoche 2012
- STARZ Denver Film Festival 2012, Int. Competition
- Solothurner Filmtage 2013

**2009 SEED WARRIORS, produced by ican films gmbh, in co-production with ARTE/ZDF, SF**

*Director:* Mirjam von Arx / Katharina von Flotow

Developed with the support of the MEDIA Programme of the European Community

HD/35mm, 86' / 52'

**Nomination Int. Green Film Award, Cinema for Peace Gala Berlinale 2011**

*Theatrical Release:* Praesens-Film AG (Fall 2010, Switzerland)

*Broadcasters/DVD:* RSI (Switzerland), NRK (Norway), UR (Sweden), TVP (Poland), TVE (Spain), True Visions (Thailand), Link TV (USA) / Film Media Group (USA), cms constructive media service GmbH (Germany)

*Festivals (selection):*

- Solothurner Filmtage 2010 (Switzerland)
- Planet in Focus 2010 (Toronto, Canada)
- 27. Kasseler Dokumentarfilm- und Videofest 2010 (Germany)
- 5th Int. Science Film Festival of Athens 2010 (Greece)
- Rhodos Int. Films and Visual Arts Festival 2010 (Greece)
- Fünf Seen Filmfestival 2010 (Starnberg, Germany)
- International North South Media Forum 2010 (Ouagadoudou, Burkina Faso)
- 20th Oslo International Film Festival 2010 (Norway)
- BaKa Forum 2011 (Basel, Switzerland)
- Cinema for Peace Gala 2011 (Berlin, Germany)

**2007 SEVEN DUMPSTERS AND A CORPSE, produced by ican films gmbh, in co-production with SF**

*Director:* Thomas Haemmerli

DV / Super 8mm, 81'

**Nominated for Swiss Film Award 2008**

**Zurich Film Award 2007**

**Audience Award Duisburger Filmwoche 2007**

*Theatrical Release:* Frenetic Films (Switzerland); Neue Visionen (Germany), Filmladen, (Austria)

*Broadcasters:* 3Sat (Germany), SBS (Australia), YES (Israel), CBC (Canada)

*Festivals (selection):*

- HotDocs 2007 (Toronto, Canada)
- Int. Film Festival Locarno (Appellations Suisse)
- Filmfest Hamburg 2007 (Germany)
- Duisburger Filmwoche 2007 (Germany)
- 24. Kasseler Dokumentarfilm- und Videofest 2007 (Germany)

**2005 BUILDING THE GHERKIN, co-produced by ican films gmbh,**

*Director / Exec. Producer:* Mirjam von Arx

Digibeta / 35mm, 89' / 52'

**Winner First Prize Int. Film Festival sur l'Art, Montréal**

*Theatrical Release:* Switzerland (Distributed by: ican films gmbh), Germany (Distributed by: GMfilms), London, U.K. (Barbican)

*Broadcasters:* SF 1 (Switzerland), Sky Artsworld, ABC (Australia), MICO/NHK (Japan), NRK (Norway), Arts Channel (New Zealand), Taiwan Public Television, 3sat (Germany), Fox Int.

*Festivals / (selection):*

- Int. Documentary Film Festival 2005 (Munich, Germany)
- Art Doc FEST 2005 (Rome, Italy)
- EcoFilms, Rhodos Int. Film & Visual Art Festival, 2005 (Rhodos, Greece)
- Pärnu Int. Film Festival, 2006 (Pärnu, Estland)
- CPH:DOX 2005 (Copenhagen, Denmark)
- 22. Kasseler Dokumentarfilm- und Videofest 2005 (Kassel, Germany)
- 24e Festival Int. du Film sur l'Art 2006 (Montréal, Canada)
- Festival Artecinema, 2006 (Naples, Italy)
- The Best of FIFA. Dahesch Museum, 2006 (New York, USA)
- Architecture Film Festival, 2006 (Prag, Czech Republic)
- Int. Women Film Festival, 2006 (Kalkutta, India)
- Int. Architecture Film Festival. 2007 (New Zealand)
- Architecture Film Festival, Guggenheim Museum, 2007 (Bilbao, Spain)
- Greenx Film Festival, 2007 (Vancouver, Canada)
- Int. Architecture Film Festival, 2007 (New Zealand)
- Architecture Film Festival, 2007 (Rotterdam, The Netherlands)
- Guangzouh Int. Documentary Film Festival, 2007 (Guangzhou, China)
- Arts and Lights Film Festival, 2008 (Tallinn, Estland)
- Australian Cinématèque/ Gallery of Modern Art. 2008 (Brisbane, Australia)
- Hungarian Contemporary Architecture Centre, 2008 (Budapest, Hungary)
- IMAGES d'HELVETIE, Fondation Suisse, 2008 (Paris, France)

**2005      ROGER FEDERER – REPLAY, co-produced by ican films gmbh**

*Director:* Christian Neu

HDcam, 52'

*DVD:* Distributed by Warner Bros

**2003      ABXANG, produced by ican films gmbh**

*Director:* Mirjam von Arx

Super 16mm / DVCam, 102'

*Theatrical:* Switzerland (Distributed by: Filmcoopi)

*Broadcasters:* SF (Switzerland), Teleclub (Switzerland), 3sat (Germany)



## Technical Information and Credits

*Genre:* Creative feature documentary

*Length:* 87' / 57' (TV version)

*Country of origin:* Switzerland

*Shooting format:* HD (1920 x 1080), 16:9

*Screening format:* 35mm FAZ, DCP, HDcam

*Language:* English

*Subtitles:* German, French

*Producer & Director:* Mirjam von Arx

*Authors:* Michèle Wannaz, Mirjam von Arx

*Production Manager:* Manuela Ruggeri

*Camera:* Kirsten Johnson, Claudia Raschke

*Editor:* Sabine Krayenbühl

*Sound Design:* Christian Beusch

*Composer:* Adrian Frutiger

*Coproduced by:* Coproduced by SRF, SRG SSR and ARTE G.E.I.E.

*Other Film Funders:* Zurich Film Foundation, Suissimage, Succès Cinema, Succès Passage Antenne, Migros Kulturprozent

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