

FOREVER

A Film by Heddy Honigmann



Portrait of Caroline Rivière by Ingres, seen through the eyes of Valérie © 2006 Cobos Films BV

95 minutes / color / 35mm / 2006

French, w/ English Subtitles

ICARUS FILMS

32 Court Street, 21st floor / Brooklyn, NY 11201

(718) 488-8900 / f (718) 488-8642

mail@IcarusFilms.com / www.IcarusFilms.com

Short Description

The Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris comes alive through the stories of its regular visitors. Not only a place to mourn the loss of loved ones, this cemetery is also a unique place where the living connect to the immortal power of art by remembering the legendary writers, composers, painters and other artists from around the world buried there.

Synopsis

FOREVER is a film about the power and vitality of art, about a place where love and death go hand in hand and beauty lives on: the Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris.

Père-Lachaise – one of the world’s most famous and beautiful cemeteries – is the final resting place of a gifted group of artists from various periods in history and virtually all corners of the world. Some, such as Piaf, Proust, Jim Morrison and Chopin, are still worshipped to this day. Others have fallen into oblivion, or are visited only occasionally by a single admirer.

In FOREVER we see the mysterious, calming and consoling beauty of this unique cemetery through the eyes of today's visitors. Many come for their 'own' beloved: husbands, wives, family and friends. Others honor 'their' artist by leaving behind a personal message or a flower. While admirers share with us the importance of art and beauty in their lives and their sorrow for the loss of those dearly departed, the graveyard gradually reveals itself not only as a resting place for the dead, but also as a source of peace and inspiration for the living.

Death offers little consolation except for the passing of time, the melancholia of a moss-covered tomb, and the beauty and power of a piece of music, a poem or a painting.



Featured Artists

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN
(1810-1849)
composer

MARCEL PROUST
(1871-1922)
writer

APOLLINAIRE
(1880-1918)
poet

SADEGH HEDAYAT
(1903-1951)
writer

JEAN-AUGUSTE INGRES
(1780-1867)
painter

ELISA MERCOEUR
(1809-1835)
poet

AMADEO MODIGLIANI
(1884-1920)
painter

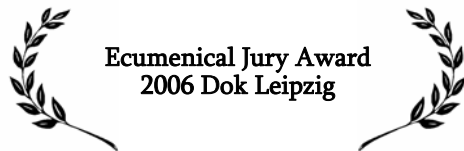
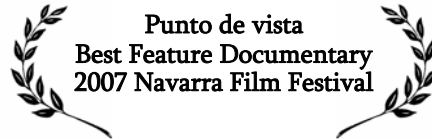
SIMONE SIGNORET
(1921-1985)
actress

JIM MORRISON
(1943-1971)
singer

MARIA CALLAS
(1923-1977)
Soprano

GEORGES MÉLIÈS
(1861-1938)

Awards & Festivals



San Francisco International Film Festival, 2007
Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, 2007
Philadelphia Film Festival, 2007
Festival Vrouwen Films (Assen), 2007
Vilnius International Film Festival (Lithuania), 2007
Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival, 2007
Museum of Modern Art, 2007
FIPA Biarritz, 2007
Angers (France), 2007
Palm Springs Film Festival, 2007
Rencontres int du documentaire de Montreal (RIDM), 2006
CINEUROPA, 2006
Cork Film Festival, 2006
Haifa International Film Festival, 2006
San Sebastian Film Festival, 2006
Buenos Aires International Film Festival (BAFICI), 2006
Nashville Film Festival, 2006

Review Excerpts

“Mesmerizing... one of [Honigmann’s] most accomplished and expressive works. Known as a maverick artist not afraid to tackle taboo subjects, Honigmann teases out the audience’s buried emotions with carefully selected images.”

—**Variety**

“A film has been made with meticulous care and love of a mysterious beauty the viewer will never forget. The montage, the framework, the editing and the amount of sentimentality: everything has been carefully dosed, which forms a fantastic whole.”

—**Ecumenical Jury Award, Dok Film Festival, Leipzig 2006**

“It is surprising that a film about a cemetery should end up being a celebration of life, but that's what the magic of intelligent cinema is all about, believing that culture and art are the motors of existence.”

—**Ramiro Cristóbal, FIPRESCI**

“The film proceeds smoothly and harmoniously, combining art, literature and music so as to present an original perspective on the themes of life and death. Furthermore, the director possesses the gift of enabling her subjects to express freely their own emotions, a dimension of the film that was particularly appreciated. The film demonstrates that surrounding death there is life.”

—**Dutch Film Critics Award, 2006**

“What a joyful visit to a cemetery! [The film] also takes place in your own mind, you make your own associations. Existential questions are dealt with without any banality and always with a respectful curiosity for the people who reveal their heart on camera.”

—**Tue Steen Müller, Dox Magazine**

“An exquisite paean to the enduring nature of art... a gorgeous film that celebrates the art and beauty and conversations the departed still inspire.”

—**Toronto Globe and Mail**

“For a documentary about a cemetery, *Forever* is remarkably attuned to the living; more surprising still, it avoids oppressive gloominess. This is partly a matter of the way Honigmann punctuates her interviews... This is the mood—ebullient, reflective—that Honigmann is after, and while it arrives naturally enough in these interviews, she’s not afraid to push her subjects to connect the dots of art, memory, and self... Her gift as a filmmaker lies in the moment-by-moment flow of interview and observation. Patience and curiosity: these are the stuff of Honigmann’s persistence of vision.”

—**Max Goldberg, San Francisco Bay Guardian**

Review Excerpts

“A contemplative and absorbing film about...well, the meaning of life, but by way of an exploration of a Parisian cemetery... a thoughtful, emotional look at what Honigmann considers the three constants of human life: death, love, and beauty. *Forever* is unassailable in its musings upon all three, and is ultimately a haunting filmic work that advances our understanding of what it is to be human.”

—Matt Brown, BlogTO.com

“When I see a film such as Heddy Honigmann’s *Forever*... I am pulled back into a world in which documentaries can be every bit as mysterious and emotionally nuanced as a fiction film, a great piece of music, or a painting... Honigmann’s eye for the world around her is curious, lingering and drunk with a desire to watch and listen. Going along for the ride with her pulls the viewer into a dreamlike conversation about death, art and love.”

—Maggie Bowman, MediaRights

“A meditation on the immortal power of art.”

—Herald Tribune

“Honigmann is one of the most brilliant documentarians working today.”

—Karen Cooper, Director, Film Forum, New York

Director's Statement



Heidi Honigmann, director © 2006 Cubes Films BV

Every now and again, an image, an encounter or a scene moves me to the extent that it is forever etched on my memory and later becomes the catalyst for making a film.

A cemetery in a village in Andalusia. Walls with alcoves. Flowers. The sun. In a corner on a stool, opposite an alcove: Lucia, about 70 years old. She's smoking a cigarette and humming.

When she gets ready to leave, I approach her.

'No, I don't normally smoke – only when I'm here with my husband,' she says. The song she was humming is based on a poem Garcia Lorca dedicated to Dolores 'La Parrala', a famous 'cante jondo' singer.

In the little notebook I keep to record special encounters, I enter the date of our meeting: 25 October 1996. 'On a dark stage, La Parrala converses with Death', says Lucia, with a lilting voice. 'When I sing, I do it for my husband... such wonderful lyrics, such powerful music'.

This scene with Lucia kept haunting me, possibly because of the association with those themes that are eternal and continue to preoccupy us: the insoluble mysteries of love and death.

When I visit the cemetery Père-Lachaise in Paris in May 1998, I see how a young woman puts a red and a white flower on Chopin's tomb. On George Méliès' grave is a passport photograph of a girl. On the back is written 'merci'. Père-Lachaise too, is registered in my book of encounters.

There is little consolation where death is concerned. With Lucia in my heart and the tranquil beauty of Père-Lachaise in my mind, I simply had to make a film that celebrates love and offers a serene perspective on death. A film about how beauty can console, forever.

Biography

Director. Born in 1951 in the Peruvian capital Lima, where she lived until 1973. After studying Biology and Literature at the University of Lima, she studied film at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome. In 1978, she moved to Amsterdam where she lives and works.

Honigmann's body of work has been honored in retrospectives, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, among many other venues. She was recently honored with San Francisco Film Festival's Persistence of Vision Award, Outstanding Achievement at Hot Docs International Documentary Festival, and the J. Van Praag Award from The Humanist Association, which recognized her entire body of work, in which "important universal themes such as survival are developed in a unique filmic form."

Heddy Honigmann Is Good for You

by John Anderson

At this year's Academy Awards, an incongruous Jerry Seinfeld introduced the nominees in the Best Documentary Feature category by calling them "the five extremely depressing films that are nominated for this award." Not the most agile joke, perhaps, but a lot of documentary people probably laughed out loud, as did any viewers with a sense of film history, and any sense of humor. They knew the line actually mocked what has come to be a profoundly passé stereotype: Nonfiction cinema may be good for you, but it is about as appetizing as medicine.

Heddy Honigmann is good for you. And her films are appetizing antidepressants. Penguins, fast food and fat guys in baseball caps all have been credited with raising the profile of the documentary in recent years, but these are aberrations, stupid pet tricks at the symphony. Among the real artists of nonfiction, Heddy is as responsible as anyone for raising the standards of doc-making worldwide. She flexes the form to meet her purposes, but never sacrifices style or integrity. She champions the dispossessed without sermonizing, and she injects just enough of herself in her films to give us a sense of the woman behind the movie without ever eclipsing the subject or the substance, the sense of space or the sense of place.

That her films are egoless makes them all the more precious.

This also means that Heddy may never win an Oscar, or even be nominated for one. But let's face it: She exists on a stratum too rarified for celebrity-driven industry awards or klieg-lit TV spectacles. It is up to the likes of the San Francisco Film Society, and its Golden Gate Persistence of Vision Award, to honor the lifetime achievement of a woman who has taken us inside the hearts of subjects most other filmmakers would never have noticed.

Most other filmmakers, of course, would never have been capable of the delicately probing methods and sometimes heart-wrenching effects she's achieved. Consider *Crazy*, her 2001 film about U.N. soldiers who reminisce about hellish global conflicts and the music they listened to in order to stay sane. The film is a tightrope walk across an open wound—the lingering camera, the obvious pain and the vortex of memory create more tension than a week's worth of action thrillers—but neither the subjects nor their inquisitor ever lose their dignity. Or our attention.

In *The Underground Orchestra*, music again plays a central theme—as it often does in Heddy's films—but rather than being just a means of creative expression, it is the unifying element among immigrant street people of Paris, and the avenue by which Honigmann gets into her real themes of exile, inequality, disenfranchisement and personal histories. "I don't make films about subjects," she told an interviewer in 2001, "but about people." A simple, elegant, generous ethic, yet one that seems to elude about half the documentarians currently in circulation.

Born in Lima, Peru in 1951, Heddy trained as a filmmaker in Rome and has lived and worked in the Netherlands since 1978. It is said that love brought her to Amsterdam, and love has been the

engine of her art—especially if one considers art a form of love. Heddy isn't particularly interested in railing against social inequities, despite the sense of political dissatisfaction one hears rumbling under her movies like a dyspeptic subway train. Rather, she is obsessed with the way people of often limited means deal with those inequities—through art, through love, through sex. Through memory. Through dance: For the expat Cubans who virtually oscillate through *Dame la Mano*, movement and music are a means of reconnection to community, culture and Havana. In this case it is the rumba—albeit a rumba performed in New Jersey—that provides the oblique arrow with which Honigmann pierces her target.

“Through the personal stories you get to the other backgrounds, the beauty, the power” she has said. “If you did it the other way round, a film would be too heavy, it would be unbearable.” Via circuitous routes, Honigmann knows, we often arrive at truth.

But is truth enough for her? Are there gradations of truth? Degrees? Qualities? It is true that atrocities were committed in Bosnia during the war, but there is another truth achieved in *Good Husband, Dear Son*, in which Honigmann wades into Ahatovici to capture the grieving female voice of a town where 80 percent of the men are gone. It's true that Peru suffered economic collapse in the '90s, but there's another truth in the individual stories of the teachers, economists and housewives of *Metal and Melancholy* who turned into taxi drivers to make ends meet. And while it's true that we live in a culture of celebrity, death and celebrity death, the way Honigmann treats these matters in *FOREVER* is unlikely ever to be matched in tenderness, wit or ironic contemplation.

Heddy's films are elegantly composed, rich in precisely poetic imagery, fluid transitions and narrative flow. Ultimately, though, what one comes away feeling is the humanity, the empathy, the pouring out of hearts. Ask any theologian: What separates man from other animals? The same thing that distinguishes the work of Heddy Honigmann: Soul.

John Anderson is a regular contributor to Newsday, the New York Times, Variety and the Guardian of London. He is the author of Sundancing (2000) and Edward Yang (2005) and coauthor with Laura Kim of I Wake Up Screening: What to Do Once You've Made That Movie (2006).

HEDDY HONIGMANN

SHORT FILMOGRAPHY

- 2006/2007 **FOREVER**; Documentary/90'/35mm/Cobos Films & NPS
Full awards and screenings list under Awards & Festivals (page 2).
- 2005 **FRAMED MARRIAGE**; Documentary/50'/ Beta /premiere September 2005
Produced by Appel & Honigmann and the IKON-television
- 2004 **FOOD FOR LOVE**; 12 documentaries/25'/video/serie
Produced by Appel & Honigmann and de HOS
Premiere Utrecht 2004; premiere January 2005 MOMA; TV-premiere July 2005
- 2003 **DAME LA MANO**; Documentary/120'/colour/35mm.
Produced by Pieter van Huystee Film / Appel & Honigmann in co-production with VPRO Television.
Mention of honor at the 'Dance on camera film festival Lincoln Center, N.Y.' 2004
'Impact on music' award at the Nashville Film Festival, 2004, USA
Best Documentary, Channel Islands Indie Film Festival, 2004, USA
- JAN CASSIES AWARD for her hole work Fund for Cultural Films for Television
- 2001/2003 **FILM RETROSPECTIVE** at the Videotheque of Paris/Festival du Cinéma de Paris
FILM RETROSPECTIVE at the Robert Flaherty Seminar, New York City.
FILM RETROSPECTIVE in the film museums of Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid, Spain.
FILM RETROSPECTIVE in Berlin (Cinema Arsenal with the Berlin Film Forum).
FILM RETROSPECTIVE at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
FILM RETROSPECTIVE in Graz, Austria
FILM RETROSPECTIVE at the Museum of Modern Art NY, Pacific Film Archive SF, Toronto & Chicago
- 2001 **GOOD HUSBAND, DEAR SON**; Documentary/50'/colour/video.
Produced by Appel & Honigmann in co-production with IKON Television.
World première at IDFA 2001. Many festivals and TV-broadcasting all over the world.
Nominated as Best European Documentary
- 1999 **CRAZY**; Documentary/97'/colour/35mm.
Produced by Pieter van Huystee Film & TV in co-production with VPRO Television.
Winner Audience Prize IDFA 1999
'Best Long Documentary' Dutch Film Festival Utrecht 2000
'Best Historic Documentary' Film Festival Valladolid 2000

- 1998 **2 MINUTES SILENCE, PLEASE**; Documentary/87'/colour/35mm.
Produced by Pieter van Huystee Film & TV in co-production with NPS Television.
Closure film Documentary Film Festival Nyon & many festivals
- 1997 **THE UNDERGROUND ORCHESTRA**; Documentary/108'/colour/35 mm.
Produced by Pieter van Huystee Film & TV in co-production with VPRO Television.
Winner SCAM Prize Cinéma du Réel Paris 1998
Winner Chief Dan George Humanitarian Award, Vancouver International Film Festival 1998
Winner Dutch Film Critics Award Dutch Film Festival Utrecht 1998
- 1996 **O AMOR NATURAL**; Documentary/76'/colour/35mm.
Produced by Pieter van Huystee Film & TV in co-production with NPS Television.
Official festival selection IDFA 1996.
Winner Jury Prize Montréal 1997
Winner 'Certificate of Merit' International Film & Video Division, category 'The Arts' Golden Gate Awards San Francisco 1997
Winner 'Prix Spécial' Prix Italia 1997
- 1995 **AU REVOIR**; Feature/115'/colour/35 mm.
Produced by Ariel Film in co-production with NOS Television.
Official festival selection in Locarno, Semaine Internationale du Cinéma à Paris,
Winner Bronze Leopard ('Best Actress' Johanna ter Steege) and Winner F.I.C.C. Award Locarno 1995
Winner Dutch Film Critics Award Dutch Film Festival Utrecht 1995.
- 1992/1993 **METAL AND MELANCHOLY**; Documentary/80'/ colour/16 mm
Produced by Ariel Film Productions in co-production with VPRO Television.
Official festival selection at the IDFA (1993), Rotterdam (1994), Cinéma du Réel Paris (1994).
Winner 'Grand Prix' Cinéma du Réel Paris 1994
Winner 'Johnny Jordaan Prize' of the Amsterdam Art Fund 1994
Winner 'Golden Pigeon' and the Mercedes-Benz Award Leipzig 1994
- 1988/1989 **YOUR OPINION PLEASE**; Short fiction/13'/colour/35 mm
Produced by Rolf Orthel.
Various festivals and several prizes.
- 1986/1987 **MIND SHADOWS**; Feature/115'/colour/35 mm
Produced by Rolf Orthel in co-production with VPRO Television.
Based on a novel by J. Bernlef.
Official festival selection at the Atlantic Festival Atlantique (1987), Festival International du Nouveau Cinéma Montréal (1987), Berlin (1988), Gothenburg (1989), Biennale Vienna (1989).

Credits

<p>WITH YOSHINO KIMURA BERTRAND BEYERN REZA KHODDAM BRUNO DOUCHET VALÉRIE BAJOU CHRISTOPHE MENEZ DAVID POULY STÉPHANE HEUET</p> <p>AND CLAIRE ZALAMANSKY FATHÉ AZZOUG MARIA CARCELEN HOURIA DOUCHET LÉONE DESMASURES MME DERBALIAN MME OXENAAR AHN JUNGKI MICHELLE SANTACREU AND ALL THE WORKERS AND VISITORS OF PÈRE-LACHAISE IN PARIS</p> <p>DIRECTED BY HEDDY HONIGMANN</p> <p>WRITTEN BY HEDDY HONIGMANN ESTER GOULD</p> <p>in collaboration with JUDITH VRERIKS</p> <p>PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT ALAZRAKI A.F.C.</p> <p>SOUND PIOTR VAN DIJK</p> <p>EDITOR DANNIEL DANNIEL</p> <p>dubbing mixer HUGO DIJKSTAL</p>	<p>RESEARCH HEDDY HONIGMANN OSH VAN DER LELY JUDITH VRERIKS ESTER GOULD DANIELLE WILDE</p> <p>ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ESTER GOULD</p> <p>ARCHIVE RESEARCH ELISA MUTSAERS</p> <p>ASSOCIATE PRODUCER JUDITH VRERIKS</p> <p>PRODUCTION MANAGER DANIELLE WILDE</p> <p>PRODUCTION NPS GEORGE VAN BREEMEN</p> <p>PRODUCTION ACCOUNTANT SIMON DE HAAN</p> <p>PRODUCTION TRAINEES SAMIRA ALHASSAN EMMANUELLE MONIER STEFANIE DE RUITER EMILY WONG</p> <p>EXTRA CREW CONCERT ADRI SCHROVER VINCENT FRANCOIS MARK BAKKER ROB BOUWE SERGE LIGTENBERG MARI LUC GRALL WOUTER KIRCHJUNGER PIETER VAN WYNSBERGE</p> <p>TECHNICAL FACILITIES AVIDIA CAMALOT TREFFERS & TROUSERS</p> <p>DIGITAL INTERMEDIATE FILMMORE AMSTERDAM FLORENTIJN BOS</p> <p>LABORATORY CINECO – AMSTERDAM</p>	<p>GRADING BORIS TRENTELMAN</p> <p>DESIGNER TITELS & POSTER MENNO LANDSTRA</p> <p>ARCHIVE LES DIABOLIQUES - HENRI-GEORGES CLOUZOT DESERT ISLAND UN HOMME DE TÊTES - GEORGES MÉLIÈS © LA CINEMATHEQUE MÉLIÈS INA INSTITUT NATIONAL DE L'AUDIOVISUEL NEDERLANDS INSTITUUT VOOR BEELD EN GELUID LES ARCHIVES DE MODIGLIANI, CHRISTIAN PARISOT À LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU Volumen 1. Combray Volumen 2. A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleursby MARCEL PROUST adapted and illustrated by STÉPHANE HEUET© 1998 GUY DELCOURT PRODUCTIONS – HEUET, PARIS LES COLLINES & COEUR COURONNE ET MIROIR GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE © 1925 ÉDITIONS GALLIMARD</p>
---	--	--

<p>MUSIC LE TEMPS DES CERISES Composed by JEAN-BAPTISTE CLÉMENT Performed by YVES MONTAND UNIVERSAL DE LA MAIN GAUCHE Composed by DANIELLE MESSIA & JEAN FRÉDÉNUCCI Performed by DANIELLE MESSIA BARCLAY/UNIVERSAL A LA UNA YO NACÍ Traditional Performed by CLAIRE ZALAMANSKY FANTASIE IMPROMPTU IN C SHARP MINOR, OPUS 66 Composed by FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN Performed by YOSHINO KIMURA NOCTURNE NO. 8 IN D FLAT MAJOR, OPUS 27, NO. 2 Composed by FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN Performed by YOSHINO KIMURA CASTA DIVA (NORMA) Composed by VINCENZO BELLINI Performed by MARIA CALLAS OPERA OF PARIS, 1958 BRAZILIAN LIKE Composed by MICHEL PETRUCCIANI Performed by MICHEL PETRUCCIANI SEXTET NORTH SEA JAZZ FESTIVAL, 1998 MOJO CONCERTS, DREYFUS JAZZ</p>	<p>WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO Secrétariat Général de la Ville de Paris Mission Cinéma – CATHÉRINE WALRAFEN, RÉGINE HATCHONDO & MARIE-JOSÉE LAMBERT Direction des Parcs, Jardins et Espaces Verts, Le Cimetière du Père-Lachaise – HENRI BEAULIEU, CHRISTIAN CHARLET, PASCALE TRUCHON- THIERRET Mairie du 20ème arrondissement de Paris – JEAN-MICHEL ROSENFELD Forum des Images - JEAN- YVES DE LÉPINAY & ALAIN ESMÉRY JEFF BLEDSOE & MARIANNE BONICEL Institut néerlandais - RUDY WESTER & HARRY BOS CYRILLE LIBERMAN ANDRÉ ATÉLLIAN CAROLE AMIELPIERRE LORRAIN LAURENT BECHETOILLE MAXIME HÉRAUD MATHILDE GIRARD ELISABETH HOWER LAURA MIMOUNILAURENCE CAMPA SAMIA BORDJIALAIN CHOTIL-FANI YANN DE GRAVALAHMAD SALAMATIANFAMILIE SUBASI GEORG MERTINNATHALIE L'HERMITTE GERMAINE MOUNIERAURELIEN LAMBERT EDWART VIGNOTPILAR ROBLES HANNA ZAWORONKO ANNE-MARIE MALTHÊTE-QUÉVRAIN, MARIE LAURE ROPERCH, LILI FRERIKS, MAARTEN KLOOS, MARJOLEIN MELKMAN, NOËL FAUST, WIM VAN SLOOTEN, HENK TIMMERMANS, EDDY WARMERDAM, CASPAR WINTERMANS, CRISTINA ALONSO, CLAUDE ALAZRAKI, JOHN DURIE, SEAN MCGLINN, ANNETTE ESKÉNAZI, RUUD DE BRUYN, HOLLAND SUBTITLING, JOKE TREFFERS, BART VAN DE BROEK</p>	<p>LITERARY TRANSLATIONS CÉLINE LINSSEN MARJA & MIKE GOULD MIRTHE LUTEIJN JELLE NOORMAN JOE JOHNSON.</p> <p>COMMISSIONING EDITORS NPS CEES VAN EDE ANNEMIEK VAN DER ZANDEN</p> <p>PRODUCED BY CARMEN COBOS THIS FILM WAS MADE WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF NEDERLANDS FONDS VOOR DE FILM COBO FONDS STIMULERINGSFONDS NEDERLANDSE CULTURELE OMROEPPRODUCTIES THUISKOPIE FONDS MEDIA PROGRAMMA ONTWIKKELING EN MEDIA DISTRIBUTIE IN COLABORATION WITH YLE TEEMA, TV ESTONIA, SBS EN SVT A COBOS FILMS PRODUCTION IN COPRODUCTION WITH NPS © 2006 COBOS FILMS BV / NPS</p>
---	--	--