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Langiziit

LANGIZIIT is a film about the moment when wanderlust turns into homesickness.



Anna lives in New Zealand. Her ill mother is at the other end of the world and to her grandchildren in Switzerland Anna is the Skype-grandmother. Urs dreams of the Lucerne carnival, but just when the Swiss drive Winter out, Summer begins in New Zealand and for Urs, this means work. Since his retirement, Hugo has been homesick. Longing for a country, which he left as a young man. Yearning for Switzerland that no longer exists as it was then.

Langiziit "Longing for Home" is the title of a movie.

About two years ago I was approached by Brigitte Lauber, a Swiss friend residing in Auckland, as she tried helping her Swiss film maker friend, Romana Lanfransconi from Lucerne, to locate candidates for a documentary.

The brief was to find three Swiss Expatriates from all over the world to open up their house, their soul.

Condition:

We had to originate from Central Switzerland and had lived outside Switzerland for a reasonable number of years. First we had to pass a skype interview and again a second one with the producer, Romana.

Over 70 people applied.

I wanted to do this, I mean what a

fine print: Participants have to hand over publishing rights, loss of privacy in some form, and acknowledge that these images become property of the producers. I could not foresee any problems and was sure that all my family and friends would celebrate these grand images with me and enjoy a living memory of what happened there and then.

Discussions with my family followed as they would have to become part of my story. Not all of them participated, but most important, friends said YES and let's plan parties so we can be in it! I signed the contract and so did Rosa my daughter and Leon my partner.

My mum had cancer at the time and so July 2015 was my last visit to see her in Switzerland. Mum agreed to meet the film producer for a coffee. Together we planned the day of filming on the farm and with mum setting the tone, she invited them for Chnoepfli (A swiss pasta dish) 10 days later. That day turned out to be the last living memory I had with her.

Dad tried to hide on top of the steepest paddock with his scythe (hand held tool for cutting grass) while I went for a walk with Leon, film team with a huge heavy camera in tow. We were climbing over barbed wire fences, squeezing our bodies through dense Hazelbushes, stepping uphill over rocks and holding on to shrubs so we didn't lose grip under foot, then we met up with my Dad. That scene did not make it to the movie!

Three months later, after having filmed another Swiss in Canada, the film team arrived in New Zealand. There are two of us Swiss Kiwis, Urs Bauer in Warkworth will be seen by them after me.





On the day when Ramona arrived with her camera man, I was busy moving a cabin from one corner of the Holiday Park to the other. I thought that this would have been a great shot but they had to set up first. In the morning of day two I checked myself in the mirror a bit longer than usual and even went to the hairdresser. Of course they followed me and it all features in the film. A microphone sits on my belt with a hidden cable tucked through my bra. Soon my daughter steals the show. She was learning to drive and scratches her car while trying to parallel-park along the fence line. On day four I wanted to show off my sailing skills. Off we went over the Kaimais to Tauranga Harbour. I dressed up into my winter sailing gear, rig the boat and the team had arranged that the coach will pick them up a bit later so they can film me during training. Its October and the water was very cold. Disaster strikes or I'm just not very good to be honest and capsized so many times that I had to be towed back to shore before the film team was even picked up!

Day five, Mapuna, my Maori friend visits and plays the ukulele- the team is captivated, follows her around, she gets MY microphone and ends up in the movie.

Throughout the screening, Romana set me aside for quiet interview sessions, soul searching, intense. It made me think harder and longer why I'm here and what "Heimat" (homeland) means. Then at the opening night, seeing myself speak honest thoughts and perhaps making sometimes less tactful comments was difficult, especially so when most of my Swiss family and friends were present. It was not easy to be surprised with a presentation about oneself on a large screen. None of us three main Characters had seen the movie prior to the opening night.

I was very fortunate to be present at the film premiere in Luzern on the 24th April. It was the most amazing experience mainly because so many of my family members and friends were there to watch my life. The film cutter came to me afterwards saying that he thinks he knows me better than I know myself...I don't think so!

The movie is a success, additional shows were put on, it is still running over summer at smallish festivals.

My siblings cried when we saw our mother again bigger than life, like an angel, serving up Chnöpfli.

Courtesy of Anna Blattler



Some Questions by Swiss playwright Max Frisch*

Q. What do you like especially about your homeland?

Do you like

- A) The landscape
- B) That its people are similar in their habits
- C) That you have moulded yourself to fit in and therefore can count on acceptance

Q. How much Homeland do you require?

Q. If you live as husband and wife, without having a common homeland, do you feel excluded from the homeland of your partner or are you liberating each other in some way?

Q. As far as homeland being the landscape and its people in a defined district where you might be born and have grown up, homeland is not exchangeable. Are you grateful for that?

Q. To whom?

Q. Are there landscapes, cities, customs, etc, that secretly makes you wonder if maybe you might have been better suited for another homeland?

Q. Do you have a second homeland?

Q. If yes, can you imagine a third or a fourth homeland or will it remain the first and only one?

*Max Frisch, *Tagebücher 1966-71*, Frankfurt a.M. original in German, my translation might not be perfect.