

LEARNING BY CAMPING. The Patriarch's Watchful Eye

A documentary written and directed by Nicola Hochkeppel

2004, 62'

A 1960's and 70's West German vacation idyll. The Hubert J. Wagner family of Cologne – all nine of them – trapped between the „simple life“ romanticism of camping and the educated middle-class ideal of classics-based scholarship. Tax consultant Wagner, the arch-catholic clan patriarch, suffers no amendments to his meticulous plans for the rigorous summer pilgrimages. Using the family's home-movie footage (1965 – 1975), the documentary film **LEARNING BY CAMPING** also chronicles a chapter of German social history during the heyday of the flourishing welfare state.



Hitting the road for the holidays with kids, kit, and campervan: The unique super 8 aesthetic prompts associations with highbrow Riviera holidays, complete with madcap comic appeal. Contrast is provided by the present day interviews with Hubert's wife Maria and her grown children. At times critical, at times with ironic humor, the family members delve into early traumas. Despite all attempts at leaving the past behind, the story comes full circle when the former younger generation, now parents themselves, proudly show us their own various and sundry camping vehicles. There's a bit of old man Wagner in all of them after all.

Alexander von Schmidt

Directed and written by Nicola Hochkeppel

Cinematography: Hubert J. Wagner (+), Super8-Filme (1965-1975) Nicola Hochkeppel

Editor: Oliver Szyza

Editing advice: Peter Eckes

Audio-Restoration/ Mastering: Daniel Schulte

Technical support: Sven Kesting/ Reinhard Möller

tsunami film distribution

wit Produktion ©2004

2004 *21. Kasseler Dokumentarfilm- & Videofest*, Honorable Mention *Goldener Schlüssel*2005 *The Image Festival*, Toronto, Kanada
Shadow Festival, Amsterdam, NetherlandsBiography

Nicola Hochkeppel, born 1972 in Cologne. M.A. in Media Studies currently working on her PhD (Film on TV) at the Humboldt University (Berlin). Worked as a scholar on the project *Die kleine und die große Show des DFGForschungsprojekts Programmgeschichte des DDR-Fernsehens – komparativ (The Small and the Big Show of the DGF Research Project: a comparative programming history of East German TV)*.

Filmography2004 *Bildungscamper. Der Blick des Patriarchen*. Dokfilm, 62 min, dv_color.2001 *Cycles*. 3'06 min, dv_color.*Campleben. Theatersommer am Kap*. 5'08 min, dv_color.2000 *Auf dem Sofa. Die Pixelpark-AG*. 13'47 min, dv_color.