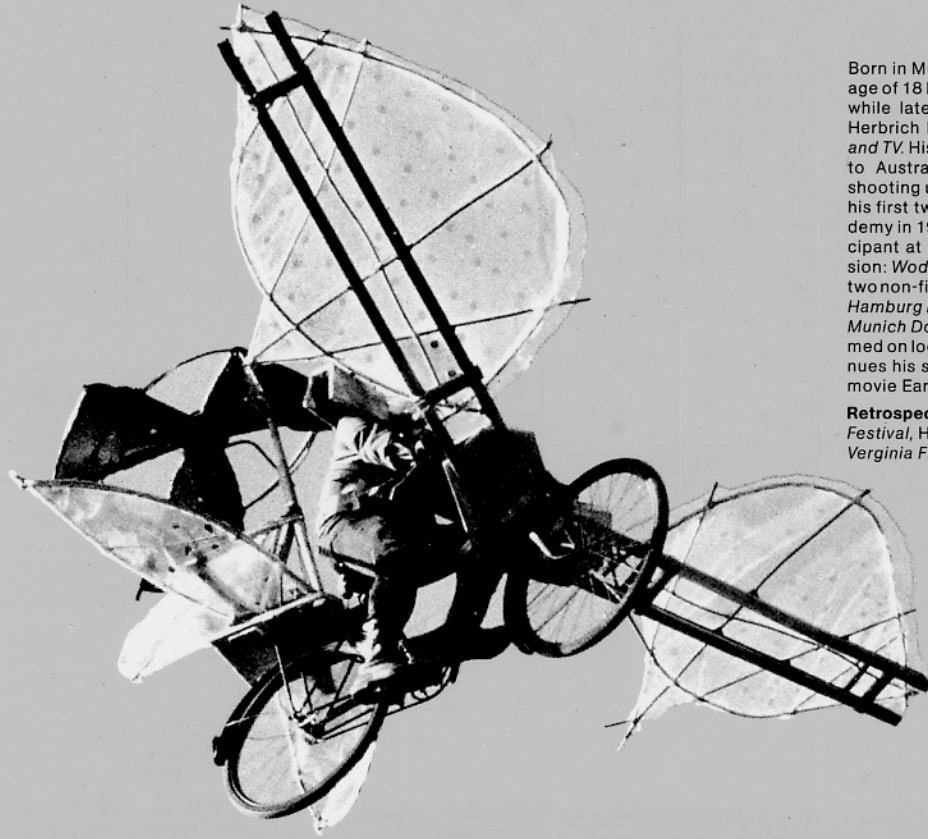


FICTION - NON-FICTION

FILMS BY OLIVER HERBRICH



Born in Munich in 1961 **Oliver Herbrich** completed at the age of 18 his first full length movie *Mathias Kneissl*. A short while later, after completing his secondary education, Herbrich began studies at the Munich Academy of Film and TV. His film education was supplemented by sojourns to Australia and South America, where, occasionally shooting under precarious circumstances, he completed his first two documentaries. He graduated from the Academy in 1985. That same year, he was the youngest participant at the *Moscow International Filmfest*, his submission: *Wodzeck*. During 1986 Herbrich completed another two non-fiction films in Germany, became a member of the *Hamburg Film Foundation*, as well as a jury member at the *Munich Documentary Film Festival*. Since 1987, he has filmed on location at sites throughout the globe as he continues his series of Third World documentaries. His latest movie *Earthbound* was awarded international prizes.

Retrospectives: 1985 *Filmfest Munich*; 1987 *Low Budget Festival, Hamburg*; 1989 *Filmweek Herdecke*; 1990 *West Virginia Filmfest, Charleston USA*.

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THE BAVARIAN AL CAPONE

The Bavarian Al Capone is the autobiographical portrait of Theo Berger, a man who has spent most of his life behind bars. His records of criminal exploits as house- and jail-breaker register more than 150 criminal offences committed since turning eighteen. Berger was sentenced to some 30 years in prison, terms twice superseded by stints of preventive detention. Footage was shot during the half-year parole Theo Berger received once prison doctors arrived at his medical verdict: leukemia. Soon after the participation in this film Theo Berger - not yet prepared for freedom - robbed a bank, got arrested and was sentenced to another 12 years. A telling tale on guilt and expiation describing the criminal justice system in contemporary Germany.



Non-fiction, 59 min.,
16 mm color, Germany.
Bavarian version with
German subtitles.



BiKiNi mon amour

The **Bikini Atoll**, formerly a remote and peaceful site in the South Pacific, exploded into the public's consciousness in 1946 when the United States began using the small atoll as a proving ground for atomic warheads. The film, interweaving historical and contemporary footage, documents the abuse of the native islanders in the fallout areas as human guinea pigs. Today, some forty years after the last blast, the deadly radioactive aftermath is omnipresent. Recently, after a lengthy struggle, the U.S. government agreed to issue reparation payments. But the dollars seeking to salve the nuclear sores have only served to further wipe out the native culture. »The money has made us poor«, realizes the King of the exiled Bikini islanders.

Honorary Mention, Medikinale Int., Parma, Italy;
Red Cross and Health Filmfest, Varna, Bulgaria;
Awarded Cum laude.

Non-fiction, 57 min., 16 mm
color/b&w, Micronesia.
English version available.



DEAD HEART

The Australians call the uninhabitable desert areas in the center of the continent **Dead Heart**. Out here, smack-dab in the middle of nowhere, is the settlement of Birdsville - 23 houses and a pub with liquor licence. Telephone service didn't arrive until 1979 - some 90 years after the locals first had applied for it. One weekend out of each year, however, this forgotten place is turned into a crowded inferno as some 5,000 civilization-weary Australians descend here for the annual Birdsville Cup Horse Race. Buses, four-wheel drives, motorbikes and small airplanes invade the place like a swarm of locusts. The sozzled merriment reaches its crescendo on Saturday night when everyone indulges in one final uproarious round of revelry. By Monday morning all that remains behind are 23 houses, a pub with liquor licence - and, strewn everywhere, 80,000 empty beer cans.

Non-fiction, 45 min.,
16 mm color, Australia.
English version available





EARTHBOUND

Earthbound is based on an authentic story: Franz Seeliger, a 75 year old psychiatric patient wants to steer a self-built, muscle-propelled flying machine. But he is kept in custody since the Third Reich. After Dr. Frank launched his case to the press, Seeliger is released to a retirement home and his plan(e)s can now take shape. He is supported by the new directress, Hanna, his former doctor who also left the clinic. The old man shortly becomes acquainted with a group of circus freaks. After successfully performing his flying-bicycle act he decides to never return to the retirement home but rather tour with the circus. But at the initiative of his guardian, Dr. Frank, the old man is escorted back by police. It's now that Seeliger has to fulfill his dream: To fly by throwing himself with all his might at the ground – and missing.

Best Artistic Contribution, *Europa Cinema*, Viareggio, Italy; Best Screenplay, *Imagfic*, Madrid, Spain; Prix de la fédération int. de cineclub, *Figueira da Foz*, Portugal; Awarded *Cum laude*.

Fiction, 92 min., 35 mm color/b&w, Germany. Version with English subtitles available. Starring Hannes Thanheiser, Vera Tschachowa, Ruediger Vogler, Hark Bohm



The Proud and the Sad Life of Mathias Kneissl

Mathias Kneissl was Bavaria's last genuine robber. The movie, based on 19th century historical sources, depicts the last year in the life of this famous outlaw and folk-hero. At the age of 23 he is released from jail after completing an unjustified sentence of six years. He now goes astray to rob the money for his and his girlfriend's emigration to America. After shooting a policeman, Mathias Kneissl remains at large for a number of months. Not until he is betrayed by his girlfriend did the police track him down, three hundred soldiers surrounding the barricaded farmhouse in which he is hiding. The ensuing siege lasts several days. Finally, severely wounded, Kneissl is pulled from the farmhouse ruins. He recovers in a Munich hospital only to be executed in 1902. He is 27 years old.

Awarded *Summa cum laude*.

Fiction, 72 min., 16 mm color, Germany. Starring Stefan Becker, Marianne Ploog, Rudolf Eydmann.



WODZECK

Franz Woyzeck, the protagonist of Georg Buechner's unfinished drama, is incorporated in this adaption of a classic. The contemporary Franz **Wodzeck** lives in Germany's Ruhr industrial region. Wodzeck meanders back and forth between the monotony of working each day on a car assembly line, and returning each evening to the cheerless desolation of the factory dormitory. Once his girlfriend, Maleen, snubs him for his boss, Wodzeck's personal and social frustrations escalate into a vista of emotions: he runs amuck and bloodily stabs Maleen to death. After he has killed his one sole love Wodzeck resigns himself to his fate. A hollow shell of a man is admitted to a psychiatric asylum. He feels no more anxiety, no more desire. He simply exists.

Best Male Actor, *Moscow Internation Film Festival*, GUS Awarded *Cum laude*.

Fiction, 82 min., 35 mm color, Germany. Version with English subtitles available. Starring: Detlef Kuegow, Arianne Erdelt, Charles Brauer, Hans Beerhenke



Priests of the condemned

Priests of the Condemned portrays the life in the leper colonies situated in shadows of the Himalayas. In the world's last Hindu kingdom of Nepal, leprosy – now easily curable – is yet regarded as a curse of the gods, those deities who forsake the Kathmandu Valley each year for the length of the monsoon season. As the rains pour down, humankind is left to stand alone, defenseless against the demons who dole out afflictions for the transgressions of former lives. Leprosy is one such punishment. In Nepal one reckons with 170.000 instances of leprosy of which many are severely maimed, hands, feet and face badly deformed. A large number, because of fear, horror and religious dogmas, have been rejected from family and village communities. They have no means of existence, no abode nor anything to eat, neither is suitable medical treatment available. This dire circumstances drive them to the cities where they vegetate as beggars.

Awarded *Cum laude*

Non-fiction, 78 min., 16 mm color, Nepal. English version available.



Searching for EL DORADO

Contemporary »conquistadores« continue the search for the gold of **El Dorado**. *Docegeto*, the Brazilian mining company, discovered gold deposits while exploiting the mineral resources of the Amazon jungle. Impoverished Brazilians, lured by the promise of quick fortune, flocked to the area to stake out claims. The prospector enclaves are caricatures of the Brazilian society at large, wealth determining human worth. A labyrinth of ladders connects the crazy-quilt of claims, a busy anthill patrolled by military police. Most claims are worthless; many fortune-hunters wind up toiling like medieval serfs for the lucky few who struck it rich. The government has declared the region off-limits for women, arms and alcohol – predictably, just outside of the military barriers, boom-town bar districts have sprouted up. And here the small profits scratched together by the gold-diggers are quickly gone.

Prix d'Antenne II, *Festival Cinema du réel Paris*, France Second Price, *Cinestud Filmfestival Tel Aviv*, Israel Awarded *Summa cum laude*.

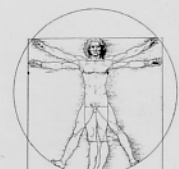
Non-fiction, 45 min., 16 mm color, Brazil. French version available.



THE WORLD BEYOND THE WORLD

The World Beyond the World is a cybernetics documentary. »Thinking machines« and »people thinking as machines« (super-computerprogrammers who have internalized computerese) are perhaps two of a kind. But clashes with the 'real world' are preprogrammed for these machines of flesh and blood. The film traces humankind's strivings to discover itself again in its mechanical creations, from the efforts to construct automatons in Switzerland some 200 years ago, to a pinnacle display of contemporary achievement: a robot plays Haydn's *Genesis* at the World Expo in Japan. The film concludes with an interview between human being and computer, the latter issuing the final summation: »We are discussing you – not me.« – Is it only the internalized mechanization which separates us as human beings from animals?

Non-fiction, 45 min., 16 mm color, Germany

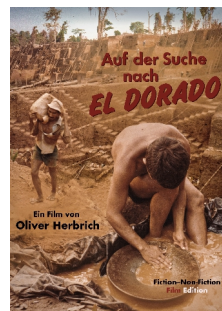


Reviews of films by Oliver Herbrich



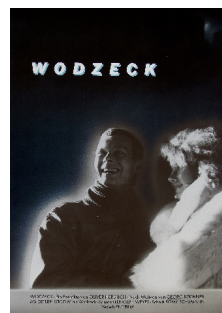
The first film of 19-year-old Oliver Herbrich: **Mathias Kneissl**. It reminds of a figure by Bresson and is played by Stephan Becker, not as an imitation of the historical hero, but as a person in the present day. Just as the whole film is not concerned with unattainable authenticity, but rather, in its well done passages, creates images as visions and not reconstructed illustrations. *(Norbert Jochum, Die Zeit)*

Herbrich is a highly gifted composer of visual concentration exercises. Long, quiet settings. Two at a table in the dark, a burning candle, nothing else. Landscape, farmers, soldiers: Like the silhouettes of a tightly assembled play. The dialogue shrunk to core sentences: signals, experiences, and verbal border fences. *(Ponkie, Abendzeitung)*

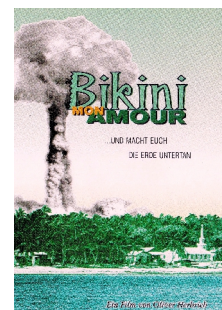


Searching for El Dorado, which tells of a peculiar paradox: Gold diggers in the Brazilian jungle who have dedicated themselves exclusively to making money - and are becoming more and more impoverished. Because the big profit that everyone is hoping for doesn't materialize, and the few grams of precious metal that are mined and that keep up the motivation in particular are being wasted in the surrounding shanty towns. *(Andreas Friedemann, Münchner Merkur)*

Actually nothing has changed since 1830, everyone is working, many don't know what for, some are going crazy. And **Wodzeck** is no exception. Sure, the story is well known. But Herbrich updated it excellently, in fact optimally. One feels compassion, anger, grief. That gets very close to Büchner's intention. The achievements in acting are award-worthy, especially Detlef Kügow in the title role. Herbrich proves with Wodzeck that the Ruhr area is the Bronx of Germany and therefore an ideal shooting location - as a 23-year-old Munich filmmaker. *(Döll, Ruhr Nachrichten)*



Theo Berger, who with numerous break-ins and breakouts has achieved some fame in recent German criminal history and ambivalent popularity in the yellow press, is freed from the myth of the legendary gangster in Oliver Herbrich's documentary **The Bavarian Al Capone**. The laconic frankness with which Berger comments on his own biography shapes the essential quality of this document. *(Hans Günther Pflaum, Süddeutsche Zeitung)*



The incredible story of this region, which suffers from nuclear mania like no other in the world, is told by Oliver Herbrich, who has both gained a reputation as a documentary and feature film director. The history of the nuclear testing is documented with rare archive footage, along with the almost cynical treatment of the population. **Bikini - mon amour** focuses on the lives of the islanders. Herbrich shows the inevitable decay of a once paradisiac culture. *(Rainer Brückner-Heinze, Frankfurter Rundschau)*

The most inspiring stimulus for cinema is its very destiny: to be a place of imagination. This is when it does not depict reality one-to-one, but rather lifts off from reality without, of course, losing sight of it, like the psychiatric patient in Oliver Herbrich's **Earthbound**. *(Hans-Dieter Seidel, FAZ)*



Priests of the Condemned is a report from a vale of tears that can be found in almost every country of the Third World. The images are not easy to wipe away. They affect us as they are, without instrumentalizing the horror. Oliver Herbrich focuses - as in his last two documentaries - on the people; he seeks to analyse their Genesis and their environment. Thus, despite the distance, a closeness emerges that is the first approach to dealing with a taboo. Herbrich is right when he says that these deformed people make visible to us the borderline between 'normal' and 'outcast'. *(Heiko Küftner, Süddeutsche Zeitung)*



In **Rules of the Road**, Oliver Herbrich portrays a nomadic people threatened with extinction. The German documentary filmmaker has tracked down this ethnic group not in the Amazon or on a remote archipelago, but on the outskirts of London, on the roads of Wales and Ireland. The audience realises that misery never disappeared from Europe, but was merely pushed to the uninhabitable fringes of civilization towards the end of the 20th century. In the midst of our artificial paradises, the Irish Travellers collect scrap iron, melt lead from cables, or let the acid of old car batteries disappear into the gully. *(Christian Gloyer, Berliner Tagesspiegel)*