



presents:

NENESIS A THOMAS IMBACH PICTURE

Switzerland, 2020, 131'

PRESS KIT



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Credits

Chronicle of the of the freight station and the "Police And Justice Centre"

FESTIVALS

IDFA - International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam

Competition for Feature-Length Documentary 16 November - 6 December 2020 International premiere

Locarno Film Festival

Secret Screenings 5 - 15 August 2020

Visions du Réel

International Feature Film Competition 17 April - 2 May 2020 World premiere

PRESS QUOTES

"the film couldn't be more timely"

"a voyeuristic, locked-down viewpoint"

"Shot on handsome 35 mm, sometimes through telephoto lenses which bring an uncomfortable intimacy with the unwitting subjects, sometimes through wide shots which seem to extend to the edge of the city and beyond, the film looks a treat."

- Wendy Ide for Screen Daily

"Thomas Imbach shows off his chameleon-like ability to move between fiction and the most experimental form of documentary with style and apparent ease"

- Giorgia Del Don for Cineuropa

"[Imbach] has perfected the filming, editing, and musical techniques he employed in *Day is Done*"

KEES Driessen for Business Doc Europe

"The history of a city becomes a political study into how a nation is obsessed with hiding things"

Tagesanzeiger

"Fascinating, terrifying and slightly surreal."

SRF 2 Kultur

"Nemesis fits the current state of the world like a glove. Both its subject and viewpoint of view, capture the inevitably distant gaze, and our obsession with security and surveillance"

TAZ

Read Thomas Imbach's interview with Variety here.

LOGLINE

By observing a construction site, NEMESIS probes the extinction of history as Zurich's distinctive freight station is replaced by a Prison and Police Center designed to accommodate people awaiting deportation.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

The old freight station in Zürich once brought prosperity to the city. Its construction unleashed a flow of goods and unveiled new access to the world. But 125 years later, this symbol of international exchange and movement is making way for control, isolation and national security. A new Prison and Police Centre is planned to rise in its place, designed to accommodate people awaiting deportation.

Shot entirely from his window, film maker Thomas Imbach has observed the construction site for over seven years, wringing life and beauty from the restless movement of machines and people that are reshaping the area.

Fueled by Imbach's consternation, and accompanied by both his personal chronicle, along with testimonies of newly arrived immigrants, NEMESIS probes how we deal with the extinction of history.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Once the source of prosperity for the city, the old freight station in Zürich is now a helpless body in its death throes. Grown huge and heavy over the years, it dominates the landscape by its sheer mass. Built in just nine months, it has transformed the neighbourhood it stands in. A flow of goods was unleashed and a new access to the world was unveiled.

But 125 years later, this symbol of international exchange and movement is making way for control, isolation and national security. A new Prison and Police Centre is planned to rise in its place, designed to accommodate people awaiting deportation.

Shot entirely from his window, filmmaker Thomas Imbach has observed the construction site for over seven years, wringing life and beauty from the restless movement of machines. Day after day, he films the transformation of the site from his vantage point. He witnesses the collapsing of mighty roofs, then captures how the disfigured corpse of the station is meticulously dissected into constituent parts: the roofing felt is pulled off the body like skin, and the ribs of the cellar vaults are suddenly left exposed and unprotected.

After years of standstill, the denuded wasteland becomes a construction pit for the new prison and voices start to emerge from it. These are the voices of people who came full of hope to the city, making the arduous journey across the Mediterranean, only to be confronted by Europe's growing xenophobia. Instead of finding the liberty they had imagined and a life of self realisation, the chances are they will wind up being detained on this very site, right outside Imbach's window.

Fueled by Imbach's consternation, and accompanied by both his personal chronicle, along with testimonies of newly arrived immigrants, NEMESIS probes how we deal with the extinction of history.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I started shooting NEMESIS seven years ago because it broke my heart when the government decided to demolish the old freight station. I think this destruction will soon be judged as an act of architectural vandalism. The slow death of my long-time neighbour has made me think about the passing of time; feelings ranging from early memories of my grandfather's death to more recent events when a filmmaker friend of mine got cancer.

I am experiencing the present as a turning point, with technological and political developments imposing new priorities on us within the span of a few years. The memory of the past is increasingly delegated to the Internet. Every event can be reached by mouse click. The city and its architecture are pre-programmed in apps, we no longer have to discover them ourselves. In this spot of the world - the size of 15 football fields - the dissolution of historical space is still taking place in a very brutal and concrete way. How was it even possible that a building on an architectural scale that no longer exists in our country - two halls 400 metres long with over 100 shed roofs - could be sacrificed for a prison to accommodate 300 inmates and countless offices? (see Chronicle freight station/Police and Justice Centre in the appendix)

I've already shot a film over a period of 15 years out of my window ("Day Is Done", 2011) and over that time I've developed a sixth sense that allowed me to react immediately to certain sounds, lights, or simply by instinct. I never shot according to a plan or schedule, but in the midst of my everyday life and in between other projects. Of course, at times I missed something and got upset about it, but that is part of the game. When the freight station was demolished, it was impossible to predict when one of the remarkable glass roofs would collapse. So to capture their final moments, I made an exception, and waited for hours behind the camera with my finger on the trigger.

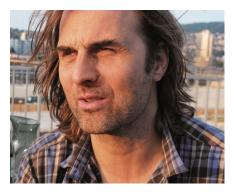
After the destructive phase I looked for signs of life. In the years after the demolition and before the start of construction, I secretly hoped that nature would reclaim the site. The first time I discovered the fox on a Sunday morning, I was beside myself with joy, and was delighted to have a new neighbour. When construction started, I was impressed by the workers who built the concrete shell of the new building. They seemed like timeless characters with old-fashioned manners. They made me think of Pasolini's non-actors in "The Gospel According to St. Matthew." Ironically, in the film, they are a contrast to the modern trend towards a total security apparatus.

Why did I finish the film before the prison and police complex was completed?

I already had enough footage to make two films! More important was the fact that I was never interested in the new building as an architectural event. I explored what it represented. Once the shell of the building was finished this was apparent; so I left it standing as a ruin.

- Thomas Imbach, April 2020

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



As one of Switzerland's most innovative and internationally renowned filmmakers, Thomas Imbach moves with virtuoso mastery between documentary and fiction. He has acquired a reputation for courageous experimentation both formally and as a storyteller. His early successes include WELL DONE (1994) and GHETTO (1997). The feature films HAPPINESS IS A WARM GUN (2001), LENZ (2006) and I WAS A SWISS BANKER (2007) as well as the autofiction DAY IS DONE (2011) premiered at the Berlinale. His english-language period drama MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS (2013) was selected for Toronto. His feature film MY BROTHER MY LOVE (2018) premiered at Locarno in Competition.

Filmography

2020 NEMESIS, Feature documentary, 131 min. Coproduced by Okofilm Productions and Bachim Film

- Visions du Réel 2020, Nyon, Competition
- Karlovy Vary IFF 2020, Competition (invited, festival cancelled)
- Locarno Film Festival 2020, Secret Screenings
- IDFA Amsterdam 2020, Competition

2020 as producer: MARE by Andrea Štaka, Fiction feature film, 84 min. Coproduced by Okofilm Productions, Zurich und Dinaridi Film, Zagreb

- Berlinale 2020, Panorama, Sarajevo 2020, Competition

2018 GLAUBENBERG, Fiction feature film, 114 min.
Coproduced by Okofilm Productions, Swiss Radio and Television, SRG SSR
- Locarno 2018, Competition

2014 as producer: CURE – The Life of Another by Andrea Štaka, Fiction feature film, 83 min. Produced by Okofilm Productions, Coproduced by Produkcija Ziva, Deblokada Films - Locarno 2014, Competition, Sarajevo 2014, Competition

2015 WELL DONE, Film installation, Kunsthaus Zurich: EUROPA, 06/2015 - 09/2015

2013 MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS, Fiction feature film, 35mm (DCP), 119 min. Coproduced by Okofilm Productions, Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen, SRG SSR, ARTE, Sciapode Productions

- Locarno 2013, Competition
- Toronto Film Festival 2013, "Special Presentations"

2011 DAY IS DONE an autobiographical fiction, 35mm (DCP), 111 min.
Coproduced by Okofilm Productions, SRF Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen and ARTE

- World Premiere Berlinale 2011, Forum
- Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, Competition

2007 I WAS A SWISS BANKER, Drama, 35mm, 75 min. Underwater fairy tale of the Swiss Banker Roger Caviezel.

- Premiered at the 57th Berlinale
- Swiss Film Awards 2008, Nomination Best Actor
- Zurich Film Awards 2008, Special Jury award

2006 LENZ AM BERG, 35mm; Film Installation, 3-Channel-Projection Kunsthaus Zurich: In the Alps

2006 LENZ, Drama 35mm, 96 min.

Contemporary adaptation of Georg Büchner's "Lenz"

- Premiered at the 56th Berlinale

2002 happy too, Digi-Beta, 60 min. "happy too" parallels the Kelly-Bastian relationship with the struggles of the actors in "Happiness is a Warm Gun"

- Premiered at the International Film Festival Locarno 2002, Cinéastes du Présent

2001 HAPPINESS IS A WARM GUN, Drama, 35mm, 92 min.

Drama on the mystic death of the lovers Petra Kelly und Gert Bastian.

- Nominated for the Golden Leopard 2001, International Film Festival Locarno
- Official Selection Berlinale 2002
- Zurich Film Prize, 2001, Nominated for "Best Swiss Feature Film", Quality Award (OFC)

2000 Portrait Film on Thomas Imbach "Die Kamera als Sonde", Beta-SP, 60 min. by Christoph Hübner for WDR/3Sat

1998 NANO-BABIES, 35mm (Cinemascope), 45 min.

Science-Fiction essay on babies of high-tech researchers for Swiss Television/3SAT

- Commissioned by Swiss Television and 3Sat

1997 GHETTO, Feature documentary, 35mm, 122 Min.

Docudrama with teenagers on the sunny side of Zurich's Gold Coast

- Best Documentary, International Film Festival Mannheim
- Premio Giampaolo Paoli, International Film Festival Florence
- Quality Award (Swiss Ministry of Culture), Zurich Film Prize

1994 WELL DONE, Feature documentary, 35mm, 75 Min.

Documentary on employees of a Swiss high-tech bank corporation.

- FIPRESCI-Prize in Leipzig
- Quality Award (OFC), Zurich Film Priz, Art award of the city Lucerne

1991 RESTLESSNESS, 16mm, 58 min.

Rail-movie with three homeless people in the IC-triangle ZH-BE-BS

- Nominated for the Max-Ophüls-Prize, 1991
- Quality Award (Swiss Ministry of Culture)

1988 SCHLACHTZEICHEN, 16mm, 56 min.

Doku-comedy about the Swiss Army

- Opening film at the Solothurn Film Festival
- Quality Award (Swiss Ministry of Culture)

EXCERPTS FROM THE VOICE OVER

Laying of the foundation stone of the prison and police centre

Guess what's hidden in that copper box?

It's a time capsule to pass selected objects on to future generations.

The chief of justice chucked in a mirror, saying: "Whoever has power must check herself now and again in the mirror."

My first death

My grandmother went to a factory after primary school. She worked as a winder at Brown & Boveri who electrified our railways. She had to gobble down her lunch so quickly that later she suffered a stomach ulcer. My grandfather was a carpenter but became unemployed in the 1930s. He came looking for work and found grandmother instead.

Both came from peasant families. We were all peasants in Switzerland until the railway made our country a flourishing market place.

When my grandfather had to give up his carpentry business he had a heart attack. But he continued carpentry in his own basement until the moment he suffered a stroke. And the plane slipped.

My grandmother called me in great distress. I drove over and entered the kitchen. An uncle and aunt sat crying at the table drinking Chianti and eating chocolate.

Grandfather was my first death.

"Mass immigration"

When Zurich voted for a prison and police centre was it an omen for the tide of xenophobia? Today more than 70% of prison inmates are foreigners, and the figure is rising.

Do we secretly expect that in the future only foreigners will populate our prisons? Perhaps 99 migrants to one Swiss banker?

Prisoners awaiting deportation

I ask Lisa what she does when she visits refugees in prison. She says it's not about doing anything special. It's about being there. So they know someone's listening to their story.

As soon as you know someone, he's not just a category. He's got a F-card, a B-card, an N-card, a C-card? A naturalized citizen or second generation? Absurd. They're just people, individuals, humans.

(Abdoul)

I left the Ivory Coast and arrived in Niger.

I had paid to be taken to Libya but once we got to the Libyan border they left us in the middle of the dessert with no water and no food.

We walked for five days, day and night.

Our feet were cut to pieces.

It was a rugged dessert with rocks and sand. On the sixth day we were arrested by the Libyan military.

Those who had money were taken to one side. Me and another man had nothing in our pockets at all. So we had to wait all day until sunset. They picked up the people who had money and drove them to the city. Me and the other guy with no money, they drove us directly to jail.

This was my first time in prison.

Even the word prison frightened me.

(Salah)

I spent five years in Swiss prisons.

But I never thought that Switzerland would constrict itself in such a short time.

You Swiss are all crazy.

I'd rather... what's the opposite of paradise? Yes, I'd rather live in hell than in this knotty country.

Press kit NEMESIS - IDEA 2020

CREDITS

131 minutes – DCP - shot on 35mm - 1:1,85 - color - 5.1 sound Language: German. English, French and Italian subtitles available

NEMESIS a Thomas Imbach Picture

Narrator Voice Milan Peschel

Cinematographer Thomas Imbach

Edited by David Charap

Thomas Imbach

Sound Design by Peter Bräker

Music by KALI Trio

Lukas Langenegger

Refugee testimonies Lisa Gerig

Produced by Andrea Štaka

Flora Grolitsch Thomas Imbach

THANK YOU

In Order of Appearance Apple Wrangler

The Harpsichord maker The Kissing Couple The Glass Roof Girls Demolition Workers Lady of the Alpine Horn Policemen and women

Project Manager of State Government

State Police Chief
State Justice Director
State Construction Director

Railway Workers Red Paint Model Cobble Stone Handlers

Site Architects
Train drivers
Water Engineers
Foundation Workers
Photographers
Vintage Car Dealers

Nail Clipper Jogging Banker Car Park Gossips AC/DC Fans

Freight Train Cleaner Truck Driver Toilet Man

Fence Builders Padlock Man Sunbathing Ladies Bulldozer Drivers

Press kit NEMESIS - IDFA 2020

Skateboard Girls

Community Service Gardeners

Tarmac Sweeper Door Designers Snow Clearer Football Boys

Street Food Festival Crew

Festival Kids Festival Mothers Festival Band

The Girl of the Frozen Drinks

Rodeo Riders Security Guards Forensic Inspector Fence Painters

Gravel Separator Driver

Drilling Engineer Crane Builder

'Skeleton Crew' Workers

Men in Suits

The Maestro of the Site
The Stumbling Worker
Children of the Future
Concrete Workers
The Snowballer

The Coffee and Cigarette Worker

Injured worker Firemen

Union Reps.

The Singing Worker

Scaffolders Graffiti Artists Crane Lovers Boxers & Dancers

The Nemesis T-Shirt Man

and all other workers and visitors to the site of the prison and police centre

Musicians KALI Trio

Piano Raphael Loher
Guitars Urs Müller
Drums & Percussion Nicolas Stocker

www.kalitrio.com/info/

Compositions performed by KALI Trio for NEMESIS:

RIOT MAYA 61

TROPE

BIST DU EIN SCHMETTERLING?

UM SHIPOL

Musicians NEMESIS Band

Vocal & GuitarsLukas LangeneggerGuitarsUrs MüllerBass GuitarBalz BachmannPiano & OrganEphrem LüchingerDrums & PercussionNicolas Stocker

List of Songs performed by the NEMESIS Band:

THE CITY IN THE SEA
Words by Edgar Allan Poe
Composed by Lukas Langenegger
Performed by Lukas Langenegger and NEMESIS Band

SPRING

Written by Bill Callahan

Performed by Lukas Langenegger and NEMESIS Band

DEATH DON'T HAVE NO MERCY

Written by Gary Davis

Performed by Lukas Langenegger

THERE WILL BE A RECKONING

Written by Billy Bragg

Performed by Lukas Langenegger and NEMESIS Band

ONE FINE MORNING

Written by Bill Callahan

Performed by Lukas Langenegger and NEMESIS Band

A MAN NEEDS A WOMAN OR A MAN TO BE A MAN

Written by Bill Callahan

Performed by Lukas Langenegger

SATURATED

Written by Charles L. Owen, Ian William Rilen Performed by Lukas Langenegger and NEMESIS Band Supported by

Bundesamt für Kultur (BAK)

Ivo Kummer

Matthias Bürcher (FiSS)

Zürcher Filmstiftung Daniel Waser

Susa Katz

Marianne Muriset

Migros Kulturprozent

Nadine Adler

Ernst Göhner Stiftung

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CHRONICLE OF THE FREIGHT STATION AND THE "POLICE AND JUSTICE CENTRE"

The entry on alt-zueri.ch for the historical freight station:

Built in 1897 by the architects Ing. Robert Moser, Legani and Kirchen.

At that time, this horseshoe-shaped terminal was considered the most modern freight station in Europe. The castle-like main building, the actual expedition building, is flanked by the freight halls on the sides: The almost 400 meter long expedition hall along Hohlstrasse and the somewhat shorter dispatch hall, which stretches 250 meters along the railway line. Over the years, the dispatch hall has been extended twice, the first time in 1943 and a second time in 1964.

In order to be able to handle rail loading as efficiently as possible and in as little space as possible, the loading ramps inside the "horseshoe" were set up in a saw tooth shape. This very special sight can best be seen from Hardbrücke, a large bridge close by.

In terms of storage capacity, space was planned very generously: The underground cellar vaults alone have a storage capacity of approx. 7'000m².

The connection of the fate of the freight station with the prison and police centre begins on September 13, 2000 with the decision of the Zurich Government Council on the location. With the help of renowned architects, the site of the freight station is chosen as the location for the new "Police and Justice Centre".

The second ominous link is the government's promise to clear the barracks of the police and remand prison, which are located a little closer to the city centre, in order to allow the barrack's site to be used for new purposes by the population.

After a test planning, the Canton of Zurich laid its hand on the SBB site of the freight station in 2002 and notarized a purchase of the whole area.

In 2003, the PJZ law (Police and Justice Centre) is adopted in a cantonal referendum. The Social Democrats, the liberals and the Christian Democratic Party are in favour; the Swiss People's Party, the Green Party and the Alternative Party are against it. A central argument in the referendum campaign - especially for the Socialists - is the prospect of the "liberated" barracks.

A master plan and a project competition will be announced between 2004 and 2006. In April 2006 Theo Hotz's project wins.

From the media release of the Swiss Heritage Society of 14.6.2006:

The Swiss and Zurich Heritage Protection yesterday filed an appeal with the Federal Supreme Court against the demolition of the Zurich freight station. The building is an architectural monument of great value in terms of urban development, transport and industrial history. It is acutely endangered by the current planning of the Zurich Police and Justice Centre (PJZ).

For the construction of the PJZ, the cantonal building authorities want to release the Zurich freight station from the protection of historic monuments and allow it to be demolished. However, the object is extremely remarkable for its typological uniqueness, its architectural quality and its very good original state of preservation.

Whether the freight station is of national importance or not has not yet been clarified by the building management, the administrative court of the Canton of Zurich or the SBB (Swiss Federal Railway). The freight station is still owned by the SBB. Under the Federal Nature and Cultural Heritage Protection Act, the SBB is obliged to preserve its architectural monuments and not to sell them for demolition.

In its decision of November 2nd 2005, the Government Council stated that the removal of the freight station's inventory could not be challenged on appeal. The Cantonal Administrative Court corrected this position. The Swiss Heritage Society and its Zurich section were right to defend themselves against the way in which the

appeal was handled. Nevertheless, the Administrative Court also rejected the appeal of the Heritage Protection Agency.

Yesterday [i.e. 13.4.2006], the Swiss Heritage Society and its Zurich section filed an appeal against the decision of the Zurich Administrative Court with the Federal Supreme Court. It demands the protection of the monument and the clarification of its significance by an expert opinion of the Federal Commission for Monument Preservation (EKD). Without this clarification, it is not possible to make a legally sustainable weighing of interests. The planning procedure in the PJZ case raises big question marks.

For example, it is not comprehensible why the Canton is carrying out urban development studies and an architectural competition at enormous expense before the necessary clarifications on the scope of protection of the freight depot are even available. The public interest of monument protection was consistently ignored.

A building application will be submitted in 2009. As the costs are getting out of hand, the Cantonal Council rejects the building loan for the PJZ by 89 votes to 82 on September 20, 2010. The PJZ law is repealed and the end of the Prison and Police centre seems to be sealed. However, the PJZ supporters, as the Liberals, Social Democrats and the Christian Democratic Party are holding a referendum to create a second referendum.

In the voting battle, the parties are fighting over a contradictory slogan: Who on September 4 continues to say YES to the Police and Justice Center, must vote NO to repeal the law.

On September 2, 2011 the no votes win and the controversial project seems to have a future after all.

The majority of the Cantonal Council - especially now with the Swiss People's Party - feels committed to the referendum and accepts the building loan on March 26, 2012.

On 12 October 2012, the Federal Supreme Court rejects the last appeal by the Heritage Protection Agency against the construction of the Prison and Police centre.

In May 2013, demolition of the historic freight station begins.

In June 2014, the Zurich Government Council informs that the Police and Justice Centre is already planned too small and that the use of the barracks by the police will continue to be necessary in the future. An outcry goes through the media; the government breaks its word before the construction of the PJZ has even begun.

In 2017, the Cantonal Council rejects any further use of the barracks by the police, because this was always promised before the votes.

In 2019, the Social Democrats demand an additional building with a postulate in the Cantonal Council, because the new building is already too small. It is rejected by 125 votes to 40.

Since 2019, the City and Canton of Zurich have been in conflict over how the barracks should be put to new use.

It is planned to move into the Prison and the Police Centre in 2021/22.