

MAN ON EARTH

A FILM BY AMIEL COURTIN-WILSON



BOB HAS SEVEN DAYS TO LIVE.
NOW HE MUST MAKE PEACE WITH
HIS FAMILY,
THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE,
AND HIMSELF.

Produced in Association With

VICSCREEN

FLOOD
PROJECTS



Festival Selections Include



Awards





Director

Amiel Courtin-Wilson

Producers

Amiel Courtin-Wilson

Alice Jamieson-Dowd

John Baker

Format

DCP

**Australia & New
Zealand Distributor**

Bonsai Films

Duration

98 mins

manonearthfilm.com

www.floodprojects.com

"EXTRAORDINARY"

"PROFOUND"

"LIFE-CHANGING"

"AS POIGNANT AS
ANYTHING I HAVE EVER
SEEN"

"MASTERPIECE"

"A SINGULAR EXPERIENCE"

Synopsis

Robert 'Bob' Rosenzweig is a 65 year old Jewish New Yorker who went to Woodstock at 15, designed bathrooms for Elton John and Janet Jackson and is funny and full of life. He also only has one week to live.

Diagnosed with Parkinson's, Bob has decided to end his own life using Washington State's Death with Dignity laws.

MAN ON EARTH is the inspiring, surprisingly funny and heartbreaking portrait of Bob's last week on earth.

With unflinching intimacy and incredibly unique access, our film follows Bob as he tries to make peace with his family, the love of his life and himself, right up until he takes his last breath.

Deeply compassionate, MAN ON EARTH is a meditation on time and mortality, asking the big questions, "How do we face death when it comes?" and "What does it mean to live a complete life?"

Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Amiel Courtin-Wilson, with sound design by Oscar Winner Robert Mackenzie, music by Oscar and BAFTA award winning composer Nicolas Becker, and editing by Oscar nominated editor Peter Sciberras, MAN ON EARTH is a cinematic journey with an unforgettable human being. Bob will stay with you forever.



Links

Man on Earth Trailer (WIP)
Man on Earth Teaser Trailer

Press

2023 The Guardian Review
2023 Metro Magazine Article
2023 Sydney Film Festival ABC Arts Review
2023 True/False Fandor Critic's Notebook Review
2022 Upcoming on Screen Review
2022 Interview with Jason di Rosso, ABC Radio National
The Curb Interview with Andrew F Peirce
The Conversation Review by Adrian Danks
Business Doc Europe Interview
TripleRRR Primal Screen Radio Interview
Exposed Magazine Interview
FilmInk Interview



“Man on Earth is an observational documentary that prioritises, above everything else, the subject and his circumstances. It’s pitched at just the right level of immersion: a soft, spectral glow veneering more conventional fly-on-the-wall elements such as handheld camerawork... Films like Man on Earth are tough to watch but we emerge from them deeper and richer.”

Luke Buckmaster, The Guardian

“Courtin-Wilson gets it all with astonishing intimacy, absorbing not only Bob’s fragility and candor as his illness eats away at him, but his restless drive to be fully (and unapologetically) himself...the unflinching honesty about Bob’s decline and warts-and-all humanity (and humor) offers insight, catharsis and some unexpected poetry, even during two particular scenes in which the camera holds for an extended stretch, witness to moments that are at once deeply personal yet fully universal.”

Steve Dollar, Fandor Keyframe

“For all of the emotion that runs through Man on Earth for those previous 90 minutes, it is the calm and gentleness of those final moments that stay with you. While he is peacefully passing away, you never forget how much of a powerhouse of a person Bob Rosenzweig was. Courtin-Wilson has conjured a wonderfully careful portrait that pulls you through all the possible emotions, leaving you in a stunned and contemplative state.”

Scott Gilliland, Upcoming on Screen

“It’s a tender, often irreverent reflection on a fascinating and contradictory life, as Courtin-Wilson – as he did in The Silent Eye, his sublime portrait of jazz musician Cecil Taylor – allows his intimate, unflinching images to unravel toward glimpses of the unknown. This is a bracing, sometimes tough film to watch, but one that will leave you permanently altered (or at least minus a dry eye).”

Luke Goodsell, ABC Arts

“Man on Earth is an unflinching film with remarkable access to Bob and his family. It alternates between unvarnished realism and moments of poetic lyricism. If you’ve seen director Amiel Courtin-Wilson’s other films you’ll be familiar with how he captures visually poetic details with an ostensibly realist framework... it’s also a film that inspired in me a renewed appreciation of life and the preciousness of our relationships and the need to nurture them.”

Jason Di Rosso, ABC Radio National

“Man on Earth is a film of tremendous intimacy that manages to artfully capture the dignity of death with breathtaking honesty.”

Flick Ford, 3RRR Primal Screen

“An extraordinary film.”

Adrian Martin, Metro Magazine

“Over the past 20 years, Amiel Courtin-Wilson has emerged as one of Australia’s most perceptive, challenging, honest and adventurous filmmakers. His latest film, Man on Earth, is an unflinching, unguarded and deeply affecting experiential portrait of the last seven days in the life of Bob Rosenzweig.”

Adrian Danks, The Conversation

“Amiel Courtin-Wilson’s work as a filmmaker consistently operates in the realm of the emotional, presenting the rawness and reality of humanity with a stark honesty like few other filmmakers... The embrace and depiction of Bob’s soul is laid bare with profound empathy by Amiel and the crew of considerate filmmakers by his side that includes producers Alice Jamieson-Dowd and Chris Luscri, cinematographer Jacqueline Fitzgerald, sound recordist Steve Bond, and more.”

Andrew F Peirce, The Curb



Director's Statement

MAN ON EARTH is the culmination of two decades of relentless work exploring the documentary form.

It is also the most emotionally powerful, universal project I have ever worked on.

In 2019, I set out to capture, with great sensitivity and respect, a clear eyed poetic meditation on time and the experiences leading up to and including the death of one human being.

As I became extremely close with Bob in the last week of his life, the film evolved into something richer - a character study about a warm, funny, archetypal man reflecting on his life with profound irreverent pathos.

These qualities will surprise and delight an audience at every turn, as they did those who knew him.

Bob is/was many things all at once - a father, partner, friend, bathroom designer, performer, comic, raconteur. It's as if the delightful multiplicity of all these identities were only deepened by the knowledge he was about to die, and by the salutary warmth and generosity he extended to every living being he came across in his last week.



Unfurling through the eyes of a man feeling each moment with an incandescent intensity, MAN ON EARTH is also a film about the elasticity of time and how life is transformed when you know the exact moment of your death in advance. Our film allows audiences the rare privilege of seeing an actual death portrayed with compassion and delicacy.

A highly engrossing and entertaining piece of cinematic storytelling, we want this film to inspire powerful conversations around the universal experience of death and dying and to ultimately inspire real social change.

Themes

The idea for MAN ON EARTH was initially inspired by my own contemplation of grief and loss in my family.

Ever since I sat with my father and watched my stepmother pass away in 2013 in a hospice in Melbourne, I have been extremely passionate about looking more closely at rituals surrounding death.

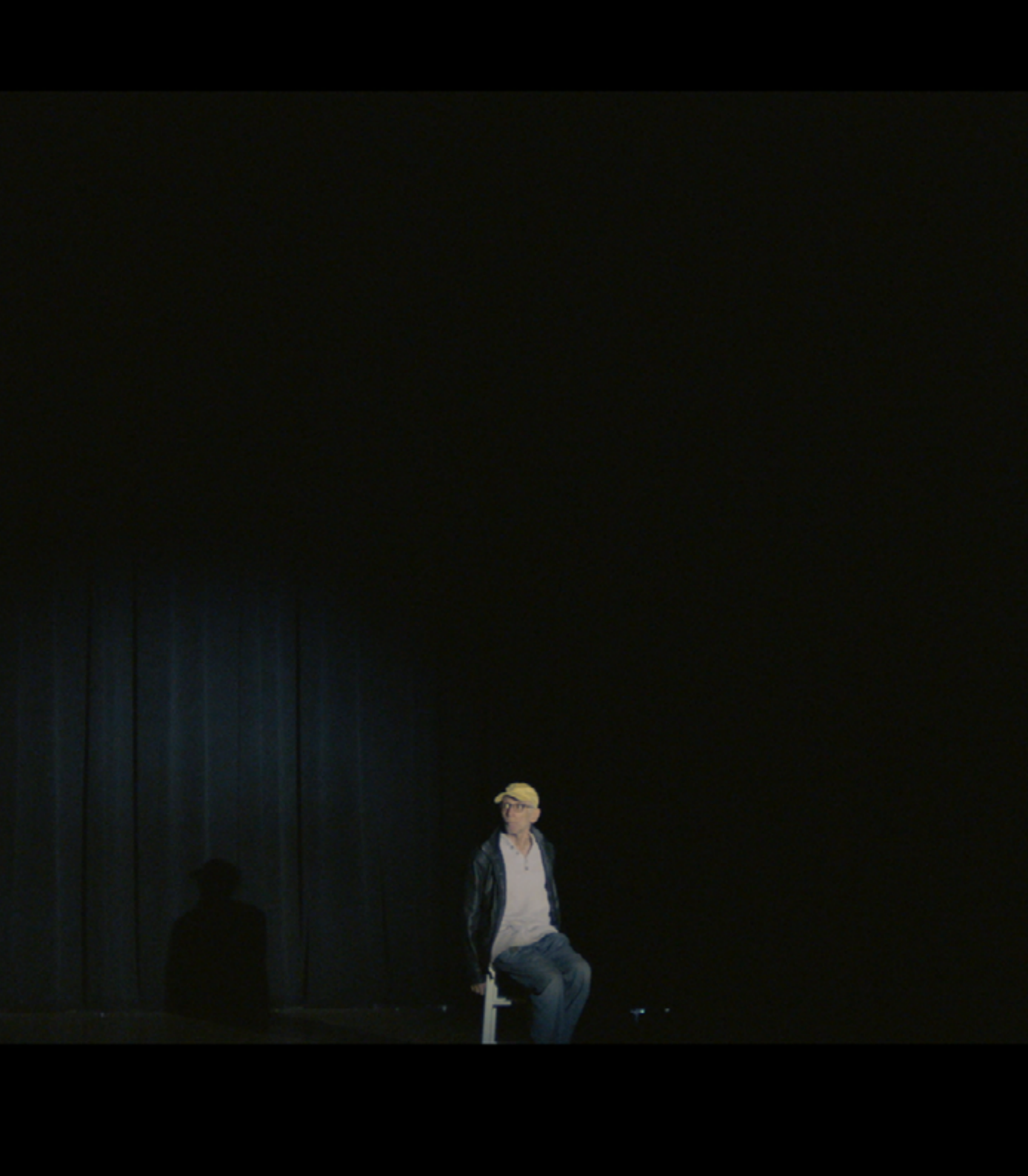
The genesis of this film was my desire to make a pure, emotionally arresting work that ignites a series of conversations in the community around death.

In a society plagued with questionable priorities, we are also governed by subterranean fears about how to face death with an open heart.

This film lays bare a man who is full of regrets but who is nevertheless trying to find peace with only days to live.

Structured with a clear chronology that functions with tension building inevitability, our film is about time and how time is transformed when you know the exact moment of your death in advance. In many ways, Bob is grateful for this opportunity to prepare for the end of his life but his days are also punctuated with extreme highs and lows that only intensify as the days pass.





About Bob

As a self proclaimed frustrated performer, Bob's baby-boomer, Jewish New York humour is abrasive and endearingly familiar, while at the same time bearing the heart-wrenching stress fractures of a palpable vulnerability. It is this combination of candor, levity and Bob's electric, childlike excitement that gives our film the rich tonal paradoxes that keeps audiences utterly compelled.

We had no idea how extraordinary, exuberant and full of life Bob would really turn out to be in the face of his illness. Bob's energy is not at all what you expect when you think of aging, terminal illness, medical aid-in-dying or the last week of someone's life.

As soon as Bob reached out to our production collective Flood Projects and requested that we film the last week of his life, I knew we had been blessed. After our first hour long phone conversation in January of 2019, it was clear that Bob would be hugely entertaining on screen because he is full of contradictions and a truly remarkable human being.

Bob was adamant about us filming his actual death and including it in our film. He would joke that "It was the best way in the world to guarantee an audience sticking around to the end."

Impact

The MAN ON EARTH production team has partnered with multiple impact organisations across Australia, the U.K. and the U.S., including two of the major dying with dignity organisations in the U.S.

As part of our broader release strategy, we plan on implementing a focused impact campaign for MAN ON EARTH that will include;

- Working with key allies and public figures who act as advocates in this field and in multiple countries to exponentially increase our public and online presence across press, social media and targeted community awareness.
- Key members' screenings in partnership with a range of relevant organisations around the world.
- Extensive community outreach screenings and in person Q&A sessions with the filmmaking team, along with accompanying panel discussions with a broad cross section of potential speakers including; health workers, theologians, philosophers, authors, musicians, artists, journalists, academics and experts in the field.
- A strong, multi-tiered international education release plan that will include study guides being produced, along with accompanying lectures, in person screenings and panel discussions.

Impact Partner Statements

“Man on Earth is a moving and powerful film. As viewers we almost become part of Bob’s extended family – we get to know him as a person and accompany him on his journey through his last weeks living with Parkinsons through to his assisted death. Bob states his profound decision in simple terms: “I feel like I’m ready to go.” His choice restores his autonomy, and as a campaigner for legalising assisted dying in England and Wales, this deeply resonated with me. If we can confront the reality of our own death, particularly if we can exercise choice over the timing and manner of it, we can make the most of the time we have left. Everyone who watches this film will gain a better sense of what matters most to them.”

Carrie Hynds

Board Director of My Death, My Decision (UK)

“I consider this film a compelling intersection of the creative and literal considerations of death, grief, and mourning... We believe there is a wide audience for this film and we look forward to partnering with the producers and distributor of the film to bring the work to cinemas with event screenings, where it will have the most impact on audiences.”

Jessie Williams

CEO, The Groundswell Project (Australia)

“Beautiful, and incredibly compelling.”

Cate Mahan, Death with Dignity (USA)



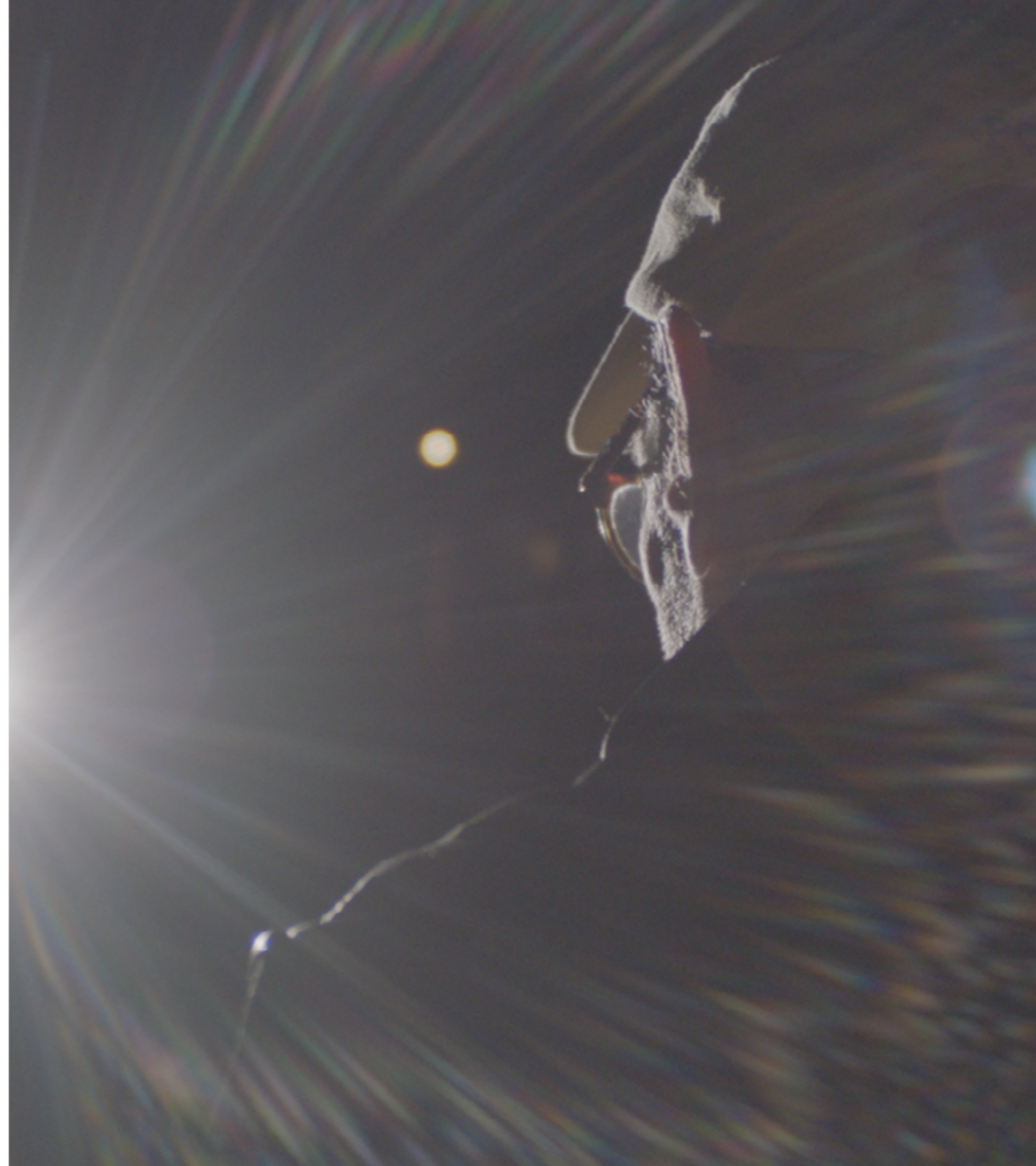
Structure / Style / Cinematic Language

Having previously utilized documentary methodologies in a fictional dramatic context in my feature films HAIL and RUIN, in this film it is very much the inverse- I'm seeking to create a highly authored cinematic world that exists around Bob's life as he counts down the last seven days of his life on Earth.

Shot with an Arri Mini with vintage Cooke Ultra Prime lenses, I wanted the film to look and feel like an etched piece of wintery Americana.

The fundamental tenet championed by Werner Herzog that it is our duty as image makers to create images we haven't seen before is what informs the decision to show Bob at the moment of his death.

Infused with a delicate and craggy comedic tone, all driven by Bob- our charming, flawed guide through his world that is slightly heightened and punctuated with a humour that keeps an audience sensitized to the overarching tragedy of the story.



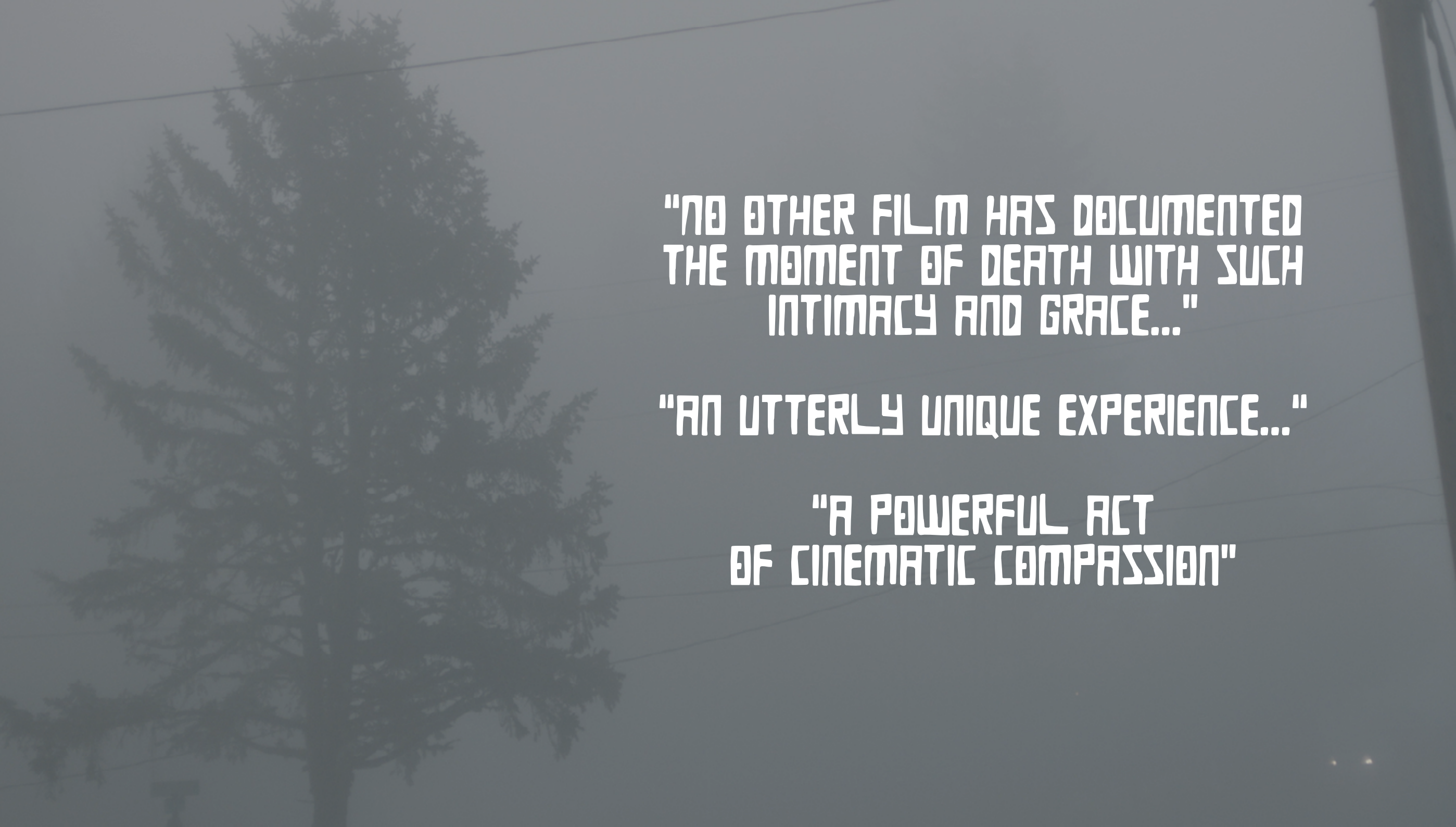
Aside from a judicious use of home videos and photographic archival material from Bob's past, the film has two predominant temporal modes throughout; the real time observational chronology of Bob's last seven days, and a highly intimate, direct to camera testimonial interview shot against a bright, sun drenched window that will function as a series of punctuation marks allowing us to step outside of time and comment on memories and Bob's reflections on life.

This allows us to make tonal hairpin turns, to cycle through a multitude of small details about Bob's life and most importantly to let Bob speak directly to us throughout his story, how to lead a happy life and also what not to do to avoid regrets.

This film is not only about the minutiae of Bob's character but also about the minutiae of time itself. The film is structured not dissimilarly to a road movie; we meet characters one by one with Bob, they stay with us for a while, we get to know how they relate to Bob's life and then Bob says goodbye to them and he moves on.

Told to us by a man who is feeling everything with incandescent intensity, MAN ON EARTH is a film about how your life is transformed when you know the exact moment of your death in advance.

An engrossing, surprisingly funny and deeply entertaining piece of cinematic storytelling, our feature film will inspire powerful conversations around how we face death and how we can lead a richer, more emotionally fulfilled life today.



"NO OTHER FILM HAS DOCUMENTED
THE MOMENT OF DEATH WITH SUCH
INTIMACY AND GRACE..."

"AN UTTERLY UNIQUE EXPERIENCE..."

"A POWERFUL ACT
OF CINEMATIC COMPASSION"



About Flood Projects

One of the most innovative and bold creative voices in Australia, Amiel Courtin-Wilson and the Flood Projects team are constantly seeking new ways to further the language of film and the moving image.

Our collaborators are world class industry leaders that include Academy Award Winners, Sundance Award winners and Kyoto Prize Winners. Our work has screened at the Venice, Cannes, Berlin, New York and Sundance film festivals, and collected many awards, including the AACTA Byron Kennedy Award, the National Portrait Prize and the Special Jury Prize at Venice.

We have exhibited at The Whitney Museum, The Museum of Natural History in New York, National Gallery of Victoria, Museum of Contemporary Art, Museum of Old and New Art, The Barbican, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam and toured extensively across Asia among many others, and have presented special lectures at UCLA, Harvard, Yale and Johns Hopkins University.

Flood Projects also currently has several other documentary and narrative projects in various stages of production including:

UNDERWOOD - a highly cinematic essay documentary exploring love, death and the afterlife in the American South West

AN AMERICAN TIME TRAVELLER - a visually stunning, impressionistic feature length documentary portrait of jazz icon Cecil Taylor

BODY MUSIC: CHARLEMAGNE PALESTINE - a kaleidoscopic documentary film exploring the acclaimed Jewish artist, composer and performer Charlemagne Palestine

TRACES - an epic visual poem shot entirely using thermal imaging that takes audiences on a journey through the protean cycles of life and death

CARNATION - a visceral and thrilling narrative feature film about a transcendent love between two young people on the fringes of Oklahoma City

POLLY AND PETER - a unique, feature length portrait of two Australian artists born at the beginning of the 1950s whose lives became entwined through art and love.

Our work has featured in:

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

FILM COMMENT

The Monthly



FESTIVAL DE CANNES



Artlink

theguardian



Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin

MONA

The New York Times

realtime

SUNDANCE
FILM FESTIVAL



SATURDAY PAPER

MUUMA

museum
boijmans **B** van
beuningen

The Sydney Morning Herald

VARIETY

NY
FF

NGV



la Biennale di Venezia

THE
Hollywood
REPORTER

Monster Children

MIFF
MELBOURNE
INTERNATIONAL
FILM
FESTIVAL

MUBI

THE AGE

WIRE

acmi



INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM

POTTER
MUSEUM
OF ART

AnOther Magazine

TEHRAN TIMES

AUSTRALIAN
CENTRE FOR
THE MOVING
IMAGE

Amiel Courtin-Wilson

Director & Producer

Amiel Courtin-Wilson is one of Australia's most innovative filmmakers whose internationally acclaimed work as both filmmaker and artist spans feature films, documentary, video installation, drawing and photography.

Amiel's feature films include CHASING BUDDHA (Sundance, 2000), BASTARDY (Winner Best Documentary - Sydney Film Festival), HAIL (Venice Film Festival, 2011), RUIN (Winner Special Jury Prize Venice Film Festival, 2013) and THE SILENT EYE (The Whitney Museum) and his shorts and documentaries have screened at Cannes (CICADA, 2009) and museums around the world.

Amiel recently won the Byron Kennedy Award at the 4th AACTA Awards in recognition of his commitment to innovation in Australian Cinema over the last two decades and the Melbourne Cinémathèque screened a retrospective of his films in 2018. Amiel is currently working on a slate of new projects and is passionate about mentoring emerging filmmakers.

Alice Jamieson-Dowd

Producer

Alice Jamieson-Dowd is an Australian independent producer with a background in cultural theory. Her work with acclaimed filmmaker Amiel Courtin-Wilson has taken her to both the MeetMarket and the Arts Talent Market at Sheffield Doc/Fest, as well as IFP film week NY and in 2020 she executive produced the Australian selection of EDEN EDEN EDEN curated by Donatien Grau of the Musee D'Orsay.

Alice's Australia Council funded immersive installation work TRACES, filmed entirely with thermal imaging cameras, is set to premiere in 2023.

As well as producing MAN ON EARTH, Alice is currently in production on the feature project BODY MUSIC, a hybrid documentary about avant-garde New York musician and artist Charlemagne Palestine.

Alice is passionate about cinematic non-fiction and telling intimate stories that push boundaries of form. She is currently developing a multi-platform documentary about funeral rituals around the world.

John Baker

Producer

John Baker is a Los Angeles based producer. His most recent production is LUCE, Julius Onah's critically acclaimed film starring Naomi Watts, Octavia Spencer and Tim Roth premiered at Sundance in 2019. John's production company Calais co-produced Amiel Courtin-Wilson's upcoming CARNATION and other films include Matthew Ross' FRANK & LOLA (Sundance, 2015) starring Michael Shannon and Imogen Poots, Tim Sutton's DARK NIGHT and MEMPHIS (Venice Film Festival, 2013), Lawrence Michael Levine's WILD CANARIES and Tristan Patterson's DRAGONSLAYER. Baker is a graduate of Wesleyan University.

Robert MacKenzie

Sound Designer & Mixer

Acclaimed Academy Award-winning (HACKSAW RIDGE) sound designer Robert Mackenzie has collaborated on Courtin-Wilson's last five features: MAN ON EARTH, CARNATION, RUIN, HAIL and BASTARDY. An Academy Award winner for his recent work on HACKSAW RIDGE, his previous credits also include the acclaimed films THE POWER OF THE DOG, THE NIGHTINGALE, LION, BERLIN SYNDROME, ANIMAL KINGDOM and MARY MAGDALENE, as well as many other Australian and international feature films.

Jacqueline Fitzgerald

Cinematographer

Jacqueline Fitzgerald is a Los Angeles-based, New Zealand-born cinematographer who has worked on a remarkable selection of documentaries, feature films and television series, including TRUE DETECTIVE, THE KING (2019), THE PEANUT BUTTER FALCON (2019). Her instinctive and poetic eye and empathetic ability to work in a range of environments makes her one of New Zealand's most interesting talents. She has recently completed work on the major Apple TV+ series MASTERS OF THE AIR, for directors Cary Fukunaga and Dee Rees.



Peter Sciberras

Editor

Oscar nominated for his recent work on Jane Campion's THE POWER OF THE DOG, Peter Sciberras is one of Australia's most acclaimed film editors, working across film and commercials.

His feature film debut HAIL (dir. Amiel Courtin Wilson) was selected to play in competition at the 2011 Venice International Film Festival. That same year, the short film MEATHEAD (dir. Sam Holst) gained selection in the Cannes Film Festival, and was also awarded the Crystal Bear for Best Short Film at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Sciberras' celebrated feature film collaboration with David Michôd has spanned three films: THE ROVER, which premiered at Cannes, WAR MACHINE, starring Brad Pitt, which premiered on Netflix in 2017, and THE KING, starring Timothée Chalamet and Joel Edgerton, which screened Out of Competition at Venice 2019, subsequently released on Netflix.

Nicolas Becker

Co-Composer

Academy Award winning sound designer & composer Nicolas Becker is a highly acclaimed foley artist, sound designer and composer. His cinema credits include his Oscar-winning work on SOUND OF METAL, DAU, GRAVITY, AMERICAN HONEY, ARRIVAL and SUSPIRIA.

Becker has worked with an astonishing roster of acclaimed filmmakers throughout the world, including Wim Wenders, Chantal Akerman, David Cronenberg, Alain Resnais, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, Roman Polanski, Andrea Arnold, Ilya Khrzhanovsky and Alfonso Cuarón.

He is equally celebrated for his film composition and exhibition sound design for leading French artist Philippe Parreno and his sound art and sound supervision work alongside artists including Sophia Al Maria, Eric Baudelaire, Patti Smith, and Emma Critchley.

Becker recently collaborated with Harvard Sensory Ethnography Lab film-makers-anthropologists Lucien Cataing-Taylor & Véréna Paravel on sound design for their innovative medical imaging documentary DE HUMANI CORPORIS FABRICA (Cannes Directors Fortnight, 2022).

Chris Luscri

Co-Producer

Chris Luscri is a producer & documentary director working across narrative, documentary and multi-platform filmmaking. He produced the short films GREVILLEA (Berlinale, 2020) and REPTILE (MIFF, 2021), as well as co-producing several features with internationally acclaimed production company Flood Projects.

Working with Allison Chhorn, he served as Executive Producer on the hybrid documentary THE PLASTIC HOUSE (NYFF 2020), and the shorts BLIND BODY (Sydney Film Festival, 2021) and MISSING (Prototype, 2021). Chris has recently co-produced Allison's major moving image installation SKIN SHADE NIGHT DAY (ACE Open, 2022) as well as the end of life documentary MAN ON EARTH (Sheffield Doc/Fest, 2022) for leading Australian film-maker Amiel Courtin-Wilson.

Faith Guoga

Associate Producer

Faith Guoga is a Lithuanian/Filipino Australian producer with a background in shorts, television and feature film production, with a Master's of Producing from the prestigious Victorian College of the Arts where she graduated with First Class Honours.

She is drawn to bold stories that invite meaningful conversations and recently produced NEST, a short period gothic psychodrama which premiered locally at the 69th Melbourne International Film Festival as part of the Accelerator Program and internationally at the Sitges Film Festival in Spain, one of the most respected genre film festivals worldwide. She is currently working across the slate as a producer at Flood Projects.

Sophie Hyde

Executive Producer

Sophie Hyde is a founding member of film collective Closer Productions. She lives and works on the lands of the Kaurna people in South Australia.

Her debut feature drama 52 TUESDAYS (director /producer /co-writer) won the Directing Award at Sundance and the Crystal Bear at the Berlin Film Festival. She directed and produced the Australian / Irish co-production ANIMALS starring Holliday Grainger and Alia Shawkat.

She created, produced and directed episodic series F*!#ing Adelaide, as well as the 4 x 1-hour series THE HUNTING (director: Ep 4) which won two Australian Academy Awards and the Australian Writers Guild award for Best Series.

Sophie's feature documentaries include LIFE IN MOVEMENT (producer /co-director), winner of the Australian Documentary Prize, SHUT UP LITTLE MAN! AN AUDIO MISADVENTURE (producer) and SAM KLEMKE'S TIME MACHINE (producer) and IN MY BLOOD IT RUNS (producer).

Michael McMahon

Executive Producer

Michael McMahon is a screen content producer and one of the acclaimed EPs on MAN ON EARTH. Michael was a founder and first Executive Chairman of Matchbox Pictures Pty Ltd. He is Professor, Film and Television at Swinburne University of Technology and teaches at the University of South Australia.

Michael's documentary production and executive producing credits include SADNESS, WILDNESS, the ANATOMY series, NEXT STOP HOLLYWOOD and THE COMING BACK OUT AGAIN BALL. His television drama credits include CALL ME MUM, SAVED, THE SLAP and Series 1 of NOWHERE BOYS. Feature film credits are THE HOME SONG STORIES, LOU, CUT SNAKE and ALI'S WEDDING. He is an executive producer on the Netflix Original series CLICKBAIT. His company Big and Little Films has several projects in development.



A street scene at dusk or dawn. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with a hint of light breaking through near the horizon. In the foreground, several utility poles with power lines stretch across the frame. On the right, a large, dark building is partially visible. The overall mood is somber and atmospheric.

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