

Independent views, made to connect

near/by film

near/by film produces short, midlength and feature films, as well as installations and exhibitions. The focus is on creative documentary and formally exceptional, author-driven fiction, bringing to light underexposed stories and experiences. near/by film provides an environment for collaboration, taking risks and curiosity.

Manon Bovenkerk

Manon Bovenkerk founded near/by film in 2018. As a creative producer she is actively involved in the conceptual and formal development of the projects. Her aim is to support filmmakers using forms of cinema that cross genres and formats, with the objective to develop modes of production that nurture the process of artistic filmmaking.

Her latest short film, *Trágedia* (2025) by Bernardo Zanotta, has its (inter)national premieres at Woche der Kritik and IFFR.

City of Poets (2024) by Sara Rajaei was selected for the world premiere at the 74 Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin in the Berlinale Shorts Competition and won numerous awards since, amongst which a Gouden Kalf for best short documentary. Her previous short film, *In Flow of Words* (2021) directed by Eliane Esther Bots won Best Direction - BONALUMI Engineering at Locarno Film Festival, Best Documentary at Hamptons International Film festival, Best Documentary at Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival and a Gouden Kalf at Netherlands Film Festival.

She is currently developing Sara Rajaei's first fiction film, *Headless Trees*, a co-production with France supported by Netherlands Filmfund and New Dawn. Creative long documentaries by Sabine Groenewegen and Maria Molina Peiró are scheduled for release in the winter of 2025/2026.

Projects near/by film - upcoming and recent releases



City of Poets / Sara Rajaei

Through a collage of personal archive footage and photographs, the history emerges of a semi-utopian, metaphorical city, where all the streets are named after poets. When war begins and new neighbourhoods are built to accommodate the refugees, abrupt and sweeping upheavals lead to mental confusion among the city's residents.

Direction & script: Sara Rajaei **editing:** Nathalie Alonso Casale **sound design:** Milan Gataric **color grading:** Laurent Fluttert **final mix:** Hugo Dijkstal **graphic design:** Atelier Alambic **support:** Netherlands Film Fund, Mondriaan Fund, Municipality Rotterdam, het Cultuurfonds, Vevam Fund

World premiere: 74 Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin, Berlinale Shorts Competition, 2024

Short documentary, 21 mins



Wild Fruits / Bernardo Zanotto

After a period overseas in Antarctic France, Jean Aurand finds refuge as a servant in the house of French philosopher Michel de Montaigne, where a series of fantastical events change the lives of these two men forever.

Direction & script: Bernardo Zanotta **cinematography:** Ville Piipo **sound:** Sergio Gonzalez Cuervo **production design:** Esther van de Pas **festival distribution:** EYE Experimental **support:** Netherlands Film Fund, Amsterdam Fund for the Arts, Vevam Fund **co-producers:** Yann Gonzalez & Flavien Giorda, Venin Films (FR)

Premiere: Festival du Cinéma du Brive, 2024

Short fiction, 35 mins



Call me Agnes / Daniel Donato

Agnes' life revolves around playing badminton with her queer friends and working at a restaurant she set up inside her house with her best friend Rini. When her younger brother Indra arrives, Agnes faces a dilemma. The truth could give her a chance to reconcile with her brother but it seems more difficult to reach than she thought.

Dutch Premiere: Netherlands Film Festival, Gouden Kalf Competition; International premiere: Queer Lisboa, Closing Night Film, 2024

Dutch cinema release: March 2025

Hybrid feature film, 93 mins

Direction: Daniel Donato **script & editing:** Daniel Donato & Lucas Camargo de Barros **camera:** Lamis Al Mohamad **sound design:** Kamila Wójcik **composer:** S'yo Fang **with:** Agnes Geneva, Rini Mak, Gianluca Koeswanto and Fernando Belfiore **Dutch cinema release:** Periscoop Film **support:** Netherlands Film Fund, Municipality The Hague, Amsterdam Fund for the Arts, Fonds ZOZ, Vevam Fund



Unreal Estate / Ksenia Galiaeva

In the seemingly paradisiacal surroundings of their Russian summerhouse, the filmmaker turns her parents - Holocaust and labor camp survivors - into willing actors in their own stories. For over 25 years she has attempted to influence their memory and family history through the power of image and wishful thinking, to create a family myth that could be healing. The summerhouse has become a collection of metaphors where time passes at a stretchable speed - like mythical time where the story continues but is repeating itself at the same time.

Direction: Ksenia Galiaeva **editing:** Katarina Türler **sound design:** Sergio Gonzalez Cuervo **composer:** Joachim Badenhorst **graphic design:** Jan Dallae & Park Woohyuk **support:** Mondriaan Fund, het Cultuurfonds

Premiere: Netherlands Film Festival, Gouden Kalf Competition, 2024

Film installation (40 mins, looped), single screen (57 min), documentary/autofiction

Co-production and distribution support by near/by film



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Projects near/by film - realized



Insieme, Insieme / Bernardo Zanotta

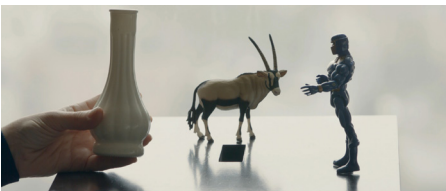
A co-production between Venin Films (FR) and near/by film

An unusual bandit trio spends autumn in a village by Lake Maggiore. In their holiday apartment they create a parallel world, which little reflects their surroundings. As the pressures of the outside world begin to weigh in on them, they kidnap a tourist in order to give their lives a purpose.

World premiere: FIDMarseille 2022, French Competition

Mid length fiction, 37 mins, 2022

Direction & script: Bernardo Zanotta **with:** Jun Ortega, Lydia Giordano Gustavo Jahn, Leandro Lefa **cinematography:** Ville Piipo **sound:** Sergio Gonzalez Cuervo **distribution:** EYE Experimental **co-producers:** Yann Gonzalez & Flavien Giorda, Venin Films (FR)



In Flow of Words / Eliane Esther Bots

Three interpreters working for the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia find themselves in the surreal position of having their own personal memories confronted with conflicting narratives from both sides of the conflict, of perpetrators and victims.

World premiere: 74 Locarno Film Festival, International Competition, winner Pardi di domani Best Direction BONALUMI Engineering

Documentary short, 22 mins, 2021

Direction & script: Eliane Esther Bots **cinematography:** Daniel Donato **sound design:** Sergio Gonzalez Cuervo **executive producer:** The New Yorker Documentary **support:** Stroom Den Haag, Municipality The Hague, Netherlands Film Fund **festival distribution:** Square Eyes **screening selection:** New York FF, Vancouver Int. FF, Hamptons Int. FF (Best Short Documentary), GwangHwaMun Int. Short FF (Special Jury Award), Aguilar FF (Honourable Mention Best Short Film), Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur, Clermont-Ferrand (winner Best Documentary), DocAviv (winner Best Short Film).



The Channel / Eliane Esther Bots

In a dark space with a translation cabin in the center, the interpreters Alma, Besmir, and Nenad talk about their work for the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Video documentation is used to augment their stories, but this performance revolves around the voice, as do the experiences of these essential cogs in the judicial machine.

Premiere: IDFA On Stage 2020
performance/installation, 2020

Commissioned by: IDFA on Stage 2020 **support:** IDFA, Stroom The Hague, Municipality The Hague.



In His Bold Gaze / Bernardo Zanotta

A well-known cannibal drama in which the actors play unfinished characters, often unsure of who they are on and off screen: a closeted gay man, his mother and his lover - caught between the anxiety and pleasure of castration.

Realized
Experimental short, 19 min, 2020

Direction, script & editing: Bernardo Zanotta **cinematography:** Raydrick Feliciano, Bernardo Zanotta & Anna Moreno **sound:** Sergio Gonzalez Cuervo **support:** Amsterdam Fund for the Arts



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Projects near/by film - realized



Premiere: Beautiful Distress House, 2020
Installation, 2020

PUK* System / Floris Schönfeld

PUK* is a chaotically creative, irrational and possibly schizophrenic artificial intelligence. The project creates a visceral and complex portrait of this illusive character by creating a narrative around it. The installation offers an embodied experience of a meeting with PUK*

Direction & artworks: Floris Schönfeld **cinematography:** John Treffer **sound:** Ruben Samama **algorithmic programming:** Misa Skalsis **support:** Amsterdam Fund for the Arts, Mondriaan Fund



Premiere: Netherlands Film Festival 2019
Documentary short, 18 min, 2019

Cloud Forest / Eliane Esther Bots

Five Dutch girls take us on an imaginative journey through the memories and images of their parents' experiences of the war in the former Yugoslavia. It is in the intimacy of darkness, in the shadow, where these events unfold.

Direction, script & editing: Eliane Esther Bots **cinematography:** Herman van den Bosch & Daniel de Oliveira Donato **sound:** Sergio Gonzalez Cuervo **support:** Stroom Den Haag, Netherlands Film Fund **distribution:** EYE Film
Selected screenings: Uppsala ISFF, Document Human Rights Festival Glasgow, Kassel Dokfest, Eastern Neighbours Film Festival, Glasgow International Short Film Festival, Movies that Matter Festival, Go Short IFF, Filmfest Dresden, Open City Documentary FF London, Reykjavik IFF, Valladolid IFF



Exhibition: Electriciteitsfabriek
Exhibition, 2018

Expeditie Eisinga / Jeroen Eisinga

The film work of Jeroen Eisinga is like a search for unknown territory, the success of which depends on the proper preparation and the capacity of the filmmaker to endure physical and mental exhaustion. Focal point of the exhibition was Eisinga's new 60 minutes film work Nightfall.

production & program: Electriciteitsfabriek Den Haag **conceptual, technical and program advice:** near/by film **support:** Stroom Den Haag, Fonds 21, Mondriaan Fonds, Gemeente Den Haag, EYE Film Institute

Projects near/by film - in production



In post-production
Documentary, 80 min, expected release 2024

Consider a Tomato / Marina Sulima

High-tech greenhouses dominate the imagination of the future of agriculture. In that future, between the glass walls, the climate is monitored and controlled to precision and rock-wool replaces soil. A quest to enter a Dutch tomato greenhouse transforms into a trip to Moldova, homeland to many greenhouse workers and to a family cookbook. Can the reading of a manuscript cookbook overlap with the industry of greenhouse tomatoes?

Direction, script & animation: Marina Sulima **additional animation:** Olivia D'Cruz Oliveira **editor:** Albert Elings **composer:** Sanam Tabaseni **final mix:** Fokke van Saane **support:** Wildcard, Netherlands Film Fund

Projects near/by film - in production



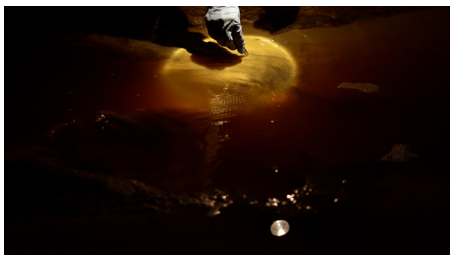
In production

Creative documentary, 90 min

Missing Scenes / Sabine Groenewegen

Forensics, poetry and speculation entwine in this experimental documentary. Driven by an investigation around vanished scenes from a Dutch pre war film set on an Indonesian Rubber plantation, and the actress who disappeared together with the scenes of her fictional character, the search for answers unfolds into an interrogation of omitted maternal ancestry.

Direction & script: Sabine Groenewegen **cinematography:** Juan Palacios **sound design:** Malu Peeters **co-editor:** Diana Toucedo **partners:** EYE Film Institute, Netherlands Institute for Sound & Vision **support:** Netherlands Film Fund, Municipality The Hague, Amsterdam Fund for the Arts



In production

Creative documentary, 90 min

Como todo mortal / Maria Molina Peiró

On a planet in the Solar System, an AI remote robot explores a desert landscape searching for any trace of life. Light years away, or perhaps only a few steps, humans dig up the natural and historical strata of a landscape between the South of Spain and Mars.

Direction & script: Maria Molina Peiró **camera:** Juan Palacios **sound design:** Sergio Gonzalez Cuervo **editing:** Diana Toucedo **composer:** Natalia Dominguez Rangel **vsupport:** Netherlands Film Fund, Amsterdam Fund for the Arts, Fonds21, Film and Audiovisual Arts Institute (ICAA), Eurimages. **co-producer:** Carlota Coloma, 15L Films (SP)

Projects near/by film - in development



In development

Fiction feature, 90 min

Headless Trees / Sara Rajaei

In **Headless Trees**, fear forms the main plot, as a catalyst resulting each story to develop into another, connecting the characters living in different periods of time in unsafe contexts filled with intolerance, submission, and suspicion. In order to deal with their traumas the protagonists escape their actual settings and take refuge into imaginary worlds.

Direction & script: Sara Rajaei **camera and vfx:** Reineir van Brummelen **editor:** Reiner van Brummelen **music:** Milan Gataric **support:** Mondriaan Fund, Netherlands Film Fund through The Imagination **co-producers:** Marc Thelosen, seriousFilm (NL), Hassan Lakdari & Valentine Massinier, Laydbirds Films (FR), Zahra Amir Ebrahimi, Alambic (FR)



In development

Documentary, 90 min

The Listeners / Misho Antadze and Peter Hammer

As the Doomsday Clock shows 90 seconds to midnight, nuclear war becomes ever more likely. Shopkeepers and electricians, students and retirees in remote parts of the globe maintain a network of sensitive monitoring devices that acts as the ears of a network that might be preventing the end of the world.

The Listeners is a poetic, observational film about unlikely civilians who might be preventing the apocalypse, and the invisible legacy of nuclear testing.

Direction: Misho Antadze **script:** Misho Antadze & Peter Hammer **camera:** Roy van Egmond **sound design:** Ted Krotkiewskie **development support:** Netherlands Film Fund **developed within the framework of Eurodoc2022**



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