

WHERE WE BELONG

A film by Jacqueline Zünd

A production of realFilm | Written and directed by Jacqueline Zünd | With Alyssia & Ilaria Pascale, Carleton & Sherazade Gogel, Thomas Kurmann | Director of Photography Nikolai Von Graevenitz
Edited by Gion-Reto Killias | Music Thomas Kuratli | Sound Recordist Marco Teufen | Sound Design Peter Bräker | Re-Recording Mix Jacques Kieffer | Producer Stefan Jung, Jacqueline Zünd
in co-production with SRF, RTS, SRG SSR, With the support of Migros-Kulturprozent, Swissfilms, World Outlook Films

real FILM

MIGROS
kulturprozent

SRF
Schweizer Radio
und Fernsehen

RTS
Radio Télévision
Suisse

SRG SSR

SWISSFILMS

OUTLOOK
FILMS



LOGLINE

Parents split up, a family falls apart. Two separate worlds emerge from what once was considered a unity. In constant transition, children now live between two homes.

WHERE WE BELONG approaches their reality and focuses on how fragile children are, but also how brave, smart and funny they respond to their situation.



*In the beginning I was ashamed because it was the only separation up here.
And that's why we became kind of a mockery. Later, when school camp came
our teacher said we couldn't go.*

Thomas

INTERVIEW WITH JACQUELINE ZÜND

WHERE WE BELONG takes us into the world of children whose parents have separated. What led you to this topic?

My son has two homes. There you have it already: In German there is no plural for the word „home“. In his class, my son was the only kid with separated parents, at least that's what it seemed like. The divorce rate in Switzerland is 50 percent. Apparently it's still cause for shame when the ideal of the happy family collapses – even though we have long known that the nuclear family is the place where our neuroses come from. I was interested in this paradox.

In WHERE WE BELONG you focus exclusively on the children's perspective. The parents, on the other hand, remain largely offscreen. Why did you choose this approach?

When dealing with separations and their consequences, it's usually the adults who do all the talking – they make the decisions, they discuss and they analyze. I was interested in the children's point of view. It was important to me not to portray them as passive victims, but to understand them in their own perception: What is important to them? What hurts them? What can they manage effortlessly? And what seems insurmountable? I wanted to ask them the questions which parents avoid because they're afraid of the answers, or because they want to protect the kids from their own reality. Maybe it's also a matter of underestimating children and their view of the world. Or simply not listening enough.

How would you describe their perception? What is their view of a world that has split in two?

Children see things clearly. They observe acutely and are poetic when they describe their situation. I was impressed by the way they read their parents and feel whether they are doing fine or not. It is incredible how much they care for their parents' well-being and what they are willing to do for that. It touched me how much responsibility they bear. They are always looking for ways to deal with their situation, often with humor - whether intentional or not. Basically, WHERE WE BELONG is a film about resilience.

WHERE WE BELONG gets very close to the children. How did you proceed during the shooting? How was it working with kids?

The artistic process was similar to my earlier films. I searched for scenes and environments that reflect the children's inner worlds. I developed them like scenes for a feature film and captured them in tableaux. This time, however, it was less a matter of staging everyday life than in my earlier films. I offered the children a lot of room to explore, which makes the film more lively and faster. It's also the first time I show interviews on screen. I found it fascinating how much can be read in the children's faces.

I took tremendous care in handling the interviews with the children. I spent a lot of time researching, preparing and consulting with child psychologists. On the first day of shooting

INTERVIEW WITH JACQUELINE ZÜND

I took some wooden figurines and various other aids with me - but I soon realized that speaking with children requires exactly the same thing as speaking with adults. You just have to listen to them and be open.

What role did the parents play?

I had to win their trust first, of course. Letting the children talk freely must have frightened many of them. They were worried that the kids would divulge intimate details or shed a bad light on one or the other of the parents. What makes matters worse is that separated parents often disagree. If one of them thought the film was a good thing, the other might have been against it for that same reason. I had to be patient. But luckily there are exceptions. The mother of the twins in the film impressed me with her attitude. She said: „Now it's our turn to listen“.

The title WHERE WE BELONG evokes a longing for a home. Have these children lost this home or has it just changed? They lose the home they know. Their life becomes restless, with many questions about who will be with whom, and for how long... But if the adults can manage to figure out this themselves, children can adapt and settle in. In the best case, they will simply have two homes. Maybe it doesn't feel like the ideal world of early childhood anymore, but it's a world where they can be certain that relationships last, even things when things end. Their new situation becomes normal for the children.

Just like my son, who was about three years old when he remarked on the way home after an evening with a family we know: „Mummy, it's kind of funny that Ida's dad lives there too.“

That sounds almost harmonious. Where do problems arise then?

During my research, I discovered a small room at Zurich Central Station where separated parents who no longer want to see each other can drop off their children for the other to pick them up. Unfortunately, many adults simply don't manage to push their injuries aside when it comes to their children. There lies a great potential for destruction, which can be very stressful for children. Carleton and Sherazade in the film, for example, they chose to live in a children's home, so as to escape the line of fire.

WHERE WE BELONG is your third film after GOODNIGHT NOBODY and ALMOST THERE. Visually they almost seem like a trilogy, and thematically there are parallels as well. Would you agree?

In their own way, I think all three films are about loneliness and isolation: loneliness in sleeplessness, loneliness in old age, and now the loneliness of the child who - at least temporarily - loses their most important frame of reference. What fascinates me is how people deal with it, and how they develop coping strategies.

I started questioning all the crap my father says about my mother. Like, my mother has this thing going on and that thing. But none of that is true. And I mean none of it. It's all bullshit. 100% lies. Cow dung. Like always, we bought into his lies. And I was, like, a bit lost because I didn't know who I should believe. Which story is true?

Carleton

For me, personally, the worst thing is to be told: choose between your Mum and your Dad. Then you think: Hello? Are you stupid or what? I mean, are you crazy? They're my parents, I don't want to choose between them. I love them both.

Sherazade





When I was younger. I should have had the courage to tell Mum and Dad to stop arguing and reconcile. It's too late now.

Ilaria & Alyssia

BIOGRAPHY & FILMOGRAPHY JACQUELINE ZÜND

Born in Zurich, Switzerland. Studied journalism at the Ringier School of Journalism and film at The London Film-school. Her first feature length documentary GOODNIGHT NOBODY (2010) has been shown at international film festivals and won numerous awards such as Best Newcomer at Visions du Réel and a special mention at DOK Leipzig. Her last film ALMOST THERE (2016) premiered at IDFA Amsterdam and won a Swiss Film Award in 2018.

2019 WHERE WE BELONG

Feature-length documentary

2016 ALMOST THERE

Feature-length documentary

2010 GOODNIGHT NOBODY

Feature-length documentary



FILMOGRAPHY CREATIVE CREW

Cinematography by
NIKOLAI VON GRAEVENITZ

Filmography (Selection):

2018 KRUSO
by Thomas Stuber

2016 ALMOST THERE
by Jacqueline Zünd

2016 SIBERIAN LOVE
by Olga Delane

2014 HEDI SCHNEIDER STECKT FEST
by Sonja Heiss

2011 THE FUTURE
by Miranda July

2010 GOOD NIGHT NOBODY
by Jacqueline Zünd

2007 HOTEL VERY WELCOME
by Sonja Heiss

2003 DER WALD VOR LAUTER
BÄUMEN
by Maren Ade

Edited by
GION-RETO KILLIAS

Filmography (Selection):

2017 ZWIESPALT
by Barbara Kulcsar

2016 ALMOSTTHERE
by Jacqueline Zünd

2015 THE IDEA OF A LAKE
by Milagros Mumenthaler

2012 DIE SCHWARZEN BRÜDER
by Xavier Koller

2010 ABRIR PUERTAS Y VENTANAS
by Milagros Mumenthaler

2010 DAY IS DONE
by Thomas Imbach

2008 PEPPERMINTA
by Pipilotti Rist

2006 DAS FRÄULEIN
by Andrea Staka

Music by
THOMAS KURATLI

Filmography (Selection):

2018 KILLING EVE (S2)
misc. Directors

2017 BLUE MY MIND
by Lisa Brühlmann

2015 UTOPIA
by Joerg Hurschler & Cyrill Daepf

Music:
PYRIT (Solo Project since 2013)
Albums:
„Control“ 2018 / „UFO“ 2015

CREDITS

written and directed by
JACQUELINE ZÜND

with
ALYSSIA AND ILARIA PASCALE
CARLETON AND SHERAZADE GOGEL
THOMAS KURMANN

Cinematography by
NIKOLAI VON GRAEVENITZ

Edited by
GION-RETO KILLIAS

Original Sound
MARCO TEUFEN
BENOIT BARRAUD
RETO STAMM

Produced by
JACQUELINE ZÜND und STEFAN JUNG

Music by
THOMAS KURATLI

Sound Design
PETER BRÄKER

Production Advisor
KARIN KOCH

Artwork
Huber/Sterzinger

Assistant Director
BEATRICE MINGER

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BERLINALE SCREENINGS:

09.2.2019, 13:00, Zoo Palast 2 (Premiere)
11.2.2019, 16:00, CinemaxX 3
13.2.2019, 13:00, HKW
16.2.2019, 09:30, Filmtheater am Friedrichshain