



NACHT SCHICHTEN

night shifts

PRESS KIT

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Synopsis

They are not just awake; they live at night and with the night. *Night Shifts* is the portrait of an alternative world. The film follows the trails of people in Berlin who are invisible during the day, accompanying them on their nocturnal paths through the metropolis, which are marked by pragmatic routine, desires, and dangers.



„IT’S ALWAYS NIGHT,
OR WE WOULDN’T NEED LIGHT.“
(*Thelonious Monk*)

Brief Description

Two masked figures creep through the snow-covered bushes toward the shunted freight cars. Helicopter pilots from the federal police are called into action. They are monitoring the city from above. A security guard on her nightly rounds in the icy cold of winter is feeding a duck that has strayed onto an industrial site. Two young women are riding around Berlin in a bus from the city mission, bringing freezing people to a shelter. A Japanese DJ gets ready to perform; the nights in Berlin have become her second homeland.

A lone sleepless man wanders through the bitter cold night brightened by the moon. There he finds calm and consolation. A homeless man in driving snow at night is searching for a dry place to sleep, protected from the outside world.

Over the course of one night, we meet these people at different times and in different places. Gradually we get to know them and learn why they live at night. Their stories come together into a portrait of an alternative nocturnal world in which people create a new home for themselves.



The Filmmaker's Commentary

Night Shifts shows people in Berlin who live in and with the night and asks about the motives for the shift in their life rhythms. Some people work and live at night by choice, while fate has compelled others to do so; still others use darkness to operate in secret, and some find a new home in it. The film accompanies these people on their paths through the night in order to ascertain the motives and to shed light on the essence of night in today's big cities through this encounter with them.

It was my intention to explore cinematically the tension between a pragmatic routine by which the night is spent or organized and the existential desires and fears that seem to be inevitably evoked. Through lengthy observations and conversations with the people involved, we discover the conflicts and ambiguities but also the promising freedoms that their way of life opens up. The moments in which we can sense despair, fear, and desperation or the struggle against these things reveal how fragile the night's freedoms are.

This fragility results from the tension between freedom and control that I wanted to sound out, since living at night is still suspicious somehow. We can no longer rely on our sense of sight or sense of hearing and hence succumb to deceptions. People do jobs in order to provide security at night, and in the process they use a wide variety of instruments of surveillance to make it possible to control darkness. We tried to find people who have adjust to the night and others who control it.

The film is a declaration of love for the night, yet it is no unspoiled, harmless love, since danger is always an integral component of the night.



Press and Commentary

Night Shifts is in no small measure a film about the hunt.

The night guard is lying in wait for a criminal. Even though no one expects her to do so, even though she is not really paid enough to do it.

A night wanderer goes hunting aimlessly in the nocturnal streets. He observes and is curious to see what he will encounter.

The police scan the city from their helicopter using the most modern night-vision equipment; movements at night are suspicious. The graffiti artists seem like urban poachers, who are inspired by the risk of being chased to leave their traces behind in the city.

The prey is secondary. The real motives for the hunt have always been lying in wait, stalking, and spotting.

The night as a field in which the hunter can become the hunted.

The night as existential struggle in which the homeless man finds a place to sleep, then carefully covers up the traces of his stay before the break of day. The winter night as a life-threatening situation. This contrasts with the night as a place of excess and pleasure and the loneliness of the DJ behind her turntables.

Night Shifts shows people who live in and with the night. The film manages to expose, in unspectacular fashion, deeper traces and archaic connections.

In this film the night is asocial, alone, unbourgeois, unpredictable, and not least of dark beauty.

At the latest when the film shows the fox who is trying to steal a goose, the hubris of the assumption that the city has banished the forces of nature becomes clear.

This cinematic essay is about plunging into the night, gliding beneath the surface, dissolving clear contours, and the layers and stratifications of the night.

(*Christian Frosch*)

In Ivette Löcker's film *Night Shifts*, the lack of depth of field derives from the choice of subject: she accompanies nocturnal people through a wintery Berlin—in images that often depend on low light thresholds. Masked graffiti artists, wandering homeless people, social workers in their bus, police in their helicopter, and a Japanese DJ form the panorama of an alternative world that, in contrast to the familiar world of day, has something wild and uncontrollable about it. Not infrequently, the groups of people behave according to the schema of hunter and prey—which ultimately finds a nice echo in the scene in which a fox tries to steal a goose.

(*Dominik Kamalzadeh, Der Standard / Taz, 9.11.2010*)

Cast *(in order of appearance)*

Matthias Eggert – a forest ranger in Gatow

Gihur Nesnirg

Frank Altpeter, Manfred Heyer, Attila Hillebrandt – Blumberg squadron of the federal police

Marie-Therese Reichenbach and Sandra Schönknecht – winter bus of the Berlin City Mission

Ines Pachur

Mieko Suzuki

Marcel Exner

Dietmar Lawin

also with:

“Basti”

Ms. Blume, Mr. Eckert

Michael Brisewski

Andreas Christ

Thanks to:

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Berliner Stadtmission und Bahnhofsmmission Berlin am Bahnhof Zoologischer Garten

PSD Piepenbrock Sicherheitsdienste

Behala Westhafen



Filmography of Ivette Löcker

Born in Bregenz and raised in St. Michael, Lungau, Austria. Studied Slavic languages (Russian), Eastern European history, and sociology in Vienna, receiving her degree in 1997. Since then she has worked as a researcher, production manager, and director's assistant in various documentary films, including *Pripyat* by Nikolaus Geyrhalter and *Hat Wolff von Amerongen Konkursdelikte begangen?* by Gerhard B. Friedl. Since 2006 she has been directing her own documentary films. Ivette Löcker lives and works in Berlin.

Films

- 2008 Marina and Sasha, Coal Shippers
- 2010 Night Shifts

Crew and Credits

Crew:

Director, Writer: Ivette Löcker

Camera: Frank Amann, bvk

Editing: Michael Palm

Sound and Sound Design: Gailute Mikšyte

Unit Manager: Caroline Kirberg

Production Manager: David Bohun

Producers: Ralph Wieser und Georg Misch

Dramaturgical Consultants: Michael Palm, Colleen Scheepers

Color Grading: Klaus Pamminger

Sound Mixing: Alexander Koller, Synchro Wien

Copying: Listo Film

Funding:

if – Innovative Film Austria (bm:ukk), Land Salzburg Kultur

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Technical Data:

A 2010 | color | 35 mm (XDCAM) | stereo | 97 min.

Festivals:

Premiere: Duisburger Filmwoche, November 1–7, 2010

Diagonale—Festival des österreichischen Films (Graz), March 22–27, 2011

Wisconsin Film Festival (Madison), March 30–April 3, 2011

Achtung Berlin Filmfestival (Berlin), April 13–20, 2011

Contact

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