



# We The Village

A documentary film by **Antonia Traulsen** and **Claire Roggan**

A KOBERSTEIN FILM production in coproduction with NDR  
Funded by nordmedia and Filmförderung Hamburg/Schleswig-Holstein

**89 Min.**

Somewhere, in the middle of the economically underdeveloped region Wendland in Germany, people have decided to found a village. It is supposed to become a model village for Europe's future, for a hundred old, a hundred refugees and a hundred young people. Quickly, the social experiment has become its very own micro cosmos of society. As if under a burning glass hot topics are being discussed in order to find solutions to problems that affect our whole society: the integration of refugees, an aging society, social isolation and the difficulties of people with disabilities, seniors or single parents, the lack of perspective for young people in the provinces...

It is a mammoth project, a bureaucratic hurdle race, an idealized utopia – carried by very special protagonists. The village can become the prototype for a European way of life on the country side, it can, however, also end in an ecological senior residency. Anything can happen.

## Credits

Directors	Antonia Traulsen, Claire Roggan
Idea	Antonia Traulsen
Director of Photography	Claire Roggan
Editor	Robert Handrick
Music	George Kochbeck
Sound	Antonia Traulsen, Dirk Drazewski, Madeline Jost
Executive Producer	Maria Wischnewski
Line Producer	Jens Körner
Production	KOBERSTEIN FILM
Commissioning editor	Timo Großpietsch (NDR)
Funded by	nordmedia Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein (FFHSH)

## Long Synopsis

Right on the outskirts of the small town Hitzacker in Lower Saxony (Germany) people have decided to found a village. A model village for Europe's future, for one hundred elders, one hundred refugees and one hundred young people. The social experiment quickly becomes its own microcosm of society, happening under special conditions in this economically underdeveloped region and with extraordinary commitment from those involved.

An experiment with potential to serve as an example, since over half of Germany counts as rural area – and still only a fifth of the population lives there, with the trend decreasing. Not only does this result in the decay of vacant buildings, but the whole infrastructure, water and waste pipes, streets and train connections, which would lead to the depopulation of entire regions. But how do residents and local companies react when a corn field right in front of their doors becomes a large building-site overnight? When a group of „alternative leftists“ plans on founding a car-free multiculti village and turns their figurative front yards into a parking space? Because life completely without cars is not possible on the countryside after all.

And how do you realize ideas of solidarity and equality in a large group, when the resources of finances, time and physical involvement in construction are distributed unequally? Can this village become a „village for everyone“ when its future inhabitants can't even decide on how much money and working hours each individual is supposed to contribute to make the 15 million euro-project come to life?

Though there is a consensus concerning anti-racism, solidary financing and ecological construction, the individual dreams for the design of their living space still vary a lot.

For almost four years, the film accompanies its protagonists in the process of planning and construction. Especially for the older ones the village is a long sought-after passion project, in which they are willing to invest a lot of time and money – up to the point of burnout.

For young families it is an alternative for the overpriced large cities or the place where they want to raise their children with like-minded people. And then there are the refugees, who after countless informational events with translators still don't see why they should get involved in building a village for as long as their residence status is still uncertain.

It is a mammoth project, a bureaucratic hurdle race, an idealized utopia – carried by very special protagonists. For all kinds of different reasons they see a chance in it – a chance for all of us.

## Directors

**Antonia Traulsen** studied German, history and cultural sciences in Hamburg and Berlin. Since 2014 she realices documentary and image films as freelance producer and director. 2017 she moved to a farm in the German provinces Wendland with her husband and child.

2013 Absent Present – Ein Land. Eine Familie. Ein Konflikt

2021 Wir Alle. Das Dorf.

**Claire Roggan** studied cultural sciences and history in Berlin and Barcelona. Since 2013 she works as freelance filmmaker in Hamburg and Berlin. She won the Gerd-Ruge-scholarship and leads the documentary film section of the Wendland Shorts short film festival.

2013 Absent Present - Ein Land. Eine Familie. Ein Konflikt

2019 O último fecha a porta

2021 Wir Alle. Das Dorf.



## Director Statement

We live in a world of never before seen wealth of which by far no every member of our society profits off and which was built on a system that's neither sustainable nor future-proof. Those well off do not see any pressing reasons for change, whilst the less privileged lack the resources to change the structures for the better.

Our main protagonists experience different levels of privilege but they share a goal: They want to make society more fair, sustainable and fit for the future by founding their very own village. What they envision the village to become is a „piece of lived utopia“ and „playground of diversity“ (wording that didn't end up in the film but will stay with us). Their courage, energy and unshakable conviction impressed us right from the start. With a great amount of open-mindedness and reflexion they spoke about their own intolerance, about fear and feeling overwhelmed. We were there when they got stuck on the smallest of details, misunderstandings and matters of opinion – and oftentimes happy to not have to solve these problems ourselves. At first. While editing, their problems became our's and we had to ask ourselves: How to tell hold-ups and detours, which are part of life? But that are leading away from the main topic or are hard to illustrate?

The village and the film made us realize that the direct way is not always the most successful and that in community and team work many people have to devote a lot of time and energy to not lose track of the goal.

Our film is finished. For the village the jury is still out on whether ideas of justice and solidarity can be realized in everyday life as well. But even if that's not the case, everyone will have learned something for life, which is a whole lot of change on it's own.

## **Production**

KOBERSTEIN FILM was founded by Maria Wischnewski and is a film production company based in Berlin. The company strives to produce films that have an effect and impact on society, in times where the documentary movie has become more important than ever for cinema and television. We believe in a mature and interested audience, as well the necessity of the documentary movie for the cinema. To present socially, politically and culturally valuable content and to bring the audience back to the movie theaters will always be our goal. Many of our topics offer an transmedial approach and a dynamic synergy. Our project partnerships exceed the film industry – we also work together with foundations, theaters, universities and cultural institutions. This all works in a wonderful team, with professional filmmakers, as well as the up-and-coming next generation. Member of the German Producers Alliance.

## **Realized Projects**

### **LIFE ON TAPE – BILDER (M)EINER MUTTER**

A cinema documentary film by Melanie Lischker / In cooperation with WDR/ARTE  
Funded by BKM

### **WE THE VILLAGE**

A cinema documentary film by Antonia Traulsen and Claire Roggan  
In cooperation with NDR. Funded by nordmedia and FFHSH

### **LOST WOMEN ART**

A two-part documentary by Susanne Radelhof  
In cooperation with MDR/ARTE  
Funded by Staatskanzlei Thüringen & Ministry of foreign affairs Germany

### **THE WOMEN OF THE BAUHAUS**

A film by Susanne Radelhof for ARD-theme night / Commissioned by MDR/RBB

### **THE SPRINGER TOWER**

A film by Maria Wischnewski / Commissioned by RBB

### **MEMORIES OF JÜRGEN GOSCH**

A film by Grete Jentzen and Lars Barthel  
An interdisciplinary project in collaboration with the Akademie der Künste,  
the Hochschule für Schauspielkunst Ernst Busch, Deutsches Theater  
and the Goethe-Institut. Funded by Hauptstadtkulturfonds.

### **DAGMAR MANZEL – PORTRAY**

A film by Maria Wischnewski und Josephine Links / Commissioned by BR/MDR/RBB

### **GET ME SOME HAIR!**

A cinema documentary by Lars Barthel / In cooperation with WDR/ARTE  
Funded by BKM

### **CLÄRCHENS BALLHAUS**

A film by Maria Wischnewski / Commissioned by RBB