

Locarno Festival
Official selection

IN PRAISE of NOTHING

AN UNLIKELY FEELGOOD DOCUMENTARY Written and directed by BORIS MITIĆ Narrated by IGGY POP
Brainstormed and filmed by 62 CINEMATOGRAPHERS in 70 COUNTRIES Edited by BORIS MITIĆ
Music by PASCAL COMELADE, THE TIGER LILLIES Sound mix by BRUNO TARRIÈRE, IVAN UZELAC
Produced by BORIS MITIĆ, FABRIZIO POLPETTINI ©DRIBBLING PICTURES, ANTI-ABSURD, LA BÊTE 2017

WWW.NOTHING.EXPOSED



In Praise of Nothing (Slatko od Ništa)

Documentary • Serbia/Croatia/France • dir. Boris Mitić • 78min • 1,85:1 • DCP

LOGLINE

A whistleblowing documentary parable about Nothing, narrated - in simple childish verse - by Iggy Pop.

SYNOPSIS

One day, Nothing runs away from home, tired of being misunderstood.

Follows an epic adventure in which Nothing roams the world like a fallen prophet, denouncing our delusions and admitting its own, all the while trying to persuade us of its natural, necessary and ultimately constructive role.

Each shot, sound, cut or line in the film represents a connotation, manifestation or quirky point of view of Nothing; each twist in the plot - a mirrored slice of our own lives.

Suspension of disbelief guaranteed.

PRODUCED BY

Boris Mitic for Dribbling Pictures (Serbia) & Anti-Absurd (Croatia) and Fabrizio Polpettini for La Bête (France), with support from Film Center Serbia, Croatian Audiovisual Center, Centre national de l'image animee, Procirep-L'Angoa, Creative Europe TV Programming, IDFA Bertha Fund, the Geneva Center for Contemporary Art and Faena Art, in association with ARTE France, RTS-SSR, SVT, YLE, TVC, RTVS, MKTV, RTRS, RTV

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY

Boris Mitić

NARRATED BY

Iggy Pop

MUSIC BY

Pascal Comelade & The Tiger Lillies

CINEMATOGRAPHERS

Sebastian Alfie, David Batty, Nedžad Begovic, Attila Boa, Roman Bondarchuk, Dusan Brkovic, Alicia Cano, Rodolfo Castillo-Morales, Sorin Dragoi, Amlan Dutta, Aleksandr Elkan, Eleftherios Fylaktos, Eduard Georgadze, Michael Glawogger, Sinisa Glogoski, Ed Godsell, Marino Grgurev, Mohammed Hashem, Milos Jacimovic, Olivier Jourdain, Goran Jovic, Jessica Kingdon, Justin Kramer, Niklas Kullstrom, Edmond Laccon, Branko Lazic, Petr Lom, Vitaly Mansky, Zoran Marinovic, Jovana Milanko, Boris Mitic, Lucian Muntean, Chingiz Narynov, Boris Poljak, Maja Rasic, Ranajit Ray, Francesco Scarel, Rui Silveira, Aleksey Solodunov, Andrijana Stojkovic, Dmitriy Stoykov, Katia Suvorova, Oleksandr Techinski, Riho Vastrik, Ana Maria Vijdea, Anna Zaboeva, Teco Wong

FILMING LOCATION

Albania, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, England, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kirghizstan, Lebanon, Macedonia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Scotland, Serbia, Senegal, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE, Ukraine, Uruguay, USA

SCREENER

<https://vimeo.com/227525487>

(ask for password)

EXTRA INFO

[how-to-film-nothing](#)

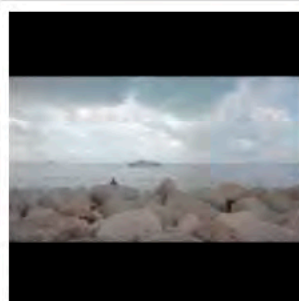
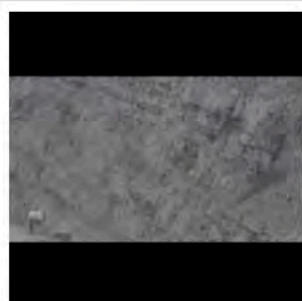
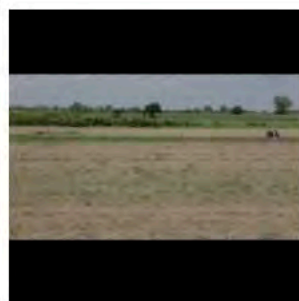
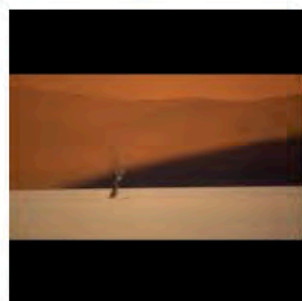
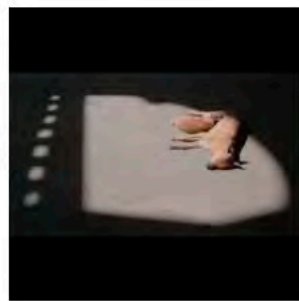
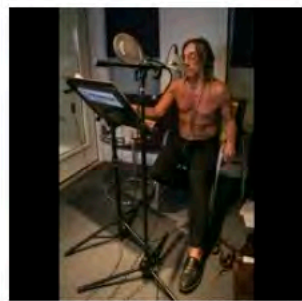
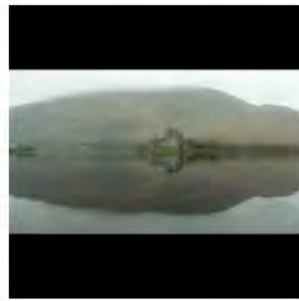
[nothing-script](#)

[nothing-1p](#)

[nothing-info](#)

NEWSLETTER: <http://us10.campaign-archive2.com/home/?u=1f8bc740942a946b9f149cba9&id=f4db2f9bdf>

Production Stills (8)



Boris Mitic – director/writer/producer



Born in 1977 in southern Serbia.

Lived on a few continents, worked for a few years for the most prestigious global media, understood a few things and dedicated the rest of his life to creative parenting, creative football and creative documentaries: a Gypsy Mad Max recycling saga, a claustrophobic tragicomedy of the absurd, a satirical documentary fairy tale, a feelgood parable about Nothing.

3 mid-length docs, 150+ festivals (IDFA, Edinburgh, Abu Dhabi, TIDF, Silverdocs, Mar del Plata, Jerusalem...), 20 broadcasters (ARTE, MDR, SVT, YLE, RAI, Al Jazeera...), 18 awards (Sarajevo, Madrid, Rome, Mexico, Montevideo, Novosibirsk...), 'most pirated docmaker in the Balkans', 'inverted-vérité specialist'.

Plays blitz-chess, writes satirical columns for Playboy and lectures worldwide about atypical documentary filmmaking (Edinburgh, Beirut, Doha, Kolkata, Copenhagen, Moscow, Geneva, Sofia, Sarajevo, Florence, Zagreb, St.Louis, Dhaka...)

Filmography: Pretty Dyana (2003), Unmik Titanik (2004), Goodbye, How Are You? (2009)

www.dribblingpictures.com | www.dribblingpictures.com/academia

Director Statement

Contemporary documentaries have become trapped in the web of good intentions, reduced to either hyperbolized and often manipulated life bites, or to patronizing moralization in the name of some higher or ideal values that don't really exist, or at least not in sustainable quantities.

There are no appropriate discourses either, be they conservative, liberal, catastrophic or idealistic, which could provide much needed epistemological comfort. Hence this quest into Nothing, majestic and scary, imminent and distant, everybody's orphan.

Nothing as a permanent possibility of new beginnings, Nothing as post-ideological deflation, Nothing as a cinematic response to the everything and the anything that we are so confusingly running after.

I personally don't feel any emptiness in life, quite the contrary. I remember my best football moves way back to the early Eighties; I've paid due respect to my parents, to my country, to most friends and to my personal religion; I have adorable kids, a resilient body and a playful mind.

Yet, it is the very conscience of Nothingness that makes our lives even more fulfilled, and provides the most honest ground for assessing our attitudes and achievements, both personal and professional – and one really doesn't need to be a guru, a physicist or a philosopher to get that.

The goal of this film is to make each viewer experience this positive potential of Nothing in his or her own individual way, through pure cinematic pleasure. If this little smile on the corner of your mouth remains until the end of the screening, the mission will be more than accomplished.

I would be most happy to develop this film for another 30 years and complete it at the fine age of 69, but I still don't think that the overall idea would change.

What I want is to do is to make a visual equivalent to the best satirical book ever, Erasmus's 1513 classic "In Praise of Folly", in which Folly goes around the world convincing people that it is smarter to be mad than to be smart. I want to do the same, 500 years later, in these new Dark Ages, with Nothing in the main role.

Production Notes

The Premise

This is a documentary about Nothing. Not about nothing at all or nothing in particular, but about a very particular subject, which is - Nothing.

You've all been through moments when you feel that there's just too much of everything, in both life and cinema, and this idea jumped right out of one of those moments.

It started as joke, a provocation, an intellectual game, but I quickly realized that Nothing is actually a very meaningful, legitimate and important documentary film topic.

Nothing is so present in every aspect of our lives; it quantifies, qualifies and modifies every single thing that we think and do to such an extent that I thought it deserves to be given a voice and a chance to defend itself.

Every taxi driver and every grandmother I have talked to ever since have passionately agreed with me on this; they urged and entitled me to do this film, so here it is.

Anonymous brainstorming

Nothing's narration is illustrated by 'documentary footage of Nothing', shot by dozens of cinematographers from around the world, both Cannes/Sundance/Venice/Berlinale/Camerimage winners, seasoned filmmakers and absolute beginners, basically by anyone who felt like taking up the challenge of filming Nothing in a documentary way.

They worked together on this in a progressive collaborative effort, which started with a basic challenge: Send in 10 documentary shots of Nothing, period. Whatever is Nothing for them – personally, culturally, aesthetically.

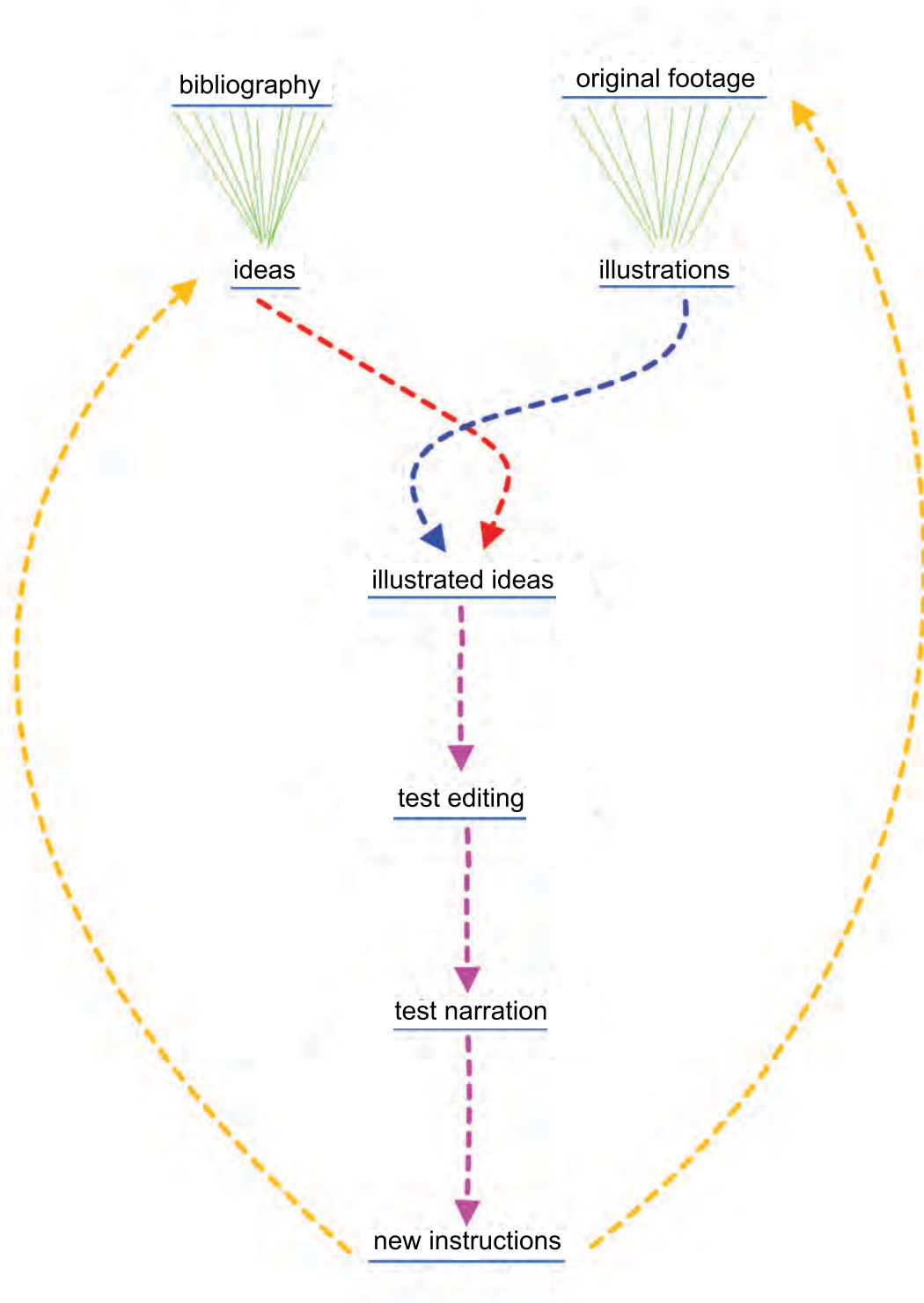
After they sent us their virgin shots, we gave them access to our online brainstorming platform, where they could see and comment on the footage of the others. But the catch is - both the clips and the comments were unsigned, so the discussion was very open, egalitarian and uninhibited. Over time, cinematographers would get increasingly specific instructions, both collective and personal, as per the needs of the rough cut.

This custom-made brainstorming platform is currently restricted to participating cinematographers, but will be opened to the public after the release of the film in the form of an ongoing and keyword-searchable Museum of Nothings.

Sneak preview: www.dribblingpictures.com/nothing-platform USER: 999 PASS: 000

Participating cinematographers: www.dribblingpictures.com/nothing-cinematographers.pdf

WORKFLOW



Creation out of Nothing

The decision to write the script about the most elusive subject in the history of mankind in simple childish verse was utterly unexpected. The director never wrote anything lyrical in his life until faced with a scripwriting deadline, when he spewed out the whole text in one breath, bypassing (or subliminating) 5 years of meticulous research across 20.000 pages of what's probably the most eclectic bibliography ever used in a documentary film. Bedtime children books probably bear a share of the blame, too.

The same 'acceleration' happened in editing. The team was so curious to see whether the recording session with Iggy Pop worked out, that they edited the entire rough cut in one non-stop 4-day session, transcending years of analyzing and keywording the footage.

The Financiers of Nothing

"In Praise of Nothing" received the highest grant ever given to a documentary film in bankrupt Serbia - which was already a clear sign.

The production stretched over 5 years, as if it was waiting for the political moment when the country would finally be allowed to apply for European audiovisual funds, which happened in the spring of 2016. The application was successful and Nothing got bonus monies from Creative Europe TV Programming, the first time a film from the ex-Yugoslav region gets such a grant.

The project is also supported by the French CNC, the Croatian Audiovisual Center, the IDFA Bertha Fund, the Geneva Center for Contemporary Art, Faena Art and 10 European broadcasters.

A doc'n'roll poem

When asked for impressions after narrating the script, Iggy Pop inspiringly stated: "This was like... something from the Renaissance or something. Like Dante or something... Pretty cool."

