

NEW RELEASE



Ulrich Seidl Safari

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 Interview by Felix Hoffmann, Markus Keuschnigg
 with Ulrich Seidl
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Ulrich Seidl's filmic and photographic images relentlessly present us with the world of hunting tourists in Africa.

Africa. In the endless wilderness, where bushbucks, impalas, zebras, gnus, and other animals live by the thousands, they go on vacation: German and Austrian hunting tourists drive through the bush, lie in wait, and stalk their prey. And then they shoot, cry from excitement, and pose in front of their bagged game. *Safari* – Ulrich Seidl's award-winning »vacation film about killing, a film about human nature.« Now in the form of a book about the question of how one can let death and nature, Western colonialism and a repressed »third« world, speak for itself in a neutral way within the frameworks of photographic and filmic images. The photobook *Safari* juxtaposes carefully composed »shots« precipitously wrested from the moment with essays by authors such as Sibylle Berg and Michael Köhlmeier, and an interview by Felix Hoffmann and Markus Keuschnigg with Ulrich Seidl.

Excerpt from Ulrich Seidl in conversation with Felix Hoffmann and Markus Keuschnigg:

FH/MK: Time and again it seems that the protagonists in Safari create closeness, even with one another, through the act of killing. It seems you only really experience what it is to be alive by killing.

US: For me, that was probably the most surprising, perhaps even the most fundamental discovery I made with Safari. People who embrace, who hug, who congratulate one another and kiss each other after shooting an animal. Killing an animal engenders emotional closeness, sentiment and passion. The act of killing appears to be some kind of emotional release.

FH/MK: Like many of your other films, Safari takes on a socially controversial subject matter. Even before the film premiered, there were critical voices on the subject of animal welfare.

US: There were editors and television people, even in the funding phase, who in all seriousness took the view that showing animals being killed is unacceptable for a television audience. It inevitably makes you question the phony and hypocritical world we live in. Where does this insistence on covering things up come from? Censoring things and making them taboo »in the best interests of the audience«? It can't actually be about animal welfare, but more likely stems from fear of the animal rights activists. Animal rights shouldn't mean not showing animals being killed, but rather the other way round: animal rights means, among other things, showing the killing and confronting the viewer with the reality of it.

Ulrich Seidl, born 1952 in Vienna (Austria), is a director, author and producer. Seidl started his career with award-winning documentaries such as *Good News* (1990), *Animal Love* (1995) and *Models* (1998). Seidl's first feature fiction film *Dog Days* (2001) won the Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival in 2001. *Import Export* (2007) was the first film Seidl produced through his own production company, formed in 2003 with his long-term co-author Veronika Franz. It was followed by his prize-winning *Paradise Trilogy* (2012). All three films were premiered in competition in Cannes, Venice and Berlin. The trilogy was followed by *In the Basement* (2014) and *Safari* (2016). 2022 world premiere of the most recent film, *Rimini*, at the 72. International Film Festival Berlin / Berlinale.

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