

LA BELLE FILM *and* RECYCLED TV *present*

Fell In Love With A Girl

a film by Kaleo La Belle

SWITZERLAND 2017 | DCP | 119min | Dolby5.1 | Original Version: English & Swiss German | Subtitled Versions: English, German, French

www.labellefilm.com

PRIX DE
SOLEURE
NOMINATED
2018



Official
Selection
Zurich Film Festival

PRODUCTION | LA BELLE FILM GmbH | Birmensdorferstrasse 51 | 8004 Zurich, Switzerland | info@labellefilm.com | www.labellefilm.com
RECYCLED TV AG | Sandrainstrasse 3 | 3007 Bern, Switzerland | info@rectv.ch | www.rectv.ch

CONTACT | Emma Marxer | LA BELLE FILM GmbH | Birmensdorferstrasse 51 | 8004 Zurich, Switzerland | emma@labellefilm.com | +41 78 790 06 49

LA
BELLE
FILM

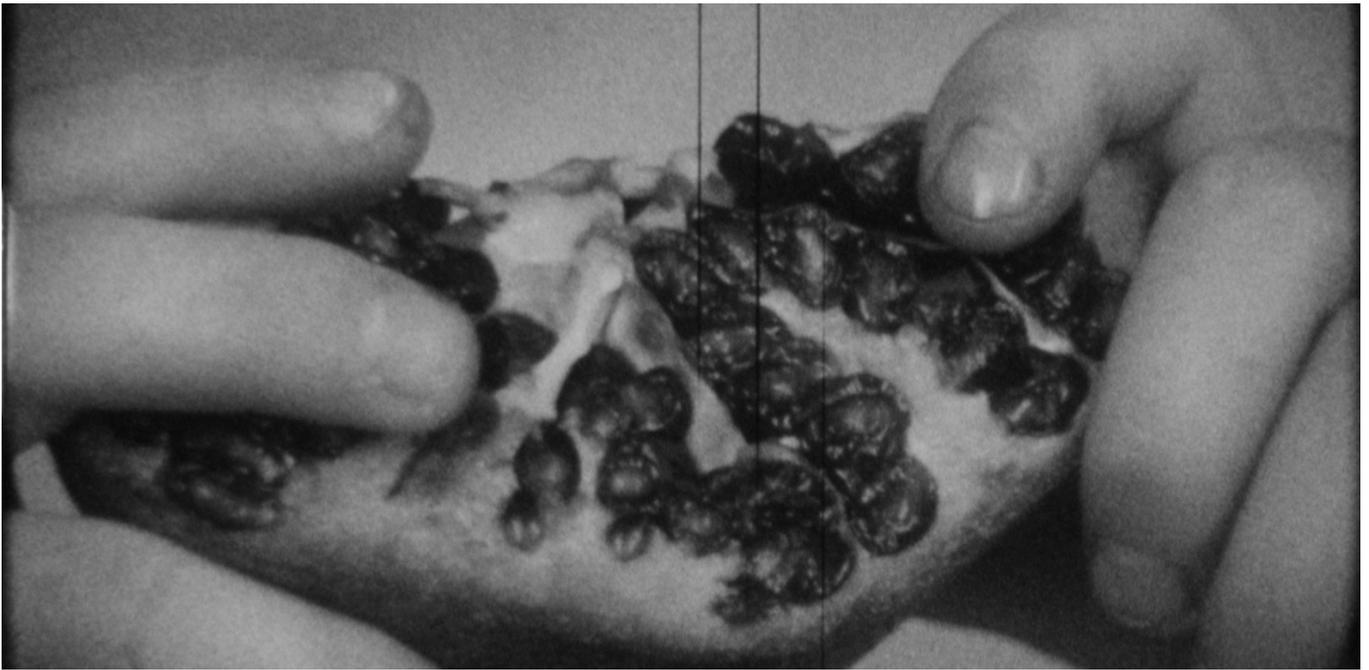
RECTV

co-production supported by



SWISS FILMS

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Logline	3
Short Synopsis	3
Synopsis	4
Director's Statement as <i>Protagonist and Author</i>	5
The Characters	
Emma	6
Karin	6
Alek	7
Ilia	7
Jeanne	7
The Artists	
Yves Netzhammer	8
Ulay & Marina Abramovic	8
The Musician	
Raymond Raposa	9
Narration	
Peter Mettler	9
The Soundtrack	
Raymond Raposa	10
Cory Gray	10
Sufjan Stevens	10
Credits	11
Director Bio Filmography	12
Festivals	13
Production	13
Press	

LOGLINE



A patchwork family makes a new start, but the utopian dream that is meant to hold them together threatens to instead tear them apart.

SHORT SYNOPSIS



A story that begins as a utopian quest to create an alternative life for a patchwork family, becomes a complex look at relationships and the personal needs of 6 individuals struggling to find a common thread in their love for each other.

SYNOPSIS



Filmmaker Kaleo La Belle, whose previous films confront themes of freedom and responsibility in the context of the absent father, revisits the topic of fatherhood as he embarks on a transatlantic journey with his own family in search of new beginnings. Leaving their home in Switzerland, his patchwork family, (himself, his new partner, his ex-wife and their 3 kids) set out to find their footing together, under one roof, in their imagined utopia in Portland, Oregon, USA. Tensions and fragility begin to reveal themselves as the economics of the relocation and everyone's individual needs collide with the vision they had at the outset. A new family concept has to be formed, one they thought impossible. Told from the author's perspective and interwoven with songs of longing by Raymond Raposa (Castanets) with contributions from artists Yves Netzhammer and Ulay & Marina Abramovic, *FELL IN LOVE WITH A GIRL* is an uncompromising treatise on love and practical life, desires and rationality, and what it means to be a family.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT as Protagonist and Author



FELL IN LOVE WITH A GIRL is the chronicle of a slice of time in two love stories: one romantic and one as a father, in the framework of a family's attempt to keep children, parents, and new loves together.

Having grown up alone with my mother, I wonder what motivated my father to leave his son in pursuit of his own freedom? And at what point is personal freedom nothing more than selfishness? Now a separated father myself, I am driven to keep my children with me, as if responsibility could be my ultimate form of rebellion.

Is there a family model for separated parents other than living in two households? How far will one go for love? What does it mean to be a family? What is one willing to sacrifice for one or for the other? These were the questions I was facing in my personal life, questions I deemed to be rich and pertinent for cinema.

I chose to shoot the film primarily myself, using a cameraman in critical moments when I knew I had to be purely a protagonist. It was important to me that the viewer be in the intimacy of the space of the characters. The authenticity of the journey was paramount. To me, a film cannot be personal enough! However, I am not interested in subjecting an audience to some private therapy session or in exploiting the private lives of my protagonists. As a director, in making intimate films and telling personal stories, I find it integral to differentiate between what is personal and what is private, private in my opinion not being for the screen.

The intention of this film was to keep the family's motivations free from the filmmaker's. As a filmmaker, I am interested in personal stories, where we come from, and the choices that form us. A self-ethnographer, I look at the microcosm of my own life journey, my family's story, and our cultural parameters. My work is motivated by framing a story through an ultra subjective lens, while connecting to a larger, universal story. The question of whether to film oneself or someone else is essential to my work. Choosing not to spare myself from my own case study gives weight to my decisions as a director and contour to my characters and myself. If I were prepared to make this same film about someone else's life, why shouldn't I then decide to film my own?

Kaleo La Belle, August 2017

THE CHARACTERS

EMMA



„(moving to Switzerland) I knew what I meant to you. I knew what you meant to me. I felt like I knew what Karin meant to you. I didn't know what you meant to Karin... but my relationship with Karin from the beginning has been very good.“

Emma and Kaleo met as teenagers in Detroit then met again in San Francisco 20 years later and fell in love. Kaleo had 3 children and was recently separated from Karin, their mother, and lived in Lucerne Switzerland. In order for Emma and Kaleo to be together, she chose to cross the ocean to be with him. She never adapted to the small Swiss town, and longed to return with Kaleo to the States.

KARIN



„I think it's also difficult for the children. To have us together in one house. I think that's really a challenge for them. I mean I can handle them quite well if I am alone. If you are there it's really difficult.,“

Karin had always wanted to leave the small Swiss town she had grown up in. When she fell in love with Kaleo, a 23 year old American, she thought he would be her ticket out of Lucerne, but instead he moved there to be with her. Three kids later they separated. After Emma moved to Switzerland to be with Kaleo, Karin suggested they all move to Portland, Oregon together, as a way to have all the kids and parents together. Everyone saw the opportunity for a new beginning.

 THE CHARACTERS

ALEK



„Why do you always drink a beer, is that yummy?“

„If you do something good at our school, then you are going to get a treat. Like a packet full of lollipops.“

„Don't film. Stop. Right now!“

„I brought you roses.“

Alek 12, is excited to leave Switzerland and move to the States. But life there, writing in English and attending public school, is more challenging than he expects. He longs to return to Switzerland.

ILIA



„What would happen if Jeanne, I or Alek would break our leg at that time when we were going to leave (Switzerland)?“

„Kaleo, right you can't be married to two people?“

„Do you have life insurances?“

„I as well just have to find my balance.“

Ilia 9, is sad to leave her friends behind. After a tough start she adapts well to her new life in Portland. When it comes to deciding between here or there, she chooses a life with her new baby brother.

JEANNE



„Kaleo, well, I love you guys and I love Karin. So it's hard to decide.“

„You know I got born in Switzerland, I found a lot of friends in Switzerland, and I'm more used to like Switzerland and how it looks and like my grandma is there and all this stuff I'm used to.“

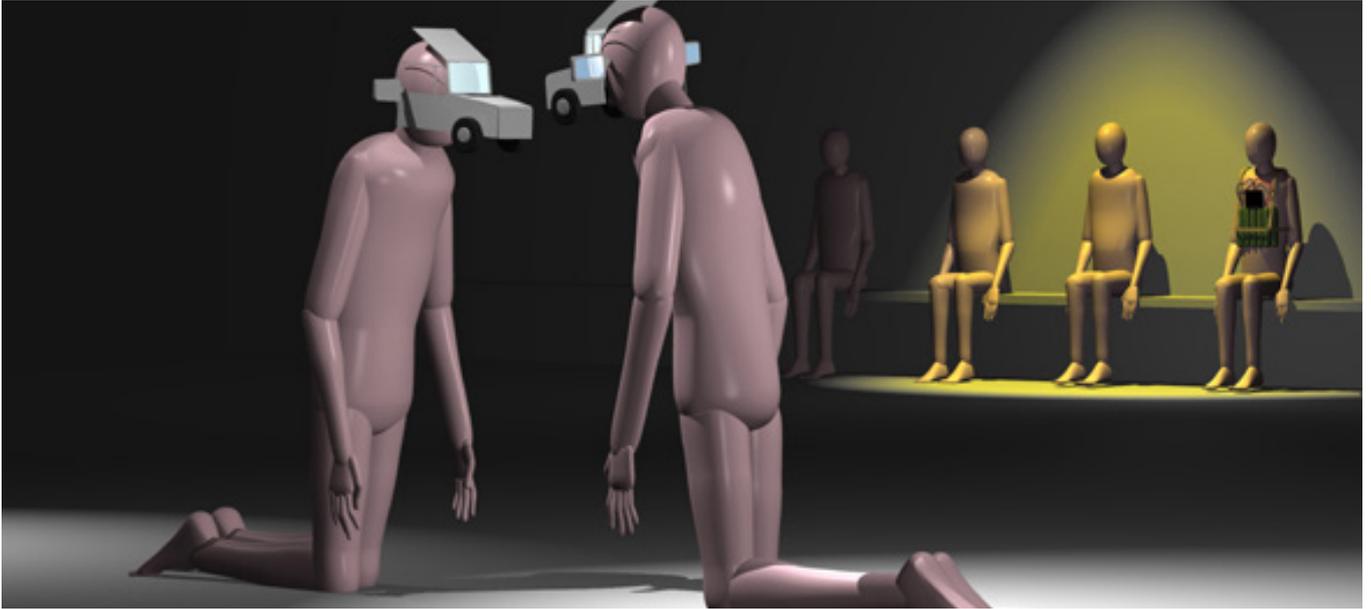
„I wish we could still be opening presents.“

„A little brother? It's gonna be so cute.“

Jeanne 7, is the youngest and the clown. Over the year and the course of the film, she shows her wisdom and is able to articulate what even the adults are unable to.

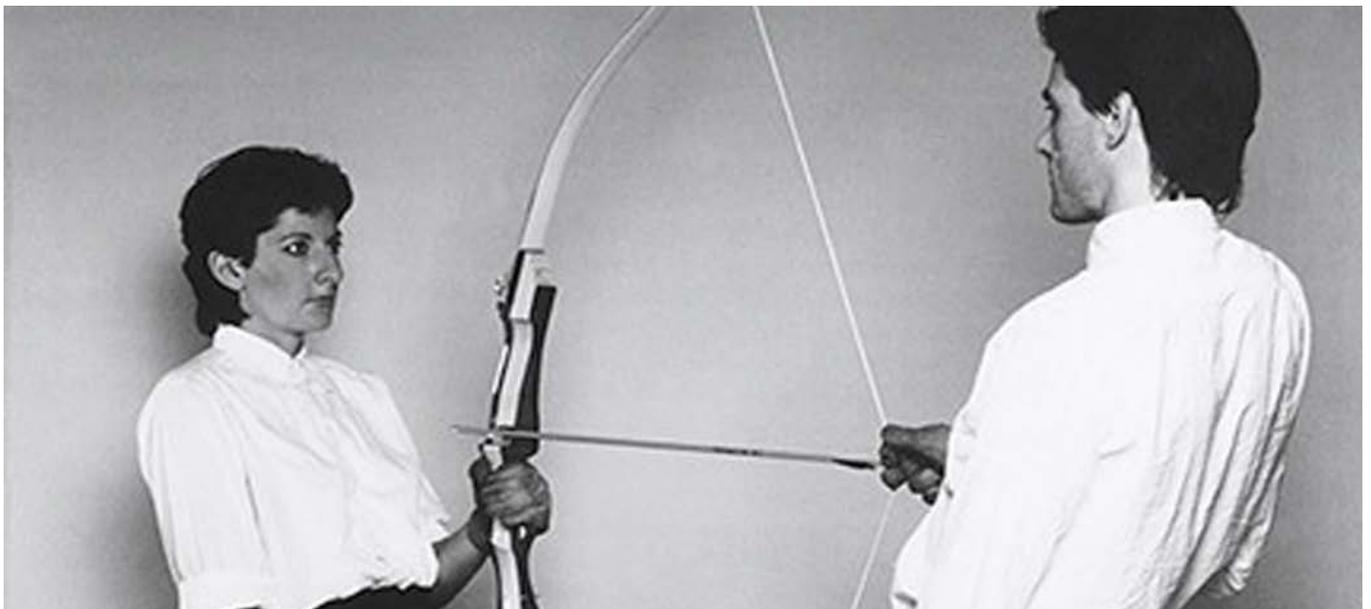
THE ARTISTS

YVES NETZHAMMER



Yves Netzhammer is a Swiss artist whose works and installations revolve around questions of contact and relationships between man, animals, objects and the world at large as well as also being a critique of civilisation. Netzhammer's works have been shown world wide with solo exhibitions including SFMOMA in San Francisco and the Swiss Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

ULAY & MARINA ABRAMOVIC



Marina Abramovic and Ulay (Frank Uwe Laysiepen) started collaborating as artists and living together in 1976. Their separation was marked by the famous Great Wall Walk performance in China, in 1988. Over and over again, they have made themselves the topic of their performances and actions entitled Relation Work, exploring the limits of physical and psychic endurance and specific gender roles.

THE MUSICIAN

RAYMOND RAPOSA (CASTANETS)



SONG TEXT:

We ain't free my love
We are not our masters
The wind outside blows faster
And the drowning and distance
For instance listen
As I cross these miles and
Try to tell you that „I love you“

NARRATOR PETER METTLER



NARRATION TEXT:

I was a kid when I first heard of Pangaea. I imagined then, it was the ocean that had pushed the continents apart, like heavy boats drifting in the tides. And if those currents changed direction they might push them back together as well, making everything one.

Peter Mettler is a Swiss-Canadian film director and cinematographer. He is best known for his unique, intuitive approach to documentary. He has narrated his own features *Picture of Light* (1994), *Gambling, Gods and LSD* (2002), and *The End of Time* (2012) as well as Peter Liechti's film *The Sound of Insects* (2009).

THE SOUNDTRACK

RAYMOND RAPOSA (CASTANETS)



Raymond Raposa records and performs under the name Castanets. Originally from San Diego, California, Raposa tested out of high school at the age of 15 and traveled the U.S. via Greyhound bus for the next four years. This unusual educational experience swamped a musical vision that reflects a disquieting substrata of American life. Raposa is known for his sparse arrangements and his lyrics alone make every song a masterpiece. He

recorded the original score for Kaleo's film „BEYOND THIS PLACE“ (2010) with Sufjan Stevens.

CORY GRAY



Cory Gray is a composer's composer. He's a multi-instrumentalist, an adventurous arranger, a studio wizard, and a compelling producer and engineer. He composes for Film and TV.

SUFJAN STEVENS



Sufjan Stevens is a childhood friend of Kaleo's, and a protagonist in his documentary film „Crooked River“ (2005). Sufjan Stevens is a singer-songwriter currently living in New York City. He mixes autobiography, religious fantasy, and regional history to create folk songs of grand proportions. Sufjan's music has appeared in both television „Weeds“, „Nip/Tuck“ and in the film „Little Miss Sunshine“ and recorded together with

Raymond Raposa the original score for the film „BEYOND THIS PLACE“ (2010) by Kaleo La Belle.

CREDITS



author, director Kaleo La Belle
cinematography Kaleo La Belle
 Simon Weber
narrator Peter Mettler
editor Tania Stöcklin
musical score Raymond Raposa
 Cory Gray
 Sufjan Stevens
contributing artists Ulay & Marina Abramovic
 Yves Netzhammer
sound Reto Stamm
production manager Emma Marxer
sound editor Christof Steinmann, Magnetix, Zürich
sound design & mix Florian Eidenbenz, Magnetix, Zürich
online Uli Müller
grading Peter Guyer
consultants Vadim Jendreyko
 Peter Liechti
commissioning editors Urs Augstburger
 Anita Hugli
 Denise Chervet
producers Kaleo La Belle
 Emma Marxer
 Peter Guyer
 Madeleine Corbat

Director's Bio & Filmography

KALEO LA BELLE



Born in 1973 in Maui, Hawaii. Joint Swiss and American citizenship. 1992-96 Attends University for Electronic Arts, Alfred, New York, art and video department. 1996 BFA. 2002-06 Attends HSLU (Hochschule Luzern, Design & Kunst), video department. He is the director of **CROOKED RIVER**, **BEYOND THIS PLACE** and **FELL IN LOVE WITH A GIRL**. Based in Switzerland, Kaleo La Belle works internationally as an independent director and cinematographer for documentary films.

2017 «**FELL IN LOVE WITH A GIRL**» | Documentary | DCP | 119min

Production: LA BELLE FILM GmbH, Zürich, Recycled TV, Bern

Co-production: SRF - Swiss National Television and Radio

2010 «**BEYOND THIS PLACE**» | Documentary | 35mm | 93min

Production: Docmine AG, Zürich | Mixtvision mbH, München

Co-production: SF SRG SSR idée suisse

Distribution: Frenetic Films (CH) | Nour Films (FR) | LA BELLE FILM (USA)

World Sales: Nour Films (FR)

2005 «**CROOKED RIVER**» | Documentary | DigiBeta | 52 Min.

Production: LA BELLE FILM GmbH | Hochschule Luzern, Design & Kunst (HSLU)

World Sales: La Belle Film GmbH

2001 «**ACHE OF LOVE**» Video Essay | Beta SP | 18 Min.

Co-production: Institute for Electronic Arts, NY

World Sales: La Belle Film GmbH

FESTIVALS (Abridged Selection **BEYOND THIS PLACE**)

2011 Solothurner Filmtage, Nominierung Prix De Soleure, CH

2010 RIDM, International Competition, Montréal, CA

DOK Leipzig, International Programme, Leipzig, DE

São Paulo Int. FF, International Competition, São Paulo, BR

AFI-Silverdocs, International Competition, Silver Springs, US

Krakow Film Festival, International Competition, Krakow, PL

Hot Docs, Official Selection, Toronto, CA

Visions Du Réel, International Competition, Nyon, CH

AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS (**BEYOND THIS PLACE**)

2011 Nomination: „Prix de Soleure“ 46. Solothurner Filmtage, CH

2010 WINNER: SSA/Suissimage „Prix Création“, Visions du Réel, CH

WINNER: „Grand Jury Prize“ 50th Krakow Film Festival, PL

Artists Grant: Canton and city of Lucerne, section Film, CH

AWARDS

Prix de Soleure Nomination 2018 - **53rd Solothurner Filmtage**

FESTIVALS

13th Zurich Film Festival - Focus Competition

53rd Solothurner Filmtage - Prix de Soleure Nomination

CINEMA RELEASE

Switzerland - June 2018. Swiss Distribution: RECYCLED TV / LA BELLE FILM GmbH



**LA
BELLE
FILM**

LA BELLE FILM GmbH was founded by Kaleo La Belle and Emma Marxer in 2010. Based in Zürich Switzerland, its focus is producing personal documentaries for the international arthouse cinema, TV and Festival markets.

LA BELLE FILM's productions include award winning **REWIND FORWARD** (2017 | 24min) by Justin Stoneham, **FELL IN LOVE WITH A GIRL** (2017 | 119min) by Kaleo La Belle, **CROOKED RIVER** (2006 | 52min) by Kaleo La Belle, and N. American distribution of award winning **BEYOND THIS PLACE** (2010 | 93min) by Kaleo La Belle.

PRESS

ZURICH 2017

Fell in Love with a Girl, the frank portrait of a developing family unit

by GIORGIA DEL DON

06/10/2017 - Swiss-US director Kaleo La Belle returns to explore the theme of the family as the ultimate unit of utopian happiness, through both hope and disillusion



In competition in the Focus Switzerland, Germany, Austria section at Zurich Film Festival, *Fell in Love with a Girl* seems to conclude (or at least prolong) a trilogy about fatherhood begun by Kaleo La Belle in 2006 with *Crooked River* and continued four years later with *Beyond this Place*, a road film peddling forwards on a bike looking for the inexistent link between a father (that of the director) and his son.

Winner of the prestigious Grand Prix SSA/Suissimage for best feature film at Visions du Réel, *Beyond this Place* was created by Kaleo La Belle as the child of a utopian era (that of late 60s American counterculture) that deprived many children of solid family roots, while also gifting them unrivalled freedom of thought.

In his most recent film, *Fell in Love with a Girl*, Maui-born Swiss director completely switches perspective. Having become a father himself, Kaleo confronts his own identity as a parent, ex-husband and new lover.

Kaleo travelled to Switzerland due to a romance and subsequently fathered three children there (with Karin, his ex-wife), he now seems to be making the reverse trip with his current partner, Emma, who is originally from the United States, accompanied by his entire family (Karin included!) after deeming it impossible for him to abandon his children, to deprive his children's mother of their presence vice versa. The film weaves between the six members of what is now essentially a community, and the dense tangle of relationships that slowly turns into a deadly trap for an extended family that is still ultimately both juvenile and fragile.

Between projects planned in minute detail in order to allow everyone to find their own place and the harsh reality of the fact, familial harmony inevitably breaks down.

Kaleo La Belle fully embraces the crisis, filming everyone meticulously, up until the point of absolute exasperation, accompanied by a frank voice-over. If, at the beginning of the film, this almost compulsive attitude seems to come from a desire to better understand the needs of each member of the extended family, the film gradually becomes a shield to hide behind to protect oneself from harsh reality and shattered dreams.

If the film's foundation, on which the family relies (respect, an absence of jealousy, sharing), appears to be utopian, we're forced to admit that the humanity that lives inside each member of this improbable tribe consists of a healthy selfishness, instinctual self-preservation and basic needs, and this touches the audience deeply.

The musical interludes (performed by the melancholy Raymond Raposa), which give the film its rhythm and allow everyone to process what progressively becomes an obstacle course, also regularly remind us of the reasons that gave birth to this journey. A necessary warning that allows us to cling to hope until the film's last moments, which in spite of everything, results in a happy ending.

Impregnated with a rare form of poetry, *Fell in Love with a Girl* is a true and intimate study: honest, clumsy and human, focusing on love in comparison to the complexity of a family unit that is as unwieldy as it is eternal. An entirely modern film.

Fell in love with a Girl was produced by La Belle Film GmbH, Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen and Recycled TV AG.

(Translated from Italian)