



ALPENLAND

A FILM BY ROBERT SCHABUS

PRESS KIT

www.alpenland-film.at

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ALPENLAND

LOGLINE

A film about one of the most spectacular landscapes at the heart of Europe and about the people who live there, who have a very special bond with their habitat despite the tough conditions they often face.

SYNOPSIS

The Alps are not only a spectacular landscape at the heart of Europe, but also home to 13 million people in eight countries. The numerous languages and dialects spoken here and the various ways of living reflect the cultural diversity of this unique region. In his feature documentary ALPENLAND, Robert Schabus paints an insightful and sympathetic portrait of this region, travelling to meet a family of mountain farmers in Austria, visiting a small manufacturing company in the village of Premana in Italy and going to famous skiing resorts like Méribel in France or Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Bavaria, Germany. The idyll is bearing the seeds of its own ruin: tourism creates jobs and destroys nature, the traffic cuts through Alpine valleys and the impact of climate change is unmistakable in the Alps. At the same time, there are people for whom defying the harsh vagaries of nature is a centuries-old tradition and they are not willing to abandon their homes.

ALPENLAND is the story of people caught between the two opposite poles of economy and ecology, and who have a deep bond with their living environments despite these difficult conditions.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT by Robert Schabus

I feel privileged to have grown up in an Alpine region. I had an exciting childhood on a farm, despite all the difficulties and social constraints. It's a very powerful landscape, which demands a very particular approach geared to its unique characteristics. But a lot has changed behind this romantic and glorified backdrop, and the question of where these developments are going seems to be more pressing than ever before.

One of the protagonists in ALPENLAND says: "What you can find in the Alps can no longer be found anywhere else. But it's just the remains now." And the leading expert on Alpine research, Werner Bätzing comments: "The existential problems caused by developments in the Alpine regions are not exclusive to the Alps. It's just that due to their topology, these regions reveal the core problems of our modern society sooner, more explicitly and more dramatically than other regions in Europe. The Alps are like a magnifying glass, through which we can observe our society today."

The documentary ALPENLAND focuses on the very personal experiences and circumstances of individuals and families in the Alpine regions. Over a number of years, I got very close to these people and was deeply touched by these encounters. Their strong ties to their homes, to the landscape and also to their works seem to belong to another era. It's the other side of the coin, contrasting with the glorifying images of the tourism industry, which itself is just one part of the machinery leading to increasing population density and soaring housing prices in some Alpine towns. At the same time, villages with similarly fantastic panoramic views are shrinking and with them, infrastructure, jobs and social life.

A fundamental balance has been disturbed. In a number of places, the local population is under more and more pressure, faced with decisions and developments that are completely out of sync with their needs. There are, however, villages and towns where the balance is still more or less in good order.

These personal stories of goatherds and bladesmiths in Italy, migrant tourist workers in Switzerland, a doctor's surgery in France, a forest ranger in Germany, and a family of mountain farmers in Austria are just a fraction of all the possible stories in the Alps.

And at the same time, they already tell all that can be told.



ALPENLAND **(A 2022, 88 min.)**

Director, Script, Editing
Assistant Director
Cinematography
Sound
Dramaturgical advice
Sound Design and Mixing
Grading
Music

Robert Schabus
Marie-Therese Vollmer
Lukas Gnaiger
Bertram Knappitsch
Wolfgang Widerhofer
Andreas Frei
Lukas Lerperger
Lukas Lauermann

Production Manager
Executive Producer
Producers
Production

Antonia Bernkopf
Michael Kitzberger
Michael Kitzberger, Wolfgang Widerhofer, Markus Glaser, Nikolaus Geyrhalter
NGF - Nikolaus Geyrhalter Filmproduktion GmbH

With support of

Österreichisches Filminstitut
ORF Film/Fernsehabskommen
Filmstandort Austria
Filmfonds Wien
Bayerischer Rundfunk
Land Kärnten Kultur / Carinthia Film Commission

QUOTES

Mölltal – Carinthia, Austria



JOSEF PACHER, Farmer

I can do this, because I've only got a few years left. But I wouldn't recommend it to a young person. The alternative would be to give up. It'd probably be a good idea. As sad as that is. The work here is more dangerous than in the valley. But I still prefer being a mountain farmer to being a farmer down in the valley



JULIA AUERNIG, Student

Well, I'll have to take over the farm, because I'm an only child. I'd like to keep it going, I don't want it all to fall apart. I'd like to make sure that alpine farming survives. But it wouldn't make sense the way things are now. I do feel under pressure a bit. But as my dad always puts it: we'll manage somehow. It'll work out somehow.



MARIA PACHER, Farmer

I was born here. Mother was picking potatoes that day and in the evening, she gave birth to me.

Garmisch-Partenkirchen – Bavaria, Germany



AXEL DOERING, Retired forester, Cipra President Germany

The Alps are just so fascinating. What you find in the Alps can't be found anywhere else. But it's just the remains now.

I moved here in the 1970s. Back then, the average yearly temperature was 6.8 degrees. Today it's 8.2 degrees. So, from a climate perspective, this ski resort is now 300 metres lower than back then. No one ever went skiing at an altitude of 400 metres. So, they're trying to keep this going artificially by spending lots of money and interfering with the landscape and the soil.

You can make a rough calculation: One social housing unit pays for a snow cannon.



NICOLE MOJR, Real estate agent

Not many people here have such a nice view of the mountains. And that is also reflected in the price. Due to the current economic situation, people are more skeptical about the stock market. So, they prefer to invest in real estate. In "concrete gold", that is.

Premana - Lombardy, Italy



FAUSTO RIZZI, Knife manufacturer

The people who take up traditional professions, like making knives and scissors, have a deep connection to the village. This connection between family and work is the reason why many of us stay.

It's only a village, but it's where I was born and grew up, where I have my friends, the mountains, the rivers, where I have my relatives and family, my work, my school. So it's nothing, but everything to me. I'll fight till the end to be able to stay here.



PIETRO RIZZI, Knife manufacturer

If it wasn't for the jobs here in Premana, there'd probably be hardly anyone living here.



DAVIDE RIZZI, Knife manufacturer

An important aspect here is the community. Despite the competition, there is a sense of solidarity between the companies. For almost all technical problems we might have in our company, we find the solution here in our village. So, although the company is small and is located in a remote village, we have a lot of options close at hand. This might not be so easy to find in Milan. Let's put it this way: we like the balance we've got here.

Méribel – Trois Vallées, France



BERNADETTE VABRE, Medical assistant

It's important to have a family physician, who knows you from childhood and accompanies you throughout adulthood. But that won't happen anymore in the future. And I think it's a pity. Here in Méribel, we know that we won't be able to find a doctor who would have a surgery every day like we do. So I think the practice will close.



THIERRY VABRE, Physician

No hotels also mean no seasonal workers. The seasonal workers are patients for the doctor. They're customers for the supermarkets. They're skiers for the ski lifts.

And then there's climate change. Skiing might only be possible two months a year, instead of four. What do you live on if you only have work for two months?

Valle Stura – Piemonte, Italy



MARTA FOSSATI, Farmer

What I like about my work is that we're involved in every single step of the process. I'm proud of being a producer. The appearance of the wolves coincided with an enormous decline in prices for our products. There's also been a constant population decline. During certain periods, there are more people here. But then there are so many months when no one is around. This lack of social network, and also the solitude, it can be quite hard to live like that. I saw a lot of people my age trying to make a living here, full of enthusiasm and with good ideas. But they'd be gone after a few years, because it was too tough. In my view, life in the mountains was just too hard on them.



ADRIANO FOSSATI, Farmer

Now nature is reclaiming the land. There's scrubland everywhere. The area where I used to graze my cows and cut hay ten years ago, is now full of blackberry bushes and shrubs. It's basically smothering us and it's our own fault: Everyone left because they couldn't make a living here anymore.

I haven't always been a shepherd and farmer. What I want to make clear is: I prefer a lousy income with my sheep than a good income in a factory. Life is not only about money. It's also about satisfaction. Life is short. It's a passage. Be at peace with yourself and the world.

Zermatt - Wallis, Switzerland



RICARDO FERREIRA, Lift attendant

I'm Portuguese, when I came here, there were about 300 Portuguese people. Now there are about 2,000. Zermatt needs the Portuguese. And Zermatt wouldn't be doing so well without the Portuguese.

When I came to Zermatt and started at this company, the glacier stretched almost to here. Today, the glacier has retreated almost 700 metres. We're covering the glacier because of the temperature and hope that we can at least save the upper part here.



SALOMÉ AZEVEDO, Service employee in bakery

There are Portuguese people working in the town administration, in grocery stores, in offices, in the mountain cable car company, in bakeries... Everywhere. Literally everywhere. And if they all disappeared just one day, you would notice it. People like us, who have a normal income, can't afford a flat in Zermatt. We work a lot. My husband works on a building site and I work in a bakery. But these aren't dream jobs for either of us. I want my children to be able to say one day, "I have my dream job."

BIOGRAPHY ROBERT SCHABUS



Robert Schabus © Johannes Puch

Lives and works in Klagenfurt/Austria.
Born 1971, grew up in Watschig/Carinthia/Austria.
Studied philosophy, education and media communication.
Since 1998 filmmaker with focus on documentaries.

Filmography:

(selected)

ALPENLAND

A 2022, documentary, 88 min

Director, Script, Editing

DEMOCRACY LTD / MIND THE GAP

A 2019, documentary, 88 min

Director, Script, Editing

BAUER UNSER

A 2016, documentary, 92 min

Director, Script



ABOUT NIKOLAUS GEYRHALTER FILMPRODUKTION

Founded by Nikolaus Geyrhalter in 1994 and with Markus Glaser, Michael Kitzberger and Wolfgang Widerhofer as partners since 2003, NGF produces documentaries, feature films and series for cinema and television.

The current productions TALES OF FRANZ, a family film by Johannes Schmid, based on the classic children's book by Christine Nöstlinger; and ALPENLAND by Robert Schabus, a documentary about the upheavals in the European Alps, are about to be released. BREAKING THE ICE, the debut feature film by Clara Stern, will be released in autumn.

NGF Geyrhalterfilm has produced more than 70 documentary feature films and TV documentaries over the past 20 years, winning more than 150 international awards; including the European Film Award for MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE, Marc Bauder, 2014; Grimme Award for OUR DAILY BREAD, Nikolaus Geyrhalter, 2008; IDFA Special Jury Award for OUR DAILY BREAD, 2005, and ELSEWHERE, Nikolaus Geyrhalter, 2001; Duisburg 3sat Documentary Film Award for ABOUT THE YEARS, 2015, Nikolaus Geyrhalter.

Years of collaboration have also resulted in several TV docu-series, such as REISECKER'S TRAVELS, directed by Michael Reisecker, in 58 parts from 2010-2020; currently in post-production is the four-part international architecture series CIVILIZATION by Diego Breit-Lira.

NGF Geyrhalterfilm's feature films celebrated major international premieres: THE ROBBER by Benjamin Heisenberg in the 2010 Berlinale competition, MICHAEL by Markus Schleinzner in the 2011 Cannes competition, MADEMOISELLE PARADIS by Barbara Albert in the 2017 Toronto and San Sebastian competitions, L'ANIMALE by Katharina Mückstein in the 2018 Berlinale Panorama Special. COMING OF AGE by Hiebler/Ertl was a major cinema and TV success in 2012.

World distribution partners such as Playtime/Films Distribution, Films Boutique, Les Films du Losange, Autlook Filmsales (NGF Geyrhalterfilm is a founding member and partner) have sold our films worldwide.



FILMOGRAPHY NIKOLAUS GEYRHALTER FILMPRODUKTION

(selected)

ALPENLAND

A 2022, 88 min., Director: Robert Schabus

GESCHICHTEN VOM FRANZ / TALES OF FRANZ

A/D 2022, 78 min., Director: Johannes Schmid

RETTET DAS DORF / SAVE THE VILLAGE

A 2020, 76 min., Director: Teresa Distelberger

PENISSIMO

A 2020, 52 min., Director: Gabi Schweiger

ROBOLOVE

A 2019, 79 min., Director: Maria Arlamovsky

GEHÖRT, GESEHEN – EIN RADIOFILM / LISTEN TO THE RADIO

A 2019, 90 min., Directors: Jakob Brossmann, David Paede

VIVA LA VULVA

A 2019, 52 min., Director: Gabi Schweiger

ERDE / EARTH

A 2019, 115 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

REISECKERS REISEN / REISECKER'S TRAVELS

A 2010–2020, 58 x 25 min., Director: Michael Reisecker

DIE UNBEUGSAMEN – DREI FRAUEN UND IHR WEG ZUM WAHLRECHT / DEFIANCE. THREE WOMEN AND THE VOTE

A/D 2019, 50 min., Director: Beate Thalberg

DIE BAULICHE MASSNAHME / THE BORDER FENCE

A 2018, 112 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

L'ANIMALE

Fiction, A 2018, 96 min., Director: Katharina Mückstein

DER MANN, DER ZWEIMAL STARB / YOU ONLY DIE TWICE

ISR/A/D 2018, 91 min., Director: Yair Lev

LICHT / MADEMOISELLE PARADIS

Fiction, A/D 2017, 97 min., Director: Barbara Albert

DIE ZUKUNFT IST BESSER ALS IHR RUF / THE FUTURE IS BETTER THAN ITS REPUTATION

A 2017, 85 min., Directors: Teresa Distelberger, Niko Mayr, Gabi Schweiger, Nicole Scherg

DIE KÖNIGIN VON WIEN – ANNA SACHER UND IHR HOTEL / THE QUEEN OF VIENNA – ANNA SACHER AND HER HOTEL

A 2016, 55 min., Director: Beate Thalberg

DAS LEBEN IST KEINE GENERALPROBE / LIFE ISN'T A REHEARSAL

A 2016, 90 min., Director: Nicole Scherg



FUTURE BABY

A 2016, 91 min., Director: Maria Arlamovsky

HOMO SAPIENS

A 2016, 94 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

ALLES UNTER KONTROLLE / CITIZEN B

A 2015, 93 min., Director: Werner Boote

ÜBER DIE JAHRE / OVER THE YEARS

A 2015, 188 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

THE VISIT

DK/A/IRL/FIN/NOR 2015, 83 min., Director: Michael Madsen

MEINE NARBE / MY SCAR

A 52 min., 2014, Director: Mirjam Unger

DAS KIND IN DER SCHACHTEL / THE CHILD IN THE BOX

A 2014, 85 min., Director: Gloria Dürnberger

MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE

D/A 2013, 88 min., Director: Marc Bauder

CERN

A 2013, 75 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

POPULATION BOOM

A 2013, 93 min., Director: Werner Boote

SCHULDEN G.M.B.H. / DEBTS INC.

A 2013, 75 min., Director: Eva Eckert

DIE LUST DER MÄNNER / MEN'S LUST

A 2012, 65 min., Director: Gabi Schweiger

DONAUSPITAL SMZ OST / DANUBE HOSPITAL

A 2012, 75 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

ANFANG 80 / COMING OF AGE

Fiction, A 2011, 90 min., Directors: Sabine Hiebler & Gerhard Ertl

MICHAEL

Fiction, A 2011, 96 min., Director: Markus Schleiner

ABENDLAND

A 2011, 90 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

ALLENTSTEIG

A 2010, 79 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

DIE LUST DER FRAUEN / WOMEN'S LUST

A 2010, 61 min., Director: Gabi Schweiger



DER RÄUBER / THE ROBBER

Fiction, A/D 2009, 96 min., Director: Benjamin Heisenberg

FOOD DESIGN

A 2009, 52 min., Directors: Martin Hablesreiter, Sonja Stummerer

7915 KM

A 2008, 106 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

EINES TAGES, NACHTS... / A WHITE SUBSTANCE

A 2008, 21 min., Director: Maria Arlamovsky

FLIEGER ÜBER AMAZONIEN / FLYERS OVER AMAZONIA

A 2008, 80 min., Director: Herbert Brödl

MEIN HALBES LEBEN / (HALF) THE TIME OF MY LIFE

A 2008, 93 min., Director: Marko Doring

UNSER TÄGLICH BROT / OUR DAILY BREAD

A 2005, 92 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

ÜBER DIE GRENZE / ACROSS THE BORDER

A 2004, 131 min., Directors: P. Łoziński, J. Gogola, P. Kerekes, R. Lakatos, B. Čakič-Veselič

DIE SOUVENIRS DES HERRN X / THE SOUVENIRS OF MR. X

A/D 2004, 98 min., Director: Arash T. Riahi

LAUT UND DEUTLICH / LOUD AND CLEAR

A/D 2002, 67 min., Director: Maria Arlamovsky

ELSEWHERE

A 2001, 240 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

PRIPYAT

A 1999, 100 min., s/w, Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

DAS JAHR NACH DAYTON / THE YEAR AFTER DAYTON

A 1997, 204 min., Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

ANGESCHWEMMT / WASHED ASHORE

A 1994, 86 min., s/w, Director: Nikolaus Geyrhalter

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