

Limburg premiere for award-winning film about the Arab revolutions

On Thursday 16 June at 8pm, Kunstencentrum BELGIE will host the Limburg premiere of PXL-MAD / UHasselt PhD student Peter Snowdon's award-winning documentary about the Arab Spring, The Uprising. Made entirely out of YouTube videos shot by ordinary people as they demanded the fall of their dictatorial regimes, the film has won a string of prizes at international film festivals since its 2013 premiere. The screening will be preceded by a new performance piece devised by Peter Snowdon and French actor Scali Delpeyrat, and will be followed by a debate on the Arab revolutions five years on.

Created by Peter Snowdon as part of his Doctorate in Visual Art at PXL-MAD / UHasselt, *The Uprising* creates an imaginary pan-Arab revolution out of online videos shot and uploaded by the actors of the Arab Spring. Described by found footage guru Craig Baldwin as "a bold, epoch-defining leap forward in doc method", and as "kind of a masterpiece" by veteran indie director Jon Jost, the film won the Opus Bonum award for best world documentary on its debut at the Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival. It has since screened at over 20 festivals on four continents, including Turin, Edinburgh and Bratislava, as well as at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

The evening will begin with the world premiere of a new performance piece, *The Situation is Excellent*. Based on an interview given in 2009 by Julien Coupat, one of the French activists charged with terrorism in the so-called "Tarnac affair", this short play offers a reflection on the reasons behind the wave of revolts that would later sweep Europe in the wake of the Arab Spring, and resonates strongly with the current Nuit Debout protests that started in France and have since spread to other countries, including Belgium. The play will be presented in a semi-staged reading, in which the role of Coupat will be played by the French actor Scali Delpeyrat, with support from Peter Snowdon and Hilde Pexsters.

The programme will conclude with a discussion about the Arab Spring and its heritage both within the region and without. The invited speakers are: Maher Hamoud (Chief editor of the Brussels-based Propaganda Monitor, and former chief editor of the Cairo-based Daily News Egypt), Saraa Saleh (Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, KULeuven) and Mathijs van de Sande (Institute of Philosophy, KULeuven). The discussion will be chaired by Roger Huisman, foreign editor of *Het Belang van Limburg*.

This evening takes place during Ramadan. A traditional breakfast (*iftar*) meal will be served at sunset, immediately following the screening of the film.

Entrance to the event is free, but reservation is required. You can reserve a ticket by sending an email in Dutch or English to upbelgie@fastmail.fm. Doors will open at 7pm.

The Uprising is in Arabic and English, with English and Dutch subtitles. *The Situation is Excellent* will be performed in English, with Dutch supertitles. The debate following the screening will be held in English, with no translation.

On Friday 17 June at 10am, Kunstencentrum BELGIE will host the public defence for Peter Snowdon's doctorate in visual arts, during which he will present his research for the film *The Uprising*. The external jury is composed of the filmmaker Malcolm Le Grice (professor emeritus, University of the Arts, London), the philosopher Dork Zabunyan (professor, Université de Paris VIII), and the sociologist Mohammed Bamyeh (professor, University of Pittsburgh). The internal jury comprises Dr Wendy Morris (Lieven Gevaert Research Centre), Dr Leen Engelen (LUCA School of Arts) and Prof Samah Selim (Rutgers University). The PhD was promoted by Prof Dr Erik Moonen (University of Hasselt) and Dr Sofie Gielis (PXL-MAD), and the jury will be presided by Prof Dr Rob Cuypers, Dean of the Faculty of the Arts and Architecture, University of Hasselt. If you wish to attend the defence, please send an email in English to upbelgie@fastmail.fm in order to reserve a place.

Biographical notes

Peter Snowdon

Peter Snowdon is a filmmaker whose work combines documentary process with experimental form. His short films have screened at the Museum of Modern Art (NYC), the Edinburgh International Film Festival, Documenta Madrid, Ann Arbor Film Festival, Cinema Vérité (Tehran), Experiments in Cinema, Ecrans documentaires, Entrevues and Abandon Normal Devices. His work is distributed by the Collectif Jeune Cinéma (Paris).

Peter holds a Master in Transmedia from Sint Lukas Hogeschool, Brussels, and is currently completing a practice-based PhD in documentary film at PXL-MAD / UHasselt. He teaches filmmaking at the University of the West of Scotland,

He and Scali Delpeyrat have previously collaborated on three short fiction films.

Scali Delpeyrat

Since training as an actor at the Conservatoire national supérieur d'art dramatique, Paris, Scali Delpeyrat he has worked on the stage with directors such as Bernard Sobel, Philippe Adrien, Brigitte Jaques-Wajeman, David Lescot, Jacques Lassalle, Denis Podalydès and Olivier Py, and his roles have included Hamlet and Ivanov.

For French television he was Napoleon in a serialised adaptation of *War and Peace*, and most recently appeared alongside Kad Merad and Niels Arestrup in *Baron Noir*. In the cinema, he has worked with Bruno Podalydès, Laurence Ferreira Barbosa, Jean-Marc Moutout, Pierre Jolivet, Emmanuel Bourdieu, Sofia Coppola, Agnès Jaoui, Schoeller, and Raoul Peck.

He is the author of several plays, and the director of the theatre company, Le bel établissement.