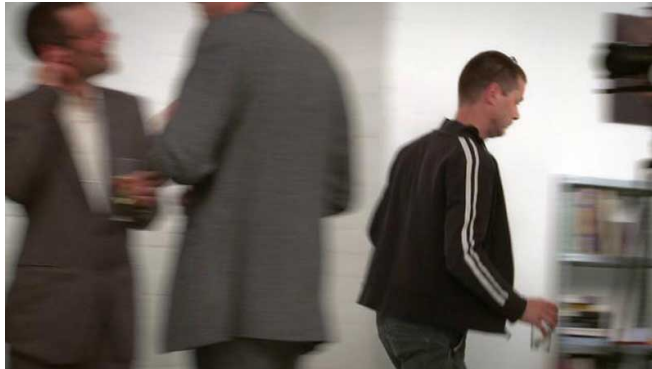


City of dreamers

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Documentary looks at lives of seven expat artists trying to make a living in Berlin

Berlin is portrayed as the city of dreamers in Edward Longmire's *Ich bin creative*, a feature-length documentary film that follows the lives of present-day artists making (or trying to make) a living in the German capital.

It will have its premiere at kino Světozor Monday, March 24, as part of the cinema's continuing Documentary Mondays program. Although set in Berlin, the film is in English and will have Czech subtitles for local audiences.

Ich bin creative

When:

Monday,
March 24, at
8:45 p.m.

Where: Kino
Světozor

Tickets: 90
Kč

Ichbincreative.com

Looking at seven individuals — a poet, three musicians, a spoken-word artist, a visual artist and a filmmaker, all of them expats, and some more successful than others, though only compared with each other — over a

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period of 18 months, the film opens with the pessimistic question whether there is really enough fame to go around for everyone in a city full of creative types, all of whom want some measure of recognition.

As expected, some of them are gratingly pretentious, perhaps even ridiculous, depending on your taste, and in this kind of an anthology film that seeks to cover all of them equally, not everyone is going to be equally interesting. *Ich bin creative* hits its stride when the characters drop the facade, and their vulnerable sides come out, like a musician whose family travels to Berlin to see him perform and just end up shaking their heads and try to convince him to return to the United States.

The question is raised whether these artists are in Berlin because it inspires them or because, as is mentioned every so often, one can live there for cheap while still experiencing a vibrant city life. Some of them let down their guard more than others, and it is these three or four individuals that keep us interested, relax us and make us root for them to succeed.

Others, like a Romanian-born spoken-word artist with half an Australian accent, or an artist-cum-musician who tries to look like Rodriguez, are slightly less compelling, although they also evince rare moments of sincerity that do catch us by surprise.

Longmire, who is originally from the United Kingdom but has spent most of the past 15 years living and traveling abroad, asks the right questions and clearly has his subjects' confidence. However, this project differs from many of his previous films (including his must-see sophomore documentary feature from 2002, which traced his own experiences teaching English as a foreign language in Prague, called *Teaching English in Prague*) as he takes much less of a central role in the proceedings, even though he is also working in Berlin as a creative for an extended period of time.

The feeling of isolation is always in the background — even as we see many of the artists having a great time plying their trade — and underscored by the characters never meeting each other, thus giving the impression of being somewhat disconnected throughout the film.

Ich bin creative isn't only for those interested in how creative individuals make a living, or who wish to get a clearer sense of the bohemian life in Berlin: It shows a city that beats to the rhythm of its diverse but mostly laid-back inhabitants, and while there clearly isn't fame in store for all of them, this may simply be a great place to be, even without success.

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