



Photo by John Appel

# ONCE THE DUST SETTLES

a film by John Appel

cinema cine  
delicatessen

## SYNOPSIS (200 words)

Amatrice, Chernobyl, Aleppo: three iconic disaster sites from modern history. Amatrice was destroyed in 2016 by an earthquake. Chernobyl witnessed one of the worst nuclear disasters in history in 1986 and in the city of Aleppo people are starting to rebuild the historic centre which was reduced to ruins by the war that broke out in 2011.

Constructed as a cinematic triptych, *Once the Dust Settles* shows what happens when the dust has settled and the camera crews have left for new catastrophes. The film centers around the evocative stories of survivors who are now trying to rebuild their lives. Their stories are set against the background of the emerging disaster tourism at poignant locations.

Alexei Breus, the only operator from the nuclear plant's control room to survive, now works as a tour guide at the amusement park which Chernobyl has become. Gina Zodian, one of Syria's best tour guides, who before the war used to show tourists around the archeological monuments, now waits in Aleppo's ruined centre for the first tourists to return. And Amatrice's pastor and former tour guide Luigi Aquilini now has to face the fact that his town will never be rebuilt.

A film about dealing with disaster and mental reconstruction.



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## SYNOPSIS (108 words)

Three places destroyed by a major disaster: Amatrice in central Italy by an earthquake, Chernobyl in Ukraine by a nuclear catastrophe and Aleppo by war. *Once the Dust Settles* shows what happens when the dust has settled and the camera crews have left. The film centers around the evocative stories of survivors who are trying to rebuild their lives, against the background of emerging disaster tourism in poignant locations. A cinematic triptych about dealing with disaster and mental reconstruction: the only survivor from the control room at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, one of the best tour guides in Syria, and the pastor of Amatrice, once a tourist town, now destroyed beyond recognition.



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## CREDITS:

Cobos Films presents in co-production with 

### ONCE THE DUST SETTLES

a film by John Appel

with

Luigi Aquilini  
Aleksej Breus  
Sergej Myrny  
Abdel Hay Kaddour  
Gina Zodian  
Maggie Zodian  
Abdullah Dahdo

written and directed by  
John Appel

produced by  
Carmen Cobos and Kees Rijninks

photography  
Erik van Empel nsc

sound  
Mark Wessner  
Mike van der Sluijs

editing  
Mario Steenberghe nce  
John Appel

sound design  
Hugo Dijkstal

research and location manager  
Ralf Groothuizen  
Sasha Ourikh  
Daisy Mohr  
Joseph Bashoura  
Fouad al Ali  
Lama Kayali

post-production supervisor  
Rob J Maas

technical facilities  
Filmmore

grading  
Petro van Leeuwen

commissioning editor vpro  
Barbara Truyen

this film was made possible with the support of



## CV JOHN APPEL



Photo by Tamar Appel

## JOHN APPEL

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### curriculum vitae

#### *Education*

Gymnasium B

Classical Literature, Univ. of Amsterdam

Film Academy (camera & documentary)

#### *Films*

- 2019    **ONCE THE DUST** (85 min., HD) VPRO 2019  
film in 3 chapters about iconic disaster areas of modern history: Amatrice (hit by an earthquake), Chernobyl (nuclear disaster) and Aleppo (war). The film shows how people try to cope with life once the dust has settled, in a decor of touristic interest. Produced by: Cobos Films Cinema Release Febr 2020  
Festivals: Official Masters selection IDFA 2019
- 2018    **OUTSPOKENLY DUTCH** (82 min., HD) Human 2019  
portrait of The Netherlands by public speeches on weddings, funerals, political meetings, protest gatherings etc.  
Festivals: NFF 2018, Cinema Release Oct. 2018  
*Nomination: NFF Film Critics Award*

- 2015 **ERITREA STARS** (55 min., HD), VPRO 2015  
documentary about the national footballteam of Eritrea, that fled it's country during a tournament in Uganda (2012). After 1½ year of wandering and hiding the complete team of 17 players suddenly appears in Gorinchem, where they get a permanent residence permit.  
Produced by: VPRO  
Festivals: Official selection IDFA 2015
- THE MAGIC OF EDITING** (55 min., HD), NTR 2015  
Five docu-editors about the main issues in the editing room:  
the art of lying the truth, manipulation versus integrity.  
Produced by: Rocco Film  
Festivals: NFF 2015, Zagrebdox 2016
- ZORO FEIGL** (15 min., HD) AVRO 2015  
Portrait van of artist Zoro Feigl  
In the series 'Dutch Masters of the 21<sup>e</sup> Century'  
Produced by: Interakt  
Première: EYE-Instituut, Amsterdam
- ATS/THE 4 JERSEY'S OF ADRIE VAN DER POEL** (30 min., HD) VPRO 2015  
Portrait of former world champion cyclocross Adrie van der Poel.  
Produced by: VPRO Television
- 2014 **CLEMENS & HIS SUPER EAGLES** (35 min, HD)  
The rise and fall of coach Clemens Westerhof and the national football team of Nigeria in the '90.  
Produced by: VPRO/Andere Tijden Sport
- 2013 **NO SKY NO HOPE** (15 min., HD)  
portrait of visual artist Jeroen Eisinga  
In the series 'Dutch Masters of the 21<sup>e</sup> Century'  
Produced by: Interakt
- 2012 **WRONG TIME, WRONG PLACE** (82 min.) Human 2013  
documentary about the role of chance and destiny based on the tragic events in Norway on 22/7  
*Openingfilm IDFA 2012; Official Selection a.o.: Hot Docs, Full Frame, DOXA, Zagrebdox, Tromsø, Thessaloniki, Munich, Silverdocs, Karlovy Vary, Melbourne*  
*Awards: Onion Award Best Film Int. Competition, Makedox 2013; Moral Approach Award, Maszkedox 2013*  
*Nominations: Estonian People's Award, Parnu Int. Filmfestival 2013; Grand Jury Award, Open Cities Doc. Fest. London 2013*  
Produced by: Cobos Films
- WASTE LAND** (60 min., video) Human 2012  
documentary about the kidnapping in '77 of a primary school in the northern village Bovensmilde.  
*Competition Dutch Filmfestival 2012*  
Produced by: IDTV
- 2011 **8 SECONDS** (30 min., video) VPRO 2011  
portrait of former cyclist Peter Winnen , 30 years after his glorious victory in the Alpe d'Huez-stage in the Tour de France of '81.  
Produced by: VPRO Television
- I, JAN VAN MUNSTER** (15 min. video) Kunsthal, Rotterdam 2011  
portrait of artist Jan van Munster as 'sculptor of energy.'  
In the series 'Dutch Masters of the 21th Century- Produced by: Interakt

- FAGERNES REVISITED** (30 min., video) VPRO 2011  
 portrait of former world champion speed skating Henk van der Grift , 50 years after his glorious and unexpected victory. Back to the starting point: the little village of Fagernes in Norway.  
 Produced by: VPRO Television
- 2010 **IN THE BEGINNING** (50 min. video) Human 2010  
 portrait of Prof. Dr. Ellen van Wolde, Old Testament Professor, and her innovative interpretation of Genesis 1.  
*Competition Dutch Filmfestival 2010*  
 Produced by: De Familie
- PHOENIX'S ASHES** (53 min. HD) Human 2010  
 film about lost memories after the burning down of a storage building.  
*Kriterion 2010, Competition Dutch Filmfestival 2010*  
 Produced by: Appel&Honigmann
- 2009 **THE PLAYER / De Speler** (85 min./35mm) NPS 2010  
 personal documentary about gambling, based on memories of the filmmaker's father  
*IDFA 2009 (Feature Length Competition), Dioraphte IDFA Award Best Dutch Documentary 2009, Grand Prize for Best Documentary 2010 at Fimforum Zadar (Croatia), Filmfund Artistic Succes Award 2010, Grand Award Docudays Kiev (Ukraine) 2011*  
*Nomination VPRO IDFA Award Best Feature Length Documentary 2009, Nomination Magnolia Award China 2010, Best Feature Length Documentary Dutch Filmfestival 2010*  
 Official Selection(a.o.) : Hotdocs, Full Frame, It's all true, Karlovy Vary, Docaviv, London, Moscow, Lisboa, Istanbul, Krakow, MIDA China  
 Produced by: Cobos Films
- 2007 **TRAINER** (50 min./video) HOS 2007  
 portrait of a dedicated young Turkish soccer coach and his pupils  
 Produced by: Pieter van Huystee Films
- 2005 **THERE GOES MY HEART** (60 min./video) VPRO 2005  
 portrait of the world's first old peoples house for drug addicts  
*IDFA 2005 other festivals Kiev, Kaapstad, Krakow, Rome, Sheffield (2006)*  
*Top Ten Non-Fiction Köln (2006), Apordoc Lisboa (2009)*  
 Produced by: Appel&Honigmann
- THE LAST HONOUR** (52 min./video) IKON 2005  
 documentary about funerals without family  
*Competition Dutch Filmfestival 2006*  
 Produced by: Appel&Honigmann
- 2004 **VOICE OF THE NETHERLANDS** (45 min./video) HOS 2004  
 portrait of the Netherlands by speeches  
*Dutch Filmfestival 2004*  
 Produced by: Appel&Honigmann
- 2004 **ALWAYS IN MY HEART/ Immer im Herzen** (25 min./video) AVRO 2004  
 documentary love story of a German WW 2- soldier and a Dutch girl  
 Produced by: Appel&Honigmann

- 2003 **SENEGAL SURPLACE** (50 min./video) IKON 2003  
roadmovie about the cycle tour of Senegal  
*Competition Dutch Filmfestival 2003*  
*Nomination: Herman Kuiphof Award for Best Dutch Sports Film 2012*  
Produced by: Appel&Honigmann
- 2003 **THE LAST VICTORY /** (88 min./35mm) IKON 2004  
documentary about the world famous horserace of Siena  
*IDFA 2003 (Joris Ivens Competition), Golden Calf 'Best Feature Documentary', 'Best Camera' and 'Best Editing' 2004, 'Best Director Award' Infinity Festival Alba 2004, Grand Prize for Best Film Ismailia International Filmfestival Egypte 2004, Grand Prize for Best Film Krasnagorski International Filmfestival Moskou 2004, nomination European Academy Award en Prix Arte 2004; in competition in festivals of Karlovy Vary, Toronto, Pusan*  
Produced by: Cobos Films; Cinema release USA, Great-Brittain, the Netherlands, Poland 2004, Germany 2006
- 2002 **CROWN PRINCE ON WIERINGEN** (50 min./16mm) VPRO 2002  
documentary about the exile (1918-1923) of German crown prince Friedrich Wilhelm on the former island of Wieringen  
Produced by: Appel&Honigmann
- NAOMI & HER MOTHER** (25 min./16mm) VPRO 2003  
portrait of an 11- year old girl and her manic-depressive mother  
*IDFA 2003 (Kids & Docs), Hot Docs 2004*  
Produced by: Lemming Film
- 2001 **GREETINGS FROM THE 'AFSLUITDIJK'** (30 min./16mm) 2001  
filmportrait based on postcards *Dutch Filmfestival 2001* Produced by: Appel&Honigmann
- ILJA REPIN, PAINTER OF THE RUSSIAN SOUL** (50 min./16mm) AVRO 2002 documentary  
about 19th century Russian painter Ilya Repin  
*Dutch Filmfestival 2002, Nomination Golden Statue 2002*  
Produced by: IDTV
- 2000 **100 YEARS AJAX** (70 min./video) NOS 2000  
documentary about the history of soccer club Ajax at its 100th anniversary  
Produced by: Zeppers Films
- THE PROMISED LAND** (50 min./16mm) IKON 2001  
documentary about a man found dead in his appartement after five weeks  
*IDFA 2000, winner Premio Speciale Milaan 2001*  
Produced by: FVS Paul de Bont (cinema release 2000)
- 1999 **TRENCH OF DEATH** (70 min./16 mm) VPRO 1999  
documentary about the five last surviving soldiers of a WW 1-trench in Belgium  
*Competition Dutch Filmfestival 2000*  
Produced by: VPRO Television
- 1999 **ANDRÉ HAZES – SHE BELIEVES IN ME** (90 min./35 mm) NPS 2001  
portrait of the most popular Dutch singer André Hazes  
*Opening Film IDFA 1999, winner Joris Ivens Award 1999, nomination Golden Calf 2000, nomination Golden Statue 2001*  
Produced by: Zeppers Films (cinema release 1999)



- 1998 **THE THIRD CROSS** (30 min./16 mm) VPRO 1998  
 portrait of a skater during the unique '11 Cities Tour' in the Netherlands  
 Produced by: VPRO Television
- OUTLAWED** (50 min./video) AVRO 1998  
 documentary about the worldwide discrimination of gays  
*Amnesty International Filmfestival 1998*  
 Produced by : TV Dits
- 1997 **VREDENHOF** (60 min./16 mm) VPRO 1997  
 documentary about the daily visitors of a cemetery in Amsterdam  
 Produced by: VPRO Television
- LITTLE LITHUANIA** (50 min./16 mm) VPRO 1997  
 documentary about Lithuanian exiles living on a manor in Engeland  
 Produced by: VPRO Television
- 1996 **BEYOND THE DREAM/PETER WINNEN** (25 min./video) AVRO 1996  
 portrait of a former professional cyclist as an artist  
 Produced by: Zeppers Films
- 1995 **FAREWELL TO THE SHIPPER'S QUAY** (67 min./16 mm) VPRO 1996  
 documentary about the demolition of a new housing estate in Almere,  
 the 1st in the very young history of this new city  
 Produced by: VPRO Television
- 1993 **JOHNNY MEIJER** (60 min./16 mm) TROS 1994  
 documentary about Dutch accordion virtuoso Johnny Meijer  
*2nd place Audience Award IDFA 1993, Nominated for 'Golden Calf Best Documentary' 1993*  
 Produced by: Jura Films (cinema release 1994)
- 1991 **THE SHIPYARD** (35 min./16 mm) VPRO 1992  
 documentary about former workers of the NDSM-shipyards in Amsterdam  
 Produced by: VPRO Television
- 1988 **ON YOUR EYES** (120 min./video) KRO 1988-1990  
 14 short documentaries  
 Produced by: Teorema Films
- 1987 **RADIO DANIËLLE** (35 min./16 mm) VPRO 1988  
 documentary about an illegal radio station  
 Graduation Film Academy  
*Canon City Award Dutch Filmfestival 1987 (Best Graduation Film)*

*Other activities:*

Photographer on more than 40 documentaries;  
 Guest Lecturer at the Dutch Film Academy; Guest Professor at the University of Cluj (Rumania);  
 Jury Member of IDFA, International Filmfestival Karlovy Vary, Vision du Réel, Guangzhou Mentor at CloseUp,  
 Programme for Mediterranean filmmakers (since 2006); Mentor at the Aristoteles Workshop in Rumania (2010-  
 '17); Masterclasses at all over the world.  
 Delegate Commissioning Editor for the Humanistic Broadcast (since 2010)  
 Professional in Residence, Media and Culture Studies, University of Amsterdam 2009  
 Filmmaker of the Year 2009. Since 2000 Partner in production company VOF Appel&Honigmann, in  
 cooperation with filmmaker Heddy Honigmann.

For more information about the film please contact:

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