

## Between Heaven and Hell: the Films of Ulrich Seidl

At Watershed Tue 23 – Sun 28 Sept 2008 / a Watershed programme touring the UK and Ireland

Watershed continues to extend the quality and diversity of film available to UK audiences with a retrospective of the work of Ulrich Seidl, one of Europe's most important and provocative filmmakers. Seidl's second feature film **Import/Export** will be released nationally on Fri 3 Oct, and this retrospective offers a timely look at the development of his filmmaking over the past 15 years, the majority of which has not had distribution in the UK. Seidl's documentaries and features have sparked heated debate, particularly within Austria, his home country, and this season is a unique opportunity for UK audiences to acquaint themselves with his darkly funny, often shocking but always deeply humanistic work.



We are delighted that Ulrich Seidl will be at Watershed on Thu 25 Sept to introduce a preview of his latest feature film **Import/Export** and to take questions from the audience. Watershed Head of Programme Mark Cosgrove says of Seidl:

*"When I saw **Import/Export** for the first time in Cannes last year, I was transfixed by its immediacy. Reviewing Seidl's work over the last 15 years, he emerges as a true visionary auteur whose pursuit of a cinematic truth has justly earned him comparisons to great European directors Fassbinder, Pasolini and Herzog and marked him as a major filmmaking talent to discover."*

Dispassionate and visually striking, Seidl's unrelenting gaze blurs the line between fact and fiction as it aims to authentically depict its subjects during their most intimate moments. The programme's seven titles make audiences squirm, laugh, cringe, gasp and maybe recognise human traits that lie at the heart of all of us. **The Bosom Friend** (Fri 26 Sept 1800hrs) is a fastidiously composed portrait of the reclusive, bosom-obsessed maths teacher René Rupnik who sees the female form even in his mathematical equations, while **Animal Love** (Wed 24 Sept 1800hrs) is a humorous but disquieting study of Austrian pet owners whose relationships with their four-legged friends replace the intimacy and companionship of other humans.

Seidl's films have screened at festivals worldwide, and his first feature **Dog Days** (Sat 27 Sept 1800hrs) won the Grand Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival in 2001. Shot over several long, sweltering summer days, the film's characters wallow in their own and each others' misery, resentment and frustrated desire. Seidl's latest film, **Import/Export**, was nominated for the Golden Palm award at Cannes in 2007 and is a confrontational and compassionate tale of migration and social borders in contemporary Europe. Moving in diametrically opposed directions, the film traces two journeys toward a better life: nurse Olga leaves the poverty of the Ukraine for a new start in Austria, while unemployed Austrian Paul heads to the Ukraine in search of work and meaning.

**Between Heaven and Hell: the Films of Ulrich Seidl** will premiere with a selection of films at the Cambridge Film Festival from Fri 19 to Mon 22 Sept before its run at Watershed. It will then go on to tour to independent cinemas throughout the UK and Ireland this autumn, including Filmhouse in Edinburgh, the Irish Film Institute in Dublin and the ICA in London.

- Ends - / PTO for notes and full details on the season.

1 Canon's Road, Bristol, BS1 5TX (0117) 927 6444

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## Notes to editors:

- For any further information, images and/or if you would like to interview Ulrich Seidl, please contact Sharon Clark (sharon@watershed.co.uk) or Anna Searle (anna.searle@watershed.co.uk) or call (0117) 927 6444.
  - **Import/Export** plays at Watershed from Fri 3 Oct.
  - For information about the tour, including venue information, titles and dates, please visit [watershed.co.uk/seidl](http://watershed.co.uk/seidl)
  - **Fee:** all screenings in this season are £6.00 full / £4.50 concession.
- Season Deal:** Buy tickets for any three films in the season for the price of two. (Season deal excludes the preview screening of **Import/Export**)

## Between Heaven and Hell: the Films of Ulrich Seidl at Watershed

### **Losses to be Expected**, 1992 (18) Tue 23 Sept, 1800hrs

Seidl explores the social borders that divide us through the efforts of Austrian widower Sepp to court Czech Paula who lives just across the border.

### **Animal Love**, 1995 (18) Wed 24 Sept, 1800hrs

A critically acclaimed, darkly humorous study of Austrian pet owners whose relationships with their four-legged friends replace – or displace – the intimacy and companionship of other human beings.

### **Preview: Import/Export, + director Q&A**, 2007 (18) Thu 25 Sept, 2000hrs

Watershed is delighted to welcome Ulrich Seidl to Bristol for a special preview of his latest film, a confrontational and compassionate tale of migration and social borders in contemporary Europe.

### **The Bosom Friend**, 1997 (18) Fri 26 Sept, 1800hrs

Maths teacher René Rupnik's trigonometric interests meet his fascination with female anatomy in this intimate and fastidiously composed portrait of a man normally consigned to the fringes of society.

### **Models**, 1998 (18) Sat 27 Sept, 1500hrs

**Models** depicts the harsh realities of the modelling industry for a group of Viennese friends.

### **Dog Days**, 2001 (18) Sat 27 Sept, 1800hrs

Over several long, sweltering summer days, the film enters into the closed spaces of suburban Vienna as its characters wallow in their own and each others' misery, resentment and frustrated desire.

### **Jesus, You Know**, 2003 (18) Sun 28 Sept, 1800hrs

Seidl employs the intimacy of prayer as an entry point into revealing the everyday complaints and deepest secrets of his subjects in this fascinating documentary.

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