

Souls of Naples

A film by
Vincent Monnikendam



As if in Caravaggio's famous paintings, sombre drama and lighter scenes are juxtaposed in the age old streets and piazzas of Naples. Here, colourful Neapolitans have survived a chaotic life of joy and sorrow for 2500 years. In the meantime the volcano Vesuvius sleeps with one eye open..

Publicity:
MVSP
Monique van Schendelen
Noordereinde 233 B
1243 JT 's-Graveland
t +31(0)35- 582 6969
f +31(0)35- 582 7885
monique@mvsp.nl

Distributor Benelux:
1 more film
Meeuwenlaan 98-100
1021 JL Amsterdam
t +31(0)20- 635 018/017
f +31(0)20- 635 3249
www.onemorefilm.com

Production company & sales
MEMPHIS FEATURES
Malliebaan 77
3581 CG Utrecht
t +31(0)30- 2332023
f +31(0)30- 2310409
info@memphisfilm.net
www.memphisfilm.net

SYNOPSIS

The incomparable splendour of Naples, situated in the shadow of a volcano and by the blue sea of an enormous bay, inspired Johann Wolfgang von Goethe to the famous statement: "See Naples and die".

But Naples also has a more complex side. Behind the splendour and pomp that dates from the time when Naples still had great political and social influence, one can also find poverty and adversity. The film director Vincent Monnikendam ends in the backstreets and steep alleyways where sunlight barely penetrates, where dark drama and frivolity keep the age-old city in their grip.

The central feature of the film is the painting *The Seven Acts of Mercy* by Caravaggio, the master of the *clair-obscur*. This altar piece was painted in 1607, commissioned by the noble founders of the *Pio Monte della Misericordia*, a charitable institution that is still active. Myths about this painting, the history of the Pio Monte, the joy and sorrow of Neapolitans, alternate and combine to form a colourful portrait. With a leading role for the city of Naples itself.

Among the important characters in *Souls of Naples* are Pietro Gargano, editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Il Mattino* and a connoisseur of urban history, and Gian Paolo Leonetti, former chairman of the *Pio Monte della Misericordia* and a descendant of a noble family. The baroque interior of the villa where we meet contrasts with the sober entourage of the inner city. This is where the transsexual Gianni earns a meagre income by selling lottery tickets and Pina tells us about her difficult existence while she sews trendy handbags in a small factory located in an old cellar. The Russian painter Natalia Tsarkova tries to communicate in her own work the essence of *clair-obscur* in the paintings by Caravaggio whom she so admires. According to her, the special lighting effects with powerful contrasts so characteristic of his work are the symbol of survival, for good and evil, for life and death.

In a style inspired by these characteristic light-dark contrasts *Souls of Naples* provides an inspiring portrait of a city that has survived for two and half thousand years.

The Netherlands • 2004 • 35 mm and digibeta • 1:1,76 and 16:9
• Dolby SR • Italian - subtitled in english and dutch •

DIRECTORS STATEMENT

Neapolitans in a variety of surroundings and situations are interwoven in this documentary surrounded by Neapolitan images, stories, poems and songs. The title 'Souls of Naples' refers both to the different individuals in the film as to the different manifestations of what Neapolitans call 'the soul of Naples'. This turns out to be complex, contrasting and complicated and therefore has many manifestations. This is revealed in the filmic composition while the film is also a snapshot of the ever-present entanglement and bond between the rich and the poor and between the present and the historic past.

The documentary was inspired by the 400th anniversary of the aristocratic Neapolitan lay organisation Pio Monte della Misericordia that has practiced charitable work for four centuries. Caritas (charity) and atonement, life and death are the themes portrayed by the painting 'The Seven Acts of Mercy' painted by Caravaggio and commissioned by the founders of this organisation in 1606 and is still the pride of the Pio Monte church in the centre of Naples.

In both substance and form, the documentary exploits the contrasts and the chiaroscuro displayed by Caravaggio's painting but also present in a variety of forms throughout Naples.

This helps create an unknown and contemporary picture of Naples that has not been seen before.

Vincent Monnikendam

CREDITS

Script & Documentary composition	VINCENT MONNIKENDAM
Director of Photography	MELLE VAN ESSEN
Assistant Director of Photography	SANDER ROELEVELD
Sound mixer	PIETER GUIJT
Assistant Director & Production	MARCO FUNEROLI
Literary advice & translation	ROSSELLA DI STAZIO
Editor	ALBERT MARKUS
Sound design	JAN DRIES GROENENDIJK BJÖRN WARNING
Sound mix	JAN WILLEM VAN DEN BRINK
Sound studio Naples	ANDREA TREGUA
Additional shots	GREGOR MEERMAN CIRO BERTOLINI
Director additional shots	SHERMAN DE JESUS
Translators	ANDREA GARCIA MURGA MIRIAM PIPOLO PAUL ÖFFNER FLORA PROTA
Grading	CIRIS, HANS BUIJTINK
On-line	NEON, LAURENT FLUTTERT
Additional on-line	MICHEL REICHWEIN
Graphics	HARM VAN ZON
Laboratory	CINECO
Stock	FUJI PROFESSIONAL MOTION PICTURE FILMS
Film transport	ACTION FREIGHT, MICHEL VAN DER SLUIS
Insurance	AON, KAREL DE JONG, GERALD MAMBER
Legal advice	PATRICE KATZ
Publicity	MONIQUE VAN SCHENDELEN
Distributor Benelux	1 MORE FILM, WALLIE POLLÉ, SUZAN VAN DER VEEN
Assistant Producer	ELINE VAN WEES
Production IKON	MARGIE MONFILS
Commissioning Editors IKON	WESSEL VAN DER HAMMEN MARGJE DE KONING
Based on an idea	IDANNA PUCCI & TERENCE WARD
Script & Documentary composition	VINCENT MONNIKENDAM
Producers	SHERMAN DE JESUS CÉCILE VAN EIJK

Grateful thanks to

Circolo del Unione, Caravaggio Hotel, Delmar Fonderia d'Arte, Holliday Autos, Museo di Capodimonte, Napoli Sotterranea, Annelies Lots, Anton Kramer, Barbara Wiessing, Carmen Cobos, Enzo Pirozzi, Erik Disselhoff, Fabio Roveto, Frederike Schötz, Kees Ryninks, Monica Wissing, Margaret Scaramella, Martin Mooiman, Nives Monda, Peppe Marmo, Peter Roelofs, Raffaele Esposito, Raffaele Albodoro, Rob Charles, Sandra den Hamer, Serena Cascione, Tonino Boniotti

With special thanks to

Board & secretariat Pio Monte della Misericordia,
Marchese Fernando de Montemayor,
Ing. Gian Paolo Leonetti
Pietro Gargano & Giornalisti d'il Mattino,
and all Neapolitans who worked for Souls of Naples.

Souls of Naples is produced with support of
Stimuleringsfonds Nederlandse Culturele Omroepproducties
Nederlands Fonds voor de Film
CoBO Fonds



A co production of



© MMV MEMPHIS FEATURES / IKON

www.memphisfilm.net

PROFILES

MELLE VAN ESSEN, director of photography

Melle van Essen began his film career in 1983. He worked with well-known directors such as Johan van der Keuken, Frank Schaeffer, Frank Diamand and Jos de Putter. For his film *Landschappen waar niemand van weet* he was awarded the Prix Futura. *Isingiro Hospital* got in 1993 the Gold Calf and several international awards. Also *Conducting Mahler* and *Lagrima Negras* were awarded international prizes.

SHERMAN DE JESUS / CÉCILE VAN EIJK, producers

Award winning producer Sherman de Jesus began his career with a documentary about writer-poet Cola Debrot. In 1992 he founded Memphis Film & Television with producer Cécile van Eijk. He has been directing besides writing scripts and producing documentaries and feature films such as *The Indian Bore A Negro*, *Long Live The Brown Monster*, *Prisoner of Java* and *All is Light* - Jan Henderikse. Further the award winning short films *Daddy's Little Girl*, *Joy Meal* and *Honey* (Dutch Selection to the Oscars) directed by Tamar van den Dop. The feature film *Boy Ecury* won the FIPA D'OR, the Golden Calf and the Columbine Award at the Moondance Festival.

Cécile van Eijk produced since 1988 numerous commissioned films in the field of health care and education and corporate films.

By joined forces with producer/ director Sherman de Jesus to set up Memphis Film & Television, her aim is to produce high quality international documentaries, feature films, television programmes, for theatrical and television release and world-wide distribution.

Recently the award winning documentary *All is Light* directed by Sherman De Jesus, the short *Honey*, directed by Tamar van den Dop, was the Dutch submission for the 2005 Oscar.

The feature film *Boy Ecury*, written by Arthur Japin, directed by Frans Weisz, won the Colombine Award for best feature film at the 2004 Moondance International Film Festival, the FIPA d'Or for best music at the FIPA Biarritz and the Golden Calf for best music at the 2003 Nederlands Film Festival.

In production is *Employee B 18799* - Jan Schoonhoven, an intimate portrait of Holland's most important artist, director Sherman de Jesus. Also in production are a documentary about abortion, the short films *Ho!* and *Oh what a night*, the feature film *Weekend Pilgrimage* and the documentaries *Tulip Time* and *Unlettered*.

Cécile van Eijk taught for five years audiovisual communication at the University of Utrecht. At the Maurits Binger Film Institute she followed in 1999/2000 the management training for producers.

FILMOGRAPHY VINCENT MONNIKENDAM

Vincent Monnikendam developed himself from journalist to a well-known documentary filmmaker. Between 1981 and 1992 he made documentaries and documentary series focusing on the relationship between the Dutch and the tens of thousand of immigrants in Holland.

Living amidst those who become the natural actors of the documentary became a necessary part of his working method and personal documentary style.

Among the documentaries he made are Rayon 69 (prize Best Tv-Documentary), Lijn 6 (4 x 50 min.- nominated Best Tv-Documentary) and De Tiendepening (5 x 50 min). In 1995 he became an independent documentary filmmaker.

His documentary 'Mother Dao the Turtlelike' (1995), made out of 300.000 metres of 35mm archive film material from the former Dutch East Indies was screened at fifty-two international film festivals and won seventeen awards among them five Grand Prix.

SELECTION of tv-programs and documentaries for the Dutch broadcasters NTS-tv, KRO-tv, NOS-tv, NPS-tv, IKON-tv

1963 NTS-tv: report (15 min.) 'Beeldvorming'
1964 KRO-tv: documentaries (2 x 30 min.) 'de Wissel' en 'de Drempel'
1965 KRO-tv: documentary (40 min.) 'Samenzijn'
1966 NTS-tv: national tv-show 'Oudjaarsavond'
1967 NTS-tv: documentaries (2 x 60 min.) 'Orde Baru I en II' (Indonesia)
1968 NTS-tv: series (15 and 25 min.) 'Openbaar kunstbezit', 'Panoramiek'
1969 NTS-tv: cabaretseries 'Studentenhaver' with the first tv-performances of 'Neerlands Hoop in Bange Dagen' (Freek de Jonge), Ivo de Wijs, 'Don Quichocking', and 'Looking forward to 1942' of the Royal College of Art Theatre, Bradford UK
1970 NTS-tv: reports: inundation-desaster Tunesië, Council Rome, 'Die Dag in Dallas' (murdering J.F.Kennedy), and 'Persoonlijk'
1971 NTS-tv: originator programs debates philosophers a.o. Michel Foucault
1972 NTS-tv: dramatized documentary (60 min.) 'Thorbecke'
1973 NOS-tv: documentary (60 min.) 'Claude Lévi-Strauss'
1974 NOS-tv: 'Peilstand' daily programs oilcrisis
1975 NOS-tv: documentary (60 min.) 'Multinationals'
1976 -1977 NOS-tv: 'Paspoort' daily program for immigrants
1978 NOS-tv: documentary (30 min.) 'Over het spoor'
1980 NOS-tv: documentary series (2 x 65 min.) 'Rayon 69' (Molenwijk, Den Haag)
1982 - 1983 NOS-tv: documentary series (4 x 50 min.) 'Lijn 6' (Hobbemastraat, Den Haag)
1984 - 1985 NOS-tv: documentary series (5 x 50 min) 'De Tiendepening' (Gorcum and Turkey)
1988 NOS-tv: commision editor documentary series 'Palet' (weekly 30 min.)
1989 - 1990 NOS-tv: research historical filmmaterial (found footage) Dutch East Indies
1991 NOS-tv: documentary series (3 x 30 min.) 'De Illegalen' and 'Café Willy' (30 min.)
1992 - 1994 NOS-tv: continuing research historical filmmaterial Dutch East Indies
1995 NPS-tv: documentary (90 min.) 'Mother Dao the Turtlelike' (Moeder Dao de Schildpadgelykende)
1996-2003 Research historic Russian filmmaterial Russian Avant Garde;
Research for new film about multinational operating lawyersfirms
2002-2003 Research Naples for new documentary 'Souls of Naples'
2004 IKON-tv: documentary (50 and 90 min.) 'Souls of Naples'