

# channel 8

A feature film written & to be directed  
by Andrea Maria Dusl



## Director's Statement

For many years I have been dreaming of a city that I only know from sleep. It matches no place I have been before in real life. Where is this city? Did I make it up by myself? Is it existing? I don't know. I talked to scientists working in the field of lucid dreaming, who revealed to me that this is something many people experience. Yet they don't talk about this dream world they have never been before. A world that is channeling from somewhere or someone to their minds.

So I made up a story around this strange phenomenon. The story of the TV reporter and the painting pickpocket girl. And I choose Saint Petersburg as the dream city. A metropole that for two centuries has been a vivid political and artistical channel to the West. Here in the eye of russia I set the story of Valentin and Anastassija.

**Andrea Maria Dusl,  
Vienna, June 2006**



EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

DRUG DEALER

Here we have... Ketamin. That's the stuff.  
Good stuff, you can trust me. How many dreams?

VALENTIN

Full throttle. The whole night.



INT. ST. PETERSBURG. BOXING CLUB - AFTERNOON

Anastasiya is in a boxing club with her friend and driver Rotor, who is hitting a punchbag.

ANASTASIJA

There's somebody here.

ROTOR

What do you mean, somebody is here? I'm here.

ANASTASIJA

Somebody is in my thoughts.

## Synopsis

Valentin has it all. Talent, good looks, a loving girlfriend, a perfect job and the best friends in the perfect city. Valentin makes his living as a TV reporter for Channel 8, a news broadcaster in the pulsating city of Paris.

One day, while walking past an editing room, he experiences a disturbing encounter. The footage running on the monitor shows images he recognises. Valentin knows the people in this news clip: he knows their names and details about their lives. As if they were close friends. Yet Valentin has never met them, nor has he ever been to the Russian imperial city of Saint Petersburg, where the images were shot.

Valentin knows these people from his dreams! Night after night Valentin has wandered around the city on the River Neva, without ever paying any attention to this in his daily life. Dreams are dreams, nothing more, Valentin would say. Little does he know that his dreams are reality. The reality of a Russian woman. Valentin is dreaming the life of Anastassija, a classy thief and anarchist artist living in St. Petersburg.

While doing research on the images that haunt his sleep, Valentin ventures deeper and deeper into a world he has never encountered before. The world of a delicate and sophisticated thief in Robin Hood mould, struggling for existence in the gap between rich and poor. Mysterious things happen. While dining with friends he finds a key in his food. Days later a gold Rolex materializes in his hands; it featured in a dream!

Valentin decides to dig deeper. With the help of his "colour therapist", an eccentric Tajik character, he learns the technique of lucid dreaming. This gives Valentin control over his dreams, which almost come to resemble a video game – but are set in faraway St. Petersburg, the "Venice of the North".

And then in one dream he sees her: Anastassija, on the other side of a mirror. Valentin's perfect world, the bourgeois Bohemian existence that the upper middle classes can so easily enjoy in liberal Paris, falls apart when he resolves to go to the city he only knows from his dreams. To search the woman on the other side of the dream mirror: Anastassija.

From all the dreamlike episodes of Anastassija's real life that flow into Valentin's consciousness, there is one thing he "knows": that she is living behind an eye. An eye?

Pretending to shoot a documentary on life in St. Petersburg, Valentin embarks on a search that leads him deeper and deeper into the guts of the city – and into his own life, which has somehow passed him, by. On the border between reality and projection Valentin makes a fateful decision.

Since he can't find his dream woman by everyday research, he heads for the sleep world. In a dark corner of the city he finds a drug dealer and buys a huge dose sleeping pills - Valentin wants to sleep, he wants to enter the dream world. Back in his hotel room Valentin jumps the border.

Here, in a St. Petersburg altered by lucid dreaming, the mystery becomes if anything even more incomprehensible. Valentin is invited to a Pyjama Party where he meets a charming but dangerous clique of nightlife Mafiosi. Friends of Anastassija? Enemies? The situation threatens to spin out of control. Valentin flees the gangster party. Almost safe back in his hotel, Valentin now sees the image that has haunted him in countless dreams. A huge eye. It is in fact a larger-than-life advertising poster covering the façade of an entire building on Newsky Prospect. Is this the eye she is living behind? It is. Behind the gigantic eyes of the advertising banner lies Anastassija's apartment.

Valentin rushes up the dirty stairs. The key fits. The apartment is oddly familiar: Valentin has seen it in his dreams. But Anastassija is not here. Something is wrong. Now Valentin hears turmoil at the door, the unpredictable gangsters have followed him. A gun is pointed at his head. Is this dream or reality? Worse. The Russian gang, now dangerously close, turns out to consist of his girlfriend in Paris, his best friend and his therapist. And they are out for his blood.

There is only one way out - to jump through the eye.

It is a long fall. But worth the deadly risk. Anastassija, the woman from the other side of the mirror, has been haunted herself... by Valentin's own dreams. And she has taken precautions to protect him from the fall. For the first time the two meet in the same reality. Another story begins.

**Andrea Maria Dusl**

**Andrea Maria Dusl** Born in Vienna in 1961, the daughter of an Austrian architect and a Swedish mother from a family of sea captains. She attended the Master Class in Stage Design at the Vienna Fine Arts Academy, acquiring her Magistra Artium degree in 1985 and has worked at the theaters and as a columnist. 1989/1991 she produced and directed her first series of short films. Her first feature film **Blue Moon**, produced by Lotus-Films was screened in competition at the 2002 International Film Festival **Locarno**.

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## Films

**Around The World in Eighty Days** 1991 Short, **Heavy Burschi** 2005 Short, **Blue Moon** 2002, 90min.

Prod: Lotus Films, Cast: Josef Hader, Viktoria Malektorovych, Detlev W. Buck.

In post-Cold War Slovakia, Johnny Pichler is a money courier with big problems. He falls desperately in love with a mysterious Ukrainian woman who has problems of a similar magnitude. They spend a couple days together until this mesmerizing lady disappears, leaving Johnny desperately wanting more. In his quest to find her, Johnny discovers her taxi-driving twin sister Jana in the Ukrainian city of Lviv. Jana, he gradually discovers, harbors even more mysteries than her sister. Part thriller, part socio-political adventure, part love story, **Blue Moon** evokes the sexy, mysterious, and beguiling elements of formerly east-of-the-Wall Europe.

**Released in** Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Netherlands Festivals (**Awards**): Locarno Competition 02, Pusan 02, Viennale 02, Hof 02, Valencia 02, Bratislava 02, Berlin Market 03, Rotterdam 03, Porto 03, Diagonale 03 (**Grand Prix for Best Austrian Film**), Las Palmas 03, Minneapolis/St. Paul 03, Seattle 03, Lagow 03 (**Special Jury Prize**), Moscow 03, Karlovy Vary 03 (**Variety Critic's Choice**), Espoo 03, Leeds 03, Diagonale 04 (**Best Script**), Paris Semaine du Cinema Autrichien 04, London, British Film Institute - Now, About These Austrian Women 04 etc.



**LOTUS-FILM** Our aim is to enable and produce the films we long to see in the cinema. We visualize innovative, high-quality films that are thought provoking and stimulating. Films that are edgy, challenging and moving. Films that reflect and question the themes and patterns of our cultural backgrounds and look across our boundaries at the world outside. Films for an audience in the art-house-niche and beyond.

Our credits include feature-films like **NORDRAND** (directed by Barbara Albert), **BLUE MOON** (directed by Andrea Maria Dusl), and **SLUMMING** (directed by Michael Glawogger), feature-length documentaries such as **TIERISCHE LIEBE** (directed by Ulrich Seidl), **MEGACITIES** and **WORKING MAN'S DEATH** (Glawogger) as well as high quality TV-films **KABALE UND LIEBE** (directed by Leander Haussmann) and furthermore international co-productions such as **EIN SPEZIALIST** and **VIHJUD LEVI**.

We believe in the strength of David's means against Goliath's power. To this end we are prepared to go a long way, to leave the straight and narrow and venture out into the realms of new ideas.

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