



FITTING IN

A film by Fabienne Steiner

Documentary, 84 min
Switzerland, 2025
Languages: English, Afrikaans
Subtitles: en / de / fr

Production company:
point de vue DOC
Jonas Schaffter
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In co-production with:
Zurich University of the Arts
Swiss National Radio and Television
Unexplored Realities

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Logline	Within the walls of a prestigious men's residence called „Eendrag“, young South African students are confronted with a past that has not been forgotten.
Short synopsis	Young South Africans from all walks of life begin their student experience at the elite University of Stellenbosch. Within the walls of a prestigious student residence called „Eendrag“, the newcomers are confronted with colonial structures. They try to navigate between personal growth, cultural differences and a past that has not been forgotten.
Long synopsis	<p>A new academic year begins at the elite University of Stellenbosch. In the prestigious men's residence called „Eendrag“, young adults from all walks of life come together. The student „House Committee“ faces the challenge of bringing together a diverse group of newcomers. The „Primarius“ EDUAN takes on the task of preparing the students for communal living. However, beneath the surface, tensions simmer: PoC students feel uneasy and discuss issues behind closed doors.</p> <p>A racist incident in a neighboring residence escalates the situation. Some students debate whether the incident was truly racist or if some students demonstrate, simply to use this incident to draw attention to fundamental issues. Meanwhile, activists TADIWA and CARLTON advocate for changing colonial names within the residence, encountering resistance in the process.</p> <p>NATHAN, a PoC and member of the LGBTQIA+ community, uses his humor and empathy to build bridges between the various groups. When he is elected to the „House Committee“, he faces a new challenge: How can he create a residence where all students, regardless of their background or identity, can find their place?</p> <p>„Fitting in“ is a film that highlights the challenges young people face within a structure shaped by colonialism. The documentary examines how young people deal with the legacy of apartheid. It shows how difficult it is to break old patterns in order to forge new paths.</p>

The residence „Eendrag” is a microcosm that reflects the diversity of South African society. It was important to us to capture a range of perspectives and personalities: students who identify with the existing traditions, those who actively seek change, and those who consciously distance themselves from the prevailing culture and withdraw. The film portrays an incredibly diverse ensemble over the span of one year.

The outsiders Jarren and Cyle



The traditionalists Petrus and Chris



The activists Tadiwa and Carlton



The mediators Nathan and Leython





Director's note

Growing up as a white South African in the suburbs of Johannesburg, I lived a privileged and secluded life behind thick walls. When my family moved to Switzerland, I was 13 years old. It was the first time I had heard of „Apartheid.“ Learning about the political and social impact of the Apartheid era, I quickly discovered that I strongly disagree with the mindset of my own family members. With „Fitting In“, I wanted to explore how the „born free“ generation deals with the burdens of the past, while living in a surrounding that celebrates it. Within the traditional men's residence „Eendrag“, I was able to observe up close, how challenging it can be to change established structures.

„Fitting in“ follows young South Africans who are trying to find their place in a society shaped by colonial structures. Using an observational camera, I aimed to capture the various perspectives of the students and critically examine their everyday lives, while also showcasing humorous moments. During filming, I became aware of how important humor can be, in coping with everyday injustices.

Although the film primarily tells a South African story, it addresses a global theme. With my film, I want to inspire people to confront the past in order to find solutions for the future.



How the project came about

„Fitting in“ emerged from an interdisciplinary collaboration between filmmakers and social scientists. Initially, our research was closely linked to an ongoing research project within the research network „Unexplored Realities“. Led by social scientist Dr. Florian Elliker, „Unexplored Realities“ examines the topic of integration in student residences.

In the spring of 2020, an opportunity arose to conduct initial on-site research in collaboration with Dr. Elliker and social scientist Niklaus Reichle. This allowed us to gain valuable insight into the daily realities of the students at „Eendrag“ and to establish initial connections.

Background information

Historically, Stellenbosch University was a stronghold of Apartheid ideology and, for a long time, was exclusively reserved for white students. Even today, the proportion of white students in Stellenbosch remains disproportionately high compared to South Africa's demographic diversity. In the residences, a colonial value system has persisted, carefully passed down from one generation to the next. While the university is now making efforts to become more inclusive, these initiatives often face resistance from students. The self-governed residences have been slow to implement more inclusive approaches to communal living, while the fundamental structures remain largely unchanged.

Fabienne Steiner
Drehbuch, Regie,
Kamera

Born in 1984 in Johannesburg, South Africa, moved to Switzerland at the age of 13. After studying visual communication, worked as a graphic designer for several years. Completed a Bachelor's degree in Film at ZHdK in 2020. Various camera and directing roles in documentary and short films. Completed a Master's degree in „Documentary Filmmaking“ at ZHdK in 2025.

Directing & Cinematography:
 Café Zentrum, Documentary, 20 min, 2020

Co-directing & Cinematography:
 Der Wert der Dinge, Documentary, 68 min, 2023
 Kleinmeer, Documentary, 21 min, 2021
 Kleinwald, Documentary, 23 min, 2018
 Kleingolf, Documentary, 23 min, 2017

Awards:
 Best Graduation Film BA ZHdK (Café Zentrum), 2020
 Documentary Film Award, Thalberg Foundation (Café Zentrum), 2020

Michael Bolliger
Drehbuch, Ton,
Montage

Born in 1985 in Winterthur, grew up in Rorschach. Studied Journalism and Organizational Communication at ZHAW. Completed professional training in cinematography and editing at SRF in 2016. Since 2016, has worked as an editor in the „Scenic Production“ department at SRF.

Editing:
 Spuren im Stein – Der Bodensee, Documentary, SWR, 44 min, 2019
 Stolz, Stress, Schmerz, Documentary, SRF, 19 min, 2018
 Bündner Baukartell, Documentary, SRF, 17 min, 2018
 Subkulturen, Documentary, SRF, Episode 2, 7 min, 2018
 Impact Investigativ, Documentary series, SRF, 15–30 min, 2022–2025

Jonas Schaffter
ausführender
Produzent,
Produktionsleitung

Born in 1988 in Metzerlen (Canton of Solothurn). Studied at the University of Art and Design in Basel, graduating in 2013 with a Bachelor's degree in Visual Communication. Spent a year in Istanbul, where he studied photography for a semester at Mimar Sinan University. From 2016 to 2019, completed a Master's degree in Film at ZHdK, specializing in „Documentary Filmmaking.“ Has been working as a film lecturer at the University of Art and Design in Basel (FHNW) for several years and is involved in various roles at the production company point de vue.

Directing:
 Futura! Flurin, Documentary, 16 min, 2022
 Arada, Documentary, 83 min, 2020
 Offside Istanbul, Documentary, 52 min, 2015
 Claramatte – Spring 2013, Documentary, 17 min, 2013

Producing:
 Offside Istanbul, Documentary, 52 min, 2015

Grants & Awards:
 Landys & Gyr Travel Grant, Istanbul, Turkey, 2016
 Solothurn Film Award, Office for Sports and Culture, 2018

Directed by	Fabienne Steiner
Story by	Michael Bolliger Fabienne Steiner
Produced by	Jonas Schaffter, point de vue
in Co-Production with	Zurich University of the Arts ZHdK Swiss National Radio and Television SRF Unexplored Realities
Commissioning Editor SRF	Urs Augstburger
Production Assistant SRF	Gabriela Bloch
Line Producer ZHdK	Filippo Bonacci
Project Development Unexplored Realities	Dr. Niklaus Reichle
Scientific Support Unexplored Realities	Dr. Florian Elliker
Head of Master Film Documentary ZHdK	Sabine Gisiger
Programm Director Film ZHdK	Sabine Boss
Administration ZHdK	Claudia Hürlimann
Technical Equipment ZHdK	Ines Herrmann
Post-Production ZHdK	Gian Courtin
	Norbert Kottmann
	Fabienne Koch
Mentor	Sabine Gisiger
Editing Mentors	Barbara Weber
	Gesa Marten
Producing Mentors	Frank Matter
	Andreas Weber
Camera	Fabienne Steiner
2nd Unit Camera	Remi Peterson
Sound	Michael Bolliger
	Jonas Schaffter
Production Manager / Location Manager	Jonas Schaffter
	Kilian Lilienfeld
Editor	Michael Bolliger
	Elias Jutzet
	Fabienne Koch
Assistant Editor	Damiana Rudolphi
	Fabienne Koch
Grading	Ian Oggenfuss
Sound Editing und Design	Thomas Rechberger, KLANGFILM Studios
	Floris Demandt
Sound Mixing	Thomas Rechberger
	Martin Scheuter
Composition	Moritz Widrig
	Joachim Flüeler
Ukulele	Zander Raubenheimer

Choir song: „Iza Ngomso“
Arranged by

Christopher Tin
Hein Roelofse

Choir Members

Hein Roelofse
Ampitsa Thipa
Adam Senzul
Thato Nako
Wium van Wyk
Miguel Martins
Ashwin Booysen
Cameron Garde
Bruce John
Neil du Toit

Techno Beat

Phumlani Dyasi
Anele Sogoni

Guitar

Bruce John

Festival Strategy

Charlotte Ducos, Swissfilms
Rowena Raths

Producing & Distribution Support

Sophia Rubischung

Film Distributor Switzerland

Royal Film

Subtitles

Manuela Vonwiller, Dietmar Vonwiller, ZAXAPH
Fabienne Steiner

Grafic Design

Pat Löffel

Project Accountant

Judith Huber

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Stadt St.Gallen
Kultur St.Gallen Plus
Lotteriefonds Kanton Solothurn

point de vue

Z hdk

SRG SSR

Unexplored Realities

ROYAL FILM



Kanton St.Gallen



SWISSLOS

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