

ITINERARY OF A PROJECT

To gather a thousand synopses on the topic «Blind Date» and then select around twenty of them that are to be made into short films, is a way to bring about new encounters and delve into new fantasy worlds. In short, it means to really live the experience the project is about.

The 1000 synopses, as was to be expected, were at first only embryos of a story. The main task was to get to the root of the theme. As the scripts progressed, the elements of the narrative as a whole began to take shape. The storylines, with a few exceptions, all began to come together in a sequence that could be summarized as:

A man (or a woman) is alone. He/she longs to love and be loved in return. But by whom ? He/she might have an image of their dream companion, but can reality live up to that ? The singleton seeks the help of a dating agency and quickly finds him/herself face to face with a person who in no way, shape or form matched the ideal they had in mind. Will this person compromise and is he/she willing to give a chance or not ?

The protagonist of each film clearly holds the key to how the plot unfolds. The richness of their character, the strength of their desire and this fixated obsession and will to succeed are at the heart of each story. The «partner» is the obstacle that comes between the protagonist and their imagination and the storyline unravels as the misunderstandings that nestle their way into these budding relationships, are cleared up. They have to choose whether they will accept or reject the *other*. This confrontation between the fantasy of desire and the restrictions of reality started to become the true subject matter of the films and simultaneously provided the element that would connect one film to the next. The phenomenon of a blind date proved itself to be the ideal means to study the fantasies of people. Fantasies that in essence, reality can never live up to. Fantasies that we so passionately long for, we sometimes wish for them to be more real than life itself is.

As a starting point we gave ourselves fifteen minutes to tell each story. To describe a character in such a short time frame was of course a challenge. At best we hoped to portray an aspect of the nature of each person described. The other dilemma was how to make a very unnatural encounter – arranged by an agency – seem believable and natural. No one really believes they will encounter their soul mate this way, until perhaps one day they do. To not take that into account would have taken us along a path of improbabilities that would have led to a dead end. By implementing aspects of comedy or fantasy we managed to avoid that trap. The diversity of the characters, fantasies and the stories in themselves meant that the blind dates started to become more and more cohesive. Now, in retrospect it's clear that the short films have become a «collection of portraits» of people on a quest to find their «other half».

Throughout the development stages the storylines began becoming more and more complex and to manifest certain difficulties from a directing point of view. That is why we often turned to more experienced directors, contrary to what our initial intention had been. At the same time we always knew that the directors should be involved at the earliest stage possible, so they could really get to grips with the storyline they would translate into images. That naturally led us, in some cases, to prolong the writing process and revisit the scripts with the directors.

At the end of the day, we as producers – just like each of the 12 protagonists – found ourselves in a constant blind date situation: we had to adapt to the fictional reality of the narrative and the

very real reality we lived with each writer and director. To make way for a rich exchange and successful collaboration, we have to learn to listen to ourselves as well as others.

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