

SO WHAT MEDIA

presents

"ON THE OCCASION OF THE 100 YEAR ANIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH"

KAFKA IN THE FRIDGE

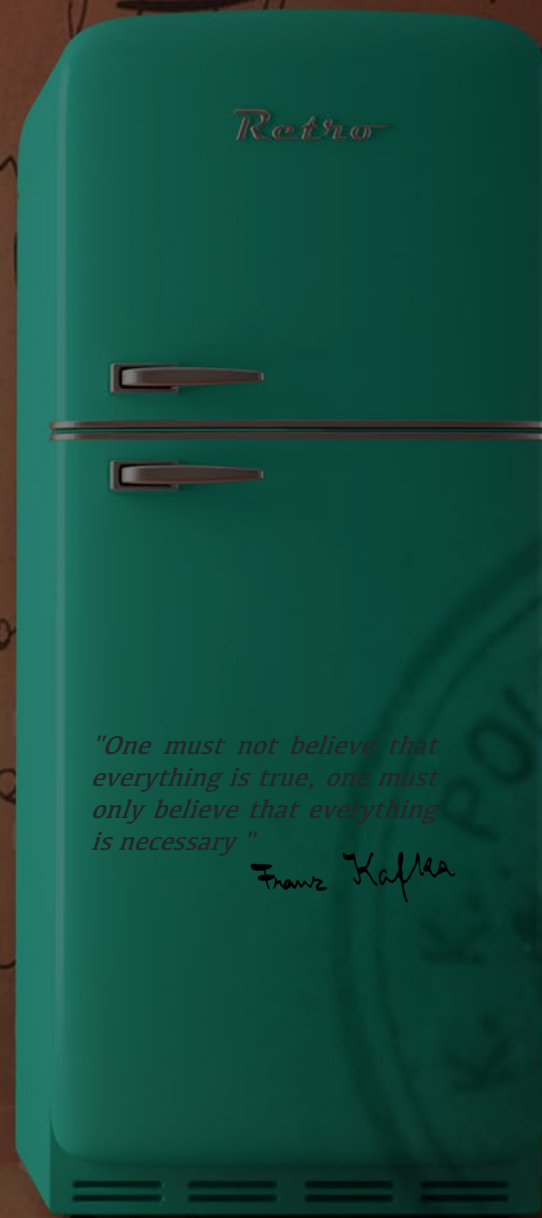
The long story of the legacy of Franz Kafka's papers

Betrays, Loves, Mysteries

A 90 MIN. DOCU-FILM

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED

BY MICHELE MALLY



*"One must not believe that
everything is true, one must
only believe that everything
is necessary"*

Franz Kafka

Produced by

PICASSO 

OVERVIEW

"Dear Max, my last request: to burn completely, and without having read it, all that is found in my legacy (...), whether they are diaries, manuscripts, letters, mine or others, drawings, etc..."

(Testament of Franz Kafka, 1921)

Betrayals, loves, mysteries: the strange story of the manuscripts of perhaps the most famous writer in the world, Franz Kafka, from the moment when Max Brod, his best friend, decides not to burn them, ignoring his will, up to the conclusion of the story, with two countries tormented by the traumas of the past confronting each other before a Supreme Court to decide the final destination of the papers... a last trial for the author of "The Trial".

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KAFKA'S LAST TRIAL

THE STORY

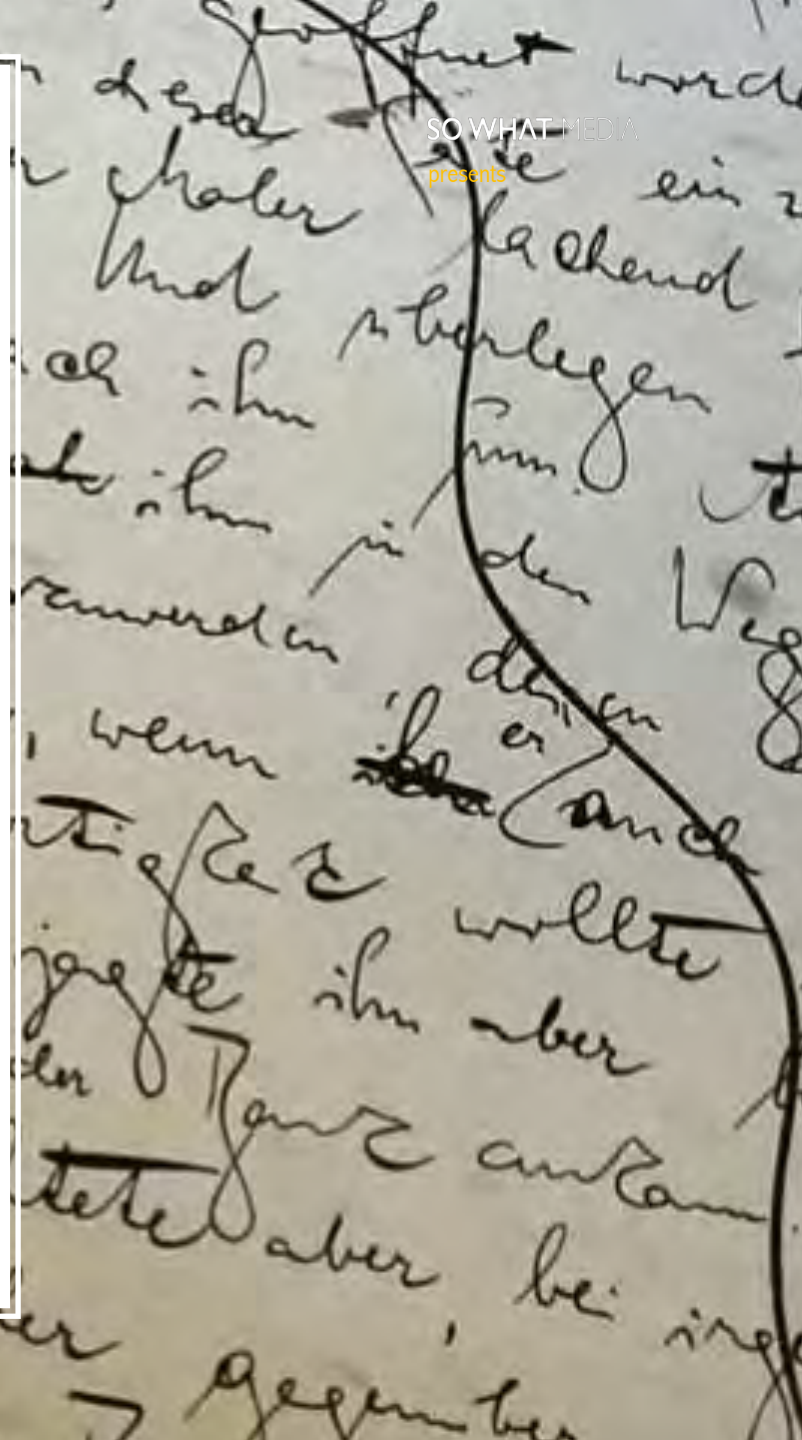
KAFKA IN THE FRIDGE

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"Kafka in the fridge" tells the long story of the legacy of Franz Kafka's "papers".

A century-long thriller, which began on June 2nd, 1924, when Kafka literally starved to death, devastated by tuberculosis, unable to swallow, while he was editing his story "A Hunger Artist". From that very moment the manuscripts, letters, diaries and drawings of the author of the "Metamorphoses" begin an incredible and exciting adventure, involving Kafka's friends, such as Max Brod, who refused to burn them as well as the last great love of Kafka, Dora Diamant, who was with him at the time of his death. We will see Gestapo soldiers confiscate part of Kafka's letters from Dora, Soviet Comintern officials eager to get hold of the writer's papers and, after the war, a number of lawyers, archivists, historians and scholars, all interested in the intellectual legacy by Kafka. A long and exciting story that reaches the present day, involving the heirs of some boxes of Kafka's unpublished material of incomparable historical and cultural value: Eva and Ruth, the daughters of Max Brod's secretary and secret lover in Israel. Ruth died in 2012 and Eva kept some of the boxes with Kafka's manuscripts in the refrigerator of her apartment in Tel Aviv, where dozens of cats used to keep her company. From this moment a long legal battle begins with the State of Israel for ownership of Kafka's legacy. It is "Kafka's last trial" involving Eva herself, the National Library of Jerusalem and the Marbach archive in Germany, which already owns the original manuscript of "The Trial".



OUR QUESTIONS

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Did Max Brod do the right thing in not respecting Kafka's will?

Milan Kundera, in "Testaments Betrayed", says that Max Brod publishes "everything, without any discernment", but it is thanks to him that the world comes to know "The Trial", in 1925, or "The Castle", a year later.

Why would Kafka want to destroy his papers?

What do they contain?

A finished story?

Not all mysteries have been cleared up.

According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, the Hoffe family would have hidden somewhere some of Brod's diaries and, above all, some letters exchanged after Kafka's death between Brod and two women with whom Kafka had an affair: Felice Bauer and Dora Diamant.

These letters may shed new light on another enigma: where are the documents seized by the Gestapo from Dora Diamant in 1933?

The traces of the notebooks lead to places in Poland, Germany and Russia, where they probably ended up after the Second World War.

The hunt is still on.

Who does Kafka belong to?

The Israeli Supreme Court has ruled on the ownership of Kafka's papers, in the film his writing will do so; a writing, which may be defined as universal. His gaunt and alienating lexicon, the unforgettable characters of his stories, from Odradeck, The Cares of a Family Man, to Josephine, The Singer, of the Mouse Folk, from the Hunger Artist, to the huge repellent insect, Gregor Samsa; all of this will be evoked in the film through readings that will accompany us into Franz Kafka's world.

THE NARRATIVE STYLE

In our documentary **we will have two narrative levels** that intertwine: on the one hand, a close chronicle, an account of the facts, documents and testimonies, with the rapid pace of a journalistic investigation, where we will be guided by those who have experienced the legal proceeding of Kafka's papers.

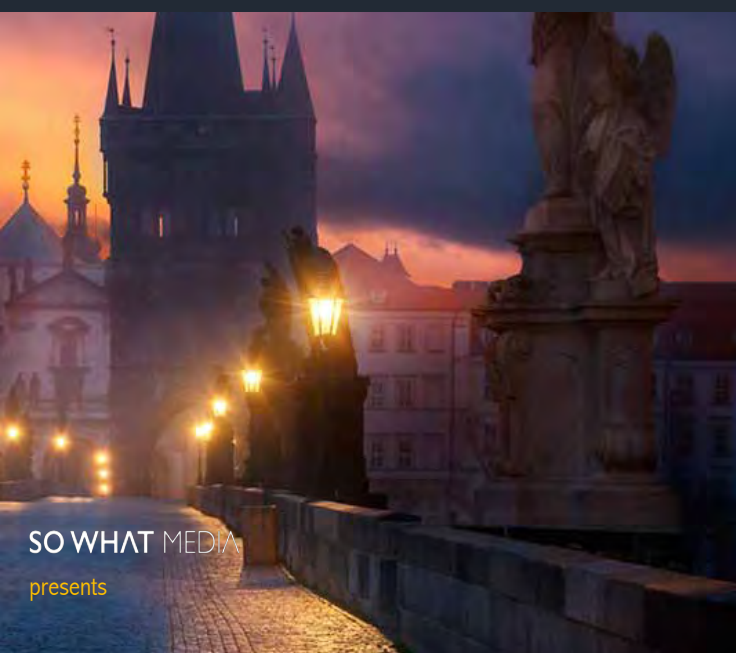
The other narrative level will project us into the extraordinary setting of Prague (the castle, the cathedral and the alleys of the alchemical Prague and the Jewish quarter) where a symbolic place will be recreated: a theatre/cabaret, where a Master of Ceremonies will be the narrator and will introduce the public to the various protagonists of the story, in a whirlwind of different eras.



We will meet Eva Hoffe in the kitchen on Spinoza Street in Tel Aviv, where cats purr sitting next to a large green refrigerator; we will be in the company of Max Brod and Kafka's closest friends at the Café Louvre.

The Master of Ceremonies' readings and stories will be accompanied **by a small orchestra** that will play live the repertoire of the Yiddish cabaret of the time, so loved by Kafka.

Archival materials and interviews with witnesses will be added to this fascinating atmosphere which will mark the stages of a real "mystery" that embraces the history of the entire twentieth century and the beginning of the new century.



KAFKA AND THE BRIDGE
A DOCUMENTARY FILM

OUR KEY EXPERTS

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STEPHAN LITT

Stefan Litt studied general history and Jewish studies at the Freie Universität Berlin and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He worked on several projects in various archives before being appointed, in 2010, supervisor of European linguistic heritage at the Archives Department of the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem. Since 2018 Stefan is also curator of the Humanities Collection of the National Library of Israel. In this capacity, he showed the world for the first time Kafka's documents that arrived in the Library, now restored and digitized.



BENJAMIN BALINT

Benjamin Balint, a Jerusalem-based writer, is the author of several acclaimed non-fiction works. His reviews and cultural journalism have appeared in The Wall Street Journal, Haaretz, Claremont Review of Books, Weekly Standard and Die Zeit (Germany), while his Hebrew translations have appeared in The New Yorker, Poetry International and Crazyhorse. His book, Kafka's Last Trial (2018), has been translated into ten languages and the book won the 2020 Sami Rohr Prize for Hebrew Literature. Benjamin is the only witness at the trial, where no television media were allowed, participating daily and filling dozens of notebooks with Eva's story.

OUR KEY EXPERTS

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KATHI DIAMANT

Born in New York and raised in France, Germany and South Korea, Kathi Diamant is an actress, author, television producer and adjunct professor at San Diego State University. Her award-winning book, "Kafka's Last Love: The Mystery of Dora Diamant" has been reviewed by over 60 publications and websites and has been recognized internationally for its original research and revelations about the life of Dora and Kafka. It was published in the US and UK and translated in Spain, France, Russia, China and Brazil. The story of Kathi Diamant is curious: as a young student in San Diego in 1986, she falls in love with a German literature professor, who asks her if she is related to Dora, Kafka's last love. Kathi doesn't know how to answer, but to impress the professor she starts researching her and Kafka's family. It is the beginning of an obsession that will change Kathi's life forever, leading her in the following thirty years to look for the documents that the Gestapo had seized at her Diamant house. For this, she Kathi founded the "Kafka Project" and collected a large amount of material on Dora and Franz Kafka.



ULRICH VON BÜLOW

Dr von Bülow is responsible for the archival section of the German Literary Archive in Marbach (Germany), one of the most important literary archives in Europe, which preserves several Kafka manuscripts, in particular "The Trial".

WHAT'S NEW?

The boxes containing Franz Kafka's secret papers are now in the National Library in Jerusalem, available to scholars for research purposes. Stefan Litt will show us, for the first time, the drawings, notebooks, manuscripts that no one has been able to see in the last hundred years.

National Library of Israel
Jerusalem, Israel
© 2020 - planned completion 2020
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WHY NOW?

The greats of world literature, from Nabokov to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, saw in Kafka a literary model to follow, some have defined him: "the Dante of the 20th century".

In 2024 the centenary of Kafka's death will be celebrated and our documentary offers the great and unique opportunity to celebrate this anniversary, showing the public a story and aspects of the life of Franz Kafka still unrevealed.

KAFKA IN THE FRIDGE

A 90 MIN. DOCU-FILM

THE DIRECTOR



MICHELE MALLY, Freelance director with a thirty years long experience, Michele Mally has directed dozens of documentaries and cultural TV programs.

To sum up the most recent experiences and achievements, in 2018 his docufilm "Klimt & Schiele, Eros e Psiche", The film, written and directed by Michele, **has been awarded the Best Documentary in Fine Art and Photograph prize at the Master of Art Film Festival 2019.**

In the same year **he directed Helen Mirren on the set of the film "Anne Frank, parallel lives".**

In 2020 Michele directed the docu-film "Ermitage - The Power of Art" in St. Petersburg, starring Toni Servillo, **released in international cinemas and winner of the 2020 Silver Ribbons (Nastri d'Argento 2020)**

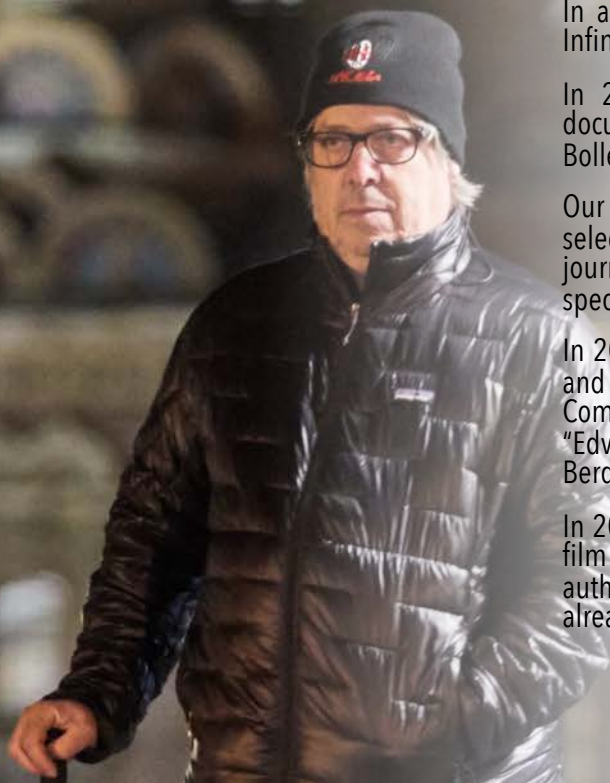
In autumn 2021 he directed and edited the documentary film "Venice. Infinite avant-garde", with Hania Rani and Carlo Cecchi.

In 2020, for the United Nations General Assembly, he directed the documentary for "UN day", starring the worldwide famous dancer Roberto Bolle at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan.

"Our Eduardo", directed by Michele and realized with Didi Gnocchi, was selected for Nastri d'Argento 2021, as well as "Scalfari. A sentimental journey", successfully presented at the Rome Film Festival and awarded a special Silver Ribbon (Nastro d'Argento).

In 2022 on the occasion of the Beijing Winter Olympics, he writes, directs and edits the portraits of Italian athletes for the Italian National Olympic Committee. In the same year, he also wrote and directed the docufilm "Edvard Munch, lovers, ghosts and Lady vampyres", with Ingrid Bolsø Berdal. The film was released in November 2022.

In 2023, "Men and Gods. The wonders of the Egyptian Museum", a docu-film about the Egyptian Museum of Turin, whose subject he also signs as an author. **The film's main actor is Jeremy Irons**, whom Michele had already directed in a film about the Prado Museum.



DIRECTOR'S VIEW

1. THE RE-ENACTMENT

The reenactment in this case will not have the function of narrating the past, but will represent a symbolic and evocative moment, recreating a place like a theatre/cabaret from Kafka's era; true narrative fulcrum of the film. Here a Yiddish orchestra, a Master of Ceremonies and the various extras on stage will introduce us to the different characters of the story, transporting us to the different moments in which past events and the recent procedural story of Kafka's writings took place.



DIRECTOR'S VIEW

2. THE INTERVIEWS

We have a unique witness to the trial of Kafka's papers; internationally renowned scholars, academics, archivists, biographers. This will offer unparalleled content with historical and scientific rigor.

We will use two different interview styles to engage the audience.

The *immersive style*, where our experts will not only speak in front of the camera as presenters, but will interact, accompanying us in the narration. We will see them walking the streets of Prague, Tel Aviv and Marbach, and in search of Kafka's last documents; while the *talking heads* interviews will be used in key moments of the narrative to explore themes and give food for thought and reflection.



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DIRECTOR'S VIEW

3. THE ASSEMBLY

The editing phase has the task of uniting the two narrative levels of our film: the theatrical one and the purely documentary one. We will use different shooting techniques with high-level cinematic optics as well as the most advanced technologies. The color grading will be entrusted to an internationally renowned colorist: Giorgia Meacci.

KAFKA IN THE FRIDGE
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DIRECTOR'S VIEW

4. THE SOUNDTRACK

The original soundtrack will be composed by Laura Masotto, an extraordinarily talented violinist and artist.

PRODUCER

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Max Serio is a television and film producer, director and founder of **PICASSO FILM**. His work, as an executive producer, includes popular series on Netflix such as SPYCRAFT, an eight-part docuseries examining how different countries spy on each other, and Terrorism Close Calls, a ten-part docuseries devoted to terrorist plots foiled after 9/11. In collaboration with Bigmedia.tv, Max was associate producer of over **250 hours of documentary** series distributed and broadcast worldwide in the last 13 years for clients such **Netflix, National Geographic, Curiosity Stream, ZDF, Discovery channel, RAI, RMC, ITV, BBC, History channel**. His credits include psychological thrillers such as Cult of Personality, Inside the Criminal Mind and Serial Psyche and historical series such as The Secret of the Templar's Knights, Footprints of Civilization and Warrior's Way.

Besides producing, Max is also a writer. He has co-written The Cost of War, a six-part documentary series analyzing the last 100 years of war or The Pope and the Devil, a four-episode series on the controversial affair of Pope Pius XII and the Nazis, to name but a few.

Max interviewed more than 200 people all over the world, including top officials of the intelligence communities of the United States, Israel, Germany. High ranking personalities from the Catholic Church, criminal figures such as serial killers, spies, assassins, military personnel and Green berets, as well as academics, journalists and famous writers.

Currently, he is the founder and principal of the production company Picasso Film and co-founder and principal of the production and distribution company So What media.

<http://www.picassofilm.net/>

<http://www.sowhatmedia.tv/>

KAFKA IN THE FRIDGE
A 90 MIN. DOCU-FILM



KAFKA IN THE FRIDGE

Written and Directed by Michele Mally

Produced by Max Serio _Picasso Film
maxserio@picassofilm.com

Executive Production SO WHAT MEDIA
ladislav@sowhatmedia.tv

Thanks for your vision