



## Nobody's Perfect

Director: Niko von Glasow, Germany, 2008, 84 minutes

Niko von Glasow was exposed to the drug Thalidomide in the womb. As a result he was born with phocomelia, a birth defect in which the bones of the arms and legs are very short or entirely absent. "The first thing people react to when they meet me is how I look," says Niko. "...All my life I've tried not to think about my disability, tried to ignore the truth." Now, instead of hiding, Niko decides to uncover everything and pose naked with eleven other adult Thalidomide survivors, for a photo shoot.

Each person chronicled in *Nobody's Perfect* is uniquely different, and in a series of frank conversations, they talk about growing up in a world that had little use for them. The film deals with the complex aspects of disability; sexuality, family, self-hatred, even thoughts of suicide. But the most interesting aspect of Niko's film is how each person copes with their disability. Blunt humour and honesty helps disperse what one man calls 'the orgy of compassion.'

As the photo shoot draws closer, the participants' nerves begin to show. But when the towels finally drop and the camera begins to roll, something unexpected happens. From the image of one woman leaping naked in midair, to Niko's young son laughing and pointing at his father's penis, the joy and beauty of each individual shines forth. When the photos are displayed in a public exhibition, they provoke surprising reactions. What emerges is a remarkable portrait of the human spirit in all its glorious imperfection.

### DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Niko von Glasow began his training with Rainer Werner Fassbinder (Lolaand Theater of the world). He then worked for a number of film directors including George Stefan Troller, Hellmuth Costard, Alexander Kluge, Peter Zadek and Jean-Jacques Annaud. Niko studied film at New York University and at the Film Academy of

Łódź in Poland. This is where he made his first feature film in 1990, *Wedding Guests*, which won several awards including the German Film Critics Award and the Grand Prix Lino Ventura. In 1994 Niko wrote, directed and produced the award-winning *Marie's Song* starring Sylvie Testud. In 2007 Niko's TV film *Look At Me* was broadcast in WDR's 'Menschen Hautnah' series. This is a personal portrait of his life as a filmmaker born with short arms due to Thalidomide.

In 2007 he began filming his cinema documentary *Nobody's Perfect*. Current projects are the founding of the Tibetan Film School and the development of three feature films: *Pig, a girl from Tibet* and *Touching Bluebell*. Niko von Glasow lives in London with runs Palladio Film from both London and Cologne.

PRECEDED BY:

### Ivan and Loriana

Director: Stefano Cattini, Italy, 11 minutes, 2008

A beautiful portrait of two deaf children in nursery school. Ivan and Loriana communicate with 'child signs', but the nuns want the children to speak. Sweet Ivan loves playing with mischievous Loriana, who roars like a lioness when she is fed up with practicing in front of a mirror.

### Sound Shadows

Director: Julie Engaas, Norway, 2008, 7 minutes

'Many people think that I live in darkness, but before my eyes there is nothing. Just air.' An award-winning animated short exploring the perceptions of a blind woman.

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