



NOV 2 – 10, 2011  
NEW YORK'S DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL

# GIRL WITH BLACK BALLOONS

A film by  
CORINNE VAN DER BORCH



US DOC REVEALS CHELSEA HOTEL ARTIST WITH UNDISCOVERED WORK:

## GIRL WITH BLACK BALLOONS – US Premiere

By Corinne van der Borch

Doc NYC - Metropolis Competition  
USA, 2010, HD, Color, 63 min

**Press screening:** Thurs Oct. 20, 10am at IFC Center, 323 Ave. of the Americas.

### Public screenings:

Sun, Nov 6 @ 7:30 pm at NYU – Kimmel Center: Eisner & Lubin Auditorium (60 Washington Square South, 4<sup>th</sup> floor). Followed by a Q&A.

Mon, Nov 7 @ 3:45 pm at IFC Center (323 Avenue of the Americas: 6th Ave @ W. 3rd St.)

**Director Corinne van der Borch and artist Bettina Grossman are available for interviews.**

After its world premiere at the 2010 Edinburgh International Film Festival, GIRL WITH BLACK BALLOONS will have its US premiere in New York, where the film was shot about a very New York subject. Director Corinne van der Borch discovers artist Bettina (in her 80's), who has lived and worked in the Chelsea Hotel since the 60s. As the hotel has literally closed its doors for renovation, GIRL WITH BLACK BALLOONS is an ode to one

of New York's most fascinating citizens and to the city's adventurous spirit in decades gone by. Director Corinne van der Borch is currently shooting additional footage of Bettina in the almost-deserted hotel – which she hopes to include in the Doc NYC screenings.

### **Short Synopsis**

GIRL WITH BLACK BALLOONS is a multi-faceted portrait of Bettina – a reclusive, artist living within the confines of Manhattan's legendary lodgings. Said to be the most beautiful woman to have ever lived in the Chelsea Hotel, Bettina has hidden away in her studio for over forty years. She sleeps on a lawn-chair and surrounds herself with boxes stacked from floor to ceiling, filled with works of her art of which a fraction has been shown only once, in a 1980 exhibition in the OK Harris Gallery, whose owner Ivan Karp launched the careers of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. Filmed over two years, Bettina lets down her guard and reveals a treasure trove of her artwork- boxes filled with constructivist-inspired multi media pieces. But it's come at a huge cost.

### **Bio Corinne van der Borch**

Dutch filmmaker Corinne van der Borch (Wimbledon, 1977) is based in New York where she graduated from the School of Visual Arts in 2009. She established Wondertime Films in order to create 'ordinary magic', by collecting intimate stories and visuals, which can easily go unseen by using her camera as a notebook. Albert Maysles was a mentor during the two-year shoot of GIRL WITH BLACK BALLOONS, with Alan Berliner committed as consulting editor and producer. Corinne's new documentary project, "The Twin Moms" – currently in development – was chosen to participate in the highly selective Summer School of the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam earlier this year.

**Praise** for GIRL WITH BLACK BALLOONS: *"You captured her soul."* Academy-award winning director Barbara Kopple.

*I can't wait to see the next work from the directors of The Mouth of the Wolf and Girl with Black Balloons, to name just two."* Creative Director Edinburgh Film Festival Hannah Mc Gill (EIFF newsletter August 2010)

Website: [www.girlwithblackballoons.com](http://www.girlwithblackballoons.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/wondertimefilms](https://www.facebook.com/wondertimefilms)

Twitter: @wondertimefilms

**For press materials, a limited number of screeners and interview requests with director Corinne van der Borch and artist Bettina Grossman, please contact:**

Thessa Mooij, 646.637.4700

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### **Long Synopsis**

The legendary Chelsea Hotel in New York hides many stories behind its more than 200 doors. Old ones and new ones. Dark chapters and happy endings. Everyday moments of magic and extraordinary turns of life. There is no other building in the city of which so many people think, when passing it: "If only these walls could talk."

Dutch filmmaker Corinne van der Borch has managed to open one door. Not just any Chelsea Hotel door, that is (if such a thing exists). It's the door that is answered – if you're lucky - by the most beautiful women to have ever lived in the Chelsea Hotel, according to residents. It is also fair to say that she is one of the most eccentric creatures, not just in the hotel, in the whole city of New York.

Her name is Bettina, her age stays unrevealed and she has taken refuge in her Chelsea Hotel studio since the sixties, surrounded – or better said: built in - by hundreds and hundreds of her stunningly beautiful art works, stacked from floor to ceiling. She sleeps on a lawn chair in a tiny corner. She can only reach it by maneuvering carefully through boxes, paintings and collages, of which most have never seen the light of day. Being in Bettina's studio is like being in her head. Van der Borch gained access to this incredible place, to the life of this reclusive woman who guards her creativity and her artwork with her... well, with her life. She is as much a prisoner as a freed soul.

The result of two years of visits by the filmmaker, just her and her camera, is a fascinating, endearing and sincere documentary.

### **Bio Laura Minnear (editor & co-producer)**

Laura is an award-winning filmmaker who began her work in documentaries for series such as PBS-Frontline and Nova after a diverse background in field biology/zoology, fine arts, percussion and dance. Her recent credits include THE LULU SESSIONS (editor, co-producer, co-writer) with director S. Casper Wong, currently on the festival circuit and winning Best Documentary, Emerging Filmmaker, and Audience awards; BLAST! (co-editor) with director Paul Devlin, (Hot Docs 2009 and BBC Storyville premieres). She is currently a producer/editor for Dan Rather Reports. The stories we tell, whether on-screen or in how we choose to live our daily lives, seem to her to be at heart about the dance.



### Quotes

*"Girl With Black Balloons" is a beautifully conceived excavation --part archeological, part psychological --into the life and times of a truly authentic New York City character. It is a film of dialogues: between Bettina and the ghosts of the Chelsea hotel, between filmmaker and subject, between two women, between two cultures, and ultimately, between the unpredictable pushes and pulls of life and art."*

~ **Alan Berliner**, filmmaker-Wide Awake (2006), The Sweetest Sound (2001), Nobody's Business (1996), Intimate Stranger (1991)-

*" You captured her soul "* ~ Two-time Academy Award winning filmmaker **Barbara Kopple**.

*"I can't wait to see the next work from the directors of The Mouth of the Wolf and Girl with Black Balloons, to name just two."* ~ Creative Director Edinburgh Film Festival Hannah Mc Gill (EIFF newsletter August 2010)

*"Bettina's work burdens on me like a constant ethical claim"* ~ **Gert Schiff**, art historian, critic, lecturer and professor at the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University

*"Thoughtful and sensitive, this documentary is a fitting tribute to a truly original woman."* ~ <http://www.tvbomb.co.uk>

### Credits

Produced, Written by Corinne van der Borch  
Presenting Bettina  
Cinematography by Corinne van der Borch  
Edited by Laura Minnear, Corinne van der Borch  
Co-produced & co-written by Laura Minnear  
Original Music by Andres Subercaseaux  
Mentor Albert Maysles  
Consulting Producer/Editor Alan Berliner  
Consulting Editors Grahame Weinbren, Chiel Aldershoff  
Advisors Shelly Silver, Ed Bowes  
Graphic Animation Einat Gavish  
Sound Designer Eric Milano  
HD mastering Jon Fordham Frame:Runner, Inc New York  
Insight on Sight Bettina  
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