

A Insertfilm Production  
with SRF Sternstunde Kunst



# THE 'MENSCH' OF MY LIFE IS ME

A documentary by Christian Walther

54 min. | Switzerland | 2021

[www.insertfilm.ch/en/tmomlim/](http://www.insertfilm.ch/en/tmomlim/)

**Publicity**

Insertfilm AG  
[pedro.haldemann\(at\)insertfilm.ch](mailto:pedro.haldemann(at)insertfilm.ch)

+41 32 625 70 01  
+41 79 302 84 66

**Sales**

Aardvark Film Emporium  
[film\(at\)aardvarkfilm.com](mailto:film(at)aardvarkfilm.com)

+41 76 468 89 17

## **LOGLINE**

«Häutungen» («Shedding») became a cult book of the women's movement in 1975. In it, the Swiss author Verena Stefan relentlessly describes her escape from the patriarchal world. The film shows how she increasingly became the 'Mensch' of her life and portrays her and the people who were close to her.

## **SYNOPSIS**

Verena Stefan writes «Häutungen» («Shedding») in 1975. Her book sells several hundred thousand copies, the author becomes famous, celebrated and is confronted with hostility – even from her own ranks – and soon after retreats to the countryside. Later, she writes other books, among others about her mother and her grandfather. They are always very personal, but it is precisely for this reason that many people are able to follow on from the experiences and thoughts told by Verena Stefan.

The film «The 'Mensch' of My Life Is Me» tells Verena Stefan's life with archived interviews and text passages from her works. In addition, we have spoken to longtime companions like Cristina Perincioli in Berlin and Lise Moisan in Montréal.

We go back to the time when «Shedding» was published: 1975 was the International Year of Women, but in Germany and Switzerland, married women needed their husband's consent to sign a contract, abortion was forbidden.

All these developments and experiences are reflected in the present, for example in the Swiss women's strike in June 2019, and in the growing and passing of nature. Ultimately, the big question is: How can I lead a self-determined life?

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I met Verena Stefan only once, thirteen years ago, when her book «Fremdschläfer» was published and I realized a TV report about her. A 'Fremdschläfer' is a person who sleeps over at a stranger's place, but it is also a term for the cancer that had lodged in her body (and from which she eventually died) and a term for an asylum seeker who does not spend the night at his designated sleeping place.

The encounter with her, the power of her precise language and her criticism of its heteronormativity captivated me and her biography, which is reflected in her work, deeply impressed me. But by the time I began to study her in depth, she was already dying.

Verena Stefan was born in Bern in 1947, the same year and in the same city as my mother. With her Baccalaureat in her pocket, Verena Stefan turned her back on Bern in 1966 and went to a city where «the levers of culture move», as she puts it, to West Berlin. In 1975, her first book, «Shedding», was published by a small feminist publishing house. The book dissects the language and actions of men and women and holds a mirror up to patriarchy. «Shedding» was a great success, sold hundreds of thousands of copies, was translated into tens of languages and is today considered the most radical German-language book of feminism.

Verena Stefan was an inspiration to many women, but she did not like to push herself into the limelight. This is one of the reasons why there is very little footage of her. It was therefore clear from the beginning that Verena Stefan's life had to be told by those people who were close to her.

I personally think it's great that so many women - very different women - who are in the autumn of their lives appear in «The 'Mensch' of my life is me» and thus set an example.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### **CHRISTIAN WALTHER – Director**

Born 1972 in Berne, Switzerland. Trained as primary school teacher. Studied English, Media Science and History in Berne. Graduated with a MAS in European Studies from the University of Basel.

Since 1999 works as a producer with SRF Swiss Television. Lives and works as a journalist and filmmaker in Berne and Geneva. «The Mensch of my life is me» is his third documentary after «Die Rückkehrer» (2016), and «Matera – From the shame of Italy to the Capital of Culture» (2018).

[www.nordsternmedien.ch](http://www.nordsternmedien.ch)

### **PEDRO HALDEMANN – Producer**

Born in 1952, studied at the Swiss Jazz School, Berne. 1979-87 member of the ensemble Andreas Vollenweider and Friends. From 1992 founder of the independent theater group X-Rayted Production and author of various plays. Assistant director at the Stadttheater Biel-Solothurn. 1994 Promotion Award for Theatre und Film Music of the canton of Solothurn. Member of the SFP (Swiss Film Producers Association). Since 2011 active as a producer and partner of Insertfilm AG.

[www.insertfilm.ch](http://www.insertfilm.ch)

### **GISELA WEIBEL – Editor**

Lives in Stäfa, Switzerland. She has 20 years experience in video and film editing, strong structural skills in documentaries and putting together best performances from actors in fiction.

[www.giziwybel.com](http://www.giziwybel.com)

### **SANDRA STADLER – composer**

Born in 1989, Composer and pianist. She studied piano and composition (Bachelor) and composition for film, theater and media (Master) at the Zurich University of the Arts. In addition to film music, she composes concert music for various formations and is active as a pianist, singer and songwriter.

<https://sonderfilmmusic.com/en/>

**INSERTFILM INC.** is an independent production company based in Solothurn, Switzerland.

Its main focus lies in producing content focused on global and local topics, culture and art issues, aimed to reach an interested audience. Since 1992 Insertfilm has produced features, documentaries and essays for cinema and television, working both in Switzerland and in coproduction with national and foreign partners.

[www.insertfilm.ch](http://www.insertfilm.ch)

## **CREDITS**

### **A documentary by**

Christian Walther

### **With**

Verena Stefan

Lise Moisan

Cristina Perincioli

Ulrich Stefan

Greta Nemiroff

Geneva Moser

Anna Stüssi

Heide Marie Weller

### **Produced by**

Pedro Haldemann

### **Editor**

Gisela Weibel

### **Co-Producer**

SRF Sternstunde Kunst

Sandra Roth

Urs Augstburger

### **Music Composer**

Sandra Stadler

A Insertfilm production  
In collaboration with SRF