



FIREFOX
THE PRINCE
AND THE
SPACE IN BETWEEN

A FILM BY KLAUS PAS

MEET MATTHIAS: 32, AUTISTIC, LIKES VIDEO GAMES.

BEST FRIEND WITH FIREFOX: TALKING RED PANDA, ALCOHOLIC.

SYNOPSIS

"Firefox, the Prince and the Space in Between" tells the story of Matthias and of his best friend Firefox, a drunk red panda. Matthias works in a chocolate factory in the Flemish part of Belgium. When I meet him, he is spending a week of his summer holiday at his parents, mostly playing online video games.

I film him, sometimes watching, sometimes asking him how it feels to be 32 and autistic.

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Firefox, the Prince and the Space in Between was a human adventure. The film was not thought of as a film. It started with a simple question from Matthias's mother who asked me whether I thought making a film with her autistic son could be a good idea. To me, it sounded like a mutually enriching experience. That was in March 2012.





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Three months later, I was in Belgium, on my way to meet Matthias for the first time. My only plan was to have no plan at all. I was not even sure we would be making a film together. Never having spent time with anyone autistic before, a part of me feared that we might not be able to get along, let alone film something together. I did not want to think of what the film could be or how it should look, before I actually had the time to sit down with Matthias. I certainly did not want our time together to become a didactic treaty about autism.

It took a good day before I felt I could take my camera out. Observation. That was my first idea. I would film him, from the back, not showing his eyes, for I felt that he still did not want to expose himself fully to the camera. Hopefully, Firefox, his extravagant teddy bear would soon fill the digital silence orchestrated only by the endless video games in the background.

As days went by, Matthias opened up and I was able to be more frontal with him, asking him about very personal things. But then here again, going into the details of what autism meant to him proved very out of place and was not answered. So I asked him about sex, about love, about his parents and God. I decided to focus on him and his off-screen world as a way to highlight his self-seclusion.

After just a week, mostly spent inside around the computer because of the rather cold and rainy weather, it was already time for me to leave. Matthias would go back to work, at a nearby chocolate factory employing disabled people and I would sit down behind my computer, looking for the right way to share my story with him on the screen. Our film was not a problem solver, it did not investigate the causes and did not explore any potential solutions, it simply showed the very specific and intimate family life of an autistic man on the eve of his 32 birthday.

What happened in front of the camera was both very real and magical at the same time. Like the Little Prince, Matthias is often blessed with the candor of a stranger child, who seems to reflect on our human ways through the cynical views of his best friend Firefox. And when confronted with our codified social interaction patterns, he tends to fall in what I could only describe as the space between our reality and his very own world.

Documentary / 26 min. / Turbulence Films (Switzerland) / 2012 / HD (1920x1080) / 16/9 / Colour / Stereo 2.0
French & Flemish with English subtitles / Disability / Autism / Portrait
Available in DCP / HD Cam / Blu-ray / Digital Betacam / DVD