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Review: *The Naked King – 18 Fragments on Revolution*

by [GIORGIA DEL DON](#)

05/06/2019 - Swiss director and journalist Andreas Hoessli talks to us about revolution through the eyes of those who lived through it in all its glories and defeats



trailers & videos

international title: The Naked King – 18 Fragments on Revolution

original title: Der nackte



The triumphant winner of the international competition section at the DOK.Fest München, **Andreas Hoessli's** *The Naked King – 18 Fragments on Revolution* [+] is a striking work for the precision and complexity of its approach. As the product of long periods of time spent in Poland and Iran, two worlds which the director knows like the back of his hand, the film was born out of a need to understand the way in which the historical ups and downs of these two countries have shaped the lives of those who were there to live through them.

(The article continues below - Commercial information)

Focusing not so much on the public personalities who fill the pages of history books, but rather on the “common” people – the many overshadowed revolutionaries who truly believed that a (potentially) utopian change might come about - Hoessli builds a bridge between a past which he himself was witness to and a present which is difficult to define.

In some respects, the seed was sown for *The Naked King – 18 Fragments on Revolution* as far back as 1978, the year in which Hoessli travelled to Poland to work on his thesis. There, he struck up a friendship with **Ryszard Kapucscinski** who was working as a reporter in Iran at the time and who became, in a manner of speaking, the protagonist of Hoessli's film.

Poland and Iran, with all their protests and revolutions which were taking place at this key period in time, become the starting point for a film which, from its opening scenes, has all the markings of a spy novel, though frightfully real in tone. Forty years after the upheavals which marked these two territories nigh on simultaneously despite their geographical distance, the director sets himself the difficult task of unearthing the remains of that time: the people, the places, the society itself. By way of interviews with those who lived through this period and who can give human form to the anxieties felt at the time, as well as with

König – 18
Fragmente
über
Revolution

country:	Switzerland, Germany, Poland
year:	2019
directed by:	Andreas Hoessli
screenplay:	Andreas Hoessli

full film profile



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those who hadn't yet been born, but who nonetheless feel this angst is engraved into their very being, Hoessli digs deep in an attempt to find the common truth of an unforgettable time in our human history. By interweaving archive images - which, going by today's standards, have something of the unreal about them (in Iran, hordes of people dressed like westerners, attending lively rallies) -, memories attempting to convey the indomitable spirit which animated so many people and the testimonies of those who suffered the consequences of the events, the director (re)constructs a historical timeline based on feelings and individual perceptions.

What was going through the minds of these numerous youngsters, men and women, who were involved in these revolutions sweeping through Poland and Iran? But most importantly, what happened to them once the revolution was snuffed out (as was the case in Poland), or when the religious authorities took up the reins of power (as in Iran)? Should we look at it as a defeat or should we concentrate on the positive consequences that the revolution has had for future generations?

Hoessli tries to answer these questions by drawing on his own personal perspective – the experiences he has lived through and the consequences to which he bears witness today. By focusing on individuals, the director gives a voice to those who have now grown too used to silence; a silence which conceals clues which are very much there, and which point to a past which is still very much alive.

Although some knowledge of the time period examined in the film is required in order to fully appreciate *The Naked King – 18 Fragments on Revolution*, the direct focus it places on human beings ultimately results in a film which is both humane and universal. The narrating voice, meanwhile – the great **Bruno Ganz** in the German version and **Sam Riley** in the English –, endows the film with a sense of mystery and elegance which is always gratefully received

Produced by Mira Film (who are also in charge of international sales), TM Film GmbH, Centrala, ARTE G.E.I.E. and TVP Telewizja Polska, the film will be released in Swiss cinemas in September. Swiss distribution will come courtesy of Vinca Film GmbH.

(Translated from Italian)

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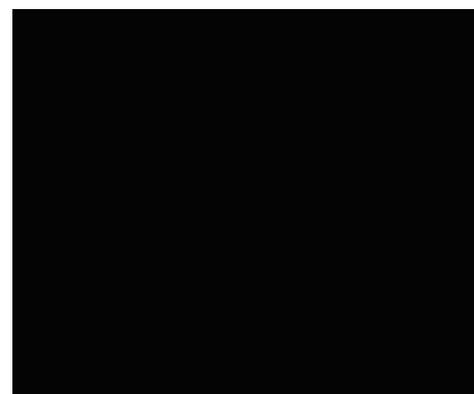
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