

freedom2speak

PRESS-SHEET

>I'd like to start off by saying that I am not anti-American, but I am anti the views of the present administration. <

Dustin Hoffman, actor, USA, in FREEDOM2SPEAK V2.0



>I live in a great country – and they do usually ask questions. I'm praying that at some point the right people are going to step up and say: Are you sure that maybe before we go killing people, we should talk about it more.<

George Clooney, actor, USA, in FREEDOM2SPEAK V2.0

FREEDOM2SPEAK V2.0

Germany, 2004, 60 min, DV

Directors: Markus C.M. Schmidt, Brigitte Kramer, Christoph Gampl,
Marc Meyer, Uwe Nagel



FREEDOM2SPEAK V2.0

It all began at the Berlinale 2003, before the war in Iraq, and was continued at the film festivals in Istanbul and Cannes up, into the post-combat and on-going stages of the war. The group revolving around the filmmakers Markus C. M. Schmidt, Christoph Gampl, Brigitte Kramer, Marc Meyer and Uwe Nagel enables the film International community – from Abderrahmane Sissako to Volker Schlöndorff – to communicate their sense of helplessness.

>They tore down the statues and destroyed them with American tanks, but Saddam won't be defeated simply by destroying his statues or even by deposing him.<

*Ahmed Baha Eddine Attia, producer, Tunisia,
in FREEDOM2SPEAK V2.0*

Today I think that this war, for such reasons, is impossible without conclusive evidence. It shouldn't happen.

Patrice Chéreau, director, France, in FREEDOM2SPEAK V2.0

If there's a war, I'm hopeful that the movie industry can offer people what they need in a time of war, maybe some relaxation.<

*Jack Valenti, Chairman Motion Picture Association., USA,
in FREEDOM2SPEAK V2.0*

FREEDOM2SPEAK V2.0 – SHORT SYNOPSIS

How does war change our perception? How well can we detect media manipulation – how far do we accept it?

Interviews and short films from the film festivals in Berlin, Istanbul and Cannes comprise a controversial documentation of opinions and moods during the Iraq crisis in 2003. A documentary collage that exposes itself to the criticism of being manipulative, FREEDOM2SPEAK V2.0 gives filmmakers from around the world their say - Volker Schlöndorff, Abderrahmane Sissako, Minnie Driver, Romain Goupil, George Clooney, Udi Aloni, Andres Veiel, Martina Gedeck, Jack Valenti, Kutlug Ataman, Luc Picard, Dustin Hoffman, among many others.

FREEDOM2SPEAK V2.0 - SYNOPSIS

February 2003 – Between Washington, D.C. and Baghdad, the Iraq crisis is about to escalate – In Berlin, it's the opening of the International Film Festival. 100 filmmakers decide to counter the widespread feeling of powerlessness under the label **freedom2speak**. From interviews and short films emerges a provocative documentation of moods and opinions in the face of a looming war.

March 2003 – In Baghdad, bombs are exploding – Istanbul sees the start of its Film Festival. Under the impression of emotionally charged images from the war, filmmakers and festival attendees argue over the reasons and consequences of American occupation in Iraq.

May 2003 – US President George W. Bush proclaims the end of the war – On the Croisette in Cannes, war supporters and opponents engage in controversial discussions: Politics, media and esthetics – how has war changed our perception? How well can we detect media manipulation – how far do we accept it?

A documentary collage that exposes itself to the criticism of being manipulative, FREEDOM2SPEAK V2.0 gives filmmakers from around the world their say - Volker Schlöndorff, Abderrahmane Sissako, Minnie Driver, Romain Goupil, George Clooney, Udi Aloni, John Hurt, François da Silva, Kutlug Ataman, Andres Veiel, Martina Gedeck, Jack Valenti, Fred Kelemen, Luc Picard, Dustin Hoffman, among many others.



HISTORY

freedom2speak on FREEDOM2SPEAK

February 2003. The Iraq crisis is escalating: The US presents evidence that serves to justify a unilateral war. Worldwide public doubts and opposition are being ignored by the Bush Administration, as are United Nations attempts at negotiation and de-escalation. On her own authority, the US prepares a war that contradicts all democratic principles of the world community.

At the same time, the 53rd International Film Festival is opening in Berlin. Berlin filmmakers rally under the label **freedom2speak**, not ready to close their eyes to the explosive political developments for two weeks, during which the world is going to be radically changed by the Iraq crisis.

Uncertain where it will lead them, the filmmakers decide to act. With the Festival's support they interview celebrities – They install a speaker's corner in front of one of the Festival venues, where each and every Festival attendee can state their opinion to be recorded. Additionally, the filmmakers ask all colleagues to submit freestyle short films on the topic. In the course of the Berlinale, a small group of Berlin filmmakers develops into an international team working for a common goal.

The result is a 70-minute documentation, created within 12 days, with the support of more than 100 filmmakers, among them stars like George Clooney and John Hurt.

FREEDOM2SPEAK VERSION 1.0 is premiered on the Festival's last day, in a completely overcrowded theater. The feedback goes beyond all expectations. It proves there is a desire for a forum outside the established media and encourages the group to continue **freedom2speak**.

The next stations are the film festivals in Istanbul and Cannes. Iraq is defeated and occupied, the "post-war" is raging. Analysis of the consequences and significance of the war begins; Opinions are even more controversial than before. While Istanbul is dominated by the question of the power and origin of images from the war, Cannes is an arena of arguments between war supporters and opponents.

By the end of June, 18 hours of material have been submitted: Interviews, short films, news footage, and video clips. All motivated by the one question: How does this war change our image of the world?

Screening and editing this profusion of material becomes a Herculean task. How to fit which image? Who gets their freedom2speak, with which statement? How can the montage keep up with the pace of developments in Iraq?

By the end of December, **FREEDOM2SPEAK VERSION 2.0** is finished. 60 minutes of documentation, created in a window of time of 12 months, a controversial representation of moods and opinions of filmmakers by filmmakers, on media and manipulation and a war with no end in sight.

Credits:

Directors:

Markus C. M. Schmidt , Brigitte Kramer, Christoph Gampl,
Marc Meyer, Uwe Nagel

Photography:

Jörg Jeshel , Frank Grunert, Isabel Casez, Philipp Koller,
Sebastian Winkels, Eeva Fleig, Peter Aichholzer, u. a.

Sound:

Bernd von Bassewitz , Jörg Theil , Kai Luede u.a.

Editing:

Markus C.M. Schmidt

Assistant Editing:

Kristine Langner, Christoph Schilling,
Sabrina Schmittmann, Eduardo Delgado Lopez.

Mixing:

Raimund von Scheibner

Technical Support:

media total, Howard Harrington

Producer:

Freedom2speak International e.v.

Production Manager:

Boris Keidies, Simon Chappuzeau

Production Coordination:

Anke Oehme,

Set Manager:

Marion Glaser, Ali Saghri

Editorial Support/ Red-Carpet-Interviews:

Martin Maaß

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