

DREAMS FOR LIFE

Director's statement

At the end of 1996 beginning of 1997, I had just finished editing on a personal documentary called THE BUTLER, summer was just around the corner and I would wake up each morning under the spell of yet another dream. Within the space of some months I had an incredible number of dreams which all seemed to be about the same thing. More than anything, I was bewildered at the continuity of their themes and the similarity of emotions such as longing, loneliness and regrets they evoked in me. A great number of these ended up in DREAMS FOR LIFE.

One of the reasons I decided to do something with these dreams was that not only they were so powerful in mood and emotion, but they were also coherent. They told a story, they had a beginning, a middle and an end. I knew I could never reproduce the images of my dreams in a way that they would move one the same way they moved me. But if I told these dreams in words, like in a story, then maybe people could be moved because they would experience their own pictures and emotions. I decided to put the dreams within the context of a narrative film.

I have for some time, been interested in when it's best to tell and when to show in film. What components can be used when, to tell the best story and best engage the audience? For example, when is it more challenging that the image tells the story? When is it best to tell it in a dialogue between characters, in voiceover, in music or in written words?

In my personal documentaries for example, the voiceover is as important as the image. It is about thoughts and feelings, it drives the narrative and engages the audience emotionally. The images are like still lifes in painting, visually pleasing, yet they don't intrude. That's how I see the voiceover in DREAMS FOR LIFE. The dreams my character describes are in themselves short stories or even poetry, in the bigger picture they are very much related to the main story and its themes. If film is a story, I want to tell DREAMS FOR LIFE through different stories and I want my audience to be carried away like I was - in sorrow and in hope.

I love the kind of films which leave an after-taste with me, when the emotions I felt while watching the film linger still inside of me some days later. That is how dreams effect me. That is one of the main reasons I am so excited about DREAMS FOR LIFE. I feel it has the potential to achieve this, to effect one emotionally, even subconsciously and to stay with one for a while after, from autumn to...

Anna Kannava

DREAMS FOR LIFE

Writer/director's statement

The use of voiceover in my personal documentary films is as important as the image. It is what drives the narrative and engages the audience emotionally. The image is often secondary, accompanying the story which unfolds in words. The voiceover is about thoughts and feelings, which in combination with the image, dialogue and music, tell a story which is film.

In the case of my personal documentaries the subject has of course been non-fiction. I have always preferred however, making films in which my own life and experiences have been fictionalized, and have written drama in the conventional dialogue driven way. But as a new idea has come to me which demands I tell the narrative very much through voiceover, it occurred to me that there is no reason why I should not make a fiction in the way I make documentaries.

I have for some time, being interested in when it is best to tell and when to show in film. What components can be used when, to tell the best story and best engage the audience. For example, when is it more challenging that the image tells the story? When is it best to tell it in a dialogue between characters, in voiceover, or in written words? The voiceover can be used to tell the story directly, it can also be used to describe a character's thoughts, it can even be used to recite poetry. These are all tools which can be used in film. The right combination, and usage of each tool at a certain time is something that fascinates me. In my recent documentary *The Butler*, the balance of the different styles and materials used was the secret to telling the best story possible. This experimentation I want to continue in *Dreams For Life*.

A big component of *Dreams For Life* is the descriptions of dreams and thoughts my main character has. They will mainly be accompanied by simple images of herself and objects in her house, the park across her bedroom framed by her window - the streets, buildings and seascapes she comes across. These images will be like still life paintings. Or I may create images from her unconscious. There will also be the story unfolding in dialogue between the two main characters. The right combination of the two, dialogue and voiceover, will be the secret to a strong film. Attempting a drama this way is a new challenge for me. One which I hope I can resolve as successfully as I have done in my personal documentaries. The dreams my character describes in voiceover are in themselves short stories or even poetry. These stories are the priority, they are what I hope will engage the viewer in the scene.