



# FIRST HAND FILMS

## A BRIEF ON WHAT WE DO

### The Business of Sales and Falling in Love

**First, we fall in love. Then, we start to work. Our passion is to get good films seen, our job is to add professional know-how to further the film's commercial career: knowledge of the markets, contacts with the relevant players, and skills to close a deal. Our business is to sell great films, and we're good at it.**

#### ① Buyers

We continuously build and cultivate contacts with our clients. We know what they are looking for and when they have what kind of budgets available. A list of our clients is on our website.

#### ① Markets

We are present at all major international festivals and markets as well as at specialized events to show and sell films. We visit buyers regularly on their turf in order to keep in close touch with their very individual product demands.

#### ① Teaching and Learning

We participate in local and international seminars and panels around the world and share our knowledge with colleagues and clients. We know the markets and follow the industry's own developments as much as the technical revolutions.

#### ① Catalogue

We have a catalogue of more than 200 films which makes us a solid partner for buyers who trust our profile and have neither time nor the inclination to negotiate each film they buy individually. Each film sells others in the catalogue, and the catalogue supports each film – it's all about continuity.

#### ① Business

We have, despite our infatuation, 'healthy' distance to the work of art. We can define its potential and make sure that it is offered to the right audiences in order to maximise results. We have the necessary experience and competence to negotiate and close complex licence agreements in the best interest of the film and its makers.

We work at our own financial risk and are independent since 1998. We invest time, effort and money up-front when we believe in a film and in its commercial potential. We only earn our share when the filmmakers do, when we have successfully closed a deal.

Esther van Messel (owner and managing director), Gitte Hansen (deputy director),  
Ayse Poffet (business manager), Sarah Born (research and development)

### The small print hard facts

Since 1998, Esther van Messel runs FHF in Zurich and Berlin for international distribution of documentaries, TV series and fiction films. FHF acts as executive producer for selected projects and has worked with major broadcasters around the world (Arte, BBC, CH4, Ikon, SBS, VRT, ZDF and many others). FHF is present at all major festivals around the year, with booths and stands at the main events in Berlin, Cannes, La Rochelle and Amsterdam. First Hand Films have competed in Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Rotterdam, Locarno, Sundance, Toronto and many others. FHF's very first pick-up went on to receive the OSCAR® for Best Documentary Feature. Since then, most First Hand Films have won awards: Emmy, Prix Europa, IDFA main awards, Biarritz, Banff, Grimme-Preis, Grand Prix Nyon, National Film Awards, European Film Awards, Silver Leopards, Golden Rose Montreux and more. In 2009, all First Hand Films have been seen by many millions of people.

In 2010 the second First Hand Film is Academy Award® nominated: BURMA VJ.

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