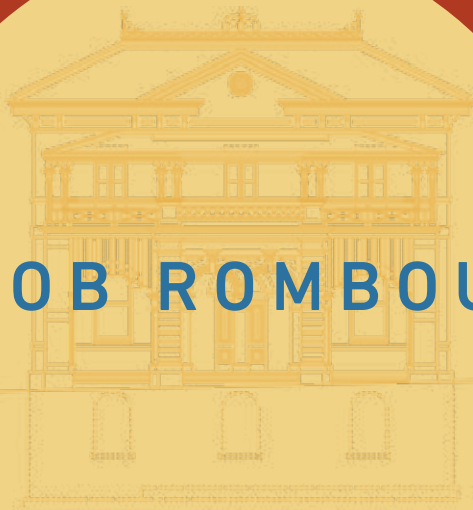


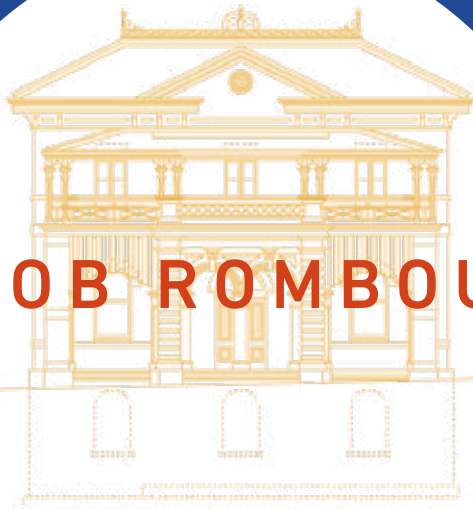
SHOWCASE  
CINEMA

ROB ROMBOUT



SHOWCASE  
CINEMA

ROB ROMBOUT



# ROB, THE DOC NOMAD

nomad

*noun*

noun: **nomad**; plural noun: **nomads**

a member of a people that travels from place to place to find fresh pasture for its animals and has no permanent home.

“the withering of their grasslands forced the nomads of the Sahara to descend into the Nile valley”

itinerant, traveller, migrant, wanderer, wayfarer, roamer, rover, gypsy, Bedouin; More

synonyms: transient, drifter, vagabond, vagrant, tramp;

refugee, displaced person, DP, homeless person; *dated* bird of passage

**a person who does not stay long in the same place; a wanderer.**

“Dolly was a nomad who had finally taken root in Hawaii”



Writing an intro for a dear colleague, that I know for so long, and having the excellent text of Ernie Tee in this booklet, makes it a little bit superfluous. It makes it a bit unnecessary and redundant.

We have been class mates in the film school, we have lived in the same neighbourhood, we kept in touch, nearly always by accident, bumping into each other. I always took the opportunity to catch up. We were in some ways opposites, but the curiosity to learn about the latest endeavours was always there, as Rob has been just more than an interesting person. He was very early on, a guidance as a teacher, who could finely explain his pedagogies, and he had – again from day one, a very keen eye as a filmmaker. His observation skills are quite extra-ordinary, and that makes him both the excellent teacher and wise filmmaker that he has become.

His is also a very generous person, as he is the first to share his knowledge and his passion, with friends, colleagues and students, in so many ways. That was exactly what we wanted to do here and now. Give him not just the one and usual window to come and teach documentary filmmaking in our school, but give him a multi-faceted set of windows, to be able to give him the portrait he deserves. We hope you all come and discover, with genuine curiosity.

We sincerely hope we have made him proud. Welcome to Rob, on the move, as he often is.

**PROF. HERMAN VAN EYKEN,**  
Head, Griffith Film School

# ABOUT

## ROB ROMBOUT

Rob Rombout (Amsterdam, 1953) has lived and worked in Brussels since 1975.

He is an independent documentary film-maker, teacher and lecturer .

He is co-founder and executive of the Doc-Nomads international Master ([www.docnomads.eu](http://www.docnomads.eu)).

He has been an independent documentary-maker for over 30 years.

All films were shown on television and festivals.

Rob was 10 years vice-president of the Belgian Committee of the French Author Organization SCAM.

He was member of film-commissions in Belgium & France.

He is a regular teacher at SKDA Hanoï, AUT & ALBA Beirut , Griffith, Brisbane and ESTC in Lisbon.

He gives workshops in Brazil, USA, China, Russia & France.

His last film is a portrait of the Dutch writer Robert van Gulik

*"On the track of Robert Van Gulik"* ( 87 min, 2016)

[www.robrombout.com](http://www.robrombout.com)



# THE TRAVELS OF ROB ROMBOUT

February 2018

*By Ernie Tee, Professor Film History & Film Analysis  
at the Dutch Film Academy*

'When film made its first appearance in 1895, many of us were forced to stasis. In the course of the nineteenth century travel lust had prompted us to develop many other ways to transport us to distant places, in addition to maritime traffic. But very soon after the introduction of the Cinématograph from the Lumière brothers it was film that took us to the most inaccessible regions of all continents, including the ice-cold polar regions. At the same time, we as film public, were sentenced to small, and later larger, darkened rooms, which we were not supposed to leave as long as the film played. This is the situation that has descended on us since the coming of film: we have all become explorers, without having to leave our city, our village, our place. Because of film, travelling was no longer a matter of moving our bodies, but made travel settle into our imagination. And how rich did our imagination get when fed with all those beautiful, silent travelogues in the beginning of the last century?

Nowadays these conditions are gone of course: the physical movement is fully optimized and democratized, with ease everyone gets to the farthest corners of our planet and film has nothing more to tell us, since we ourselves are the suppliers of the most daring travel films with all our different types of smart apps. These films' goals are not to challenge our imagination however, but are evidence: they have to demonstrate that one has been at that place.

Rob Rombout is a filmmaker who brings travelling back to our imagination with his documentaries. The filmmaker, living a nomadic life himself most of the time – as a Dutch Zaanlander who ended up in Brussels with his Portuguese wife, but travels

a lot around the world for his films – leads us everywhere, from Paris to Moscow, from China to the Kerguelen Islands in the southernmost part of the Indian Ocean, from the Azores to the Urals, where Rombout discovered an extraordinary documentary film festival in the isolated town of Perm. And mostly we have ended up in Amsterdam through his films, though not only the Amsterdam in the Netherlands, but also the Amsterdam in the Indian Ocean (Île Amsterdam), the Arctic Island Amsterdam northwest of Spitsbergen, and the Amsterdams at fifteen places throughout the entire United States of America who are allowed to carry this name.

But all these destinations are not the actual subject of the films of Rob Rombout. We may be taken anywhere and everywhere, but the films tell us more about the journey towards it, about travelling, about being on the go. In the film *Portrait about Dutch writer Joost de Vries*, made by Rombout in 2016, the filmmaker takes the writer on a train journey, as to literally loosen the writer's views from the ground in which they are rooted. And in many films of Rombout we specifically experience the journey before we arrive at the destination ('Perm-Mission', 'The Azores of Madredeus'). But, once arrived, it is as if we are not yet convinced of the durability of the destination in the films of Rob Rombout. When he visits processions and taurada's with Madredeus on the Azores, a custom in which enraged bulls are released in the streets, it seems like it is a study on the firmness of the ritual from the filmmaker. In other films it seems Rombout is openly looking for an excuse to leave the place again. For example, the film he made about the Alsace, 'The Passengers of the Alsace', does not have the Alsace as its subject, but deals with the question of what the inhabitants of this region, often coming from elsewhere, find so special about having become a true Alsatian. It is as if

the filmmaker, perhaps out of disbelief, searches in others their reasons for moving to an area and stay there.

A rewarding arena for Rombout is formed by all those settle-locations, that have a temporary character and where departure somewhere in the future is certain. For example, at the Queen Elizabeth 2, where Rob was shooting his film 'Transatlantic QE2', and for the Queen Mary 2, a gigantic cruise ship, on which he filmed 'QM2, The Enterprise'. This also applies to the Northern sea drilling rig with its regular crew, where he filmed 'Black Island', and certainly also for the Nord Express train, with which he travelled from Paris to Moscow to portray his fellow-travellers and many people who lived and worked along the route ('Nord Express').

The being on the move in Rob Rombout's films is expressed by the loose, sensuous way in which the filmmaker builds up his films. Nowhere you can find the restrictions of a tight narrative structure. Destinations are allowed, but the journey itself may still surprise us in many aspects.

In an age where everything is within reach, travel itself is the great forgotten path. Not in the films of Rob Rombout.'

# THE AZORES OF MADREDEUS / LES AÇORES DE MADREDEUS

1995

40 MINUTES



## SYNOPSIS

A poetic portrait of the famous Portuguese band, Madredeus, filmed in the magnificent surroundings of the Azores. The Azores offer an unpredictable landscape where light itself, under the influence of a whimsical climate, can completely change in a minute. The music of Madredeus is at home there. Teresa and Pedro tour from one island to the others and rediscover some of the multi-ethnic origins of their music. Landscapes, testimonies and popular feasts rituals recall the themes of their songs.

Madredeus leading vocals are performed by Teresa Salgueiro, Pedro Ayres Magalhães plays de guitar and is the composer, Francisco Ribeiro plays violoncelle and sings, accordion is performed by Gabriel Gomes, José Peixoto also plays guitar en on keys Carlos Maria Trindade.



## **DIRECTOR**

Rob Rombout

## **WRITER**

Rob Rombout

## **DOP**

Jean-Paul Dezaytijd

## **SOUND**

Paul Heymans

## **EDITOR**

Adriana Moreira de Oliveira

## **PRODUCER**

Mona Lisa Films



# ON THE TRACK OF ROBERT VAN GULIK

2016

87 MINUTES

## SYNOPSIS

'On The Track of Robert van Gulik' is a documentary about Dutch writer, diplomat, Chinese specialist and scholar, Robert van Gulik. Robert van Gulik (1910-1967) is one of the world's most popular Dutch writers, but relatively unrecognized in his own country. As a diplomat, Chinese specialist and scholar, he became most famous with his detective series about Judge Dee, which in many ways, are projections of his own life: a permanent duality between his real life and the hero in his books.





## **DIRECTOR**

Rob Rombout

## **WRITER**

Rob Rombout

## **DOP**

Stef Tijdink  
Benjamin Wolf  
Stefano Bertacchini

## **SOUND**

Yves Gooddens-Bara

## **EDITOR**

Adriana Moreira de Oliveira

## **PRODUCER**

Off World



# THE PASSENGERS OF THE ALSACE / LES PASSAGERS DE L'ALSACE

2002

52 MINUTES

## SYNOPSIS

In his quest to answer his questions about identity, Rob Rombout visits the region Alsace. On a train he meets 'ordinary' people and interviews them on issues that apparently have no link with the Alsatian regional identity or the clichés that generally characterise the Alsatian.



Fascinated by travelling, Rob Rombout tries to share his feelings with us, as a stranger, a passer-by, who meets a region and its inhabitants and progressively shows his perception of the Alsatian identity, or identities, at a given moment. The way they observe: the gaze. As in a train, everyone is following their own route. It is the movement of life. Following those three lines, Rob Rombout goes beyond the capture of personal history and weaves the threads of several particular stories that tell us the collective story of life in a region, as in a snapshot of a moment shared with others, with strangers randomly met on a train. He paints the landscape of life, in the movement of the passing time.



## **DIRECTOR**

Rob Rombout

## **WRITER**

Rob Rombout

## **DOP**

Samuel Dravet

## **SOUND**

Grégoire Delandes  
Suzanne Erkalp

## **EDITOR**

Adriana Moreira de Oliveira

## **PRODUCER**

Le Meilleur des Mondes



# TRANS-ATLANTIC, QE2 / TRANSATLANTIQUE, QE2

1992

57 MINUTES

## SYNOPSIS

Over 1800 passengers and 1100 crew members board the world's largest ship, the last of the transatlantic liners; they are bound to live close together for five days at sea. For 150 years Cunard has maintained maritime links between Britain and the United States. The Queen Elizabeth 2 made it's first voyage to New York on May 2, 1969. After five hundred years of Atlantic ship crossings, the QE2 is the last ocean liner in activity. The ocean liner's role has changed over the years. Once an indispensable and single means of transport to distant lands, the ocean liner is now a haven of pleasure, providing isolation, escape, and distraction. First there is the unpredictable ocean and a never changing seascape, then the arrival in New York, the destination that seemed so far away, like a New World.





### **DIRECTOR**

Rob Rombout

### **WRITERS**

Rob Rombout

Jean-Philippe Laroche

### **DOP**

Louis-Philippe Capelle

### **SOUND**

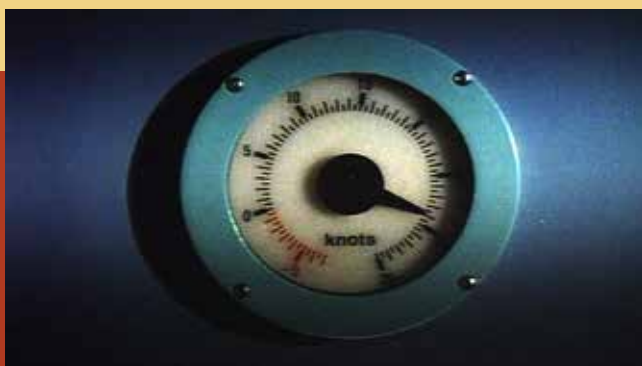
Paul Heymans

### **EDITOR**

Adriana Moreira de Oliveira

### **PRODUCER**

Nota Bene



# ROB ROMBOUT

## 35 YEARS ON THE MOVE

This exhibition is the result of a long journey I went on with Rogier van Eck. It is a concept; filming all places of the name Amsterdam – all Amsterdams in the world.

The first film, *Amsterdam Via Amsterdam* (90 minutes, 2004), is a sea-movie, visiting two small islands, one on the North Pole, the other in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The second film, *Amsterdam Stories USA* (360 minutes, 2012), is a road-movie, connecting 15 locations with the name Amsterdam in the USA. We are now working on a double portrait, an editing-film, between a remote village named Amsterdam in Mpumalange, South Africa, and another small village in the North of Holland, named Nieuw-Amsterdam. The resulting film, *Amsterdam Black & White* (90 minutes, 2020), will be the third chapter of the Amsterdam trilogy.

These documentary films are brought together in the Webb Gallery. Although all films were conceived for a single screen, the Gallery gives the possibility to experience the Amsterdam projects in space and time.

I made films for the single screen for over 35 years. My films have been shown at festivals and through broadcasters around the world. The perception has changed: festivals became markets and television is limited by its addiction to formats. Gallery exhibition is different. The films can not be experienced as a whole. But audiences engage with my works without haste, in an individual, self-directed way, paying attention to details that I never discovered myself. I see my own work in a new light, see new connections, new audience reactions. The Gallery gives a possibility to experience the Amsterdam project in space and time, to add photography and cartography that cannot be included in the films. It gives a new, alternate reality to the work.

# AMSTERDAM STORIES USA



# AMSTERDAM VIA AMSTERDAM



