



Theatrical & Festival Booking Contacts:

Nancy Gerstman & Emily Russo, Zeitgeist Films
212-274-1989 • nancy@zeitgeistfilms.com • emily@zeitgeistfilms.com

Press contact:

Sasha Berman • shotwellmedia@gmail.com

A ZEITGEIST FILMS RELEASE in association with KINO LORBER

M.C. ESCHER

JOURNEY TO INFINITY

SYNOPSIS

M.C. Escher: Journey To Infinity is the story of world famous Dutch graphic artist M.C Escher (1898-1972). Equal parts history, psychology, and psychedelia, Robin Lutz's entertaining, eye-opening portrait gives us the man through his own words and images: diary musings, excerpts from lectures, correspondence and more are voiced by British actor Stephen Fry, while Escher's woodcuts, lithographs, and other print works appear in both original and playfully altered form.

Two of his sons, George (92) and Jan (80), reminisce about their parents while musician Graham Nash (Crosby, Stills & Nash) talks about Escher's rediscovery in the 1970s. The film looks at Escher's legacy: one can see tributes to his work in movies, in fiction, on posters, on tattoos, and elsewhere throughout our culture; indeed, few fine artists of the 20th century can lay claim to such popular appeal.

ABOUT M.C. ESCHER

Maurits Cornelis Escher (1898-1972), better known as M. C. Escher, was a Dutch draftsman and printmaker born in Leeuwarden, The Netherlands.

Escher created his first prints in 1916 while a secondary school student in Arnhem. From 1919 to 1922, he attended the School for Architecture and Decorative Arts in Haarlem, during which time his studies turned from architecture to drawing and printmaking. In 1921, Escher began to travel extensively in Italy, settling in Rome in 1923. Escher married in 1924 and lived in Rome with his growing family until moving to Switzerland in 1935, to Belgium in 1937, and back to The Netherlands in 1941 during the first years of World War II.

Escher's frequent trips exploring the Italian countryside between 1921 and 1935 strongly influenced the subjects of his early prints, which included portraits, still lifes, and landscapes. During this period, he also created woodcut illustrations for three publications: the booklet *Flor de Pascua* (1921), an emblem book *XXIV Emblemata* (1932), and *De vreeselijke avonturen van Scholastica* (1933).

Traveling to Spain in 1936, Escher visited the Alhambra for the second time and visited the mosque in Córdoba. The renewed exposure to Arabic design occasioned an important change in his work--he became fascinated with geometry and symmetry and how those abstract design elements could be incorporated into his representations of the natural world. The images in his later prints are created from within his mind rather than representations of the physical world. He explored how to represent people, animals, and objects rising from the flat page and then returning, as well as how to represent the endlessness of infinity. As a result, Escher's work has been recognized both in the art world and in the scientific community, including at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam during the International Mathematical Conference in 1954.

Escher worked in a number of printmaking techniques, including lithography, drypoint, and mezzotint. However his preferred print techniques were woodcut, wood engraving, and linoleum cut.

-Boston Public Library

Please credit all uses of M.C ESCHER artworks as follows:
© the M.C. Escher Company B.V.- Baarn - the Netherlands

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Robin Lutz is the initiator of the Escher film project together with his co-producer Marijnke de Jong. First they sought cooperation with the Escher Foundation, which has all the (picture) rights to the works of Escher. This foundation agreed and gave their full cooperation to realize the movie. This indispensable partner will link the film also to the countless Escher exhibitions planned all over the world in the coming years. Naturally, the Escher museum in The Hague was also a good partner in this film project. Sir Roger Penrose, emeritus professor of mathematics at Oxford University is the patron of the film.

"I fear that there is only one person in the world who could make a really good movie about my prints: myself". Escher wrote this line in 1969 to an American collector of his work. And that is exactly what Escher is doing in this movie: he is the director, not literally but symbolically. As well as a visionary graphic artist Maurits Escher was a sharp observer who described his observations in numerous diaries, letters, lectures and catalogues. Thus, an image is created of his personal life described in his own words, with all his fears, doubts, euphoric moments, political considerations, his amazements, his artistic development and of course his own opinion on his work.

The public sees the film through the eyes of Escher himself: the camera is Escher. M.C. Escher tells in his own words what he saw, what he felt, what inspired him, what amazed him, what irritated him. We get under his skin and come as close as possible to meeting and understanding this great graphic artist.

The camera is Escher's eye!

The film shows historical footage of: Leeuwarden, where he was born, Haarlem, where he was educated, Italy where he lived during the rise of Mussolini, Spain just before Franco where he found his inspiration for his 'plain filling' and the Netherlands during the German occupation and the 50s and 60s when he lived in Baarn.

Escher gave sharp commentary on the turbulent world around him but focused entirely on his art. After a long period of traditional work his big breakthrough came after WWII with his "Escher" prints. In these works he shows a world that seems logical at first view but seems to be impossible in reality. The film shows with 3D animations how Escher visualized a vague idea into a graphic work and how his thought process evolved.

Although art historians often criticize Escher he is, after Rembrandt and Van Gogh one of the most famous Dutch artists known in the world. Everyone recognizes his work immediately.

How did he get his inspiration, how did he live, who was that genius graphic artist who worked fanatic and finally stunned the world? Escher was astonished by his huge success, especially among the youth. Escher's sons, George and Jan, and pop icon Graham Nash put Escher's story in context in the movie. The son's testimonials are a direct supplement to Escher himself. Pop star Graham Nash is a big collector of Escher's work and thanks to Escher's work he discovered 'art'. He is now, besides a singer also an art collector and publisher of art books. This feature documentary is the first complete film about Escher's life and work told in his own words! This film is a very personal statement by Escher himself 44 years after his death.

ESCHER EXHIBITIONS

During his lifetime Escher participated in many group exhibitions. He had smaller exhibitions in various countries, but his worldwide success started in 1954. That year he had his first solo exhibition in a leading Dutch Museum, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

In the same year he also had his first solo exhibition in the US at the Whyte Gallery in Washington D.C. It was a huge success and he sold 86 prints, which was a record for a Dutch artist in those days.

In 1968 the 'Gemeentemuseum' in The Hague organised the first Escher retrospective. By that time Escher was already ill and in the following years, until his death in 1972, only a couple of exhibitions took place.

After his death retrospectives of his work have been organized all over the world by the Escher Foundation, from Brazil to Japan, from Melbourne to Portugal, from Singapore to Argentina. They attract hundreds of thousands of visitors.

The Escher Foundation continues its work but due to COVID, momentarily all plans are set on hold.

INTERVIEWEES

Graham Nash

Escher did not understand where the popularity of his works amongst the hippies in the 1960s came from. "I cannot understand why the out-of-control youth of today appreciates my work so much..." he wrote.

Graham Nash, former member of The Hollies and later Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young describes in his memoirs 'Wild Tales' the life changing effect the encounter with Escher's art had on him. He explains why in the documentary and even comes up with an unknown story that confirmed Escher's complaints about being distracted from his work by his fans!

George and Jan Escher

To put their father's words in context interviews are conducted with two of Escher's sons, George and Jan. Their witnesses are complementary to Escher's story but also a reflection of it. Escher wrote during his lifetime many letters to his oldest son George (1926 – 2018), who emigrated to Canada in 1958, nearly one every two weeks. His youngest son, Jan, born in 1938, remembers a later period in his father's life.

NARRATOR

Stephen Fry

Stephen John Fry is an English actor, comedian and writer. Fry's film acting roles include playing his idol [Oscar Wilde](#) in the film [Wilde](#) (1997), a performance which saw him nominated for the [Golden Globe Award for Best Actor](#) and Inspector Thompson in [Robert Altman](#)'s murder mystery [Gosford Park](#) (2001) among many others. Fry is also known for his roles in television, such as [Lord Melchett](#) in the [BBC](#) television comedy series [Blackadder](#) and the title character in the television series [Kingdom](#) and [Absolute Power](#) as well as a recurring guest role as Dr Gordon Wyatt on the American crime series [Bones](#). He has also written and presented several documentary series, including the [Emmy Award](#)-winning [Stephen Fry: The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive](#), which saw him explore his [bipolar disorder](#).

Besides working in television, Fry has been a prolific writer, contributing to newspapers and magazines and having written four novels and three volumes of autobiography, [Moab Is My Washpot](#), [The Fry Chronicles](#), and [More Fool Me](#). Fry is also known for his voice-overs, reading all seven of the [Harry Potter](#) novels for the UK [audiobook](#) recordings.

FILMMAKERS

Robin Lutz - Director

Robin Lutz founded his own company in cultural audio-visual productions in 1988. He specialized in the production of cultural documentaries, in cooperation with or on behalf of broadcasters, funds, museums etc. Robin Lutz Audiovisual Productions has developed into a renowned production company and due to their great quality, a substantial amount of his films have been awarded, both nationally and internationally.

Marijnke de Jong - Co-Producer

After having finished her study in art history at Leiden University, Marijnke de Jong worked for 13 years as a curator in the print room of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Afterwards she worked for Europa Nostra, a heritage NGO, and was involved in the development and organization of the first two editions of a Heritage Film Festival, where she met Robin Lutz. From 2001-2014 she was director/curator of Panorama Mesdag in The Hague and specialized in art and illusion. Nowadays she is advising cultural organizations and since 2016 she also co-produces films with Lutz.

FILMOGRAPHY

2019

Producer and director Robin Lutz and co-producer Marijnke de Jong received the prize for 'the best film portrait' for the film 'M.C. Escher: Journey to Infinity' about the life and work of the graphic artist M.C. Escher at the "37th International Film sur l'Art Festival" in Montreal Canada.

The jury report stated:

"A film that gives the viewer a great deal of desire to rediscover the work of Maurits Cornelis Escher. The film tells a complete and well-documented story, in which the intimate life and the world-famous work of this artist are combined. This film would also earn prizes for its ingenious and varied soundtrack, a prize for elegant animation and a prize for humor in the voice-over spoken by Stephen Fry."

2018

The film 'M.C. Escher: Journey to Infinity' won a 'Crystal Film Award' in the Netherlands.

2016

The documentary film “Spinoza, A Free tThinker” by Robin Lutz won a Grand Prix-, Golden Dolphin in Cannes in 2016, during the 7th Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards.

2015

“Spinoza, A Free Thinker” – documentary about the philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1672) Length 90 minutes

Prize: Spinozamedal 2015, Netherlands

2012

“Aquarius” – documentary about the painter Anthonie Pieter Schotel (1890-1958)

Length 52 minutes.

Prize: Intermedia Globe Silver 2014 from World Media Festival Hamburg

2005

“Walking with Vincent van Gogh in The Hague” – documentary about The Hague period in van Gogh’s life. Length 30 minutes.

Prize: Best heritage film 2002. Europa Nostra Film Festival Italy.

Prize: International Film and Video Festival Hollywood USA. Certificate for Creative Excellence

2003

“Johan Barthold Jongkind; a Dutchman in Honfleur” –documentary about the French period of the painter Johan Barthold Jongkind. Length 30 minutes.

Prize: Gold Camera Award 2007. International Film and Video Festival Hollywood USA.

2002

“Glass is Leerdam” – documentary about art glass production in Leerdam. Length 30 minutes.

Prize: Gold Camera Award 2006. International Film and Video Festival Hollywood USA.

2001

“Jugendstil in The Hague” – documentary about Jugendstil in The Hague. Length 30 minutes.

Prize: Best Build Heritage Film 2001. Europa Nostra Film Festival Italy.

1997

“Life out of death” or “Mummies as modern medicine”. A documentary about the scientific search in Egypt on viruses in monkey mummies. Length 52 minutes.

Prize: TROS Scenario Contest 1994

Prize: XXIX Festival international du Film Maritime et D’Exploration. France 1997

CREDITS

A Robin Lutz film

Co-produced by Marijnke de Jong

Narrated by Stephen Fry

production, camera & direction	Robin Lutz
Co- & field production	CulturAlly
editor	Moek de Groot, NCE
scenario	Marijnke de Jong Robin Lutz
light and grip	Koos Westhoff
sound	Louis Zarli
audio post-production	Bob Kommer Soundstudios
animations	Mirage3D VFX Robin Sip Jeroen Tanis Marijn Kuiper Simen Stroek Arjo Munnik Aaron van Dealen Laura Jolly Edwin Jansen Lieke van den Berk
advisors	Mark Veldhuysen Prof dr J.L. Locher Alexander van Breemen
voice over	Koos Westhoff
still photographers	Marijnke de Jong
film research	Rogier Smeele
patron	Sir Roger Penrose