

pas de deux // PRESS KIT

A feature length film
Directed by Elie Aufseesser



ToiToi is thrilled to have premiered our film *pas de deux* at the 57th Solothurn Film Festival, and are honored to have won the Opera Prima award for Best First Feature film! Here are some remarks from the Jury on the film:

"We have decided in favor of this film because it makes room for life, for the unexpected, for encounters, for what the other allows us to discover about his or her world and about the world;

Because it is written while walking, because it does not prejudice its subject, because it is open to the human being in all its singularity and complexity;

Because it does not direct our gaze and trusts the spectator;

Because it also trusts its instinct, experiments, commits himself fully and without a safety net;

Because it is always on the move and invites us to follow it in the meanders of its documentary path;

Because it offers us, in its rough diamond state and by the freedom of its form, some powerful flashes;

Because it questions, through the portrait of this astonishing family, filiation, the passage to adulthood, death, carefreeness and madness."

TECHNICAL SPECS //

Original Title: *pas de deux*

Original Language: English
French
Mandarin Chinese

Subtitles: English
French
German
German-French

Film type: Non-Fiction

Running time: 01:24:09

Image format: 16:9, HD, COLOR

Sound format: Dolby 5.1

SYNOPSIS: *Pas de deux* follows Jon as he moves to New York City for his studies by integrating Columbia University's elite diving team while Peter, his older brother, wanders the Jordanian desert sick and unsure about his way of life. Both brothers are tested by these foreign places and geographies, discovering they can harbor more confinement than freedom. During these moments of separation, the already great distance between them grows even wider.

DIRECTORS STATEMENT:

"Stories that, while true, become imaginary as they tell them, and from imaginary they end up becoming true." (*Baron in the Trees*, Italo Calvino)

In *pas de deux*, I am searching for a personal and inventive way to see the relationship between a person and his or her environment, and to explore how one affects the other. I stumbled upon two brothers, Peter and Jon, taking the same journey, at the same time—though in opposite directions—and I made the choice to step into their experience in order to understand the varied ways each of us, even those who come from the same family, seek to understand our place.

After being accepted into their family, I discovered a complex quest for identity: a family whose fate has been thwarted by the great waves of 20th century history, a family of Buddhist, Muslim and Jewish origins with an American father, a Chinese mother, a centenarian grandfather whose brain tumor is growing day by day, and siblings who must constantly find their place between these cultures. Born and raised in Switzerland, Peter and Jon (the protagonists) but also Nina, their sister, must navigate between Switzerland and the United States, in a globalization that has split their family over three continents in a combination of unrest, joy and tragedy

As I became attached to this family, I began to see my alignment with my own shift and become more complex. Their search merged with mine, in a trajectory that blended personal and creative process.

- Elie

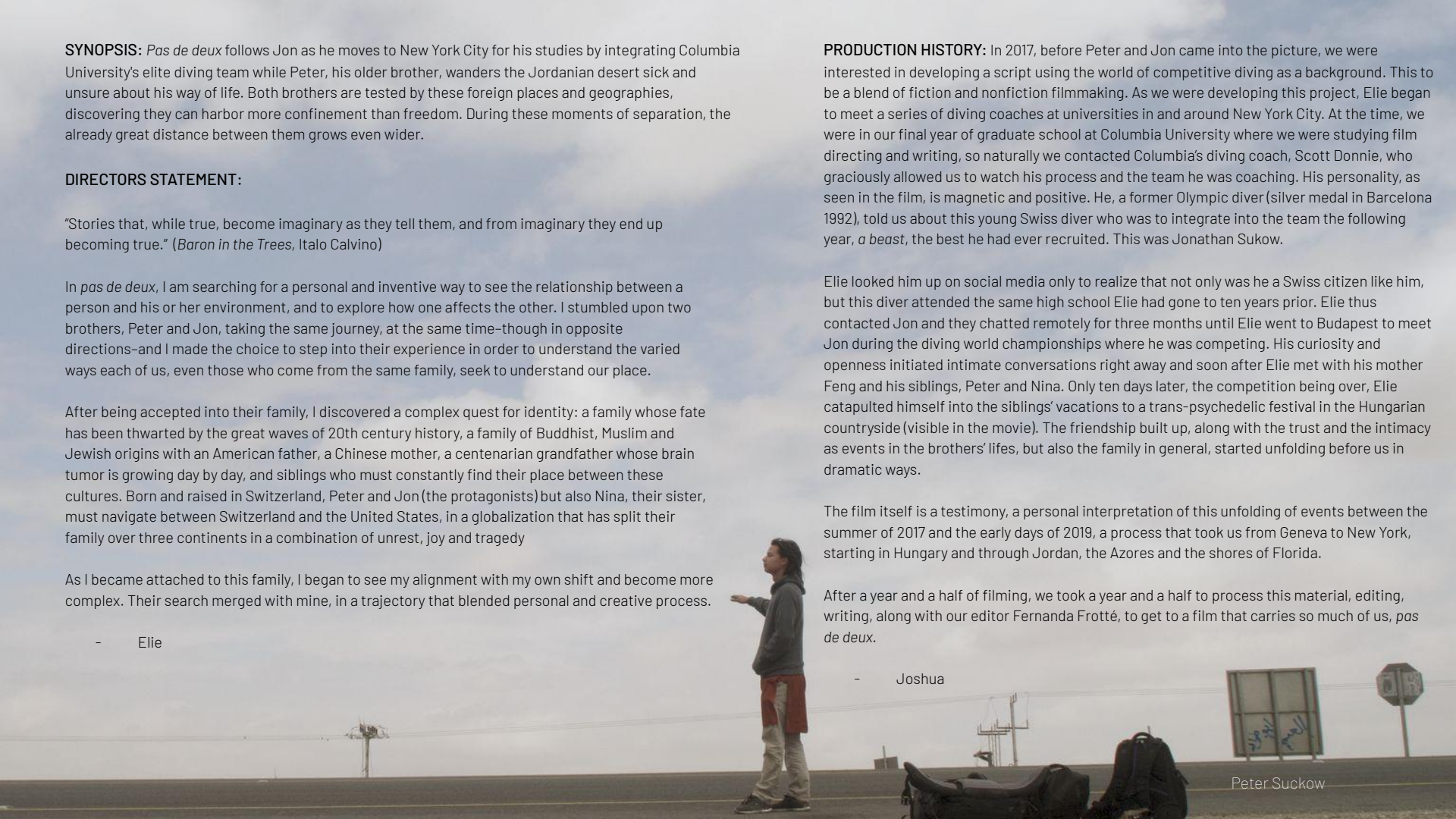
PRODUCTION HISTORY: In 2017, before Peter and Jon came into the picture, we were interested in developing a script using the world of competitive diving as a background. This to be a blend of fiction and nonfiction filmmaking. As we were developing this project, Elie began to meet a series of diving coaches at universities in and around New York City. At the time, we were in our final year of graduate school at Columbia University where we were studying film directing and writing, so naturally we contacted Columbia's diving coach, Scott Donnie, who graciously allowed us to watch his process and the team he was coaching. His personality, as seen in the film, is magnetic and positive. He, a former Olympic diver (silver medal in Barcelona 1992), told us about this young Swiss diver who was to integrate into the team the following year, *a beast*, the best he had ever recruited. This was Jonathan Sukow.

Elie looked him up on social media only to realize that not only was he a Swiss citizen like him, but this diver attended the same high school Elie had gone to ten years prior. Elie thus contacted Jon and they chatted remotely for three months until Elie went to Budapest to meet Jon during the diving world championships where he was competing. His curiosity and openness initiated intimate conversations right away and soon after Elie met with his mother Feng and his siblings, Peter and Nina. Only ten days later, the competition being over, Elie catapulted himself into the siblings' vacations to a trans-psychedelic festival in the Hungarian countryside (visible in the movie). The friendship built up, along with the trust and the intimacy as events in the brothers' lives, but also the family in general, started unfolding before us in dramatic ways.

The film itself is a testimony, a personal interpretation of this unfolding of events between the summer of 2017 and the early days of 2019, a process that took us from Geneva to New York, starting in Hungary and through Jordan, the Azores and the shores of Florida.

After a year and a half of filming, we took a year and a half to process this material, editing, writing, along with our editor Fernanda Frotté, to get to a film that carries so much of us, *pas de deux*.

- Joshua





Peter Suckow

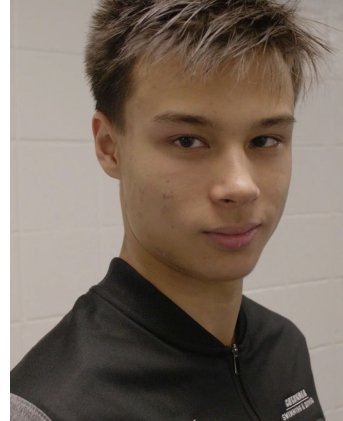
Born in 1993, Peter is the eldest of three siblings. Like the entire family, his cultural heritage is rich. His mother, Feng, was born in China from a mixed muslim and buddhists family that has gone through (and suffered from) the cultural revolution. The father, Steve, is from a Jewish-American family, specifically from New-York. At age 8 Peter offered a book about parenting to his parents and at age 16, though being a good student, quit highschool to become self taught and live in a tree for a few weeks (after having being kicked out of the house). He subsequently started travelling around the world, which he has been doing to this this day...

Press

[Peter Suckow relate son vagabondage en photos, Tribune de Genève](#)

[Swiss and love: Peter Suckow, RTS](#)

[Peter Suckow à la Puce à l'oreille, RTS](#)



The brothers

Jonathan Suckow

Born in 1999, Jonathan started diving at the age of 8. He integrated the national team at age 10 and after a few years became Switzerland's top diver. In 2013 he became the first Swiss diver to ever win a medal at the european championship. In 2017, right around when the director, Elie, met him, Jon left Geneva to integrate Columbia University's diving team where he has been breaking records and winning titles on a regular basis. In 2021 he has missed Olympic qualification by a hair. Beyond diving, Jon is a person full of curiosity for the humanities, philosophy, politics, economics, history and so on...

Press

[Plonger à Sec, Tribune de Genève](#)

[Stoppé en plein vol, Tribune de Genève](#)

[Destination Tokyo, Léman Bleu](#)

[A Dance that never ends, Columbia Lions](#)

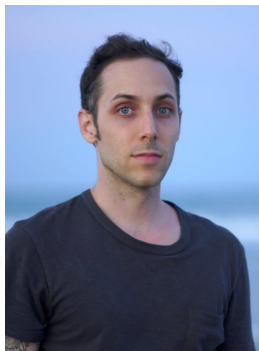
The crew



Elie Aufseesser

(Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Editor)

Elie received his MFA in directing from Columbia University in NYC where he has worked with Opodox Productions on *The New Bauhaus* (Alysa Nahmias, 2020) and *This World Is Not My Own* (Petter Ringbom, 2022) as Associate Producer. Elie also has a background in film theory and history from Lausanne University, Switzerland, where he worked as a film critic. He is currently developing his upcoming projects as writer/director. *Pas De Deux* (2022) is his first feature film as director and producer.



Joshua R. Troxler

(Producer)

Joshua received his MFA in screenwriting from Columbia University in NYC. He went on to work with BigMouth Productions in Brooklyn on Marilyn Ness' (Oscar Shortlisted) *Charm City* (2018), and then served as Kirsten Johnson's Directors Assistant and the Production Coordinator on her award winning film *Dick Johnson Is Dead* (2020). He's currently co-producing Johnson's follow up feature film and Producing the next feature documentary from filmmaker Marty Lucas, *Into The Tules*. *Pas De Deux* (2022) is his first feature film as producer.



Fernanda Frotté

(Editor)

Fernanda Frotté received her MFA in screenwriting from Columbia University in NYC. Upon her return to Brazil, Fernanda developed the TV series "Life Ahead" for Globoplay (in pre-production). She also worked as the on-set editor for "Eyimofe", feature film that premiered at 70th Berlinale; edited "August Sky", a short film selected for 75th Cannes Film Festival Official Selection and winner of a Special Mention from the Jury. Currently, Fernanda works as an development executive for RT Features. *Pas De Deux* (2022) is her first feature film as a lead editor.



CREDITS //

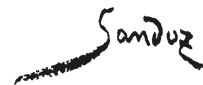
FEATURING

Jonathan Sukow
Peter Sukow
Nina Suckow
Feng Suckow
Steven Suckow
Liang Ru Pan - 潘良儒
Zhong De Ding - 丁忠德
Christiane Favia
Scott Donnie
Carmela Ackman
Milton Ackman

TECHNICAL

Director, Image, Sound Elie Aufseesser
Producers Joshua R. Troxler & Elie Aufseesser
Editors Fernanda Frotté & Elie Aufseesser
Sound Editing & Mixing Renaud Musy & François Musy
Color Correction Robin Erard, Rougegorge Post Production
Original Music Clément Barral
Additional Camera Paul Carpenter
Additional Sound Noah Dodson

MADE WITH SUPPORT FROM



FONDATION
PHILANTHROPIQUE
FAMILLE SANDOZ

POSTER

Illustration by Nathalie Perrin

LINK TO [TRAILER](#)



Illustration Nathalie Perrin



CONTACTS //

Elie Aufseesser
director

elie@toitoy.film / +41.788078099

Joshua R. Troxler
producer

joshua@toitoy.film / +1.570.772.9106

Website // toitoy.film

Facebook // [@pasdedeuxTT](https://www.facebook.com/pasdedeuxTT)

Instagram // [@toi_toi_films](https://www.instagram.com/toi_toi_films)