



Die Junge Akademie

The *Junge Akademie*, in co-operation with the Filmuniversität Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, filmArche, interfilm Berlin, and the Deutsche Kinemathek, is calling for contributions from filmmakers anywhere in the world to the competition of the forum **be a better being**.

A better being – between aspiration and pressure

'Be a better being!' is a phrase that is generally directed at oneself. Its focus is the increasingly widespread drive for individual improvement, the desire to become a "better being". Yet what does it mean to be a "better being"? What criteria should be used to define such a concept? Many of the measurements we hear about nowadays are based on an ideal body, an ideal depth of meditation, an ideal diet, or even an ideal stress level. The often opaque norms of apps, of self-help books, of the marketing world produce certain concepts of what a human is or should be. People's readiness to apply these concepts leads us to assume that these norms are negotiable. But is that really the case? Or is the border between individuals' free decision-making and social or media pressure becoming increasingly blurred? What is the role of moral and religious concerns in this context?

And what about the social and political components of self-improvement, in other words: the goal of a more inclusive society, a more cohesive commonwealth of people, social groups, and nations, particularly against the backdrop of the current crisis of European integration and solidarity? Or are we, as individuals, going to be submerged in a *Brave New World* in which we voluntarily reveal all the relevant data about our mental and bodily states? A world structured by the algorithms of search engines, which is allegedly becoming ever more secure thanks to worldwide networks of control? Control through the online community? Or through the state? Or through the state within the state? And, finally, what role does the young generation play in all of this?

be a better being is looking for short films that deal with these phenomena in creative and unconventional ways. Submissions should authentically portray the large, small, and odd aspects of the diverse ways in which our world manifests itself as a place of actual or imagined self-improvement, thus contributing to a dialogue between scholars, filmmakers, and society at large.

be a better being awards a screening fee of 300,- EUR to all films selected for screening during the Forum scheduled for November 2016. In addition, an audience prize of 1000,- EUR will be awarded.

Starting in January 2016, more opinions and positions of scholars and experts on **be a better being** will be available on the project blog "Perspectives". <http://betterbeing.info/category/perspectives/>

Project Management: Prof. Dr. Magdalena Nowicka (Berlin) and Dr. Evelyn Runge (Jerusalem)

Regulations

Submissions should reflect the many different facets of the topic **be a better being**. All genres are permitted: from narrative films to animated films to documentaries or experimental films. To qualify for submission, films must have been produced in the last three years and must not exceed 15 minutes in duration. The deadline for submissions is the **24th of June 2016**.

The films selected by the jury will be presented in mid-November 2016 at the two-day forum **be a better being** and will provide the basis for discussions between filmmakers and scholars. Some of the contributions will be available for viewing and discussion beforehand on the online platform www.betterbeing.info. The contributions presented online will not necessarily be part of the competition and may include films produced more than three years ago. More information as well as terms and conditions can be found here: www.betterbeing.info

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