

## PRESSKIT

# REACHING FOR THE SKY

## HEMEL IN GUANGZHOU

A film by  
Bert Oosterveld & Peter Franken



[www.reachingforthesky.nl](http://www.reachingforthesky.nl)

# Logline

*(66 words)*

After winning a prestigious competition Dutch architect Mark Hemel is assigned to build the highest television tower of China. The world seems at his feet now his dream of building an icon becomes reality. "Reaching for the Sky" candidly shows the personal and professional dilemmas of young architect Mark Hemel who, together with his wife, architect Barbara Kuit, seems to achieve his highest ambition with his first assignment.

*(36 words)*

'Reaching for the Sky' candidly shows the personal and professional dilemmas of young architect Mark Hemel who builds the highest television tower in the world and seems to achieve his highest ambition with his first assignment.

## Synopsis

Together with his wife, the Dutch architect Mark Hemel has won an architecture competition to design the highest television tower in the world in Guangzhou, China. It's his first assignment after having participated in several prestigious design contests and his dream to build an icon becomes reality. This tower will be his calling card, paving the way for a move to China, one of the few places where there still is room for extraordinary ideas. But things go different as soon as the foundations are being laid. The film follows Mark's inner struggles and urge for control. His relationship with the tower is in perpetual motion, loving it one minute and being overwhelmed the next. But China knows no restraints. 'Reaching for the Sky' portrays the personal and professional dilemmas of young architect Mark Hemel in a candid manner, an architect who seems to have achieved his biggest ambition at the outset of his career.

## About Mark Hemel & Barbara Kuit



Mark Hemel studied at the Technical University of Delft and Architectural Association in London. He received several scholarships for research in Africa and Asia from the Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture. From 1999 to 2008 he taught as Unit-master at the Architectural Association in London since 1999 and later in the post-graduate Environment and Energy program. In 2003 he received the RIBA Bronze Medal Tutor Award. In 1998 he and Barbara founded Information Based Architecture. Those first

years IBA was based in London, but since 2003 they operate from Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Barbara Kuit graduated from the Technical University Delft, The Netherlands. She worked as a local architect in cooperation with Philippe Starck in London on the Sanderson and St Martins Lane Hotels. Subsequently she worked at the office of Zaha Hadid in London, on the Mind zone in the Millennium Dome in London-Greenwich; on the Contemporary Arts Centre in Rome; the Wolfsburg Science Centre in Germany; and on many other competitions and projects. In 1998 she founded Information Based Architecture together with Mark.



## About the directors

### **BERT OOSTERVELD** – BIOGRAPHY



After graduating in photography and AV-design at the Art Academy *St. Joost* in Breda, Oosterveld started a study for cameraman at the Dutch Film Academy. As a documentary cameraman he worked for 20 years for the public Dutch broadcasters. He enjoys to work abroad and sees it as a challenge to work under difficult circumstances: sailing at the southern ocean, in the rainforest in Cameroon, around Sherpa people in the Himalaya's or at a melting glacier in Patagonia. But also nearby he always finds something that inspires him, like teenage fathers in Amsterdam. Oosterveld prefers to work with a small crew and small size cameras because they allow him to be flexible and not too dominantly present in the field. He is interested in what people motivates, why they do what they do, and let them tell their stories to the world. The film "Reaching for the Sky" is his first film he made as a director and as a cameraman.

### **BERT OOSTERVELD** - FILMOGRAPHY camerawork:

1998 "**I came to Palestine...**" 90 min. director: Robert Krieg, 14th Internationales Dokumentarfilmfestival München, München, Deutschland. Middle East International Film Festival Abu Dhabi, Vereinigte Arabischen Emirate.

1991 "**Adiós General**" 58 min. director: Robert Krieg, 8th Festival Internacional de Cine de Valdivia, Valdivia, Chili. 21th Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano, Havana, Cuba.

2001 "**White Gold**" 87 min. director: Robert Krieg, 23th Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano, Havana, Cuba. 8th Chicago Latino Film Festival Chicago, USA. International Documentary Film Festival Istanbul, Turkey.

2003 "**Nima Temba Sherpa**" 50 min. director: Margriet Jansen.

2003 "**Tagged**" 13 min director: Julika Rudelius. Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Brooklyn Museum New York.

2005 "**Economic primacy**" 18 min director: Julia Rudelius. Stedelijk museum Amsterdam.

2006 **“Forever”** 16 min. director: Julia Rudelius, Swiss Institute of Contemporary Art, New York, USA Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

2009 **“Faces of a City”** 52 min. director: Alexandra Jansse, Trinidad Tobago Filmfestival 2011.

2010 **“Het verdriet van West-Friesland”** 57 min. Director: Leen van der Berg

## **PETER FRANKEN** BIOGRAPHY



Peter Franken (1968) is an independent filmmaker based in Amsterdam where he graduated from the Rietveld Art Academy. After working as a versatile visual artist he decides to focus on the medium film and began making concept driven shorts, video-art and more recently documentaries, for numerous festivals. His desire to make his most recent feature documentary 'Reaching for the Sky' (2012) stemmed from a strong interest and curiosity in what people thrive in there ambition and ideals. Currently he researches and wrote the script for the feature 'God on Ijtje' about a protestant priest who against the odds starts a church in

the God fearing newly build neighborhood of Amsterdam. It will be broadcasted in spring 2013 on Dutch National Television.

## **PETER FRANKEN** - FILMOGRAPHY

2009 **“Ruhezeit Abgelaufen”** documentary about death, how vivid is the image of death in our time? In collaboration with curator Mark Cremer. Direction Peter Franken

2009 **“Faces of a City”** 52 min. Director: Alexandra Jansse Trinidad Tobago Filmfestival 2011. Camera and directing assistance Peter Franken

2010 **“De Droom”**, 5 Short films about Stelling van Amsterdam in collaboration with UNESCO en Province N-H. Director, script Peter Franken

2013 **“ Reaching for the Sky”** 52 min. Directors Peter Franken en Bert Oosterveld in collaboration with AVRO and Doc Eye Film

2013 **“ God op Ijtje”** 25 min. Research, script, edit: Peter Franken ism Elsbeth Fraanje for IKON in collaboration with Baldr Film

# Credits

Reaching for the Sky  
*Hemel in Guangzhou*

With the architects Mark Hemel & Barbara Kuit

Directed by	Bert Oosterveld & Peter Franken
Camera	Bert Oosterveld
Camera fireworks	Mark Hemel
Sound	Peter Franken Yorrick de Nooijer
Editor	Jan Wouter van Reijen
Mixage	Alex Booy
Translation	Erik Pezarro
Eindredactie AVRO	Marijke Huijbregts
Office Producer	Elleke Claessen
Producers for Doc.Eye Film	Frank van Reemst & Joost Verheij

This film is made possible with funds of the Dutch Fund for Architecture and the Dutch Consul in Guangzhou.

A film by Doc.Eye Film in co-production with AVRO

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Beside the film there's also the book 'Supermodel, The Making of the World's Tallest TV-tower' by Mark Hemel that has been published by NAI Booksellers.

## Specs

Original title:	Hemel in Guangzhou
English title:	Reaching for the Sky
Country of production:	The Netherlands
Year of production:	2013
Website:	<a href="http://www.reachingforthesky.nl">www.reachingforthesky.nl</a>
Duration:	59'13'' 52'
Colour or black/white:	Colour
Ratio:	16:9
Format:	HD
Screening format:	dvd, bluray
Language:	Dutch, English, Chinese
Subtitles:	Dutch, English

Producer / distributor:

Doc.Eye Film  
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Van Hallstraat 52  
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