

Project Proposal

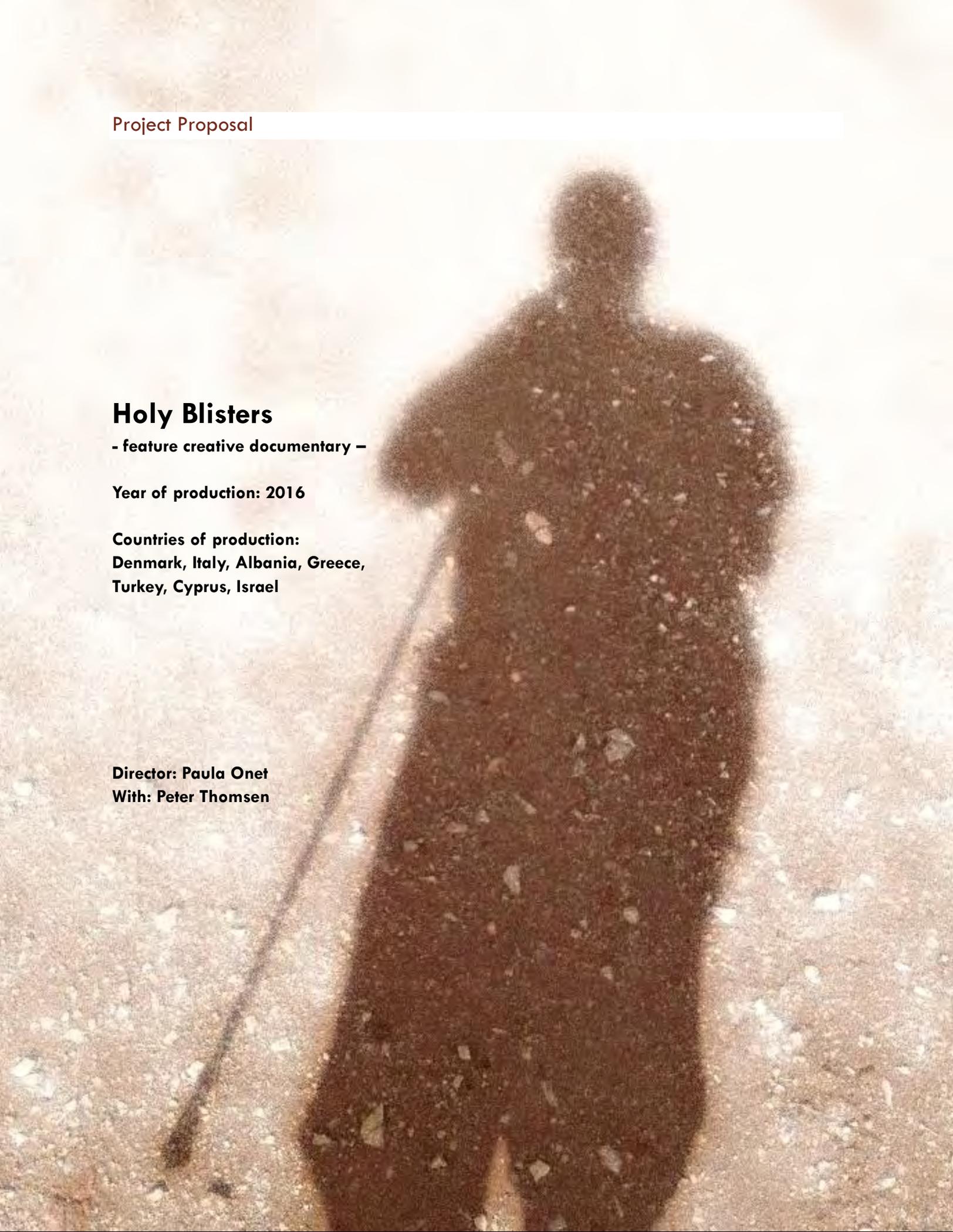
Holy Blisters

- feature creative documentary -

Year of production: 2016

**Countries of production:
Denmark, Italy, Albania, Greece,
Turkey, Cyprus, Israel**

**Director: Paula Onet
With: Peter Thomsen**



1. LOGLINE/STORYLINE

“Holy Blisters” is a documentary film about a man who can't sleep because of his *Restless Legs Syndrome* so he walks, he has to. His ultimate wish is to have a home and a normal, stable life with his lover but he can't have it if he doesn't sleep and he can't have it either if he walks. So he walks to overcome the pain of giving up the love for a woman. This is a film about finding a balance between the body and the mind, where the nature made the first choice.

“You will have an interesting life, I was told. But I would have rather lived an ordinary life... wife, children... You know...” (Peter)

2. SINOPSIS

It is better to have a **stable relationship** but **suffer** OR **be happy and free** in a **lonely** life? This is a question of a man with restless legs but also a question of all men with restless minds...

Peter is an informatics engineer from Denmark, who would still fix and make computers if he wouldn't have a genetic illness called *Restless Legs Syndrome* which keeps him walking. Since he started doing pilgrim routes, he calmed down his illness and lightened his soul, so he is happy to use walking as a resource. Although it seems like his happiness depends on his legs, there is his heart who asks its right to materialize and fulfill the love for a woman. He met a beautiful French woman called Juliette in one of his trips and started to have a love relationship with her, seeing her from time to time in various points on his routes. They've even lived together except the time when Peter was walking. Despite their great love, he was not able to maintain the relationship for 2 reasons: **if he walks**, he is **psychically far away** from her and **if he stays**, he is **physically far away** from his personality because his restless legs don't allow him to sleep and he becomes depressed and emotionally unstable. This instability cost him a lot of conflicts, including the breaking up with Juliette. Now he wants to walk on one of the oldest pilgrim routes from Rome to Jerusalem to overcome this lost love. Moreover, it's not only about walking but also about all the experiences and people he meets on the way that give him courage and makes him bless his illness.

“In relation to my restless legs, I've hoped for a miracle, that's why I walked to Lourdes because that's where miracles happen. Walking without a purpose, even though it makes me feel better, is still just walking... Anyway, I have no choice so I'll keep walking... And believing...”

The film follows him in this struggle between **walking vs. staying** at home and **walking vs. having a family**, following him in both his **home** and on his **route**. The narrative line focuses on the **interior vs. exterior spaces**, in both physical and psychical way:

→ On one side, the film presents Peter **while being at home in Denmark**, where he lives a **quiet** and **calm** life in a small countryside house, playing chess with his friends and renovating the house. It seems like this is a perfect life for him until the night comes and his legs cause him itches all over the body, creating a lot of **noise** in his mind. He is able to reach months of non-sleeping nights which make him depressed and powerless *“like a zombie”*, as he said. He received the right diagnosis only few years ago after trying in vain to overcome his sleeping problems in cigarettes, alcohol and thousands of therapies. He still visits sometimes Alcoholics Anonymous where he has many friends. It seems like there is no definite treatment for his illness just some temporary solutions that don't work for him anymore. So he walks... But he chooses special walks...

→ On the other side, the film follows Peter on one of the oldest **pilgrimage route**. While walking, Peter has a very **accelerate rhythm** and covers long distances, sometimes more than 30 km/day. There are days when he ends his walking full of blisters and pain in the feet but his mind is calm and fresh. He made many pilgrim routes, not only for the sake of moving his legs but for various spiritual reasons, walking for months and using couchsurfing (sharing people's homes for free) to reduce the costs. The film intends to follow him on the *way from Rome to Jerusalem*, walking to learn to live through a lost love, a restless mind and legs. He will do more than 5,000 km crossing Italy, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus (to avoid Syria) and Israel. Besides the spontaneous meetings and situations, the film will give a glimpse of **the people** and **the local tradition** of the places Peter crosses by. The visual interest is for **both human and natural landscape**.

Why this route? Because Peter promised to himself to walk on the four most important medieval pilgrimage destinations. Till now he walked to Rome, Santiago de Compostela (via both the Camino Francés and Vía de la Plata) and he planned to make the way to Jerusalem but he stopped for 2 reasons: the meeting with Juliette and the war in Syria. Now that he gave up fighting for her love, he wants to continue with his dreams of walking despite the war.

3. TREATMENT

The story is presented to the audience by using the tools and approach of an **observational documentary** with a **poetic tendency**, especially when portraying the sleepless nights caused by the pain. The **unobtrusive camera** follows Peter in a **direct relationship**, letting the situations reveal his reactions in a natural, spontaneous way.

The visual style of the film consists mainly in very large and very close shots, trying to reveal **the noise of Peter's inner space** and **the silence of the outer spaces** and its reverse.

Some possible examples of approaches from the **Peter's home sequence**:

- long and silent shots on the daylight, showing him at his home and playing chess in his friend's home;
- detailed shots and close-ups showing objects, gestures, facial and corporal expressions to illustrate his pain and insomnia;

On the routes, Peter is shot in the same observational way, keeping the **2 visual tendencies**. The parallel spaces of the film will be connected by a **meditative walk of the camera** through the **landscapes** of the countries implied in the project, as a crossing border from the 2 worlds of Peter and as a breath for the rhythm of the film. The connection between spaces will be made also by sound, using **quiet sounds of the human body and of the nature**.



Picture made by Peter in his "Via Francigena"



Picture made by Peter in his "Via de la Plata"

The central story line will be carried forward by Peter's voice as a "**stream of thoughts**", not as interviews. **The 2 types of sound** consist in direct, ambient sound and Peter's voice (direct and off-voice). It is intended to explore the silence of every place, even exaggerate it if it's needed to support the narrative. The close-ups will be partly sustained by subtle sound effects which accentuate the growing dementia caused by insomnia.

4. Director's INTENTION and MOTIVATION

I met Peter while walking on Northern Way, on October 2015. It was a rainy day and only one hostel on a long distance. On that evening we started talking and he gave me glimpses of his life. I was impressed when he told me he was planning to buy new shoes because "*I still have a lot to walk, years maybe*" he said. I thought that this is a man who dedicated his life to the beautiful passion of walking but then I found out about his sleeping problems. Next morning, we didn't see each other anymore and I felt sorry not to ask him for his contact. Anyway, I said to myself that if there is to meet him again, so it will happen. And so it was, on my last day of pilgrimage. He seemed to have a heart-shape blister, a lot of interesting stories and troubles in finding a way to deliver the stories to the audience in writing/self-recording because "*conversation is my media*". We became friends, started exchanging emails, visited each other and decided to work together. Like he said, "*in all meetings there is an opportunity to share and to create*" and we share the pleasure of walking, the love for spirituality and storytelling.

On a higher level, I hope this film will give him courage to follow his dream and bring together people from different ethnic, cultural and religious background and walk to all major pilgrim destinations, to pray, sing, dance beyond any religious differences because "*we are all born by the same spirit and equally precious!*".

5. Director's CV

I am a Romanian freelance filmmaker interested in documentary film and new media.

I am both a film director and a director of photography. I've made my film studies in at UBB University (FTT), department of Cinematography, Photography and Media in Cluj-Napoca (RO) where I've gained a multicultural academic background by having many scholarship experiences in South Korea and Turkey. During my studies at the Master of Photography and Dynamic Image at UNARTE Bucharest I also went with a scholarship in Valencia (SP).



My portraits made by my father in the same place, 10 years difference and still in love with the camera (2004-2014)

Besides the academic life, I've been a resident artist in France, Sweden and Italy. Maybe the most highly-improving experiences for me were the participations at workshops around the world, like: Aristoteles (RO), Storydoc (GR-DE), Nisimasa Experimental Film (RO), Interaction Film Camp (RS), Bodyparts-Dance and Video (RO), LongocampoDOX (RO), Transylvania Talent Lab (RO), Documentary Filmmaker's Developer Toolkit - meeting sessions (RO), VFF - Visegrad Film Forum (SK).

My last documentary film [As You Like It](#) was officially selected in over 40 festivals around the world festivals like: Karlovy-Vary, DOK Leipzig, TIFF Romania, documentART etc, winning awards like: best image, best social documentary, public prize and best short film. Besides this, I have a Special Mention for Academic Excellence by the League of Romanian Students Abroad.

I worked as a **multimedia coordinator** (4 Culture Association), film **editor** (Fantascope Films, Little Stars Film School, independent projects, like *The Ark* and *The Japanese Quince Tree*), **cinematographer** (films: *As You Like It*, *The Manakia Brothers* and *Resolutions 2014*) and maybe the most important, as a **film director** (films: *4GeneRelation Women*, *As You Like It*, *Connection Lost* etc; video-installations: *Mirador*, *Skype Virtual Installation* and *Site Under Construction* - collaboration). I am still active in all the fields listed above, with a focus on cinematography and I develop projects beyond geographic or mind borders.

I strongly believe in the importance of traveling and discovering yourself and I've expressed it in my first "TED" speech (Travel Enhances Divinity) <https://vimeo.com/paulaonet/ted>

For more information about me, please visit my website www.paulaonet.com

6. PRODUCTION TIMETABLE

Phase	Time Required	Completion Date (estimated)
Development	6 months	February - August 2016
Production	2 months	½ August – ½ September 2016 December 2016
Post-Production	5 months	January - June 2017
Release		Fall 2017

7. SHOOTING PLAN

Shooting Location	Duration	Time
Maribo, Denmark	2 weeks	December 2016
Rome to Jerusalem	6 weeks	August – September 2016
➔ Start in Rome (Italy)	2 days	
➔ Italy, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus and Israel	5 weeks	
➔ End in Jerusalem (Israel)	3 days	

To see the full financial plan & distribution strategy, please contact the producer.

8. ANTRPODOCS & FILMS-THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION COMPANY



ANTROPODOCS AND FILMS is an independent Production and Distribution Company specialized in anthropologic and social documentaries. The company develops two different types of projects: on the one hand, it develops academic-theoretical products, i.e., visual capture of works in the field and ethnologies with the specific purpose of investigating; on the other, it produces narrative documentaries for the general audience, making the anthropologists' works and concerns available for everyone.

ANTROPODOCS AND FILMS is the audiovisual branch and producer of WWW.ANTRPOLOGIAAUDIOVISUAL.COM - an international intercultural organization which mainly focuses on visual anthropology. Our work covers all the aspects of visual anthropology: investigation, theorization, production, distribution and display. Its aim is to provide the young talented people with the necessary means and it enables the experimented investigators to show their investigations to the world.

ANTONIO CADIerno PARODI (bio & films)

He is the founder and president of AntropoDocs & Films, international production and distribution company of audiovisual anthropology and the director of the MAAM -Muestra de Antropología Audiovisual de Madrid- at the Anthropologist National Museum of Madrid, Spain.

He's also the director of the MA on "Visual Anthropology and Multimedia" at EMUI-UCM, Euro-Mediterranean University Institute in consortium with Universidad Complutense of Madrid.

Current projects in development: "HOLY BLISTERS" directed by Paula Onet; "SALVE, ANTIFONA DE UN PUEBLO" co-directed by Cristina Escobar and Antonio Cadierno; "TRANSES", series x 4, directed by Antonio Cadierno in coproduction with EGO PRODUCTIONS – Spain; "THE DEVIL IN THE MINE" directed by José Luis Benitez in coproduction with PRODUCCIONES VOLCAN-Mexico.

Projects as a producer: "THE CHILDREN OF RACHIDA" directed by Juan Ignacio Robles in coproduction with ANTRPOLOGÍA MEDIA. 52' 2014; "LOOKING FOR THE ZAWIYA" directed by Juan Ignacio Robles in coproduction with ANTRPOLOGÍA MEDIA.52' 2012; **18 HOURS** directed by Juan Ignacio Robles in coproduction with ANTRPOLOGÍA MEDIA 52'2011; "PLAN 25" (Spain) documentary 55' directed by Antonio Cadierno 2010; "GENERO-SIDA" (Spain) documentary 24' Directed by Alejandro Fernandez 2009; "WHEN YOU ARE DEAD" (Spain) documentary 24'directed by Mario Aranguren 2009; "THE INVISIBLE CITY: Voices in the Canada Real" "co-directed by Lucía Mbomio Rubio and Antonio Cadierno 2008;

Projects as a director: "PLAN 25" (Spain) documentary 55' 2010; "THE INVISIBLE CITY: Voices in the Canada Real" co-directed by Lucía Mbomio Rubio and Antonio Cadierno. 52'2008; "FUXIAN LAKE" (China) documentary 24'. Co-directed by Dr. Lee Kung Sen, department of arqueology of the University of Kunming. 2007; "DAWN IN ANGKOR" (Cambodia) Documentary 24'. 2007 - "1000 EUROS EVERY MOON" (Barcelona) documentary 44'2006; "GRAFFITI, URBAN LEGEND 69" (Madrid) documentary 16' 2005

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To hear an extract from an audio interview with Peter, please go to

<https://soundcloud.com/paula-onet/holyblisters-voice>



Peter Thomsen, the main character

The TEASER of the film – COMING SOON!