



# MALEIKA

A Movie by Matto Barfuss

**Presskit to the Cinema Movie MALEIKA**

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# MALEIKA



**The pictures which Matto Barfuss managed to film are unique. As watcher you might feel to be a part of the cheetah family, so close so direct.  
(Max Moor, the German narrator of Maleika)**

# MALEIKA

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# MALEIKA

## DIE CREW

Director: Matto Barfuss  
Cinematographer: Matto Barfuss, Martina Jandová  
Cutting: Martina Jandová  
Music: Vladimír Suchý, Jan Kalesnikovich, Petr Marx  
Producer: Matto Barfuss

Maleika is a production of the Maleika Film GmbH and the Matto Barfuss Filmproduction

Country of Production: Germany  
Production year: 2013 - 2013  
Length: 105 minutes  
Sound: Dolby Atmos  
Screen format: 1:1:85



Painting by Matto Barfuss

# MALEIKA

## Short Summary

Matto Barfuss is very well known as the cheetahman. 2013 he came across the cheetah Maleika who gave birth to six babies one year afterwards. Matto decided to follow this family in the many month to come.

Maleika shows the meanwhile world-wide famous cheetah struggling to bring up her small ones. She dedicates all her power to the great aim .

Nature is merciless. But nothing is stronger than the unconditional love of a mother and her urge to raising up her beloved kids and making them strong and big.

### **Matto Barfuss:**

**„Had I written a screenplay before, I couldn't have done it more beautiful or more dramatic“**

The director and producer Matto Barfuss is photographer, painter, writer and dedicated wildlife-filmer, UNESCO award winner and UN Ambassador for biological diversity. Between 1996 and 2002 he lived in Tansania as an accepted member in a cheetah family for many months. He followed the big cats on his hands and knees. He lived also among mountain-gorillas. Since 25 years he lives at least six month per year in the African bush. His reports, lectures and picture books about these time made the dedicated conservationist world-wide famous. 2013 another big cat changed his life.

For his epic movie Maleika the film maker followed Maleika and her cubs for four years. By this a utmost thrilling feature film entirely produced in the nature came up. The movie gives the spectators the opportunity to get very intimate insights in the unpredictable and literately breath-taking daily routine of the big cats. It is a superb cinema-adventure. The watcher becomes part of the most touching story which nature ever told - witty and empathetically narrated.



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## About the Content

We experience an epic adventure about growing-up, love and survival in the wilderness in the majestic surrounding of the Masai Mara in Kenya.

The cheetah Maleika gave birth to six cubs: Martha, Malte, Mirelèe, Marlo who loves to climb, Mia and the fumbler Majet. With their shaky mane on their back the small ones look like funny punks. Day by day the cubs become braver and more naughty. Still, life for the young guys is just a game and they are protected carefully by their mum. Each challenge pushes the kids a bit more to self-reliance and independence. But wilderness is full of danger for the fastest land hunters on the earth. Each adventure might be the last one.

18 long months Maleika cares for her youngsters. At least every 3 days she goes on a hunt to feed her always hungry gang which they perceive as an easy daily routine.

The camera is always present as the rascals grow up. Matto accompanies them on their excursions with the mum, the exciting apprenticeship to a hunter and on long trips to new territories - always following tracks of gazelles, gnus and antelopes on their way to new feeding grounds.

In the vastness of the Masai Mara the cheetah family encounters dangerous enemies like hyenas and jakals. And there are powerful rivals: lions of the neighbouring pride and the cheetahs of the 'Hatari Gang'. The lioness 'Mona Lisa' has to feed her offspring as well. She cares for them with the same urge and solicitude like Maleika. Also she has to handle fate and joy.

In competition for prey or struggle to overcome, the strongest prevail mostly, sometimes however rather the smartest.

Certainly, also Maleika and her clever cubs are confronted with throwbacks and painful loss.



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## About the Production

Matto Barfuss work is backed by 25 years experience in the African bush. Usually he stays for at least 6 month per year in the wilderness to narrate thrilling stories as cinematographer, researcher, photographer, painter and conservationist. For instance, he filmed mountain-gorillas in the Kongo and suricates in the very remote parts of the Kalahari. Although, Most moving are his experiences with the big cats. About this he published among quite a few others the bestseller picture book „I'm a Cheetah' in eight languages.

1996 he came across a cheetah mother in the Serengeti. Finally she adopted him as a part of her family. Altogether 25 weeks he lived as a „human cheetah“ on his hands and knees among the cats. He learned their behaviour and their sounds and was fully integrated in their daily routine. He named the cheetah mother of 5 cubs ‚Diana‘.

2013 he meet Maleika a bit further north in the Masai Mara. He is convinced that Maleika is the great granddaughter of ‚Diana‘. „She was so similar and right from the beginning so confident with my presence. So, by this it I was almost instantly urged to follow this awesome cat and woman with the cinema-camera.“, recalls Matto Barfuss.

2014 Maleika gives birth to six cubs in one of the most splendid plains on this earth. This alone was a sensation. Now the story was in full flow. Usually a litter comprises 2 up to 4 cubs in the wild. Most of the cubs don't survive the first year of their life. „In October 2015 I commenced to check thoroughly my whole footage. With this an immense project came up, as I had to sift 207 hours of film material.“, reports Matto.

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Long days in the studio started at 9 am and did never end before 3 am on the following day. „Amidst November I was drained and totally overwhelmed. In this difficult mental state I decided spontaneously to return to Kenya to Maleika. A family of seven became in the meanwhile a family of four. At least the three remaining cubs were now grown bigger than the mother. It was just a question of time, when the kids would be left into independence.“, recalls Matto.

But what Matto and his co-director Martina Jandová had to film this time was sad and amazing at the same time.

„It changed at least partly the message and the emotion of the picture“, says Barfuss. „We sometimes couldn't bear what we had to watch in the viewfinder. Through my camera lens I'm extraordinary close to the action. This means that all emotions of my actresses slip right into my soul.“

Finally we had 259 production days on location to preserve the story for the screens. We filmed the whole story with the legendary RED Epic camera in 4K and 5K resolution.

According to Matto Barfuss the making of the first rough cut of ap. 10 hours and the 234 minutes directors cut was a nightmare: „I had to kill so many for me emotional important anecdotes.

Though, we shared the great slogan of the movie - „Never give up“.

Maybe this one of the reasons that finally the whole endeavour ended up with an epic piece of artwork about love, the urge to become big and happy and about the letting go. And the latter can be so gruel and painful.

„Every time it hurt so much“, says Matto and blinks some tears away. „It was an emotional roller coaster for us. We laughed and cried at times. Well, all of these put together the heart-breaking story.“

The best stories tells the life itself. MALEIKA is a movie which presents empathy of animals from an totally different angle. We all should learn a lot from the movie.

„The long years in Africa taught me a lot. Dynasties soar up and perish one day. Some prides of lions increased in numbers over forty and disappeared in the years after.“, ponders Matto. „It makes you humble.“

With the cinema movie MALEIKA the GREEN BELT BOTSWANA initiative will be started and promoted. It is driven by Matto's non-profit organization „Leben für Geparden e.V.“ and his Go wild Botswana Trust.





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## About Cheetahs

Maleika's realm is the Masai Mara in the Southwest of Kenya. The national reserve comprises an area of about 1.500 square kilometres and is situated adjacent to the famous Serengeti national park in the South.

Cheetahs are the fastest land mammals on the earth. They can accelerate instantly from 0 to 100 km/h in incredible four seconds. Sprinting in the plains they reach up to 120 km/h, but are just able to keep this speed over a maximum distance of 800 metres.

Cheetahs are built to be fast. They have a streamline body and their hind legs are longer than the front legs. All muscles are made to give them maximum ability to accelerate.

Cheetahs have a body length of 1,2 metres, the tail is 70 centimetres long. Males have a weight of 50 to 70 kilos, females up to 45.

African cheetahs like Maleika hunt mainly middle-sized antelopes, Thomson-gazelles, impalas, gnus and rodents. Maleika is a very brave cheetah. She hunts also zebras and even buffalo calves.

Cheetahs are able to eat meat after already four weeks after birth. Grown-ups can gulp down up to 30 pounds as a single meal. After a good feast they can overcome up to 5 days without food.

Cheetahs use delicate sounds to communicate. They don't roar like lions, but are good in hissing. Typical are meowing calls. Cheetahs are able to hear this kind of call over a distance of 1,5 kilometres. Cubs have a bird-like call which is a good invention of the nature. Enemies think of birds, when the small cheetahs call for their mother.



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The main distribution of the cheetahs (*Acononyx jubatus*) is the Southern and Eastern Africa. In Asia is just a minor population left. They live mainly in Iran. Otherwise they are extinct.

Also in Africa cheetahs are highly threatened. Current estimates state that just 7000 individuals may be left.

Most striking feature are the so called tear-stripes which run from the inner side of the eyes down to the corners of the mouth. One can distinguish cheetahs by comparing the spots on the shoulder and the pattern of the tail which is individual like a finger-print.

Cheetahs are very solitary, but brothers or even males from different families stay together for life quite often. Cheetahs have no typical territorial behaviour. Their individual hunting area can be up to 1.000 square kilometres and is determined by the occurrence of potential prey. Caused by this many cheetahs leave protected areas and can be severely threatened by farmers in the neighbourhood of national reserves like the Masai Mara.

The average lifespan of a cheetah is ten to twelve years. Some outstanding individuals like Maleika can achieve ages older than fourteen.

The mortality rate of cheetahs is sadly very high. When mum embarks on a hunt, she will leave the babies hidden, but otherwise unprotected which is a weak moment. Furthermore cheetahs are made for speed and are barely able to defend their cubs against a pride of lions or a bunch of hyenas -especially, if the cheetah mother is wounded.



# MALEIKA

## Interview with Matto Barfuss

1) Could you please tell us about your first encounter with Maleika in 2013. How did it happen? Why are you convinced that she is the great granddaughter of Diana from the Serengeti?

When I came across Maleika the first time, she was solitary and obviously about to investigate for something to hunt. I followed her for a while. Suddenly she leaped up on the vehicle.

„Wow, she is a beauty“, I marvelled about the cheetah sitting on the roof above me peering in the distance. Suddenly she flinched, jumped down from the car and dashed away.

Hey, go - follow“, I yelled. My Masai friend and driver struggled to rush behind her. We couldn't stick close. After an amazing sprint over 2 kilometres Maleika even accelerated with stunning ease. We gave up, swerved aside and finally I filmed the last stage of an spectacular hunt.

Right on the spot I was convinced that Maleika is an incredible cheetah and personality. Usually a cheetah manages to sprint a distance of up to 800 metres. I met so many cheetahs in 25 years in the African bush. But she was definitely unique!

With the cheetah Diana I lived starting from 1996 for altogether 25 weeks on my hands and knees right in the middle of the family of six. As an fully accepted member of the family I got an very intimate insight in the world of the cheetahs. I really loved her.

2002 I decided to quit this amazing experience. At this time her daughter lived far up in the North of the Serengeti in close range to the Masai Mara. Maleika and Diana have so many common features.

I mean, I can't prove it, but there must be a very close relation.



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2) Producing a film in the African wild should be an enormous challenge. Which one is the greatest?

Well, indeed. From the technical side it is foremost the struggle with dust, heat, sometimes humidity and the management of the energy supply. From the mental side it is the passion and the empathy.

Decisive is the meticulous preparation of the filming. Still at home I conduct a comprehensive check of the equipment and make a plan how to protect the cameras against the micro-fine dust. First of all, this means to clean regularly. I use strictly dustproof boxes where I keep the equipment, when I'm not in operation. 2003 I lost a major part of a production in Zambia due to dust. This became a lifelong warning for me.

Great heat and heavy downpour can bring my camera to physical limits. Especially the heat is a crucial threat. At some excursions in the hotter rainy season temperatures go up to 50 degrees Celcius. I produced Maleika in 4K and 5K resolution which means additional heat by an formidable flow of data. The camera has luckily a powerful (but quite noisy) fan. She still works reliable in an area of 76 degrees Celcius. Fortunately I never come across severe problems.

Another challenge was the transfer and securing of the huge amount of data, and the energy supply which I need to run the cameras. During the very remote productions in the Kalahari I use my special equipped film-vehicle which has 220 watts solar panels on the roof. That helps to be absolutely independent in the wild.

For the production of Maleika I decided to use a film camp. Energy was then supplied by a generator.

3) How could someone imagine the daily routine during the long production out in the plains? What were the threats?

Deep inside me I'm a genuine bush man. The quite retrenched life with at the same time high pressure outputting maximum artistic and technical quality doesn't really burden me. Nevertheless life out in the bush entails always huge challenges.

Usually a production-day starts about 4:30 with a short overall check and some maintenance of the film-vehicle. About 5:30 we embark to the plains. It depends a bit of where we have left the cheetahs the evening before. In case of no threats at night Maleika should be found at her sleeping spot. Sometimes we have to search for quite a while, in rare cases even for the entire day.

As soon as we bump into the cheetahs, I mount the camera on the tripod and are ready for action. I work in a way of a good narrator. Quite often clips which one actually wouldn't film are important for the final result. The biggest challenges are to be always highly attentive. Maleika is spontaneous and unpredictable. I have to evaluate the situations and should be prepared at any time. There is no second chance, a lost moment will be lost. I work with the camera completely manually. With the right hand I control the exposure, with the left I conduct the focus work, and with both hands I render the panning movements. I'm almost in trance, when the cheetah literally flies with up to 120 km per hour towards my camera. I have to manage to adjust the focus due to the large sensor of the camera meticulously.

Around 18:30 the sun will set and shortly after Maleika should have found her sleeping spot. So, by 19:00 we return to the film camp. Many times it becomes significantly later though.

As soon as we arrive in the camp, we plug the batteries to the charging point, clean the cameras and start to transfer the footage. First I put it on my computers, evaluate the results and take up the transfer to the hard discs A at around 21 o'clock. This lasts 3 up to 4 hours. Instantly we have a dinner and discuss thereby the production day. About 23:30 we slip in our beds in the

tent. Eventually the alarm clock rings at 1:00. A bit sluggish I control the correct transfer of all the data. Immediately afterwards I connect the backup hard discs to the computer and start the next transfer. Until wake-up in the next morning all should be done.

The production in the bush is very draining and requires all your power. Maleika did challenge me to the utmost.

I got some ribs fractured already on the 3rd day. We discovered in close range to Maleika 3 young cheetah siblings which are named in the film the ‚Hatari Gang‘. Almost instantly they displayed a hunt.

„Let’s find a good filming position!“, I yelled to my driver. The engine roared and the off roader took on speed:

A loud bang, a hard hit - after a short distance ride the rear axle crashed into a hyena whole. I lurked already behind the camera ready for the shot. In desperation I tried to secure the heavy camera on the tripod. I managed just, but bounced with the whole momentum of my body on the dashboard of the vehicle. For a long moment I was in a haze and couldn’t realize what happened. Then overwhelming pain set in. Two ribs were soft like butter and could be moved in all directions.

„Don’t be a sissy“, I challenged myself for the time to come. Frankly spoken, I had to clench my teeth in many situations.

One session of the production lasted straight 47 days. Lack of sleep and constant focussing brought me to the brink of a total collapse. On the eight hour drive to Nairobi I literally lost conscience. My head bent to the left. Suddenly a goat crossed the road and my driver had to hit the breaks hard. I awaked with a nasty vertigo which handicapped me for many months. Especially the flight back home became a nightmare. I travelled alone and had enormous amounts of gear and most important all the hard discs. I had to learn within a couple of hours which movements of the head I shouldn’t do not losing control over my body and collapsing instantly to the ground. To bend down was a no go. Due to the many vertigos I felt permanently nauseous. For a quite long while I couldn’t walk straight. But I managed to overcome. Eventually I had learned Maleika’s lessons well: „To give up is no alternative.“



# MALEIKA

## 4) How close did you approach the cheetahs?

After the amazing experience over 6 years as „human cheetah“ among the big cats in the Serengeti I decided to narrate Maleika's story from an outside angle. I was keen neither to affect her nor to be a part of the story. Also because of this I produced the whole story with just one film vehicle and one camera angle. That was a risk, as quite a few productions of these kind would back on up to 10 vehicles and angles. With such the animals would be sincerely harmed. In our days, I think one as a conservationist can't agree with such an approach. Wildlife-filmers should give conservation absolute priority.

In hindsight I can affirm that this deliberate decision to a minimum of affection gives the cinema movie a very special quality. The pictures convey significantly more proximity and personality of the characters to the audience. It was worth the effort of being myself always on the spot. Even the numerous action sequences got a higher profile and quality.

Eventually I was emotionally quite close to Maleika. The strong and stoic cheetah and mother turned soon into a woman who revealed her weak moments and vulnerability. Sometimes I returned in the morning and knew instantly how she was. I felt, when she was sad or exasperated and she therefore might act in a sudden rush without preparation. All this I had to consider carefully to handle the camera accordingly.

Step by step I got familiar with Maleika as hunter which helped us as a team to manage to get the best camera position right before the action started. Quite a few times we drove 2 kilometres ahead. When outsiders watched us they were quite baffled: „They are crazy. The cheetah intends to hunt and they vamoose.“ But we instead understood her perfectly. So, we achieved to film 47 awesome hunts, quite often straight from ahead.

One anecdote:

It was a peaceful morning. Maleika enjoyed her kids on a mount watching a herd of buffaloes in the depression. Suddenly Maleika focussed the charade.

My driver: „Ah, just buffaloes.“

Me sluggish: „Well, buffaloes. Much to dangerous for such a delicate cheetah.“

In fact, there is no prove that a cheetah mother ever attacked a buffalo.

We watch in an easy way. Suddenly Maleika narrowed the eyes what she does in preparation for a hunt.

We: „Hey, she will do it...“ Then we acted instantly.

My driver dashed away. I boot up the camera and prepared the tripod for the wild ride. The driver swerved the vehicle and hit the break as hard as he could. Camera ran, I focussed the buffalo running straight towards me. Maleika showed up... the rest of the story in the movie.



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5) Quite often dangerous and nerve-racking moments come up. Weren't you be tempt to intervene, if such dramas happened in front of your camera?

My blatant reply: „Yes!“ But I can't interfere with nature. If something bad happens, it is real hell for me. I was around when kids were killed.

For me it was heart-breaking as the cheetah family crossed a rapid stream and Maleika's son Marlo was grasped by a crocodile. At first instant I was really about to toss the camera towards the reptile. At the same time Maleika lingered deeply unnerved on the opposite bank of the river and watched in horror her struggling son. Then she glanced to me and pled: „Please, try something. Help!“

I went almost crazy behind my camera.

Finally I yelled: „Fight, Marlo! Fight!“

When Marlo submerged for ever in the river, my driver mentioned nervously: That's nature!“

My partner and I hugged and cried. The driver decamped for long minutes behind shrubs. Suddenly he returned and rushed with incredible speed 45 kilometres to get on the opposite side of the river, as we had to use a wooden bridge upstream. Nobody could speak during the wild ride. The days after made us stunned. The grief of the mother and her remaining cubs cut deeply in our minds. I recorded pictures which can't be described at all. At least we have to think new about empathy with animals. But this is the only good outcome.

And there was the day Maleika was badly injured. It seemed to be the end of her and the film at all. Of course, I thought to interfere. Maleika had still 5 babies which she had to breastfeed regularly. We asked a vet for advice, but the insight was that we might rescue Maleika, but could harm at the same time her babies.

I firmly believe that it helped that we were close to Maleika day in day out. It is an highly dramatic chapter in the film how she managed to come back to life on her own. For me it was pure horror and fear. Over 4 weeks we couldn't be sure that Maleika will make it.



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6) You produced 250 hours of footage from 2013 until 2017. How did you manage to create the final movie?

Right from the beginning I was keen to narrate the story of this fabulous mother and cheetah Maleika like a feature film. I aimed to generate a close range of the viewer to our hero and her kids. That was the challenge.

First of all I wrote a comprehensive screenplay containing 70 chapters. Afterwards I screened the footage in my studio for weeks. For each chapter I allocated 30 to 40 minutes of selected footage. At the end of 2015 I concluded the first rough cut of approximately 10,5 hours. Right then the real unnerving part of the cutting commenced. I had to eliminate many of the beloved and of my personal emotional moments from the cut. That was a real nightmare. I struggled hard to achieve a 352 minutes version. As soon as I decided to create much later a series with the rest of the footage I overcame literally a psychological hurdle. I enjoyed much more freedom to focus on the story. Until July 2016 we achieved a break-through with an excellent 132 minutes version. Partly the story went perfectly smooth and even a bit to swift. So, I denied persistently to shorten the movie further. From version to version we reduced after formidable discussion sometimes 3 to 4 or just 2 minutes. Parallel we worked on the sound which gave the work more and more a certain depth. Our composers delivered us great music. One based his compositions on his depressive mood which gave the darkest moments an incredible tragic. We cried in front of the screens. Our main composer created powerful symphonic sounds. This made us thinking about a Dolby Atmos implementation.

Almost of the end of the cutting we got overwhelming news from Maleika. She had again a litter of 2 cubs. Instantly we stopped our studio work and embarked on another production trip to Africa. We returned with 36 hours additional footage. We were happy, but had no idea what to do with all that stuff. Finally we cut an epilogue of 3 minutes. But just this gave the movie such a beautiful happy end!

At the beginning of February 2017 the cutting of Maleika was done. In March we recorded the narrators. In the night before the recording we sat on the bed in our hotel room in Berlin and struggled one last time for each and ever phrase. Many parts we rephrased to give the film more personal touch. Just weeks before we finally decided to aim putting all effort into a feature film. We introduced a third narrative perspective - so, the narrator, Maleika and the kids. Our narrator Max Moor didn't know about it when he arrived in the studio. First he frowned and then he worked on it with humour and full engagement. The day we recorded turned out to be an excellent day. Max gave his whole heart in it and I felt that Maleika will become a great piece of movie art. One other challenge came up: How could we convey to the potential cinema visitor that Maleika is no nature documentary but a real epic story a la Disney?

The last stage of the post-production ended up in a creative party. At the end of March we moved into a Dolby Atmos theatre and graded the movie. The touch was defined, all should be done to let the nature documentary behind. And we continued with the final mixing of the sounds in Dolby Atmos. We were a bit like kids experimenting with new toys:

„Hey, the small one here should say something!“, meant our senior mixer Tobias.

„Timecode....., send us a nice sound for the cheetah kid“, we mailed to the sound engineer on the upper floor. A couple of minutes afterwards the sound arrived:

„Wow, great stuff!“, we giggled at times.



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7) On your numerous expeditions to Africa you got know animals in intimate close range (for instance mountain-gorillas). Why are you so fascinated by cheetahs in contrary to other big cats? What makes Maleika to your „Queen of Africa“?

The first encounter with the cheetah mother „Diana“ 1996 in the Serengeti was love on the first sight. But who is able to define such a love? Well, it should had been, otherwise I wouldn't been able to follow theses cheetahs for many long month on my hands and knees. These cheetahs thrilled me entirely and won my heart.

In all the years with Maleika I learnt so much. I admire her courage and her stoic calmness with which she handles even obvious dead-end situations. For all this she has my whole respect. The relation between us is very special. Emotionally we are utmost close. During post-production I always addressed her as friend or our boss never as cheetah. Her disposition is that of a good queen. She never puts responsibility away, instead she takes over full personal responsibility and handles all duties with impressive focus.



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8) What can the audience in the cinema expect from the movie? What should they take along from it?

The audience will get great entertainment with emotional depth. Maleika is a movie about the great emotions - the real love, the sorrows of a mother and the pain to let go.

Maleika show us with awesome pictures and her impressive story that there is no sensible reason on this world to give up. One should take along this message into the daily routine.

I'm aware that this movie is partly a provocation for the pure nature film lovers. Maleika and all other characters are treated like unique personalities which doesn't go along with the scientific observation of nature. But in the field of behaviour research we watch some change in recent years. Animals do not function according to fixed behaviour patterns. Finally this cinema movie proves that animals can be very individual personalities, acting individual and show individual emotions.

And that it is all about - emotions! The extinction of species continues unimpeded on this planet. With great emotions for nature and wildlife we could motivate people to become engaged. Maleika is an ambassador for the wildlife and especially for cheetahs. There are just 7000 free-roaming cheetahs left! The movie supports our conservation trust in Botswana. We work there for wildlife-education and against the human-wildlife conflicts with it's devastating impact.



# MALEIKA

## Prologue of the Movie:

### Pictures move the World - The childhood Dream

Cats coined my life. That started in my early childhood. I grew up on some kind of an organic farm. All our animals lived free-roaming, but finally the purpose of their existence was to be at any given day consumed. Cats didn't fit in and were not really welcomed by my parents. You just couldn't eat them.

„The cats were again noisy in the night and we couldn't sleep at all“, my mother complaint quite often. Or - „The damned cat did again scabble in the soil of my flower bed“.

Nevertheless many cats gave birth to their babies on the hayloft of our farm. And they all became my close friends. Many times they enjoyed lying in my bed in the morning and my mother lashed into a frenzy.

„Great!“, I celebrated secretly. „Cats are like me - headstrong, stubborn and strategic thinkers.“

„Your should turn to the right“, ordered my mother. So, I turned to the left. Just did the contrary. Cats were the symbol for my life. Initially I intended to become a researcher of animal behaviour. When I was 8 I discovered the great scientist Konrad Lorenz and other well-known colleagues of him. I purchased and borrowed each and every book about animal behaviour.

But there was another great passion in my life, which was to change something on this world with pictures. I draw enthusiastically stories. At first stories of indians and cowboys. I recall my grandma who drove a very long nail into the wall to pin all my drawings she got from me on it. As soon as the whole length of the nail was covered she secretly disposed them. Well, I liked my grandmother nevertheless.

With 12 I made a decisive u-turn. I decided to take part at an international competition for young fine-artists. The theme was „Experience Nature“. I was awarded with the first prize. I knew instantly that I might dedicate my life to cats, but pictures should become the centre of my being.

I started to paint and was mesmerized how by my doing white canvasses turned into another world. Each piece of art is a wonder, each a reflection of deep emotions. I painted, but I painted always stories. I thought in stories. It seems that my brain has a remarkable ability to think in actions of stories like a film.

I painted at least eight hours a day until late night. I can't recall school really. I dozed my time there in some kind of daydream away. Well, 2 hours a day I had to sleep. School seemed to be the best place for doing that.



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When I became 14 I dared first time to go public with my creations. Frankly speaking, this was a great moment, although my first exhibition was just in a subsidiary of a bank. The exhibition was announced in the newspaper and I had to give some radio interviews. The promotion had good impact. I earned my first money. As a dedicated artist I should have invested the money in an array of new canvasses. Instead, I was keen for producing some more pictures - so many pictures that I could narrate a great story in a cinema movie.

Shortly after I came across an add in a newspaper. A guy tried to get rid of his 16mm film camera. The price matched the amount of money I just had made.

„Well, should be mine“, I pondered. Not long after I embarked on a train trip to the nearby city of Heidelberg. On the same day I returned proudly with my investment well padded in my bag. Finally I felt to be a film maker and producer. In the weeks to follow I purchased an appropriate tripod and worked on a screenplay. It became the story of a young couple which yawned to change the world with pictures. Finally I came to the conclusion that this endeavour is meant to fail in a very dramatic way. I was more or less negative about the society and the screenplay ended up in a drama.

With having a screenplay together I could start the implementation. I purchased 2 rolls of film. But event the pure price for the film rolls threw me into a serious depression. So, I made my mind to calculate the whole endeavour. The first step was to ask for a tender to processing the exposed film rolls. The outcome triggered a personal finance crisis. I could be sure to be bankrupt before the project finally would come in full flow. I also didn't think that it might be successful to investigate an investor with the age of 14. My parents themselves couldn't be asked. The movie was plastered with - let's say- not so nice scenes. So I had no hope that my parents would come to the conclusion that an investment in such a film could turn to a good idea and business.

With a heavy heart I decided to continue just as an painter and performance artist. The cinema movie was downgraded to stay as a dream. At least I kept the camera. I stroke her sometimes and enjoyed to hear her roaring without a film roll in it. Ever and anon the good buddy got an overnight in my bed like my cats on the farm before.



# MALEIKA

Also in the month to come no investor showed up. As at the same time my need for canvasses increased, while my career as an artist tumbled, I slid into a crisis of funding. I was forced to make a plan. I had to consider each and every possibility to achieve the great goal. From the angle of an entrepreneur it didn't serve any purpose to keep the 16mm film camera. Mentally I couldn't bear to sell the dear buddy. But reality is merciless. When I entered my 16th year of age the film camera was literally my last remaining capital. So, heavy-hearted I purchased a newspaper add... and got sadly a feedback. The caller was about to make films for the international environmental organization Greenpeace. That at least mitigated my pain.

He arrived on a Saturday. It rained cats and dogs. We met in the garage at my parent's house. The deal was soon made. I got a batch of paper called money and he obtained my film camera. I glanced for a quite long time after him until he disappeared in the rain. On this day I pledged: One day you will buy the best camera on this world and make a great cinema picture."

In the meanwhile I started to live the life of my screenplay, and it seemed to become the story of my life. I painted pieces of art to move the society. But this is a long story to tell. Finally I survived, my former life companion not.

Actually my way to Maleika began in the year 1995, when I could realize another big dream of my childhood - the first trip to Africa. Africa - yes, Africa that was what I always craved for. 1996 I encountered a wild cheetah mother with her 5 cubs in the Serengeti. I named her Diana. For me it was love on first sight. Instead, for the cheetah it was maximum love on the 18th sight. About my life on hands and knees as an accepted member of the family I reported comprehensively in quite a few picture books and text books. Until 2002 I stayed for many months and over 3 generations among the cheetahs in the Serengeti. Afterward I made a variety of books, TV documentaries and multi-vision shows. I explained full of enthusiasm how cheetahs live and behave in the wild.

2012 my pledge came true. I bought finally the legendary RED Epic Film camera and with this the finest state of the art camera on the world. Now I was just in need of the great story. Where could I find it? Well, why not there where my dream with the cheetahs took place - which was the Masai Mara and Serengeti ecosystem.

I started the production in 2013. The movie had the working title „Once I'm a Big Cat“. I was keen to narrate the stories of big cats kids and their mothers. But then I came across Maleika...

More informations: [www.maleikafilm.com](http://www.maleikafilm.com), [www.cheetahman.com](http://www.cheetahman.com)



# MALEIKA



## **Matto H. Barfuss**

**(more informations: [www.cheetahman.com](http://www.cheetahman.com))**

### **With twelve**

Visual artist and first prize of an international art contest

### **From fourteen onwards**

first own exhibition, more art awards, later the famous UNESCO- photo award

### **From 1987**

„RockART“ the artistical critical view on the society and their treatment of the environment  
Surrealistic Art-Creation-Period

### **1989**

Art work „Barfooth-Crossing of the Alps“ - performance art for the protection and preservation of the Alps. Matto crossed bar-foot via rock and snow the Alps. After 270 kilometres and after 20 days he reached the final destination in Italy. Matto utilized no civil structures and carried all his food and his sleeping-bag on his own. As artist he compared the destruction of his feet with the erosion in the Alps.

### **1990**

Launched his Publishing House and published various art-prints and calenders of rock-heroes of the sixties

### **1991**

Opening of Europe's first Music-Art-Gallery

### **From 1992 on**

„Animal Revolt“ - new period of artworks and performance art

### **Since 1995**

More than 66 excusions to Africa, numerous reportages for famous magazines worldwide (STERN, Mui Interessante, Terra Sauvage, GEO...) . Matto stays since then for at least 6 month per year in the African bush.

# MALEIKA

## **For 25 weeks**

Accepted member in a wild cheetah family in the Serengeti. He lives on his hands and knees as „human cheetah“ among the big cats. He shares their social behaviour and the whole daily routine... This unique projects makes Matto Barfuss well-known worlwide....

## **Since 1998**

Publishes the bestseller picture-book „I was a Cheetah“, published in 8 different languages so far...  
Founder and President of the non-profit organization „Live for Cheetahs“  
Film-production in the Serengeti for the film „The Cheetahman“

## **1999**

Books „Cheetahland“, „Secret Africa“ and more expeditions

## **Since 2000**

official Representative of his Country  
Opening of his own Art-House of the Big Cats in Rheinau/Germany

## **2001**

Initiator of the international art- and cultureproject „Painting for Cheetahs“ under the patronship of the Namibian President and the German Minister-President.  
Creation of the international Art-Icon „G“ as a symbol for global responsibility

## **August 2001**

First Relocation of Cheetahs in Namibia

## **2002**

Production and Broadcasting of a great TV-Special for ZDF and arte (Life for Cheetah, 37 Grad, Making of)  
„Ambassador of the Mountains“ in the international year of the mountain-ranges of the UN

Initiator and creator of a joint-venture project according to the slogan „Culture meets Economy“  
Founder of the international Programme „Education for Conservation“ - Matto created and published a wildlife-schoolbook for children in Afrika. More than 50.000 books were printed and freely distributed. yet..  
Start of the on-going documentation of all the existing Mountain-Gorilla families in Uganda, Ruanda and the D.R. Congo...

## **2003**

Autobiographie „on Quest for the Paradise“ , published in Germany, China, Korea and Czech Rep,  
First creation of a so called „Cheetahwine“ according to the slogan „Support and Enjoy“. Since then Matto created regularly his own wine to fund his programme „Education for Conservation“.

## **2004**

First edition of his own annual Wildlife- and Art-magazine Magazin „G“

## **2005**

First Expedition in the D.R. Congo and since then numerous film TV-reports about the gorillas  
The picture-Book „Barfuss among Mountain-Gorillas“ is published in Germany, then Czech Rep.

## **2006**

Long expeditions in the D.R. Congo and conclusion of the film-production for the film „Gorilla-Fever“, more books  
Launch of the long-term film-documentary „... with Lions through Africa“

# MALEIKA

## **2007-2008**

Founding of the „Gorilla-Aid-Fund“ and active support of the rangers in the gorilla-areas in D.R. Congo

## **2009**

Premiere of the documentation-project „... with Lions through Africa“ as Live-Multivisionshow  
Premiere of the film „The Future of the Gorillas“ in Swiss TV.

## **2010**

Picture-book „ ... with Lions through Africa“, Start of the film-production „Spotted Hunters“ and „The forgotten Lions of the Bushmannland“

## **2011**

The Project „...with Lions through Africa“ becomes international

## **2012**

Appointment by the German Minister for Environment to the UN-Decade-Ambassador for biological Diversity  
Book and Film „The Cheetahs of the Kalahari“

## **2013**

Matto creates the Art-House „Planet Go“ and lays the foundation for the implementation in 2014  
Matto Barfuss starts his film-production in 5K for two long-term Cinema-Productions in Africa.  
The Film „The Wild Dogs of the Kalahari“ was finalized after a six year production period

Matto launches the Planet-Go Cinema-Filmproduction and Internet-TV

## **2014**

Matto continues the long-term study about cheetahs and lions in the Kalahari  
Over months he films for his great cinema-production „Cats of Mara“ in Kenya  
Opening of an office in Maun/Botswana and distribution of 20.000 wildlife-schoolbooks in the Kalahari.

## **2013 to 2017**

Production of the cinema movie MALEIKA

## **2017**

Picture Book MALEIKA and roll out of the first fashion collection MALEIKA in cooperation with MARC CAIN.





# MALEIKA



## **The „Green Belt Initiative“ powered by Maleika**

The cinema film „Maleika“ supports the initiative „Green Belt Botswana“.

Matto Barfuss launched 1998 the non-profit organization „Leben für Geparden / Life for Cheetahs“ in Germany and 2015 the „Go wild Botswana Trust“ in Botswana.

The Tropic of Capricorn extends for a distance of 500 km through the South of Botswana coined by austerity and bleakness. Humans and animals there are experts in survival.

„Green Belt Botswana“ will plant a line of arid-resistant trees over a period of 10 years. This kind of landscape art will be revived by a wildlife-education program, aid against „human wildlife conflicts“ and programs for the san people to integrate them in sustainable tourism. Of course, the focus is on Maleika's fellows as well.

The area is also the venue of another great cinema project of Matto Barfuss.

The initiative will be managed by the „Go wild Botswana Trust“ in close collaboration with „Leben für Geparden e.V.“, Achertalstr. 13, D-77866 Rheinau, [www.geparden.de](http://www.geparden.de), Phone +49-7844- 911456