



P.O.V.'s "TINTIN AND I"

By Anders Østergaard

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Filmmaker's Statement

This film took me four years to make, but my idea of how I wanted it to be came in an instant. It was one of those rare moments when a drama presents itself within a clear visual framework – the perfect DNA for a film.

Being an average Tintin fan, like so many Europeans of my generation, I was skimming through the official Tintin website when I came across an article about one of my favorite books in the series – *Tintin in Tibet*. It revealed Hergé's first few sketches and notes as he approached the story and they seemed to directly reflect his stream of consciousness: "*They find themselves in Tibet. What are they doing there? There has to be a motive.*" And then – with an abrupt leap beyond the usual limits of children's entertainment – "*A search for eternal wisdom . . . Buddha!*" In these first notes, Hergé seemed to be sending his impeccable boy-scout hero out on a quest for spiritual enlightenment – nothing less. The author of the article then went on to point out how these disturbing lines coincided with a major emotional crisis in Hergé's life. This was the fall of 1957 when Hergé, a married man, was drifting into deep depression because he had fallen in love with another woman and he didn't know how to handle the guilt.

There it was. Suddenly there seemed to be an answer to a hunch I had always had through all my years as a Tintin reader. A hunch that something was going on behind the scenes. That a lot of nervous energy and personal experience was embedded in these apparently innocent stories. And that this was why they kept on being such a rich and stimulating read. It was obvious to me that *Tintin in Tibet* had to be the climax of an intense personal drama – played out so movingly by Hergé in the snowy and desolate plains of Himalaya. All I had to do was unearth the story that was bound to lie behind this crucial moment in his life and his art.

Then came the tapes. Quite miraculously, the Hergé Foundation was able to offer me 14 cassettes: the result of Hergé's marathon testimony about his life and work, which until then had been thoroughly censored. Their technical state was generally miserable – but Hergé's serene and spirited voice filtered through the distortion and convinced me that it was possible to turn the film into an intimate autobiography that would truly move its audience – 20 years after the artist's death.

The rest was hard work, never-ending negotiations and a sheer battle to keep everybody else's opinions about Tintin and Hergé out of what I wanted to do. But throughout the entire production it was such a delight to have the privilege of working with the colors, the graphics, the humor and the mystery in those immortal stories called *The Adventures of Tintin*.

- Anders Østergaard

