



# Awake

**Cheer up... Armageddon's coming!**

(UK 2015, ENGLISH, B&W and Colour, 22 mins.)

Anna, who's chronically ill, is visited by Doreen, a door to door proselytizer who makes herself at home and stays the day, slowly defrosting her non-welcome. Together, they walk in the park, bake a cake and watch an Ingmar Bergman film. Both women are blind, played by blind actors Alex Bulmer and Margo Cargill in this existential comedy.

A *filmpro* production

Written and directed by Michael Achtman

Produced by Caglar Kimyoncu

With Alex Bulmer and Margo Cargill

Categories: Narrative Fiction, Short

Genres: Comedy, Drama

Niches: Disability Culture, LGBTQI

Audio description and captioned versions available.

website: [www.awakethefilm.net](http://www.awakethefilm.net)

twitter: @awakethefilm

facebook: awaketheshortfilm

**Writer/Director/ Editor**

Michael Achtman

**Producer**

Çağlar Kimyoncu

**Sound Designer**

Mustafa Bal

**Anna**

Alex Bulmer

**Directors of Photography**

Juan Soto

Zeynep Dağlı

**Music**JS Bach: The Goldberg  
Variations, BMV 988

Piano: Kimiko Ishizaka

**Doreen**

Margo Cargill

**Sound Recorder/Mixer**

Jon Newell

**Screenings**

July 2015 – Mykonos Biennale, Greece

July 2015 – Tenerife International Film Festival, Spain

October 2015 – Buffalo International Film Festival, USA

October 2015 – Seize the day with me film festival, Novi Sad, Serbia

October 2015 – Montecatini International Film Festival, Italy

November 2015 – Phnom Penh International Film Festival, Cambodia

November 2015 – All Lights India International Film Festival, Kerala, India

November 2015 – 'O Curt Short Film Festival, Italy

December 2015 – Together! 2015 Disability Film Festival, London, UK

March 2016 – Picture this... film festival, Calgary, Canada

March 2016 – II Diseases International Short Film &amp; Art Festival (2 FICAE), Valencia, Spain

September 2016 – Look &amp; Roll 2016, Basel, Switzerland

**Director's Biography**

As writer, director and performer, **Michael Achtman's** work spans theatre, film & video, and live art. From 1997 through 2002, he collaborated with R.M. Vaughan on a series of poetic, DIY videos that screened internationally and culminated in retrospectives at the Squeaky Wheel, Buffalo and SPIN Gallery, Toronto. Since 2003, he has frequently collaborated with Deaf and disabled artists, and his work explores accessible practice and distribution. His 25-

minute short, *Welcome Stop*, screened at the Moscow International Disability Film Festival, Entzaubertfest (Berlin) and Picture This... film festival (Calgary). He is an associate artist at *filmpro*, a London-based digital arts agency.

### Director's Statement

*Awake* was inspired by Ingmar Bergman's film *Winter Light*. The first time I watched it, or tried to, was late at night, and in the middle of the sombre film I drifted off into a very peaceful sleep, which is funny because at heart it's quite disturbing. *Winter Light* deals with the crisis of faith of a Swedish country pastor. One of his congregants, played by Max Von Sydow, comes to him distraught at the state of the world, looking for a reason to go on, and when the pastor, in the depths of his own doubt, is unable to help, the Max Von Sydow character kills himself.

I wanted to write a film for two fabulous blind actresses, Margo Cargill and Alex Bulmer, and I thought that a door to door proselytizer was a good way to get strangers to meet. I loved the idea of a blind Witness going from house to house, trusting in the universe and inviting herself into people's lives. And I've always been interested in questions of faith, how even the most wacky and ephemeral belief system can provide a solid foundation for survival, where a more logical and realistic world-view can drive us to despair.

I've spent more than a decade collaborating with disabled artists, and I'm interested in creating work that makes disability visible, but in a context where people's impairment isn't the central issue. Unfortunately, it's still rare to see disabled characters played by disabled actors – "cripping up" is the norm, and still acceptable in a context where blackface, for example, is taboo. The irony is that some viewers don't believe these actresses are really blind. They seem too comfortable and adept at navigating their surroundings – we've been trained to think of blindness the way it's represented by non-disabled actors - staring straight ahead, touching the walls, feeling people's faces, etc. It's time for all that to change!

