WAGENINGEN GETS ‘ROTTERDAM’ NATURE FILMS

It is quite rare for cinemas to show nature documentaries, so a whole weekend full of nature films is downright exceptional. The Heerenstraat Theater will be doing just that from 9 to 12 November with the Wageningen Wildlife Film Festival, showcasing nine documentaries. This is actually an offshoot of the Wildlife Film Festival Rotterdam, which takes place a week earlier.

The Rotterdam event has been going since 2015 and invariably attracts big crowds. ‘The Cinerama is always packed,’ says Sebastiaan Grosscurt. The Forest and Nature Conservation alumnus leads the Q&A sessions after each screening. According to Grosscurt, the Rotterdam organization had wanted an offshoot of the festival in Wageningen for some time. He decided to put that idea into practice. Grosscurt says the Heerenstraat Theater will be screening the ‘most breath-taking films’ from the selection in Rotterdam. During the four days, nine films will be shown twice each. As an extra, each day there will be a Q&A session after one of the films. Three of those sessions will include Wageningen scientists, namely Patrick Jansen, Laurens Ganzeveld and Gibbs Kuguru. Ganzeveld (Meteorology and Air Quality) will answer questions about the film *Into the Ice*. The film follows the work of glaciologists who study the effect of climate change on the Greenland icecap. Ganzeveld himself researches the exchange of climate-active gases between the ice and the atmosphere and was involved in the major polar expedition MOSAIC in 2019. Although it should be noted that expedition was about sea ice.

‘The ice is 3.5 kilometres thick at the top of the Greenland ice cap’

Still from the film *Into the Ice*. Glaciologist Alun Hubbard descends into a moulin (glacier mill) on Greenland.
◆ Photo Lars H. Ostenfeld (*Into the Ice* director)

Into the Ice is about the land ice on Greenland. Ganzeveld spent a month on Greenland in 2009 to carry out measurements on that land ice. ‘That was at the Summit Station, at the top of the Greenland ice sheet, where the ice is 3.5 kilometres thick. That ice is so heavy it pushes the ground hundreds of metres downwards. The bottom layer is 100,000 years old.’

800,000 years

Ganzeveld does a lot of teaching on the dynamics of glaciers. ‘About how glaciers can respond strongly in the climate system to climate change: because of feedback mechanisms, glaciers can grow fast but equally they can break up fast. The higher up a glacier is, the faster it grows because the air is colder higher up. Until the glacier is at such altitudes that there is almost no moisture in the sky and so no snow is created.’

‘That is the case in Antarctica,’ continues Ganzeveld. ‘It is so cold that almost no snow falls. As a result, the ice on Antarctica reacts much more slowly to climate change. And that relative lack of dynamism means the ice is much older. The oldest layer dates back 800,000 years.’

Incidentally, Ganzeveld cannot say what *Into the Ice* itself will be showing.

‘I haven’t yet seen the film.’ RK

Wageningen Wildlife Film Festival, 9-12 November, Heerenstraat Theater.