

COLLECTIVE EYE, INC. PRESENTS

A film by Taggart Siegel

QUEEN OF THE SUN:

WHAT ARE THE BEES TELLING US?



A Collective Eye Production | HD 82 Min. | Directed by Taggart Siegel | Produced by Jon Betz

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Without bees, Albert Einstein said, “man would only have four years of life left.” From the director of *THE REAL DIRT ON FARMER JOHN* comes a profound, alternative look at the tragic global bee crisis. Juxtaposing the catastrophic disappearance of bees with the mysterious world of the beehive, *QUEEN OF THE SUN* weaves an unusual and dramatic story of the heart-felt struggles of beekeepers, scientists and philosophers from around the world. Featuring Michael Pollan, Gunther Hauk and Vandana Shiva, *QUEEN OF THE SUN* reveals both the problems and the solutions in renewing a culture in balance with nature.

QUEEN OF THE SUN received the Documentary Channel’s Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary, Honorable Mention at the 2010 Nashville Film Festival and the Audience Award at Maui Film Festival. It has been officially selected for IDFA 2010.

WWW.QUEENOFTHESUN.COM

NOTABLE QUOTES FOR *QUEEN OF THE SUN*

★★★★★ “On this fascinating new documentary...Taggart Siegel circled the globe to interview the world's most passionate beekeepers, and their testimonials make this an irresistible romance about the essential role that honeybees play in maintaining earth's fragile ecosystem...a cautionary tale with a hopeful outlook.”

-*Jeff Shannon, The Seattle Times*

“Queen of the Sun is stunning...as soulful as it is scientific, as uplifting as it is alarming. Siegel sets himself and his film apart with exquisite cinematography and awe-inducing visual artistry. B+.”

-*Christine Champ, Film.com*

“A creative exploration of the global honeybee crisis replete with remarkable nature cinematography, some eccentric characters and yet another powerful argument for organic, sustainable agriculture in balance with nature, Taggart Siegel's attractive call-to-action docu "Queen of the Sun" reps a natural follow-up to his prize-winning "The Real Dirt on Farmer John... "Queen" could generate some honey in niche theatrical before landing on the smallscreen.”

-*Alissa Simon, Variety*

“Queen of the Sun breathes love and hope into the catastrophic crisis inundating our oldest domesticated animal, the honey bee. I was moved from tears to hope as the film gently offered next steps anyone could take to make the world a better place...”

-*Barbara Booth, Santa Fe Waldorf School*

“Inspiring, humbling, thought provoking, entertaining, and beautifully shot, this film does much more than introduce the current crisis faced by the bees. *Queen of the Sun* is a call for cultural renewal, for a holistic and compassionate understanding of these amazing creatures. ”

-Rebecca Briggs, *Biodynamic Farmers & Gardeners Association*

“A wild, entertaining and thoughtful documentary... You are engulfed by wonder.”

-Michael Van Baker, *The Sun Break*

“*Queen of the Sun* inspires all to get involved in Earth's ecological future, and gives an optimistic vision of the future of food production.”

-Carly Dahlen, *Screenology*

“I never thought that a documentary about honeybees would make me both laugh and cry-but filmmaker Taggart Siegel’s *Queen of the Sun* is one such film.”

-Dennis Hartley, *Hullabaloo*

ABOUT THE FILM

50 WORD SYNOPSIS

Queen of The Sun is a profound, alternative look at the bee crisis. Juxtaposing the catastrophic disappearance of bees with the mysterious world of the beehive, QUEEN OF THE SUN weaves an unusual and dramatic story of the heart-felt struggles of beekeepers, scientists and philosophers from around the world.

100 WORD SYNOPSIS

Without bees, Albert Einstein said, “man would only have four years of life left.” From the director of THE REAL DIRT ON FARMER JOHN comes a profound, alternative look at the tragic global bee crisis. Juxtaposing the catastrophic disappearance of bees with the mysterious world of the beehive, QUEEN OF THE SUN weaves an unusual and dramatic story of the heart-felt struggles of beekeepers, scientists and philosophers from around the world. Featuring Michael Pollan, Gunther Hauk and Vandana Shiva, QUEEN OF THE SUN reveals both the problems and the solutions in renewing a culture in balance with nature.

150 WORD SYNOPSIS

In 1923, Rudolf Steiner, a scientist, philosopher & social innovator, predicted that in 80 to 100 years honeybees would collapse. His prediction has come true with Colony Collapse Disorder, where reports continue to surface that bees are disappearing in mass numbers from their hives with no clear single explanation. In an alarming inquiry into the insights behind Steiner’s prediction QUEEN OF THE SUN examines the dire global bee crisis through the eyes of biodynamic beekeepers, scientists, farmers, and philosophers. On a pilgrimage around the world, the film unveils 10,000 years of beekeeping, highlighting how our historic and sacred relationship with bees has been lost due to highly mechanized industrial practices. Featuring Michael Pollan, Vandana Shiva, Gunther Hauk and beekeepers from around the world, QUEEN OF THE SUN weaves a dramatic story which uncovers the problems and solutions in renewing a culture in balance with nature.

TWO-PAGE OVERVIEW

Queen of The Sun is an in-depth investigation to discover the causes and solutions behind Colony Collapse Disorder; a phenomenon where honeybees vanish from their hives, never to return. *Queen of The Sun* follows the voices and visions of underrepresented beekeepers, philosophers, and scientists around the world, all struggling for the survival of the bees. While other bee films focus exclusively on commercial beekeepers, this film emphasizes the biodynamic and organic communities who have differing opinions from many commercial beekeepers and are overlooked in other films.

Queen of The Sun reveals bees as a barometer of the health of the world. Bees fly millions of miles to keep the earth in bloom and have provided humans with honey, wax and pollination for our food for over 10,000 years. Through animation and illuminated imagery, *Queen of The Sun* uncovers how bees were highly revered by the Egyptians, Mayans and Greeks, but the bond between humans and bees, once a sacred partnership is now a complicated, profit-driven, industrial enterprise.

Queen of The Sun draws from the insights of Rudolf Steiner an Austrian scientist who, in 1923, predicted that in 80 to 100 years, bees would disappear. Steiner said: “The mechanization of beekeeping and industrialization will eventually destroy beekeeping.” Gunther Hauk, our main character and a protégé of Steiner’s, against all odds, begins to build the first bee sanctuary in the world. Surrounded by industrial agriculture, he is creating a 600-acre farm to help support the bees in crisis. Through his insights, we are launched into a journey around the world to uncover the compelling perspectives concerning the complex problems bees are facing such as malnutrition, pesticides, genetically modified crops, migratory beekeeping, parasites, pathogens and lack of genetic diversity from over queen breeding. Seeking answers through unique and unusual beekeepers and scientists who have heart-felt respect for their bees we confront and address the harsh realities causing the bees to disappear. *Queen of The Sun* finds practical solutions and discover the deep link between bees survival and our own.

Queen of The Sun is unique in its approach: while investigating the apocalyptic crisis affecting the bees, it balances the dark reality we face with both the secret wonder of the beehive and the good humor of real, devoted beekeepers. It is neither a dour, nor a dire predictor of gloom. The film weaves the ‘beauty with the beast’: landscapes and beescapes contrast chillingly with the harshness of the Monsanto-dominated global agriculture. The expertise of the scientists and philosophers is clear as they present their cases in an easy-to-digest, unfolding manner, complemented by artful animation and clear compelling imagery.

The characters in *Queen of The Sun* share a common belief that solutions to the bee crisis lie in a renewal of agriculture and beekeeping that supports the needs of the bee and therefore supports the planet. While their solutions are simple and practical, they are not

easy. *Queen of The Sun* demonstrates their immense efforts to rebuild a community in balance with nature.

Queen of The Sun presents a compassionate inquiry into the struggle of commercial beekeepers who, when faced with skyrocketing demand and staggering losses, do their best with the methods they were taught, often unaware that their standard practices are seriously flawed. For example, artificially bred bees are malnourished on a diet of high-fructose corn-syrup, are confined in plastic hives and are transported thousands of miles, bombarded by exhaust fumes, only to be over-worked in crops soaked in pesticides. A stunning revelation- that to manufacture a single non-organic cotton tee shirt, one third of a pound of pesticide is used- underscores the sheer volume of toxic chemicals commonly being applied to crops. Because of these conditions, the exhausted and weakened pollinators become easy prey for mites, climate change, environmental radiation, viruses, air and water pollution, and the challenging effects of genetically modified crops.

Media amplifies alarm about the worldwide collapse of bee colonies and scientists hunt for a silver bullet cure. In the meantime, bee advocates strive to renew a culture that takes its cues from the hive. They have wisely recognized that the bees, themselves, are our guides and they have looked to the bees' example of collaboration and community as the model for their own actions. Einstein was right: it is impossible to change any problem by using the same tools that created it. With that in mind, ***Queen of The Sun*** highlights non-traditional approaches that do much to create positive global change.

The world is at an opportune moment to see the film. The current possibility for positive change and the universal commitment to saving our planet's future are linked. ***Queen of The Sun*** mirrors the hopefulness of this time of volatile transformation and reassessment. The optimistic response of those who saw ***The Real Dirt on Farmer John*** leads us to believe that people are ready to confront the decline of the honeybee population and its dire consequences and to embrace the changes illuminated in the film. It is the positive and hope-laden message of ***Queen of The Sun*** that opens its viewers' minds to the real possibility of a sustainable, healthy and verdant future.

DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY



For 25 years, Taggart Siegel has produced and directed Emmy-nominated, award-winning documentaries and dramas that reflect cultural diversity with absorbing style. From spiritual elders struggling to preserve traditions in alien environments to marginalized youth surviving hostile streets, the subjects of his films present vital perspectives rarely seen on mainstream media.

Broadcasted and distributed worldwide, Siegel's films bring compelling voices and visions to a global audience. **The Real Dirt on Farmer John**, Siegel's critically acclaimed documentary about a maverick visionary farmer, won 31 international film festivals awards and was released theatrically around the world. It was broadcast worldwide and was aired in 2007 on INDEPENDENT LENS. *The Real Dirt on Farmer John* was written up by Roger Ebert for it's U.S. theatrical release as "A loving, moving, inspiring, quirky documentary" and by former Vice-President Al Gore as "Unbelievably special...a real and gripping story with insight and humor."

Siegel's other award winning films, **The Split Horn: Life of a Hmong Shaman in America** and Emmy nominated *Between Two Worlds*, capture the struggle of Hmong Shamans trying to maintain their ancient traditions in America, while *Blue Collar and Buddha* explores the dilemma of a community of Laotian refugees adapting to life in a blue-collar mid-western town. *Heart Broken in Half* tells the complex story of a street gang in Chicago, and *Bitter Harvest* follows the blight of a farm during the catastrophic 1980's. In his deeply personal dramatic film, *Body Memories*, Siegel journeys into the archeology of the soul, while his theatrical feature debut, *Shadow of the Pepper Tree*, explores the mysteries and temptations of a Mexican healer. Siegel also directed *Ember Days* and produced *Destroying Angel*, *The Beloved* and *The Disenchanted Forest*, a documentary about orangutans for National Geographic Television.

Taggart Siegel is the co-founder of Collective Eye, Inc., a non-profit media production and distribution organization based in San Francisco and Portland, Oregon. His most recent film, "**Queen of the Sun: What are the bees telling us?**" is profound, alternative look at the bee crisis.



PRODUCER/EDITOR: Jon Betz is a Portland-based documentary filmmaker and producer for *Queen of The Sun*. He is a graduate from Rhode Island School of Design where he received the Tiffany Rosen Scholarship Award for Excellence in Narrative Filmmaking and Fine Arts Award for Excellence in Film. Betz's work strives to maintain a high degree of artistic craft while digging deeply into the spiritual, emotional and ethical issues surrounding his characters. *Memorize-you-saw-it*, Betz's award-winning, intimate autobiographical documentary, journals his time as an aid worker living with former-child soldiers in Eastern Uganda. *Memorize-you-saw-it* has screened at educational institutions and public venues, including The Watson Institute at Brown University and The Ivy Film Festival.



COMPOSER: Every so often a musician emerges who manages to speak to the spirit by way of their instrument. Electric cellist and vocalist Jami Sieber reaches inside the soul with compositions that are contemporary, timeless, lush, and powerfully evocative. Her style of performance has been recognized internationally. An innovative musician, Jami's music moves beyond the surface, seeking and re-seeking her truth by creating musical bridges and connections. Jami's life-long commitment to the environment, social justice, and the healing arts is at the heart of her music, reflecting a deep dedication to the arts as a medium of exploration and awareness of the interconnectedness of all beings. In addition to live performance, Jami has written musical scores for film, theater and dance, possessing an innate ability to use her instrument like a painter, adorning her musical canvas with washes of vivid tones and reflective moods. Jami, at her core, is in a constant state of re-invention which manifests in her music, engaging all of the senses and the depths of the imagination and creating experiences that invite listeners to new realms of perception.

CREDITS

A Collective Eye Production

DIRECTED & PRODUCED BY

Taggart Siegel

PRODUCED BY

Jon Betz

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

Donald Siegel

Eric Stolberg

George Mitchell

Mike Quinn

EDITOR

Jon Betz / Taggart Siegel

ANIMATION

Noah Dorsey

Alyssa Timon

ORIGINAL SCORE

Jami Sieber

Chris Rodgers

Michelle Hwang

SOUND DESIGN

Ryan Mauk

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Taggart Siegel

KEY CAST

Michael Pollan – Author “Omnivore’s Dilemma”

Gunther Hauk – Biodynamic Beekeeper & Farmer

Vandana Shiva – Physicist

Horst Kornberger - Philosopher

Jeffrey Smith - Author “Seeds of Deception”

Raj Patel – Author “Stuffed and Starved”

Carlo Petrini - President, Slow Food International

May Berenbaum - Entomologist

Michael Thiele - Biodynamic Beekeeper, Melissa Garden

Johannes Wirz - Molecular Biologist, Goetheanum

Yvon Achard - Beekeeper and Bee Historian

Gunther Friedmann – Demeter Biodynamic Beekeeper

Scott Black - Biologist, Xerces Society

Hugh Wilson - Botanist, Hinewai Reserve

Jacqueline Freeman – Biodynamic Beekeeper & Swarm Catcher

David Heaf - Biochemist and Biodynamic Beekeeper