

# The dome as cinema screen

Harald Singer



**Harald Singer**  
Co-founder of  
LivinGlobe Film Productions

*Dome projection is an ideal medium for a new form of movie, where stories are told in three-dimensional space using real film actors, genuine locations and virtual rooms. By taking advantage of the new possibilities opened up by digital imaging, we create imaginative cinema presentations full of emotional excitement and remarkable visual effects. Cinema for all senses - immersive cinema.*

It is no longer a question of achieving unity of space and time, of presenting a story as true-to-life as possible in a location that looks like the real thing, as in the classic feature film. The idea is to expand the dramatic action into new domains of the imagination, with fantastic associations and visual effects. The action is distributed over the space, allowing the viewer to become director: the viewer decides where to look, what aspect of the film he or she is interested in.



## LivinGlobe Film Productions

LivinGlobe was founded in early 2003 by Bettina Pfändner and Harald Singer with offices in Berlin and Munich. The first and only company of its kind, LivinGlobe is entirely dedicated to the production of full-dome films. They are gradually building up a library of titles that can be shown in domes with full-dome projection on a license fee basis.

LivinGlobe will produce various types of film:

- Immersive Cinema feature films
- Documentary films
- Fictionality films – fiction based on reality

LivinGlobe plans to bring real life into the dome as well as fantasy. The dome acts as an expandable space, giving free reign to the imagination. LivinGlobe films are never just computer animation films, they are always based on genuine photographic images. The scenes are then expanded using computer graphics and the manifold possibilities of digital processing.

## R+J - the film

First off the production line is "R+J", the first-ever full-dome film, produced for ADLIP and SkyVision. R+J is a modern adaptation of the classic drama "Romeo and Juliet" by William Shakespeare and was produced by LivinGlobe, Carl Zeiss and SkySkan Europe as a demo film.

R+J demonstrates all sorts of ways in which full-dome video can be successfully presented in a dome. The dome is transformed into an entertainment dome, into wraparound cinema. R+J shows it is possible today to project genu-



ine photographic images in a dome and to present feature stories with narrative and dialog.

## R+J – photography

R+J was filmed like any “normal” feature film with 35 mm film. This is the standard film format for feature movies, but because of the much larger projection area in the dome compared with conventional cinemas, the limits of this technology are apparent.

LivinGlobe sees the future of immersive cinema in digital film production. In association with its partners Carl Zeiss, ARRI and Sky-Skan they will be developing and using revolutionary new photographic and processing tools for the new full-dome environment.



## R+J – the story

For the first film of this new genre the producers deliberately chose one of the best and best known dramas in world literature, so as to create the association between classical story-telling and the latest imaging techniques.

The action takes place in a desert. A group of young people are travelling with a truck and various building materials through an empty landscape looking for the “right place”. At this place they make a halt and start building a stage as a party venue using the simple bits of wood and material they have with them.

At last it is ready: the stage is erected and the event can begin. A great party starts, which gathers pace until it becomes a kaleidoscope of sensory excitement.

Juliet wanders about in a state of elation, driven on by the crazy gang of partygoers, till she suddenly lands up in the arms of a young man - Romeo. Their eyes meet, but Juliet is wrenched away and has to go on dancing.

Romeo is exhausted. He withdraws to a quiet corner, where he leans against a large wooden ladder. There he discovers to his surprise, leaning over the balustrade, the lovely girl who had fallen into his arms on the dance floor - Juliet. A tender love story unfolds between the two, which ends with a first loving kiss.

But Romeo and Juliet are only the helpless pawns in a game between two enemy camps, the Capulets and the Montagues. Tybalt, who belongs to Juliet’s family, challenges Romeo from the opposing family, to a fight – and loses. In a moment of fierce wild hand-to-hand fighting Romeo kills Tybalt.

Romeo flees to Juliet. She is torn between love for him and his appalling act. For a moment they succeed in ignoring reality, and, as if wrapped in a cocoon, shielded from the outside world, they revel in their love for each other. They enjoy their first night of love, but

## R+J – facts and credits

Title:	R+J
Duration:	20 min.
Production:	LivinGlobe
Coproducers:	Carl Zeiss, Sky-Skan Europe
Producer:	Bettina Pfändner
Direction:	Harald Singer
Visual Design:	Kevin Beaulieu
Actors:	Julia Dietze, Florian Jahr
A production for ADLIP and SkyVision.	
The trailer of R+J won the Domie Award for Innovation at the DomeFest in Albuquerque in June 2004.	

as day dawns Romeo must flee, banned by the Prince for his wicked deed.

The drama takes its course. The father thinks of a cunning trick. He gives Juliet poison to drink so she appears to be dead. Romeo, all unwitting, comes home in secret from his exile and finds Juliet apparently dead in her tomb. In despair he drinks the poison so as to join her in death. As he is dying, Juliet wakes up from her coma and sees him. In a mixture of joy, rage and despair she kisses him – hoping to find a last drop of poison on his lips so she may die with him. Her hope is fulfilled. Romeo and Juliet lie there in the tomb together, united in death and love.

But all this was just a game played out in the soft desert night. After the tragic end the party and the dancing continue with all tragedy forgotten.

*Scenes of the shooting of R+J.*

*Photo credits: H. Singer  
Background: two scenes of the full-dome movie (dome original format).*

