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JOURNEY INTO THE MYSTERIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS WITH “AWARE: GLIMPSES OF CONSCIOUSNESS” PREMIERING ON PBS’S INDEPENDENT LENS APRIL 25, 2022

*The Award-Winning Documentary Investigates the Mysteries of Consciousness Through a
Scientific and Spiritual Lens*

(San Francisco, CA) April 5, 2022—Filmmakers Frauke Sandig and Eric Black explore six radically different perspectives on consciousness in their documentary “[AWARE: Glimpses of Consciousness](#).” Through expert perspectives spanning high-tech brain research, Eastern Meditation, the use of psychedelic substances, and the consciousness of plants, Sandig and Black evoke existential mysteries at the core of the human experience, ultimately encouraging viewers to review their long-held beliefs and assumptions, and initiate their own journey into consciousness.

Lauded by the *Los Angeles Times* as “mindful” and “consciousness-elevating food for thought,” and garnering a 100 percent “Certified Fresh” score from critics on *Rotten Tomatoes*, “AWARE: Glimpses of Consciousness” makes its television debut on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS on April 25, 2022, at 10:00 p.m. ET (check local listings). The film will also be available to stream on the PBS Video app.

The film features six expert researchers studying the existence of consciousness and how to achieve it from radically different perspectives. Sandig and Black speak with: Christof Koch, renowned neuroscientist and head of the Allen Institute for Brain Science; Matthieu Ricard, a former molecular biologist and current Tibetan-Buddhist monk; Roland Griffiths, neuroscience professor and director of the Center for Psychedelic and Consciousness Research at Johns Hopkins University; Philosophy Professor Richard Boothby; Monica Gagliano, scientist, professor and researcher; and Mayan healer Josefa Kirvin Kulix.

Each expert brings distinctly different but relevant findings to the film and provides compelling, fascinating new insights on inner awareness. For instance, Koch has come to openly question whether material science can find the origins of consciousness and has begun to ask if consciousness could be in all things—the fundamental essence of the universe. Ricard maintains we cannot approach consciousness from the outside, but only from the inside,

through meditation. Griffiths is systematically investigating prohibited psychoactive substances used by Indigenous peoples for thousands of years to heighten awareness and cure illness. Gagliano is making the empirical case in her lab that plants hear, see, communicate, learn, remember, and feel pain. Along with a look into each researcher's work, Sandig and Black weave in contemplative, sprawling visuals reminiscent of cinematographic meditation throughout the film.

"AWARE: Glimpses of Consciousness" has been deep in the festival circuit over the last year, winning the Feature Competition Jury Prize at the 2021 Illuminate Film Festival, the Online Audience Award for Poland's Millennium Docs Against Gravity festival, and the Create the Future Award at the 2021 Maui Film Festival Audience Awards. In addition, the film was shortlisted for the German Film Awards, the country's top prize in film. The fourth collaboration between Sandig and Black, the documentary is the second film in their trilogy, "Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth."

Visit the "[AWARE: Glimpses of Consciousness](#)" page on INDEPENDENT LENS for more information about the film.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS:

Frauke Sandig is a documentary filmmaker based in Berlin, Germany. She also works as a commissioning editor for Deutsche Welle. Her previous theatrical films as director/producer/dramaturgist (also with Eric Black) are "Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth" (2011), which premiered at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam, "Frozen Angels" (Sundance 2005), and "After the Fall" (Berlin IFF 2000).

Eric Black is a photographer and documentary filmmaker based in San Francisco and Berlin, Germany. His films as director/producer/cinematographer (also with Frauke Sandig) include "Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth," "Frozen Angels," and "After the Fall"—all three were official selections in over 200 international film festivals.

CREDITS:

Written, Produced, and Directed by	Frauke Sandig and Eric Black
Director of Photography	Eric Black
Dramaturgy	Frauke Sandig
Editors	Franziska von Berlepsch



Rune Schweitzer

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ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS:

INDEPENDENT LENS is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly PBS series airing Monday nights at 10:00 p.m. ET. The acclaimed series, with Lois Vossen as executive producer, features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from Acton Family Giving, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens. Join the conversation: facebook.com/independentlens and on Twitter @IndependentLens.

ABOUT ITVS:

ITVS is a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization that has, for over 25 years, funded and partnered with a diverse range of documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning films and then airs them for free on PBS via our weekly series, INDEPENDENT LENS, as well as on other PBS series and through our digital platform, OVEE. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, The National Endowment for the Humanities: American Rescue Plan, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org.

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