

FAR OUT ISN'T FAR ENOUGH

The Tomi Ungerer Story

A film by

Brad Bernstein

98 minutes , English, Digital (DCP, BluRay), 2012, Documentary, 16x9, Dolby 5.1 Surround, Unrated



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*“Easily the most wildly fascinating artist profiled in a documentary since Crumb.” –
Movies.com*

“Thoroughly entertaining!” – The Hollywood Reporter

Short Synopsis

One man’s wild, lifelong adventure of testing society’s boundaries through his subversive art, **FAR OUT ISN’T FAR ENOUGH: The Tomi Ungerer Story** combines traditional documentary storytelling with original animation culled from seven decades worth of art from the renegade children’s book author and illustrator.

Using a palette of 20th century events to paint an artist’s epic yet controversial life story, the film offers a retrospective of Ungerer’s life and art, and ponders the complexities and contradictions of a man who, armed with an acerbic wit, an accusing finger and a razor sharp pencil, gave visual representation to the revolutionary voices during one of the most tantalizing and dramatic periods in American history.

About the Film

FAR OUT ISN’T FAR ENOUGH: The Tomi Ungerer Story depicts one man’s wild, lifelong adventure of testing societal boundaries through his use of subversive art. This 98-minute film combines traditional documentary storytelling with original animation from over 70 years’ worth of art from the renegade children’s book author and illustrator. Using a historical palette of 20th century events to paint an artist’s epic yet controversial life story, this film offers a feature-length retrospective of Ungerer’s life and art, pondering the complexities and contradictions of a man who, armed with an acerbic wit, an accusing finger and a razor sharp pencil, gave visual representation to the revolutionary voices during one of the most tantalizing and dramatic periods in American history.

Coming of age under the German occupation of France in World War II, Tomi Ungerer produced some of the most iconic imagery of the 1960s and ‘70s. From his striking visual commentaries protesting American involvement in Vietnam to the many beloved characters of his children’s books, he is admired worldwide for the influence his work has had on a variety of art forms, and for his contribution to children’s literature. “No one, I dare say, no one was as original,” **FAR OUT** interviewee Maurice Sendak said of him. “Tomi influenced everybody.” Yet the same factors that vaulted him to meteoric success – fearless creativity, absolute outspokenness, fierce independence – also made him a lightning rod for controversy and the object of intense malice.

In **FAR OUT**, we meet an artist who creates boundary-exploring erotica and provocative political art, while penning best-selling children's literature with mischievous wit and childlike innocence. He arrives on American shores eager for economic opportunities and new creative freedom, and he leaves having offended even the tolerant and open-minded as he pushes past the limits of propriety. He becomes a broadly appealing artist and Madison Avenue success story, a singular artist steeped in piquant ideas and thoughts, yet even his most recognized books are now out of print. While Ungerer is by no means a victim, he is an early casualty of the so-called cultural wars—a man who didn't fit neatly into the left or the right, and who managed to offend and fascinate people of all political and cultural persuasions. Once the most famous children's book author in America, Tomi Ungerer became persona non grata in this country, exiled to the professional abyss, never to be heard from again.

Yet the film also explores Ungerer's life post-America, when he retreated to Nova Scotia in the hopes of finding himself. We see an artist "dropping out" and reinventing himself by adopting an agrarian lifestyle. Ultimately, his search leads him to Ireland, where this illustrator discovers this island's natural beauty and its resilient people, and through both finds his own personal satisfaction and inner peace, not to mention renewed critical and commercial success late in life.

Ungerer's artwork is the beating heart of the film's visual style—the product of his pencil provides the essential imagery for our film's Broll, an archive of thousands of original still images. What makes this documentary innovative is how we use this archive as a narrative tool. Through a number of motion graphics techniques, from stop motion to 3D animation, we are uniquely animating hundreds of select pictures from this trove to help tell our story, bringing his childhood sketches, advertising campaigns, anti-Vietnam War posters, cartoons, collages, works of erotica and children's books into motion. In addition, historical archival footage and still photographs are selectively interspersed throughout the piece, providing important historical context but never dominating Ungerer's original imagery.

While our subjects' on-camera interviews provide the backbone of the film's narrative, writers, critics and other artists from various fields are interviewed to put his words and actions under a discerning microscope. Secondary interviews include: the late, great Maurice Sendak, legendary children's book author and close friend; Jules Feiffer, syndicated Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist and friend; Patrick Skene Catling, British children's book author and critic; Michael Patrick Hearn, American literary scholar specializing in children's literature and its illustration; Steven Heller, art director, journalist and critic for the New York Times Book Review; Burton Pike, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at the CUNY Graduate Center, former Fulbright student and long-time friend and others.

Filmmaker Bio

Brad Bernstein is a writer, producer and director who has spent the last fourteen years in long-form documentary production. He is currently the staff writer for VH1's Emmy Award-winning doc series *Behind The Music* and has also produced and written five episodes of the series, a sixth of which (about Ludacris) is currently in production through his production company Corner of the Cave Media (Miami, FL). Brad is also director and writer of *Real Change: Artists For Education*, a one-hour prime time special airing on CBS on April 23rd, 2013 that includes interviews and performances with Pitbull, Justin Bieber, Miley Cyrus, Lady Antebellum, Jason Mraz, Quincy Jones, Matthew Morrison and LMFAO.

Brad is also currently directing and producing a ten-camera, live concert and documentary adaption called *Jazz and the Philharmonic* which features Bobby McFerrin, Chick Corea, Dave Grusin and Terence Blanchard that will air on PBS in January, 2014. Brad served as supervising producer on an original, six-part documentary series called *Saved* for Animal Planet that aired Fall 2011. He was also supervising producer on *Recording: The History of Recorded Music*, an 8-part documentary series shot in high-definition that traces America's history since Thomas Edison invented the first sound recording device in 1877 to the Internet. Executive producers for *Recording* include impresario Quincy Jones and legendary record producer Phil Ramone. *Recording* contains interviews with Phil Spector, Billy Joel, Norah Jones, Chuck D, Clint Eastwood, BB King, Flea, Paul Simon, Smokey Robinson and many other musicians and artists.

Brad was coordinating producer on ESPN's highly acclaimed documentary series *Rites of Autumn: The Story of College Football*, a 10-hour production narrated by Burt Reynolds; was a producer on *In Focus*, a 36-part Fox Sports documentary series hosted by esteemed broadcaster Dick Enberg; was a producer on *Between the Lines*, a four-hour original series for A&E hosted by Robert Downey, Jr. that featured President Jimmy Carter, Priscilla Presley, Martin Sheen and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton; and was producer and writer of *MSG Profiles*, an 8-part biography series on the New York Knicks and Rangers.

Director's Statement

On July 27th of 2008, I was in my office in Coconut Grove, Florida sifting through sections of the *New York Times* when, instantly, my life changed. There on the front of the *Times'* Arts section was an article – really a character sketch – of an Alsatian artist who seemed to have been through it all: Nazi occupation, the fight for civil rights and the American cultural wars of the 1960's, the golden age of magazine illustration, the sexual revolution, shame and exile. Yet here he was, as prolific as ever, set to be republished in the United States after a forty-year hiatus. I felt compelled to write Tomi Ungerer a letter, pitching him on an idea to make a documentary on his life and career.

Just over two weeks later, I got home from work to find a letter in my mailbox. But this was no ordinary letter: a cat was penning the words with one paw and drinking a glass of wine with the other! Mr. Ungerer agreed to participate, in his own unique way. We arrived in West Cork, Ireland ready for what was planned to be twelve days of intensive shooting. Excited, optimistic and ready to get to work, my crew and I spent three hours lighting Tomi's studio. When we were set-up, I invited my subject to the interview chair and rolled tape. One could never have expected what came next: Tomi refused to answer a single question. After watching us set up for three hours, taking apart his studio to create the shot look we desired, he lost it emotionally and physically. We completely altered his reality and, like a child, his mind shut down and he refused to cooperate. There was nothing I could do; here we were, caught up in one of Tomi's infamous anxiety attacks.

The good news is that we were rolling tape during the entire exchange and, ultimately, Tomi was able to bring himself back from his darkest depths. But what's more, he then set to explaining the root of his anxiety. And I learned an invaluable lesson about my subject: his personal history has truly marked him, for better and for worse, and while he has moments of extremely unusual behavior, he is also complex and intellectual enough to be able to explain the causes behind both his failings and his genius. And that, as far as a documentary is concerned, is what translates into a great film, which is what I hope people think we have with **FAR OUT ISN'T FAR ENOUGH: The Tomi Ungerer Story.**

Festivals

Official Selection

Toronto International Film Festival

Rome International Film Festival

Warsaw International Film Festival (Audience Award, Documentary Feature)

São Paulo International Film Festival

Deauville International Film festival

RIDM - Rencontres Internationales du Documentaire de Montréal

DOC NYC

Haifa International Film Festival

Anney International Animation Film Festival

Braunschweig International Film Festival

Festival Internacional de Cine de Gijon

Festival Internacional de Cine de Mar del Plata

2013 Festivals

Palm Springs International Film Festival (Special Mention, John Schlesinger Award)

Glasgow Film Festival

Jameson Dublin International Film Festival (Best Documentary)

Miami International Film Festival

Sedona International Film Festival

Cinequest

Florida Film Festival

Nashville Film Festival

Cleveland Film Festival

Credits

Cast

Tomi Ungerer
Maurice Sendak
Jules Feiffer
Steven Heller
Michael Patrick Hearn
Patrick Skene Catling
Burton Pike
Aria Ungerer
Patrick Joseph Sheehan
Caroline Ward

Crew


Director:	Brad Bernstein
Producer:	Brad Bernstein
Co-Producer:	Rick Cikowski
Director of Photography:	Jimmy O'Donnell
Editor:	Rick Cikowski
Writer:	Brad Bernstein
Executive Producer:	Kevin Rich
Executive Alien:	Christopher Laine
Co-Executive Producers:	Erik Neandross, Eric Rosee, Reza Taleghani
Animation:	Alain Lores, Rick Cikowski, Brandon Dumlao
Additional Editing:	Jason Schmidt, Brandon Dumlao
Still Photography:	Sam Norval, Vincent Edmond Louis Poitout
Consultant:	Stephen Mintz
Original Music by:	Ben Sollee, Eoin Coughlan & Daragh Dukes

http://movies.nytimes.com/2013/06/14/movies/far-out-isnt-far-enough-about-tomi-ungerer.html?_r=0&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1371217654-2bUsXtYrb1Vk37IB0VQRyg

The New York Times

A Brilliant Book Illustrator Who Broke the Rules

'Far Out Isn't Far Enough,' About Tomi Ungerer

 NYT Critics' Pick

By ANDY WEBSTER Published: June 13, 2013

Brad Bernstein's captivating documentary "Far Out Isn't Far Enough" is a portrait of an illustrator, Tomi Ungerer; a time, largely the 1950s and '60s; a place, New York City (mostly); and an industry, children's book publishing. It is also a record of a man's tormented youth, his broad artistic impulses and the price he paid for following them.

Mr. Ungerer was born in 1931 and raised in Strasbourg, France, where he was traumatized by the German occupation. In 1956 he came to Manhattan, where, profoundly influenced by Saul Steinberg, he plunged into magazine and advertising illustration when those fields were in full bloom, just before television exploded. Commercial work led to children's books at Harper & Row, and "The Mellops Go Flying," his first entry in a series about a family of adventurous French pigs, took off. "Zeralda's Ogre," "Crictor" and other classics followed.

Mr. Ungerer's imagination extended into outrage at segregation and at the Vietnam War, which he protested in posters of blistering expressionistic power. But "Fornicon," a volume of erotic drawings, got him blacklisted from children's book publishing. Mr. Ungerer left for Nova Scotia and then Ireland. Europe, unsurprisingly, cherished him more than puritanical America. In 2008 Phaidon Press reissued his children's books and has recently published new ones, ending a long hiatus by Mr. Ungerer. In 2011 he returned to New York for a triumphant public appearance.

Among the speakers on camera are an erudite Jules Feiffer and a grizzled, vehement Maurice Sendak. But no one is more compelling than the white-haired, constantly smoking Mr. Ungerer, whose eloquence and luminous eyes command attention. Charming animated sequences offer a tantalizing taste of this creator's singular talents, underscoring the grievous wrongs dealt him.



Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story: Film Review

6:41 PM PST 11/12/2012 by John DeFore

Brad Bernstein's documentary introduces audiences to a onetime star of children's publishing.

NEW YORK — A violent, scatological, sex-crazed mind shouldn't keep a man from being a giant in the world of children's literature, says Brad Bernstein's *Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story*. The thoroughly entertaining doc hopes to restore Ungerer to his place in the kid-book pantheon -- a project started when Phaidon reissued his books in 2008 -- but it also establishes the artist's place in the history of mid-century commercial and political illustration. Devotees of graphic arts will love it, but the film's appeal isn't limited to that niche.

Connecting the dots between formative experiences and creative proclivities more successfully than the average bio-doc, *Far Out* introduces a man whose WWII-era upbringing in Strasbourg made him ill-suited to conformity the rest of his life. His exposure to Nazi propaganda did, however, inform his knack for single images that punch big ideas into viewers' heads: After moving to New York, he quickly found success in an advertising world hungry for new styles.

At first, his unconventional ideas were a hit in the world of children's storybooks as well. Though scary elements were normally forbidden there, Ungerer and a daring editor made bestsellers of books starring snakes, vultures, and even a child-eating ogre. Interviewed here, the late Maurice Sendak (a big fan) gives Ungerer credit for opening the door to the lovable beasts in *Where the Wild Things Are*; Jules Feiffer and graphics scholar Steven Heller also sing his praises, going on to speak of the potent political posters he produced alongside these books.



Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story ★★☆☆

BY [NICK MCCARTHY](#) ON JUNE 12, 2013

Documentaries focused on a living icon are often made or broken by the charisma and intelligence of their subject. In Tomi Ungerer, an octogenarian illustrator with an eclectic oeuvre and strong perspective, debut director Brad Bernstein has captured a soul personable and dynamic enough to justify the talking-head format of *Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story*. With his piercing blue eyes and disarmingly dry humor, Ungerer is a lucid narrator with a crisp memory; at once sincere and cheeky, he cannily recounts his eight decades of experience that influenced his work and worldview. Charting his prolific career, from adolescent doodler to children's book author to renegade illustrator of political satire and controversial sadomasochistic erotica, Bernstein allows the artist space to eloquently elaborate on his country-hopping moves and sociologically significant art. The linchpin to the doc's success is that Ungerer is so damn humane and compelling—the kind of guy you want to engage in conversation with over a pint.

In the doc's opening moments, Ungerer expresses his "full respect for a piece of paper...because when you draw or write, you start a new life." Ungerer treated his own existence as a blank piece of paper, reinventing himself through immersion into new milieus; this brought him from Strasbourg (his nationally conflicted Franco-German birthplace) to New York in the '50s, to Canada in 1971, and ultimately Ireland in 1975, where he finally discovered inner peace. Each metaphorical page in his life dictates a different stage and, through Ungerer's stories, *Far Out Isn't Far Enough* often takes the form of a bildungsroman, earnestly establishing impactful coming-of-age landmarks including young Ungerer's traumatic observation of WWII and his burgeoning adult self's immersion into the Manhattan scene. These early time periods were dominated by a fear—an oft-repeated feeling that Ungerer finds essential to human development, to experience and overcome—that bleeds into his sublime drawings, whether the intended audience is a child or an art collector.

Bernstein doesn't completely relinquish the spotlight to Ungerer, though, as he synthesizes Ungerer's elucidations with a hyperactive visual panache—chockfull of stop-motion recreations of Ungerer's art—to aesthetically manifest the artist's boundless, almost overwhelming imagination. "I simply have too many ideas, and with age it gets worse—it just snowballs," Ungerer says as he draws a comparison to the unrelenting falling rocks seen in Buster Keaton's *Seven Chances*. He briefly pauses, then continues, "I'm crushed by my ideas." Bernstein's manic necessity to animate Ungerer's work is equally exciting, but crushing. Technically, the design is impeccable, but on a narrative level the interspersed integration of animation occasionally sputters, often resulting in a stalling, mixing-and-matching hodgepodge of Ungerer's art. The images—often wry meditations—are infrequently given time to breathe and be

absorbed by the audience. For better or worse, this rapid collage of Ungerer's art functions more as a timeline than an exhibition, mirroring Ungerer's casually anti-establishment knack for ingraining himself in the events and cultural upheavals of the time. And, with his introspective life reflections and a legacy of provocative imagery, *Far Out Isn't Far Enough* proves that Ungerer's legacy is as historically significant as it is artistically

<http://www.timeout.com/us/film/far-out-isnt-far-enough-the-tomi-ungerer-story-movie-review>



Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story: movie review

Author: Michael Atkinson

The tsunami of '60s–'70s artist docs continues with this portrait of America's first transgressive children's-book illustrator-author. Emigrating from Alsace, France, in 1956, after a childhood spent drawing Nazi atrocities, Ungerer metamorphosed from advertising wunderkind to kid-lit sensation to saber-toothed antiwar satirist to pornographer. Along the way, he established a linear graphic style that took off from Sol Steinberg and clearly led to Ralph Steadman and beyond. (Among a thousand other iconic bits of culture, he did the original movie posters for *Dr. Strangelove* and *Monterey Pop*.)

Now in his eighties, Ungerer is certainly an irrepressible force, but beyond his surreal erotica getting him blacklisted from picture books in the early '70s, his life isn't very dramatic, and Bernstein's film pads it with historical footage and precious animations. It's difficult to parse why—Fornicon, his career-wrecking art volume of startling speculative-S&M erotica, must have stories behind it, and Ungerer's private countercultural experiences must've had more juice than we're led to believe.

But maybe not—the art's the thing, and perhaps he just drew. Hardly the trippy icon the doc's title suggests, the artist is now more like everyone's slightly seedy hedonistic granduncle, happiest sketching cartoon pigs and walking the moors of County Cork.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/09/tomi-ungerer-interview_n_2103629.html

HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE

Legendary Illustrator Tomi Ungerer Talks 'Far Out Isn't Far Enough,' And Returning To America (INTERVIEW)

The Huffington Post | By [Mallika Rao](#) Posted: 11/10/2012 9:51 am EST Updated: 11/27/2012 6:26 pm EST

Maybe he was strange, but in the 1960s Tomi Ungerer was also a hit. The children's illustrator and writer from Strasbourg, France made his name in Manhattan, where the force of his talent broke publishers' rules -- for instance, the Miltonian one about how snakes can't be protagonists. (Meet Crictor, Ungerer's groundbreaking reptilian hero.)

Then one day, Ungerer went and broke the unbreakable rule, by American standards at least. He published erotic art. Presto, change-o, and also, arrivederci! School libraries dumped his work, reviewers refused to review him, he hightailed it back to Europe, and the overprotected American public lost a genius.

Or at least, so goes the beguiling premise of "Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story." The feature-length documentary brings the legendary exile back to his adopted home once again, with a U.S. premiere at the DOC NYC film festival in Manhattan this Saturday.

The film's director, a Miami-based television documentary producer named Brad Bernstein, first came across Ungerer in 2008, by way of a New York Times profile about an alleged tussle some 50 years ago between Ungerer and the FBI. Knowing a character when he saw one, Bernstein wrote a letter to Ungerer asking if he could film him. Ungerer, who now lives atop a cliff in Ireland, did not bite. He had no interest in being misunderstood again. But his daughter and manager Aria (who also runs her 81-year-old father's Facebook and Twitter accounts) insisted he take a chance.

If the resulting film, pieced together over the past four years, is more loving than dispassionate, it's hard to blame Bernstein for picking a side. In Ungerer's care, digression is an art form. He practices it at length in "Far Out," usually in a way that forces his point. Within the film's first five minutes, he makes two leaps: that a sheet of paper is akin to a body, and that his calling is to then "rape [it] with my drawing."

The drawings in question, spare and evocative, are woven through the film by animator Rick Cikowski. Along with unconventional heroes -- the green and beady-eyed Crictors of the world -- Ungerer plays with conventional villains turned on their head. Adolf Hitler, and the bombings of World War II, which

Ungerer witnessed as a young boy, are drawn with the clean strokes of a *New Yorker* cartoon, a model Ungerer has long been inspired by and whose strict adoption only makes his dark subjects darker.

The famously grumpy Maurice Sendak, who died before the film's release, also makes an appearance, in a brief but memorable cameo in which he credits Ungerer for inspiring him to create "Where The Wild Things Are." As far as celebrity endorsements go, there may be no other one to get. (Is there a more recognized children's illustrator or book in America?)

And yet, though *CriCTOR* and the rest are back on U.S. shelves, everything about Ungerer -- from his long-limbed, gap-toothed elegance to his cheerful embrace of fetishism -- is continental. Europe is where his fans are, where he lives, and where a museum dedicated to his work marks the world's only such for a living illustrator. The Huffington Post spoke with the octogenarian during the film's summer debut at the Toronto International Film Festival. He told us how it feels to see his face on the big screen, and to return, in a fashion and for a spell, to the country that never quite accepted him and yet draws him like a needle to "the huge magnet."

Scroll down for images of Ungerer's work.

The Huffington Post: How is it to have a film made about you?

Tomi Ungerer: It's rather strange. In the past, I've been very spoiled in Europe with a lot of documentaries. I did four films with Percy Adlon, but they were always on small screens. They were always on television. But I never like to watch myself. I don't like my voice, my accent. I speak German in a French accent, and French with a German accent and German with a French accent and so on.

Now, watching myself, it's scary, actually! It's bigger than life size. But then Brad did such a wonderful job. I'm delighted that he was able to formulate it without any *treason*, you know what I mean? Without any twisting. I still wonder, you know, how can you do it? I'm over eighty years old. A whole lifetime, he put into one capsule for an hour and a half, with so much feeling and vibrancy.

HP: Was it comfortable watching it last night with an audience for the first time?

TU: It was really heartwarming. I have no other word. I felt really reassured. I felt that I was among nice people who understood me. Because I'm a pretty kind of scattered person with all the things I do. I can be interpreted in any way.

HP: What interpretations were you afraid of?

TU: I don't like it when people say that I'm a pornographer. I do erotic art, and I do eroticism in my satire, and that really comes across [in the film].

HP: You've described New York as having a magnetic force on you. Will you be visiting during the film's festival run?

TU: Right now, I'm just so glad to just get back on the American continent. I've loved New York like no other city in my life, and when you've loved you always still have a lingering melancholy about getting back. My last trip there was marvelous. I have so many old friends there. But I can't go so soon after this

trip. That will be too hard on me. I have a hard time traveling...though I *have* turned into a living advertisement for Air Canada. Impeccable, impeccable!

HP: In the film, you talk about how much America fascinated you as a young man.

TU: And how!

HP: Do you think if you were young today and starting out, the country would hold the same appeal to you?

TU: This is a very good question. I suppose I don't know! I have changed altogether. I change all the time. Nowadays, I don't have that innocence I had then. When I arrived in America with \$60 in my pocket, it was still the McCarthy witch-hunt era, which is how I got into trouble.

HP: What would you say has changed since then?

TU: What really struck me in New York when I was there a year and a half ago was that you don't feel any racial differences any more. The one language that is spoken is the smile language. You don't feel these lingering racial frustrations you used to have in the olden days. I feel that's changed, and it shows that anything can change.

Would you say that children's literature has evolved as well? Is it a moralizing force in the same way it was when you started illustrating?

I think children will always be children, but on the other hand, the background has changed so much, especially with immigration and people living in other countries. Children are exposed to completely different values. There's one constant, which is: good or bad. The moral. I think this should be taught in schools more, that what is bad is what is not profitable to anyone.

HP: Any plans to come back?

TU: In 2015, I'm having a big big retrospective at The Drawing Center in New York City. I'll come for that.

HP: And what's next?

TU: I just finished a book, which is called "Fog Man." It's being published in the spring. It's my homage to Ireland, the first time I've set a book there, and the first time in a children's book where it's all atmosphere. But I cannot tell you the whole story. You have to wait for that one.

<http://variety.com/2012/film/reviews/far-out-isn-t-far-enough-the-tomi-ungerer-story-1117948838/>



Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story

Already in heavy fest rotation, the pic should also travel far and wide in smallscreen formats.

Boyd van Hoeij

The colorful personality and heterogeneous body of work of French-born illustrator-author Tomi Ungerer is vividly brought to life in docu "Far Out Isn't Far Enough." Helmer Brad Bernstein, who has a background in nonfiction TV production, here brings a clearly cinematic sensibility to his account of Ungerer's youth and initial success as an author of such children's books as "The Three Robbers," and the artist's subsequent parallel career in adult-targeted fare, including Vietnam-era protest posters and top-drawer erotica. Already in heavy fest rotation, the pic should also travel far and wide in smallscreen formats.

Main interviewee Ungerer was born in Alsace in 1931, and his childhood wartime experiences go some way toward explaining his unique sensibility and current pro-Europe advocacy work. Alternating inventive animated sequences and talking heads, including the late Maurice Sendak, "Far Out" paints a chronological picture of Ungerer's often contradictory-seeming career, which really took off in 1950s New York. Along the way, Bernstein succeeds in sketching a detailed portrait of his strong-willed, outspoken (in three languages) and occasionally hilarious subject, who suggests fear is a great motivator, even for kids. Tech credits are impeccable.

<http://peoplesworld.org/far-out-isn-t-far-enough-unique-art-of-tomi-ungerer/>



"Far Out Isn't Far Enough": unique art of Tomi Ungerer by: [Anthony Mangos](#) June 13 2013

Contrast, courage, and challenge ... these are the words one may think of when viewing "Far Out Isn't Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story," written, produced, and directed by Brad Bernstein. Some may be familiar with Ungerer's award winning children's books, but perhaps less so his subsequent and controversial antiwar posters and adult erotica. The themes of contrast, courage and challenge are prevalent throughout the 98-minute film and the artist himself touches upon them numerous times. The documentary, which gives Ungerer carte blanche to express his ideas, premieres on screens this summer.

Tomi Ungerer was born November 28, 1931, in Strasbourg, France, of German heritage. In the film, he reflects back to the outbreak of World War II. His family attempted to keep their French identity, but the French language was forbidden during the Nazi occupation of Alsace. Fear was prevalent, and the young boy experienced much of it. Life never returned to normal for the youngster after the war, as his heavy German accent (which is still very pronounced as he speaks in this film) created some prejudice against him. He arrived in New York City in 1956, and began writing and illustrating children's books. It was in his work he confronted the concepts of fear and courage, stemming from his memories of fascist occupation.

Tomi Ungerer's artistic design went far beyond children's books. He drew illustrations for such publications as the Village Voice, which led to more ambitious adult/erotic collections. A trip to the American South in the early 1960s shocked him as he experienced his first taste of racism through segregation. His outrage led to the creation of the 1964 anti-racist book, "Underground Sketchbook." He followed up in 1966 with "The Party," a parody of elitist society he observed in Manhattan. By this time, the Vietnam War was full force. The atrocities from that war brought back memories of his youth under German occupation. This led to his designing extreme and poignant anti-Vietnam-War posters. Viewers of this film who are unfamiliar with Ungerer's posters will be startled at the strong and harsh imagery that is shown. They really pack a punch, as reiterated by the artist during his commentary.

The film presents much archival footage of a youthful Ungerer exploring the Manhattan of the 1950s and '60's. There are praises from contemporaries Jules Feiffer and Maurice Sendak, who says that inspiration for his classic, "Where The Wild Things Are," came from Ungerer's earlier works. Both fellow illustrators make it clear they had no aversions to Ungerer's "adult" art. Viewers also get some insight

into his family life, with on-screen comments from his daughter, who says her father has always searched for an identity. From his heritage to his art, he defines contrast.

In 1969, the artist reached the zenith of his work in "adult" illustration with "Fornicon: The Erotic Art of Tomi Ungerer." He was still very active in writing children's books. Ungerer had no problem traversing both worlds of art, and managed to keep them separate. Unfortunately, libraries across America were not as understanding, and his popular works were removed from library shelves. This took a toll on the artist, and he retreated to a small town in Nova Scotia during the mid-1970s.

Reflecting on this period in his life, Ungerer explores the frustration of an artist paying the price for pushing the limits of his abilities. He describes how ideas kept snowballing into his mind without effort. He says every challenge should immediately be followed with another greater challenge, which leads to the title of the film: "Far Out Isn't Far Enough." Unsure of an afterlife, he welcomes the prospect of nothingness as the greatest challenge. Even in finality, the spirit of the artist shines through.

Nowadays, Ungerer splits his time between Ireland and Strasbourg. Images from his hometowns are interspersed with commentary and colorful animated sequences in his current work. It's an equal treat for mind and eye.

His children's books have steadily resurfaced through the decades, and are once again welcomed in American libraries. In 1998, he received the Hans Christian Andersen Award For Illustration. He seems genuinely happy to once again be acknowledged for that work, as witnessed by the emotion he shows on screen. Still an activist, he has worked hard to support the European Union, especially between France and Germany.

This film will keep audiences engaged throughout, and will be a unique inspiration to artists who often see their creative processes making extreme, sharp turns ... sometimes at a great cost to the individual

<http://www.brooklynrail.org/2013/06/express/tomi-ungerer-enfant-terrible>



INCONVERSATION

TOMI UNGERER, ENFANT TERRIBLE

BRAD BERNSTEIN with Williams Cole

by Williams Cole

Brad Bernstein is the director of *Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story*, a documentary opening at Lincoln Plaza Cinemas on June 14. While the Alsatian-born Tomi Ungerer might not be as famous—or infamous—in the United States as he is in Europe, his illustration style and perspective on childhood has had profound influence not only on graphic arts but also on leading children's book authors including Maurice Sendak. In fact, the main reason why Ungerer's books for young audiences were effectively shut out of the American market for many decades was that he also produced influential political and erotic art—an antithetical combination in our Puritanical culture.

I grew up with Ungerer's art and met him many times because my father, William Cole (1919–2000), knew him well and wrote a number of children's books that Ungerer illustrated. I sat down with Bernstein, who has also produced several successful documentary series for ESPN and other cable channels, earlier this year at a West Village café.

Williams Cole (Rail): So, the first time I went to Tomi's house in Ireland—I'll never forget it. It was the middle of the day when we got there, and he pulls out a bottle of whiskey. [*Laughs.*] I'm 16 and my brother's 14 and my dad's with us and we're all taking shots of whiskey, and Tomi's going around the table saying, "Okay, what kind of prejudices do you have, come on!" And I'm an idealistic communist teenager saying "I don't have any prejudices, man!" and he's all like "Bullshit! Have another shot of whiskey!" And I got *completely* wasted. [*Laughs.*]

Brad Bernstein: Your dad was cool with that?

Rail: Yeah, he must have just rolled with it. Their relationship went back to the '50s, I think. Didn't Tomi tell you some story of playing a gag on my father at some New York City party?

Bernstein: Yes, I think it was on the Upper East Side, and your father had to take the subway home. It was winter and Tomi thought it would be really funny to take your father's jacket at the party, and without telling him, stitch or tape a swastika armband around the jacket's arm. And, so the story goes, your father hopped on the subway with the jacket, and everyone was looking at him like he was a Nazi! That right there is quintessential Tomi. He's still like that to

this day and he's about to be 81. He's a provocateur of the first order.

Rail: Wow, that's even more messed up because my dad fought in World War II in the Battle of the Bulge. He loved everyone except Germans and would always say "Fucking Nazis!" [Laughs.] I'm sure you had some experiences spending so much time with him.

Bernstein: Well, Tomi also did something to me that was actually worse. On the last day of the 15-day shoot we did with him at his home in Ireland, we were driving up to his property out in the middle of nowhere. There was one part where the road ends and suddenly there were 10 guys in army fatigues with what looked like machine guns, and we were like "What the fuck is going on?" We had a three-car convoy and they pulled up a car behind us so we couldn't move. There were fields to the left and right and they whipped us out of the cars with force, threw us down and stole our wallets. We were screaming and I was like "Is this the I.R.A.?" And then they threw us in these vans and drove us up the hill blindfolded. When we stopped they took off our blindfolds and there was Tomi laughing and drinking a beer with his family. He had put his sons and their friends up to it. We were scared shitless! [Laughs.] And that was how we wrapped up our shoot with him in Ireland. And he filmed the whole thing.

Rail: That is messed up. On a serious note, how did you start to film?

Bernstein: Back in 2008 there was an article in *the New York Times* that said something like, *Watch out, watch your children—that subversive is back!* This was because Phaidon Press was republishing Tomi's books and reintroducing him to America. Every anecdote that I read in the article just jumped off the page and I knew a real character was there. And once you start digging into the art work—that treasure trove of thousands, even tens of thousands, of images—it seems like every moment of his life has been covered through his images. Starting when he was 3, before the Nazis even arrived in Strasbourg, he recorded so much and was a witness to seminal events in European and American history. So you put all those things together and I knew it had the potential to be good.

Rail: So when you first met him, how would you describe him?

Bernstein: "Eccentric" probably doesn't even do him justice. "Hyper-intellectual" probably is also fitting. "Child-like" and "innocent" I think as well.

Rail: Explain those youthful qualities.

Bernstein: He has like a child-like innocence—everything is new to him. We would walk down the street and he would look at like two clashing colors that he found to be the most amazing thing. You'd think he'd never seen a wall that clashed before. Everything he sees it seems he sees with fresh eyes, and I think that's one of the things that makes him really unique.

Rail: Was there a moment where you thought, *Okay, here's a test?* A point where he was just trying to provoke you in a way and try to see if you were offended by stuff?

Bernstein: Yep. We go to Strasbourg, arrive exhausted, and we're shooting the next day. Tomi says, "I want you to come by so we can meet." And we end up sharing about six bottles of wine. That was kind of his way of challenging us to get along with him in a sense—and we did! But the next morning we get there and he opens the door, and his teeth are all craggily and yellow and he's so hung over but just blurts out, "Brad! My favorite Jew from New York!" And that's how we started shooting right there. You can take that one of two ways, you can be offended if you have a stick up your ass, or you can say, "God, I love this guy." And it's hard not to like Tomi.

Rail: His provocative nature is a great thing because he's always probing to see if somebody is uncomfortable in order to expose insecurities, I suppose.

Bernstein: Yeah, I liked that. I think he tries to push buttons. He did that in the '60s until it basically lost him his publishing contract. I guess he went too far and he does have some regrets. It was at a conference of librarians in New York and people started questioning him about how someone could make both erotic art and children's books. And as we show in the film, he really pissed a lot of folks off. It kind of froze him out of American publishing for a long time.

Rail: Talk a little about the influence that Tomi had on Maurice Sendak?

Bernstein: When we interviewed Sendak, he said, "I don't know if *Where the Wild Things Are* would have ever happened without Tomi." That right there is validation or justification enough for Tomi's career and our film. I think there was this whole group of really interesting, intelligent, creative people back in the '60s creating these really iconic children's books. They were all different but they all had this similar, quirky sensibility.

Rail: How would you describe Tomi's perspective on children?

Bernstein: That you shouldn't hide anything from them, that you should show them reality. Like you said: you're 16 and your brother is 14, you share a bottle of whiskey and he asks you what your prejudices are—and that's Tomi in a nutshell. Don't hide anything from children. One thing he always imparted to me throughout the interviews was, when you are teaching children something, don't say it's a tree, say what the tree is, say it's an oak tree, or say it's a maple, because they can absorb all that information. Don't give them generalities. When I have children that will probably be the one thing I take from Tomi: children aren't stupid. Give them the information, even if it's bad. I think it's a lesson that a lot of Americans have forgotten.

<http://twi-ny.com/blog/2013/06/14/far-out-isnt-far-enough-the-tomi-ungerer-story>



Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story

3 ½ Stars

"I am a self-taught raving maniac, but not as crazy as Tomi, or as great as Tomi," Maurice Sendak says early on in Brad Bernstein's engaging documentary, *Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story*, adding, "He was disarming and funny and not respectable at all." Another children's book legend, Jules Feiffer, feels similarly, explaining, "Tomi was this wonderfully brilliant, innovative madman." Born in Alsace in 1931, Tomi Ungerer developed a remarkably diverse career as an illustrator, incorporating the emotional turmoil he suffered after losing his father when he was still a young child and then living under Nazi rule. In *Far Out Isn't Far Enough*, Ungerer takes Bernstein and the audience on a fascinating journey through his personal and professional life, traveling to Strasbourg, Nova Scotia, New York City, and Ireland, which all served as home to him at one time or another as he wrote and illustrated such picture books as *The Three Robbers* and *Cricotor* for editor Ursula Nordstrom, made bold political posters in support of the civil rights movement and against the Vietnam War, and published a book of erotic drawings, *Fornicon*, that ultimately led to a twenty-three-year exile from America during which he stopped making books for children. "I am full of contradictions, and why shouldn't I be?" the now-eighty-one-year-old Ungerer says in the film. Ungerer discusses how he uses fear, tragedy, and trauma as underlying themes in his stories, trusting that kids can handle that amid the surreal nature of his entertaining tales. He opens up his archives, sharing family photographs and old film footage, which reveal that he's been pushing the envelope for a very long time, unafraid of the consequences. He also visits the Eric Carle Museum to check out a retrospective of his work for children, appropriately titled "Tomi Ungerer: Chronicler of the Absurd." Meanwhile, Rick Cikowski animates many of Ungerer's drawings, bringing to life his characters, both for children and adults, adding another dimension to this wonderful documentary. *Far Out Isn't Far Enough* is a lively, engaging film about a seminal literary figure with an infectious love of life and art, and a unique take on the ills of society, that is a joy to behold. The film opens June 14 at Lincoln Plaza, with writer, editor, and curator Steven Heller, who appears in the documentary, leading intros and Q&As with Bernstein and Cikowski at several screenings on Friday and Saturday night.

Not Just For Children: Bernstein Elegantly Draws An Illustration Legend

Documentaries on the eccentric or tortured artist are a dime a dozen, but it seems each year a few view worthy films pop up, reminding us of forgotten gems by presenting their work through a reflective lens. This year we've already seen the release of the humorous and endearing *Beauty is Embarrassing*, the bizarre *Pushwagner*, and the politically charged *Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry*, but with ***Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story***, director Brad Bernstein's first feature, we are blessed with the opportunity to delve into the incredible life story of an often overlooked, but legendary figure of modern illustration, and like the aforementioned films of 2012, highlights the artist's voracious propulsion to create. With signature eccentricity and heartfelt candor, Ungerer himself recants his tale that begins with the Nazi take over of France, moves through his rise to popularity as a children's book writer and illustrator in the New York print industry, and ventures into his exploits in erotica, fatherhood and beyond.



It's easy to compare Bernstein's film to other illustrator bio-docs like Spike Jonze's *Tell Them Anything You Want: A Portrait of Maurice Sendak* (Sendak is actually featured here showering Ungerer with praise in one of his last interviews before his passing) or the seminal Terry Zwigoff film, *Crumb*, but the truth is that this film, while being much sleeker and just as genuine in its presentation than the films mentioned, is enwrapped with the history of the many countries Ungerer migrated to throughout his life. Each cultural sea change directly informed his art, and we are given plenty of opportunities to experience each period for ourselves as Bernstein features plenty of Ungerer's ingenuity throughout with either gorgeously stylized spotlights or carefully animated recreations of his many storybook characters, never including any strictly for visual flair, but as a perfect compliments to the elegantly told story.

Not only is Tomi an insanely gifted artist, but he is also a vivid storyteller. Bernstein's many interviews that make up the narrative body were done in multiple sessions, allowing several takes on a given subject, often times yielding a variety of emotional responses. With these takes in hand, Bernstein often gives brief cutaways midway through tough conversation to other interviews where Tomi couldn't handle the emotion retort, bluntly cutting off questions all together, showing us just how touched he often is. Behind his zany countenance and quirkisms, Ungerer is a man of unquenchable creativity and an unbearable appreciation for human curiosity. With ***Far Out Isn't Far Enough***, we get an affecting look into the forgotten talent's incredible struggle with artistic eccentricity, and through it we are reminded to stay hungry for life, even in death.