

# BEN LEWIS

Documentary film-maker,  
producer-director,  
writer, presenter  
and art critic  
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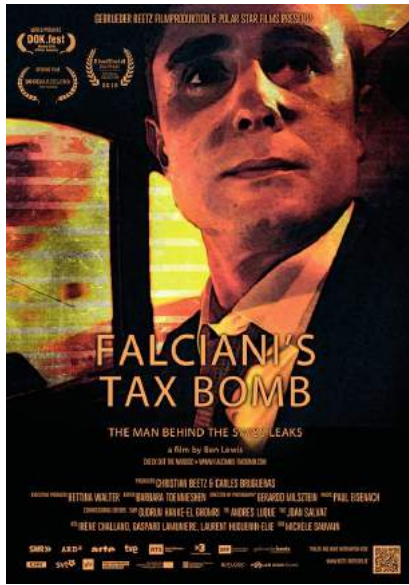


**Workers or Shirkers? Ian Hislop's Victorian Benefits**, Wingspan Productions for BBC2 1x 60' 2016 documentary about the history of Britain's benefits systems. *"t was an unforeseen coup for Ian Hislop to secure an interview with Iain Duncan Smith. As Duncan Smith welled up, Hislop looked as surprised as us viewers – but not terribly sympathetic. What could have been a dry subject – essentially a potted history of state benefits – came to engaging life."* Daily Telegraph.



**A Banker's Guide to Art**, Oxford Films and Television for BBC4, 2016 1 x 90'. Feature documentary about how to turn a profit collecting art. *"A hotbed of corruption: insider gives art auctions a hammering"* The Times

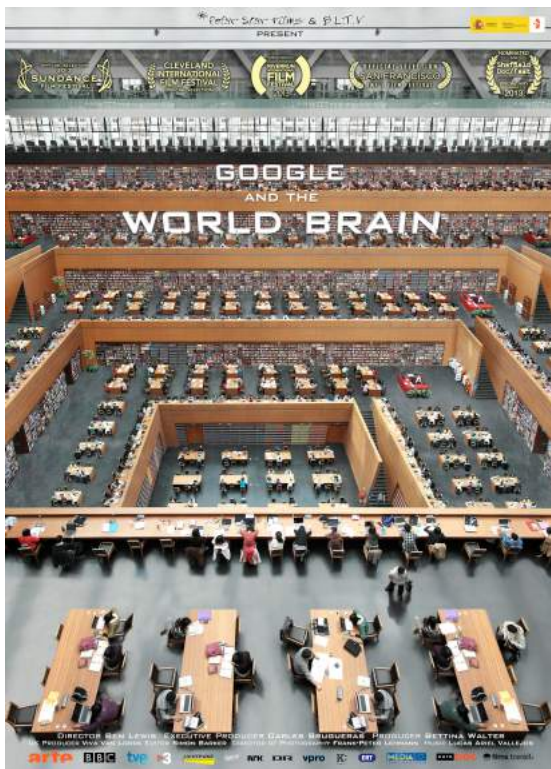
2016 **Chancers: The Great Gangster Film Fraud** a feature length documentary for BBC, SVT, DR and NRK about London's notorious film fraudsters and their film "Landscape of Lies". Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/81399766>  
 Password: risetrailers2014



**"Falciani's Tax Bomb"** feature length documentary for Arte, SWR Germany, TVE Spain, TVC Spain, DR Denmark, about a Swiss banking whistleblower and his HSBC private bank database. Opened the Barcelona Documentary festival; nominated for Germany's Deutsche Fernsehpreis and Wirtschaftsdokumentarpreis  
 Trailer. <https://vimeo.com/122079329>



**Poor Us: An Animated History of Poverty** HD 60', 2012, Director and writer Submarine/Steps Productions for the BBC, Arte, PBS and over 50 broadcasters around the world. This film combined interviews, animation and motion graphics. Shown on over 70 TV channels worldwide 2012-13. Premiered at IDFA, A'dam 2012. "A miracle of clarity and compassion" - the Guardian; "Thought-provoking and mind-bending" - The Times. Jointly awarded a Peabody Award as part of the [www.whypoverty.net](http://www.whypoverty.net) project. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxbmjDngojs>



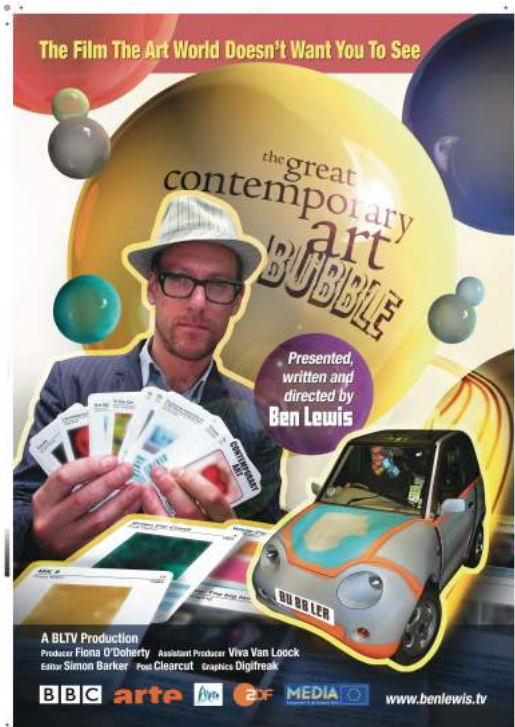
**World Brain: The Internet and the Search for Total Knowledge** HD 90', 2012

Director, writer and co-producer, BLTV/Polar Star Films, 2012 for the BBC, Arte, DR, VPRO, Al-Jazeera-US, NHK Japan, etc. The story of Google's project to scan every book in the world and create a giant digital library. Premiered at Sundance January 2013. First Place National Headliner Award for Documentary 2014, USA; Best documentary Rincon Film Festival. Shown in over 60 other film festivals.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vxlveocxjM>

**What Brits Love**, presented, written and produced by Ben Lewis 5 x 45' HD documentary and animated series about Britishness, Films on cars, hats, sandwiches, jokes and homes. BLTV for Arte, DR, Noga-Isreal.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dw6dFmOFu2U>



**The Great Contemporary Art Bubble**, HD, 90' feature documentary, 2009. director, producer and presenter For BBC, Arte, ABC-Australia, Channel 8-Israel, VPRO, DR, SVT, NRK, SF and others. A film about – the boom and bust of the contemporary art market. Shown at the Montreal Film Festival, Vancouver Int'l Film Festival, Tel Aviv Art Film Festival, CPH-Dox, Lo Schermo del'Arte, Florence, Palm Springs Film Festival, Garage, Moscow, etc. Over 2000 DVDs sold through museum stores, amazon and BLTV websites. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gth8\\_3msnlk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gth8_3msnlk)

At the time I was writing as an art critic for the Evening Standard and Prospect Magazine, and contributing occasionally to the Times, Observer, FT, Monopol (Germany) etc.

**Hammer and Tickle - The Communist Joke Book**, 2006, 90' Digibeta, DV, super



8, flash animation. Producer/director/writer  
The story of Communism through the thousands of jokes told by ordinary people living under the regimes, 90 min documentary for BBC, Arte, CBC, ZDF, etc. Premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival 2006. Winner Best Documentary Zurich Film Festival 2006; nominated for a RTS award. I later wrote a book on the same subject, published by

Weidenfeld and Nicholson in the UK in 2008. It was translated into many languages.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtzEzPu7q3k>

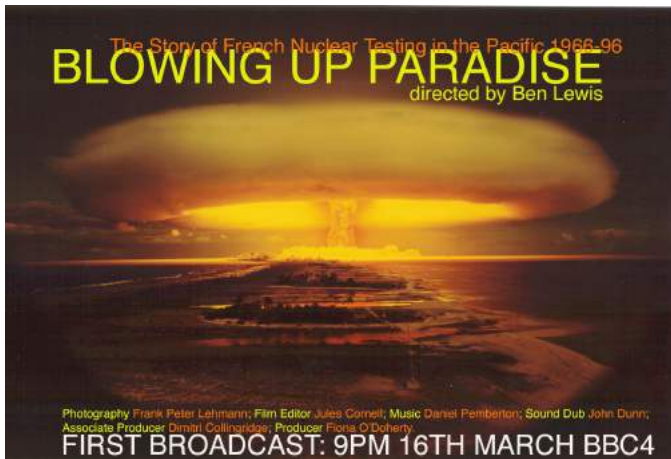


**Art Safari I and Art Safari II**, 2005/6, DVcam for BBC, Arte, DR, SVT, ABC-Aus, Noga, SF, Ovation. Director, writer, presenter and producer

Two series of 4 x 30 minute documentaries about contemporary artists broadcast in over 23 countries. Maurizio Cattelan, Matthew Barney, Relational Aesthetics, Gregor Schneider, Santiago Sierra, Takashi Murakami, Wim Delvoye and Sophie Calle. Winner Grimme Prize NRW Sonderpreis Kultur, 2007. Bronze medal, NY Television Festival 2007.

Also, 2007, limited edition film "Curating – a Game of Chance" commissioned by the Deutsche Bank for Berlin Guggenheim exhibition "Affinities." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R164dPWHrRk>





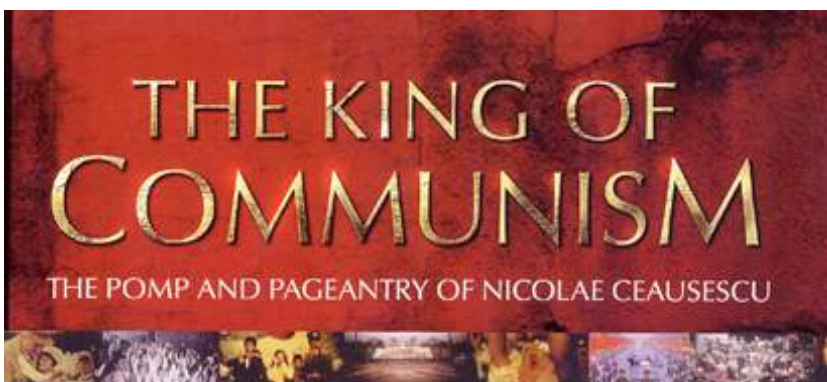
**Blowing Up Paradise**, 2004, 80' feature documentary .  
 Producer/Director  
 Film about French nuclear testing in the Pacific 1966-96, digibeta for BBC, Arte, ZDF, SBS etc about French nuclear testing "4/5" Financial Times, "fascinating sometimes horrifying" – Sunday Times, "salutary tale" – Time Out; Environmental Award at the Grenoble Nature and Environment Film Festival 2006. Special Jury Prize, Tahiti Film Festival 2007; Golden Panda, Sichuan TV Festival, China 2007.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOzv9yWM5eo>



**Baader Meinhof: In Love With Terror** Autumn 2002 - 1 x 70 min digibeta documentary, Mentorn for BBC4 & 2;  
 Producer/Director  
 Premiered at the ICA "25 Years after Stammheim" conference 11.10.02; Hotdocs Festival, Toronto 2003. "I asked myself how would a DJ make documentary?" – quoted in Time Out.

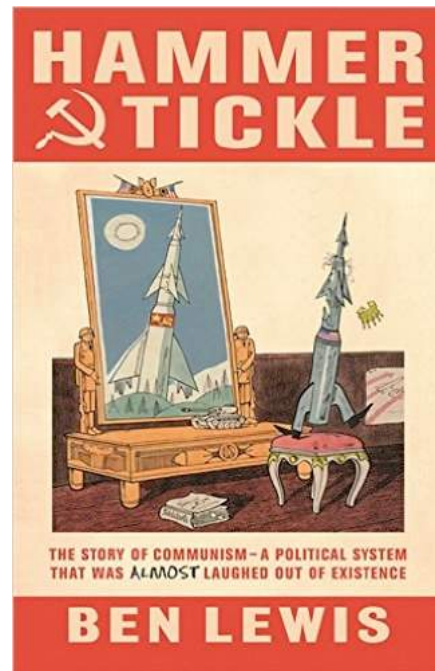
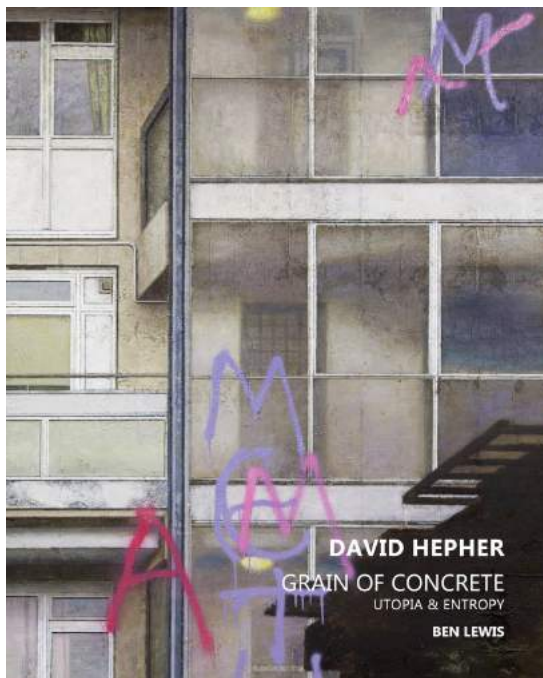
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnUnR9S4vLo>



**The King of Communism: The Pomp and Pageantry of Nicolae Ceaucescu**, documentary about Ceaucescu. Little Bird for BBC/NDR/TV2 Sep 2001  
 Producer/Director  
 "The week's best television programme" – Kathryn Flett, Observer; Grierson Award Best Historical Documentary 2002.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0m9UCrG2-E>

## JOURNALISM AND BOOKS



**David Hepher: Grain of Concrete / Utopia and Entropy**, monograph on British painter David Hepher for Angela Flowers Gallery, 2016/2017.

<http://www.flowersgallery.com/shop/view/david-hepher-grain-of-concrete-utopia-and-entropy>

**Hammer and Tickle – The story of Communism a political system that was almost laughed out of existence**, the history of humour under Communism, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2008; published by Pegasus in America and translated into several languages including German, Romanian, Italian and Portuguese

<http://amzn.to/1EVofGr>

I have written as an art critic for most of Britain's major newspapers including The Observer, Sunday Times, Financial Times, Evening Standard and Times, and for Germany's Die Welt. My articles have been licensed by newspapers around the world. I wrote for Britain's leading public policy magazine Prospect for several years about art and history.



## PUBLIC SPEAKING, EDUCATIONAL WORK

I have delivered lectures, held seminars and participated in debates on cultural, tech

and historical subjects at conferences, fairs, universities and schools around the world. These have included

**Intelligence Squared** Debates at the Hong Kong Art Fair 2012 and Saatchi Gallery 2010;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qP9Cz5IkVI> [at 22.30 in]

<http://www.intelligencesquared.com/events/contemporary-art-excludes-the-99/>

**Data Drama** conference at Princeton School of Architecture 2014

<http://soa.princeton.edu/content/soa-conference%3A-data-drama>

and Communist Humour Conference, Princeton Department of Slavic Languages 2010.

**Guardian Masterclass in Investigate Journalism**, Barbican Centre, London 2015

**Lecture and Crits** with post-grads, UIC and Art Inst of Chicago 2015; University of Michigan (2011) and also at Chelsea School of Art and other London art schools 2008-2015

## EXHIBITIONS

My film 'The Great Contemporary Art Bubble was exhibited at '**Show Me The Money: The Image of Finance, 1700 to the Present**', the People's History Museum in Manchester, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, John Hansard Gallery, part of Southampton University 2014-16; It was also shown at the '**The Global Contemporary**', ZKM Karlsruhe 2011-12 and '**Nothing to declare? – World maps of art since 89**' at Akademie der Künste, Berlin. The show runs from 1 Feb – 24 Mar 2013.

"Curating A Game of Chance" was commissioned by the Deutsche Bank and shown at 'Affinities' at the **Deutsche Guggenheim** in 2007

## EDUCATION

1989: Free University Berlin, Art History scholarship *Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes*

1984-88: History and History of Art, Trinity College Cambridge, MA

1979-1983: St Pauls School, Barnes. A-levels in English, history and German, all A-grades. 10 O-levels with 8 A-grades

## LANGUAGES

Fluent German, good French and Italian, some Romanian and Spanish, very rusty Dutch

## SELECTED AWARDS

American First Place National Headliner Award for Documentary 2014; Peabody Award 2012; German Grimme Prize for best arts programme 2008; Zurich Film Festival best historical documentary 2007; Rincon Film Festival best Documentary 2013; Grierson Award for best historical documentary 2002.