I am asked to send a few notes about something—anything—that I might be doing right now by an editor of this fine magazine. I have only a few hours and I stop to gather my thoughts to see if such a thing might really be possible.

Often I’m asked what it is that I do, or how do I do what I do, and often the simplicity of the question takes me aback. I do what most people do: trying to survive while at the same time attempting to see clearly, learning and sharing insights that hopefully are useful to the positive growth of others beside myself. I use images and sounds as mediums of exploration and meditation. I’m not that interested in mimicking existing forms and structures just for the satisfaction of construction or commercial gain. Rather I try to work at the limits of my understanding, knowledge and perception, invoking processes and mysteries that I don’t fully comprehend.

The forms sometimes tend towards ‘drama’ or ‘documentary’ sometimes ‘musical’ but generally—I like to think—they are actually unclassifiable, determined strictly by the nature of the subject they deal with. Defining films by genre, I see as an oversimplification of our greatly varied perceptions on reality. Limiting our vision to slottable, supposedly marketable forms, is akin to denying freedom of speech. I greatly respect the improvisational approach, feeling that there is a lot more to be discovered and learned by not letting the intellect dominate a process. I’ll work from a set of themes rather than a predetermined pre-scripted blueprint. I go out into the world, tuning myself like a radio receiver, building and developing my responses into a project—a film, an event, a picture, a conversation.

The last big project I did like this ended as a three-hour film called Gambling Gods and LSD. (www.gambling-gods-and-lsd.ch) Its themes, although never stated, included the illusion of safety, the denial of death, transcendence and our relationship to nature. After that five-year long process, one of my main realizations was simply stated in a voiceover towards the end of the film:

“Maybe there’s a difference between looking for something, and just looking...when you are part of what you’re looking at—and it looks back at you and you look back at it.”
Today, a couple of years later, I have the good fortune to be working on a film with the 99-year-old, ever-lucid chemist and discoverer of LSD, Albert Hofmann. He references Goethe:

“Born to look, destined to see. There are a series of distinct stages in the development from looking to seeing: In the beginning there is the simple perception of an object, without being aware of it, without its arousing our interest. The second stage involves the object attracting our attention. In the third stage the object gets precisely observed and explored. Here begins the thought process of scientific inquiry. But the highest stage of observation occurs when the fundamental relationship to an object and even to all that surrounds it loses the border separating subject and object, observer and observed—when the perception that there is a difference between me and the outer world is suspended and I become one with the world and its elementary forces. This is the condition of Love.”

And thus he manages to enlighten me a little bit more about what and why I do what I do.