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#75

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Cannes issue 2012

**THE HUNT
THOMAS VINTERBERG
SUSANNE BIER
BILLE AUGUST
SLUG INVASION
CINEFONDATION**



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INSIDE

FILM

FILM#75 Cannes issue
May 2012

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presenting the films in competition, films in
progress, young talents and news stories.

Catalogue in the reverse section gives a
view of current Danish feature films,
documentaries and short films.

The Danish Film Institute is the national
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couraging Danish film and cinema culture.

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EUROPEAN FILM DREAMS /EDITORIAL

This year, as every year, a wide assortment of European film industry players – merchants, artists, media and public funders – will be descending on Cannes. All arrive at the notorious gathering hole, now celebrating its 65th anniversary, full of dreams and aspirations – of golden palms, successful negotiations, glowing reviews, new partnerships, of wrapping up the financing on their next film. The stakes are high and, as always in the wonderful and gnarly world of film, there are more losers than winners.

This year, many of us should pack a few extra concerns, considering that 2012 is an important year in determining a new framework for European film production. Not only is the MEDIA programme, so crucial to cross-border film partnerships, up for renewal, the EU Commission is also preparing its final proposal for a new cinema communication that will set the conditions for public film funding in Europe for years to come.

The so-called 'Draft Communication on state aid for films and other audiovisual works' not only establishes a framework for member countries' funding of individual film projects and regional fund initiatives, it is also very important in determining the scope of future audiovisual policies.

With so much at stake, the European film agencies have long worked to secure a strong and flexible framework capable of embracing the development potentials and the challenges faced by the film industry.

This is especially true in terms of maintaining the EU member states' commitment to the European audiovisual culture, but also in terms of the continued possibility of supporting the whole food chain – from conception through development, production and marketing, until the film meets its audience right where they are, in front of the TV, laptop or at the cinema.

Another issue is the inclusiveness with which the actual concept of 'audiovisual' is defined. What is an 'audiovisual work' in the year 2012 and in the future?

The world over, filmmakers are dedicating themselves to creating stories that can unfold in many ways, in many media and on many different platforms – all at once. One and the same universal tale of love and longing may have been developed on Facebook and take the form of webisodes, a TV series, a computer game, a feature and an App. Supporting these open and refreshing agendas takes a broad framework, not restricting definitions.

These issues will define our common future. Indeed, there will be plenty to dream, talk and worry about under the swaying palms in Cannes.

Henrik Bo Nielsen, CEO



Slug Invasion. Framegrab

Based on true events

Slug Invasion, a miniature war movie about killer slugs attacking an old granny's garden, is one of the fifteen films in Cannes' Cinéfondation selected out of more than 1,700 submissions from 320 film schools. Read more page 19.

DANISH FILMS IN CANNES 2012

OFFICIAL SELECTION / COMPETITION

THE HUNT THOMAS VINTERBERG

CINÉFONDATION

SLUG INVASION MORTEN HELGELAND

MARCHÉ DU FILM

MARCO MACACO JAN RAHBEK

SHORT FILM CORNER

DOG IN HEAVEN JEANETTE NØRGAARD

THE SECRET OF THE ICE FLOWER JACOB LEY

SEVEN MINUTES IN THE WARSAW GHETTO

JOHAN OETTINGER

TABOO BO MIKKELSEN

WILD BIRD JACOB BITSCH

PRODUCER ON THE MOVE **SIGNE LEICK JENSEN**
/ TOOLBOX FILM

Find facts on all films in the catalogue in reverse section.

Meet the Danes / Scandinavian Terrace / 55 La Croisette / 1st Floor.

A renaissance for storytelling

Windelov/Lassen Interactive (WLI) is a new Danish company that combines the expertise of film producers Vibeke Windeløv and Stinna Lassen with the vision and experience of Internet director Christian Fønnesbech. The company will soon be presenting its first online production, *Cloud Chamber*.

Cloud Chamber is a science-fiction drama about three young scientists using electronic music to decode a signal from space. The episodic content is shot in English and directed by Fabian Wullenweber. It features Jesper Christensen, Sara Hjort, Gwilym Lee and Gethin Anthony.

Cloud Chamber is a continuing online story where an amazing universe unfolds and the viewers become detectives, interacting with the story and unravelling the mystery.

"Through 10 years of producing online stories, I learned how to fuse social networks, filmed episodes and games into a single narrative experience," says transmedia



Vibeke Windeløv, Christian Fønnesbech and Stinna Lassen **Photo:** Rolf Konow

director Christian Fønnesbech who has overall artistic responsibility for the production. He hopes the result will be emotional like a film, addictive like a video game and engaging like a social network.

The new company believes the Internet has launched a new renaissance for the entertainment industry - benefiting both the industry and audiences. They like to quote Mark Zuckerberg, the founder

of Facebook, who said, "The next five years is no longer about creating a place for people to get connected. It's about all the things you can do once people are connected."

Vibeke Windeløv, who has produced a long list of major Danish films, including Lars von Trier's, describes the company's profile,

"This is innovative entertainment for the new market for Internet content - it's fiction for the Facebook

generation. At WLI we aim to produce original stories, while providing filmmakers, storytellers and owners of media properties with a smooth transition into a booming market where gaming, interactivity and social participation are combined."

Cloud Chamber, premiering in fall 2012, is supported by the Danish Film Institute/New Danish Screen.

Danish cinema across the EU

Romanian children are invited to a unique hands-on experience when the mobile film studio FILM-Y lands in Transilvania in June.

A bottle-green Morris Minor and several cases of heavy film and computer equipment will soon be ready and rigged in Cluj when the Transilvania International Film Festival, one of Europe's young dynamic festivals, launches its 11th edition on 1 June.

In February, the mobile film studio FILM-Y, based at the Danish Film

Institute in Copenhagen, travelled to the Bozar arts centre in Brussels and reported all sold out in no time. Soon, Romanian children will also be able to try their hand at shooting a film when FILM-Y settles in Cluj during the film festival in June.

The studio invites the children to explore the creative and technical processes of filmmaking. During 4-5 hours they direct, act in, shoot and edit their own film, using the green Morris Minor, which is equipped with a back projection, as the main prop in a car chase story.

FILM FOCUS IN 2012

Since January Danish cinema has taken centre stage in the cultural agenda of the Danish EU Presidency which runs through 30 June.

FILM-Y travelling to European cities is part of this wide range of film activities which offer audiences across the EU a closer look at Danish film and cinema culture. Other initiatives

include a heightened presence of films at European film festivals, hand-picked European talents who are meeting in Copenhagen for intensive networking and inspiration, a special magazine on Danish cinema, and a brand new Blu-ray box of 20 films offered to representations and cultural institutes throughout Europe for them to arrange screenings with local partners.

OSCAR WINNER ON TOUR

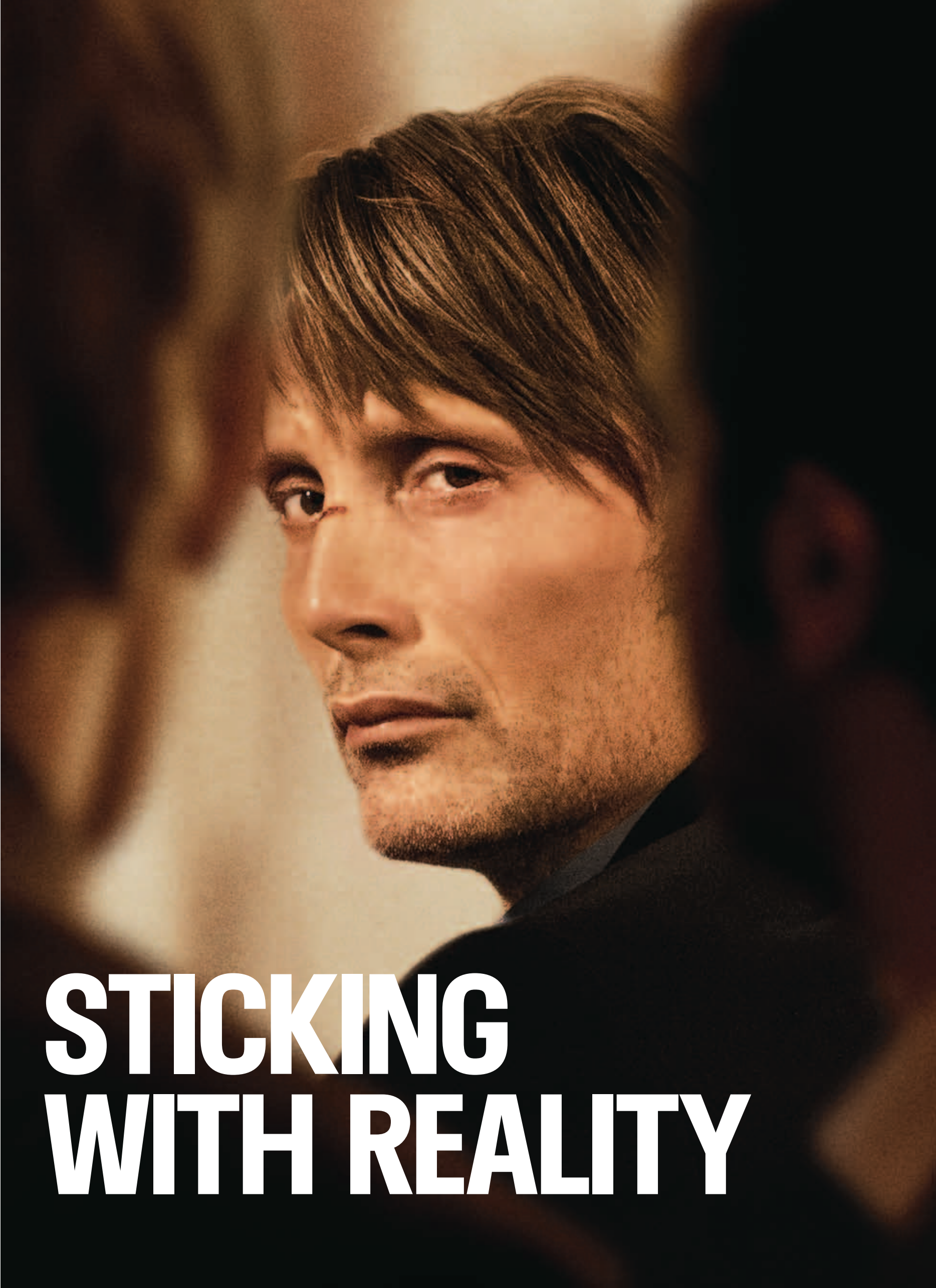
"We are experiencing a particularly keen interest in the Blu-ray box," says Christian Juhl Lemche, project manager at the Danish Film Institute.

One of many major film screening events which is in fact inspired by the DFI's Blu-ray box is a festival in Poland which took off in Warsaw and Lodz in March. The festival runs until June visiting several cities on the way and giving Polish audiences the opportunity to see films such as Jørgen Leth's cycling classic *A Sunday in Hell*, Michael Madsen's nuclear waste film *Into Eternity*, and Susanne Bier's 2011 Oscar winner *In a Better World*. See more at dfi.dk/eu2012. AH



Photo: Bozar

A car chase in the making ... Tickets were sold out in no time when FILM-Y visited the Bozar arts centre in Brussels in February.



**STICKING
WITH REALITY**

INTERVIEW. Thomas Vinterberg has always sought new ways to push his artistic limits. Now, 14 years after his Dogme film *The Celebration* took Cannes by storm, the Danish director is bringing another powerful drama to the world's most prestigious film festival. *The Hunt*, about a man wrongly accused who is exposed to the hatred of everyone in his small town, marks a return to the purity of vision he had at the beginning of his career, the director tells Mike Goodridge.

BY MIKE GOODRIDGE

In the frenzy of excitement that greeted Thomas Vinterberg's international smash *The Celebration* in 1998, he received numerous entreaties from all manner of people. One was a Danish psychiatrist who handed him a file of cases and said he had a responsibility to explore the other side of the abuse issues in the film. Overwhelmed with travel, development and new projects, he shelved it.

Eight years later, Vinterberg was cleaning up his desk and came across the doctor's file. "I read it and was totally stunned by it," he explains. "I felt like I had to do this movie."

The film that evolved from that chance discovery is *The Hunt*, the director's seventh feature, and one which is bound to generate the international acclaim and controversy that he aroused with *The Celebration* 14 years ago. The subject this time is a false accusation made by a young girl against a mild-mannered kindergarten teacher called Lucas (played by Mads Mikkelsen). In the hysteria that follows the accusation, Lucas's life comes crashing down.

No instance of wrongdoing takes place in *The Hunt*. The film is a more classic story of a man unjustly accused. Lucas - who, Vinterberg says, is unquestionably innocent - becomes the target of hatred by all in the small rural town where the film is set. He is initially presented as a kind and beloved man but is vilified overnight, abandoned by his lifelong friends and physically assaulted.

Vinterberg, 43, also found himself probing wider contemporary issues like the viral nature of thought and identity. "It's uncontrollable," he says. "Especially in the world today where communication is so easy, people are being judged morally in all sorts of different media. You can tell stories about another person that very quickly become the identity of that person. The people in this town give Lucas a mark and create an identity around him that he will never escape. I find that really interesting and frightening."

"The people in this town give Lucas a mark and create an identity around him that he will never escape. I find that really interesting and frightening."



The Hunt Photo: Per Arnesen

"We worked constantly at not trying to create a myth out of this person but to stay in real life, and Mads is an expert at that. He is constantly demanding answers."



The Hunt Photo: Per Arnesen

A SCANDINAVIAN MAN

Central to the success of *The Hunt* is a powerful performance by Denmark's biggest star Mikkelsen who subverts his hyper-masculine persona to play the hapless Lucas. It is the first time Vinterberg and Mikkelsen have collaborated and Vinterberg describes the process as "absolutely wonderful."

"This character is in a way a portrait of a modern Scandinavian man," says Vinterberg. "He is warm, friendly, helpful and humble. He does everything people ask him to, he is being run over by his ex-wife. He is castrated in a way. And the journey we made with Mads was to develop him from this person to someone who has to manage this cold and brutal reality without taking a step from the basic ideals of his Scandinavian character. He has to keep his dignity and not resort to violence."

Mikkelsen and Vinterberg met two months before shooting to go through the script and tailor the character to the actor. Lucas was originally written as a more overtly masculine, taciturn



The Hunt Photo: Per Arnesen

man always dressed in hunting gear. But when the director and actor got together, they resolved to make him more civilized.

"This very manly man, Mads, came into the film with all his beauty and muscles and we decided to flip the character and make him a humble schoolteacher. We worked constantly at not trying to create a myth out of this person but to stay in real life, and Mads is an expert at that. He is constantly demanding answers. Why am I doing that? Could I do this? Could I wear these? He would call me at any time asking different questions about the scenes and coming up with new lines. And when an actor gets the feeling that he knows the character through conversation and improvisation, then all the small details come. He feels calm enough to disappear into the unknown."

Vinterberg recalls a pivotal scene in the film when, on Christmas Eve, Lucas goes to the local church service and faces a congregation of people who hate him.

"Mads wept all day in every take in exactly the same way," says the director. "I've never seen anything so professional. The scene was all mapped out very precisely but we shot it from many different angles and he has to go through several stages - determination, collapse, anger, relief. He wept for eight hours and there are very few actors that can do that."

CONFUSING SUCCESS

Vinterberg describes *The Hunt* as a return of sorts to the purity of vision he had at the beginning of his career. He still considers his graduate film *Last Round* his best. "After that I did *The Biggest Heroes* and *The Celebration* and those films were all very close to me in the sense that I can see myself in a very naked way in them," he explains.

But after his Dogme film *The Celebration* scored a slot in competition at Cannes in 1998, won a jury prize there, scored sales, box office success and awards all over the world, Vinterberg found himself the subject of intense attention. Offers flooded in, Los Angeles agents swarmed around and he struggled to maintain his innocence as a creative filmmaker. His next feature *It's All About Love*, a futuristic romance in English and starring Joaquin Phoenix, Claire Danes and Sean Penn, received mixed reviews, as did his next *Dear Wendy*, a script by his friend Lars von Trier which gave Jamie Bell one of his first lead roles since his breakout *Billy Elliot*.

"I was trying to escape the hysteria surrounding *The Celebration*," he says. "I experimented a lot with those films because I felt that I hadn't explored the room that I was in. I felt I had to go all the way out to that wall and all the way to the other wall to find out where I was. I loved doing that because I was constantly on thin ice but of course there were some very painful experiences."

The outsized success of *The Celebration* was confusing, he explains. "It didn't give me much. Artistically it took away my focus for quite some time. I was like a football player after a big goal and the camera was pointing at me for way too long. Now, I feel I am back and actually looking at my stories and looking at the world to find stories. Now I'm constantly trying to find this vulnerable pure quality from my graduate film, where there was no speculation about the future and you are very honestly trying to regard people in certain situations. If you want to do that, you have to stop thinking of yourself as a career pilot."

LIKE A BICYCLE TEAM

The film which grounded Vinterberg again was *Submarino*, a gut wrenching study of two brothers wracked by addiction adapted from the novel by Jonas T. Bengtsson. The film was selected for competition at Berlin 2010 and earned him his best reviews since *The Celebration*. "With *Submarino*, I felt I sort of came back. If you consider *The Celebration* like an explosion, the dust had to settle for a bit and I felt I could continue with what I was doing before, knowing a little bit more about how things worked."

Submarino also saw him teamed up with hot new Danish writer Tobias Lindholm on the screenplay. Lindholm was fresh out of film school when he was drafted in to write the adaptation but has since



Thomas Vinterberg Photo: Karina Tengberg

co-written two seasons of the hit TV series *Borgen* and directed two of his own films *R* (with Michael Noer) and the forthcoming *A Hijacking*. It was only natural for Vinterberg to turn to Lindholm again on *The Hunt*.

"We are like a bicycle team when we are writing," he smiles. "Sometimes he is in front and I am following him and sometimes I am in front. We map out the story for quite some time together. We do a 10-page version, then a 20-page version and when we have an idea of the whole story, we start writing. The front bicycle writes 10 pages very fast without looking back and then the other one rewrites it. At the end you have a script which is a Lindholm/Vinterberg script which I then change to make my own."

The script of *The Hunt* approaches the story from an unusual angle in that it sticks closely to the Lucas character. Scenes you'd expect in classic witch-hunt movies - the townspeople getting together to fuel their rage, the police interrogation of the suspect - are not there.

"We tried to stay very close to the main character and avoid making a case study," he says. "This is fiction and we communicate through the heart and then it goes to the brain and back again. So we had to follow the emotional story of this person."

DEMONS AND VICTIMS

Also, it's an unusual story in that, for all the drama, everyone is innocent and thinking they are doing the right thing. Vinterberg is a parent himself and understands why and how adults become so aggressively protective of their children at the first whiff that they are in danger.

"The father of the little girl believes in his daughter like every parents should do, and I totally

understand him," he muses. "Everybody has the feeling that you know your child, but there is this cliché about kids that they don't lie and in this film, we claim that they do: they invent stories, they often lie to make the grown-ups happy and in this case she is saying what is expected of her.

"Imagine sitting in front of a policeman or a psychologist or your parents who keep on asking you the same questions. What did you see? Did you see this? Did you see that? And imagine that after the third time, it becomes part of your imagination that it actually happened. As a child especially, it is more difficult to divide fiction from reality.

"So to some extent, the kids here are the demons of the film because they destroy a man's life, but it's very important for me to emphasise that in a case like this, the kids are also the victims. They are the ones we should protect the most."

BIGGER AND BETTER APPLES

So what next for Vinterberg? Will he stay in Denmark and persist in his creative renewal? Or will he venture out into the world again?

"It's a constant dilemma for me between working in Denmark and working abroad," he says. "It's a conversation I have with myself every day because I am still offered scripts set abroad and I am still coming up with stories that could potentially happen in Canada or the US. It's complicated for me because Denmark is the soil I grew up from and I know all the details which are important for the originality of a film. And that sort of disappears the more miles you put between you and your home. Then again, film language is universal and everybody understands everybody." He cites Ingmar

THOMAS VINTERBERG

Born 1969. Graduate of the National Film School of Denmark 1993. Vinterberg was, together with Lars von Trier, Søren Kragh-Jacobsen and Kristian Levring, one of the four original Dogme brothers. His international breakthrough *The Celebration* (1998), the first film adhering to the Dogme concept, won the Jury Award in Cannes, and his two English-language films that followed, *It's All About Love* (2003) and *Dear Wendy* (2005), were selected for Sundance. In 2010 *Submarino* was selected for Berlin's main competition, and the film won the Nordic Council Film Prize. *The Hunt*, in Cannes Competition, is Vinterberg's seventh feature.

ZENTROPA

Founded 1992 by director Lars von Trier and producer Peter Aalbæk Jensen. Acknowledged for having reinvigorated the industry with Dogme95. Von Trier's *Breaking the Waves* (1996) won the company its first breakthrough. Zentropa's international reputation has continued to build due to directors like von Trier, Lone Scherfig, Susanne Bier, Per Fly, Annette K. Olesen and Niels Arden Oplev. New films include Susanne Bier's romantic comedy *Love Is All You Need* (see page 10), a new film by Simon Staho, Thomas Vinterberg's *The Hunt* in Cannes Competition, and Nikolaj Arcel's *A Royal Affair* which took home two awards in Berlin. zentropa.dk

"Now I'm trying to find this vulnerable pure quality from my graduate film, where there was no speculation about the future."

Bergman as one of his biggest idols "and he didn't give a shit about the rest of the world. He made his films in his own country. He was painting the same apples and they just got bigger and better. That is very attractive to me."

"Having said that, Denmark is awfully small and I get crazy from being here all the time. I love American actors and the American distribution system, and British actors, so I have to get out of here sometimes. I need to get out to stay alive artistically."

One way the director is pushing his limits is on the stage in Vienna where the Burgtheater Vienna has given him the chance to stage original plays written for the theatre. The latest of these plays called *The Commune* has been playing to packed houses and Vinterberg is determined to make a film of it.

"It all happens on the commune I grew up on in the 1970s and '80s. It's a portrait of the end of a time. It's about the end of a relationship but it's also about the end of love in general as the cold 1980s come in. This is a film I am not in doubt that I want to do, although I don't know in which country. At the moment, we are trying to set it up outside Denmark."

He sighs, the conflict evident on his face. "I don't know. Sometimes I think maybe I am at my best when I work here. But as an artist you want to avoid repeating yourself. I want to explore new territory. When I don't feel like I am doing that, I feel old" ■

Read about co-writer on The Hunt Tobias Lindholm on page 22. For more information on the film, see reverse section.

Films by Thomas Vinterberg



THE HUNT / 2012

Following a tough divorce, Lucas has a new girlfriend, a new job and is reestablishing his relationship with his teenage son. But things go awry. Not a lot. Just a passing remark. A random lie. As the snow falls and the Christmas lights are lit the lie spreads like a virus, and the small community suddenly finds itself in a state of collective hysteria while Lucas is fighting for his life and his dignity. In Cannes Competition.



SUBMARINO / 2010

"With *Submarino*, I felt I sort of came back," Vinterberg says about his gloomy but loving story of two brothers who were separated after a traumatic event in their childhood and now stumble through life on opposite sides of the road of abuse. Vinterberg's first collaboration with Denmark's hottest screenwriter, Tobias Lindholm, *Submarino* was selected for the Berlin Film Festival and won the Nordic Council Prize.



WHEN A MAN COMES HOME / 2007

After two international productions, Vinterberg returned to Denmark with a comedy about another returning star. A famous opera singer, Karl Kristian Schmidt, with much razzle and dazzle arrives in his hometown to grace it with a performance. He has not been back long before he is entangled in a love triangle, while at the big gala dinner skeletons come rattling out of the closets.



DEAR WENDY / 2005

Elder Dogme brother Lars von Trier scripted Vinterberg's second English-language film, a tale of American gun fetishism. Jamie Bell, in his first starring role since *Billy Elliot*, plays 18-year-old Dick who becomes a gun owner by accident. Drunk on the power of his gun, but also a declared pacifist, Dick forms a brotherhood of other armed, peace-loving outsiders his age.



IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE / 2003

Vinterberg's first international, English-language production is a visually and thematically ambitious, dream-like sci-fiction drama starring Claire Danes, Joaquin Phoenix and Sean Penn. Anthony Dod Mantle, Vinterberg's go-to DP from *The Biggest Heroes* through 2007's *When a Man Comes Home*, crafts unforgettable images of a frigid, death-ravaged New York.



THE CELEBRATION / 1998

This first Dogme film was Vinterberg's breakthrough which also brought a new freshness to Danish acting, launching the career of, among others, Ulrich Thomsen who plays Christian arriving for his father's 60th birthday party with two speeches in his pocket, one yellow, one green. When his father picks the green one, the guests are shocked by the ghastly secret it reveals. Cannes Jury Prize winner.



THE BIGGEST HEROES / 1996

Vinterberg's first feature is a desperate road and buddy movie, with Thomas Bo Larsen in the lead and introducing new stars of Danish cinema Ulrich Thomsen and Paprika Steen. On furlough from prison, Karsten learns that he has a 12-year-old daughter. When he witnesses her stepfather mistreating her, he and his friend Peter take her away on a dramatic road trip through Sweden.



THE BOY WHO WALKED BACKWARDS (SHORT) / 1994

Awardwinning short film about Andreas, a nine-year-old boy grieving the loss of his brother in a traffic accident. Showing his talent for treating tough subjects with tremendous sensitivity, Vinterberg introduces themes like death, sorrow, fraternal love and childhood trauma that reappear later in *The Celebration* and *Submarino*.



LAST ROUND (SHORT) / 1993

Vinterberg's graduation film from the National Film School of Denmark and his personal favourite today. Thomas Bo Larsen, in his first outing as Vinterberg's leading man, plays a young man who is told he has leukaemia. With three months left to live, he has to decide how to say goodbye to his circle of friends. Bo Hr. Hansen wrote the script for this and the next two of Vinterberg's films.

A TRUE ROMANTIC





Love Is All You Need Photo: Doane Gregory

INTERVIEW. After a string of intense dramas, Susanne Bier turns to comedy in *Love Is All You Need*, set in sunny Sorrento, Italy, and with the romantic pairing up of Pierce Brosnan and Trine Dyrholm. Mike Goodridge talks to the director about the nerve-wracking joy of winning an Oscar, her collaboration with writer Anders Thomas Jensen and how to balance an uncomfortable subject matter with all the charms of a romcom.

BY MIKE GOODRIDGE

"I think I am very romantic," laughs Susanne Bier. "I think there has always been a contradiction between what people expected from me as a director and who I was. And I guess with this film there is less of a difference between who I am and what the movie is like."

The film is *Love Is All You Need*, a delicious romantic comedy set over a wedding weekend in Sorrento where a host of characters fall in and out of love. Bathed in sunshine, lemon groves and beautiful sunsets, it's Bier's first romantic comedy since 1999 when she broke Danish box office records with *The One and Only*. Since then, she has become internationally acclaimed for a string of powerfully intense dramas revolving around moral dilemmas kicking off with her Dogme film *Open Hearts*, followed by *Brothers*, *After the Wedding*, for which she was Oscar nominated, the US-set *Things We Lost in the Fire* and *In a Better World* for which she won the Oscar in 2011.

And, as you would expect from a filmmaker with those extraordinary films under her belt, this is no bland romantic comedy with two-dimensional characters. She and her frequent writing collaborator Anders Thomas Jensen build all their work around authentic characters and in this case they have come up with Ida, a sunny, positive

woman getting over cancer and a philandering husband, and Philip, a slick British businessman working in Copenhagen who has never been able to recover from his wife's death many years before. Most of the film takes place in Philip's property in Sorrento where his son is marrying her daughter.

A LONELY ENGLISHMAN

"The exciting thing about a romantic comedy is not who's going to find each other but the journey of how they will get together," Bier explains. "We have done a number of dramas where we dealt with the notion of 'what if.' And with this film we had this woman in a very unhappy and lonely situation and we wanted to bring her back to a joyful state."

"But," she cautions, "you can't be heavy handed in a romantic comedy. You have to be emotionally engaging. So you have a character for whom you feel sorry but this person has to have a lot of charm and unpredictability."

For the part of Ida, Bier cast veteran Trine Dyrholm who played one of the key dramatic parts in *In a Better World*.

"I think it was fun for her because she has been playing characters on the dark side for a while," says Bier, "and at the beginning I think she was afraid of playing it so light. Ida is someone who maintains high spirits even when things are really awful. I would say she is slightly inspired by my mother who also had cancer but always managed to see the positive side of things. We wanted the character to have traces of that: it's intrinsic to who she is that she would at all times choose the positive way."

For Dyrholm, it was a challenging balancing act to maintain that sunny nature without being

irritating either to those around her or the audience. "You must never sense that this woman is stupid," says Bier, "because she is not."

Meanwhile as Philip, Bier cast the legendary Pierce Brosnan, who gives one of his most vulnerable performances to date. Bier always wanted the character to be a foreigner living in Denmark to heighten further his isolation. "For this character to be lonely, almost alienated in Copenhagen, it had to be someone who was clearly a foreigner."

Brosnan attempts a couple of lines in Danish, but speaks for the most part in English, a fact which adds to the international flavor of the film. "He is a great actor," says Bier about Brosnan. "Yes he has been James Bond but he is a real actor and he completely understood what the film was about. I think there was a part of him that wanted to do something a little more fragile."

FLESH AND BLOOD

Including cancer in the story is a risk for any light endeavour, but Bier made a determined effort not to let it overwhelm the film's central charm.

"I am not sure I would want to see a film about cancer and I wouldn't want to make a drama about cancer," she explains. "But we wanted to treat it in a way that was potentially painful but not disturbing. The intriguing thing was to deal with an uncomfortable subject matter in a charming way. It's just part of the story."

If the film sounds too heavy, it isn't. Bier and Jensen readily embraced romantic comedy conventions in the script. Ida and Philip start out with a frosty relationship when she backs into his car at Copenhagen Airport, but as in all good romcoms, the frost melts over the course of the weekend. Meanwhile various supporting characters fulfill certain types: Paprika Steen plays Brosnan's stuck-up, vitriolic sister-in-law who is determined to snare him for herself, Kim Bodnia is Dyrholm's obtuse husband who carelessly brings along his mistress to the wedding, and Christiane Shaumburg-Müller is the gauche sex bomb mistress who puts her foot in her mouth at every turn.

"Good taste is the worst hindrance to movie-making so you have to be courageous and take on clichés and conventions," says Bier. "If you are terrified about them, you could lose the engagement of the audience. It's about engaging with them. We all live according to clichés. Ten times a day we all do things which are full of clichés. The important thing is to make sure the characters are real flesh-and-blood human beings and to really care for them. You can't avoid conventions, you have to make it real."

She says that she likes the comedies of Richard Curtis (*Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Notting Hill*) for this very reason: despite the fairytale English settings, the characters are authentic. "I think he's a genius," she says. "He reinvented the romantic comedy by being pretty real."

"The exciting thing about a romantic comedy is not who's going to find each other but the journey of how they will get together."



Director Susanne Bier Photo: Les Kaner

FOUND THE PERFECT HOUSE

Bier has to be about the most glamorous filmmaker working in the world today. Her long black tresses of hair flowing over her tanned shoulders, she looks much younger than her years and is hardly the picture of the harried filmmaker. Indeed she laughs when she explains that she sat waiting in a cafe in London for an hour for a meeting with Sam Mendes (one of her producers on *Things We Lost in the Fire*, ed.) before they both realized they had been sitting two tables away from each other. "I was wearing a nice dress and had shopping bags with me, and he told me he never imagined I would look like that. He thought I was this European arthouse director who should be wearing black. There's a contradiction between what I look like and the movies I make."

But Bier is no pushover, famously working intensively with her actors in her efforts to get the best from every scene. And that was no different on *Love Is All You Need*.

"It was just as demanding as on a drama," she says. "Make no mistake, it's as difficult making a light movie as it is making a more heavy drama. We did have a lot of fun making it, but the laughter didn't necessarily go hand in hand with the material."

Shooting in glorious Sorrento of course was a bonus for everyone involved in the film. Cinematographer Morten Søborg and producer Vibeke Windeløv found the house where the wedding takes place when they went scouting for locations early on in the process. It was perfect for the film - unfurnished, empty and beside a lemon grove.

Bier and Jensen had often retreated to the Amalfi coast to write some of their earlier films, so for them it was a natural spot to set a film. "We had a key Danish crew but also a big Italian crew," she recalls. "And Italian catering. It was pretty uncomplicated actually because the movie is also about people visiting Italy, so it wasn't as if we were pretending we were Italians."

HUGGING STEVEN SPIELBERG

It's not unusual to find Bier out of Denmark. She has spent much of the last 18 months on the road - first going through the rigours of the US awards season before throwing herself into shooting *Love Is All You Need* in Italy. She recently completed filming in Prague on an English-language film based on the novel *Serena* by Ron Rash. Set in Depression-era North Carolina, the film tells the story of two newlyweds who build up a timber empire and stars Hollywood A-listers Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence alongside Danes like Bodnia and David Dencik.

Bearing in mind that all four of Bier's last Danish films were partly set overseas, Bier clearly has an eye on the world.

"I think in a way, being Jewish, I have always had a sense that I don't belong to a specific physical country," she muses. "I have family everywhere. My father came to Denmark in 1933 and so I am a second generation immigrant. I do feel I am Danish and I am very happy living in Denmark, but I don't have that family history there that many of my

"Good taste is the worst hindrance to movie-making so you have to be courageous and take on cliches and conventions."



Love Is All You Need Photo: Doane Gregory

SUSANNE BIER

Born 1960. Bier's international reputation soared as her previous feature *In a Better World* received a Golden Globe and an Oscar in 2011, a year that also saw her honoured as Best Director at the European Film Awards. Bier is widely acclaimed for such films as the Oscar-nominated *After the Wedding* (2006), *Brothers* (2004) which was awarded in Sundance and San Sebastian and remade in the US by Jim Sheridan in 2009, the Dogme film *Open Hearts* (2002), and her romantic comedy *The One and Only* (1999) which made nearly a million Danes flock to the cinemas, turning Bier into a household name in Denmark almost overnight. The director is currently working on the US production *Serena*.

ZENTROPA

See page 8.

friends have. It's pretty natural for me to work with people from everywhere and almost to live and work in a number of places. Since I was 12, I always preferred reading English books to Danish."

She smiles at the recollection of the awards season which she described as "nerve-wracking and demanding." She estimates she conducted around 500 press interviews for *In a Better World* to promote the US release and generate publicity for awards voters.

"For foreign films, the director is the person who represents the film because foreign actors are not well-known in the US. I do believe that the film had a story to tell and I wanted people to see it, but it was exhausting."

She recalls the Academy Awards night itself as a blur heightened by the tension of the day leading up to the ceremony. "When I came off stage after the speech, there was a bar backstage and I had a huge vodka and orange. I don't usually drink much and I think it was ten years since I'd drunk vodka, but I had another one and a third one. I wasn't really drunk after that, just in some kind of weird state."

Selected films by Susanne Bier



SERENA / 2013

Bier has been busy filming in Prague for her second American film, after 2007's *Things We Lost In the Fire*. Set in North Carolina, 1929-30, against a dramatic woodland backdrop, *Serena* is the romantic and nerve-jangling story of big dreams and corrupting power. Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence star in the film based on the 2008 novel by Ron Rash.



LOVE IS ALL YOU NEED / 2012

Bier's first romantic comedy since 1999's *The One and Only*, *Love Is All You Need* takes us to a wedding in postcard-perfect Sorrento, Italy. Around the young bridal couple is the bride's mother, a hairdresser who is relentlessly upbeat even though she is battling cancer and her husband just left her, and the groom's British father who is still recovering from the tragic death of his wife.

She laughs. "I remember hugging Steven Spielberg at the Governor's Ball and I don't know what I said to him."

Back in Copenhagen, she was met by her parents and a horde of press at the airport and then the film's production company Zentropa hosted a party for her. "That was amazing. At that point, I had held (the Oscar statuette, *ed.*) and I knew it was for real."

Among the Danish crew attending the Oscars with Bier was Anders Thomas Jensen, with whom she has worked on and off since *Open Hearts* in 1999.

"I have a great appreciation for him and the way he works," she explains. "We have a lot of fun. And he is a very close friend. We are both wary of getting to a point where you start repeating yourself. There is always a comfort zone which is dangerous in all artistic endeavours. I think that's probably why we did a comedy in order to avoid it. He hasn't worked on *Serena* but I am sure we will be doing other things. I don't know what we'll do next but we will definitely try and avoid that comfort zone."

Explaining that she is resolutely not a "careerist", she returns to why she felt the need to get romantic with this latest film.

"I just work with what I feel like and I felt like making a romantic film," she says. "The whole movie is about various kinds of love and it's an unashamedly romantic film. You aren't really allowed to be overtly romantic today. Even in the good romantic comedies there's always an element of cynicism. I wanted to make one which is not cynical but which I would still like to see. That meant it had to have some real content. I can't watch a romantic comedy if I don't feel like I am able to identify with the characters or if it's too slick. There had to be some edges to it."

"But most importantly," says Bier, "I didn't want it to be cynical. I guess I am particularly romantic" ■

For more information on *Love Is All You Need*, see reverse section.



IN A BETTER WORLD / 2010

A lavish production adding a political dimension to its human-interest theme, the film asks: How many times do you have to turn the other cheek before it's time to hit back? The dilemma in the global story of a doctor, Anton, working in an African relief organisation, is reflected in the local story of his 10-year-old son who is the victim of bullying in a small Danish town. Winner of a Golden Globe and an Oscar.



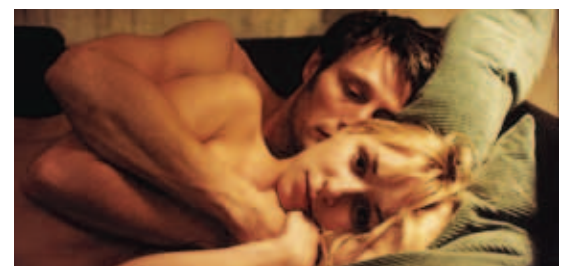
AFTER THE WEDDING / 2006

Jacob has dedicated his life to helping street kids in India. When the orphanage he runs is threatened with closure, he receives an offer of a generous donation from a Danish businessman. But the strings attached trigger a momentous meeting of past and future that puts Jacob in the dilemma of his life. Mads Mikkelsen and Sidse Babbett Knudsen are in peak form in Bier's Oscar-nominated film.



BROTHERS / 2004

Bier adds an international outlook to an intimate drama of two brothers. Michael has a successful military career and a beautiful family, while Jannik lives a slacker life on the edge of the law. When Michael is sent to Afghanistan, the balance between them is changed forever. *Brothers* won the Audience Award at Sundance and was remade in Hollywood by Jim Sheridan.



OPEN HEARTS / 2002

In this Dogme film, Cecilie is a woman teetering between moral responsibility and forbidden love after her boyfriend Joachim is hit by a car and paralysed from the neck down. Marie, the unfortunate driver, is married to a doctor, Niels, who contacts Cecilie in the hospital. When Joachim drives Cecilie away, she seeks comfort in Niels' arms. Bier's first collaboration with screenwriter Anders Thomas Jensen.



THE ONE AND ONLY / 1999

No Danish filmmaker before or since has had as much success with a romantic comedy. *The One and Only* was a huge popular breakthrough for Bier and her actors, Sidse Babbett Knudsen, Paprika Steen and Sofie Gråbøl. Sus and Niller are trying to have children with their respective partners when after a chance meeting they realise they may be each other's one and only.



FREUD LEAVING HOME / 1991

Family conflicts are at the heart of Bier's first feature, exploring religious and cultural identity in a Swedish-Jewish family. Angelique is struggling to get out from under her domineering mother, Roshia. To celebrate Roshia's 60th birthday, her other children arrive from the US and Israel. When she turns out to be fatally ill, issues are put on the table that were always taboo.

SHINING LIGHT ON MARIE

INTERVIEW. In his first Danish film in 25 years, Bille August takes up a golden piece of Danish history – the Skagen painters and Marie Krøyer, an artist struggling to break free from the shadow of her celebrated husband.

BY NANNA FRANK RASMUSSEN

“A woman shouldn’t find herself, she should find a husband.” The line is directed at Marie Krøyer, in Bille August’s film of the same name. The film is set in an age when it only seemed natural that a woman’s identity should be anchored in her husband. And what a husband to be anchored in: Marie was married to one of the most successful and respected Danish artists ever, P.S. Krøyer.

The Skagen painters is the name of a group of painters in the late 1880s who settled on the northernmost tip of Denmark attracted by the

unique light in this harsh, remote area where two seas collide. They are a piece of Danish history. In their prodigious output and approach to art, they became an important element of the modern breakthrough.

In this age of transition from traditional agriculture to industrialism, a new awareness arose challenging woman’s place in society. Marie Krøyer became a painful case in point. A painter herself, she has always been better known as her husband’s lovely model. Life with her genius but mad husband – P.S. Krøyer was bipolar – put a strain not only on her creative urges but also on her roles as wife





Marie Krøyer Photo: Rolf Konow

and mother. Marie wilted in the shadow of her husband's talent.

It was this aspect of Marie Krøyer's story that originally caught Bille August's attention.

TRAPPED IN A DILEMMA

"I have long been fascinated by the Skagen painters as a whole and by the phenomenon that so many brilliant painters settled in Skagen at the time," the director says. "I was researching their history when I came across a biography of Marie Krøyer, *The Passion of Marie* by Anastassia Arnold, and found a good starting point for a story.

"I was captivated by the portrait of this woman who in her day was the most admired woman in Denmark - for her beauty and because her husband, who was such a brilliant painter, made her portrait. But I wanted to get behind the facade."

In 1902, to escape P.S. Krøyer's exhausting, all-consuming illness, Marie goes away on holiday, with her daughter Vibeke, and meets a Swedish composer, Hugo Alfvén. They fall madly in love.

"Marie was a woman of her age and trapped in a dilemma: Should she stay with her wonderful but mentally ill husband, who was also much older than she, or should she follow her heart and pay the price?"

"You have to keep in mind that, before television and supermarket tabloids, she was the most feted woman in Denmark, because of her beauty and very much because of the status she enjoyed. So she went from being the most admired woman to being the most hated, the most reviled. She paid a huge price for living out her love."

Because of the many harrowing and life-changing choices she made, she became the symbol of a woman who deliberately went against conventions. For August this was perfectly in line with his approach to Marie Krøyer and the subject

of the Skagen painters. "The picturesque setting, the abundance of good painters in this period, became more of a backdrop for the chamber play. What interested me was the interpersonal drama. I was especially fascinated by the portrayal of Marie Krøyer who pays such a high price for the choices she makes. But she also profits from her experiences. She matures. Through all her ordeals, she keeps her head up, she grows and she learns.

"Today, women still have to make some tough decisions. Tougher than men's, I think. Because women still have to choose between a career, family and love. That makes Marie's story relevant today."

For August, it's important that a story is universal in a way that transcends time, nationality, gender - all the filters through which a film can be experienced.

"I always ask myself this when I start a period film: What can it teach us today? This story has so much to tell modern people."

THE NORDIC LIGHT

This is the first time in 25 years that Bille August has shot a film in Denmark. That's how long it's been since he bowled over the world with *Pelle the Conqueror*. Winning the Palme d'Or at Cannes, a Golden Globe and a Best Foreign Language Oscar, *Pelle* launched August's international career. After the Bergman-scripted *The Best Intentions*, which earned August another Palme d'Or, the director cemented his name with a series of adaptations, including *Jerusalem*, *The House of the Spirits*, *Smilla's Sense of Snow* and *Les Misérables*. His last film, *Goodbye Bafana*, chronicles the relationship between Nelson Mandela and his jailer. How does it feel to return to his national heritage?

"It's been a huge pleasure to do a Danish story, in the Danish language, with Danish actors. Being away

"When Nordic films are successful, it's usually because they have a certain look. Because they are rooted in a culture, a light, a filmic look."

for so long also allowed me to approach matters like casting with a particularly objective eye."

Birgitte Hjort Sørensen, who stars as Marie Krøyer, broke through playing an investigative reporter in *Borgen*. The political TV series is also an international hit, but that didn't impact on August's decision.

"I saw an episode of *Borgen*, but it was her screen test that convinced me. I wanted to find someone with a certain portrait likeness to Marie, who radiated the same strength and willpower but also had a certain fragility. Birgitte has all those assets."

While Sørensen shines as the strong but beleaguered Marie, she had to share the director's attention with light itself. The unique Nordic light holds a powerful fascination for August.

"The most important thing for me, actually, in doing a Danish story was getting to work with the Nordic light," he says. "The unique Nordic look is linked to light. Dramatic seasonal changes are part of our identity. We are extroverted in summer, and in winter we isolate ourselves. That affects us as a people, and has for thousands of years. It's reflected in our literature, painting, music and film."

In fact, that a film is rooted in a specific culture, like this one, in the Scandinavian, matters a great deal in terms of how a film is received abroad, August says.

"In my experience, when we make films that have a very Nordic look, we are also being very international. The Nordic is our identity, after all. You rarely succeed making films that are trying to look like American mainstream. When Nordic films are successful, it's usually because they have a certain look. Because they are rooted in a culture, a light, a filmic look."

Light was also at the heart of P.S. Krøyer's art. His masterful control and evocation of light lift his paintings out of the apparent banality of his subject matter. With Dirk Brüel, his director of photography, August spent a long time studying Krøyer's paintings in order to recreate the same sense of light - a challenge that had to be solved to stay true to the visual universe that the characters inhabit.

LOVE AS A DRIVING FORCE

It's obvious to August that P.S. Krøyer was a truly great artist. However, paradoxically because of his success, like the other Skagen painters, he became a national treasure, his paintings reproduced on everything from cookie tins to posters and plates. As a result, the Skagen painters have often been brushed aside as "poster artists." But viewing the

“The picturesque setting, the abundance of good painters in this period, became more of a backdrop for the chamber play. What interested me was the interpersonal drama.”



Marie Krøyer Photo: Rolf Konow

actual paintings should convince anyone that these artists were more than virtuoso technicians – they had a soulfulness and a passion that can't be denied. The same is clear from Marie's story.

The two men who shape Marie's life use her as a muse and a model. She is the mother of their children. They draw their strength from her. Love is the driving force of their work as artists. August recognises this, though he would never compare his own work as a film director to that of a painter.

“Filmmaking is different because it's a lot more organised. I have to stay extremely disciplined. I can't afford to live a bohemian life, as a lot of artists probably can.”

Signe Leick Jensen, one of his two producers on the film and selected as Danish Producer on the Move in Cannes this year, describes August as extremely focused. When he is working, he is able to shut everything else out. The director leads a socially ascetic life when he is shooting.

“It's about excluding all unnecessary things,” August says. “When I work on a film, I try to cleanse my life and only deal with what's relevant. I focus

on my work, see very few people, preferably just my family. I don't watch TV or read the paper. I shut out the world. I don't want to be distracted. You only get that one shot when you're making a film, and you have to aim and hit the mark as well as you can when you are fortunate enough to get a lot of money to work with.

“I'm not particularly sociable on a shoot. I don't see the actors privately, I don't want to listen to gossip. It's my way of getting closer to the essence, a way of refining my expression and getting to the core.”

He is happy to share that core with Hugo Alfvén and P.S. and Marie Krøyer. The core is love.

“Love overshadows everything else. It could be erotic love or it could be your love for your children. It could also be the passion that has to do with art, of working to express yourself. That's how I relate to life. My understanding of life goes through love and through art” ■

Read about Signe Leick Jensen, Danish producer on the Move at Cannes, on the next page. For more information on Marie Krøyer, see reverse section.

THE SKAGEN PAINTERS

The Skagen painters are named for the remote village on the northernmost tip of Denmark's main peninsula where they moved in the late 1800s. Inspired by the French Impressionists and realist movements such as the Barbizon school, they took to painting en plein air in search of a more truthful expression steeped in the powerful local sunlight, the sweeping scenery and the authentic life of the local fishermen. Among their favourite subjects was also the colourful social life among the members of the group which included Marie Krøyer and her husband P.S. Krøyer, the most prominent member, Anna and Michael Ancher, Viggo Johansen and Christian Krohg.



Bille August on the set of Marie Krøyer Photo: Rolf Konow

BILLE AUGUST

Born 1948. Trained as cinematographer and photographer in Stockholm. Graduated in cinematography from the National Film School of Denmark in 1973. Before his debut *In My Life* in 1978, August worked as a cameraman on Danish and Swedish productions. Director of three acclaimed films for children and youth 1983-84, *Zappa*, *In the World of Buster*, and *Twist and Shout*. Director of international co-productions including *The House of the Spirits* (1993), *Jerusalem* (1996), *Smilla's Sense of Snow* (1997), *Les Misérables* (1998), *A Song for Martin* (2001) and *Goodbye Bafana* (2007). *Marie Krøyer* is set for domestic release in September.

SF FILM PRODUCTION

Danish production unit of Svensk Filmindustri AB with fiction feature films as the main activity. Has signed *Arn I* (2007) and *Arn II* (2008), both directed by Peter Flinth and based on Jan Guillou's famous saga about crusader Arn Magnusson. These were followed by *Lost in Africa* (Vibeke Muasya, 2010) and Mads Matthiesen's *Teddy Bear* (2011), winner of Best Director in Sundance. The company has signed documentaries *The Monastery* (2006) by Pernille Rose Grønkjær and *Defamation* (Yoav Shamir, 2009). Bille August's *Marie Krøyer* is set to release in September.

PROFILE. She got her start in the industry on a fluke, learned the ropes during the Dogme wave and recently struck out on her own as an independent producer, opening her own company, Toolbox Film. Now Signé Leick Jensen, producer on Bille August's *Marie Krøyer*, has been picked to be Denmark's Producer on the Move in Cannes.

BY NANNA FRANK RASMUSSEN

Signé Leick Jensen happened to be answering the phones at a public access TV station the day someone from the National Film School called up and asked for people to help shoot that year's graduation films. The year was 1994. Leick Jensen was 19 and wasn't even sure that she wanted to get into movies. Today she couldn't imagine not being in the circus of filmmaking, a life she loves.

Leick Jensen recently wrapped up her work on Bille August's *Marie Krøyer*, which she and Karin Trolle produced for SF Film Production. It's hardly her first time working with a legendary Danish director. She cut her teeth on Nils Malmros' *Barbara* (1997) and later joined the Nimbus film company together with Morten Kaufmann, now her partner in Toolbox Film.

This was right at the time that the Dogme wave was swelling and washing over the world. It almost knocked Leick Jensen off her feet, too.

FOUR FEATURES IN ONE YEAR

"One year, we did four features back to back," Leick Jensen says. "It was hard work. I was still in my early twenties and hadn't even had time to finish my college preps. So I decided to take some time off from the industry and try to figure out what I wanted to do. I had this idea that I wanted to study political science or maybe go into journalism."

Nine months later, having sailed around the world, she knew that movies were what really floated her boat. Soon, she became production manager on Thomas Vinterberg's *It's All about Love*.

"That film was my baptism by fire. We were juggling a huge budget and international stars, all the while travelling to six different countries," Leick Jensen says. "Plus, there was a lot of follow-up work on the film, wrapping up contracts and the final financing together with the film's producer Birgitte Hald. That was my film school. It really dawned on me then that I not only have organisational skills but also a good head for numbers."

It has been full steam ahead for Leick Jensen ever since. She was the line producer on Lars von Trier's *Manderlay*. Together with Vibeke Windeløv and Meta Louise Foldager, she produced von Trier's comedy *The Boss of It All*. She worked on Louise Friedberg's drama *The Experiment* and, more recently, Ole Christian Madsen's comedy *Superclásico*, which was short-listed for an Academy Award earlier in the year.

"I enjoy working across genres and seeing a film through in close collaboration with the director. As a producer, I consider it my duty and my responsibility to make sure there is constant sparring and development around each individual film in all its processes. It's not just a question of financing but also of taking responsibility for the processes."

AN OBLIGATION TO BE CURIOUS



Producer Signé Leick Jensen **Photo:** Joachim Ladefoged

Working as a producer lets her live out her desire to explore the world, she says.

"You have an obligation to be curious. To get out there and meet people and be curious about them and their stories."

With that in mind, Leick Jensen has hooked up with EAVE (European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs), an organisation that provides project development, networking and training for producers from all over the world.

"It's amazing for me to get the tools and international skills they provide." She's hoping to reap similar rewards from serving as the Danish Producer on the Move in Cannes.

SCANDINAVIAN PRIVILEGE

"It's terrific and also important to look over the hedge once in a while and get fresh inspiration from outside," Leick Jensen says. "Moreover, this has confirmed to me how privileged we are in Scandinavia, because we have public funding systems that provide screenplay and development support. You don't get that anywhere else in the world, practically. We have to keep optimising our system, of course, but it's really good to get a chance to meet people who know how to produce films on a shoestring."

There are other reasons why Danish cinema is sitting pretty, she says. "Danish cinema is a good brand. Names like Lars von Trier and Zentropa have done a good job for Danish cinema, which clearly benefits us all."

Even with the effects of the recession still reverberating around the world, Leick Jensen and her business partner Morten Kaufmann had no qualms about opening their own company, Toolbox Film, about one year ago.

SIGNÉ LEICK JENSEN

Born 1975. Filmography includes a string of highly profiled titles including Ole Christian Madsen's Oscar short-listed *Superclásico* (2011) and Louise Friedberg's *The Experiment* (2010) as well as Lars von Trier's *The Boss of It All* (2006) and *Manderlay* (line producer, 2005). Worked in various functions on these titles: the three Dogme films *The Celebration* (Thomas Vinterberg, 1998), *Mifune* (Søren Kragh-Jacobsen, 1999) and *Kira's Reason – A Love Story* (Ole Christian Madsen, 2001), and on Thomas Vinterberg's English-language drama *It's All about Love* (2003). Producer on Bille August's new film *Marie Krøyer* for SF Film Production (see page 14). Owns Toolbox Film with producer Morten Kaufmann.

"It's a risky time to start up a company, of course," she says. "It's challenging but fun, too. Being a small company with low overhead gives us a degree of freedom. Even with the recession, there are so many exciting things going on right now, like new forms of distribution, that require us to think production and marketing into our processes in a whole new way – and, frankly, I think that's a lot of fun. A company that's so new has no 'usual' way of doing things.

"Our vision is to develop and produce films for theatrical and TV release. At the moment, we have a comedy, a political thriller, a tragicomic chamber drama and two children's films in development. We believe our strength lies in our professional curiosity," Leick Jensen says.

Meanwhile, she is maintaining her ethos of appreciating the individual director. "They're the ones putting their name on the line and you've got to respect that. It takes a lot of guts to make a film" ■

Read interview with Bille August on previous pages. For more information on Marie Krøyer, see reverse section.



Marco Macaco. Framegrab



Director Jan Rahbek Photo: Andreas Severin

I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER GET TIRED OF MONKEYS IN MOVIES

NEW ANIMATION. It's been almost four years since Jan Rahbek won the Nordisk Film & TV Fund's Nordic Talent Pitch. Now he has transformed his winning idea into the animated action-comedy *Marco Macaco*. Though a few things have changed along the way, the basic elements remain the same: monkeys, a kitschy exotica universe and a giant robot. **FILM** spoke with the director about his first feature and his thing for monkeys.

BY NYNNE ØSTERGAARD

It's no coincidence that Jan Rahbek's first feature *Marco Macaco* has a monkey in the lead. Or that monkeys were also a big part of his student films at the National Film School of Denmark, including *The Mambo Grill* and *Space Monkeys*. Rahbek is bananas for monkeys!

"Monkeys are the coolest animals. There's a long tradition of monkeys in film. Just look at King Kong. They are such great characters," Rahbek says.

But what is it exactly that monkeys can do?

"The cool thing about monkeys is they are like these little caricatures of people. We see ourselves in them, and I think that's why they are used so often in films," Rahbek says, adding, "I don't think I'll ever get tired of monkeys in movies!"

But monkeys aren't Rahbek's only inspiration. He was also consumed with creating a universe inspired by exotica music like Martin Denny and Les Baxter, '60s kitsch and B-movies with giant robots. The outcome is Rahbek's first feature, the musical action-comedy *Marco Macaco*.

"I hope that the film captures some of the warmth and charm that we associate with cartoons from our childhood – that it's a bit old school but also has something very modern about it," Rahbek says.



Marco Macaco. Framegrab

LETTING THE ANIMATION TELL THE STORY

Marco Macaco introduces us to Marco the monkey who works as a beach officer on a tropical island. When his childhood sweetheart Lulu returns to the island, he immediately tries to woo her back. But soon a mysterious entrepreneur, Carlo, arrives and builds a gigantic monkey-shaped casino right on Marco's beach. What's worse, Lulu is falling for the charming casino magnate. Green-eyed with jealousy, Marco starts an undercover investigation of Carlo's strange casino and soon discovers that things aren't what they seem to be.

Despite a relatively low budget, all the animation was done in Denmark, which seems to be more the exception than the rule these days. The director put a premium on solid storytelling animation. As a case in point, all the backgrounds were "hand painted" in Photoshop rather than rendered in 3D.

"I think computer-animated films tend to look a little clinical. 'Hand-painting' the backgrounds is a way to make it more personal. It was more work, of course, but I'm happy about that decision because it was really important to the whole expression of the film," Rahbek says.

JAN RAHBEK

Born 1980. Graduated in animation directing from the National Film School of Denmark, 2008. Rahbek's graduation film *The Space Monkeys* took home the 2008 award for Best Nordic-Baltic Student Film and the 2008 Odense Talent Award. *Marco Macaco* is Jan Rahbek's feature film debut.

NICE NINJA

Animation studio founded by Thomas Borch Nielsen and the team behind the award-winning 2008 animation feature *Sunshine Barry & The Disco Worms* which has enjoyed a wide international release. *Marco Macaco* is Nice Ninja's first feature. nineninja.com

"I hope that the film captures some of the warmth and charm that we associate with cartoons from our childhood – that it's a bit old school but also has something very modern about it."

IT'S ALL IN THE TIMING

Like a lot of other animated films today, *Marco Macaco* appeals to both younger and older kids. But Rahbek and his co-creators wanted to find a new way of talking to older kids.

"We wanted to reach an older audience without having to resort to lewdness and laddishness. So we worked with things like the timing instead. After all, the fun is in the timing – in the voices, but even more so in the animation and editing," Rahbek says.

Nearly four years in the making, *Marco Macaco* is now ready to conquer the market at Cannes. For his part, Rahbek looks forward to giving people a good experience.

"At the end of the day, I just want to people to be entertained. I just want to give people a fun, fast-paced thrill ride that's worth the price of admission," the director says ■

For more information on Marco Macaco, see reverse section.

GRANNY COMBATS KILLER SLUGS



Director Morten Helgeland



Slug Invasion. Framegrabs

CINÉFONDATION. Morten Helgeland and eight of his fellow students at the Animation Workshop in Viborg, Denmark, have made a hilarious animated short about “killer slugs” pitched in battle with an elderly lady. The director got the inspiration for *Slug Invasion* right in his grandmother’s own backyard. The film has been selected for Cinéfondation.

BY NYNNE ØSTERGAARD

“Rise and shine, maggots!” goes the call to arms for an army of slugs. The battleground: an old lady’s garden. Their mission: to take a tasty flower that will keep them satisfied for months. But as in any war movie, danger lurks behind enemy lines. Only in this case the enemy is an old lady armed with pruning shears and a bucket.

This will give you a taste of *Slug Invasion*, a six-minute animated film by students at the Animation Workshop in Viborg. The story is based more or less on actual events, director Morten Helgeland says.

“Every summer my grandmother is in her garden, fighting slugs with pruning shears and a bucket of salt. I just thought it was so funny to see her standing there day after day, year after year, and I thought it would be fun to do a film showing the slugs’ side of the story,” Helgeland says.

Slug Invasion has everything a classic war movie should. The manic commanding officer ready to give his life for his country and his mission. The scared newbie who eventually grows into a real soldier and the kind-hearted, fatherly soldier who

helps him along. Add zingers like “Did someone just die without my permission?” and it’s not hard to see how Helgeland and the rest of his team gleefully raided movies like *Saving Private Ryan*, *Apocalypse Now* and *Band of Brothers* for inspiration.

FROM NORWAY TO DENMARK

Helgeland, a Norwegian, applied to the Animation Workshop in Viborg when he didn’t get into the animation school in Norway. He started out taking one of the shorter courses.

“It opened my eyes to what a great environment it is. Just to be around and get to talk with so many other creative people, both animators and computer-graphic artists. Plus, you get to experience so many noted instructors from around the world,” Helgeland says.

Helgeland soon applied and was admitted to Viborg’s bachelor programme in character animation. Most of the Animation Workshop’s classes are in English, which is a huge advantage, Helgeland says, now that he has graduated and it’s time to go out and conquer the world.

“It definitely opens some doors when you have already worked with people from all over the world, in school. It opens opportunities for collaborating not just with Danish but also with international companies,” Helgeland says.

For now, Helgeland is staying in Denmark. He is currently working as an animator on the fifth version of the popular computer game *Hitman* for IO Interactive.

This is the first time that the Animation Workshop in Viborg has had a film selected for Cannes ■

MORTEN HELGELAND

Born 1987, Norway. A graduate in character animation from The Animation Workshop in Viborg, 2012. *Slug Invasion*, selected for Cinéfondation in Cannes, is a collaboration with eight other animation students from Viborg. Helgeland is currently working as an animator on the next installment in the *Hitman* series at the renowned Danish video game company IO Interactive.

For more information on *Slug Invasion*, see reverse section.

ANIMATION TRAINING IN DENMARK

THE ANIMATION WORKSHOP IN VIBORG

Bachelor degrees in Character Animation and Computer Graphics Art. Both are three-and-a-half-year programmes and all instruction is in English.

In addition, the Animation Workshop offers a number of shorter courses in 3D-animation, 3D-art and more. www.animwork.dk

THE NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL OF DENMARK, COPENHAGEN

The Animation Programme – a four-and-a-half-year programme in animation directing for films, TV series, computer games, music videos, etc. www.filmiskolen.dk

NEW CROSS-MEDIA PROGRAMME

The National Film School of Denmark has set up a pilot project offering a semester of training in animation and computer games. Targeting post-graduate students from all of Europe with applicable professional specialties, the so-called Eucroma programme (European Cross Media Academy) is a counterpart to the add-on programme Dadiu (The National Academy of Digital Interactive Entertainment), with the addition that Eucroma also includes animation. The first class started in January of this year. The next round of applications will be opening this fall.

Read more at www.eucroma.dk
Dadiu: www.dadiu.dk

THE TRUTH HURTS

INTERVIEW. Is it okay to portray love as a young girl who doesn't talk and loves sex? This was one of the questions director Katrine Wiedemann and writer Kim Fupz Aakeson grappled with as they worked on *A Caretaker's Tale*, the offbeat, darkly funny story of a world-weary, misanthropic superintendent whose life is transformed when he meets a very young and very lusty woman.

BY CHRISTIAN MONGGAARD

"It's a love story, boy meets girl," the screenwriter Kim Fupz Aakeson says wryly about his new film, *A Caretaker's Tale*.

"What makes us go beyond ourselves and do what we otherwise wouldn't do? Only love can do that. *A Caretaker's Tale* is the story of a real bastard who is healed when he meets love. Love has to take a

form that makes him open up – we're talking about a Trojan horse here! And that just happens to be a girl who knows how to shut up and likes to have sex."

"It's a provocative premise, of course, that she has no voice and is so young," Katrine Wiedemann says. *A Caretaker's Tale* is her second feature as a director.

"She is a different kind of saving angel. The provocation was a challenge in terms of how to unfurl the story."

HIS SOFT UNDERBELLY

A Caretaker's Tale centres on Per (Lars Mikkelsen), a hateful superintendent in a bleak housing project who is rapidly sliding into middle age. His wife just left him, he drinks too much, his back and neck hurt and he basically doesn't care much for life or the world around him. Then one day he discovers a very young, naked woman (Julie Zangenberg) in one of the flats he oversees. She can't talk or

walk, but she will have sex with Per. And so his transformation begins.

His ailments miraculously disappear as he falls for the girl and her spontaneous, light and lusty nature, and he becomes a happier, more positive person. But things soon go wrong for the odd couple. Per starts lending the girl out to his friends and he is soon overrun by people in the neighbourhood who want their ills cured, too.

The story is poignant, wildly different and not without a healthy dose of offbeat, pitch-black humour.

"The premise of the story is that this girl comes into his life and slowly breaks down his armour, which puts him in touch with his soft underbelly and also makes him vulnerable," Fupz Aakeson says.

"Now people can get to him. Love is this powerful thing that also makes you vulnerable, defenceless. You surrender to love. Keeping your guard up, you no doubt avoid a lot of rejection. But then again, you're missing out on so much."



A Caretaker's Tale Photo: Per Arnesen

A MYSTERIOUS CREATURE

But, portraying love as an unspeaking young girl who loves sex, is that even okay? The director and the writer grappled with this question as they worked on the story and the film.

"We debated whether she should develop into a whole person," Wiedemann says. "Whether she was this kind of weird Kasper Hauser-like natural phenomenon that becomes a person. But it felt right to keep her as a creature that only reflects Per, which was also Fupz's basic idea. The growth is his alone, not hers. It took some time to figure out how to hold on to the provocative premise and not betray the mystery of it. The basic mystery could never really be completely unravelled. That's the film's greatest strength and it's what I fell for in the screenplay. It asks questions that I can hardly put into words, but I can feel that it touches on a truth."

Fupz Aakeson says he simply got the idea one day and decided to explore it in a screenplay without knowing where it would take him. Sometimes it's obvious what you are dealing with as a writer. Then there are the times when you have to accept that it's not immediately clear to you what's going on.

THE QUALITY OF CHAOS

Heart in throat, Wiedemann started shooting *A Caretaker's Tale* without knowing how the film would end.

"We had to see what would happen to the material during the shooting to get a sense of what was the right thing to do," she says. "It's nicer to know how the story ends when you start shooting, of course. But we could feel that the ending was in the material and we found one that felt right. It

was quite a challenge for Lars Mikkelsen. He took it in stride, but it was a big professional challenge to always have to shoot two different outcomes to a scene. Maybe the film would end with him letting her go, maybe it would end with them staying together - we didn't know. So his eyes get this weird shifty look at times that's really interesting."

Demanding processes are often the most rewarding as well, Wiedemann says. She feels privileged to work with material that has such complexity and mystery.

"I could see the quality of being in that chaos," she says. "There was a feeling of respect and confidence about the project the whole way through, including on the shoot. Everyone could feel that the story had something new and challenging. It never drained us. It gave us energy." Fupz Aakeson was more involved in the process of *A Caretaker's Tale* than he is when he simply hands a finished script to a director. He would often write at night during the shoot. It's a way of working he had been wanting to try, and he found it to be fun but also strenuous.

"You want to have everything covered, of course, when you're making a film - there's so much money involved. But you also lose some playfulness and energy when everything comes wrapped and ready for the first day of shooting," he says. "Where Katrine is coming from, which is theatre, they'll try stuff out on stage and go, 'That doesn't work, now what do we do?' It's super useful to get to see something take shape in the process. We tried doing that here. Let me put it this way: I wouldn't recommend it as a method, but it can do something."

LEAST FEMINIST DIRECTOR IN SCANDINAVIA

A Caretaker's Tale is an unusual and surprising film that's bound to raise an eyebrow or two. And you have to ask, Could a man have made it or would that have been wrong?

"That would definitely have led to some obvious comments about the director being a creep that you don't get when the director is a woman," Wiedemann and Fupz Aakeson agree.

Wiedemann says it was important for her not to compromise her screenwriter's original idea and avoid moralising about the story's premise.

"I really tried to follow the radical idea Fupz gave me, which is: no moralising about this being a horny young girl. I'm no doubt the least feminist director in Scandinavia. But I think it's great. I have no problem with the men liking this girl," the director laughs.

"That's just the way it is. The truth hurts. It was important not to moralise about the material in any way," Wiedemann says ■

For more information on A Caretaker's Tale, see reverse section.

"The film asks questions that I can hardly put into words, but I can feel that it touches on a truth."

Katrine Wiedemann, director



Writer Kim Fupz Aakeson **Photo:** Joachim Ladefoged



Director Katrine Wiedemann **Photo:** Joachim Ladefoged

"A Caretaker's Tale is the story of a real bastard who is healed when he meets love."

Kim Fupz Aakeson, writer

KIM FUPZ AAKESON

Born 1958. One of the most important Danish screenwriters of the past decade. Made his breakthrough with Susanne Bier's 1999 smash hit *The One and Only* and is renowned for his work with strong director profiles such as Annette K. Olesen, (*Minor Mishaps, In Your Hands, Little Soldier*), Pernille Fischer Christensen (*A Soap, A Family*), Swedish Åke Sandgren (*To Love Someone*) and Norwegian Hans Petter Moland (*A Somewhat Gentle Man*). His latest international achievements include *Perfect Sense* by David Mackenzie and *Mercy* by Matthias Glasner.

KATRINE WIEDEMANN

Born 1969. Stage director Katrine Wiedemann has been a decisive figure in Danish theatre since her debut in 1992. Already at twenty-five, she had put some eight productions behind her and she is today one of the leading stage directors in Scandinavia. Wiedemann entered the film scene with her feature film *The Lady of Hamre* (2000). *A Caretaker's Tale*, set for national release in October, is Wiedemann's second feature film.

ZENTROPA

See page 8.

IF I TOLD YOU I SAW A

PROFILE. It has only been five years since Tobias Lindholm graduated as a screenwriter, but he has already established himself as one of the most respected storytellers in Danish cinema. His credits include the international TV series hit *Borgen* and two Thomas Vinterberg films, *Submarino* and Cannes competitor *The Hunt*. Lindholm is a big fan of *Pretty Woman*, but when he directs his own films, like the upcoming *A Hijacking*, he likes to trim all the fat and let the logic of reality rule, as he tells Per Juul Carlsen.

BY PER JUUL CARLSEN

Fat. Or low fat. That's the question. A big topic for storytellers discussing their technique and a major theme of *A Hijacking*, the new film by Danish writer-director Tobias Lindholm.

Even though the two main protagonists of *A Hijacking* find themselves in the biggest crisis of their lives, their emotions are never spelled out or magnified or crammed down the audience's throat. There are no wild crying jags. No glasses or dinnerware smashed in crazed tantrums. No long talks over a liquor cabinet being emptied. No dramatic metaphors for the emotional world wars raging in the characters.

Naturally, you can discuss what's extraneous and what's important in a story. It's a favourite subject of screenwriters. As a rule of thumb, those who aim for broad, popular appeal rarely talk about "trimming the fat," while those who try to create serious Art can go on for days about all the patently extraneous fat they have eliminated in cold blood.

Tobias Lindholm, 34, is not the serious artist-type who claims to have reinvented cinematic language. Not even close. With his gum-chewing boyishness and longish, combed-back hair, he looks more like a business student who is ready to fish the shades out of his shirt pocket and hit the beach on the first day of summer. No grand artistic flourishes here, just a humble wish to get to the core of storytelling.

TOBIAS LINDHOLM

Born 1977. Screenwriter graduate from the National Film School of Denmark, 2007. Has written several episodes for the TV series *The Summers* (2008) and the international TV series hit *Borgen* (2010-13). Co-writer, together with director Thomas Vinterberg, on Vinterberg's *Submarino* (2010) which was selected for Berlinale competition and winner of the Nordic Council Film Prize, and *The Hunt* (national release 2013), selected for Cannes competition. *R* is a writer-director collaboration between Lindholm and Michael Noer and marks their debut as feature film directors, winning them the Danish Critics' Bodil Award for best film in 2011 where Lindholm also received a special commendation for his writing on *R* and *Submarino*. *A Hijacking* is Lindholm's second feature film.



Screenwriter and director Tobias Lindholm Photo: Søren Solkær Starbird

COW ...

He professes his love for *Pretty Woman*, which he would never know how to write himself. And he takes pride in having co-written the Danish hit series *Borgen*.

BORGEN – A FISH TANK

Lindholm has co-written 20 episodes of BAFTA-nominated *Borgen* which deals with the political game for power in today's Denmark and the personal costs and consequences of the game for those involved, on and off the political stage.

"The fact that our 'little' TV series about a subject as local as Danish parliamentary democracy has found an audience around the world is surely proof that we have succeeded in writing a good story," Lindholm says with satisfaction.

On the difference between writing for TV and films, he says:

"TV series and films are two widely different ways of telling stories. A film, to simplify it a bit, is a character's journey from one point to another. A movement. From unhappy to happy. From lonely to in love. From alive to dead. In a TV series, conversely, the characters are caught in an arena. In a kind of fish tank where, episode after episode, we try to look in on them from new angles and tell what we see. Over and over. New developments. Setbacks. Conflicts. And we have the liberty of leaving questions much more open for the audience. Because you can always answer them in the next episode. Or the next."

OWES VINTERBERG ONE

Lindholm's characteristically humble attitude also applies to his collaboration with Thomas Vinterberg. They have written two films together, *Submarino* (2010) and *The Hunt* (2012). Through the lens of a reporter who loves simple answers, it looks like Lindholm has revitalised Vinterberg. With Lindholm as a sparring partner, *Submarino* was invited to compete in Berlin in 2010 and won the Nordic Council Film Prize with a mention of the film's strong screenplay. Now Vinterberg is back to vie for a Palme d'Or in Cannes with *The Hunt*. But if you ask Lindholm, it's he who owes Vinterberg one.

"It's more reasonable to say that Thomas sparked my little career, which wasn't even born yet when I met him. He was brave enough to ask me if I wanted to write *Submarino* with him – before I was even out of film school. More than anything, I think, I got the courage from Thomas to carry out my own ideas, decisively and brutally."

The fact that Vinterberg mentioned Lindholm in the first line of his jubilant press release after *The Hunt* was selected to compete in Cannes, the respect would seem to be mutual. Still, Lindholm says, they are two very different storytellers.

"Thomas can get away with things that I could never get away with. He makes up situations that I would kill off right away at the screenplay level. He's



A Hijacking Photo: Magnus Nordenhof Jønck

much better at breathing life into everything. So, often my job is to tidy things up a bit and hand back something that's maybe a little dry. Then Thomas fills it up – and I strip away again."

REALITY RULES

Stripping away narrative fat is key, both in Lindholm's 2010 directorial debut *R* and in his upcoming film *A Hijacking*. Making *R*, he and his co-director Michael Noer discussed the tenet of "reality rules" – following the logic of real life instead of the logic of dramaturgy. This became the premise of a claustrophobic film about a young man who ends up in prison – we are never told for what crime – and is immediately tangled up in the power struggles behind the walls. The whole film was shot in an actual prison with a cast mostly of real guards and ex-convicts.

A Hijacking was made according to a similar premise. The film was shot in the Indian Ocean on a ship that was hijacked once in real life, with a cast including a real-life hijack handling expert from an international shipping company as himself. The outcome is a film that feels less like a made-up story and more like someone just happened to be filming actual events as they were taking place.

"I'm really glad you say that," Lindholm says. "I'm really, really glad to hear that. That's also why the film is just called *A Hijacking* and not something like 'Somali Pirates.'"

The film tracks two men: a cook, who is headed home to his wife and child when the cargo ship MV

"If I tell you I saw a cow, you'll immediately envision a cow you once saw. But if I start telling you in detail about my cow, you'll become too focused on whether you're understanding my cow correctly."

"Thomas sparked my little career, which wasn't even born yet when I met him. He was brave enough to ask me if I wanted to write Submarino with him – before I was even out of film school."

Rozen is hijacked off the coast of Somalia, and the president of the shipping company, who insists on personally negotiating with the pirates. Over the months that go by as the company and the pirates try to wear each other down, while seven seamen are held hostage, the two men change. How and how much they change is up to the audience to decide. That's a key point for Lindholm as a storyteller.

"American and European films have a tendency to over-explain the characters, to the point where I stop caring about them. If I tell you I saw a cow, you'll immediately envision a cow you once saw. But if I start telling you in detail about my cow, you'll become too focused on whether you're understanding my cow correctly, instead of sticking with the cow you know. That's how I look at the characters we are building up here. I find it exciting to see how little we can tell and still provide a complete picture. How much do we really need to know about each other to understand each other?"

The more unusual of *A Hijacking's* two "cows" is the shipping company president, whose self-image is challenged when he decides to negotiate with the pirates himself. His hard-ass facade cracks, but without the usual dramaturgical tricks. There are no explanatory flashbacks to his childhood, no indications of a domineering father, not a hint of the proverbial lack of morals that tycoons in movies tend to come with. Lindholm is in no hurry to explain his "cow" and the audience can fill in the gaps any way we see fit.

"I wanted to get away from the standard TV-drama style, where you have to look in on a marriage or relate to the kids or something that

will reflect what the character feels. Obviously, the emotions should be clear when we are making a TV series like *Borgen*, which has to have very broad appeal on Sunday night when viewers have so many different options to zap between. But I don't want to take cheap shots by showing obvious emotions. People in films shouldn't cry – the audience should."

If the title of Lindholm's film makes you think of the kind of film from the '80s and '90s that had Steven Seagal or Jean Claude van Damme sneaking around on a hijacked ship, beating up 20-30 pirates, think again. A lot of automatic weapons are waved around, sure, but it's the emotional action that propels the film, like the psychological change effected in the cook when a pirate sticks the barrel of a gun in his mouth.

"It's important for me to make the hijacking as close to real life as possible. There are a lot of myths and preconceptions about Somali pirates. There's the myth that they are like Robin Hood, poor fishermen whose fish were all caught by big European trawlers. There's the myth that shipping companies are a bunch of greedy bastards who don't care about their seamen. There's the myth that seaman actually have it pretty good when they are held hostage, and the myth that they are forced to eat their own faeces. It was interesting to strip away all those rumours and preconceptions."

'I CAN'T FATHOM THE WHOLE WORLD'

Here, Lindholm differs from such popular directors as Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu (*Babel* and *Biutiful*) and Susanne Bier (*Brothers* and *In a Better World*), who would probably have seized the opportunity to make a film weighty enough to carry the world on its shoulders.

"I can't fathom the whole world and I can't represent the true state of the world, because I don't think such a thing exists. But real people exist, and if I have made a film that remotely feels like it depicts real people in a real situation, then I have come a long way.

"The reality is that the pirates are no longer impoverished fishermen. Russian mob money is sponsoring a hijacking system. The pirates are buccaneers, just like in the Old West. There's lots of booze and prostitution in the former fishing towns. When a young man has tried his luck and hit the jackpot, he can pay young boys 10 dollars a pop to go out and hijack ships for him. I don't think any Somalis think this is a good idea, but huge refrigerators are sailing around out there and I can understand why hungry kids would want to go get them.

And why is no one in the international community doing anything? It's an insanely complex issue" ■

For more information on *A Hijacking*, see reverse section.

NORDISK FILM

Founded 1906, making it one of the world's oldest production companies. The catalogue from 2000 onwards embraces veteran directors such as Nils Malmros, Kasper Rostrup and Morten Arnfred, alongside a younger generation of filmmakers like Paprika Steen, Christina Rosendahl, Christoffer Boe and Jacob Thuesen. Michael Noer and Tobias Lindholm's feature debut *R* won the Danish Critics' Bodil Award for best film and top awards in Göteborg and Mumbai. *Out of Bounds* by Frederikke Aspöck was selected as a Special Screening in Cannes 2011. New release is Lindholm's feature *A Hijacking*. nordiskfilm.com

THE DARK SIDE OF MISTER NICE GUY



Pilou Asbæk and Sidse Babett Knudsen in *Borgen*
Photo: Mike Kollöffel, DR

ACTOR PROFILE. Actor and rising star Pilou Asbæk is not afraid to challenge himself – or his inner teddy bear.

There's something immediately likeable about Pilou Asbæk. You believe he is a nice guy. Even when he plays the epitome of political cynicism and lack of a moral compass, a spin doctor, in the TV series *Borgen*, you suspect he is a good person at heart.

Asbæk, who was Denmark's Shooting Star at the Berlinale 2011, had that effect already in his

first screen role as an infinitely good-natured guy who falls in love with a Jehovah's Witness girl in Niels Arden Oplev's *Worlds Apart* (2008). He proved it again in Pernille Fischer Christensen's *A Family* (2010). Ever since his debut, Asbæk, who is from a well-known family of gallery owners in Copenhagen, has cemented his name at the top of Danish film and television. The only time he played an out-and-out bastard was in the 2011 teen film *Bora Bora*, and the role had little room for Asbæk's natural, contagious presence.

Even as he keeps channelling his inner teddy bear, the 30-year-old actor clearly wants to challenge and explore his range. In Denmark, Asbæk's big breakthrough came with his role as spin doctor Kasper Juul in *Borgen*, but it's his film collaboration with another bright star, writer-director Tobias Lindholm who has also scripted several episodes of *Borgen*, that has posed the most serious challenge to his inner teddy bear. First Asbæk played Rune, a young convict who is thrashed in the prison pecking order in Lindholm's *R* (2010, co-directed with Michael Noer). Now, in the upcoming *A Hijacking*, he is a genial cook who comes close to cracking when his ship is hijacked by pirates. In Lindholm's films, the actor pushes his nice-guy-in-a-super-tight-spot quality to the max.

Johan Philip Pilou Asbæk, as is his full name, also stars in Christoffer Boe's upcoming feature *Spies & Glistrup* (Danish title) as the eccentric Danish holiday king and womanizer Simon Spies. By Per Juul Carlsen

THE COOT AND THE KID

ACTOR PROFILE. Best known as a hard-ass detective inspector in *The Killing* and a cynical editor-in-chief in *Borgen*, character actor Søren Malling is headed into uncharted waters playing a leading role as a shipping magnate in *A Hijacking*.

Two people inhabit Søren Malling's face. One is a world-weary old man just waiting for his pacemaker to be unplugged. The other is a small, pokerfaced boy waiting for someone to sit on his whoopee cushion. The seamless coming-together of these two extremes is one of the 47-year-old actor's greatest qualities. You never know what to expect from the characters he plays.

Malling's one-of-a-kind old man-slash-young boy face has room for it all, from an animal abuser in the children's film *Storm* to a simpleton in *Pure Hearts*, a lawyer in *Accused* and a driving instructor in the comedy *Polle Fiction*. The only thing he never played was an action hero or a heartthrob. They just aren't his bag. So Malling hasn't starred in a lot of films. Not yet. Søren Dyrberg Malling's resumé mainly consists of pithy supporting roles in all kinds of films, but it was his big roles in two hit TV series that made him a familiar face nationwide – the hard-ass Detective Inspector Jan Meyer in *The Killing* and the cynical editor-in-chief Torben Friis in *Borgen*.



Søren Malling in *Borgen* Photo: Mike Kollöffel, DR

In Tobias Lindholm's new film *A Hijacking* he's playing an ice-cold shipping magnate who is changed when he has to negotiate with pirates. Here Lindholm reveals a rare side of Malling. Now he's not just a colourful bit player who enters stage left and adds some splash to a scene. He is a lead character carrying a serious drama. It looks a lot like a new chapter for the cranky old coot with the whoopee cushion. By Per Juul Carlsen



FROM THE KINGDOM TO THE KILLING

Sofie Gråbøl as Sarah Lund in *The Killing* Photo: Tine Harden

Who killed Nanna Birk Larsen? Sarah Lund was the woman for the job, leading the investigation in the series that left Danish streets deserted over 20 Sundays and convinced the British that it's cool to be Danish. Lund was back in season two to solve a series of murders of war veterans. Season three, airing this fall, revolves around the financial crisis and the apparently random killing of a sailor. *The Killing I* won a BAFTA in 2011 and season two is nominated this year, as is *Borgen*. Concept director is Kristoffer Nyholm.

BACKGROUND. TV series like *The Killing* and *Borgen* leave Danish streets deserted, they are regularly nominated for Emmys and they have convinced the British that it's cool to be Danish. A radical change of course in the drama department at the national broadcaster DR, including cross-pollination with the movies, laid the foundation for the current golden age of Danish TV drama.

BY FREJA DAM

It was an experiment in itself when the Danish film director Rumle Hammerich became head of drama at DR, the Danish Broadcasting Corporation, in 1994: tapping a film director to head TV production.

Something had to be done. Danish TV drama was stuck in a rut of stilted, high-culture teleplays. Hammerich's answer to the stagnation was "Operation Morning Breeze" – a plan to modernise Danish TV drama. Taking inspiration from the US, TV drama would now be taken seriously precisely as TV drama, not filmed theatre.

But, is it even possible to structure your way to national artistic and popular success in the area of TV drama?

It sure looks like it. Titles like *The Kingdom*, *Taxi*, *Unit One*, *The Eagle*, *Better Times*, *The Killing* and *Borgen* have left Danish streets deserted on Sunday

nights at 8. The current record was set by the tenth episode of *Better Times* (Danish title *Krøniken*). It was viewed by 2.7 million people, almost half of the population.

Meanwhile, these series have also put Denmark on the world map. Since 2002, DR's productions have won several Emmy Awards and two Prix Italia for best drama series. *Borgen* has been sold to five continents and *The Killing* won a BAFTA, ahead of *Mad Men*, in the UK, where even Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, has been spotted wearing a knitted Sarah Lund sweater.

DOUBLE STORIES

The main element in Hammerich's original plan – which was later developed by Ingolf Gabold, until recently the undisputed leader of DR Drama – was combining entertaining, American-style storytelling with Scandinavian depth.

Viewers are happy to take their vitamins when they are wrapped in thrills, says Gabold who was

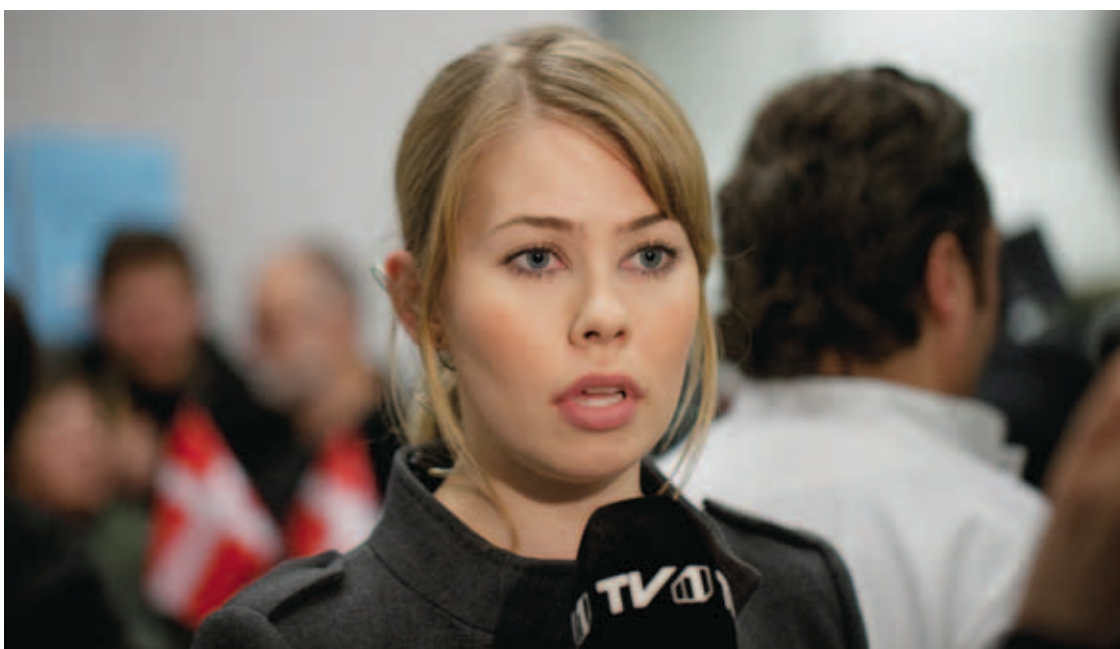
head of drama at DR from 1999 to April 2012. He dubs the concept "the double story." That is, a drama series should always have two layers. The first layer is a "good story," consisting of a well-crafted plot, characters we can identify with, a fascinating arena, good acting, etc. Then comes another story, which is socio-ethical or socio-psychological in nature.

"As a public service station, we demand 'added value,'" Gabold says. He points to *The Killing II* as his proudest achievement: a thrilling crime plot involving a series of murders and political intrigue, over which lies a societal debate about democracy, anti-terror laws and Denmark's participation in the war in Afghanistan.

"You all of a sudden realise that the overarching story isn't just about whodunit but also about a much more political question: How much of our democracy are we willing to sacrifice, by way of anti-terror legislation and surveillance, in order to preserve it?"

"You all of a sudden realise that the overarching story isn't just about whodunit but also about a much more political question: How much of our democracy are we willing to sacrifice, by way of anti-terror legislation and surveillance, in order to preserve it?"

Ingolf Gabold, DR TV

Sidse Babett Knudsen in *Borgen* Photo: Mike Kollöffel, DRBirgitte Hjort Sørensen in *Borgen* Photo: Mike Kollöffel, DR

Gabold considers this extra dimension to be the main reason for the international success of DR's drama series. "It's what sets us apart from a commercial TV station's demand for drama. Internationally, I think we're really on to something with this double storytelling. The immediate story or plot isn't enough. The overlying story, which goes across national borders, is what makes it. *Borgen*, for example, is about someone who gains political power but has to cede power at home. The story of women juggling work and family is familiar across the Western world. The fascination is in the local - the prime minister rides a bicycle, Danish is spoken - but the identification is in the global."

LACK OF MONEY LED TO DOGME 95

"Operation Morning Breeze" is named after Dr. Moesgaard's campaign to promote cooperation in the department of neurosurgery in Lars von Trier's breakthrough mini-series *The Kingdom*. No coincidence, obviously. The series was a huge, unexpected hit in 1994 and kicked off the current golden age of Danish drama series. Back then, TV

series were largely frowned upon by the Danish film industry. But Zentropa was in a tight spot financially and as they waited for the money to make *Breaking the Waves*, von Trier and producer Peter Aalbæk Jensen came up with the idea of producing a TV series with DR. Simply to get a salary. Their plan was to produce the series quickly and on the cheap.

"*The Kingdom* was a production that was just supposed to make us a little money. But as it turns out, being broke makes you creative," Aalbæk says. "Because we didn't have time to do anything else but come up with some cheap production methods, the series got a pretty fresh approach. The lights were fluorescent tubes screwed into the ceiling by the local carpenter and we used a handheld camera so we could shoot faster. By not bothering with aesthetics, *The Kingdom* is a precursor to Dogme95."

To his mind, *The Kingdom* liberated von Trier artistically, especially as a director of actors.

"Lars' first films were very storyboarded. He wasn't particularly interested in the actors. He saw them as game pieces that had to move exactly as he had planned months before. *The Kingdom* opened his eyes

*Let's Get Lost* Photo: Anders Askegaard

Sidse Babett Knudsen, who first broke through in the pre-Dogme film *Let's Get Lost* in 1997, became a household name when she starred in Susanne Bier's romantic comedy *The One and Only* in 1999. Like most women today, Prime Minister Birgitte Nyborg in *Borgen* has to juggle work and family. Starting out idealistic, with a nice husband and adorable kids, she eventually has to face the fact that power doesn't come cheap. *Borgen* has been Knudsen's big comeback. Season three airs in 2013.

"Borgen is about someone who gains political power but has to cede power at home. The story of women juggling work and family is familiar across the Western world."

Ingolf Gabold, DR TV

Borgen has produced several new stars. Birgitte Hjort Sørensen got her breakthrough playing the idealistic reporter Katrine Fønsmark. Now Hjort Sørensen is playing the title role in Bille August's *Marie Krøyer* (see page 14). *Borgen* is sold to five continents and among the major TV channels are British BBC and French-German ARTE. The series received good reviews in the UK and is nominated for a BAFTA, competing against *The Killing II*. *Borgen's* concept director is Søren Kragh-Jacobsen

to directing actors, and I'll have you know, *Breaking the Waves* was a lot better for it."

CROSSOVER

As Aalbæk sees it, *The Kingdom* was also important in raising the status of TV series in the Danish film industry, which soon afterwards started working very closely with the TV industry.

"At the time, the Danish film industry was too hoity-toity to do TV series. But when Lars von Trier could do it successfully, suddenly it was okay. I like to think that *The Kingdom* paved the way for the later successful union of the TV and film industries in Denmark."

An important element of the DR's modernisation strategy in the '90s was to produce TV drama in a cinematic style, with dynamic visuals and storytelling. DR started recruiting people from the film industry and inviting film directors, cinematographers, editors, etc., into the TV studio. Directors like Anders Refn, Ole Christian Madsen, Annette K. Olesen, Lone Scherfig, Ole Bornedal, Søren Kragh-Jacobsen, Henrik Ruben Genz, Per Fly, Katrine Windfeld and Niels Arden Oplev all

Mads Mikkelsen in *Unit One* Photo: Ulla Voigt

The nation first fell in love with Mads Mikkelsen in the Emmy awarded crime series *Unit One* (2000-03) where he plays the hard-boiled detective Allan Fischer, member of an elite mobile task force that helps local police solve hard-to-crack cases. Niels Arden Oplev is the series' concept director.

Kim Bodnia and Sofia Helin in *The Bridge* Photo: Nimbus Film

"Saturday nights are taken care of, again," a Huffington Post critic delights. *The Bridge*, a murky Scandinavian noir, recently premiered on BBC4 which had unexpected hits with *The Killing* and *Borgen*. *The Bridge* follows a maverick Swedish homicide detective (Sofia Helin) and a good-natured Dane (Kim Bodnia) teaming up after a female body is found in the middle of the Oresund Bridge, exactly on the border between Denmark and Sweden. *The Bridge* is produced by Nimbus Film in collaboration with Swedish Filmlance for DR, ZDF, NRK and Nelonen. Charlotte Sieling is concept director.

accepted the invitation and have worked in TV ever since, alongside their film careers.

"It's a pretty unique thing to have film directors and DPs working in both media with the greatest of ease," Aalbæk says. As he sees it, the two industries can considerably enrich each other. For instance, doing episodes of a TV series can give young directors valuable experience.

"Once a director has done 10 episodes of *Borgen*, I can assure you he is a lot more confident in the driver's seat when he goes out and makes a feature," Aalbæk says.

The same goes for a lot of Danish actors. Anders W. Berthelsen, Trine Dyrholm, Sofie Gråbøl, Mads Mikkelsen and Peter Gantzler, among the most notable actors in the Dogme films, all got their big breakthrough on TV. Veteran directors, too, benefit from working in TV, because they get to try out new forms and partnerships. Case in point: Lone Scherfig directed Anders W. Berthelsen and Peter Gantzler in the TV series *Taxi* and continued her collaboration with them in her Silver Bear-winning Dogme film *Italian for Beginners* ■

A SELECTION OF TV DRAMA SERIES MADE FOR NATIONAL BROADCASTER DR

The Kingdom (1994+1997), writers: Lars von Trier and Niels Vørsel, directors: Lars von Trier and Morten Arnfred

Charlot & Charlotte (1996), writer and director: Ole Bornedal. Prix Italia 1996

Taxi (1997-99), main writer: Stig Thorsboe, concept director: Anders Refn

The Spider (2000), main writer: Lars Kjeldgaard, director: Ole Christian Madsen

Unit One (2000-03), main writer: Peter Thorsboe, concept director: Niels Arden Oplev. Emmy 2002

The Serbian Dane (2001), writer: Thomas Borgstöm, director: Jacob Grønlykke. Prix Italia 2001

Nikolaj & Julie (2002-03), main writer: Søren Sveistrup, concept director: Charlotte Sachs Bostrup. Emmy 2003

Better Times (2004-07), main writer: Stig Thorsboe, concept director: Charlotte Sieling

The Eagle (2004-06), main writers: Peter Thorsboe and Mai Brostrøm, concept director: Niels Arden Oplev. Emmy 2005

Performances (2007), writers: Per Fly, Lars Kjeldgaard, Kim Leona, director: Per Fly

The Summers (2008), main writer: Karina Dam, concept director: Katrine Windfeld

The Killing (2007+2009+2012), main writer: Søren Sveistrup, concept director: Kristoffer Nyholm. BAFTA 2011. *The Killing II* BAFTA-nominated 2012

The Protectors (2008), main writer: Peter Thorsboe and Mai Brostrøm, concept director: Mikkel Serup. Emmy 2009

Borgen (2010-2013), main writer: Adam Price, concept director Søren Kragh-Jacobsen. Prix Italia 2010. BAFTA-nominated 2012

Happy Life (2011-2012), main writers: Stig Thorsboe and Hanna Lundblad, concept director: Kasper Gaardsee

The Bridge (2011), main writer: Hans Rosenfeldt, concept director: Charlotte Sieling

THE INTIMATE SPACE



You & Me Forever. Framegrab

INTERVIEW. Kaspar Munk's *You & Me Forever* takes us into the intimate corners of teen life. The director discusses his unconventional filmmaking methods that call for a strong intuition, lots of time and freedom.

BY LISELOTTE MICHELSEN

Giggles and temper tantrums, vulnerability and sass – the young actors run the full spectrum with unflinching authenticity. Shooting his second feature *You & Me Forever* without a script, Kaspar Munk put his trust in the improvisational skills of his teenage cast.

Like the director's first film *Hold Me Tight*, *You & Me Forever* revolves around a group of ordinary suburban 16-year-olds and the relationships among them. Laura and Christine have been best friends forever. One day they meet the fascinating Maria, and their friendship is put to the test. Searching for an identity, they curiously explore the boundaries between friendship and love, as Laura and Maria, in particular, plunge head first into experiments with eroticism, sex and alcohol. All the while, powerful, conflicting emotions are churning just beneath the surface – from overflowing joy in life to loneliness and abandonment.

In 2010, *Hold Me Tight* won the Danish film industry's award for best children and youth film and took home a string of international prizes. While the film was kept in an intense, measured pace and a near-stylised visual expression, the tone and storytelling style of Munk's second feature *You*

& *Me Forever* are upbeat and lively. "I wanted to make a film that's bursting with life," the director says. "*Hold Me Tight* was really tough to make, the constant close encounters touch with the dark sides of life and the mind. *Hold Me Tight* was a film about lacking joy in life, while *You & Me Forever* is fuelled by a lust for life. It's much more dynamic and energetic in all ways, in style as well as content."

PRODUCTION WITHOUT FUNDING = FREEDOM

The difference between the two films is also reflected in the production process and the director's choice of method. While *Hold Me Tight* was shot in a classically controlled process, with a script and written dialogue, *You & Me Forever* came together in a far more improvised way.

"In traditional productions like *Hold Me Tight*, I miss having the time to explore the possibilities and ideas that come up during the shoot and to pursue my creative impulses. It could be something visual or it could be about the actors or the characters' emotional states and development," Munk says.

"So I deliberately started making *You & Me Forever* without funding – not because I couldn't get any, but because I didn't want any. Part of the concept was to have ultimate freedom, so I could pursue potential ideas and experiment with methods."

The young actors were central to the process. All are unschooled, though most have acted in films before. Julie Brochorst Andersen, who plays the lead role of Laura, also starred in *Hold Me Tight*. And Frederikke Dahl Hansen, who plays Laura's in-your-face friend Maria, has experience from TV

and films – she played the lead in Heidi Maria Faisst's youth film *Rebound* from 2011. *You & Me Forever* in part grew out of Munk's wish to work with these two actresses. He wanted to continue exploring the teenage universe with a focus on the actors.

Work began with three weeks of improvisation and several scenes were shot that made it into the final film more or less intact.

"We proceeded from conflict material and basic emotional elements in the actors. For me, it was an intuitive process driven by fascination, though I was also very conscious of shaping the situations into scenes that would work dramaturgically," Munk says.

The director eventually reached the point where he realized that the project would break his back financially and artistically if he kept going the way he was. So he made a deal with the Nimbus production company. Developing the project with them, he wrote an outline and received production support from the DFI.

"I actually kept filming the whole time while this was going on, including when we were applying for funds," he says. "It was important for me to get back in the saddle quickly after my first feature. The first scenes for *You & Me Forever* we shot while all the commotion around the premiere of *Hold Me Tight* was going on, which felt good. I would much rather go right back to filming than sit around for a long time contemplating my next project."

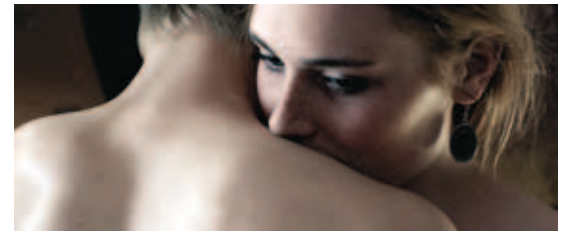
A WAY WITH TEENS

The shooting took 10 weeks in all, on and off over six months. Though Munk didn't write a script for *You & Me Forever*, he very carefully prepared his 30-page outline. No dialogue was written. The lines were created in a dialogue between the director and the actors before shooting each scene.

"This was possible because what's important in a scene rarely comes out in the lines but lies in all the unspoken things going on between the characters. Working with kids and teens as a director, I think it's important to give them a chance to speak and

"What's important in a scene lies in all the unspoken things going on between the characters. Working with kids and teens as a director, I think it's important to give them a chance to speak and use words they can identify with."

“I deliberately started making You & Me Forever without funding – not because I couldn’t get any, but because I didn’t want any. Part of the concept was to have ultimate freedom, so I could pursue potential ideas and experiment with methods.”



You & Me Forever. Framegrabs



Director Kaspar Munk **Photo:** Joachim Ladefoged

use words they can identify with and that come naturally to them.” Some of the scenes are very intimate and challenged the actors’ boundaries. So it was crucial for Munk to create a lot of confidence and a feeling of security on set. Working with a small crew helped.

In *You & Me Forever* and his other films, Munk shows an uncommon knack for working with kids and teens. The three shorts he made before his features are all about teens, as well. Are youth films his specialty?

Munk smiles. “No, I don’t see it that way. I have now, at least for a while, said what I wanted to say about teen life, and the next two projects I’m working on are about adult characters. Of course I won’t rule out that I might return to the teen universe some day. There is so much great emotional and dramatic material there that is the same for girls and boys and universally familiar, also to adults” ■

For more information on You & Me Forever, see reverse section.

KASPAR MUNK

Born 1971. A graduate of the alternative filmschool Super16, 2006. Munk’s feature film debut *Hold Me Tight* (2010) took home the Marc ‘Aurelio Award for Best Debuting Feature in Rome, the Best Feature Film Award in Tallin, and two honours at Mannheim-Heidelberg. *You & Me Forever*, set for national release this autumn, is Munk’s second feature film.

NIMBUS FILM

Founded 1993 by Birgitte Hald and Bo Ehrhardt. Celebrated for several awardwinning Dogme films, including *The Celebration* (Thomas Vinterberg, 1998), and *Mifune* (Søren Kragh-Jacobsen, 1999). Other films include Vinterberg’s English-language titles *It’s All About Love* (2003) and *Dear Wendy* (2005), Berlin double-winner *A Soap* (2006), and *Flame & Citron* (2008), one of the greatest Danish boxoffice successes in recent years. Produced *Valhalla Rising* (Nicolas Winding Refn, 2010) and *Submarino* (Thomas Vinterberg, 2010), selected for Berlin Competition. Are releasing two children and youth films in 2012: *You & Me Forever* and *The Bird Chase* (see following pages). nimbusfilm.dk



The Bird Chase Photo: Jens Juncker-Jensen

SAVE US FROM NICENESS

INTERVIEW. Looking to bury politically correct children's films, Christian Dyekjær's *The Bird Chase* proves it's possible to spin a cool film around a bevy of bird nerds chasing rare species.

BY NANNA FRANK RASMUSSEN

There are way too many nice Danish family films, Christian Dyekjær says. Now he has made *The Bird Chase*, a film for the whole family that he hopes will ring true with young audiences.

"My basic ambition was to make a less didactic family film with psychologically complex child characters," the director says. "I think we are lacking some challenging films in the genre, films that recognise that the world of children is as complex as the adult world."

"I think we are lacking some challenging films in the genre, films that recognise that the world of children is as complex as the adult world."

The Bird Chase follows Victor, a 12-year-old boy whose great passion is birdwatching. The story is set at the annual get-together of the Danish Ornithological Society, where kids compete to spot and photograph the rarest bird, an activity known as "twitching." Victor desperately wants to win. Not least to cheer up his dad who has been feeling down since Victor's mother ran off with another man, Steen, who is also a bird lover. When Victor's archrival, Daniel – who just happens to be Steen's son – brings in a picture of a golden eagle that has settled in the nearby woods, Victor's chances are looking pretty grim. As it comes down to the wire, Victor gets a little too creative trying to come up with the winning picture – he might even cheat a teeny little bit.

IS IT OKAY TO CHEAT?

Dyekjær early on ran into some etched-in-stone ideas about what you can and cannot show in a family film. Several of those who read his screenplay reacted to Victor's cheating. It's not a good moral to dish out in a film for children, they said. But Dyekjær stood his ground. Children understand why Victor does what he does, the director says.

"I grew up with *Emil of Lönneberga* and *Pippi Longstocking*, real brats, who are always up to something and steal and cheat and trick the grownups and each other. All day long. You don't see that so much anymore, which shows that family films have simply become too nice and genteel," the director says. The challenge for him was to make a film that resurrected some of the anarchy of the films from his childhood.

“One of the basic ideas of the film is that grownups are more immature. So there are several scenes where the roles have been reversed.”

“For me, childhood is a secretive and lonely time, where you try to get to know the world by experimenting. Kids are full of curiosity and a desire to understand how things work. The anarchic element of that project is evident, for instance, when you fiddle with the electrical outlet even though you aren't supposed to. Or you cheat in a contest like the one in *The Bird Chase*. Children use their unlimited imagination to explore a complex world. But what they do is rarely very well thought out or correct. You need to keep that in mind.”

KEEPING A CASTING DIRECTOR ON HAND

For Dyekjær, whose first feature, *Moving Up* (2008), was a film for adults and starring adults, working with children was a real challenge.

“I surrounded myself with top-notch adult actors, so I could concentrate on the children,” he says.

As it was essential to find a young boy for the lead role who could really act, the director allied himself of Jette Terman, a widely respected and experienced children's casting director.

“She is incredibly skilled,” Dyekjær says. “She served as an extra set of eyes on the shoot, which gave a good feeling of security on set.” The director quickly realised that there is no one way to direct children.

“The boy we cast in the lead, Oliver Methling Søndergaard, was amazing at intuitively understanding what to do. I didn't have to tell him very much. In fact, the more I directed him, the worse he performed, because then he got self-conscious and tried to second-guess me. But when he approached the role intuitively, he was completely natural and brilliant,” Dyekjær says.

“Georg Hvidtfeldt Treschow, who plays Daniel, is a different story. He had to rehearse his lines and be really sure of them to be sure in his scenes, as well. Taking the time to do a lot of rehearsing before we started shooting turned out to be really important. That way, we found out who the children were and what worked for them individually.”

DYEKJÆR AS A CHILD AND AS AN ADULT

The story of *The Bird Chase* is really Dyekjær's own story, or an interpretation of it.

“I originally wrote a little story about something that happened to me when I was 12, when I was an active twitcher and competed in similar contests. The reason I even started writing the story was I was going through a divorce, which is a well-known occasion for going over your own childhood,” he smiles.

“I know the birdwatching scene really well, because I was part of it from the time I was 11 until I was 15-16. When I had some distance from the divorce, the story ended up being this strange mix of my life as a child and my life as an adult.”

There are a few serious scenes in the film. In one, Victor has to put his father to bed when he's had too much to drink. But Dyekjær isn't worried that these scenes will be too much for his young audience.

“One of the basic ideas of the film is that grownups are more immature. So there are several scenes where the roles have been reversed. Of course, it's the father who should be putting his son to bed. I didn't try to shield the children from anything. I don't think you should. Children generally know when their parents are being embarrassing. The thing with kids is they

don't like to stand out, so of course it's really embarrassing when your parents do.”

Victor's dad clearly has a big issue with abandonment. So he builds up this illusion that it's cool to be a lone wolf, which he projects onto his son. But Victor doesn't like to be a loner. His dad's problems with the divorce are apparent in how he treats his son. At times, that gives the film a sad feeling. While *The Bird Chase* hardly adheres to a hardcore social-realist style, it does have an undercurrent of gravity.

Do we have a tendency to underestimate what's okay for kids to watch?

“I think so,” Dyekjær says. “Kids can stand to watch a lot more than we think” ■

For more information on The Bird Chase, see reverse section.

CHRISTIAN DYEKJÆR

Born 1971. Director of documentaries and commercials. A graduate of the alternative film school Super16, 1999. *Moving Up* (2008) is Dyekjær's feature film debut. His second film, *The Bird Chase*, set for national release in June, is Dyekjær's first children's film.

NIMBUS FILM

See page 29.



Director Christian Dyekjær **Photo:** Joachim Ladefoged

EVERYTHING IS IN MOTION



Free the Mind. Framegrab

NEW FILM. Meditation and yoga are shown to help war veterans and children with attention-deficit disorder in Phie Ambo's *Free the Mind*. The prizewinning director, whose new film explores the human brain, gets energy out of making films that open up questions instead of closing them.

BY CHRISTIAN MONGGAARD

"We are headed for a new Renaissance," Phie Ambo says, "a new age where everything is turned upside down. On all levels, discoveries are being made that are not what we thought they would be. A lot of fundamental questions are being asked about who we are as humans."

Such questions are grist for this inquiring documentary filmmaker's mill. Ambo's new film, *Free the Mind*, is the second in a trilogy exploring the fascinating intersection where science meets reality and scientists have to leave things open.

"It gives me energy when I realise that everything is wide open again," Ambo says, with a broad smile.

CHANGING THE BRAIN

Mechanical Love, the first film in Ambo's trilogy about humankind, asked, What is an emotion? Selected for competition at IDFA, the film explores our relationship

to robots, including lonely seniors forming emotional attachments to robotic baby seals.

The central question in *Free the Mind* is, What is a thought? Ambo tracks the world's leading neuroscientist, Richard Davidson, on his mission to improve the quality of life for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and children with learning disabilities by having them do yoga, meditation and breathing exercises. Studying Tibetan monks, Dr. Davidson has shown that meditation can literally change the brain, giving people an active hand in shaping their personality.

Free the Mind documents a week-long class for veterans and a class for kindergarteners conducted by Davidson. In most cases, it is shown, the exercises help the participants to make positive changes: the veterans learn to live with their traumatising experiences, while a small boy with ADHD conquers his fear of elevators.

FROM A PERSONAL PLACE

Free the Mind comes from a very personal place for the 38-year-old director who started managing her own anxiety by practicing meditation.

"Panic attacks are really awful," she says. "You think you're going crazy, and you totally lose grip on reality. I could tell it wasn't about bad memories from my childhood or anything that

could be talked away. It was a physical sensation that something in my brain wasn't working."

Ambo's doctor offered to put her on anti-anxiety medication, but that didn't feel right to her and instead she started looking for another way to manage her anxiety. Stumbling on the concept of meditation-based mindfulness, she decided to take an MBSR class. Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction was developed in the US by Jon Kabat-Zinn, a pioneer of mindfulness research.

"It's done in groups," Ambo says. "So there we were, 16 people with all these crazy problems – social phobias, anxiety and depression, every imaginable psychological defect we modern people pick up.

"I could feel very quickly that something was happening to me. Just getting my body to relax worked pretty well. But I could also feel that there was something happening in my brain as I meditated."

Ambo began to research meditation, breathing exercises and the relationship between the body and the mind more generally with the aim of exploring it in a film.

"Is it autosuggestion? Is it because I believe in it? Is it because I have been told it works? I had to explore what happens on a scientific level and look at *why* this has an effect and, as such, how it can be an alternative to medicine."

NO MIRACLE CURE

Ambo first met Dr. Davidson in 2009 at a mindfulness conference in Massachusetts when she was looking for a scientist for her film. It was important for her to have a scientific framework around the subject, blocking any whiff of the religious or new agey that would make it too easy for critics to dismiss and attack.

"I decided he was the one. He was just right for my film." Davidson is inquisitive and visionary, she says, "and he has the right attitude, 'Mindfulness is not a miracle cure. It might just as well be that it doesn't work, but we really know very little about it, so let's study it.'"

"Davidson has been practicing meditation himself for years, while working scientifically to try and figure out how and why meditation physically affects him and other people. He would be the first to admit

that we know very little about how the brain, the most complex organism in the world, works," Ambo says.

While *Free the Mind* presents several success stories, Ambo is not looking to close the book on meditation and its effects.

"Actually, it's only 10 years ago that the brain was believed to be static from the age of seven. Everything is in motion. Living a human life is chaotic and you have to plunge into the maelstrom, keep a cool head and hope you'll get back to the surface again. As soon as you start thinking, 'That's how it is!' you drown in your own preconceived opinions about everything."

The same goes for Ambo's work as a documentary filmmaker.

"There should always be questions in the material. That's why I go there. That's why I don't do fiction. I don't have to know how it ends," she says ■

For more information on *Free the Mind*, see reverse section.



Director Phie Ambo Photo: Minna Katz

PHIE AMBO

Born 1973. Graduated in documentary film directing at the National Film School of Denmark, 1999. Recipient of IDFA's Joris Ivens Award for *Family* (2001), co-directed with Sami Saif. Made the crisis portrait *Gambler* in 2006 of Nicolas Winding Refn. Her *Mechanical Love* (2007) was selected for the Joris Ivens Competition at IDFA. *Free the Mind*, expected release in 2012, is the second film in Ambo's human-being trilogy and chronicles the power of meditation and mindfulness.

DANISH DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION

Founded 2007 by Phie Ambo, Pernille Rose Grønkjær and Eva Mulvad, initially as a distribution platform for the directors' award-winning films *Enemies of Happiness*, *The Monastery* and *Mechanical Love*. Were later joined by producer Sigrid Dyekjær and director Mikala Krogh. Mulvad's *The Good Life*, winner of the Best Documentary Award in Karlovy Vary, and Ambo's *The Home Front* were both selected for IDFA, followed in 2011 by Andreas Koefoed and Christian Bonke's *Ballroom Dancer* and Grønkjær's *Love Addict*. Release 2012: *Free the Mind*. danishdocumentary.com

"There should always be questions in the material. That's why I go there. That's why I don't do fiction. I don't have to know how it ends."

A CLASSIC REVISITED

UPCOMING FILM. In an homage to Jørgen Leth's *A Sunday in Hell*, about the Paris-Roubaix bicycle race, an American film crew is undertaking what looks a lot like a remake of the classic Danish documentary – only this time Leth himself is the subject, while the legendary American filmmaker Albert Maysles, 85, is behind the camera.

A Sunday in Hell is probably the most kamikaze-like project in Jørgen Leth's long career. Not only is the one-day Paris-Roubaix bicycle race considered one of the toughest in all of cycling, the very idea of covering an event of such complexity – Leth had a crew of around 30 cameramen – and then turn the footage into a unified story was nothing if not daunting.

Now an American team is endeavouring to repeat Leth's feat. Not to make a new film about Paris-Roubaix but to pay homage to *A Sunday in Hell* and craft a portrait of Leth who today, at the age of 74, still makes the pilgrimage to northern France every spring as a commentator for Danish television.

Leading the American project, which has the working title *The Commentator*, is Brendt Barbur who for the last 12 years has directed the New York Bicycle Film Festival, where all of Leth's cycling films have been shown, naturally. The shoot took place over Easter in France and brought together a top-notch team of 10 camera people led by Direct Cinema legend Albert Maysles, now 85.

While Leth's film was a kamikaze project for artistic and logistic reasons, the challenge to Barbur



Director Jørgen Leth from *A Sunday in Hell* Photo: Heine Pedersen, Vibeke Winding

and his team has mainly been financial, as the film is financed by crowdfunding. When the deadline rolled over, roughly 30,000 dollars had been raised. Brendt Barbur is now preparing a pilot to be presented in connection with the New York Bicycle Film Festival in August.

By Lars Movin

JØRGEN LETH

Born 1937. Considered a leading figure in experimental documentary filmmaking. Has directed over 40 films since the 1960s, his latest being *Erotic Man* from 2010. Classics include *The Perfect Human* (1967), *Life in Denmark* (1971), and *66 Scenes from America* (1981). Developed a unique epic approach to the genre of sports documentaries including *A Sunday in Hell* (1977). For more information on *The Commentator*, see kickstarter.com.



The Expedition to the End of the World Photo: Haslund Film

THE ORIGIN, THE END ... AND THE CONTINUATION

UPCOMING FILM. In summer 2011, the polar schooner *Activ* set sail for one of the most majestic and inhospitable places on the planet. A film about the Expedition to Northeast Greenland, *The Expedition to the End of the World*, is now taking shape.

A wooden schooner loaded with scientists and artists head for Greenland, specifically the fjords of northeast Greenland. Three filmmakers and their crews sail into an untouched, nearly impassable world where sea, ice, land and life meet. The expedition is the setting for a mythological cinematic tale of

the origin and end of the world and humanity.

Aboard the ship are geologist, biologists, archaeologists and arctic scientists – along with a number of artists, including the writer Jørn Riel, the cartoonist Hervé Tanquerelle, the painter Tal R, the theologian and photographer Per Bak Jensen and the architect Bjarke Ingels.

Daniel Dencik is the film's lead director, Janus Metz (*Armadillo*) is his creative partner and the producer is Michael Haslund-Christensen. Each tracked a part of the expedition under the titles of *The Origin of the World*, *The End of the World* and *The Continuation*.

Dencik and crew number two flew to Greenland in August 2011, at a time when the ice had receded enough to allow the ship to enter the fjords. His chapter was about *The End of the World*. The expedition opened his eyes.

"We kept hitting one iceberg after another and I must admit I was a bit scared," he says. "If the hull had sprung a leak, we would be goners. The archaeologists I was tracking made finds from the Stone Age showing that people had been living there. Those people vanished and they probably saw what happened to them as the end of the world, the same way we talk about climate change today."

There's a continuation, then, after the end of the world?

"Yes, the world doesn't end. Humankind may end. Life emerges, takes maximum advantage of the circumstances, making life manifold, and humans, or whatever else is around, are forced to take a new turn – as we are seeing it now with the Arctic melting. That's how it's been for 3,800 million years. And that's how it will continue to be.

"All this talk about the climate is an effect of delusions of grandeur. We think we can destroy the Earth, but it's not like that at all. We can destroy our own possibility for inhabiting the Earth as we know it – but that's as far as it goes," Dencik says with a wry smile.

The Expedition to the End of the World is produced by Haslund Film and co-produced by Beofilm and Garage Film. The film will premiere in November 2012. LFF

For more information on the expedition and the film, see ekspeditionen2011.dk

Check our catalogue in reverse section for more documentaries to look forward to in 2012.

A PAIN IN THE ASS, THANK HEAVEN!



Martin Strange-Hansen Photo: Sophie Winqvist

STATEMENT. Dare to fail, Martin Strange-Hansen encourages his fellow directors. FILM asked the chairman of the Association of Danish Film Directors, one of the significant players behind-the-scenes, to give his take on the challenges for the European filmmakers right now.

BY MARTIN STRANGE-HANSEN

A film director should be a pain in the ass. A persistent and hard-to-satisfy pain in the ass who insists on pushing the limits in his/her quest to make the best film possible. And thank heaven for that. Without that persistence, film as an art form would perish.

I'd like you to dwell on that: film is an art form in its essence. Even mainstream blockbusters are nurtured and inspired by the artistry and bravery of directors who embody that essence. Also in the quest for the big audience, we need to push ourselves as directors - to go where the ice can break and we can fail.

In a money-drained media-landscape - from piracy, changing media-habits and shortened awareness span in a land of plenty - the traditional channels of distribution are becoming less reliable in terms of revenue. The branded, the proven and the sure-fire prevail in the hunt for the next big sequel, tent pole or brand. The unique and the daring are having a hard time.

But as we all know, this is a short-sighted strategy.

You don't keep your audience captivated by repeating yourself. You wear them out. That is why we need the pain-in-the-ass director. Someone with a unique vision and the guts to go against the grain. Someone who invents new forms of expression and crosses boundaries. Someone who is not afraid to

provoke or step out of line if necessary. Someone who does not hunt trends but creates them.

Most directors have that streak. That is why we are willing to battle long and hard, year in and out, for every film we make. But a director needs money to get his film made, so we team up with production companies and cooperate with producers. In that process we often sharpen and improve our films to the benefit of both film and audience. Especially in great teamwork between producer and director - magic can happen in that process. But the story is somewhat different if the financial fear-factor attached to the project is too high. Not because of lack of talent, originality or an intriguing story. In fact, everybody loves the project, but nobody dares to take the risk.

Fear reigns in a money-drained production environment. Fear that the next film might be last. And that the staff has to be cut. Circumstances which, ideally, should not influence film as an art-form, but easily do. As a result the willingness to invest in the daring and the risky is slowly fading.

Film as an art form does have a fighting chance in Denmark, especially since a key financial player in most Danish films is the publicly funded Danish Film Institute. Because much of our funding is not necessarily tied to a principle of generating profit in a commercial environment, there is room for the daring and the original.

In Europe, our legacy is that of visionary directors. Films in Europe have never been made on the same market-oriented terms as the great movie-making machine in Hollywood. Not that the Hollywood way isn't valid. It most certainly is. Hollywood couldn't have become the leading provider of movie-entertainment without a massive amount of ingenuity and sense of great storytelling. But in a European context, we should not strive to

replicate a movie business where big budgets and box-office is key. The bigger the budget, the greater the fear of failure. Great fear equals less risk-taking and a more uniform experience for our audience. We'd be neglecting European cinema's most treasured (and bankable) assets: Guts, vision and cultural differences. In times of crisis and a changing media landscapes we need to remember more than ever that film is an art-form and originality prevails.

So my advice for the Danish and European movie business is this: Be thankful for having no choice but to deal with directors of great vision and courage. Even though we do cause you a little trouble and pain along the way, it is that pain that might secure the film industry and audience - also in the commercial long run.

And to my fellow directors: Be a pain in the ass. Dare to fail. You owe it to your trade ■

MARTIN STRANGE-HANSEN

Chairman of the Association of Danish Film Directors. Strange-Hansen won the Student Academy Award (baby Oscar) 2001 for *Feeding Desire*, his graduation film from the National Film School of Denmark. The following year *This Charming Man* won an Oscar for Best Short Film - Live Action. Made the feature film *True Spirit* in 2006. Official webby awards honoree for his webisode *Pinly & Flau* in 2009. Made the short fiction *Jensen Lives Here* in 2010.

THE ASSOCIATION OF DANISH FILM DIRECTORS

Handles Danish film directors' rights and negotiates agreements for about 380 members who work in different fields such as animation, art film, television and feature films. Danish Film Directors was founded in 1956 as an interest group with the aim to take part in the public debate about film policy issues. Chairman is film director Martin Strange-Hansen.

Swedish-Danish film about legendary jazz singer

UPCOMING FILM. Danish director Per Fly is heading a Swedish feature about jazz singer Monica Zetterlund who became a big international star in the 1960s. *Monica Z* is in line with a proud tradition of Danish-Swedish co-producing.

Heading this Swedish-Danish collaboration about Swedish jazz singer Monica Zetterlund is Per Fly, director of the award-winning trilogy *The Bench* (2000), *Inheritance* (2003) and *Manslaughter* (2005) that provide an X-ray of class conventions in modern-day Denmark.

In the role of Zetterlund is Swedish singer-songwriter Edda Magnason, fresh off her 2012 debut album.

The subject of *Monica Z* has in itself a true Scandinavian ring to it. Monica Zetterlund was a big name in Scandinavia in the '60s and '70s when she performed with some of the greatest icons of jazz. The film is about her life through stardom and hardship and tells the story of a sublime artist who conveyed a unique natural presence and vulnerability on stage and screen.

Director Per Fly has long dreamed of making a feature about Monica Zetterlund. "As a singer, she reinvented modern Swedish jazz, working with such greats as Beppe Wolgers, Arne Domnérus and the legendary Bill Evans. Monica was also a celebrated actress, a comedienne, who starred in many of Hans Alfredson and Tage Danielsson's unforgettable films and stage plays. The story of Monica is also about the



Monica Zetterlund. Photo unknown

modern dilemma of fame. A living legend deeply cherished and loved by Swedish audiences yet unable to find love herself," Fly says.

Swedish Peter Birro has signed the script, cinematographer is the Dane Eric Kress and editor is Swedish-Danish Åsa Mossberg. Thomas

Gammeltoft of Eyeworks Fine & Mellow is the film's Danish producer, while Stella Nova of Sweden is executive producer.

Monica Z, a Swedish major production, is scheduled to premiere in September 2013.



On the set of *The Weight of Elephants* Photo: Gareth Moon

"Now that it's finished it's really rewarding"

UPCOMING FILM. New Zealand-Danish Daniel Joseph Borgman just spent seven weeks shooting his debut feature, *The Weight of Elephants*, the first ever co-production between Denmark and New Zealand. The script was developed during a stay at the Cannes Residence in Paris.

Daniel Joseph Borgman, who won the Grand Prix Canal+ Semaine de la Critique at Cannes 2010 for his short fiction film *Berik*, just finished shooting his first feature, *The Weight of Elephants*.

"It's been tough, really. It takes much longer to do than a short film. But now that it's finished, it's really rewarding, too," Borgman says.

The Weight of Elephants is about Adrian, a sensitive and lonely boy who is abandoned by his mum at an early age to live with his grandmother and his sick uncle, and who finds meaning in an unlikely friendship with Nicole, a mysterious outsider who has moved in across the street and who just might be one of the abducted children they keep talking about on TV.

The film was shot in New Zealand with a largely local crew, and post-production is now being done in Denmark. That *The Weight of Elephants* is a co-production was helpful on set, Borgman says. "The Danish way of making films is

auteur-minded, giving the director more freedom. Danes make much more films and are therefore more experienced, which the film will benefit from in the post-production."

The Weight of Elephants is inspired by the Australian novel *Of a Boy* by Sonya Hartnett. Other sources of inspiration for Borgman include his childhood in New Zealand and the works of Bob Dylan and Lars von Trier.

The Weight of Elephants, a Danish major, is produced by Katja Adomeit for Zentropa and Leanne Saunders for Severe Films. The international premiere is set for spring 2013. ABJ



This Life Photo: Lars Høgsted

A spring of period dramas at Danish cinemas

Danish moviegoers are taking to historical dramas in a big way. First-time feature director Anne Grethe Bjarup Riis's German occupation drama *This Life*, with admissions of more than 700,000, is the second most popular Danish film in the last 10 years.

This Life, the story of a family fighting the German occupiers in World War II, is the top-selling Danish film in 2012. In second place is Nicolaj Arcel's *A Royal Affair*, about the illicit love affair between Queen Caroline Mathilde and Johann Struensee, Enlightenment man and physician to King Christian VII.

The current trend of historical dramas drawing Danes to cinemas in droves seems to have started already last year when Martin Pieter Zandvliet's *A Funny Man* about legendary Danish comedian Dirch Passer was the most seen Danish film.

Together, *This Life* and *A Royal Affair* have raised the Danish home market share to 35% in the first four months of 2012. Another period drama is opening in the fall, Bille August's *Marie Krøyer*, set among the so-called Skagen painters who in the 1880s settled in a remote fishing hamlet on the northernmost point of Denmark.

This Life is the second most seen film in the last 10 years, outdone only by *Clown*, the comedy that is currently being treated to an American remake. With 438,000 admissions in five weeks, *A Royal Affair* will end up on the top ten list for the last decade. Another film by Arcel, *King's Game*, is already in fourth place on that list. *ABJ*

Top 10 / Danish films 2002-2012

1	Clown (2010)	Mikkel Nørgaard	839,000
2	This Life (2012)	Anne Grethe Bjarup Riis	713,000
3	Flame & Citron (2008)	Ole Christian Madsen	674,000
4	King's Game (2004)	Nicolaj Arcel	552,000
5	My Sister's Kids 2 (2002)	Tomas Villum Jensen	526,000
6	Father of Four (2005)	Claus Bjerre	507,000
7	Open Hearts (2002)	Susanne Bier	506,000
8	A Funny Man (2011)	Martin P. Zandvliet	472,000
9	My Sister's Kids in Egypt (2004)	Kasper Barfoed	466,000
10	The Reunion (2011)	Niels Nørlov	462,000

Source: Association of Danish Film Distributors (Fafid) and Statistics Denmark as per 7 May 2012

Clown – American style

Danny McBride is going on a “Tour de Pussy” in the American remake of the Danish boxoffice smash *Clown*, a toe-curling comedy about two men and a boy embarking on an R-rated vacation.

With 839,000 admissions, *Clown* (Mikkel Nørgaard, 2010) is the most seen Danish film of the last decade.

The comedy, based on the television series *Clown* (2005-09), is about two comics, Frank and Casper, who go on a canoe trip – or at least that is the cover story for their “Tour

de Pussy,” as Casper likes to call it. But their plans to party and have sex are dashed when Frank, much to Casper's chagrin, brings along his girlfriend Mia's nephew Bo – to prove to her that he is father material.

It's Americans' turn now to cringe at the geek and the womanizer's sexcapades. Warner Bros have acquired the rights to a remake and signed Danny McBride, known from the HBO series *Eastbound & Down*, to write and star.

McBride is producing with Todd Phillips, who brought us the related *Hangover* movies.

Clown's Danish creators Casper Christensen and Frank Hvam are also co-producing the American project.

By Freja Dam



Clown Photo: Per Arnesen

Thure Lindhardt as a notorious Austrian kidnapper

Thure Lindhardt is truly making his name internationally. Now he has scored the role as the man who kidnapped and kept the Austrian girl Natascha Kampusch captive for eight years, in the film 3096.

In Denmark, he has played an autistic murderer in *A Place Nearby*, a philosophical junkie in *Angels in Fast Motion* and a death-dealing WWII resistance fighter in *Flame and Citron*. Internationally, he is known as a Danish hippie in Sean Penn's *Into the Wild*, a lieutenant in Ron Howard's *Angels & Demons* and a tortured gay documentary filmmaker in Ira Sachs' *Keep the Lights On*.

The Danish actor Thure Lindhardt does not shy away from complex or unlikeable roles, but his villain ranking will likely be upped a notch when he plays Wolfgang Priklopil, the Austrian who kidnapped 10-year-old Natascha Kampusch, in Sherry Hormann's fact-based film *3096*. The



Thure Lindhardt plays a tortured filmmaker in Ira Sachs' *Keep the Lights On* Photo: Jean Christophe Husson

title refers to the number of days Priklopil kept Kampusch prisoner in a secret cellar before she managed to escape in 2006. Priklopil committed suicide the same day by jumping in front of a train.

Lindhardt will play opposite Irish actress Antonia Campbell-Hughes (*Albert Nobbs*, *Bright Star*) as Kampusch, and Danish actress Trine Dyrholm (*Love Is All You Need*) also has a minor role.

3096 will be directed by Sherry Horman (*Desert Flower*) and produced by the German production company Constantin Film. Filming is set to start in Munich in May, and the expected release is 2013. By Freja Dam

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