



Berlin issue 2012

## A ROYAL AFFAIR MADS MIKKELSEN LOVE IS IN THE AIR



## INSIDE



FILM#74 Berlin issue  
February 2012

**Published by** Danish Film Institute  
**Editor** Susanna Neimann (SN)  
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**Design** Rasmus Koch Studio  
**AD** Morten Bak  
**Type** Holton, Akzidenz-Grotesk, Cendia  
**Paper** Munken Lynx 100 g  
**Printed by** Rosendahls-Schultz Grafisk  
**Circulation** 2,500  
**ISSN** 1399-2813 (print version)  
**ISSN** 1903-7511 (online version)  
**Cover** A Royal Affair. Photo by Casper Sejersen  
Most of the articles are written by freelance  
film critics and journalists.

FILM is the Danish Film Institute's  
international festival magazine

Issued prior to the three major festivals  
in Berlin, Cannes and Amsterdam, the  
magazine brings articles and interviews  
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  
agency responsible for supporting and en-  
couraging Danish film and cinema culture.

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# IS THE AUDIENCE ALWAYS RIGHT? /EDITORIAL

*At the Danish Film Institute from time to time we consider introducing a reverse audience award, that is, an award to the audience. The award would go to the movie audience that has the curiosity, courage and energy to seek out challenging movie experiences. An audience of people ready to take a chance and dig deep into their pockets without knowing exactly where the film will take them: perhaps it's a film with unknown actors, from an unknown place, telling stories in other images and other voices than we are used to seeing and hearing. That audience exists and deserves to be honoured.*

*Unfortunately, there are times when such an audience is hard to spot. Looking at the Danish box office returns from the last couple of years, there is little reason to boast that Danes are the world's most courageous moviegoers. Too often we tend to go for the familiar and the entertaining. And understandably so. The box office results are appreciated and the income benefits the industry, but where does that leave the development of the art form?*

*While respect for the audience is good, it must never lead to timidity about challenging people.*

*We in the film industry have an obligation to look beyond the next financial report. This may seem like a provocative statement to make at a time when large sections of the industry are gasping for air, but at least we, the public funding bodies, must have the courage to insist, bearing in mind that a lack of innovation and an unwillingness to take risks undercuts both the art of cinema and the long-term viability of the film industry.*

*One of my favourite TV shows, *The West Wing*, has a character quote a 19th-century French politician who watched a crowd run by and exclaimed, "There go my people. I must find out where they're going so I can lead them." A parallel today is the marketing claim that "The user is king." But if "the king" doesn't move, maybe it makes more sense to learn from a powerful, innovative brand like Apple that has the audacity to put out products assuming that consumers are going to think they are cool. Without asking them first.*

*It's good that directors and others are showing a growing interest in audiences and their habits, but scanning last year's box-office list and trying to ape the biggest blockbusters simply isn't god enough. While respect for the audience is good, it must never lead to timidity about challenging it. We should learn from moviegoers' behaviour and cajole, push and, if necessary, coerce them to show openness and courage. And we should make it easy for the audience, with lots of interacting windows and platforms.*

*Finally, we must make room for and protect those artists and merchants who dare to go their own way, however unruly they may seem - and no matter how strange the films are. And then perhaps we should get around to introducing that award.*

Henrik Bo Nielsen, CEO

## Lars von Trier's Nymphomaniac

**LARS VON TRIER.** Zentropa unveils a first glimpse of Lars von Trier's next film *Nymphomaniac* about a woman's erotic journey.

Lars von Trier is busy preparing *Nymphomaniac*, his next film after *Melancholia* which earned Kirsten Dunst the Best Actress award at Cannes and was named Finest Film Achievement in 2011 by America's leading film critics.

A first hint of the tone and theme of the film is revealed in a brief synopsis released by Zentropa: *Nymphomaniac* is the poetic story of a woman's erotic journey from birth to the age of 50 as told by the main character, the self-diagnosed

nymphomaniac, Joe. On a cold winter's evening Seligman, an old bachelor, finds Joe semi-unconscious and beaten up in an alleyway. After bringing her to his flat he sees to her wounds and listens intently as she, over the next eight chapters, recounts the lushly branched-out and multi-faceted story of her life, rich in associations and interjecting incidents.

At the Berlin Film Festival Zentropa is working on financing *Nymphomaniac* which has an estimated budget of 6.7 m euros. The film has already been bought by Artificial Eye (UK), Wild Bunch (Benelux) and several more heavyweight European distributors. TrustNordisk continues to pre-sell the film during the festival.

*Nymphomaniac* has received funding from the Danish Film Institute, both for the script and for developing the project. LFJ

## Susanne Bier makes romantic comedy with Pierce Brosnan

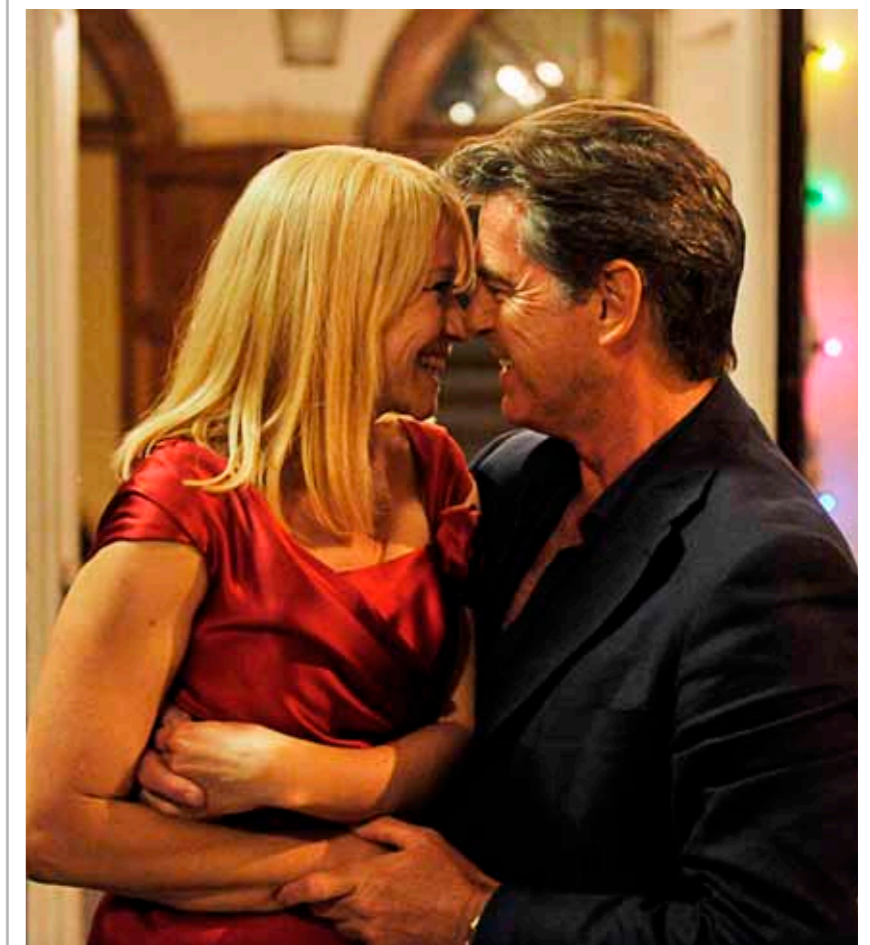


Photo: Doane Gregory

Trine Dyrholm and Pierce Brosnan take center stage in a new romantic comedy by Susanne Bier, director of Academy Award winner *In a Better World*. The film is set to release in August.

## Bringing out a character-driven genre film

**ANNETTE K. OLESEN** won a Blue Angel in Berlin for her first feature in 2002. Recently she directed several episodes of *Borgen*, which *The Daily Mail* in a gushing review calls a slick and sexy political TV thriller. Olesen is now at work on her fifth feature *The Shooter*.

The Danish director Annette K. Olesen, 46, has her own unmistakable voice in films.

Ever since her first feature, *Minor Mishaps*, won a Blue Angel at the 2002 Berlinale, she has continued to refine her craft in strong, character-driven dramas that often have resonant political themes. All of her films were made in close collaboration with the actors, often with long development phases focusing on improvisation and research into the environments described.

Olesen in 2004 followed up *Minor Mishaps* with *In Your Hands*, a Dogme-tinged prison drama that she and her writer, Kim Fupz Aakeson, called the first Danish feel-bad movie in years. *In Your Hands* (2004), as well as *Little Soldier* (2008), about a female soldier who returns from Afghanistan, rootless and traumatised, were selected for competition in Berlin.

### WORKING IN A SERIES FORMAT

Working on the TV series *Borgen*, which is currently a huge hit on BBC, was very positive for the Danish director who put her past experiences to good use in the format of a TV series.

"It was great fun and professionally very satisfying to work in the well-defined genre track of a series. It's a bit like doing a Dogme film: you submit to a set of rules, in this case certain genre conventions."

Initially, though, she was quite nervous that she wouldn't get the time she needed under the tight production format to use her method of working in depth with the characters.

"But in fact I was surprised how well everything worked out. The actors had already done most of the work of mapping their characters' past. I talked with them about what their characters had been through and what their dreams were. I didn't try to foist a lot of new ideas on them but started from the facts, their experiences with their characters. This proved to be a very good fit for a TV series," the director says.

### AN ECO-POLITICAL THRILLER

Olesen is continuing in the genre track in her new film, *The Shooter*, a political thriller. In the near future, large sections of the Danish population are in uproar because the newly elected government, breaking its campaign promises, is partnering with the US to drill for oil in the fragile Arctic. The film's protagonist is a woman journalist who has long been dogging the government.



Director Annette K. Olesen Photo: Mike Kollöffel

When she publicly states that she understands how someone might go very far to block the government's plans, a disaffected geophysicist and former Olympic marksman takes her remarks to heart - and an intense drama ensues.

The film is a remake of a Danish film from 1977, "before the fall," as Olesen puts it. That is, before the assassination of Swedish prime minister Olof Palme, before global terror and climate change. "The world

has changed so much since then," Olesen says. "Last summer, as we were writing the screenplay, there was flooding in Copenhagen and the tragedy in Utøya, Norway, happened. *The Shooter* is, scarily, more relevant now than it was when it was written 40 years ago."

*The Shooter* is written by Lars K. Andersen, Michael W. Horsten and Åke Sandgren and is produced by Nordisk Film. It stars Trine Dyrholm and Kim Bodnia. SN

# THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TELL A GOOD STORY



"All historical films blend dates and events and leave certain characters out. The alternative is a dry film where nothing special happens, but who wants to see that?"

A Royal Affair Photo: Jiri Hanzl

THE FILM

eu2012.dk

THE DANISH FILM INSTITUTE PRESENTS FILM EVENTS ACROSS EUROPE ON THE OCCASION OF THE EU PRESIDENCY IN SPRING 2012

**It's one of the most defining moments in Danish history, a drama that has everything. Many filmmakers have dreamed of putting it on screen, but as Nikolaj Arcel found out, telling the story of mad King Christian VII, his young English wife and the German doctor Struensee is not simple. Per Juul Carlsen spoke with the director of *A Royal Affair*, in competition in Berlin.**

BY PER JUUL CARLSEN

"We were pickled in awe," Nikolaj Arcel admits and for a moment looks like he is slipping back into the condition he was in three-four years ago.

"I sit here today, calm and collected, because I'm happy about the result and I'm proud of the journey we made. But back when we started out, all we had was this insane awe." Now, three years or so after Arcel and Heisterberg shucked off the paralyzing

reverence for their subject, they are bringing us *A Royal Affair*, a lavish period drama that revolves around King Christian VII, by all indications a schizophrenic, his English queen Caroline Mathilda and the king's personal physician, Johann Friedrich Struensee, a German who became the unofficial regent of Denmark from 1770 to 1772. The drama is carried by a strong cast, with Mads Mikkelsen as Struensee, the Swedish actress Alicia Vikander as the queen, and Mikkel Boe Følsgaard, a young actor making his screen debut, as the king. The film is set in striking natural scenery evoking Denmark before agriculture rearranged the country, with digitally altered shots of Copenhagen without billboards and cars.

#### A PRINCESS AND A MAD KING

The awe felt by the filmmakers came with good reason. After all, Arcel and his co-writer Rasmus Heisterberg are putting their touch on one of the most defining moments in Danish history.

Like Harald Bluetooth's converting the Danes to Christianity in 948, Denmark's humiliating loss to the Prussians in 1864 and the national team's out-of-the-blue triumph at the 1992 European Football Championship, the Struensee affair is an event that shaped the Danish nation. While it may be a matter of discussion exactly how the event has affected the Danish mentality, it is inarguably one Danish history's greatest stories.

"We spent eight-nine months freaking out and not getting anywhere, going, 'Oh, no, wait a minute, what was that, seventeen-hundred-something?' It was awful, until we had the confidence to let go and say, 'Good, we have all these different things now. We have read seven books about Christian VII and they all say different things, but we think he was like this, so we'll take this and that and this.'

"This is such a great story, one of the best there is," Arcel says. "The build-up is like a fairytale. You have a deeply enlightened 15-year-old princess who plays music and reads books and is then married

off to a mad king. The conflict begins right there. Then, lo and behold, the king gets a new best friend and the queen falls in love with him. The affair that grows out of this is not just a love affair, it also involves the friendship between the king and his doctor which leads to political change and subsequent turmoil across the country. You almost couldn't ask for a better story if you are looking for drama."

#### HISTORY ON FILM

To most Danes, the story of a German who steals the king's young wife, fathers a child with her and even usurps power over Denmark could have an unpleasant ring. But Struensee is hardly a villain. He was a man of the Enlightenment, a proponent of the winds of change that were blowing across Europe inspired by Voltaire and Rousseau.

When Struensee arrived in Denmark, in 1769, the country was still stuck in the Middle Ages. The notion of educating and liberating the populace was

a little more passionate, a little more mad. All historical films blend dates and events and leave certain characters out. The alternative is a dry film where nothing special happens, but who wants to see that?"

#### WHATEVER SPINS YOUR CRANK

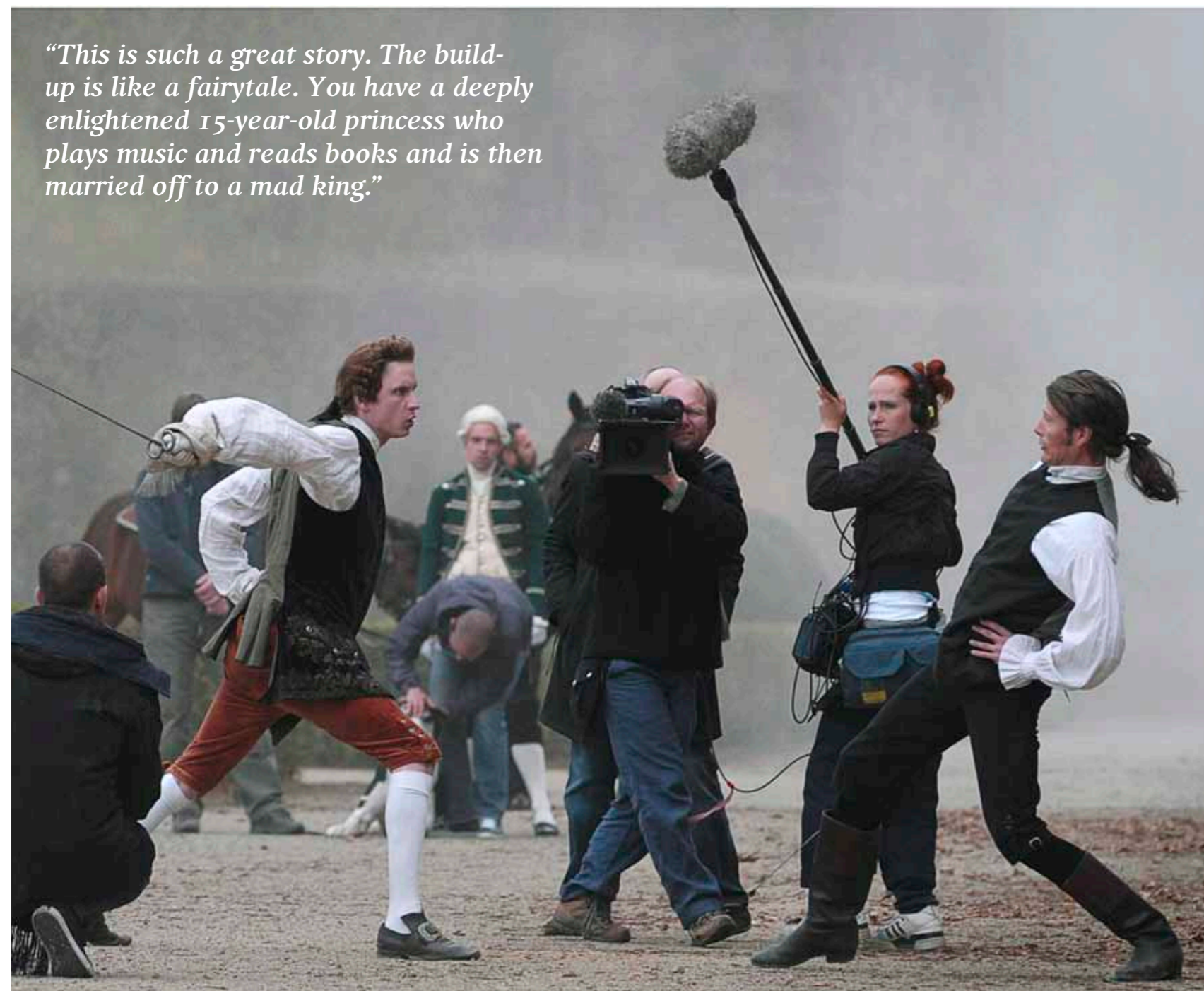
Arcel, 39, and his long-time co-writer, Rasmus Heisterberg, know this better than most Danish filmmakers. Since Arcel debuted as a director in 2004 with *King's Game*, the duo has led the charge of a new generation of Danish filmmakers who say no to European art films with handheld cameras and spotty lighting and yes to slick, tightly composed genre films in the Hollywood tradition. This is a gross simplification, of course, though it applies pretty accurately to all three of Arcel's broadly entertaining films, the political thriller *King's Game*, the children's fantasy film *Island of Lost Souls* (2007) and the guy comedy *Truth about Men* (2010). In that light it makes sense for Arcel to mention

love. I hope this is how it happened. I hope it wasn't just a cynical power game and that Struensee and Caroline Mathilda didn't make a baby just because they were bored."

As a result, posterity will not just see King Christian VII as a raving lunatic who wallowed with prostitutes in the Copenhagen nightlife but as a brilliant, sensitive mind who longed to be accepted. Queen Caroline Mathilda will no longer be just a silly goose, the way she has often been depicted, but a cultured intellectual. And Struensee will no longer be just a power-hungry German, as he has conveniently been presented.

Above all, posterity will remember Caroline Mathilda as the bright beauty embodied by Alicia Vikander, while Struensee will live on as the visionary hunk portrayed by Mads Mikkelsen. That's film, not history ■

For further information on *A Royal Affair*, see reverse section.



On the set: Mikkel Boe Følsgaard as Christian VII and Mads Mikkelsen as Struensee Photo: Jiri Hanzl



Mads Mikkelsen as Struensee and Alicia Vikander as Queen Caroline Mathilda in *A Royal Affair* Photo: Jiri Hanzl

pure science fiction. Struensee changed all that when Christian VII allowed him to reign, but he moved too quickly. When orphanages and freedom of speech were introduced, conservative forces took down Struensee. He was beheaded and broken on the wheel, his mangled remains displayed in a Copenhagen park as a warning to others. Caroline Mathilda was banished and died three years later, at 24.

Those are the facts, but their edges are obviously fuzzy. How mad was Christian VII? How much did Caroline Mathilda and Struensee love each other? How hungry for power was Struensee? A filmmaker is wise to tread with caution. Cinema is such a powerful medium that films about historical events tend to become truths in our common consciousness. Of course *D-Day* looked just like *Saving Private Ryan* – Spielberg's images are that lifelike. And New York gangsters in the 1930s and '40s looked just like they did in *The Godfather* – Coppola's version was that compelling. Even so, Arcel, now that he is well over his initial awe, is hardly worried at the thought of his version of one of the best Danish stories winding up as part of the national heritage.

"Everything we have read indicates that these people were more or less the way we describe them. We may have made them a little more infatuated,

Milos Forman's *Amadeus* which tells the story of the composer Antonio Salieri's envy of Mozart, the genius savant.

"When I watch that film, I feel like it really happened, though I know it's a complete lie from start to finish. Mozart and Salieri didn't have that kind of a relationship. But that doesn't matter to me. It's just a playwright who was inspired by real events. You should tell the story that spins your crank. You have a responsibility not to lie and outright change something that was really important. You have a moral responsibility, but you have an even bigger responsibility to tell a good story."

Obviously, there are victims, says Arcel. "But we also toned down the realities to make them credible," he adds. "We know that the dowager queen, Juliane Marie, who helped bring down Struensee, was a pretty tough customer. She brought a small spyglass to watch Struensee's execution, but that was too hardcore a detail for our film."

"I am openly and honestly fascinated by these people. My only dogma was that I wanted to do a big, epic love story. We modernised the characters, made their emotions and their mindsets modern, to make it easier to relate to the story. Call us romantics. We are. It's a romantic film. We believe in



Photo: Jeppe Gudmundsen-Holmgreen

#### NIKOLAJ ARCEL

Born 1972, Denmark. Graduate of the National Film School of Denmark, 2001. Arcel made his feature debut with *King's Game* (2004), a boxoffice hit for Arcel and co-writer Rasmus Heisterberg who have collaborated on Arcel's four films to date, including Berlin competitor *A Royal Affair*. The two also scripted Niels Arden Oplev's international co-production *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2009), the original Swedish adaptation of Stieg Larsson's Millennium trilogy.

#### ZENTROPA

Founded 1992 by director Lars von Trier and producer Peter Aalbæk Jensen. Acknowledged for having reinvigorated the industry with *Dogme 95*. 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 a romantic comedy by Bier, a new film by Simon Staho, Thomas Vinterberg's *The Hunt*, and Nikolaj Arcel's Berlin competitor *A Royal Affair*. zentropa.dk



Stellan Skarsgård and Mads Mikkelsen at the 2011 European Film Awards in Berlin. Photo: EFA

# THOSE CHEEKBONES, THAT CUPID'S BOW, THAT WOLF SMILE!

**Mads Mikkelsen has shown enormous versatility in his 16 years as a screen actor. Running the gamut from Viking warrior to Enlightenment man and World War II resistance fighter, from genius composer in Paris and pusher in Copenhagen to NGO worker in Africa, even Bond villain, Mikkelsen's face can carry it all.**

BY PER JUUL CARLSEN

"You're not good looking. You have an interesting face."

This is how one Scandinavian actor introduced the other at the 2011 European Film Awards in Berlin. Mads Mikkelsen, the 46-year-old Danish actor whose many distinctions include playing a Bond villain, received the European Achievement in World Cinema award from Stellan Skarsgård, his 60-year-old Swedish colleague who easily commutes between European art films and American entertainments. At the ceremony, Skarsgård ribbed Mikkelsen with the

line that would top every Danish news site in the days that followed: "You're not good looking."

Of course he's good looking. His high cheekbones, cool gaze, dramatic Cupid's bow and charming wolf smile suggest an underlying desire to pull every woman into bed and thoroughly and passionately sink his teeth into her throat. But of course his friend and roaster Skarsgård is right, too. Mikkelsen does not have the natural good looks of a Brad Pitt or a Sean Connery. But he most assuredly has an interesting face.

That was evident from Mikkelsen's first starring role, as Tonny in Nicolas Winding Refn's

*"Mikkelsen does not have the natural good looks of a Brad Pitt or a Sean Connery. But he most assuredly has an interesting face."*

breakthrough film *Pusher* (1996). However emphatically Kim Bodnia, as Frank the pusher, stomped on Mikkelsen's face, raging at his perceived betrayal, he could not prevent the ladies from being drawn to its graceful poetry.

Ever since, Mikkelsen's face has proven itself to be interesting and versatile enough to effortlessly travel in time and space - from comedy to ultraviolence, from the Danish drug underground to rarefied Parisian artists' circles, from NGO worker to supervillain. One moment he is playing the genius Russian composer Igor Stravinsky having sex with the fashion guru Coco Chanel on a piano bench in Paris, in *Coco Chanel & Igor Stravinsky*, the next he is splintering the bones of barbarian warriors as the proto-Viking One-Eye in Refn's *Valhalla Rising*. He shined as Niels, the sensitive doctor in Susanne Bier's Dogme film *Open Hearts*, and as a kind friend to starving African children in another Bier film, *After the Wedding*. Most recently, he scorched the screen as Rochefort, the swashbuckling bad guy in *The Three Musketeers*. Mikkelsen's face has travelled way so wide and far that his 16 years on screen seem like a very short time to fit it all in.

Of course it doesn't carry a whole movie. Mikkelsen doesn't just pose like Alain Delon and let everything else fall as it may. He is an actor who knows when to power through, who was ready to learn Russian and French and how to play the piano for the role of Stravinsky. Nor does a rundown of Mikkelsen's choice of roles reveal a stuck-up star who is afraid of new challenges or upsetting his career by throwing in with unknown directors. In 2012, he will be appearing as a 17th-century rebel in *Michael Kohlhaas*, by the French director Arnaud des Pallières. Further ahead, he will be playing a meteorologist stationed in Greenland during World War II, in *War Below Zero* by the Icelandic director Ágúst Gudmundsson. He will be starring as a kidnapper of small children in a Western-like New Zealand setup, in *The Stolen* by the British director Niall Johnson. Finally, we will get to see him in two Danish productions - in Thomas Vinterberg's *The Hunt*, as an innocent man on the run, and in Nikolaj Arcel's *A Royal Affair*, as an 18th-century Enlightenment man.

"I sit there in the dark and I watch you, I listen to you, and I am sucked into your face and into your eyes, and I am very happy," Skarsgård went on in Berlin, when he was done rating Mikkelsen's appearance. Florid speechifying is part of any awards show, of course, but most of us, women and men alike, know what he means. Watching those cheekbones, that Cupid's bow, that wolf smile as they travel from film to film, through time and space, is, simply, endlessly interesting ■

Read more about *A Royal Affair*, in *Berlin Competition*, on page 5 and in reverse section.



## FACES OF MADSKIKKELSEN

Mads Mikkelsen, born 1965, was a professional dancer for eight years before entering theatre school. Graduated in 1996 and had his breakthrough in Nicolas Winding Refn's *Pusher*. Starred in several more films by Refn and has worked with Anders Thomas Jensen, Susanne Bier and Ole Christian Madsen. Shot to international stardom in 2006 as Bond villain Le Chiffre and has since acted in a handful of international productions.

### PUSHER / 1996

In Nicolas Winding Refn's debut film, a thriller from the mean streets of Copenhagen, Mikkelsen plays Tonny, the mouthy, inept crony of small-time drug dealer Frank (Kim Bodnia). When a deal turns bad, a downward spiral begins and brings everything tumbling down into chaos. Mikkelsen creates "a striking portrayal of blustering infantilism," as one critic wrote.



### ADAM'S APPLES / 2005

Mads Mikkelsen is Father Ivan in Anders Thomas Jensen's absurdist fable about good and evil. A pathological optimist, Ivan takes in the neo-Nazi Adam who has been sentenced to twelve weeks of community service. Mikkelsen's benevolent preacher man Ivan and Ulrich Thomsen's tattooed skinhead Adam is a catchy set-up.

### THE GREEN BUTCHERS / 2003

Less than flattering, Mikkelsen's character Svend in Anders Thomas Jensen's morbid comedy is chronically sweating and driven by an inferiority complex that proves fatal - for others. Starting their own butcher's shop, Svend and his pal Bjarne struggle to get business started, until a bizarre coincidence leads Svend to concoct a new dish with a very special ingredient. Customers flock to the counter for their "green" delicatessen, but will Svend and Bjarne be able to keep up stock of this secret component?



### CASINO ROYALE / 2006

Mads Mikkelsen's cool traits seem to be perfectly at ease with the enigmatic persona of 007 arch-villain Le Chiffre, banker to the world's terrorist organisations, who cries tears of blood. Mikkelsen's understated devilry acts as a perfect counterpart to Daniel Craig's no less inscrutable poker face.



### VALHALLA RISING / 2006

100 minutes and not a single word. Mikkelsen plays a larger-than-life hero, a mute one-eyed warrior of supernatural strength who escapes enslavement and boards a Viking vessel bound for unknown shores. "My focus was on the physical presence. In that sense, it was more like a dance performance," Mikkelsen said.



### AFTER THE WEDDING / 2006

In Susanne Bier's Oscar nominated drama Mikkelsen displays a subdued naturalism as the idealistic and slightly introvert Jacob who has dedicated his life to helping street children in India. When the orphanage he heads is threatened by closure, he receives an unusual offer which brings him back to Denmark, where a wedding catapults him into the most intense dilemma of his life.

**Simon Staho asked Danish critics not to review his new film *Love Is in the Air*, because he thought they were too old to get it. Now in the youth competition at Berlin, the film is a riotous teen musical bubbling over with pop and rainbow colours about four young people who journey into the night in search of their sexual identities. Kim Skotte paints a portrait of an uncompromising Danish auteur who is not so easy to pin down.**

BY KIM SKOTTE

Jaws hit floors when Danish film critics met with the director Simon Staho on the occasion of his new teenage musical, *Love Is in the Air*. The usually so tight-lipped and ascetic director was cavorting around in knee pants and a slick pompadour in a swarm of coloured lights. "The time has come to celebrate hope," he declared. "Misanthropy has become the sure path to a lucrative career in movies". A rather surprising statement coming from a director known for stylized and gloomy-Scandinavian films in which suicide and confronting the meaninglessness of life is the order of the day.

Before the sneak preview the 38-year-old director asked Danish critics not to review the film, because he thought they were too old and set in their ways to appreciate the film's purported youthful passion and energy. If nothing else, he effectively succeeded in, once again, keeping Danish audiences away from a Simon Staho film.

As a filmmaking prophet, Staho is not honoured in his own country. Denmark does not have much of a tradition for uncompromising films plumbing emotional abysses. Dreyer was a long time ago and Denmark never had a Bergman. In fact, Staho has been met with a lot more understanding in Sweden, where he has also shot most of his films.

Anyway, why wouldn't an upbeat musical for teens with tons of pop music be a hit? But in Denmark, as most other places, teen films are a tough sell if they aren't American. So, even if Staho was suddenly slinging out cotton candy, pop tunes and a booming YES to life, the whole project still carried an unmistakable whiff of emotional extremism. For a generation that grew up with Disney's *High School Musical*, this stylised story about carnival-costumed teens roaming the neon-flickering labyrinth of the night in search of their sexual identity is not directly interchangeable with all the hard-to-resist temptations out there. It didn't help to sell the film, either, that Staho didn't even make a nod to the kind of music kids today listen to, preferring to blast Danish hits from the last decade or two. Mom and dad's playlist? Puh-lease!

As so often before, Staho had made an untactical film that stuck in the craw of normality. And way too many kids lost out on the film's many unusual qualities and unforgettable moments, those shining glimpses bringing it home that the heart is a dilettante as long as it beats hard. The bottom line is that the film is not so different from Staho's other films. They are all about love – not delicate or romantic love, but uncompromising love as the only thing that makes life worth living, or death

worth dying. The biggest difference between *Love Is in the Air* and Staho's other films is that this time he appears to have made a film that actually looks like it wants to be loved.

"Entertainment is Satan," Staho is often quoted as saying. There has hardly been a more effective way of standing outside the prevailing cultural currents since the mid-'90s. The entertainment frosting that makes it all go down so effortlessly has oozed deep into the remains of what was used to be known as the avant-garde. Staho's films don't go down easy. They are gnarly. Not to provoke for the sake of provoking, but provocations on behalf of love. Love means risking all, otherwise what's the point? As a result, many people consider Staho's films to be hopelessly immature. "All you need is love," but only if you are ready to kill for love or go to the grave for the one you love – preferably holding hands, like the two lesbian girls in *Warriors of Love* who end up hanging themselves together. *Warriors*, a black and white or, perhaps more accurately, mouse-grey and very slow film, was accused of being a hermetic exercise in style. Personally, Staho considered the film "a knife in the heart" and "an invitation to dance." Not surprisingly, it was not a big hit.

So, who is this Danish filmmaker who prefers to work with Swedish actors, because, unlike their Danish colleagues, they wouldn't dream of lending their face to hawk washing machines or mobile phones on TV? Who is this filmmaker who early on forged a stern and unbending bond of destinies with the now famous Swedish actor Mikael Persbrandt and discovered Noomi Rapace (Lisbeth Salander), casting her as the title role in *Daisy Diamond* based on nothing more than her passport picture, knowing she would burn a hole in the screen? Who is this director who shuns the tepid Danish middle-tone, who is obsessed with the idea of purity and seems most closely related to Bergman's gravity and Roy Andersson's knack for revealing humanity in grotesque tableaux?

All attempts to penetrate into Staho's personal life are repelled by a Teflon shield of Zen-like, uncompromising statements. Every new film is introduced with a flurry of conflicting signals about the meaning and meaninglessness of life and art.

Nonetheless, a brief biography can be cobbled together:

A left-handed young man grew up in Copenhagen and was not like most other people. In 1985, at age 13, he read James Joyce's *Ulysses* to get the bare essentials in place. A few years later he was in Athens, Georgia, attending film classes, having saved up for tuition by working the night shift at a provincial Danish slaughterhouse. He did not even consider applying to the National Film School of Denmark. A school like that could kill an artist. In 1995, when he thought Lars von Trier's unconventional film company Zentropa wasn't doing anything interesting, he pitched a loose idea to studio head Peter Ålbæk Jensen, who gave him carte blanche to make his first film. *Wildside* (1998), introducing Mads Mikkelsen, made clear that Staho was one to watch, even if opinions about the film varied widely.

That's pretty much how things have gone ever since. Staho's short film *NOW* (2003) has just one line of dialogue. *Day and Night* (2004), consisting of just two shots, tracks an architect (Persbrandt) who has decided to commit suicide. *Bang Bang Orangutang* (2005) is about a man (Persbrandt again) who runs over his own son and kills him. *Daisy Diamond* (2007) is the story of a young mother who is worn so thin by her colicky baby's crying that she, like the sorely tested audience, eventually just wants to strangle the kid.

*Heaven's Heart* (2008), a newly mature drama about two couples, once again with shades of Bergman, prompted speculation that Staho had finally grown up. He then immediately put an end to such speculation with his "teen films" *Warriors of Love* (2009) and *Love Is in the Air* (2011).

Is Staho a misfit genius or an incurable dilettante? Are his films exercises in style or stripped down to essentials? Are the screenplays he writes with Peter Asmussen consistently over the top or simply free of compromise and convention? The jury is still out on that. Staho's next film is not a musical for teens, but an ordinary film for adults. Even though the last thing a film by the emotional extremist Simon Staho could ever be accused of is being "ordinary" ■

See Simon Staho's films on the following pages.



*Love Is in the Air* Photo: Sebastian Winterer

EMOTIONAL  
EXTREMIST

## FILMS BY SIMON STAHO



Love Is in the Air Photo: Sebastian Wintero

*Love Is in the Air is not so different from Staho's other films. They are all about love – not delicate or romantic love, but uncompromising love as the only thing that makes life worth living, or death worth dying.*



### FLOWERS OF DESIRE / 2012

Jakob returns to his childhood village to attend his mother's funeral and discovers that Johanna, the love of his youth, still lives there, trapped in an unhappy marriage. When they secretly rekindle their old love, the villagers turn against them and soon become their enemies. With Ulrich Thomsen and Sonja Richter as the enamoured couple. See reverse section for more information.



### LOVE IS IN THE AIR / 2011

With a generous use of pop music and rainbow hues, the film takes us through a night of youthful adventure. Daniel is in love with Lina who is in love with herself and will do anything to attract the attention of a feted pop star. Terese is ready to give up her virginity to Stefan, but Stefan would rather get closer to Daniel. See reverse section for more information.



### WARRIORS OF LOVE / 2009

Two lesbians are forced to commit murder in order to save their love in this contemporary version of Romeo and Juliet's tragic romance. "I want to portray a love so strong that the characters can't even begin to question their willingness to sacrifice everything, including their own life and that of others, for it," Staho says about the film.



### HEAVEN'S HEART / 2008

Lars and Susanna are happily married. The same goes for Susanna's best friend Ann and her husband Ulf. One evening when the two couples are having dinner together, Susanna tells the others about an adulterous colleague. The story provokes strong reactions that cause a dramatic showdown among the two couples. The film was selected for the Berlinale Special.



### DAISY DIAMOND / 2007

Noomi Rapace, who plays the off-beat heroine Lisbeth Salander in the original Swedish adaptation of *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, is the single mother and aspiring actress Anna. But to achieve professional success with an infant daughter in tow is a challenge that proves too difficult for Anna whose desperation culminates in one fatal act.



### BANG BANG ORANGUTANG / 2005

Åke Jönsson is a successful businessman who is in love with himself, his career and his big car. But in one fateful moment, his life changes forever when he accidentally runs over his young son. Everything is lost, his family, his job, his home. In an attempt to start all over he takes a job as a cab driver, driving around in search for new meaning.



### DAY AND NIGHT / 2004

Mikael Persbrandt plays a divorced family man who goes on a trip to say goodbye to relatives and friends before his planned suicide. The story takes place exclusively in and around his car. The cast boasts several other heavyweight Swedish actors, including Michael Nyqvist (*The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*), Pernilla August, Maria Bonnevie and Lena Endre.



### NOW / 2003

Staho's short film features Mads Mikkelsen as a man who leaves his wife and child for his male lover, played by Mikael Persbrandt. *Now* was to become the first in a series of films that Staho would direct in Sweden, and it also marks the beginning of the director's collaboration with Persbrandt.



### WILDSIDE / 1998

Staho made his debut with *Wildside*, a thriller akin to classic film noir. Ossi (Nikolaj Coster Waldau) and Jimmy (Mads Mikkelsen) have been friends since childhood. Now Jimmy has settled down with his family in Iceland. When Ossi suddenly turns up, Jimmy doesn't appreciate this confrontation with his wild past.

# PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN



Birgitte Hjort Sørensen as Marie Krøyer Photo: Rolf Konow

**Bille August is currently putting the finishing touches on his first Danish-produced film in 25 years. And a film based on a real slice of Danish history at that. But Marie Krøyer is first and foremost the story of a strong woman and her ill-fated marriage to the mercurial painter P.S. Krøyer.**

The Danish director scored a stellar hat-trick in 1987 with *Pelle the Conqueror*, winning the Palme d'Or, a Golden Globe and an Oscar for his adaptation of a classic Danish novel about a poor immigrant boy around 1900 on the threshold of modern industrial society. August's film is particular moving in its depiction of the relationship between Pelle and his father, played by Max von Sydow.

August's following film, *The Best Intentions* (1991), from a Bergman script, also won the Palme d'Or. The director then directed a string of big literary adaptations, including *The House of the Spirits*, *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, *Les Misérables* and, most recently, in 2007, *Goodbye Bafana*, about the 20-year relationship between Nelson Mandela and his jailer.

#### TO GET BEHIND THE SURFACE

In his new film, *Marie Krøyer*, August is not only returning to Denmark, he is also dramatising a canonised chapter of Danish history set in roughly the same era as *Pelle the Conqueror*.

"I was attracted to the Skagen Painters because P.S. Krøyer, one of the best-known figures in the community, has made these stunning portraits of his beautiful wife, Marie Krøyer. And because of these paintings, she was considered among the most admired women in Denmark at the time," says Bille August.

The Skagen painters are named for the remote village on the northernmost tip of the country's main peninsula where they moved in search of a more truthful expression steeped in the powerful local sunlight, the sweeping scenery and the authentic life of the local fishermen.

"It always fascinated me that so many brilliant painters would choose to settle in such a remote place as Skagen was back then. But what especially concerned me was trying to

depict what was behind the idyllic facade presented by the paintings."

#### A WOMAN AHEAD OF HER TIME

The film focuses on Marie Krøyer, an artist on her own right, and her unhappy marriage to the bipolar Krøyer, and opens at a time when Krøyer's condition is deteriorating and the couple's dream of sharing their lives as artists crumbles and degenerates into frustration and sorrow. When Marie, together with their daughter Vibeke, escapes on a trip to get some peace, she meets the Swedish composer Hugo Alfvén and falls head over heels in love.

Bille August was particularly occupied with the psychological portrait of a woman and her fate in an age when women still were not fully recognised as individuals with demands and needs of their own. August shows us Marie Krøyer as torn between the roles of caring mother, loyal wife and talented artist – and, not least, as a woman trying to realise the dream of finding true love.

"The marital drama forced Marie to make some tough decisions that helped her to grow into a strong and independent person, a woman ahead of her time," August explains.

#### CAPTURING THE NORDIC LIGHT

The film wrapped in November, and for the 63-year-old director it has been an inspiring experience to be working with a Danish story again, and especially to be working with Danish actors.

"Obviously, a lot of new and to me unknown actors have entered the field since *Pelle*, which means that I have been able to choose without any bias," says August who has been filming mostly on location in Skagen.

"The story is also one in which the special light found in Scandinavia plays quite a major role. It's been a great challenge to try and capture the landscape and the light from the paintings."

Birgitte Hjort Sørensen and Søren Sætter-Lassen star as the film's two leads. Peter Asmussen wrote the script, and Signe Leick Jensen and Karin Trolle produced for SF Film Production. Domestic release is set for August 2012 ■ AH

For more information on Marie Krøyer, see reverse section.

*"I was attracted to the Skagen Painters because P.S. Krøyer has made these stunning portraits of his beautiful wife, Marie Krøyer."*

#### BILLE AUGUST

Born 1948. Denmark. Trained as cinematographer and photographer in Stockholm. Graduated in cinematography from the National Film School of Denmark in 1973. Before his feature 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 to release August 2012.

#### 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. Bille August's *Marie Krøyer* is set to release in August 2012. The company has signed documentaries *The Monastery* (2006) by Pernille Rose Grenkjær and *Defamation* (Yoav Shamir, 2009).



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



# HYPE ON NORDIC BRAND PRE-SALES



Thomas Vinterberg on the set of *The Hunt*, the Danish director's new drama co-written with Tobias Lindholm and expected to release end 2012. The film, which started pre-selling in autumn, has Mads Mikkelsen in the lead in a disturbing depiction of how a lie becomes the truth when gossip, doubt and malice are allowed to flourish.

Photo: Per Arnesen

Three years after the phenomenal international success of Niels Arden Oplev's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Danish and Nordic films are still very much on world buyers' priority lists. The surge of distribution platforms combined with the current hype on Nordic genre films and directors like Nicolas Winding Refn, Susanne Bier and Lars von Trier have spurred a buying spree on commercially viable Nordic content, re-focusing the market on pre-sales.

## TRIGGERS

BY ANNIKA PHAM

Most Danish and foreign-language films are still sold abroad after having been screened at a festival or a market, but over the last couple of years competition has intensified over the commercially oriented Nordic films, triggering stronger demand from buyers on projects at an earlier stage of production, and forcing sales agents to adjust.

The change came with *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* which opened the mainstream international market to Nordic films, as other distributors feared they would miss the next *Millennium* film. But the Nordic blockbuster also appeared on the market at the right time. After a few years of shying away from film acquisitions due to the financial crisis, distributors were ready to open up their wallets again, and the Nordic crime films based on best-selling novel provided a great opportunity to minimize their risks and maximise their revenues with cross media and merchandising opportunities. Also, the international crave for Nordic crime feature films was heightened by the success of TV series such as the Danish *The Killing* that became a cult series last year on the BBC, widening the audience potential for foreign language fare.

### MIX OF CATCHY ELEMENTS

Pre-selling means for a film sales agent hired by a producer to start raising financing on a film by introducing it to as many distributors worldwide as possible prior to the film commencing principal photography. For the sales agent, this means having an attractive package that will entice a distributor to take risks and advance money on the film: a mix of catchy elements such as a name director and scriptwriter, possibly a script, an attractive cast, the production company's credentials, and a promo-reel.

Rikke Ennis, CEO for TrustNordisk, one of the largest sales agents for Danish and Nordic films says she and her team have to work much more in advance, especially prior to key markets such as the European Film Market in Berlin.

"The change is indeed that we have to be involved on the projects on a much earlier stage. We have to be very prepared and start discussing projects with producers even two years ahead of

their release. Buyers are much more aggressive in knowing what's coming this year but also the following year."

New digital tools are used to facilitate viewing options of promo-reels and finished films such as online screening rooms. "Everything is smoother today, and it makes the decision process go faster. It's like warm bread: you want to eat it when it's hot, not wait until after the market!" says Ennis.

In the genre of Nordic crime novels adapted for the screen, TrustNordisk expects Zentropa's upcoming four films based on Jussi Adler Olsen's Department Q investigations, to raise the same interest worldwide for pre-sales as did, for instance, the *Millennium* trilogy, the Swedish *Easy Money* and the Norwegian-Danish *Headhunters* that was one of last year's hottest titles in Berlin.

### ANIMATED BONANZA

But Nordic crime is not the only genre today that attracts pre-financing. Danish animation based on classic children's books or original content are also in demand. Among the recent films that triggered pre-sales is the 3D *Freddy Frogface* based on Ole Lund Kirkegaard's novel. The German based Sola Media pre-sold it to over 15 territories prior to the film's premiere in Denmark last June, and this year they are offering the 3D *Jelly T*. The 3D *Ronal the Barbarian* was another strong animation film. Sales agent Tine Klint from the Copenhagen-based boutique outfit LevelK says she was able to secure 30% of the budget in pre-sales. The whole package of the film and its timing - in regards to competition on the market - made it highly attractive. "You can't pre-sell on genre alone, or a director alone. It's about the package and the timing," she argues.

An attractive mix of ingredients is also what triggered the healthy pre-sales on Nikolaj Arcel's period drama *A Royal Affair* in Berlin competition. Based on the promo-reel introduced in Cannes in 2011 by the film's leading talents Mads Mikkelsen and Alicia Vikander, TrustNordisk was able to close 40-50% of the budget in pre-sales.

### UNIQUE LARS VON TRIER

In the auteur category, Danish directors able to raise pre-financing are only a handful, with Lars von Trier keeping a unique position. "Lars' films are

pretty much sold out before we have the finished film. That's how it always has been," says the head of TrustNordisk. For instance on *Nymphomaniac* we have already several deals although we haven't started financing the film."

Nicolas Winding Refn whose US film *Drive* boosted his international profile, is another hot Danish director. His Danish, English-language project *Only God Forgives* starring again Ryan Gosling is pre-sold in Berlin by top French sales agents Wild Bunch and Gaumont. Other bankable Danish directors splitting their careers between the US and Europe are Lone Scherfig and Oscar winner Susanne Bier. Bier's upcoming comedy starring Pierce Brosnan is one of the most anticipated Danish films of 2012, and as much as 80% of the budget will be pre-sold before final delivery, says Ennis. Thomas Vinterberg's thriller *The Hunt* also started pre-selling in autumn, based on the track record of Vinterberg, scriptwriter Tobias Lindholm (*R* and *Submarino*), lead actor Mads Mikkelsen and the intriguing story.

The high production values, tight character-driven stories and reasonable budgets of Nordic films are what make them strong alternatives to US fare. Dutch buyer Pim Hermeling (Wild Bunch) who recently acquired for the Benelux *The Hunt*, *A Royal Affair*, *Nymphomaniac* and the Icelandic-Danish *Volcano* confirms: "The Nordic countries have brought us a large number of successful directors who are doing great in the Netherlands. In Belgium it's a bit problematic but still, they make money." One of his competitors on the pre-buying market for the Benelux is Lumiere, who has made a specialty of Nordic crime and paying top money to stay number one in the genre.

### NEW MARKET WITH VOD

Other key countries that have become more aggressive and are opening up to non-English language films are the UK and the number one territory in the world: the US. On top of usual buyers such as IFC Films, the marketing strategy of companies like Magnolia Pictures to go out on VoD prior to the theatrical release is paying off and is being copied by competitors like The Weinstein Company. Large subscription VoD services such as Netflix are also pre-buying, opening up a new market.

"As the US is pretty much number one on new businesses, everyone watches what they do, and we'll see the next development happening in Europe over the next two years," Ennis assures. "Here in Denmark, we're having a heated discussion about how to exploit the windows to their maximum. I think time will show that the more we exploit a film in as many windows as possible, the more the film will make money and the more films will actually be produced" ■



**Steffen Andersen-Møller** /  
Head of Audience & Promotion



**Anne Marie Kürstein** /  
Festival Consultant, short & documentary films



**Lizette Gram Mygind** /  
Festival Consultant, feature films



**Charlotte Giese** /  
Head of Unit, Children & Youth



**Christian Juhl Lemche** / Festival Consultant,  
feature films, and project leader of the film events  
during the Danish EU Presidency



**Pernille Munk Skydsgaard** / Head of Unit,  
Marketing & Festival Distribution, and responsible  
for film events during the Danish EU Presidency



**Noemi Ferrer Schwenk** /  
International producer

# DIALOGUE

## ACROSS BORDERS

Seeing a theatre full of Canadians howling with laughter at the Danish comedy *Superclásico* or a crowd of Muslim girls in Zanzibar having a wildly animated discussion about authorities after watching Niels Arden Oplev's *We Shall Overcome* – these are some of the great moments experienced by the people who work with Danish films in the international arena.

BY SUSANNA NEIMANN AND ANNEMARIE HØRSMAN

In recent years the Danish Film Institute has put a special focus on strengthening partnerships across national borders. The background for this is the increasing demand for Danish films and filmmakers on the global stage and a growing awareness in Danish cultural life in general that international cultural exchange and dialogue are important.

These international efforts, anchored in the Danish Film Act, are now strengthened in an interdepartmental committee set up by the DFI. The task is to prioritise and coordinate activities to make the quality and effect of DFI's work even better and enable the organisation to systematically evaluate and gather knowledge.

The DFI's international activities fall into three categories: festival efforts supporting the dissemination and awareness of Danish films, cultural exchange supporting exchange and dialogue in the broader sense, and co-production focusing on cross-border professional partnerships.

At the end of the day, it all comes down to films touching audiences and creating space for dialogue. Here's a look at the DFI's international efforts – what we do and why we do it.

# A STAGE FOR CULTURE AND COMMERCE

*"Once the film is launched, lots of other festivals will discover it and contact us. That's what happened when Love Is in the Air was selected for Berlin this year."*

**Steffen Andersen Møller, Head of Audience & Promotion, likes to point out that the Danish Film Act is there to support art. In practice, however, the DFI, with its subsidy system and independent activities, operates in the intersection between art and the market, an intersection with tremendous dynamism and potential, Andersen-Møller says.**

Danish films participate in more than 400 festivals every year. But if the DFI was actually meeting the demand that's out there, that number would be even higher.

"We work according to two principles," Andersen-Møller says. "There are a handful of A-festivals we simply have to be at, preferably with films in competition. We have a massive presence there. In Berlin and Cannes, for instance, we have a stand in partnership with Scandinavian Films. In addition, thanks to the good reputation of Danish films, there is a long line of festivals that would like to see us. We are very pleased about that and we make every effort to attend. Festivals are an important platform and meeting place, in terms of both broad cultural dissemination and the more commercial dimension."

The DFI's festival team strives to create ideal conditions for the players in the industry. The DFI does not handle actual sales but supports distributors and sales agents in their work.

"We stage Danish films internationally and we have a good overall view with respect to disseminating Danish cinema culture. So, apart from creating a good framework for the commercial activities, we can expand Danish festival participation and put it into perspective. Having a strong film in competition at an important festival is, of course, a criterion of success for us. It creates attention and can act as a spearhead, for example in promoting new talent or making retrospective series available," Andersen-Møller says.

### LAUGHTER IN TORONTO AND TEARS IN ROME

The Danish Film Institute's regular festival team consists of Lizette Gram Mygind and Christian Juhl Lemche, festival consultants for feature films, Anne Marie Kürstein, consultant for shorts and documentaries, and Pernille Munk Skydsgaard, head of Marketing & Festival Distribution.

Whether you're dealing with features or documentaries, Kürstein says, it's a question of finding the right match of film and festival. Kürstein notes the recent breakthroughs of Danish documentaries, also in terms of their sales potential.

"It has been exciting to work with films like *Enemies of Happiness*, *Burma VJ* and *Armadillo* that treat important political themes with great artistic power," she says. "These

films have enjoyed enormous dissemination and influence around the world, which was triggered by their launch at a festival."

When it comes to feature films, the festival efforts start with planning a strategy in close cooperation with the producer and the sales agent, Lizette Gram Mygind says.

"We watch the film together and decide what festival will be a good platform for the film's international launch. In the process, we might look at whether a certain market for the film is untapped. If that's the case, giving a potential local distributor the opportunity to evaluate the film's playability in front of a local audience can be very beneficial. Once the film is launched, lots of other festivals will discover it and contact us. That's what happened when *Love Is in the Air* was selected for Berlin this year."

With years of experience, first as head of marketing for a sales agent and now handling festivals for the DFI, Gram Mygind knows the job sometimes takes ice water in your veins.

"We sometimes have to remain patient and tell a producer or director, 'I don't think what this festival is offering us is what's best for the film. I think the film can do better, let's wait and see.' And of course, it's hugely satisfying when we come out on top."

Gram Mygind sees some negative and some positive trends on the global festival circuit. An unfortunate trend is the major A-festivals increasingly demanding that the films they pick have their world premiere at their festival.

"By insisting so strongly on having world premieres and not just international premieres, festivals are missing out on some really good films. For producers, it can be a financial challenge when they have to keep a film on the shelf because they can't give it a national premiere before its world premiere at a festival."

Then again, Gram Mygind sees a positive trend in festivals taking on the role of distributing small films on VOD. "The theatrical market is becoming increasingly polarised, and small films all too easily drown. The Tribeca Film Festival is a good example of a festival having established a distribution arm that enables more Danish films to reach a North-American audience."

At the end of the day, films meeting audiences is what makes it all worthwhile, the festival manager says. "When big crowds at festivals warmly receive the films you helped get out. It might be a packed theatre in Toronto roaring with laughter at a screening of Ole Christian Madsen's *Superclásico*. Or a cinema in Rome full of teenagers, plus the moderator, the director and me, all bawling our eyes out at Kaspar Munck's *Hold Me Tight*. Then it all comes together," Gram Mygind says before heading off to Berlin.

## SOWING THE SEEDS OF

# FILM CULTURE



Sorry, all sold out ... outside Film Club Kampala. Uganda has 1 cinema, while Denmark has 163. Half of Uganda's population is under 15.

**Brazil, Canada, South Africa, England, Tanzania and now Uganda. For years the Danish Film Institute has been behind major cultural exchange projects around the world, and Charlotte Giese has been involved in most of them. Time and again, she is blown away by the ability of cinema to foster dialogue.**

What does it mean to have a film culture? And why would you necessarily want to disseminate your own country's film culture to other countries? These are good questions that Charlotte Giese, Head of Children & Youth at the DFI, would like to answer with a mix of humility and self-awareness on behalf of Danish film culture.

The Children & Youth unit works to give every child in Denmark the chance to experience, understand and create films. Of all the DFI's international cultural exchange and knowledge-sharing efforts, our ongoing outreach to young audiences is the one aspect of Danish film policy that people abroad ask about most.

"For nearly 30 years, we have been allocating 25% of our production subsidies to films for children and youth," Giese says. "We are privileged to have a film policy that supports production, dissemination and education to youthful target groups. Because we have a tradition, a subsidy system, an organisation, we are asked to share our knowledge and experience: How do you do it? And why? What impact does it have?" Sometimes the questions involve soft, cultural values, sometimes the film professionals want to know about the films' commercial potential.

The demand is often answered by organising workshops and seminars and by sending out Danish filmmakers like Tobias Lindholm, Rumle

Hammerich and Louise Friedberg who, together with the DFI, show films, give talks and lecture. In addition are larger development projects and partnerships where the DFI works with local partners abroad, often over several years.

One such example is the partnership with Brazil, which started with screenings of dubbed versions of Danish films via festival outreach activities across this vast country. Over time, the partnership expanded to include seminars for filmmakers and political decision-makers. Another example is the establishment of Children & Film Panorama, a children's film festival with master classes and other events at the already existing Zanzibar International Film Festival. The festival's children's film section is now in its fifth year.

### UGANDAN YOUTHS IN DIALOGUE

In extension of the Children & Film Panorama project in Tanzania, the DFI is now undertaking a wide-ranging film initiative for young people in Uganda inspiring the young generation to experience and work in film, both theoretically and practically.

Youth & Film Uganda is the title of the DFI's new initiative, combining mobile cinemas, film festivals, master classes for film professionals and instruction in film production – all directed at young people.

The DFI, in partnership with the Danish Centre of Culture and Development, the Danish Embassy, Station Next, DOX:LAB and the Maisha Foundation in Uganda, is behind this new three-year cultural and development programme.

"Showing films and perhaps sowing the seeds of a film culture among the youth of Uganda is a big challenge," Giese says. "It's a society where children and young people are traditionally raised to obey their parents, their teachers and society. Watching



Youngsters watching the South African film *Izulu Lami* by Madoda Ncayiyana in Film Club Kampala. Photos: Maisha Film Lab

films from around the globe, having an opinion about films and telling your own story on film isn't commonplace in a country like Uganda – though there are certainly plenty of stories there to tell."

Many Ugandan children and teens have grown up under circumstances that would hardly qualify to be termed childhood. The organisers are hoping that watching and making films will expand the youthful participants' perspective on life and enable them to engage in dialogue with the rest of the world.

To Giese, cinema's ability to foster dialogue is at the core of the DFI's intercultural exchange efforts.

"We screened Niels Arden Oplev's *We Shall Overcome* to a crowd of girls in Zanzibar who showed up veiled and a bit cautious. We had serious doubts that this Danish film about rebelling against adult authority would mean anything to them. But I'd say they unleashed their tongues and discussed the film with wild engagement."

"We get enormously inspired – by the stories, the discussions, the engagement and the ability to come up with creative solutions even if the framework is much less organised and streamlined than what we are used to. We get so much back," Giese says.

"We also get the opportunity to see lots of amazing films that we can bring back to Denmark, in the sense that we have a close partnership with the children and youth festival BUSTER in Copenhagen which is a perfect venue for a lot of these films. Also, the DFI Cinematheque is always eager to discover new directors. Finally, we can support Danish distributors' import of films through our subsidy programme."

# PROFESSIONALISING

**"It's not enough that Denmark has a strong storytelling tradition and loads of creative filmmakers," Noemi Ferrer Schwenk says. "We also have to make sure that filmmakers can always stay up to speed on what's going on elsewhere to be among the best." DFI's International Producer is gearing up the Danish film industry for an even more dedicated international effort in the future.**

It's right there in her name: Noemi Ferrer Schwenk is multi-European. With years of experience in the European production and distribution environments, on top of her German-Spanish ancestry, what more could you ask for in terms of international expertise?

Ferrer Schwenk is now putting this expertise to good use in her job as International Producer at the Danish Film Institute, a position she assumed last September.

"I knew quite a bit about the Danish production environment before I came to Denmark in 2009. But I was still deeply surprised when I first started working in the business. Man, I thought, there's this huge desire to get involved internationally. In the DFI's newly established international office we will now be able to meet that need and create a professional framework for cross-border partnerships," she says.

### ONE-STOP CALLING

An important systematising is to gather all the knowledge in a single place, Ferrer Schwenk says, referring to the office's ambition to be a one-stop call for Danish producers looking for information about international conditions.

"That could be financing, EU funding, international training or anything else. I work closely with the Danish MEDIA Desk, so when producers write applications to MEDIA, they can now consult with my colleague Ene Katrine Rasmussen at MEDIA and come to me to get help to improve their projects' odds of passing muster with the EU-programme. We can provide a kind of reality check: Is the project realistic, does it hold up, are there other options?"

The international office not only makes its knowhow available, it also actively and assertively applies it.

"We keep track of international courses, co-production markets and training to hone skills in the industry. Because we see the big picture, we can provide very targeted support. There was an example recently where a co-production market in Lithuania held a Japanese forum for Japanese producers

looking to meet Scandinavian producers. With a little research, we found a Danish producer who had a Japanese project in the pipeline. The producer went to Lithuania and had an amazing exchange."

### KNOWHOW WINS THE DAY

Asked about the reasons for the heightened international outlook in Denmark over the last five to six years, Ferrer Schwenk points to filmmakers' fatigue with the tried and true.

"A lot of directors and screenwriters are looking for new ideas, new partnerships and new places to tell stories about. They want to challenge themselves," she says. "I sense a creative drive. More people are leaving the country to get a fresh approach to filmmaking.

"As the ambitions grow, so do the budgets. Accordingly, it's getting harder to get films financed," Ferrer Schwenk says. The fact that local sources of financing are increasingly drying up doesn't help either. "There's a long-standing tradition of financing projects locally in Denmark, and if additional financing was lacking, it could be obtained in the Nordic countries. That model is no longer sufficient." Here, Ferrer Schwenk points to knowhow as a major asset. To find locations, funds and the network to make a film somewhere other than Denmark, you need all the knowhow you can get, she says.

"We already have an internationally oriented industry in documentaries and animation. In terms of features, we have a few, big players. But it's not enough that only a few companies have gathered knowhow about working internationally. That has to become a part of the industry's overall knowhow. We should help the young generation get out there. This is where the Danish Film Institute's international office comes in: we can professionalise the international search, systematise and target it."

Interest is also flowing in the other direction, Ferrer Schwenk says. She gets a lot of inquiries from international producers about the conditions of co-producing under the auspices of the DFI's subsidy system.

"I'm especially seeing an interest in working with Danish screenwriters," she says. Moreover,

she points to Nicolas Winding Refn, Susanne Bier and Lars von Trier, as well as drama series like *The Killing* and *Borgen*, both broadcasted on BBC, as terrific showcases for Danish producers.

### VIKINGS, 2012-STYLE

"In the coming year, we'll see a lot of films that were made with Danish money but are set elsewhere and reflect an opening up toward the world. Nikolaj Arcel's Berlin contender *A Royal Affair* tells a story that's set in Denmark in the 1770s but is actually a German-Danish story and was shot on location in the Czech Republic. We are a long way from Dogme here. Ole Christian Madsen's Oscar-shortlisted *Superclásico* was filmed in Argentina, and Bier's new romantic comedy stars Pierce Brosnan and was shot in large part in Italy. Nicolas Winding Refn recently started filming *Only God Forgives* in Thailand. Bille August has wrapped *Marie Krøyer*, a period piece from the 1880s. The stories have clearly changed," she says.

"I sense the desire to get out there, to say, Yes, let's do something together. In the good old Viking spirit, but without the raping and pillaging, 2012-style," Ferrer Schwenk jests. "Everyone – Swedes, Danes and Norwegians – going out and conquering the world, in the good way.

"It's a revelation to see so much going on in the Scandinavian nations and the great focus, culturally and cinematically, on Scandinavia. We have a huge strength as a cultural region, and we have to capitalise on our natural synergies," Ferrer Schwenk says.

### BILATERAL CO-PRODUCTION AGREEMENTS

Last year at Cannes, the Danish Film Institute and Australia launched a partnership seeking to enhance cooperation between the two countries in the area of audiovisual work, to get a handle on each other's subsidy schemes and create a framework for fruitful partnerships in film, television and games. In addition, Denmark is undertaking vigorous co-production activity and professional sparring with Germany and exploration is currently underway between the Danish Film Institute and Canadian film funds such as Telefilm Canada and Canada Media Fund.

### DFI SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS

The 2011-2014 Film Accord enables the Danish Film Institute to support seven to nine co-productions in feature films per year that have a non-Danish delegate producer. The aim of supporting minor co-productions is to promote cooperation, networking, competencies and creativity across national borders. To qualify, the application must be made by a Danish producer, the production must have Danish creative or technical participation, and a deal for Danish TV broadcast or theatrical distribution must have been signed.

### INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS SUPPORTED IN 2011 (LISTED WITH DANISH PRODUCTION COMPANY)

*Bomb*, dir. Sally Potter, Miso Film  
*Camiel Borgman*, dir. Alex van Warmerdam, Det Danske Filmstudie  
*Hokus Pokus*, *Allons Åberg*, dir. Torill Kove, A. Film  
*Kon-tiki*, dir. Joachim Rønning, Espen Sandberg, Nordisk Film  
*Kraftidioten*, dir. Hans Petter Moland, Zentropa  
*Niko – Family Affairs*, dir. Jørgen Lerdam, Kari Juusonen, A. Film  
*Song of the Sea*, dir. Tomm Moore, Nørlum

# DANISH FILM CULTURE IN THE EU

**"We aim to show some of the aspects of Danish cinema that we are most proud of," Christian Juhl Lemche, project leader of the film activities during the EU presidency, says.**

"It's our ambition to provide insight into the scope and unified thinking we believe characterises Danish film policy and film culture," Christian Juhl Lemche says. Accordingly, the film efforts during the nation's EU presidency are focused not only on film screenings but also on children and teens and talent development:

FILM-Y, the DFI's mobile studio for children, is travelling to Brussels, and hopefully also to Transylvania. As for talent development, young European filmmakers will get a chance to meet and mingle when the DFI, in partnership with the CPH PIX and CPH:DOX festivals, invites them to engage in dialogue and networking.

"We're well aware that we are quite privileged in a country like Denmark, and we want to put our resources to use in sharing our experiences and knowhow. That goes for our international efforts in general. At the same time, it's always an eye-opener for us to witness the dynamism and drive in filmmaking nations that are less privileged economically and policy wise. People there are often much better at seeing opportunities instead of limitations. We can learn a lot from that," says Juhl Lemche who, most of all, is looking forward to taking FILM-Y to Transylvania.

Beyond that, Danish films will be screened in many different contexts across Europe during the presidency. Every year, the DFI works closely with European festivals to showcase Danish films to international audiences. In spring 2012, the DFI is intensifying its collaboration with selected festivals, where new films and filmmakers will

be making an even stronger showing than usual.

The DFI has issued 20 films on Blu-ray to be shown across Europe, at libraries, cinemateques, cultural centres, etc. The discs include films by directors like Susanne Bier, Lars von Trier, Thomas Vinterberg, Nicolas Winding Refn, Niels Arden Oplev, Jørgen Leth and Janus Metz, giving local audiences a chance to explore a wide range of Danish cinema.

"We are striving to make Danish films widely available to as many European citizens as possible," Pernille Munk Skydsgaard, who is a member of the steering committee for the DFI's activities during the EU presidency, says.

"The selection of 20 films embraces new titles as well as classics, and we hope it will provide a nuanced image of Denmark and of the diversity of our film culture," Munk Skydsgaard says.

## FILM INITIATIVES IN SPRING 2012

The Danish Film Institute has launched four main initiatives which aim to promote Denmark as a film nation during the Presidency, giving European audiences and film professionals a chance to get closer to the films, the filmmakers and the policies.

Get the full view of the film initiatives during the Presidency at [dfi.dk/eu2012](http://dfi.dk/eu2012) where you can download our Special EU issue – 98 pages on Danish cinema with essays and news bites garnished with images of films and film people.

Focus on Danish cinema is part of a wider cultural focus launched with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture. The Danish Arts Agency is responsible for the overall coordination. Visit the official website to find out more:

[eu2012.dk](http://eu2012.dk)

## ACTIVITIES AT FESTIVALS

Special film series, seminars, director meetings and social gatherings are some of the numerous festival activities launched on the occasion of the presidency to bring Europeans closer to Danish films and their creators. These are some of the festivals collaborating with the Danish Film Institute during the presidency:

Göteborg IFF  
Berlin IFF  
Transylvania IFF  
Edinburgh IFF  
Thessaloniki Documentary FF  
Brussels International Fantastic FF  
Cartoon Movie

## EUROPEAN TALENT MEETINGS

Denmark's two leading festivals, CPH PIX and CPH:DOX, are hosting talent meetings to nurture dialogue and creative partnerships:

The feature film festival CPH PIX is inviting 20 European film talents to meetings with their Danish colleagues and other industry professionals. The documentary film festival CPH:DOX is organising talent meetings that focus on new creative forms of collaboration. In a special edition of the festival's cross-cultural workshop DOX:LAB six European directors will meet and, in pairs, develop a film project, starting off with a workshop during spring.



## TWENTY FILMS ON BLU-RAY

Denmark has a long tradition of upholding a diverse film production that embraces powerful artistic expressions as well as broadly appealing stories for all ages. "Danish Film – A Selection" offers a taste of all this with 20 films in four categories:

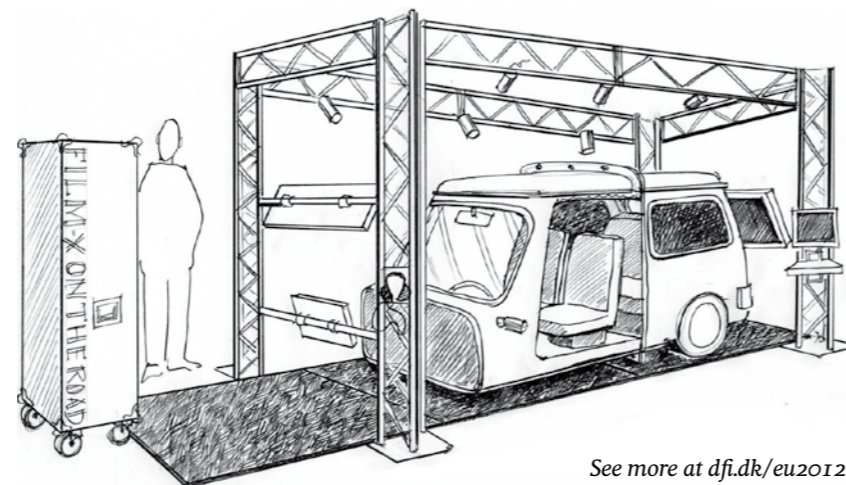
feature films, documentaries, films for children and a selection of classics. The Blu-ray is offered to Danish representations and cultural institutes throughout the EU for them to arrange screenings with their local partners.

## MAKE YOUR OWN FILM!

Belgian school children are invited to make their own film at FILM-Y, the Danish Film Institute's mobile film studio, at the Bozar arts centre in Brussels.

FILM-Y is a unique hands-on experience that gives children the opportunity to explore the creative and technical processes of

film-making from within. During its month-long visit to Brussels, the mobile film studio invites families and school classes to a few hours of fun, collaborative work where a green Morris Minor equipped with a back projection is the main prop in a car chase story that the children act in, direct, shoot and edit.



See more at [dfi.dk/eu2012](http://dfi.dk/eu2012)



Mette Damgaard-Sørensen in front of the European Film College, situated near the coastal town of Ebeltoft **Photo:** Sophie Harper

## PERSONAL VOICES IN A GLOBAL WORLD

**Mette Damgaard-Sørensen, principal of the European Film College in Ebeltoft, is visiting the Berlinale with all 115 of her students. Director of Berlin contender *A Royal Affair*, Nikolaj Arcel, is among the former students at the school in Ebeltoft which builds on the Danish Folk High School tradition.**

BY METTE DAMGAARD-SØRENSEN

Twenty years have passed, but I still remember the thrill, attending the Berlin Film Festival for the first time as a young film student, ready to throw myself into the world of film in all its aspects. I devoured exotic film programmes at remote art cinemas, feeling that I alone had discovered secret cinematic treasures. I shuffled around the European Film Market, taking in the frenzy, and I basked in sublime moments at the Berlinale Palast. It was like stepping through a mirror into a much-anticipated future. I returned home changed. Now I knew for sure where I was heading.

Twenty years later, as principal of the European Film College, my task is to help the next generation reach a point where it becomes clear to them what road to travel. Every year a new group of students, with hopes, ambitions and dreams, arrives at the school and is given the opportunity, over 8 months, to discover who they are in terms of expressions, interests and talents. They will, if we succeed in our task, grow as human beings and in the process find their personal voice.

The growth of each individual student is a key focus of the Danish Folk High School philosophy. The European Film College is part of that system and shares that philosophy, which is based on a democratic approach to education. Students and faculty live on campus, which creates an environment that is not unlike a huge 24/7 film set. Tests and grades are replaced by coaching, evaluation and critical dialogue. With pluralism, tolerance and respect as core values, it is our experience that the coming together of students from very different cultures and backgrounds has a truly creative and productive effect, corresponding to a pluralistic view on the film medium and the recognition that art never consists of one answer or one truth. In this very intense and safe environment, students are encouraged to search for their limits, make mistakes and explore their personal material to make their voices more distinct.

To me, that is our main challenge as a film foundation course. The present generation faces a media reality flooded with visual stories: the exclusivity of film media is long gone. Anybody can produce and distribute material. To begin your journey as a filmmaker, it is essential to recognise the necessity of having and nurturing a distinct voice in your choice of material and in your expression. When a student succeeds in that task and suddenly shines brightly, it is – as any teacher will know – one of the most rewarding and moving moments there is. For a distinct voice to be heard in the real world, however, it is just as important to prepare the students for the reality of the business. Recognising the importance of being engaged with your material, yet remaining very flexible when it comes to budgets, running times, formats and distribution methods, is key. It is also essential to truly understand that, to become a filmmaker, you have to make films and that film production requires strength, responsibility and teamwork.

The big festivals like Berlin provide an opportunity to sense where the industry and also the art form are heading. So, this year I return to the Berlinale with 115 EFC students, a new generation of young filmmakers who are in for an overwhelming and transformative

*"Twenty years have passed, but I still remember the thrill, attending the Berlin Film Festival for the first time as a young film student."*



Students at work **Photo:** Nicolai Lok Hansen

experience. Watching films, meeting filmmakers, attending master classes and visiting the European Film Market will confront them with the various facets of today's film business. I am certain it will be a rewarding encounter that will still be vivid 20 years from now ■



Morning view **Photo:** Nicolai Lok Hansen

## EUROPEAN FILM COLLEGE, EBELTOFT

Founded in 1993 by a group of Danish filmmakers, the EFC is the only Danish folk high school specifically built to teach filmmaking. Apart from the Film Foundation course, the school offers shorter courses, seminars, meetings and more for the film industry. International guest teachers over the years have included Wim Wenders, Christine Vachon, Jan Harlan, Rick Senat, Charles MacDonald, Mamoun Hassan and many more. The school also has artist-in-residence facilities for professional filmmakers.

## INSTRUCTION

The school's primary activity is an 8½-month course in filmmaking. 115 students are admitted every year. Half of the students are Danish, the other half come from other countries. The curriculum includes screenwriting, producing, acting, cinematography, editing, sound and fiction and documentary film directing.

## FORMER STUDENTS

Nikolaj Arcel, director (*A Royal Affair*, writer on the Swedish adaptation of *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*)  
Mads Matthiesen, director (*Teddy Bear*)  
Pilou Asbæk, actor (*Borgen*, *R*)  
Joachim Trier, director (*Oslo, August 31st, Reprise*)  
Pernille Fischer Christensen, director (*A Family*, *A Soap*)  
Martin P. Zandvliet, director (*A Funny Man*, *Applause*)  
Christina Rosendahl, director (*Triple Dare*)  
Anders Frithiof August, writer (*Superclásico*, *A Funny Man*)  
Ronnie Fridthjof, producer (*Armadillo*)  
Michael Noer, director (*R*, *The Wild Hearts*)  
Charlotte Bruus, DP (*Submarino*)  
Jacob Aue Sobol, photographer (member of Magnum Photos)

Director Nicolas Winding Refn and Thai actress Yaya Ying who stars in *Only God Forgives* Photo: Thanaporn Arkmanon

## Drive team shooting *Only God Forgives* in Bangkok

Nicolas Winding Refn is reteaming with Ryan Gosling for the genre-conscious Danish director's neo-noir *Only God Forgives*.

In the past several months, the Danish filmmaker Nicolas Winding Refn has been in Bangkok, preparing to shoot his new film *Only God Forgives*. Meanwhile, Ryan Gosling has been boning up on his Thai kickboxing skills to play the film's lead, Julian, a US expat who runs a Thai boxing club in Bangkok as a front for his family's drug-smuggling operation.

Kristin Scott Thomas stars as Julian's mother, Crystal, who arrives in the Asian megacity after Julian's brother Billy is killed. Herself the head of a powerful crime organization, she wants revenge and pushes Julian to find the killer.

On 30 January, Refn started shooting this English-language Danish production on location in Bangkok. With him is his dream team from *Drive*: Cliff Martinez, who wrote the moody synth score; editor Matthew Newman, who also cut Refn's *Bronson* and *Valhalla Rising*; plus production designer Beth Mickle.

Refn's team includes Larry Smith, the DP on *Bronson*, line producer Johnny Andersen who has been on nearly all of Refn's films, and producer Lene Børglum, who also executive produced *Valhalla Rising* and several of von Trier's international productions.

*Only God Forgives* is the first of two films – the second film is titled *I Walk With the Dead* – that Refn's and Lene Børglum's Space Rocket Nation is making with their French partners Wild Bunch and Gaumont.

About his collaboration with Gosling, Refn says: "We worked on *Drive* together, now it's *Only God Forgives*, and later we will continue with *Logan's Run*. It's hard to say what makes it work between us. It just does." LFF

*Only God Forgives* has received production support from the Danish Film Institute.

*"It's hard to say what makes it work between us. It just does."*

### NICOLAS WINDING REFN

Born 1970, Denmark. Lived in New York between the age of 8 and 17. At age 24, Refn wrote and directed his debut feature *Pusher* (1996), winning him instant critical acclaim. Films include *Bleeder* (1999), *Fear X* (2003) starring John Turturro, *With Blood on My Hands – Pusher II* (2004) and *I Am the Angel of Death – Pusher III* (2005), the two follow-ups to his 1996 breakthrough film written, directed and produced in just one year, *Bronson* (2009), *Valhalla Rising* (2010), and finally *Drive* (2011), Refn's greatest international success to date. The Danish production *Only God Forgives* is expected to release in 2013.



The Village Photo: Lars Høgsted

## Whatever the consequences

**REGNER GRASTEN.** In *The Village*, the dramatic story of a group of Danish resistance fighters during the German occupation of Denmark in World War II, producer Regner Grasten wants to draw parallels to today's uprisings against dictatorships in the Arab world.

"We were ordinary people who wanted to live in peace with our neighbours. Unless young Germans and young Danes sometime in the future will be able to extend their hands across the border in friendship, our death makes no sense." Marius Fiil, a inn keeper owner and leader of one of the most famous resistance groups during the German occupation of Denmark in World War II, spoke these words to the German court that sentenced him and seven other members of the Hvidsten Group to death.

In *The Village*, directed by Anne Grethe Bjarup Riis, producer Regner Grasten is refreshing a piece of history he thinks should never be forgotten. "It's a powerful human story that will impact many generations. The film raises questions that have renewed currency now that so many people in the Arab nations are rebelling against dictatorship. It will make future generations understand the unbelievable courage of people who rise up against injustice, regardless of the consequences to themselves."

Inn keeper Fiil in 1943 got his family and friends together to receive airdrops of weapons for the Danish resistance. Every night they waited for the coded message on BBC radio that would tell them where to go to receive supplies at midnight. One or more English Halifax bombers would fly over the designated area, the group would light signals and once the supplies were dropped, the containers of explosives were hurriedly hidden away. The explosives were used for sabotage against railroads, train depots, bridges and factories that worked for the Germans. In March 1944, the group was caught. Eight members

were executed and six were sentenced to prison.

Anne Grethe Bjarup Riis, an actress, is making her directorial debut in collaboration with Anders Refn as technical director. Refn is a long-time partner of Lars von Trier, most recently as first assistant editor and first assistant director on *Melancholia*.

The Danish Film Institute and TV 2 are funding the production which will open in Denmark on 1 March.

Regner Grasten is an important player in Danish production. He has created a strong brand in the tremendously popular *Anja & Viktor* series (1999-) and put out several dramatic features based on bestselling Danish novels: *Stolen Spring* (1993), *Just a Girl* (1995) and the epic, nearly four-hour-long *Lost Generation* (2004).

His next project in the pipeline is a drama about famous Danish author Karen Blixen and her family entitled *Tanne – A Family Saga*. The setting is Europe around 1900, at a time of great political and societal changes, with Bertolucci's *1900* as a key source of inspiration. Shooting is scheduled to start in February 2013, release end of December 2013. LFF

## Scandinavian thriller series gaining momentum

**JUSSI ADLER-OLSEN's** million-selling thrillers are headed for the big screen. Zentropa is producing with support from the Danish Film Institute and the national broadcaster TV 2.

Best-selling author Jussi Adler-Olsen's thrillers about Department Q have sold six millions copies worldwide since the first novel came out in 2007. Mikkel Nørgaard, director of *Clown*, Danish cinema's biggest boxoffice hit in the last decade, is set to shoot Adler-Olsen's *The Woman in the Cage* for Zentropa in the fall.

*The Woman in the Cage* is the first of four instalments in Adler-Olsen's series about Carl Mørck. A top Copenhagen homicide detective before a bullet almost ended his life, Mørck returns to work and is put in charge of the newly formed Department Q, a special division that investigates cold cases. One particular

case captures Mørck's interest: a politician vanished without a trace five years ago and is assumed dead, but she isn't. Not yet.

Adler-Olsen is Denmark's premier crime writer. His books routinely top bestseller lists in northern Europe, and he has won just about every Nordic crime-writing award, including the prestigious Glass Key Award – also won by Henning Mankell, Stieg Larsson and Jo Nesbo. The screenplay has been entrusted to Nikolaj Arcel, director of Berlin contender *A Royal Affair*, who also wrote the original Swedish version of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. The Department Q films are produced for Zentropa by Louise Vesth. ZDF of Germany is a partner in the project and TrustNordisk is handling sales.

In June the Danish Film Institute awarded development support to the film. In December the Danish TV station TV 2 made a deal with Zentropa to finance the first four films in the series. Zentropa expects to find additional financing partners over the spring.

The film is expected to open in theatres over Christmas 2013. The plan is for the Department Q films to become annual events with theatrical releases at year-end 2014, 2015 and 2016. LFF

Jussi Adler-Olsen's *The Woman in the Cage* is a worldwide hit Illustration: Book covers



### 1/2 REVOLUTION

"1/2 Revolution, whose title is a reference to the filmmakers' view that the 2011 uprising is an unfinished revolution, is gripping, courageous filmmaking that will reward audiences worldwide with a compelling perspective on the ongoing Egyptian chapter of the regional Arab Spring movement," wrote The Hollywood Reporter on the occasion of the film's North American premiere at Sundance. **Directors:** Omar Shargawi, Karim El Hakim **Production:** Carsten Holst for Globus **Sales:** LevelK



### BALLROOM DANCER

For two years, directors Christian Bonke and Andreas Koefoed tracked former Latin World Champion Slavik Kryklyvyy as he struggled to get back to the top with his new partner and lover Anna. "We wanted the film to look like a fiction film. Everything should be told in scenes. We filmed it like a very pure documentary, but we cut it like a fiction film," Andreas Koefoed says. **Directors:** Andreas Koefoed, Christian Bonke **Production:** Jakob Nordenhof Jønck for Danish Documentary Production **Sales:** DR International Sales



### THE AMBASSADOR

"Highly watchable, clearly (and unabashedly) exploitative and often offensive – but it undeniably unearths some very uncomfortable truths about Central Africa in general, corruption in particular and individual greed on top of it," wrote the Hollywood Reporter in its IDFA review. The film was selected for competition at Sundance. The director's last ride to Park City brought him the World Cinema Jury Prize for his daring satire *The Red Chapel*. **Director:** Mads Brügger **Production:** Peter Engel, Carsten Holst **Sales:** TrustNordisk

# COMPELLING CHARACTERS

**Danish documentaries dealing with global issues have made their presence felt at international festivals lately, a trend reflected in the films at the 2012 European Film Market.**

Omar Shargawi and Karim El Hakim were preparing a film about street kids when they were caught up in the demonstrations in Cairo in January 2011. Soon they turned their cameras towards the Tahrir Square which became the symbol of freedom of the Arab Spring in Egypt. As events heated up, Shargawi and El Hakim felt increasingly unsafe and in early February they left Cairo with the film material hidden in a pram.

The resulting *1/2 Revolution*, which has already travelled to festivals in Dubai and Sundance, is at once an account of the historical upheavals and an intense personal narrative about a small group of friends caught in the midst of chaos.

As one of three Danish documentaries at the European Film Market during the Berlinale, *1/2 Revolution* reflects a trend in Danish documentaries of depicting political, and potentially explosive, realities far from home, and doing so in a personal and broadly entertaining way.

This is no less true of *The Ambassador* which enjoyed its international release as the opening film at IDFA and was in competition in Sundance. Armed

with cufflinks, a cigarette holder, hidden cameras and a diplomatic title, Mads Brügger is on a mission to the Central African Republic to uncover murky games in high diplomatic circles, and all the while enjoying the ride. With Brügger parading as a cliché of a "white man in Africa", *The Ambassador* comes across as a highly ambiguous narrative, at the same time a severe criticism of postcolonial Francafrique and a fetishistic boyhood fantasy acted out by the director.

Taking a less controversial approach is *Ballroom Dancer*, Christian Bonke and Andreas Koefoed's feature-length documentary which had its first international showing at IDFA. The story of former number one Latin dancer Slavik who is now attempting to make a final comeback is an intense close-up portrait of a man who is struggling with an aging body and growing frustrations.

*Ballroom Dancer* is told in a distinct cinematic style that underscores the strong emotional drama both on and off stage. And like *1/2 Revolution* and *The Ambassador*, the film is driven by a compelling character that helps shape a powerful narrative. *AH*

*Also at the European Film Market are the two feature films ID:A and Sundance winner Teddy Bear. For more information on all five films, see reverse section.*

*The European Film Market runs 9-17 February.*

## 3D Jelly T

**Following up on her 3D hit *Freddy Frogface*, producer Nina Crone has a new 3D film coming out this spring, *Jelly T*, opening in Denmark on 16 May.**

*Freddy Frogface* was a popular and critical success last summer for Crone Film. Sales agent Sola Media has now sold the 3D feature to more than 40 countries and is negotiating to add even more territories.

Less than a year later, Crone Film is presenting another 3D feature based on a classic children's book by Ole Lund Kirkegaard, the Danish author beloved for his unique brand of absurd humour and special fondness for antiheroes.

*Jelly T*'s Ivan is a kid who is teased at school and yelled at at home. But that all changes when he meets a witch who gives him superstrength, so he is as strong as Tarzan.

A teaser-trailer was shown at American Film Market and *Jelly T* has already been pre-sold to several territories.

*Jelly T* is directed by Michael Hegner, who also directed the animated features *Niko & the Way to the Stars*, *The Ugly Duckling and Me* and *Help! I'm a Fish*.

Crone Film has another Ole Lund Kirkegaard adaptation in the pipeline, *Otto is a Rhino*. *LFJ*



Rasmus Horskjær is a film commissioner for children and youth at the Danish Film Institute. **Photo:** Kenneth Nguyen



## Monkey time

**Jan Rahbek has a thing for monkeys. His debut feature *Marco Macaco*, an animation film with lots of quirky humour, is finally getting ready for the market.**

"This is exactly what we are looking for!" Sophie Boé, who is responsible for international programmes at Canal+, was delighted. The cause was producer Thomas Borch Nielsen's presentation, at Cartoon Forum, of the animated feature *Marco Macaco* together with a proposed series of 52

six-minute episodes for television. The protagonist of the film and the TV series, Marco Macaco, is a charming monkey who works as a beach officer on a tropical island populated by singing and dancing monkeys. He reunites with his childhood sweetheart and falls in love all over again, that is, until the film's villain, Carlo, who is building a casino right on Marco's beach, steals her affections and launches a sinister plot to become the island's president.

*Marco Macaco*, the feature, will open in Denmark on 11 October, after three years in the making. In 2008 director Jan Rahbek won the Nordic Talent Pitch Prize awarded by the Nordic-Baltic film schools for his film project.

The TV series has been sold to Canal+, and Zodiak has come in as the sales agent.

In Berlin and Cannes, buyers can stop by sales agent Solveig Langeland of Sola Media, who is selling the film for the Nice Ninja production company. *LFJ*

## Jury member Rasmus Horskjær's international Top 5

**As a member of this year's Generation jury, Rasmus Horskjær will be judging the festival's children and youth films in competition. Here is Horskjær's own international Top 5 of films for young audiences.**

### 1. *E.T. / Steven Spielberg*

No getting around him. Family films meet sci-fi, and sweet music fills the heart. I was 11 when I saw this film, and I cried in secret. Spielberg, more than anyone, knows how to stay in touch with his inner child. He has realised his boyhood dreams one after the other.

### 2. *Finding Nemo / Pixar*

The plot here is really a lot like children's films at their worst. The mother is dead and the father is raising his only son by himself. But in this case, the dysfunctional family isn't just people but clownfish. Switching the location to a colourful ocean arena prevents the story from being insufferably intimate. A real adventure with loads of identification that's funny and touching for kids and adults alike.

### 3. *Let the Right One In / Tomas Alfredsson*

A lot of films for children and teens want to deal with difficult themes like bullying and loneliness. More often than not the films fail to rise above their themes. But this one succeeds. The cold, the snow and the barren apartment blocks are a frigid backdrop for a compelling story of budding spiritual kinship between two widely different misfits. Captivating and emotionally resonant vampire-social-realism.

### 4. *Bugsy Malone / Alan Parker*

I loved *Bugsy Malone* when I was a kid. It was dramatic, touching and musical. I think it's visionary to make a gangster musical with kids in all the leading roles and whipped cream instead of bullets blasting from Thompson's Tommy guns. Jodie Foster as Tallulah the vamp still scorches the screen. A classic.

### 5. *A Clockwork Orange / Stanley Kubrick*

*A Clockwork Orange* wasn't made as a teen film, of course, but you can view it as a rabid coming-of-age story set in an absurd future. When you're young, you're in opposition to the existing society and you want to experiment and provoke. Movies should be allied with those feelings.