

PROFILES & PRODUCTION MILIEUS

Denmark, a nation of five million, has an output of one animated feature a year, and an abundance of short films. FILM presents the flourishing Danish animation industry.

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DANISH COMPUTER GAMING INDUSTRY

Breakaway hits such as *Hitman* and *Hugo* put Denmark on the computer gaming world map. Now a new wave of Danish computer game makers is following suit with a slew of fresh gaming ideas.

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THE GROWTH LAYER

The National Film School and the Animation Workshop are involved in a close, smoothly running partnership which develops skilled professionals for the Northern European animation industry.

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FILM

#46 SPECIAL ISSUE/ANIMATION

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COVER The Ugly Duckling and Me

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A IS FOR ANIMATION

The Danish production company that brought us *Help! I'm a Fish* and *Terkel in Trouble* has grown into one of Europe's leading animation studios. A. Film operates on a three-pronged philosophy: creating regular employment for as many people as possible, always getting better at what they're doing and, just as important, everyone telling everyone else how they do it.

■ BY CHRISTIAN MONGGAARD

Light-years from 3D-behemoth Pixar's enviably spacious and airy headquarters in Emeryville, California, there is still an electric atmosphere in the long, white corridors in northern Copenhagen that are home to A. Film, one of Europe's leading animation studios. Though we're at the tail end of the summer holidays and lunch is just getting underway, you catch a sense of fun and exciting things going on behind the many doors in the narrow building.

On a wall in one of the corridors hang the full storyboards for A. Film's animated *Asterix* epic, *Asterix and the Vikings*. Co-directors Stefan Fjeldmark and Jesper Møller are putting the finishing touches on that film. In a small, crowded office, we find Anders Sørensen, once one half of the animation duo Tegnedrengene and now co-director of the third feature film based on Sven Nordquist's popular children's books about old man Pettson and his cat Findus.

In another office full of computers, animators are rendering characters for *The Ugly Duckling and Me*, a 3D-feature based on Hans Christian Andersen's famous fairy-tale, or adding digital effects to *Asterix and*

the Vikings, a 2D-animated film with 3D-elements. Then there is Craig Frank, the American manager of A. Film's commercials department, who just completed production on a spot for Information, a Danish daily. Frank is currently working on the screenplay for a 3D-adaptation of *Voyage to Saturn*, a 1977 cult comic book by the Danish cartoonist Claus Deleuran.

"The fun thing about A. Film is that we are able to keep the size we've got, with so many different people and facets and opinions and projects," Karsten Kiilerich says. Kiilerich is a director and producer and one of A. Film's five co-founders. "All the different projects and people influence each other. It's very inspirational."

"When things start moving, it's a fun place to be," Anders Mastrup says. He is A. Film's head of production and another co-founder. "People are into looking at each other's stuff. It's an incredibly young environment; you won't turn into an old fart sitting around here. We hire people straight out of school, as long as they have talent."

Jørgen Lerdam, also an A. Film co-founder, adds, "The young people who get in here help keep a certain dynamic going. We never say, 'We always did things this way and, goddam' it, we'll keep on doing them that way.'"

As Lerdam tells it, A. Film's philosophy is about creating regular employment for as many people as possible, always getting better at what they're doing and, not least, everyone telling everyone else how it's done. "The industry used to be kind of insular, which makes nobody better - neither as storytellers nor as

artists - least of all yourself, because then you sit around guarding whatever *you* happened to pick up along the way."

A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE

A. Film was founded in 1988 by four animators, Hans Perk, Stefan Fjeldmark, Jørgen Lerdam and Karsten Kiilerich, and a producer, Anders Mastrup. The five of them are still the backbone of the company. "I think it makes a difference that four artists and one production guy, not four production guys and one artist, founded A. Film," says Lerdam, who thinks of the company as his "life's work." "It set the standard for what we wanted to do. The art is what counts."

The founders picked the name A. Film, because it was simple and understandable in any language. "A is for animation," Mastrup says. "We had 200,000 weird ideas, but we had to think of something with immediate impact that people would remember."

A. Film's five founding fathers met during the production of *Valhalla* (1986), an animated feature based on comic books about the Norse gods by the Danish cartoonist, Peter Madsen. *Valhalla*, an ambitious Danish shot at making a feature-length cartoon in the Disney vein, was co-directed by Madsen himself and Jeffrey James Varab, an American who used to work at Disney.

The production was extremely chaotic. The film ran millions of Danish kroner over budget and the finished result was uneven at best. But *Valhalla* was a training ground for the five young, untested talents. They picked up a trade and were emboldened to start their own company. "The technology may have evolved



A group of colleagues on a busy day at A. Film: Michael Hegner, Jørgen Lerdam, Karsten Kilerich, Hans Perk, Anders Mastrup / Photo: P. Wessel

- we now have computers - but we're basically still building on what we learned the hard way," Lerdam says.

A. Film started out making commercials, but quickly hooked up with international animation studios, including Don Bluth, MGM and Warner Bros., which sub-contracted A. Film on their animated features.

Naturally, A. Film had ambitions of making their own features. In the early nineties, they made the first of two films (a third is currently in development) about *Jungledyret Hugo* (*Amazon Jack*). Ever since, one thing has led to another, with features, TV series and commercials. With a budget of 14 million euros, the underwater adventure *Help! I'm a Fish* (2000) was the most expensive Danish animated film ever. Last year, A. Film made its first foray into 3D-animation with *Terkel in Trouble*, a smutty, obnoxious treat for teens that hit it big at the box office.

"It's been a rollercoaster ride," Mastrup says about the finances of the animation industry. "It's up and down. Making cartoons is not good business. It's extremely risky and takes a hell of a lot of time. If you're lucky and clever enough, maybe you'll make ends meet. It's about having a sufficient amount of work all the time."

The industry was hit by a crisis a few years ago that also affected A. Film. But at the moment, things are fine. The company has its plate full making *The Ugly Duckling and Me*, costing 5.5 million euro and a companion TV series of 26 half-hour episodes at a budget pushing 8 million euro; the French-produced, Danish-directed, *Asterix and the Vikings*, in all ways a big project; a *Pettson & Findus* feature and TV series; along with 10 direct-to-video episodes of a German-produced animated children's series, *Benjamin Blümchen*.

Today, the five co-founders own half of the company. The other half is owned by the Egmont media conglomerate. A. Film employs a regular staff of around 30 people. According to Mastrup, they mainly try to hold on to "producers, directors and top animators - preferably people who can do many different things and perform different functions." In periods of peak activity, the staff swells to about 100 people, who come from all over the world.

A GYPSY WORLD

According to Mastrup, there are two different ways of making films. One he dubs the Katzenberg-method after Jeffrey Katzenberg,

the former Disney executive and Dreamworks co-founder. "He's the producer, the all-seeing wizard. He puts everything together. His vision may be stronger than the director's. He propels the work and everything is subject to compromise with him," Mastrup says.

"At this company, we don't accept any producer on a project having that much say on creative matters." Instead, the producer sets out a framework for directors to work within. "If the director wants to change something, it impacts something else. It then becomes a dialogue. It's important to control this. There would generally be no end to it, creatively speaking, unless someone said stop; things can always be better. Moreover, there is the attitude that the more time you get, the better the product will be. But that's not necessarily true."

Animation is expensive to produce and only very few productions receive national subsidies. Almost all European animation happens across national borders and A. Film is a sought-after and respected co-production partner. "The cool thing about co-productions is we get our stuff financed," says Kiilerich, who has good experience with cross-border collaboration. "We speak the same language, use the same terms, and it's the same people who travel around and work in the different studios. It's a gypsy world, very international."

Moreover, Kiilerich says, it can be a good thing to have outsiders evaluate something that was devised in Denmark. "There's something to be gained from not being completely closed off from the beginning, or too narrowly national," he says. "There's an expression,

'Europudding,' for projects that try to please all nationalities. They can get pretty ghastly. I think the balance lies somewhere in between and we sometimes find that - 'Hey! they've got a point'."

STRAPPING IN THE BLUE HIPPO

European co-productions sometimes run into snags by way of communication problems or disagreements, perhaps about content. "It's not just a question of Frenchmen thinking French, Danes thinking Danish and Brits thinking British," Kiilerich says. "It can be pretty surprising to discover that we have very different ways of looking at things. Not necessarily regarding artistic matters, but in how we organize ourselves. Hierarchical structures differ. In Denmark, we're almost like happy amateurs who feel free to walk in any door and talk with everybody about a problem we're having. It's not like that everywhere.

"Sometimes, there can also be different opinions about what to show children," Kiilerich says. "I once sat here drawing in seatbelts in a series about a blue hippo who was friends with a frog who drove a soapbox car. I couldn't believe it when they told us we had to draw in seatbelts. We thought that was totally absurd."

Still, if they didn't enjoy what they were doing, they wouldn't be doing it, Mastrup says. "It's fun. We live in an incredibly creative world and we have a lot of freedom because we get to develop our own products!"

For further information: www.afilm.dk



Help! I'm a Fish

A FRESH TAKE

The director Karsten Kiilerich is curious to see how purist Hans Christian Andersen devotees will take to *The Ugly Duckling and Me*, A. Film's zany 3D-adaptation of Denmark's national author's most famous fairytale.

■ BY CHRISTIAN MONGGAARD

"We started working on *The Ugly Duckling and Me* right after Hans Christian Andersen finished the story," Karsten Kiilerich says, laughing. That's an overstatement, of course, but when A. Film started developing a film based on Andersen's best known fairytale, the writer's bicentennial (he was born 200 years ago last April 8) was still way off in the future. The film, which has a budget of 5.6 million euros, went through a lengthy development phase,

in which the Danish Film Institute also played an important part.

At this writing, A. Film is finishing the so-called Leica reel, an animated storyboard that will eventually become a 3D-animated feature running 80 minutes. Kiilerich, who is co-directing with Michael Hegner, says that he and the producer Per Holst originally envisioned making *The Ugly Duckling and Me* as live action with talking animals. "Per had just seen *Babe* and thought it was hilarious. So we were supposed to make the film like *Babe*, using animatronics, live footage and computer-animated moving mouths on the animals."

Anyhow, 3D-technology developed faster than the project. At one point, they even considered using computer-animated figures on real backgrounds. "We tried all sorts of

things but eventually scrapped it all in favour of doing everything on the computer," Kiilerich says. "This way we can sit here, in the comfort of our studio, and keep fairly regular working hours. We can make all the thunder claps and lightning and snow we want to. I'm not saying it's always all that easy, but we can certainly control and manipulate things a lot more than if we were knee-deep in mud in a duck yard trying to shoot an egg hatching. We can make our characters do exactly what we want them to do."

BUDGET LIMITATIONS

Terkel in Trouble, A. Film's first 3D-animated feature, was made quickly and inexpensively, and it was a big hit in Denmark last year. Though the lessons from *Terkel* are not immediately transferable to *The Ugly Duckling and Me*, a bigger and more complex production, the film was still a valuable learning experience for Kiilerich.

"These are different characters," he says about *The Ugly Duckling and Me*. "They are more sophisticated in their construction. There's more cinematography in it, you might say. We were originally planning with a budget of 10-11 million euros. But *Terkel in Trouble* taught us how to build on the cheap, plan out an entire universe and avoid various problems, so we were able to cut the budget by almost half. 5.6 million euros is still a lot of money, but the budget is pretty low considering the kind of visuals we're after. And of course, it's a fraction of what American movies and big European productions cost.

"I think the future will prove us right in trying to make these films on a sane budget. Clearly, we can make inexpensive 3D-films. We proved that with *Terkel*, which cost just 1.45 million euros. We can make great pic-



The Ugly Duckling and Me



The Ugly Duckling and Me

tures. We have a million ideas and we'll be playing around with this technology in the future."

Alongside *The Ugly Duckling and Me*, A. Film and their European co-producers are working on a 3D-animated TV series costing 8 million euros set in the same universe. The plan is to start airing the TV series (26 half-hour episodes are projected) before the feature opens to give children something to look forward to. "In theory, they are the same characters," Kiilerich says. "We had a lot of problems with the financing, because there's the film world and the TV world, but in the end we succeeded. And now it's really fun to work with both. On the technical level, we have a lot more time for the movie. For the TV series we work with fixed lighting and recurring sets for the characters to move around in. For the movie, what we need, we build - within a limit, of course. The TV series has certain limitations that way. It's like shooting a sitcom where you build some regular sets, like the living room in *The*

Cosby Show, and then you might show the characters going to a parent-teacher meeting at school, for instance. But that's all you can afford to build."

Moreover, with the movie, there's time to add effects. "There's a lot more time for the actual animation," Kiilerich says. "The TV show works with a kind of automated animation. But the TV animation we're doing, with a programme developed in France, looks great. The acting is terrific. We made a point of being able to do live acting. In many 3D-series, all you get is round heads that are maybe able to smile a little bit."

A POOR, PICKED-ON DUCKLING

Developing the screenplay for *The Ugly Duckling and Me*, Kiilerich and Hegner originally tried to stay faithful to Andersen's tale. But, Kiilerich says, they ended up having to tear the story apart. "It was too heavy, and we did multiple rewrites. We soon realized that we would have to give the duckling a friend

or some kind of counterpoint, or there was no way we'd be able to turn the story into a movie. The story is basically ten pages about a poor, picked-on duckling who plods through life and only on the very last page transforms into a beautiful swan. It doesn't get much more depressing than that, so I thought: We can turn this into a comedy!"

Even so, they have taken pains to maintain certain elements from Andersen's tale. "If nothing else, the theme of being cast out of society," Kiilerich says. "We considered the political angle of people coming here from other countries. People watching the film can take it any way they want. I'd certainly say *The Ugly Duckling and Me* is a pretty fresh take on Andersen's tale. The film is almost like an ironic comment on the fairytale, but I still think we've preserved the spirit of Andersen's intentions. At least I like to tell myself that."

See catalogue back of this issue.

STAYING ON TOP OF THINGS

Jørgen Lerdam and Anders Sørensen of A. Film are co-directing a new animated feature based on Sven Nordquist's popular picture books about old man Pettson and his cat Findus. As an aid, they developed *The Nordquist Design Bible*.

■ BY CHRISTIAN MONGGAARD

Looking for a director for a new animated feature about Pettson & Findus, the Swedish production company Happy Life turned to A. Film. Happy Life had already produced two films based on the Swedish children's book author Sven Nordquist's clever and very popular picture books about the eccentric bachelor farmer Festus and his inventive cat Mercury. The last

director was a Belgian and the producers wanted a director who was more Scandinavian," A. Film's Jørgen Lerdam says. He and Anders Sørensen eventually took on the assignment.

The film is based on *The Tomte Machine* Nordquist's novel about Pettson & Findus compiled from an advent calendar series that ran on Swedish television. "Accordingly, the



Pettson & Findus

book is a bit segmented. It almost had to be,” Lerdam says. “The trick for us was to put together a film with a beginning, middle and end. I think Torbjörn Jansson, the screenwriter, did a great job of pulling that off.”

Nordquist originally did not want to be part of a third film. But Happy Life talked him into it and he ended up being much more involved than he had been in either of the first two films. “We made what we call *The Nordquist Design Bible* of all the illustrations from his books that we would be using for locations in the film,” Lerdam says. “Then, we only had to tell the screenwriter to turn to page four in the ‘Bible’ and he could see that what he wanted to take place, couldn’t. Sure, Sven’s drawings have various minor inconsistencies, but he takes pride in his objects being functional. He used to work as an architect and he’s actually built many of the strange machines he’s drawn – and they work.

“Also, we could show the ‘Bible’ to the location designer and the background painters and say: ‘Here’s the drawing style we want you to stick to – only make it a bit more cinematic now and then.’ Sven Nordquist conceives his

compositions in book form, everything is simultaneous, while we see them like a movie, extending in time.” Moreover, when the film called for objects and places that Nordquist hadn’t drawn before, Lerdam contacted him with his ideas.

“We always had Nordquist to refer to, for instance when we couldn’t figure out how *The Tomte Machine* should look. He had some sketches for it lying around and he also made a drawing of his neighbour’s farm, which we never see in the picture books.”

A WEEK BEHIND SCHEDULE

Happy Life and TV-Loonland of Germany are executive producers of *The Tomte Machine* with A. Film co-producing. The Danish Film Institute is also subsidising the film. The whole production, from character designs to storyboards, backgrounds and animation, was handled in Hungary, Britain and Denmark.

The first two films about Pettson & Findus were both put together from episodes of a TV series. This time, it’s the other way around. The feature A. Film is now making will later be cut into six episodes for a TV series. Moreover, they

are making seven episodes of another TV series. The film and the TV series have a total budget of roughly 6.7 million euros, half of it for the film. Which isn’t much for an animated feature.

“Initially, we said, There’s no way we can do this,” says Lerdam, who needs to have the finished film ready in a few months. “Then we devised a plan which would pan out if no one got sick and nothing went wrong. But of course, people do get sick and things do go wrong, so we’re currently about a week behind schedule.”

Fortunately, A. Film has years of experience in animation production to fall back on. “We’ve learned how to analyze a production down to the smallest detail. In an industrial sense, we know what to do. The different phases of an animation production can either be handled well or poorly. What’s important is always getting the best people for the job. If you use people who are not so good or new in the business, you run over schedule and things don’t turn out quite the way you wanted them to. The director always has to stay on top of things.”

The Tomte Machine will receive its world premiere late November, Denmark.



Pettson & Findus

WITHOUT A GOOD STORY YOU'RE NOWHERE

Adapting the classic comic *Asterix and the Vikings*, Stefan Fjeldmark and Jesper Møller made *Asterix and Obelix* less invincible, but more interesting as characters.

■ BY CHRISTIAN MONGGAARD

A. Film's animated adventure *Help! I'm a Fish* (2000), which cost 13.5 million euros, caught the eye of M6. The French TV network was looking for an animation studio to do a new *Asterix* film. But first M6 had to persuade Asterix-penman Uderzo to okay the project. Obviously, the studio had to deliver animation of the quality he required.

Uderzo gave the nod, and co-directors Stefan Fjeldmark and Jesper Møller picked *Asterix and the Vikings* as the title they wanted to work with. "One of our reasons for picking that album is that *we're* Norsemen," Fjeldmark says. "We thought it would be fun to reflect this Danish-French collaboration in the story, too."

Growing up, Fjeldmark was an avid reader of Asterix and making an Asterix film was a huge challenge to him. "On one hand, we get a lot free," he says. "There's an established universe whose treasures you can mine for characters, jokes and storylines. But there are limitations, too. You can only go so far and no longer. Certain invisible boundaries dictate what the characters can and cannot do - what the humour of this universe is."

As Fjeldmark sees it, Asterix and Obelix have problems as characters because they are superhuman. "It's not interesting with characters that can do anything and aren't vulnerable in any way," he says.

"People usually like to watch characters that are flawed and imperfect. That's one reason why we picked *Asterix and the Vikings*. There's a kid in the story, Justforkix, who's

rather delicate. He is a big scaredy-cat, and he likes to sleep in. He is more normal, easier to relate to. Meanwhile, we made Asterix and Obelix more vulnerable, because they almost become like parents to him. They may be supermen, but if he's screwed, they're screwed. That gives the story depth."

REASONABLE INPUT

In Fjeldmark's opinion, many of the early Asterix films are far too superficial, because they don't let us get inside the characters at all. "That's been one of the most important things for us," he says. "Jesper and I spent a lot of energy fleshing out the characters early on. We did everything we could to make *Asterix and the Vikings* not look like the previous films. Then again, we were okay with the film looking a little like an old Disney cartoon. We've made a big, lush 2D-film, while everyone else is doing 3D these days. It's a little old-fashioned and we don't mind people thinking *Pinocchio* or *Peter Pan*. The film uses many modern techniques and it has a lot of contemporary humour, in the vein of *Shrek*, but it's also a little bit old-fashioned."

Uderzo had to approve everything under-way, but he didn't interfere very much," says Fjeldmark, who has final cut on the film. "He provided some very reasonable input."

Asterix and the Vikings is now in its final phase of production. "We've finished the visuals on two of four reels," Fjeldmark says. "We still need to colour the second half of the film. All the animation and inking is done. We also need to add a few effects and other minor details, but it's no big deal. The score has been composed and will soon be recorded at Abbey Road Studios. Then there's a month of sound mixing in France."

Fjeldmark and Møller split the work, with Fjeldmark handling development and post-

production, and Møller doing everything in between, namely animation and inking. "I've been through the whole process of sound mixing, postproduction and lab work on other films," Fjeldmark says. "It was easier for me to handle those aspects. Also, I'm really interested in story development and how to adapt this kind of story, a comic book, to moving pictures. In general, I tend to focus more and more on the characters and story. My years in the business have taught me that they are the only things that count. Without a good story, you're nowhere."

A. Film will soon be screening the two finished reels to Uderzo. Anyone might be expected to be apprehensive, but Stefan Fjeldmark is taking things in stride. "We've already been showing him so much during the process," he says. "And we're happy enough with the result to expect Uderzo to be pleased, too. You never know, of course, but we certainly think *Asterix and the Vikings* is a whole lot better than anything that has been done in the past."

Asterix and the Vikings is a French-Danish coproduction.



Asterix and the Vikings

“SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE I’M OUT ON THE HEATH, KNITTING UNDERWEAR ...”

... but of course no one does that anymore: everything is sewn in the Far East. Same with cartoons, except here with us. Genres will continue to blur and we’ll all end up as designers farming out drawing work on big international productions,” Jannik Hastrup says. FILM talked with the grand old man of Danish animation who has been going against the stream for a while now.

■ BY ULLA HJORTH NIELSEN

The music for *The Boy Who Wanted to Be a Bear* was French and the backgrounds were painted in the South of France, because there was a lot of French money in the film. Other-

wise, Jannik Hastrup’s three animated features about Circleen and her friends, the mice, and all his short films have been made in Denmark, using computer-controlled cut-out animation and stationary backgrounds.

“I’m very pleased with Cell Action,” Hastrup says. “It gives edges and textures, and it’s far easier to work with than old-fashioned cut-outs and it has better flow without losing character. Mark Baker developed the system, which has also become popular for producing mixed-media music videos, including one with George Michael. When we run into something that could be improved or done more easily, Dansk Tegnefilm’s suggestions are worked into the next update of the English programme. This

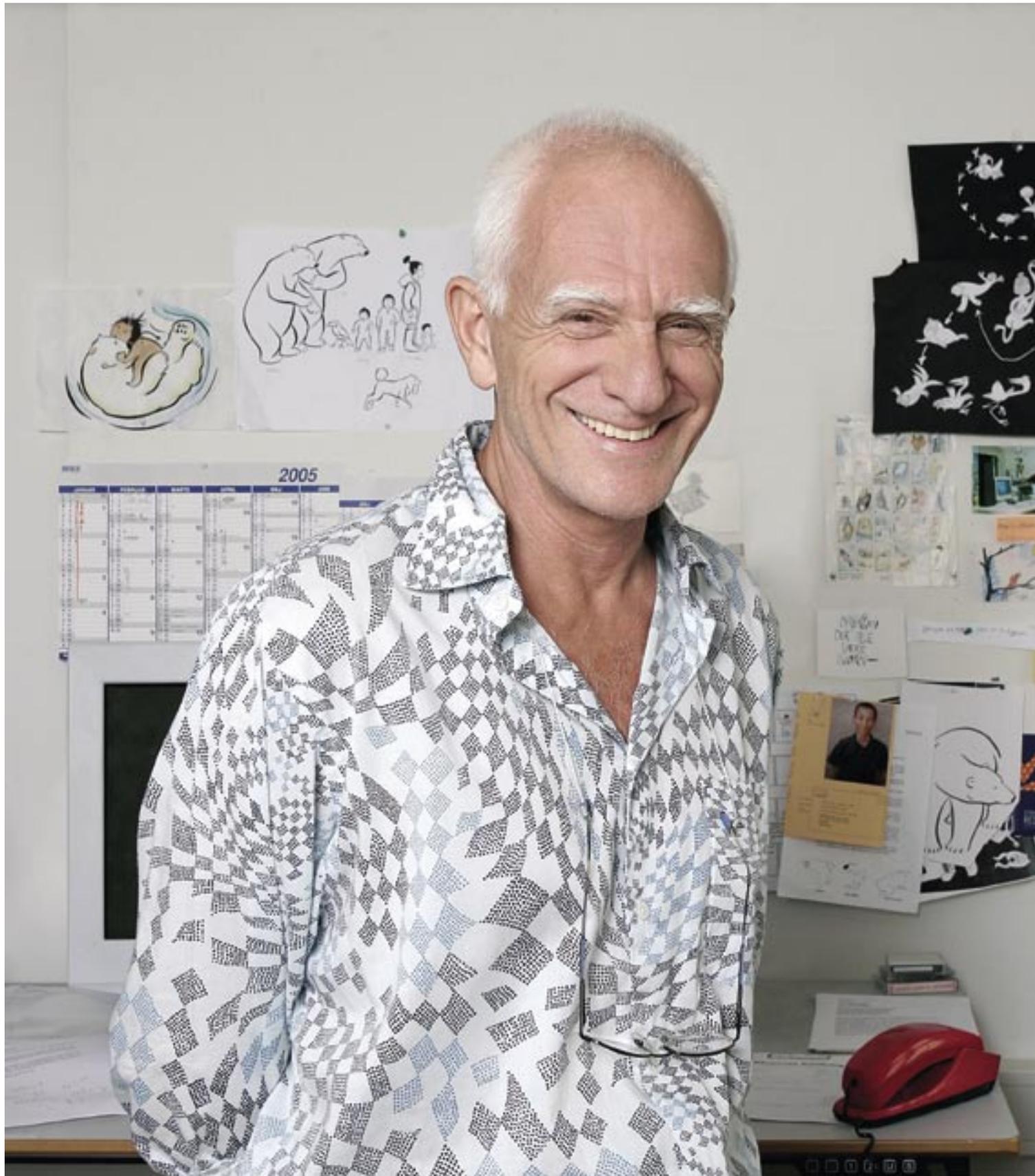
has been going on for years. We lease the system, because then we’re only charged for the time we actually use it.”

Obviously, no matter what the budget, no project from Hastrup’s hand is ever going to look like *Toy Story* or *The Incredibles*. He personally animates about 20% of every film and leaves the rest to skilled animators. “When you have the right software, you don’t need computer geeks but animators, who know what they want,” he says.

Hastrup always knew what he wanted. He ranks among the Danish animation elite without being in the least bit elitist. With originality, engagement and industriousness, Hastrup and his partner Marie Bro’s company, Dansk Tegnefilm,



The Boy who Wanted to be a Bear



has set a high standard for content and vision in Danish animation, inspiring generations of animators Hastrup's age and younger. An especially high number of outstanding women animation directors are "former Jannik students"; he has always made sure to include women. Meanwhile, he never disappoints the youngest audience, which is the exception amidst all the claims of how sophisticated children are becoming. The youngest children are almost always included, and grown-ups always get a little something extra, too, when a Jannik Hastrup film comes on screen.

Hastrup is currently putting the final touches on *War and Peas*, a 10-minute animated short for small children subsidised by the Danish

"I'm against pettiness. We're so rich, yet we're distrustful of other people, just like the fat king."

Film Institute (and scheduled for release by year's end). The film is based on a 1974 picture book by the English artist and writer Michael Foreman. The animators have been working from Forman's exquisite original watercolours.

War and Peas is a universal story about a skinny king who, with his minister in tow, bicycles through the desert to the neighbouring country to ask for help. That country is ruled by an obese king who surrounds himself with mountains of cakes, but there is no persuading him to share his wealth. On the contrary. Fearful of losing his riches, he goes to

war against his impoverished neighbour. But the war turns against the fat king when the skinny king starts using Fatso's take-along stash of cakes as missiles. The obese king is forced to surrender, peace is restored and everyone gets a full belly.

War and Peas alludes to the late 1960s era, the flower-power movement and the antiwar movie, *Kelly's Heroes*, where tanks fire shells filled with paint. Back then, Hastrup found Foreman's book a bit naive. He read it to his children, who loved it, but he never imagined animating it. Recently, when Hastrup's grown daughter reminded him of the book, he picked it up again and found that now, in his maturity, he no longer saw it in such concretely realistic terms. Then began a fruitful correspondence with the author about rights and drawings. The book is by now a classic in the Anglo-Saxon world and one wishes this charming, subtle peace film equally long legs on the international children's film scene.

"When you have millions to work with you should try to make something more than uninvolved trash."

"I'm against pettiness," Hastrup says. "We're so rich, yet we're distrustful of other people, just like the fat king." Throughout his career, Hastrup has strived to merge his stance and his work. Some rebels mellow with age, but not this director. "When you have millions to

work with, you should try to make something more than uninvolved trash."

In a similar vein, Hastrup recently finished *The Tale About the Guilty Conscience*, a 10-minute animated film he simply had to make. After his latest feature, *Little Big Mouse* (2004), the filmmaker was looking for a change of pace from serial production, which never entirely avoids a certain repetitiveness. Because it seemed more important than ever to make a film with a political target, Hastrup wrote and directed a scathing, philosophical fairytale about the Palestinian wall. The film tells the story of an offbeat, little king in whose modest kingdom all the neighbouring kings place their guilty consciences, combined and disguised as a golden egg. The offbeat king is obviously not too happy about this, but when he protests, he and his people are locked up. The film's colour scheme is as lovely as the near east itself, in stark contrast to the harsh story. Original and touching, *Guilty Conscience* appeals to children as well as adults.

Beyond the short film *War and Peas*, Jannik Hastrup is currently working on two new feature-length animation screenplays, one with Bent Haller again and the other with Flemming Quist Møller with whom Hastrup last collaborated on the genius classic *Benny's Bathtub* (1971).

See catalogue back of this issue.



War and Peas

ANIMATING IN AN ALLOTMENT GARDEN

Liller Møller and Maria Mac Dalland are animation directors who met at Jannik Hastrup's studio in the early 1980s. The two women represent different generations in Danish animation. FILM met with them to talk about their current films that are about teddy bears, Christmas elves and hope.

■ BY ULLA HJORTH NIELSEN

The summer sun is beating down on Mozart Haveby in Copenhagen's South Harbour, an allotment garden society that has grown into year-round housing for many filmmakers and other visual artists. The two animation directors Liller Møller and Maria Mac Dalland live and work here just a few doors down from one another.

Danish animated shorts used to be created in teamwork with many other animators. Today, they tend to be solo projects made on the computer. That's how Mac Dalland works, while Møller has a Swedish co-animator, Lasse Person, on her new film, *Where is the Land of Christmas?*

WHERE IS THE LAND OF CHRISTMAS?

Liller Møller is best known for her trilogy, *Sex - A Guide for Young*, 1987, *Safe for Life*, 1989 and *So That's How*, 1990, entertaining and informative films that are still used in sex-education classes in several countries.

Møller's new film is based on her stylish, illustrated book, *Where Is the Land of Christmas?* This charming animated shrieker is about a pipe-cleaner elf, Ludvig, who lives with 11 other elves in a typical Christmas landscape in a store window display.

During the day, the elves stand perfectly still, but at night, when no one is looking, they go bobsledding and skiing on the cottony slopes. One night, Ludvig falls out the shop door and has to survive in a cold and harsh, but fascinating, world he never knew existed. Ludvig is a scaredy-cat, but a doll, a bird and a pair of trolls help him, and after a perilous

journey he manages to get back to the window display. But what good is a safe, domestic elf's life when the elf has got a taste for challenge and adventure? Once Christmas is over, we know, the elves will be returned to their box to sleep until the next holiday season. The film, which has broad Nordic financing, has the makings of a Christmas classic. Completion is scheduled for spring 2006.

THE LITTLE BEAR & TRANSIT TO HOPE

Maria Mac Dalland's most recent film was *Odin's Eye* (2004), the second half of a two-parter on Norse mythology (*The Völuspa - The Creation* (1996) was the first instalment). Jumping off from treasured Norse myths, the films are couched in contemporary language. The characters are inspired by ancient rock carvings, and the backgrounds are painterly and magical. Mac Dalland knows how to make everything sparkle.

A new pool, Talent Development for Documentaries, administered by the short-film consultants at the Danish Film Institute, is putting up the funds for Mac Dalland's new film, *Transit to Hope* (opening at year's end). Combining animation and documentaries, the film examines how Denmark - a nation once humane, now selfishly complacent - treats its asylum seekers.

"I want my film to speak directly to people's

empathy," Mac Dalland says. "Asylum seekers get three meals a day but zero cash. Parents are denied the ability to give, even if it's giving their children nothing more than an in-between-meal snack. People get sick - some of them have been there seven years - they are wrecked as people. How could we?"

Mac Dalland filmed and interviewed people in the Avnstrup asylum centre, intercutting powerful and silent live footage with an animated desert journey leading to a pyramid-shaped oasis. A voice-over tells the story of the hanging gardens of Babylon, where the king built a garden in the middle of the desert, out of love for his queen who was pining for the verdant hills of her homeland.

The director is currently working on *The Little Bear*, a 15-minute film for children aged 2-3, opening in spring 2006. Technically, Mac Dalland cut some corners by filming actors in costumes and masks, and then treating the footage on the computer. She enjoys electronics and her experience is starting to pay off.

"I'm 40 now, but when I was young I thought it had to be hard work, that it shouldn't be fun," Mac Dalland says. "I've learned that too, with time," Møller adds. "That even if it's fun and comes easy, it can still turn out good."

See catalogue back of this issue.



Where is the Land of Christmas?



The Little Bear



Liller Møller and Maria Mac Dalland / Photo: P.Wessel

ANIMATION AS HARDCORE INNOVATION

Anders Morgenthaler's *Princess*, an animated feature for the Tarantino segment, is the first big project from Zentropa's new animation studio Zentropa Grrrr.

■ BY KIM SKOTTE

Lars von Trier and the Dogme films have made Zentropa a name brand, in Denmark and internationally. Unconventional ideas and working methods, not uncommonly in combination with big gestures and small budgets, have been key in establishing the Danish maverick in the European film landscape. Building on that production philosophy, Zentropa is now venturing into animation. They want to do animation, but they don't want to spend a fortune. The realities of Danish film have no room for sumptuous Disney productions.

A special animation studio has been built in Filmbyen near Copenhagen. Zentropa Grrrr, as the company is called, is busy producing its first animated feature, *Princess*. Sarita Christensen, the film's producer, wipes the sweat from her brow. A new studio, new procedures, new young people, a whole new film experience. So many things need to click when you're dealing with what is essentially a first-time movie-making experience for most of the people involved.

"But we're right on schedule," she says. "And for that we are thankful." *Princess* is one of the first films to be funded under the DFI's New Danish Screen subsidy scheme to encourage innovation in Danish film. *Princess* received 560,000 euros from the pool, nearly half its total budget of 1.2 million euros.

Computer animation offers new opportunities for dramatically cutting the cost of making animated films. Last year, A. Film scored a big

hit in Denmark with *Terkel in Trouble*, in many ways a transgressive animated feature for children. More than 350,000 Danes saw *Terkel*, which cost just 1.34 million euros to make, peanuts compared with an old-fashioned hand-drawn feature. *Terkel's* success naturally set minds spinning across the industry. Zentropa Grrrr, however, is aiming to create something completely new in Danish animation. *Princess* is hardboiled action-animation targeting the kind of audience that makes daily allusion to Quentin Tarantino and his fellows.

IT'S A GAMBLE

"It's a gamble to try and open up a new market in terms of genre and style. Animation for teens and adults, after all, is hardly what Denmark is known for doing," Christensen says. Anders Morgenthaler is the artist behind *Princess*. He is by now a veteran of the new Danish TV animation that operates on the philosophy that anime and pure digitality make for more financial latitude for new productions. Morgenthaler is fast becoming a household name in Denmark. With partner Wulff, he is the creator of a ribald daily comic strip in the newspaper Politiken. WulffMorgenthaler, as their partnership is known, has also crossed over to the Internet television where their show is now in its second season as they continue to break new outraging satirical ground assisted by Dolff, an obnoxiously racist hippo.

A graduate of the National Film School of Denmark, Morgenthaler first attracted critical attention with his 2001 award-winning graduation film *Araki - The Killing of a Japanese Photographer*. *Princess* picks up where Araki left off. Co-scripted by screenwriter Mette Heeno, *Princess* is a raw fairytale about two orphans. One, Christina, is dead after a career as the porn star Princess. Her brother

August, a minister, returns and, taking Christina's 5-year-old daughter Mia by the hand he ventures out to avenge his sister and erase her pornographic legacy on a mission that turns increasingly bloody as he goes gunning for porn kings, in general, and Christina's evil spirit Charlie, in particular. Featuring 80% animation and 20% live action, *Princess* is scheduled to premiere in early summer 2006. "We want to stand for guts and innovation," Sarita Christensen says. "It's great to get a start, even if you don't have a lot of experience but do have instinct and a clear idea of what you want. I hope that will show in *Princess*."

See catalogue back of this issue.



Princess



Anders Morgenthaler and Sarita Christensen / Photo: P.Wessel

FROM THE TINDER BOX TO THE UGLY DUCKLING

At the rate of one animated feature a year, Denmark's animation output is higher than that of many much bigger nations in Europe. The history of Danish feature-length cartoons, from 1946 to 2006, naturally includes Hans Christian Andersen and his fairytales.

■ BY SØREN VINTERBERG

Danish art for children is famous worldwide, even if most don't actually know it's Danish. Hans Christian Andersen, born in Odense (the geographical centre of Denmark) exactly 200 years ago, wrote some of the world's most popular stories. His fairytales - *The Little Mermaid*, *The Nightingale*, *The Shepherdess and The Chimneysweep*, *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* or *The Ugly Duckling*, to name just a handful - merge imagination and knowledge of human nature, seriousness and humour, in ways that have charmed the whole world.

Andersen and his works pervade throughout Danish animation, an industry that is enjoying unprecedented growth at levels of both quality and output that are impressive even to non-Danes. One animated feature a year for the last ten years is a very high output level for a nation, and a language area, of just five million people.

Things were slow at first, but Andersen was there from the beginning: his fairytale *The Tinder Box* became the first Danish animated feature,

just nine years after Walt Disney dazzled the world with his first feature-length cartoon, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, based on the Brothers Grimm tale. *The Tinder Box* - the story of a soldier who tricks a witch and three oddly eyed dogs out of their treasure and ends up winning the hand of the princess and half the kingdom, too - opened in cinemas in 1946 and was a technical and artistic triumph. The director was Svend Methling, best known for his live-action work. Meanwhile, the credits included several animators who would later be well known in their own right. One was Børge Ring who would later win an Oscar in 1984 for his touching and musical animated short, *Anna & Bella*.

Sixteen years later after *The Tinder Box* came *The Swineherd* and *The Princess and the Pea*. A double feature, adapting two Andersen tales, the film was an artistic and commercial failure, which may go some way toward explaining why so many years passed before Andersen was next animated. That did not happen until 1998, with Jannik Hastrup's great *Hans Christian Andersen and The Long Shadow* based on Andersen's tales and his life-story.

JANNIK HASTRUP

Now a well-known name in international animation, Jannik Hastrup originally worked on the first two animated features of Andersen's tales before he became a major innovator of Danish animation, in terms of technique,

as well as matter. Trained at Bent Barfod's studios, which mainly used animation in commercials, Hastrup in the 1970s developed his perennially popular animated shorts for television about *Circleen*, an unruly-haired elf in a ladybird-dotted dress who lives in a matchbox on the artist's desk. Using a 2D cut-out technique, Hastrup merged extremely low-cost production with a naive and innocent style that appeals to children and adults alike - basically the same style that was used years later, to entirely different ends, in the *South Park* TV series.

In the 1990s, Hastrup made theatrical features with the *Circleen* characters, but his central contribution really came earlier in two animated features: *Samson and Sally* (1984), a love story between whales denouncing ocean pollution, and *Subway to Paradise* (1987), a post-apocalyptic fable of humans struggling under the tyranny of rats deep below the surface of a toxic earth. *War of the Birds* (1990) likewise operated within the fable form. Children easily identify with the characters and the conflict, here small birds and mice teaming up to defeat the forest tyrant, a bird of prey named Fagin. Books and screenplays by the Danish author Bent Haller underpinned all three films as well as Hastrup's next feature, *The Monkeys and the Secret Weapon* (1995).

There is a clear leap in style from these



The Tinder Box (1964)



The Circleen character (1970-today)



Benny's Bath tub (1971)

four films to Haller and Hastrup's next effort, *Hans Christian Andersen and The Long Shadow* (1998). With its elegant and subtle pastel backgrounds, the film demonstratively keeps canonised, Disneyesque animation at arm's length. That is also the case with the large white snow and ice masses in *The Boy Who Wanted to Be a Bear* (2003), though in terms of content, Inuit myths, the film anticipates Walt Disney Studios' *Brother Bear*. Incidentally, this was the first time that Hastrup's company Dansk Tegnefilm worked on an international co-production, with Les Armateurs of France.

FLEMMING QUIST MØLLER

Flemming Quist Møller, an early Hastrup collaborator, has taken an entirely different track. Like his picture books for children, Quist Møller's deliriously imaginative animated film *Benny's Bath tub*, 1971, co-directed with Hastrup, is a beloved classic in Denmark. Equally popular is Quist Møller's delightful TV series featuring the fantastic creature Snuden. The simplicity of the animation is offset by open-minded, childish curiosity and humour – amiably anarchic nonsense with strong ties to *Pippi Longstocking* and *Alice in Wonderland*.

Lust for life and musicality likewise abound in Quist Møller's two animated features from the 1990s, *Amazon Jack* (1993) and *Amazon Jack 2: The Movie Star* (1996). Combining musical numbers and funny, fuzzy animals like

Jack and his big-city girlfriend, Rita the vixen, these films are considerably closer to the international animation mainstream as defined by Walt Disney Studios through the second half of the 20th century.

Quist Møller wrote the screenplays and co-directed, teaming up with Stefan Fjeldmark on the first film and Jørgen Lerdam on the other. In 2006 Quist Møller will be back on the silver screen with another feature about this little jungle creature (codirected with animation veteran Anders Sørensen and Jørgen Lerdam).

A. FILM

Fjeldmark and Lerdam, for their part, come from a third direction defined by the ambition to make full animation in the American mould.

This dream had propelled Peter Madsen's *Valhalla* (1986), an animated feature based on Madsen's own highly successful and much-exported comic books about the Norse gods. Like *The Tinder Box* in its day, *Valhalla* was an incubator for a generation of young animators, several of whom later banded together to form A. Film. Backed by the Egmont media group, A. Film today is Denmark's biggest animation studio.

Fjeldmark, Lerdam and Michael Hegner co-directed the highly ambitious *Help I'm a Fish* (2000), skilfully and dynamically mixing sophisticated digital 3D-elements with smoothly

paced-out laughs and chills, amazing characterizations and a broad underwater cast of beasts, predating animated features put out by much bigger studios, including *Finding Nemo* and *Shark Tale*.

Developments in 3D computer animation enabled the quantum leap embodied in Fjeldmark's next project, *Terkel in Trouble*, 2004. This very funny children's film was co-directed with Kresten V. Andersen and Thorbjørn Christoffersen, both graduates of the Animation Workshop in Viborg. New digital technology, radically simplifying and lowering the cost of such things as animating mouth movements, here enabled the creation of a purely computer-generated, naive "stop-motion" universe ringing with dialogue that has a lot in common with the kind of streetwise rapping heard on *South Park* or *Beavis & Butthead*, though it's never quite as raw.

In their own way, *Terkel in Trouble's* puppets still draw on the fantastic universe that Hans Christian Andersen cracked open in such fairytales as *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, *The Shepherdess* and *The Chimneysweep* (Andersen, in turn, was inspired by the fairytales of E.T.A. Hoffmann, including *The Nutcracker* and *The Mouse King*). Now, nearly 60 years after the premiere of *The Tinder Box*, the flourishing Danish animation industry again has a real Andersen film in the works, this time based on the fairytale *The Ugly Duckling*.



Amazon Jack (1993)



Valhalla (1986)



Terkel in Trouble (2004)

A GUN CRAZY MEXICAN, A FOREST TROLL, A FAIRYTALE WRITER AND A HIRED KILLER

Forget realism, forget normalcy: as the title suggests, *Total Overdose* is no-holds-barred action. The game is set in a Tarantino-inspired Mexico, familiar from such movies as *Desperado* and *From Dusk Till Dawn*.



Breakaway hits such as *Hitman and Hugo* put Denmark on the computer-gaming world map. Now a new wave of Danish computer game makers is following suit with a slew of fresh gaming ideas - from trigger-happy Mexican peasants to interactive fairytales starring Hans Christian Andersen.

■ BY THOMAS VIGILD

What do a gun-crazy Mexican, a chrome-domed hitman, a wisecracking forest troll and a world famous writer of fairytales have in common? Not much, you might think, but in Denmark they do. The four characters are stars of the Danish computer-gaming industry. Small in size but wide in appeal, the local industry today is a colourful mix of charismatic characters and big-selling hits. In the 1990s, Denmark was one of the most active countries in developing educational and entertaining children's games and today the Danish computer gaming industry delivers the goods in all game genres.

ORIGINS

Best known in family circles is *Hugo the Troll* from ITE (Interactive Television Entertainment). The Danish company first introduced Hugo on Danish television back in 1990. Viewers were invited to push the buttons on their home phone to steer the troll through a network of underground tunnels, to the accompaniment of witty slapstick banter. Today, Hugo has made the leap to such big markets as China, Turkey and Venezuela, with total sales of more than 8.5 million computer and console games. Even so, it was only when the action game *Hitman* from IO Interactive hit stores in 2000 that the international market really discovered the potential of something other than children's games from Denmark. Acting the part of a ruthless bald-headed assassin, the player has to use cunning and disguises to eliminate his targets. The formula hit the spot with surgical precision worthy of the hitman himself: the first three games in the series have already sold more than five and a half million units worldwide.

HITMAN IN THE PIPELINE

Building on its success with *Hitman*, IO Interactive is releasing the fourth game in the series, *Hitman: Blood Money*, in time for Christmas. *Blood Money* is a jaw-droppingly gorgeous graphic tour de force featuring realistic

Hugo the Troll has been the hottest Danish videogame export since its debut in 1990. In the early days, players controlled the troll from a pushbutton phone at home as they watched the show on TV. Later came actual video games for the PlayStation and the computer.

The adventure game, *HCA and the Ugly Prince Duckling*, is loosely based on the life of the fairytale writer Hans Christian Andersen, as he arrives in Copenhagen in the 1820s as a raw youth. Solving the game's riddles advances the player through the social hierarchy and correspondingly through 15 of Andersen's fairytales.



shadows and accurate renditions of settings ranging from the Paris Opera House to glitzy Las Vegas casinos. The player's freedom of action is dramatically increased, with wider options for accomplishing missions following the beat of one's own inner assassin. Interestingly, new elements such as prestige and reputation have been added. Now, if you behave in an unprofessional or clumsy manner, letting yourself be seen in an earlier mission, there is a greater chance of being recognized later on, which makes the missions harder.

PLAY YOUR OWN FAIRYTALE

Another major Danish game to be released this year carries a large chunk of every Dane's cultural heritage into the third millennium. *HCA - The Ugly Prince Duckling*, from the Danish startup Guppyworks, follows Hans Christian Andersen from age 14, when he arrives in Copenhagen in 1820, without a gold coin to

his name and graced only with a head bursting with unwritten fairytales. Executed in a well-conceived graphic scheme that tweaks the classic cartoon style, *HCA* is an adventure game for the entire family. The concept involves coming to the aid of a princess in distress by playing out 15 of Andersen's fairytales, including the *The Little Match Girl*, *The Ugly Duckling* and *Clumsy Hans*. Solve the riddles and rise in social status until, finally, you win an audience with the king and bring the runaway princess safely back home - it's a fairytale within a fairytale.

A SHOT OF TARANTINO

Finally, *Total Overdose* from Deadline Games is a whole other mug of tequila. The title says it all. An extreme action game for adults who like mayhem, *Total Overdose* is set in a dust-choked pastiche of Mexico inspired by films like *Desperado* and Tarantino's trade-

mark of over-the-top violence. The game is designed for unpretentious fun rather than tedious realism. The player has to blast his way through every obstacle, but in spectacular ways, using cinematic tricks. The more elegantly you lead mayhem down on your opponents, and they come in hordes, the more points you collect.

A report on the development of the Danish games industry has been published September 2005 on the DFI website (in Danish). For further information www.dfi.dk

Second only to *Hugo the Troll*, *Hitman* is the biggest Danish cultural export in recent years. The upcoming game, *Hitman: Blood Money*, set for a Christmas release, features not only improved graphics and more elaborate missions but greater freedom of action and a greater focus on performing as the cunning, ruthless killer.



ANIMATORS OF TOMORROW

The fifth graduating class from the National Film School's animation-directing programme presented six very different films last year.

FILM talked to some of the students now trying to break into the industry that seemed so distant from the classroom. The recipe for success calls for initiative, good stories – and low budgets.

■ EVA NOVRUP REDVALL

Getting off to a flying start after her award-winning graduation film, *The Shadow in Sara*, Karla Nielsen took first prize in the Nordic Film and TV Fund's pitching competition in September 2004. The honour came with 27,000 euros for developing her first feature, and Nielsen is currently up to her elbows in *Tulle & Tatotom*, a film for young children, with a universe and characters of her own creation. Right now, she is making a technical pilot using a new programme that is able to handle an exciting mix of animation techniques.

Graduating shortly after the technologically groundbreaking, low-budget 3D-feature *Terkel in Trouble* opened, she and her fellow students absorbed the lessons from that film: you have to find new and exciting ways to go for animation to appeal to adults as well as children, and since you shouldn't be expecting a big budget for your first feature, you need to channel some of your creativity into thinking rationally and coming up with inexpensive solutions.

STORIES GET PRIDE OF PLACE

If anything defines the core of their four years of film school it is the consistent focus on good stories. "We were encouraged and

trained to tell exciting stories with sequence and good characters, and I think that shows in our graduation films," Nielsen says.

As Andreas Bødker Jørgensen (who made the graduation film *For Dog and Country*) notes, student productions were always judged by the story as the most important thing. "We did a lot of reading about dramaturgy and our narrative technique was subject to critique, when we made storyboards or added sound, to see if we were getting the story we wanted to tell across. I learned a lot about storytelling and I'm much more critical now about how stories are constructed. Sure, we had the opportunity to make more artistic animated films, but when we handed in something, it was always: What are you trying to say with this? Which makes sense, since it's what we were trained to do. There has to be an audience for it. I can't see why I should make a film nobody understands."

Of course, there are many other sides to directing animation than storytelling. You need to master various different techniques and computer programmes and, just as important, you have to learn to lead a big team of animators and others who will be realising your vision. Nielsen thinks of her education as a combined storytelling and management course. Certainly, most of the students came away a lot wiser on all aspects of production after making their seven-minute graduation films.

Like everyone else at the National Film School, animation students start off with a massive dose of films followed by structured efforts merging theory and practice. Bødker Jørgensen considers the continual follow-up assignments a major asset, enabling students to try out what they learn. When the subject

came to film music, for instance, the film school organized a collaborative exercise with Copenhagen's Rhythmic Music Conservatory, offering students valuable hands-on experience combining music and film. "It taught us to stay on top of everything all the time, in all aspects of film-making. It was very gratifying to be able to put what we learned to good use."

THE FESTIVAL CIRCUIT

Most of their graduation films have been shown at several festivals. Robert Depuis was invited to Cinéfondation in Cannes with his graduation film, *Exit*. Mixing puppets and live footage of the actor Nicholas Bro, *Exit* is the blood-soaked story of a hired killer confronting the creator of his universe.

Sabine Ravn's graduation film *Bernie & Bingo* ran at festivals in Norway, Finland, the Czech Republic, Germany and elsewhere, and she enjoyed travelling around with her film. "It's been fun and inspiring, and art-wise it's been very rewarding."

Several of the graduates would have liked to have their work shown at the Cartoon Forum, but they had no time left over to finish anything this year with all their freelance assignments. As Andreas Bødker Jørgensen puts it, the deadlines were too tight for someone just out of film school. But of course, there will be another Cartoon Forum next year and several graduates expect to have films ready by then, now that they can combine their robust film-school fundamentals with their experience working in the industry.

Below: Graduation students 2004, self-portraits. See their films in the catalogue, back of this issue.



Thomas Pors



Andreas Bødker Jørgensen



Sabine Ravn



Robert Depuis



Diego Cores Krogstrup



Karla Nielsen

FILMS FROM THE HEART

Five classes so far have graduated from the animation-directing programme at the National Film School of Denmark since the programme was established in 1992. It takes personality, a desire to tell stories and a lot of persistence to get into the programme and complete it, Gunnar Wille, director of the programme, says.

■ EVA NOVRUP REDVALL

Gunnar Wille has been part of the National Film School's animation programme since the beginning. He can hardly believe it's been 13 years already. In that time, the animation world has undergone tremendous growth, and the animation programme has always tried to adapt and absorb new technologies and working processes.

Back when the animation programme was established, Wille says, artistic animation was dominated by visual artists with no particular insight into films. Meanwhile, more commercially oriented animation was dominated by an outdated filmic language. The object of the animation programme was to let developments in real film benefit animation directors, as well, who would be trained in the filmic language, including editing, sound, photography, dramaturgy, film history, etc. The animation world has no tradition of formal education of directors and part of the challenge, apart from creating a new kind of programme, also lay in developing new teaching methods based on the National Film School's past experiences in directing.

ARTISTIC POTENTIAL, STORYTELLING & PERSISTENCE

Wille describes the programme as both complex and stressful. Part of what he looks for in applicants is whether they have the personality

it takes to see their vision through to fruition with so many different things going on around them all the time.

"We look for several different things in admitting students. First of all, we look to see whether the applicants have what we consider artistic potential. They must have a visual language. It doesn't matter whether they are computer artists, painters or modellers – they must have a personal expression. The other thing we look for is a desire to tell stories and, of course, the persistence to see a story through – it takes a lot of persistence to keep a team together for the time required to make an animated film."

The admissions process has been streamlined over the years and Wille is delighted with the students who have been entering and completing the programme. "There's so much talent and so many great young people. I think we, at this school, and in Viborg, are learning to be really good educators. The Animation Workshop in Viborg emerged at the same time we did, and they have finally been approved for a three-and-a-half-year programme instead of just a one-year. That's great. I think we are already seeing the results of having two programmes in this field, which is a whole new situation. The two schools are signs of something totally unique happening. No other school in the world has programmes for directors and animators, and we're really starting to feel the impact of the specialised, skilled professionals we have been turning out."

From the get-go, Wille put a premium on working with the industry, so that students know what awaits them after graduation. People in the industry participate in the admission procedure, and regularly critique student projects and act as instructors. Gunnar Wille thinks of it as a tight partnership working like

the rest of the National Film School. Meanwhile, he takes pains to ensure that the school doesn't merely train people to fit one particular slot in the business or make one particular kind of film.

"At this school, students make films from the heart," he says. "Our job as a film school is teaching people how to make movies, not teaching them to make a specific kind of film but to use filmic language to communicate their intentions to an audience."

For more information about the animation programme at the National Film School of Denmark, see www.filmskolen.dk



The Shadow in Sara, Karla Nielsen's awardwinning graduation film.

ACTING WITH A PENCIL AND COMPUTER

The Animation Workshop in Viborg has been in existence since 1988. The school's activities are divided among departments: the *Bachelor of Arts programme in Character Animation* and the professional training courses, the *Open Workshop*, the *Drawing School* and the *Educational Media Center* for children and teens.

■ BY EVA NOVRUP REDVALL

THE BACHELOR PROGRAMME

The bachelor programme admits 25 students a year. The first class started in August 2003. Morten Thorning, who is dean, defines the essence of education at Viborg as a study in learning to act with alternative means.

"We teach our students to act with computer and pencil, because it's important to know how to communicate and act in drawings. It's key for us that the students understand what animation is before they even get near a computer."

"Many other courses simply plunk people down in front of a computer and allow them to lose themselves in a bunch of menus. But no one grows as a person that way, no one's attitudes evolve."

The four years of the bachelor programme fall under different headings: Freshman year is about 2D-animation, sophomore year is computer animation, junior year is production and senior year revolves around an internship and a final film.

The programme is structured around guest instructors from the industry who teach short series of classes in between their other commitments. Thorning is convinced students appreciate instructors from the industry who know what's happening, and he considers it an advantage not to have tenured professors whose concepts of animations easily stagnate.

"Animation is a medium in constant change. It's incredible what's been happening over the last 15 years. If we hadn't continually revised our concept of animation, we would have been a relic today."

The bachelor programme is the latest sign of the Animation Workshop's innovative thinking. Many other plans and projects are in the works: the Educational Media Center recently received 2.5 million euros from the EU's Leonardo programme to develop media education; and the Animation Workshop will soon be moving from its current three locations to spacious accommodations in a converted military base in Viborg.

Dean Thorning is obviously proud of the school's growth from a small provincial project to a highly respected institution which, like the National Film School of Denmark, develops skilled professionals for the Northern European animation industry.

The Animation Workshop and the National Film School are involved in a close, smoothly running partnership, although coordinating the exchange of students for sophomore and graduation films is a massive spreadsheet undertaking. "I think things are working really well with the National Film School," Thorning says. "And I think it shows in the graduation films, which get better all the time. In the beginning, they tended to be too arty and, later on, the engineering work showed too much. I'd say the two aspects seem to be coming together nicely now."

The Animation Workshop and the National Film School are among the many partners in the Danish Academy of Digital Interactive Entertainment (DADIU), which is working to set up an inter-institutional programme in computer game design.

THE OPEN WORKSHOP

The Open Workshop continues to go strong, attracting everyone from walk-in laymen who want to do something with claymation to professionals or recent graduates looking to develop new projects. As Morten Thorning stresses, the growth layer should never be neglected. A big reason for the Animation Workshop's success is its fertile blend of students and professionals working side by side.

Read more about the activities at Animation Workshop, Viborg: www.animwork.dk

For further information about the Danish Academy of Digital Interactive Entertainment (DADIU): www.dadiu.dk



Jorden Kalder, Animationsværkstedet, Open Workshop 2004. Instr.: Claus Toksvig

PITCHING AT FORUM

During a three-day intensive programme at Cartoon Forum, some 68 projects will be pitched in the company of potential investors, commissioning editors, and film consultants. Three of the projects are Danish.

THE TWEETHLINGS

Funny stories about forest animals



The Tweethlings is an animated TV series about little animal children living in the forest. The series, targeting children aged three to five, has been running on DR (the Danish Broadcasting Corporation) as short 25-second films introducing children's TV shows. The new series will tell funny and entertaining stories with emotional and humorous elements designed for children. The visual style is calm, simple and easily accessible. The setting is the forest, because it's a safe place, yet unpredictable, fun to explore and full of playtime possibilities. All the characters are animal children. Their games are familiar to children from their own lives. The voices are by "real" children.

The *Tweethlings* will be directed by Tone Tarding, written by Anders Sparring and Jan Vierth, and produced by Marie Bro and Frederik Vogel of Vogel Film & Media.

LITTLE CRAB

Tiny crabs go on great adventures



Little Crab is an animated TV-series for preschoolers about an unusual little crab, aptly named Little Crab, who is afraid of the water. In fact he is afraid of many things, unlike his crazy friends: sweet Edith, wild and wacky Waving Walt and little street-wise Holly the Hermit. The gang always manages to find new adventures on their secret island. It makes Little Crab very nervous to think of all the excitement they will have to go through before he can relax again.

The animation is simple yet with a strong visual style and expressive artwork.

The *Little Crab* series will be in 13 episodes of 11 minutes. Kirsten Skytte is the writer and director. Radar Film is producing.

OLIVER PANPOT

Forward-thinking boy in a fictitious land



The animated story of *Oliver Panpot* is set in the made-up kingdom of Landavia in the 15th century. After the king is usurped in a dramatic coup, the newborn daughters of the king and his general are mixed up. The king orders the general to flee with the children, but on the way the girl, whom the general believes is his own daughter, is kidnapped. His real daughter, whom he thinks is the princess, grows up with the general's son, Oliver Panpot, who is a technically innovative boy, years ahead of his time. One day Oliver happens to overhear a myth, a prophecy saying that the daughter of the former king will return and take back the throne.

Oliver Panpot is a three-part tale, directed by Jesper Østergaard, written by Svend Sieling and produced by Funkhauser Film.

CATALOGUE

DANISH ANIMATION 2004-2006

CIRKELINE OG VERDENS MINDSTE SUPERHELT / LITTLE BIG MOUSE

DIRECTED BY
Jannik Hastrup



Circline goes on holiday to Turkey with her artist. Her chums Ingolf, Fredrik, and Viktor decide to go to see her, and stow away on board granddad's ship, where they meet another stowaway, the tough, fearless mouse Ali, who has set off into the world in search of happiness. Our friends are dragged into Ali's adventures and agree to help him to obtain cheese on board. But granddad is furious: he doesn't want kids on board, and the cat, the cook, and the captain aren't exactly mouse lovers either. Meanwhile, Ali has a secret!

DANISH RELEASE 10.12.2004
RUNNING TIME 80 min
DIRECTOR Jannik Hastrup
SCREENPLAY Jannik Hastrup, Kit Goetz
VOICES Tillie Emilie Bech, Jesper Klein, Bodil Udsen, Kristoffer Schmidt, Alberte Skronski
PRODUCER Marie Bro
PRODUCTION Dansk Tegnefilm 2 ApS
INTERNATIONAL SALES Nordisk Film International Sales / t +45 3618 8200 / f +45 3618 9550 / contact@nordiskfilm.com / www.sales.nordiskfilm.com

DEN GRIMME ÆLLING OG MIG / THE UGLY DUCKLING AND ME

DIRECTED BY
Michael Hegner,
Karsten Kiilerich



Hans Christian Andersen's classic fairy tale about an ugly duckling who turns into a beautiful swan is the subject of this 3D animated comedy. The tale is updated in unorthodox fashion as Ratso, a success-starved rodent impresario tries to persuade everyone that he is the duckling's dad. Ratso and the world's ugliest duckling set off on a perilous journey towards their big breakthrough, but dangerous foes, teenage problems and unexpected paternal feelings lie ahead.

DANISH RELEASE 13.10.2006
RUNNING TIME 80 min
DIRECTOR Michael Hegner, Karsten Kiilerich
SCREENPLAY Stefan Fjeldmark, Michael Hegner, Karsten Kiilerich, Mark Hodgkinson
VOICES To be announced
PRODUCER Anders Mastrup, Irene Sparre
PRODUCTION A. Film A/S
INTERNATIONAL SALES M6 Droits Audiovisuels Paris / cdessagnes@m6.fr

JUNGLEDYRET HUGO - FRÆK SOM ALTID / JUNGO GOES BANANAS (WORKING TITLE)

DIRECTED BY
Flemming Quist Møller,
Anders Sørensen, Jørgen Lerdam



Hunters are stalking Jungo, the rare jungle creature. Danger lurks behind every tree, but Jungo still loves the forest, his girlfriend Rita and Dellekaj's meatballs. When Jungo is trapped and crated off to Junglandia, his friends immediately set out to rescue him. But, will Jungo ever experience freedom again?

DANISH RELEASE 2006
RUNNING TIME 72 min
DIRECTOR Flemming Quist Møller, Anders Sørensen, Jørgen Lerdam
SCREENPLAY Flemming Quist Møller
PRODUCER Per Holst
PRODUCTION PH3 Aps
INTERNATIONAL SALES Nordisk Film International Sales / t +45 3618 8200 / f +45 3618 9550 / contact@nordiskfilm.com / www.sales.nordiskfilm.com

PRINCESS / PRINCESS

DIRECTED BY
Anders Morgenthaler



The story of August who loses his beloved sister Christina, a former porn star known as Princess. He adopts Christina's five-year-old daughter Mia. Weighed down by grief and guilt, August breaks down and becomes psychotic. With Mia in tow, he embarks on a mission of vengeance to erase Christina's pornographic legacy.

DANISH RELEASE To be announced
RUNNING TIME 90 min
DIRECTOR Anders Morgenthaler
SCREENPLAY Anders Morgenthaler, Mette Heeno
VOICES Thure Lindhardt, Stine Fischer Christensen, Margrethe Koytu, Tommy Kenter, Christian Tafdrup
PRODUCER Sarita Christensen
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Peter Aalbæk Jensen, Peter Garde
PRODUCTION Zentropa GRRRR ApS
INTERNATIONAL SALES Trust Film Sales ApS / t +45 3686 8788 / f +45 3677 4448 / post@trust-film.dk / www.trust-film.dk

STRINGS / STRINGS

DIRECTED BY
Anders Rønnow Klarlund



Strings is a dramatic tale of adventure, bondage and liberation; of love and war, destiny and vitality, identity and common humanity. For not everything is what it seems in this land of adventure, where the threads of destiny are woven together by unseen hands, and where there appears to be a hidden connection between Heaven and Earth.

DANISH RELEASE 09.09.2005
RUNNING TIME 91 min
DIRECTOR Anders Rønnow Klarlund
SCREENPLAY Naja Maria Aidt, Anders Rønnow Klarlund
VOICES James McAvoy, Catherine McCormack, Julian Glover, Sir Derek Jacobi, Ian Hart, Claire Skinner, David Harewood, Samantha Bond
PRODUCER Niels Bald
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Peter Aalbæk Jensen
PRODUCTION Bald Production ApS, Bald Film
INTERNATIONAL SALES Trust Film Sales ApS / t +45 3686 8788 / f +45 3677 4448 / post@trust-film.dk / www.trust-film.dk

TERKEL I KNIBE / TERKEL IN TROUBLE

DIRECTED BY
Stefan Fjeldmark,
Thorbjørn Christoffersen,
Kresten Vestbjerg Andersen



Terkel is eleven years old. He's having trouble with Steen and Saki, two bullies in his class at school. Luckily, Terkel has a really good friend, Jason. But when Terkel teases Dorrit, an obese girl, so badly that she jumps out of the window, it almost ends their friendship. Jason is pretty fed up with Terkel and his tendency to suck up to the bullies. Maybe Terkel ought to be worrying about who is throwing bricks through his bedroom window at night, and Gunnar, the slightly too smug substitute teacher.

DANISH RELEASE 02.04.2004
RUNNING TIME 78 min
DIRECTOR Stefan Fjeldmark, Thorbjørn Christoffersen, Kresten Vestbjerg Andersen
SCREENPLAY Mette Heeno
VOICES Anders Matthesen
PRODUCER Thomas Heinesen, Trine Heidegaard
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Kim Magnusson
PRODUCTION Nordisk Film Production A/S, A. Film A/S
INTERNATIONAL SALES Nordisk Film International Sales / t +45 3618 8200 / f +45 3618 9550 / contact@nordiskfilm.com / www.sales.nordiskfilm.com

BIG WASH / BIG WASH

DIRECTED BY
Kassandra Wellendorf



The film takes place in a universe of laundry, water, foam and soap bubbles. The characters are children's clothes. On their way through washing and drying, the clothes act out typical children's conflicts about friendships, setting boundaries, bullying and loneliness.

The chaotic washing process is used as a symbol of kindergarten and pre-school experiences. In a washing machine different clothes are thrown together. They may match in colour or shape, but not in other ways.

DANISH RELEASE 2006
RUNNING TIME 10 min
DIRECTOR Kassandra Wellendorf
SCREENPLAY Kassandra Wellendorf
PRODUCER Karen Maarbjerg
PRODUCTION Kassandra Wellendorf
INTERNATIONAL SALES Kassandra Wellendorf / t +45 3325 0229/
t +45 2819 7656 / kasswell@hotmail.com

BILLY BOY 900 - VAMPYRKYSSET / BILLY BOY 900 - THE VAMPIRE KISS

DIRECTED BY
Teis Dyekjær



Billy Boy is desperate. He has never kissed a girl before, and if he doesn't before his 14th birthday, he'll be a total loser. He's head-over-heels in love with Helena, the new girl in class, but he's much too shy to invite her out. Meanwhile Captain Bigknight and his crew are on their way to Earth on a very important mission. They are to monitor a human kiss. Unfortunately Captain Bigknight messes up the landing, and they crash-land in Billy Boy's head. As if being a teenager wasn't enough!

DANISH RELEASE 20.05.2004
RUNNING TIME 13 min
DIRECTOR Teis Dyekjær
SCREENPLAY Tom Golzen, Mads Buttenschøn, Teis Dyekjær
VOICES Stefan Pagels Andersen, Peter Hviid, Sasia Mølgaard, Lars Thiesgaard, Peter Zhelder Due, Anette Støvelbæk, Frank Thiel, Bjarne Henriksen
PRODUCER Mads Buttenschøn
PRODUCTION Buttenschøn&Budde Entertainment Rights ApS
INTERNATIONAL SALES TV 2/Danmark, Programme Sales / t 3537 2200 / f 3537 2227 / sales@tv2.dk

BJØRNO & BINGO / BERNIE & BINGO

DIRECTED BY
Sabine Ravn
National Film School of Denmark



A new story featuring Bingo the penguin and Bernie the bear at last! This time with Special Guest Stars Giraffo, the Blubbery Elephant, Viggo the Billy goat, and last but not least ... Marius Drooler! A film packed with bumper nuts and Special Effect Effects! Don't miss it!

DANISH RELEASE 2004
RUNNING TIME 7 min
DIRECTOR Sabine Ravn
SCREENPLAY Sabine Ravn
VOICES Sidse Babett Knudsen, Ole Børnedal, Jesper Asholt, Michael Noer, Sabine Ravn
PRODUCER Katrine Vogelsang, Stine Lauritz Larsen
PRODUCTION National Film School of Denmark
INTERNATIONAL SALES National Film School of Denmark / elr@filmskolen.dk

BØRN ER PISSEFARLIGE! / WICKED, WICKED KIDS

DIRECTED BY
Diego Krogstrup
National Film School of Denmark



Two kids on a mission to kill. They are accidentally thrown into each other's arms and discover that neither of them wants to kill at all. Their bosses, who are out to get them, don't agree at all.

DANISH RELEASE 2004
RUNNING TIME 7 min
DIRECTOR Diego Krogstrup
SCREENPLAY Diego Krogstrup
PRODUCER Katrine Vogelsang, Stine Lauritz Larsen
PRODUCTION National Film School of Denmark
INTERNATIONAL SALES National Film School of Denmark / elr@filmskolen.dk

CIRKUS / CIRCUS

DIRECTED BY
Thomas Pors
National Film School of Denmark



A naive clown with a fabulous act and a heart of gold wants to join the circus. Unfortunately he ends up in the wrong place: A circus where the manager is apathetic, the ballerina has had enough, and the horse is on prescription drugs ... Circus film at it's best!

DANISH RELEASE 2004
RUNNING TIME 8 min
DIRECTOR Thomas Pors
SCREENPLAY Thomas Pors, Rum Malmros
VOICES Nicolaj Kopernikus, Helle Dølleris, Nis Bank-Mikkelsen
PRODUCER Anna-Maria Kantarius
PRODUCTION National Film School of Denmark
INTERNATIONAL SALES National Film School of Denmark / elr@filmskolen.dk

DEM DEROVRE OG DE ANDRE / THE ONES OVER THERE AND THE OTHERS

DIRECTED BY
Ziska Szemes



Mie is finally invited to a big party, but she does not want to bring her gawky girlfriend, Sanne. She sacrifices her friendship in order to be with the popular girls. But the question is whether it is worth the price.

DANISH RELEASE 2004
RUNNING TIME 15 min
DIRECTOR Ziska Szemes
SCREENPLAY Ziska Szemes
PRODUCER Marie Bro
PRODUCTION Dansk Tegnefilm 2 ApS
INTERNATIONAL SALES Dansk Tegnefilm 2 ApS / t +45 3393 0988 / f +45 3393 0989

DEN LILLE BAMSE / THE LITTLE BEAR

DIRECTED BY
Maria Mac Dalland



A simple and charming story for young children aged 2-4 about a day in the life of a small family of bears. Today, the bears go to the beach. The little bear collects rocks and seashells and finally falls asleep in the sand, while the big bears tear around and splash in the water. The film will appeal to small children, because the little bear's world is a familiar and safe place to be.

DANISH RELEASE 2006
RUNNING TIME 15 min
DIRECTOR Maria Mac Dalland
SCREENPLAY Thomas Winding, Maria Mac Dalland
PRODUCER Dino Raymond Hansen
PRODUCTION Wake Film ApS
INTERNATIONAL SALES Wake Film ApS
/ t +45 3257 3434 / t +45 4085 7025
/ f +45 3257 3434 / dino@wake.dk / www.wake.dk

EXIT / EXIT

DIRECTED BY
Robert Depuis
National Film School of Denmark



A perfect shot. Through the window, through the chair, and straight through the fat man's head. He collapsed, slid off the chair, and hit the floor. Nobody could have survived ... but the fat man did not die.

DANISH RELEASE 2004
RUNNING TIME 7 min
DIRECTOR Robert Depuis
SCREENPLAY Robert Depuis
APPEARANCES Nicolas Bro
VOICES Henrik Larsen
PRODUCER Nikolaj Tarp
PRODUCTION National Film School of Denmark
INTERNATIONAL SALES National Film School of Denmark / elr@filmskolen.dk

HVOR LIGGER JULELAND? / WHERE IS THE LAND OF CHRISTMAS?

DIRECTED BY
Liller Møller



An unassuming elf is forced from his snug window display among cotton snow and tinsel into the strangeness and harshness of the "real" world. The homesick elf undergoes many a trial before returning to his beloved "Land of Christmas." But now he finds his old home all too constricting.

DANISH RELEASE 2005
RUNNING TIME 24 min
DIRECTOR Liller Møller
SCREENPLAY Liller Møller
PRODUCER Svend Johansen
PRODUCTION Filmforsyningen ApS
INTERNATIONAL SALES Filmforsyningen ApS
/ t +45 5752 1505 / f +45 5752 1716
/ svend@filmforsyningen.dk

HÅNDVÆRK / HANDIWORK

DIRECTED BY
Mia Isabel Edelgart



Trying to fall asleep, a woman is distracted by various sounds. When the people upstairs start having loud sex, her hand falls off. She tries to catch it, but the hand eludes her and runs upstairs. Screams are heard, then the hand returns, bloodstained, and gets back on to the woman's arm. There is a knock at the door. It's the police.

DANISH RELEASE 2005
RUNNING TIME 6 min
DIRECTOR Mia Isabel Edelgart
SCREENPLAY Mia Isabel Edelgart
PRODUCER Niels Gråbøl
PRODUCTION DFI Film Workshop
INTERNATIONAL SALES Mia Isabel Edelgart / t +45 4037 4167 / mia.edelgart@sol.dk

KRIG OG KAGER / WAR AND PEAS

DIRECTED BY
Jannik Hastrup



A story about a fat king and his people who are up against a group of starving animals after a drought has set in. King Lion approaches the fat king to ask him to share his food. The king refuses, but the animals are determined to succeed in persuading the fat king and his soldiers to share their resources.

DANISH RELEASE 2006
RUNNING TIME 10 min
DIRECTOR Jannik Hastrup
SCREENPLAY Michael Foreman
VOICES Anne Marie Helger, Peter Frödin, Ole Thestrup, Anders Anderskov
PRODUCER Marie Bro
PRODUCTION Dansk Tegnefilm 2 ApS
INTERNATIONAL SALES Dansk Tegnefilm 2 ApS / t +45 3393 0988 / f +45 3393 0989

LUDMILLA, THE LIONESS / LUDMILLA, THE LIONESS

DIRECTED BY
Sébastien Fraboulet



An animation film inspired by a classic Tunisian story. The film is a modern adventure and follows a woman, Aysha, who decides to live an existentialist life in the desert as a recluse. *Ludmilla, the Lioness* follows her from afar and guides Aysha through the whole story to her final goal.

DANISH RELEASE 2004
RUNNING TIME 13 min
DIRECTOR Sébastien Fraboulet
SCREENPLAY Anushka Gothami Abeynayka
PRODUCER Sébastien Fraboulet
PRODUCTION DFI Film Workshop
INTERNATIONAL SALES Sébastien Fraboulet / +45 2288 5881

ODINS ØJE / ODIN'S EYE

DIRECTED BY
Maria Mac Dalland



Odin's Eye is the story of the Creation, the origin of man, and the struggle between Ases (Aesir) and Giants of Nordic mythology. The film offers children and young people from 7 years and upwards the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the myths and the sagas of the Viking Era.

DANISH RELEASE 2004
RUNNING TIME 25 min
DIRECTOR Maria Mac Dalland
SCREENPLAY Thomas Winding, Maria Mac Dalland
APPEARANCES Tom McEwan
PRODUCER Dino Raymond Hansen
PRODUCTION Wake Film ApS
INTERNATIONAL SALES Wake Film ApS
/ t +45 3257 3434 / t +45 4085 7025
/ f +45 3257 3434 / dino@wake.dk / www.wake.dk

ORLA FRØSNAPPER, BERTRAM OG PØLSÉ / ORLA FROGSNAPPER, BERTRAM AND A DOG NAMED SAUSAGE

DIRECTED BY
Erling Budde



Bertram is sent shopping. While he's at the butcher's, a naughty little dog comes in and snaps up a sausage. Outraged, the butcher's wife offers a reward for the dog. On his way home, Bertram happens to meet the dog and it starts following him. Then the biggest bully in town, Orla Froggnapper, pops up. He's out to catch the dog and collect the reward.

DANISH RELEASE 2005
RUNNING TIME 10 min
DIRECTOR Erling Budde
SCREENPLAY Erling Budde, Mads Buttenschøn
PRODUCER Erik Wilstrup, Mads Buttenschøn
PRODUCTION Wil Film ApS
INTERNATIONAL SALES TV 2/Danmark, Programme Sales
/ t 3537 2200 / f 3537 2227 / sales@tv2.dk

PIP OG PAPEGØJE / THE CUCKOO PARROT

DIRECTED BY
Natasha Arthy



Tobias' biggest wish is to have a pet bird. One day he saves a sick sparrow, who, it turns out, is really The Blind Fairy. As a reward for saving her, the fairy grants Tobias a wish. But things go wrong for the Blind Fairy, who unfortunately transforms Tobias into a green parrot. As a parrot Tobias finds himself in a spot. He is held captive by an evil bird merchant, and unless he changes back to his original state within 29 hours, he will remain a bird forever.

DANISH RELEASE 2005
RUNNING TIME 43 min
DIRECTOR Natasha Arthy (animation by Spild af Tid ApS)
SCREENPLAY Kim Fupz Aakeson, Per Nielsen, Natasha Arthy
APPEARANCES Peter Frødin, Julius Hilario Jønsson
PRODUCER Peter Wolsgaard
PRODUCTION Frontier Media A/S
INTERNATIONAL SALES DR TV, International Sales
/ t +45 3938 3040 / brun@dr.dk / www.drsales.dk

RØDE ØRER / AWFULLY EMBARRASSING

DIRECTED BY
Karsten Mungo Madsen



The superhero, Overman, is helping out the unfortunate eight-year-old boy Herman, who has fallen in love with a girl. Herman so much wants to tell her about his feelings, but he is also very embarrassed by them. The problems grows as Herman discovers that the girl is about to move to another town and there is only one hour left for him to announce his love.

DANISH RELEASE 2005
RUNNING TIME 14 min
DIRECTOR Karsten Mungo Madsen
SCREENPLAY Niels Lund
VOICES Thomas Mørk
PRODUCER Fredrik Vogel
PRODUCTION Tinyfilm SKP ApS
INTERNATIONAL SALES Tiny Film / mail@tinyfilm.dk

SKYGGEN I SARA / THE SHADOW IN SARA

DIRECTED BY
Karla Nielsen
National Film School of Denmark



Sara feels misunderstood by everyone and all alone in the world. She is sick of fighting, particularly with her mum. It's her mum's birthday today: a chance to reverse the vicious spiral. But that proves easier said than done.

DANISH RELEASE 2004
RUNNING TIME 7 min
DIRECTOR Karla Nielsen
SCREENPLAY Karla Nielsen
VOICES Pernille Kaae Høier, Gustav Eliasson, Sarah Boberg
PRODUCER Mia Marie Borup
PRODUCTION National Film School of Denmark
INTERNATIONAL SALES National Film School of Denmark / elr@filmskolen.dk

VILLA, VOLVO & VICKI / FOR DOG AND COUNTRY

DIRECTED BY
Andreas Bødker Jørgensen
National Film School of Denmark



A zany comedy about a man drowning in stress. He is so obsessed by his diary that he has forgotten the world surrounding him. It takes a torrent of water to show him that there are more important things in life than his next appointment.

DANISH RELEASE 2004
RUNNING TIME 8 min
DIRECTOR Andreas Bødker Jørgensen
SCREENPLAY Tommy Bredsted, Andreas Bødker Jørgensen
VOICES Klaus Bondam, Michelle Bjørn-Andersen, Morten Lassenius Kramp
PRODUCER Christian Rank
PRODUCTION National Film School of Denmark
INTERNATIONAL SALES National Film School of Denmark / elr@filmskolen.dk

STRINGS

AN INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

STRINGS A NEW DANISH MARIONETTE ANIMATION FEATURE FILM BY ANDERS RØNNOW KLARLUND AND BALD FILM/ **REVIEWS SCREEN:** A RAVISHING THOUGHT-PROVOKING MOVIE/ **MARIE CLAIRE FRANCE:** WE LOVE IT. EXEPTIONAL!/ **THE TIMES:** AN EXTRAORDINARY MELDING OF VISUAL ARTIFICE AND POETIC IMAGINATION/ **TIME OUT LONDON:** A CHARMING ANTIDOTE TO THE TECHNOLOGICAL THRUST OF PIXAR, DREAMWORKS AND THE LIKE/ **HONOURS SILVER MÉLIÈS** FOR BEST FANTASY FILM AT ESPOO CINÉ/ HONOURABLE MENTION, **CITIZEN KANE AWARD** AND **CRITICS AWARD AT BARCELONA**/ NOMINATED FOR THE **AUDIENCE AWARD AT LUND**/ **SELECTED FOR VENICE DAYS 2004**/ **INTERNATIONAL SALES SOLD TO SOME 40 COUNTRIES**/ WWW.STRINGSTHEMOVIE.COM

