

THE DANISH TERRORIST

Two young men, the same age, same culture and religion. Both have had the same opportunities. Why did one become a terrorist? Mistrati og Khaja's *Accidental Terrorist* seeks the answer. IDFA's Mid-length Competition.

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THE FLOPPY DISK INVENTOR

Dr. Nakamats is a cult figure in Japan and a famous inventor. He is about to celebrate his 80th birthday, still feeling young. Kaspar Astrup Schröder's tongue in cheek portrait is in IDFA's Mid-length Competition.

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THREE GRADUATE FILMS

Hard knocks and loss of innocence, looking for the light, and 'living online' are the themes in three films produced at the National Film School of Denmark, all in competition programmes.

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#67

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CITIES ON SPEED

GLOBAL VISIONS FOR AN URBAN FUTURE

BOGOTA CHANGE / MUMBAI DISCONNECTED
CAIRO GARBAGE / SHANGHAI SPACE

:/FILM:/

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The Invention of Dr. Nakamats Photo: Plus Pictures



Albert's Vinter Photo: Framegrab



The Red Chapel Photo: René Johannsen



Dreams in Copenhagen Photo: Henrik Bohn Ipsen



Out of Love Photo: Marek Septimus Wieser

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MEGACITIES

GLOBAL VISIONS FOR AN URBAN FUTURE

Megacities hold an irresistible attraction for migrants from the countryside. As these cities swell their needs multiply. Image of a megacity: Bogota **Photo:** Andreas Dalsgaard

At this very moment, giant urban organisms are growing at unprecedented rates. Today 50 percent of the world's population lives in urban areas. By 2030 this figure is predicted to increase to 80 percent. Growth has far outpaced city planning. The challenges and solutions to the problems in four of the world's biggest cities — Bogotá, Cairo, Mumbai and Shanghai — are the focus of the film series *Cities on Speed*, a documentary project commissioned by the Danish Film Institute and the national broadcaster DR.

BY LARS MOVIN

From the birth of the motion-picture medium, the big city as a living, manifold organism has been a favourite subject of filmmakers the world over, pros and amateurs, documentary and fiction auteurs, alike. From Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin, die Symphonie der Großstadt* (1927) to Woody Allen's *Manhattan* (1979), the city has

been a frame for cinematic narratives – if not the actual subject itself. A rich tradition in film history of capturing modern urban life on celluloid underlies the *Cities on Speed* project.

The series presents four filmic views of human conditions in four of the world's biggest cities, focusing on urban problems and the people who are working on radical solutions – from underground parks in Shanghai, over clowns miming traffic police in Bogotá, to the so-called garbage collectors in Cairo and the Nano cars of Mumbai.

Not “urban symphonies” in the classic sense, these are documentary snapshots of life in modern megacities. How does explosive population growth impact the cities' infrastructure? How do you handle all the problems that come with such growth? What drives millions of people to migrate from rural villages to these gigantic human anthills? How does an individual human adapt to a new reality with limited room and constant change?

CHARACTER-DRIVEN DOCS

To get answers to these questions and more, the

Danish Film Institute and the national broadcaster DR made a joint call for submissions for four film projects. The description called for character-driven documentary tales as vehicles for depicting the challenges and development potentials that result when cities continue to grow to a point in history when more than half of the world's population is already living in cities. The ambition was for each film to apply its own thematic vision to the issue of megacities and gather new, unexpected and, as far as possible, entertaining stories from the kind of material that is usually presented on TV as statistics or negative news reports on crime, slums and pollution.

In the following pages you can read about the directors' visions, their style and the stories they chose to tell in their films: *Bogotá Change* by Andreas Dalsgaard and Upfront Films, *Cairo Garbage* by Mikala Krogh and Nimbus Film, *Mumbai Disconnected* by Camilla Nielsson, Frederik Jacobi and Upfront Films, and *Shanghai Space* by Nanna Frank Møller and Bastard Film & TV.



"The real secret behind Mockus and Peñalosa's success is that they are two people characterized by extreme honesty and integrity in everything they do. They are two leaders who have the necessary courage to stay true to their visions, even when the opinion polls go against them." Andreas Dalsgaard

CREATING COMMUNITY OUT OF CHAOS



Strengthening the individual's sense of responsibility has been a contributing factor to Bogotá's success. **Photo:** Andreas Dalsgaard

***Bogotá Change*, directed by Andreas Dalsgaard, is the unique and surprising story of two mayors, Antanas Mockus and Enrique Peñalosa, who have changed behaviour patterns in the Colombian capital, bringing Bogotá out of a negative spiral of violence and chaos and remaking it as something of a visionary role model for other megacities.**

BY LARS MOVIN

In the ten-year period between 1995 and 2005, Colombia's capital city, Bogotá, experienced a virtual miracle. Once a city characterized by terror, crime and one of the highest murder rates in the world, Bogotá became a role model for urban planners around the world.

Behind this transformation were two visionary and forward-thinking mayors, Antanas Mockus and Enrique Peñalosa, who, applying drastically different methods, tackled the inhabitants' behaviour and the city's infrastructure. Using abundant archive material, supplemented by present day footage and interviews, the Bogotá documentary tells the story of the city's fantastic metamorphosis.

"Because Mockus and Peñalosa are public figures, considerable archive material exists, and digging it up was one of the most demanding tasks involved in making this film."

Has seeing the story from the outside been an advantage or disadvantage for you?

"For the most part, I think it has been an advantage. The 'thesis' presented by the film is that neither Mockus or Peñalosa alone can take credit for what has happened, but that it was Bogotá's great fortune that these two mayors happen to come in succession. Mockus is first and foremost a thinker, while Peñalosa is a doer, and in this way they compliment one another. And as an outsider, it has been natural for me to observe this project's success as a result of their shared contributions.

When one hears about the level of violence and corruption in Colombia, one can't help but wonder how Mockus and Peñalosa managed to survive their campaigns.

"There are politicians who are 'removed' in Colombia, and I can't say why these two have managed to survive. But it may have something to do with the fact that Bogotá, despite all of its problems with crime, drugs and slums, is also a very liberal

city, with a well educated middle class and a rich cultural life and some of South America's top universities.

"The real secret behind Mockus and Peñalosa's success is that they are two people characterized by extreme honesty and integrity in everything they do. They are two leaders who have the necessary courage to stay true to their visions, even when the opinion polls go against them. Unlike other politicians who are controlled by strategies and tactics, they have not been driven by a lust for power, only by their ideas and philosophies. And if there is a lesson to be learned by their story, it must be that the change they have managed to bring about could never have come from the traditional political system. It could only have come from the outside."

What was the most difficult thing about filming in Bogotá?

"Colombia is a very segregated society, and there are still slum districts in Bogotá where it is not safe to walk around. I worked with a team consisting of seven Colombians, and it was actually something of a challenge to get them to work in some of the more impoverished neighbourhoods. The film's cinematographer, one of Colombia's most experienced documentary photographers, later told me that we had filmed in some locations where he never would have imagined setting foot – and walking away alive."

With the large amount of archive material, this is a very different film than those you usually make. Has the fact that the story plays out in the past felt like a limitation?

I quickly arrived at the conclusion that the story itself was so strong and important, that it was not about bringing in all sorts of innovative stylistic tricks. I felt more obligated to communicate the story as clearly as possible, precisely because it isn't just a story about Bogotá, but a universal narrative about change that affects us all. The important thing about what has happened in Bogotá is that people haven't solved the problems by coming down hard and dishing out harder prison sentences, but by creating equality between all types of people in society and strengthening the individual's sense of responsibility. In short, it is about putting people in the center and creating happiness. And I am very happy to have been able to tell this story." ■

For further information about Cities on Speed – Bogotá Change, see catalogue in reverse section.



Photo: Christian B.V.Andersen

ANDREAS DALSGAARD

Born 1980, Denmark. B.A. in social anthropology at Aarhus University, 2005. Graduate of the National Film School of Denmark. *Afghan Muscles* (2007), Dalsgaard's debut as a documentary director, was a festival hit, winning Best Documentary at AFI Los Angeles and Open Eyes Award at Rome MedFilm Festival.

UPFRONT FILMS

Formerly known as Cosmo Doc. Main staff: producers: Anna-Maria Kantarius and Henrik Veileborg and production manager Monica Hellström. Company honours include Emmy nominations and several awards, besides films selected for IDFA. *Prostitution behind the Veil* (Nahid Persson, 2004), *Smiling in a Warzone* (Simone Aaberg Kern, Magnus Bejmar, 2005). Christoffer Guldbrandsen's *The Secret War*, about Danish military involvement in Iraq stands out as one of the companies most controversial films. Two films were chosen for IDFA 2008: *Love on Delivery* (Silver Wolf Competition) and *Ticket to Paradise* (Reflecting Images: Panorama). 2009: Selected for IDFA's Reflecting Images: Panorama are *Bogotá Change* and *Mumbai Disconnected* from the Cities on Speed series. www.upfrontfilms.dk www.citiesonspeed.dk



INFRASTRUCTURE OUT OF CONTROL

Mumbai Disconnected Photo: Camilla Nielsson

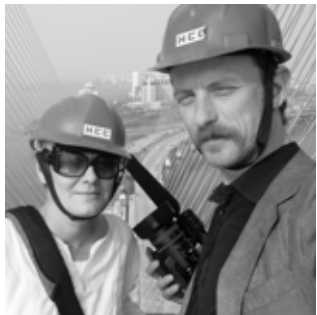


Photo: Frederik Jacobi

Humour is a powerful element in *Mumbai Disconnected*, directed by Camilla Nielsson and Frederik Jacobi. Mumbai is growing like it was on steroids. But a collapsing infrastructure is threatening to put an end to the booming economy, and is making the daily commute close to unbearable for Mumbai's 20 million citizens, where 13 people die every day on the railroads.

BY LARS MOVIN

CAMILLA NIELSSON

Born 1970, Denmark. M.A. in visual anthropology and Certificate in Culture and Media from New York University (NYU). Her film *The Children of Darfur* (2006) won the Monte Carlo TV Festival Grand Prix, TV3 Award in Spain, and Miradas Doc Award. Co-director on *Cities on Speed – Mumbai Disconnected*, selected for IDFA's Reflecting Images: Panorama.

FREDERIK JACOBI

Born 1974, Denmark. Trained as a cinematographer. Shot the film *Ghosts of Cite Soleil* (2006), recipient of the DGA Award, *Afghan Muscles* (2007), which won Best Documentary at AFI, the US film *Death in Love* (2008), selected for Sundance. As director, the short film *The Sound of Plants Fighting for Life*, shot in the Amazonas, with himself as lead actor. 2009: Debut as screenplay writer with the feature film *The Expatriate* by Jørgen Leth and *Cities on Speed – Mumbai Disconnected* (2009), selected for IDFA's Reflecting Images: Panorama.

UPFRONT FILMS

www.uprontfilms.dk
See page 5.
www.citiesonspeed.dk

In *Mumbai Disconnected*, we are presented with three characters. Veena Singhal was born and raised in Mumbai, and has lived 39 years on Peddar Road, where she is president of the Peddar Road Residents Association and has fought for eight years against a planned flyover, a highway overpass, which according to her and the other area residents would increase pollution 540 percent and destroy their neighbourhood.

Yasin is one of the city's millions of immigrants. He lives in the northern outlying districts and must fight his way onboard the overloaded trains to travel to the Crawford Market downtown, where he sells stuffed animals on the street corner. He is driven by his dream of a better life – and of one day owning his own car. And between these two we find a government bureaucrat, Mr. Das, the Vice President of the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation, whose job is to find solutions to Mumbai's overwhelming traffic problems.

"We have called it a comedy about infrastructure. Mumbai can be a tough place to live. 10-13 people die every day on the railroad tracks, and it would all be too easy to make a dystopian film about the city. It is such a huge organism, and it suffers daily from collapse. But the Mumbaikers themselves are well aware of the near grotesque aspects of their situation, and miraculously, they are able to make things work. They can sit in a traffic jam for three hours and still find the humorous side of things, and this life-affirming spirit is what we wanted to capture. And of course, it seemed obvious to borrow a bit from the humor that generally characterizes Bollywood films."

What about the stylistic side of things?

"The film's style emerged from the encounter between our characters and the camera. Both Veena and Yasin quickly began speaking spontaneously to the camera. This became a filmic space

that is central to the narrative. Veena always spoke unprompted and without encouragement when she was in her car. Yasin trains every morning and uses the physical atmosphere to formulate his strategy in the city. And in Mr. Das' office, there is a bureaucratic ping-pong match across the desk which we tried to capture with the camera.

Tell us about your experience of being dropped in the middle of a city of 20 million people?

"It was overwhelming. We first and foremost approached the assignment with great humility. At the same time, however, we felt that we as outsiders might be able to see other things that the locals could not. For example, we spoke with an Indian director who said that she would never have thought to enter the Maharashtra State Road Development office and film the way we have."

What was your greatest challenge?

"Permits were a huge problem. The Indian writer, Suketu Mehta, wrote in his book, *Maximum City*, called Mumbai 'the city of no.' People on the street are very helpful if you are stuck on the train or get lost, but among those in power, there is so little room for human consideration that it's easiest for them to just say 'no,' regardless of what you are asking.

Were there any strokes of luck?

"We had plenty, particularly when it came to our main characters. Veena seemed quiet motivated to share her story about her fight against the flyover, and the film was an opportunity for her to reach an international audience. Yasin told us straight out that he wanted to be a Bollywood actor, and he was clearly something of a performer, so he was excited to be involved in the project. He was also politically aware, and he saw the film as an opportunity to bring up some very sharp points about Western views on issues such as the environment and consumption in his part of the world. And even though Mr. Das may have been the one who had the least personal interest in taking part, he was a classic example of a bureaucrat who doesn't simply hide away in his office, but who truly fights for his cause, and who has a high sense of honour when it comes to doing his job well. In that sense, then, we were very lucky to find such interesting characters to work with. They were almost like three archetypes." ■

For further information about Cities on Speed – Mumbai Disconnected, see catalogue in reverse section.

CHANGING HABITS

Cairo Garbage, directed by Mikala Krogh, takes us on a journey into Cairo's "garbage cities," entire neighbourhoods where people earn a living sorting and recycling garbage. Cairo shows us the culture and habit factors at play in this Middle Eastern city, where Italian contractors are hired to solve increasingly unmanageable waste-management tasks.

BY LARS MOVIN

Historically, the so-called 'garbage people' have been able to manage Cairo's total waste production, but as a result of the city's explosive population growth, which has placed pressure on the old system, city authorities have outsourced part of the waste collection and management work to a number of foreign companies, including the Italian firm, Ama Arab, in order to avoid an environmental catastrophe.

Mikala Krogh had already considered making a film on one of Cairo's garbage cities before *Cities on Speed* was announced.

"When my project was selected, one prerequisite was that my original presentation had to be expanded upon to include a broader perspective, so that it was not solely about the garbage people, but more about how renovation was handled in Cairo - which includes the political level, city planning and so on. So that was the assignment I had when I travelled to Cairo."

How did the specific requirements affect your usual way of working?

"First and foremost, it meant that I had to try to combine my more observational method with a more journalistic element, which was an interesting challenge. As a whole, I was quite convinced that the film had to be able to work on television and would have to be directed to a wider public beyond those who

were already interested in the environment or documentaries. So I hope that the combination of my observational film language and some journalistic elements can shed light on the topic in such a way that people in the rest of the world can identify with the problems that people are struggling with in Cairo."

What is it that separates your film from a journalistic television production?

"Specifically, it must have something to do with the time dimension: the fact that I was present for a period of four to five months and followed my characters in a way that allows for some sort of development to take place. In a typical TV piece, a journalist goes in and interviews the people about what happened. In my film, we can follow along and see how attitudes and routines slowly change. And it may also have something to do with the visual language. Visually, I have consciously worked with either total images or very close cuts to communicate the relationships between the big city and the different challenges faced by individuals."

What were your greatest challenges?

"First and foremost, Cairo is a very demanding place to film because it is difficult to obtain the necessary permits. And once you've got them, you are still under surveillance and must be careful of what you do. It was also a personal challenge for me to work with a local photographer, because in all of my other films I've worked with the same two photographers, with whom I share a common cinematographic language. But it turned out to be a huge gift, because the photographer I ended up working with understood the language and knew Cairo extremely well."

- The film's narrative motor is garbage, but what do you see as the overall theme?

"It's about changing our habits, and about being able to adapt as cities develop. And that is a universal narrative. Indirectly, of course, it is also about consumption, but again, it was not my intention to go in, point fingers and ask critical questions concerning whether or not people consume too much in Egypt or whether they could do things differently. I am more interested in pointing out areas where we resemble one another across national and cultural boundaries. And I believe that everyone is familiar with the difficulties involved in adapting - whether it involves carrying your garbage down to the street and leaving it in a container, taking shorter showers or leaving your car at home. It's a challenge for all of us.

"In this way I wished to paint another picture of the Middle East

than the one we normally see. In the West, most stories about that part of the world either take pity on the Muslims, or in the case of fundamentalists, gladly portray women with headscarves as oppressed. For this reason, it seems relevant to tell a story about how, in many ways, everyday life in Egypt is very much like ours; also, in this case, women have actually taken the initiative to go out and actively try to solve the problems at hand." ■

For further information about Cities on Speed - Cairo Garbage, see catalogue in reverse section.



Photo: Danish Documentary Production

MIKALA KROGH

Born 1973, Denmark. Graduate of the National Film School of Denmark, 2001. Films include *My Grandfather's Murderer* (with Søren Fauli, 2004), awarded in Sevilla and Paris, and *Beth's Diary* (with Kent Klich, 2006), awarded at CPH:DOX and Nordic Panorama. *Everything is Relative* (2008) was selected for Karlovy Vary and won the Grand Prix at Taipei.

NIMBUS FILM

Founded 1993 by Birgitte Hald and Bo Ehrhardt. Celebrated for several Dogme films, including *Festen / The Celebration* (Thomas Vinterberg, 1998). Other films: *Dark Horse* (2005), selected for Cannes' Un Certain Regard; *A Soap* (2006), double-winner at Berlin. *Flame & Citron* (2008), greatest Danish boxoffice success in recent years. 2009-2010: *Valhalla Rising* (Nicolas Winding Refn), *Over gaden under vandet* (Charlotte Sieling), *Submarino* (Thomas Vinterberg). www.nimbusfilm.dk

DANISH DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION

Founded in 2008 by three IDFA Amsterdam winners, Pernille Rose Grønkjær (*The Monastery*), Eva Mulvad (*Enemies of Happiness*); Phie Ambo (*Mechanical Love and Family*); together with award-winning director Mikala Krogh and producer Sigrud Helene Dyekjær. www.danishdocumentary.com



Cairo Garbage Photo: Lara Balad

DESPERATELY SEEKING SPACE

Shanghai Space, directed by Nanna Frank Møller, takes a poetic and contemplative look at the abnormal growth of China's great port city, where a new building is constructed every other day, and where the population increases by half a million people each year. A photographer, who has documented the city's changes over the decades, is now himself a victim of that development, while a professor of urban planning fantasizes about an underground city.

BY LARS MOVIN

How will people in Shanghai continue to find space for the many new immigrants, and what does growth mean for the city's relationship with its own history?

These questions are among those reflected upon via the films two main characters: Xixan Xu, a passionate amateur photographer, who has spent a lifetime documenting the changes the city has undergone, and who himself has become a victim of Shanghai's development; and Yu Shu, an urban planning professor who fantasizes about a future city underground. Nanna Frank Møller tells:

"To me it seems natural that a film is driven by characters with whom I can identify. That is why I never doubted that, even though the assignment was based on portraying a city, the film could of course tell different peoples' stories. And because the project was about a city like Shanghai, I immediately came to think of how the individual finds space for himself in the constant change that this special place represents. How does one find space in a place where there is so little space?"
In the film, the viewer recognizes your aesthetic preferences and the significant space around the people you film. Was maintaining your own voice a particular challenge within the given framework?

"Filming is a very intuitive process in which one is always making decisions on the spot concerning what to include in the images. However, it was naturally a challenge to incorporate different factual pieces of information, as that is something I generally do not work with. My solution was to regularly try to intuit whether including the relevant information contributed something to the characters. Subsequently, the task consisted of getting the two main characters to interact, playing off the



Shanghai Space Photo: Nanna Frank Møller

man-on-the-street with the official who represents the state, and getting them both to interact with the city in a movement that can be called a filmic narrative."

Have you at any time felt that your tranquil cinematic language might not work against the experience of being in a hectic metropolis, where one's senses are constantly bombarded?

"No, because even though one finds oneself in a megacity, the individual is still in his or her subjective present, which is generally peaceful. That is also why it was a blessing to have a main character who was a photographer, who in this sense exudes tranquility amidst chaos. So no, I don't feel that I've forced form onto reality."

Where does your general penchant for open, one-face images come from?

"From a technical point of view, it must have something to do with my experience as a film cutter. For me, editing film is transferring feeling and energy from one image to another, and that type of image is simply great to cut between. The wider the passage through which feeling can flow, the better. From a more thematic standpoint, I feel it coincides with the fact that, in my preparation, I try to embrace whatever currents are moving through a big city like Shanghai.

"On one level you might say that, historically, there has not been enough space to think independently in China, which is also something that Xixan Xu felt during the Cultural Revolution. On another level, we have the professor who has visions of tomorrows China having open space, and that said space may be located underground. I work with this from a rhetorical standpoint, in the sense that one might hope that the city's many cranes and construction sites are the result of having invited foreign firms to invest in Shanghai, and that the new buildings are therefore really a symbol of China beginning to open itself up to the outside world." ■

For further information about Cities on Speed – Shanghai Space, see catalogue in reverse section.

These four director-interviews are edited versions of the booklet texts accompanying the DVD edition: Cities on Speed.



Photo: Mathilde Hvid Lipmann

NANNA FRANK MØLLER

Born 1972, Denmark. Graduated in editing at the National Film School of Denmark, 1999. Edited several films, among them *The Land of Human Beings – My Film about Greenland* (2006). Her directorial debut, *Someone Like You* (2007), won the Grand Prix for Best Danish Film, Odense. *Let's Be Together* (2008), selected for CPH:DOX and IDFA's Kids & Docs. 2009: *Cities on Speed – Shanghai Space*.

BASTARD FILM & TV

Founded 2000. Titles include: *The Red Gold* (Signe Mølgaard, 2004); *Enemies of Happiness* (Eva Mulvad, 2006), winner of IDFA's Silver Wolf Award; *Little Miss Grown-Up* (Anders Gustafsson & Patrik Book, 2008), selected for IDFA Kids & Docs in 2008, and *Let's Be Together* (Nanna Frank Møller, 2008), a CPH:DOX competitor and selected for IDFA's Kids & Docs 2009 together with *Invisible Girls* (Sidse Stausholm, 2009), the three latter films co-produced with Team Productions. Other productions in 2009: *Blekingegadebanden* by Anders Riis-Hansen, *Cities on Speed – Shanghai Space* by Nanna Frank Møller, and, produced with Team Productions, *Accidental Terrorist* by Miki Mistrati and Nagieb Khaja, selected for IDFA's Mid-Length Competition programme. www.bastardfilm.dk
www.citiesonspeed.dk



CITIES ON SPEED

WHAT'S IT TO ME?

How do we make developments in the non-Western world interesting to people in the West? That question brought together two Danish Film Institute film commissioners, Dola Bonfils and Michael Haslund-Christensen. Two years ago they initiated a film project to examine visions for humanity's urban future, focusing on the development of so-called megacities in the non-Western world.

BY SUSANNA NEIMANN

Dola Bonfils and Michael Haslund-Christensen shared a desire to visualize and address the fact that more than half of the world's population already live in cities, a rate that is expected to rise to 80% by 2030: Who or what controls the development of megacities? How do we formulate visions for future urban living? What does this development mean to people who live in megacities? And what can people in the West learn from these wildly growing cities?

ESSENTIAL PARTNERS

Danida, short for Danish International Development Agency, is an organisation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that funds public information efforts, including film production. DFI consultants have frequently collaborated with Danida on film projects, and Danida was immediately sold on the idea of films with wide appeal and direct broadcast access. Dola Bonfils explains:

"We formed a think tank with Danida to discuss possible subjects. Out of that came the idea to make a call for films on the theme of the enormous global and demographic challenge posed by the migration of people from rural to urban areas. A significant part of the framework was made possible by substantial early investments by the DFI and the Danish Broadcasting Corporation DR in developing the project."

At this point Danida stepped back, and the DFI and DR wrote a joint call for submissions, eventually selecting four proposals concerning cities in four different geographical regions: Africa, South America, the Middle East and South East Asia.

SHARED PREMISE

Cities on Speed comprises four separate films by four different directors with widely different artistic temperaments. The films were to be conceived in the Danish tradition of character-based stories with a personal imprint. The directors had the artistic freedom to tell the stories their way.

But the four films were also intended to work as a series, jointly illuminating and perspectivising the central theme. To create the best possible starting point for production and promotion, it was essential to work within a shared framework.

"For starters, everyone needed a common level of knowledge," Michael Haslund-Christensen says. "Before making their first research trips, every director and producer involved took part in a workshop led by architects and urban planners to acquire some insight into the overall issue of urbanisation. As a further requirement, each production had to include a local partner in the designated city. We wanted to look at the cities not only from above, but also from within. Thirdly, the themes for the four cities would be examined vertically – that is, they would include the overall perspective of urban planning."

"It was an interesting process, in the discussions, to work towards the shared recognition that, yes, we do give a damn, the world really does concern us," Bonfils says. "Among Danish audiences it is our experience that every time we say 'the non-Western world,' we get a friendly look back, saying, 'Isn't that interesting, but what's it to me?' But there's no getting around globalisation! We're responsible for the direction development is taking. We have

exported methods and attitudes, and a lot of what we're seeing in the world's cities can be viewed as a projection of problems we already familiar to us on a smaller scale.

OLD AND NEW FINANCING

The two DFI film commissioners consider a project like *Cities on Speed* an opportunity to investigate new paths for documentary film production and distribution, in terms of content, network forms and business models.

"Working with the industry, we need to explore new ways of doing things," Haslund-Christensen says. "Pitching the *Cities on Speed* series at the HotDocs Forum in 2008 in Toronto was a breeze. Backed by funds from the DFI, DR and DANIDA, the producers came in with a basic economy covering 60% of the production costs of fully developed projects with pilots, defined stories and logistical completion plans. That's highly unusual in international documentary film financing with high-end financing. In turn, within a relatively short time, we were able to bring in the remaining financing from international partners, which allowed us to maintain our creative momentum throughout the creative process and start principal photography within just a year of project initiation.

"It's been a learning experience for all parties to create the series," he says, adding that projects like *Cities on Speed* make it possible more clearly to identify the future obstacles and potentials of the documentary genre.

"We have gained new and valuable experiences in handling public and private financing with different industry players. We have employed new methods to optimise the artistic treatment of a complex theme and we see a host of untapped potentials for using such an extensive gathering of material on platforms other than broadcast. Hopefully, there will be opportunities to further develop those platforms in the future." ■



Cem (left) posing with Danish peer Abdulkadir with whom he meets in a Bosnian prison. Photo: Henrik Bohn Ipsen

THE DANISH TERRORIST

***The Accidental Terrorist*, a documentary for young people, is a side-by-side look at two young men. They are the same age, from the same culture and religious background and they had the same opportunities. Why did one become a terrorist?**

BY SOPHIE ENGBERG SONNE

“When a handful of Muslims decide to carry out a terrorist attack, it harms me too,” Cem says. Since 11 September 2001, the Turkish-born protagonist of *The Accidental Terrorist* has been eyed as a potential terrorist. Among those who make life hard for Cem is Abdulkadir Cesur, a young Danish Muslim convicted of conspiracy to commit an act of terrorism. Cem’s curiosity is piqued when he finds out that Abdulkadir is of the same age and background as himself. Why did Abdulkadir become

a fanatic? And how did he end up in a Bosnian prison?

The Accidental Terrorist follows Cem as he investigates the terror-convicted Danish national. Cem talks with a former classmate of Abdulkadir, with his sister and his contact in Bosnia. Finally, as the first person ever, Cem is allowed to interview Abdulkadir on camera in his Sarajevo prison.

TOP SNOOP

The Accidental Terrorist is brought to us by two journalists: Nagieb Khaja, who is of Afghan extraction and has insight into Denmark’s immigrant community. Miki Mistrati, the person behind a much discussed Danish documentary about serious maltreatment at homes for people with developmental disabilities. Mistrati, moreover is head of the tabloid Ekstra-Bladet’s so-called Snoop Group for investigative journalism. He was called in to work

“We didn’t know if we would even get to see Abdulkadir. And if we hadn’t, there wouldn’t have been any film. A lot of people probably would not have made that gamble, but I like to gamble big.” Miki Mistrati

on *The Accidental Terrorist*, when the filmmakers found themselves at a dead end.

“I’m used to persuading people,” Mistrati laughs. “I’m not an artist. I’m a craftsman. And I immediately started digging into the case,” he says. “Because I once did a programme that represented criminal immigrants in a different light than they are usually viewed in Denmark, I was able to gain the trust of several of the people involved.” However, the crew could take nothing for granted when they arrived in Sarajevo.

“We didn’t know if we would get even to see Abdulkadir. And if we hadn’t, there wouldn’t have been any film. A lot of people probably would not have made that gamble, but I like to gamble big,” Mistrati says with a sly grin.

WRONG PLACE, WRONG TIME

Mistrati was the one who got the idea to mirror the convicted terrorist in law-abiding Cem, who grew up under similar circumstances, but ended up in an entirely different place in life. Identical conditions but different results. Mistrati and Khaja made a point of having a central character that young people could identify with.

“We adamantly did not want to have a panel of experts explaining the story. Kids want to experience things for themselves, and so we wanted to facilitate a high level of identification,” Mistrati says. The reporter was delighted when his film took the Youth Jury Prize at the Odense Film Festival.

The Accidental Terrorist does not take a stand on Abdulkadir’s guilt. Instead, it leaves you with the impression of a young man who made some unfortunate choices as a teenager and now has to live with the consequences of them for the rest of his life.

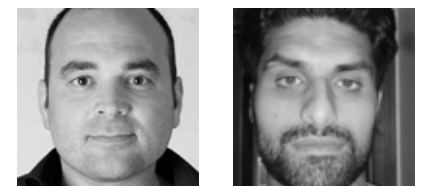
“Abdulkadir was struggling with his identity in his teenage years and dropped out. He joined a different community and now has to live with the consequences of travelling in the circles he did,” Mistrati says. Abdulkadir professes his innocence. Mistrati, who is currently working

on a TV documentary investigating Abdulkadir’s trial, found no conclusive proof of Abdulkadir’s guilt. Hence the film’s provocative title.

“I think he ended up where he did by accident. He was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Which is exactly what he claims,” Mistrati says. In *Abdulkadir*, Mistrati sees a universal story of a young person groping towards some sense of belonging.

“Abdulkadir experienced a religious awakening when he was young, but so do a lot of other kids. Some kids become bikers, others become hip-hoppers like myself,” Mistrati says. “Cem and Abdulkadir could easily have ended up in each other’s shoes.” ■

For further information about *Terrorist ved et tilfælde / Accidental Terrorist*, see catalogue in reverse section.



MIKI MISTRATI (left)

Born 1977, Denmark. Journalist since 1994. Has produced over 30 documentaries for the national broadcasters DR and TV 2. Numerous honours for his work, including thrice nominee and once winner of the prestigious Cavling Award. Director with Najieb Khaja on *Accidental Terrorist* (2009).

NAGIEB KHAJA (right)

Born 1972, Denmark. Graduate of the University of Southern Denmark, Khaja is a renowned Danish journalist and twice nominee of the prestigious Cavling Award. Journalist for the national broadcaster DR, later moved to TV 2/Danmark. Among his important works are *The Triple A Case*, *Drabet på Rust* and *Den hemmelige krig*. Director with Miki Mistrati on *Accidental Terrorist*.

BASTARD FILM & TV

See page 8
www.bastardfilm.dk

Accidental Terrorist is produced by Mette Heide of Plus Pictures and Helle Faber of Bastard Film & TV.



INVENTING A PORTRAIT

A profound interest in Japanese culture led the director Kaspar Astrup Schröder by coincidence to Dr Nakamats, an eccentric inventor who by his own count holds more than 3400 patents and is planning a final coup: living to be 144. The portrait of Dr. Nakamats is told with tongue in cheek, and it is not always clear, who stages the story – the director or the inventor ...

BY EVA NOVRUP REDVALL

Dr Yoshiro Nakamats describes himself as one of the world's most important inventors. He invented the floppy disk, a bicycle engine that runs on water, bouncing shoes, Viagra for women and much, much more. He currently holds 3400 patents and plans to increase this further to 7000 before he dies.

Most of the ideas for his inventions come to him while diving underwater in a swimming pool,

an exercise that pushes his mind to produce new thoughts. Although in Kaspar Astrup Schröder's film portrait, *The Invention of Dr Nakamats*, the doctor is seen celebrating his 80th birthday, he considers his death to be a far-off in the future. His mother lived to be 102 and he keeps her brain in his house preserved in formaldehyde. Personally, he plans to live to 144, partly by healthy living and partly by ... who knows. Maybe he'll invent something to prolong his life.

Schröder's film takes us on a unique journey into the charismatic inventor's personal world, though there are times when you wonder how much Dr Nakamats is playing to the camera. This is even more the case if you who don't know a lot about Japanese culture, so much of which can look odd to the uninitiated eye.

Schröder, who is also an artist and photographer, is fascinated by Japanese culture and has travelled widely in Japan. Even so, crossing paths with Dr Nakamats sent him on a journey beyond anything he had seen before.

REALITY ON A PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

Schröder had been reading about Dr Nakamats on one of the many Japan blogs he likes to read for

inspiration. Dr Nakamats's homepage provided the contact information and Schröder e-mailed to hear if he was interested in meeting to discuss a film project. Dr NakaMats responded promptly and turned out to have ample ideas of his own about what a film about him should be like. The filmmaker says it was mainly a question of hanging on for the ride.

"He was interested, but he also had a lot of thoughts about how the film should be. I originally planned to be the proverbial fly on the wall and observe his life, but when I arrived he had already drawn up a 130-page production plan. I ended up spending 29 very long days shooting, getting more than 100 hours of footage from 50 different locations. The pace was truly breakneck and Nakamats constantly had an opinion about how things should progress," Schröder says.

ACCESS AND STAGING

The film makes it plain that Dr Nakamats enjoys staging himself, not just for the camera but in other situations in his life as well. All along, he gave the camera unlimited access to a lot of situations that we usually don't get to see from Japan.

"Dr Nakamats is an incredibly fascinating personality, and in a lot of ways he is unlike other Japanese. As an individual, he sticks out in a crowd. In addition to portraying him, I also wanted my film to depict contemporary Japan through his everyday life. Personally, I'm fascinated by Japanese culture, so getting the kind of access I did because I was with Dr Nakamats was outstanding. In fact, it was almost uncanny how invisible I was when I followed him around. I got to film everywhere without anyone reacting to it, which usually is a hard thing to do in Japan," Schröder says. At one point, he attended a highly emotional funeral without anyone remarking on his presence.

"No one raised an eyebrow at me or my camera. At times it felt strange to be so invisible, but it was most definitely a gift," the director says. "I'm attracted to documentaries because of the element of spontaneity - my art and my music are largely

thought. Still, these hidden surprises were not enough to shift the film's centre of gravity any further than it already had. Initially conceived as a tender, humorous portrait of an eccentric inventor, the film had expanded into a study of a man determined to fight death.

"We all have our demons. Dr Nakamats is fighting his fear of death. He does everything he can to cheat death," Schröder says. "My story about him gradually evolved to be more about the relationship between life and death in general and less about his specific inventions. As Dr Nakamats says in the final line of the film, 'When I'm 143, then maybe I'll think, Next year I'll die....' He's a man on a mission, and it was interesting to bring out that aspect of his personality."

AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM

The graphic design and the music for *Dr Nakamats* have a very distinct style, the result of Schröder's desire to sign up his own international sources of inspiration. Though the director never physically met the British graphic designer Rob Chiu aka The Ronin or the American composer Mark Mothersbaugh, who scored *The Royal Tenenbaums* and other films, he describes their collaboration as a happy process. Working via Skype and the Net, they pushed the graphics and the music in new directions until they had become central to the film.

"I contacted people I wanted to work with, and getting them onboard was a real gift to me to," Schröder says. "Obviously, not being in the same physical location presents certain challenges, but it worked out surprisingly well, though there was some back and forth as we settled on the role of the graphic design and the music in the film. I always wanted the graphics to stand out. We even tried surrounding Dr Nakamats with a world of dialogue balloons, but that seemed too contrived as if we were making a spectacle of him. It was important for me to be on his side, though he's like no one else I ever met. Likewise, we didn't want to Mickey Mouse the score. It should follow him and elevate him, in his story."

now, he is looking forward to showing his new film in Amsterdam. He has been to the festival once before as an editor on another film, but now his own film is competing, and he's looking forward to seeing his team in Amsterdam, as well as Dr Nakamats, who will be attending the festival.

"We became good friends while we were making the film, and I want it to give people a good impression of him as the unique individual he is," Schröder says. "The rumour mill is churning with myths and opinions about him, and this film is a close-up look that shows him as more than the inventor of the floppy disk." ■

For further information about Opfindelsen af Dr. Nakamats / The Invention of Dr. Nakamats, see catalogue in reverse section.



Photo: Selfportrait

"He was interested, but he also had a lot of thoughts about how the film should be. I originally planned to be the proverbial fly on the wall and observe his life, but when I arrived he had already drawn up a 130-page production plan. I ended up spending 29 very long days shooting (...)"

Kaspar Astrup Schröder commenting on his star performer.

improvisational. This film, however, was more about framing and staging, and that was an exciting and very different process for me."

CHEATING DEATH

Schröder doesn't speak Japanese yet, though he is working on it. For most of the film, Dr Nakamats addresses the camera in English, explaining his inventions or introducing his family and business contacts. Later, during the editing, the translation of Japanese dialogue material revealed a host of surprises when what was being discussed turned out to be entirely different than the director had

GETTING TOGETHER AT IDFA

Schröder's international collaborators were huge inspirations, but the director is also eager to stress that the film would not have been possible without the support of experienced Danish professionals, including his producer, Mette Heide of Plus Pictures, and his editor, Adam Nielsen. He also highlights the fruitful dialogue he had with project editor Kim Leona of New Danish Screen, who was an early backer of his project.


The Invention of Dr. Nakamats has whetted Schröder's appetite to do more documentaries, ideally about Japan and Japanese conditions. For

KASPAR ASTRUP SCHRÖDER

Born 1979, Denmark. Self-taught visual artist and designer. Founded the company Kaspar (pseudonyms: KSPR or Kasparworks) in 2004. Though based in Copenhagen, he often works in Asia. Has exhibited visual work and released music in Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Bruxelles, New York and Tokyo. His documentary film *City Surfers* (2007) won Best Danish Film and Filmic Award at the D.A.F.F. Festival and *The Invention of Dr. Nakamats* (2009), selected for IDFA's Mid-length Competition. A companion book to the film compiles the director's journal entries from his time in Japan with Dr Nakamats.

PLUS PICTURES

Founded in 2008 by Mette Heide. Heide's productions include: 2009 Danish Academy Award winner *Little Miss Grown Up* (2008), Danish Academy Award Winner *Milosevic on Trial*, and *Why Democracy*, a series of 10 films. Awards for the series include the Grierson Award (*Please Vote for Me*), an Academy Award (*Taxi to the Dark Side*), won a Danish TV-Oscar, Banff-award (*Iron Ladies of Liberia*). Plus Pictures titles for winter spring 2009/2010: among others *The Prague Affair* by Christoffer Emil Bruun selected for CPH:DOX, *The Royal Climate* by Jan Bacher Dirksen, *Under Suspicion* by Louise Detlefsen, *Last White Man Standing* by Justin Webster, *The Stars Playground* by Torben Skjødt Jensen, and *The Invention of Dr. Nakamats* by Kaspar Astrup Schröder, selected for IDFA's Mid-length Competition.



HARD KNOCKS

Albert's Winter Photo: Framgrab

***Albert's Winter*, Anders Koefoed's graduation film from the National Film School of Denmark, tells the story of an eight-year-old boy who goes through a tough time after his mother is diagnosed with cancer. Koefoed seeks to examine those times when life first knocks us off our feet, but also lets us grow.**

BY FREJA DAM

Albert is eight years old and already facing the seriousness of life. His mother has breast cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy. Albert would rather not talk about it. Meanwhile, life goes on and Albert has new challenges to confront, among them moving to a new school.

Andreas Koefoed decided to make his film about Albert because the boy's crisis expresses the universal human emotions of someone getting his first knocks in life.

"I'm occupied with those times when you face hardships in life," Koefoed says. "When you leave your innocence behind and move on in life a wiser person."

The director last year made *12 Notes Down*, which ran in IDFA's Student Competition and Kids & Docs 2008. *12 Notes Down* is about a boy, Jorgis, who has to leave the boys choir because his voice is changing

and he is becoming a man. *Albert's Winter* is about a small boy's first experience with serious illness and fear of loss. These are situations, Koefoed says, in which life reveals its hardness and its beauty. Being afraid of losing your mother is tough. But when illness strikes, the family also becomes more conscious of the importance of their love for each other.

"There is beauty in the film in the love between mother and son and in the family's love that becomes so clear because of the devastating experience they are going through," Koefoed says. He considers Albert's way of coping with the situation life affirming.

"Albert is brave. He doesn't knuckle under. He processes the problems in silence and is ready to move on with his life - changing schools and leaving behind his familiar surroundings," Koefoed says.

LIFE MOVING ON

The film shows Albert taking the entrance exam at Sankt Annæ Gymnasium, a choir school. Initially, Albert doesn't want to change schools, but when he is admitted he ends up taking all the changes in his stride. Koefoed chose to focus on this change of schools, because it's an image of life moving on.

"It is a sign of Albert's strength that he is able to sing so well and pass the entrance exam, in spite of all everything that's on his mind. It was important

for me that, although Albert's mother is sick, the film also shows some of the other things that are going on in his life," Koefoed says.

In the film, Albert is not much up to talking about the things that are weighing on his mind - whether it's changing schools or his mother's illness. Albert's parents talked to him about the factual matters of the disease when his mother first got sick. He knew exactly when her chemotherapy would end. But after that he didn't want to talk about it. As Koefoed sees it, many adults think problems need to be discussed in order to be processed, but children process difficult things in a more wordless way, and that can be just as healthy.

"I don't think every problem in life is solved by talking about it. Some things simply need time to settle. A fear of losing your mother is not something you get over simply by rationalising and analysing. These things take time and they can be struggle," Koefoed says.

ROOM FOR CONTEMPLATION

A small boy who might be losing mother to cancer and has to perform a song makes for a touching story, naturally. It could easily have skidded into sentimentality, Koefoed says. One way to avoid that was to work with a minimalist score, parts of which he composed himself.



“Swelling bombastic music would seem out of place in a film about a young boy. It is better served by a small, derelict organ played with a slightly child-like sensibility,” Koefoed says.

Visually, the director was likewise careful not to overwhelm the viewer with emotions. The film goes close to Albert, but it lets the viewer breathe.

“I wanted it to be sensitive, while I tried to avoid making it claustrophobic by including occasional long shots and pauses where all you see is snow falling, with music and maybe Albert throwing a snowball or two – sequences that don’t necessarily tell a story but give the viewer room to contemplate,” Koefoed says.

FILMING FAMILY

Albert is Koefoed’s nephew, his sister’s son. Filming your own family, and someone as young as Albert, presented Koefoed with a host of ethical issues. How would Albert feel later in life that there’s a film about him at a tough time in his life that maybe presents events differently than he remembers them? Would Albert’s mother, battling cancer, need Koefoed to not just stand there with a camera but really be there for her? After talking it over with his family, Koefoed decided that the act of making a film about what they were going through would be a good process.

“I’m occupied with those times when you face hardships in life. When you leave your innocence behind and move on in life a wiser person.” Andreas Koefoed

“I could feel that my sister wanted her story to be told. Albert thought it was okay, too, that I followed him around,” Koefoed says. “On a practical level, it was also a way for me to share a difficult time with my family and get to spend time with them.” Fortunately, they got off with a fright – after her chemo, Albert’s mother is cancer free.

THE PERSONAL AND THE UNIVERSAL

The recent film-school graduate is currently working on several film projects. One is about three Senegalese boys who are discovered by a football agent and invited to tryouts with clubs in Europe, where they scramble for contracts. Before film school Koefoed was a sociology student, and the football film is a way for him to combine personal stories with a sociological, critical look beneath the surface of professional football, exposing the base inequality between Africa and Europe.

Moreover, in collaboration with the director Christian Bonke, Koefoed is working on a film for New Danish Screen. The film follows some of the world’s top ballroom-dancing couples, who are partners both professionally and privately. Again, Koefoed is looking to tell powerful, personal stories. “It was a fun challenge to take up a scene that’s so visual and superficial, to dive in and come up with powerful human stories,” Koefoed says. “That’s what I aim for in a good film – it’s what I was aiming for in *Albert’s Winter* – to tell a personal story with universal appeal.” ■

For further information about Alberts Vinter / Albert’s Winter, see catalogue in reverse section.



Albert’s Vinter Photo: Framegrab



Photo: Mads Emil Hilmer

ANDREAS KOEFOED

Born 1979. Denmark. Graduate in documentary direction from the National Film School of Denmark in 2009 and in sociology from Copenhagen University in 2004. Since 2001 produced documentary films in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. His film *12 Notes Down* (2008) has received awards and honours at prestigious film festivals worldwide, among them IDFA Amsterdam, Full Frame Durham, Silverdocs AFI and Sheffield DocFest. *A Day in the Smoke* (2008) was selected for IDFA’s Reflecting Images: Panorama. *Albert’s Winter* (2009) is selected for CPH:DOX and IDFA’s Short Documentary Competition.

IMAGES LOUDER THAN WORDS



Northern Lights Photo: Framegrab

In *Northern Lights*, Kristoffer Kiørboe's graduation film from the National Film School of Denmark, two brothers go in search of the northern lights, each other and themselves. Samuel is brain damaged and Simon is caught in a struggle between helping his older brother or making a life for himself.

BY FREJA DAM

Northern Lights is director Kristoffer Kiørboe's second film taking up the theme of brothers. His mid-term film, *Landscapes*, focused on him and his twin brother and their relationship with their father who first came into their lives when they were 21 years old. As the director sees it, sibling relationships are examples of "true love" – love not corrupted by sexuality.

"I'm interested in love stories," Kiørboe says. "Relationships between parents and children, siblings or friends. For me, that type of love has a unique kind of purity."

WORDLESS INTERACTION

Two brothers drive through a winter landscape in search of the northern lights. In reality they are out to rediscover the intimacy they have lost in the passage of time. It's hard for Simon to get close to his brother Samuel who is brain damaged. He finds it frustrating that Samuel can't sympathize with his life. In one scene Simon probes his brother for a reaction to his leaving for the US to study. Simon never gets an answer as Samuel is unable to express himself verbally.

Sometimes words fall short, Kiørboe says.

"I think Simon's need to talk with his brother is a reaction to how he can't sense him. Their lack of

intimacy makes him think they need to talk, because that's what people do when they want to get to know each other," Kiørboe says.

In the course of the film, Simon realizes that talking won't get him closer to his brother.

"Words can be lacking, and words are unnecessary in Simon and Samuel's relationship. The two brothers have to establish a relationship on a different plane – by experiencing something of beauty together, having a snowball fight, being quiet together, catching each other's glance or simply leaving to find the northern lights," Kiørboe says.

THE MAGIC OF IMAGES

Samuel's silence naturally limits the film's dialogue. But Kiørboe also chose a laconic style because he thinks images, in some types of story, speak a lot louder than words.

"I'm a fan of images. I believe in what I see more than in what's being said. Films are images and images can do special things. A certain light can say more than a thousand words," the director says, striking a blow for aesthetics in documentaries.

In some scenes, the director experiments with the relationship between images and sound, using off-sound of Simon and Samuel's dialogue in a shot of them not speaking, then cutting to a shot where sound and image are in sync. The viewer has to interpret whether the dialogue represents the characters' thoughts or whether they are actually saying what we're hearing.

"It's interesting to drop the dialogue and just have their eyes tell the story. It's fun, too, trying to see what they see and having the dialogue function as a translation of what their facial expressions are saying," Kiørboe says.

THE LIGHT WITHIN

A journey is a good narrative form, Kiørboe says, because there is a set departure and destination. The northern lights are a much less clear destination than any specific geographical point. "The northern lights are intriguing, because they don't exist in a static place. I don't know how you find the northern lights. Maybe they find you. They are as abstract as what the brothers are looking for on an inner level. They are a metaphor for finding the light within. You can't say what that is, either," Kiørboe says.

Nature overall plays an important role in the film. Kiørboe tried to make the physical settings mirror his characters' inner lives. Simon and Samuel are searching for answers to basic existential questions and that's reflected in the natural scenery.

"My characters somehow or other are looking for God – not necessarily 'God' in any religious sense of the word but as 'something' greater than us – as meaning, truth or purity. To me, nature represents that 'something.' Nature is perfection and purity. It's a good space for putting people in perspective, because we are not so pure. But we can strive for a kind of purity," he says.

DISCOVERING THE BEAUTY IN THE WORLD

Samuel is a grounded character. He just is the way he is. It's Simon who has a problem with Samuel being brain damaged.

"There's a lot less order in Simon's than Samuel's world. That's another reason why the film foregrounds nature the way it does. There's an order to nature that Simon is starting to see. The same beauty and glory in the world, he also sees in Samuel," Kiørboe says.

As the film unfolds, we watch the growing intimacy between Simon and Samuel, but Kiørboe deliberately aimed not to spell everything out for the viewer and tie it all up in a pretty bow.

"I like it that the film leaves them somewhere on the road – that the story isn't resolved. Simon and Samuel may not end up sharing their innermost secrets with each other, but they are headed in the same direction," Kiørboe says. "They are looking for the light." ■

For further information about Nordlys / Northern Lights, see catalog in reverse section.

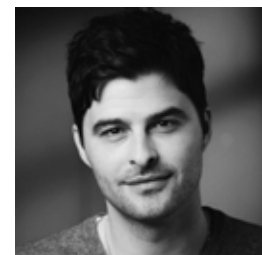


Photo: Linda Wassberg

KRISTOFFER KIØRBOE

Born 1979, Denmark. Musician and director in various media and actor in commercials, short films and TV-series before training at the National Film School of Denmark, from where he graduated in documentary direction in 2009. His graduation film *Northern Lights* selected for IDFA's Student Competition. *Angel* is the title of his pitch for a project which brought him a Special Mention at Nordic Talents 2009. *Northern Lights* (2009) is produced at the National Film School of Denmark.

A LIFE ONLINE

Miri has isolated herself in the real world, while generously sharing her thoughts and photos on her blog. *Book of Miri*, Katrine Philp's graduation film from the National Film School of Denmark, looks at the need for self-staging.

BY FREJA DAM

Miri lives alone with her two cats in a one-room apartment in a small Swedish suburb. But she also leads another life: everyday she photographs herself and writes an entry for her personal blog. Katrine Philp made her graduation film from the National Film School of Denmark about Miri, because she sees her as an example of a seemingly pervasive need for self-staging.

"I'm fascinated by the boundary between private and public and by the nature of this need to expose yourself. How visible do you want to make yourself? How much are you willing to show?" Philp says.

She sees a depth in Miri's blog that a lot of other blogs lack. Miri writes personally and honestly. The need to express herself is rooted in her loneliness.

"Miri has no one to talk to, and so she has this need to be seen and heard," Philp says. "Her social needs are met through her participation in cyberspace. She has a big online circle of people who read and comment on her blog."

Miri, who was adopted from Korea as a child, always felt like a stranger in the small northern Swedish town where she grew up.

"A tiny one-room apartment and two cats is all

she has," the director says. "It's a safe and secure place. She hardly ever asks anyone in. In her apartment, and in her blog, she creates her own world, where she can be herself."

CONTROLLED STAGING

On her blog, Miri writes about anything, from what she is having for dinner, how she spends her Sunday and what she's wearing, to more profound problems like her relationship to her family. How does it fit together, sharing her innermost feelings with total strangers online but being unable to meet people in the real world?

"It's a matter of control," Philp says. "Online, Miri has complete control of how she presents herself. She can stage herself exactly the way she wants other people to see her. When she meets people in real life, she can't hide in the same way."

Miri also blogs to make her mark in a world she does not otherwise feel part of.

"Miri wants to leave her mark. That's an existential need, I think, because life is so transient,"

"Miri wants to leave her mark (...) It's a question of being visible and making other people aware that we exist. As Miri says, if she died now, who would even notice?"

Katrine Philp

Philp says. "It's a question of being visible and making other people aware that we exist. As Miri says, if she died now, who would even notice?"

DOCUMENTING HER LIFE

Ever since she was a child and learned to draw and write, Miri has made drawings of herself and kept a diary describing the minutest details of what she had to eat and what she was wearing. Now she uses her blog. "It's a way to document her life," Philp says. "Of course she is staging herself, but she tries to show herself the way she is. She doesn't cheat - the clothes she wears when she photographs herself are the clothes she wore that day. It is important for her that her images are a window to her life.

"She's really an artist without knowing it," Philp says. The director was attracted by Miri's visual talent as it comes across in her photographs, and she wanted to bring out the visual elements of body and space in her film.

GO WITH THE SUBJECT

To get that kind of intensity, Philp says, you have to invest the time it takes to create trust between the filmmaker and her subject.

"Trust is essential," she says. "Of course, you're laying yourself open when you pose in front of a camera and put yourself on display. She was always playing around with her own bashfulness and how much she was willing to show, to her own camera as well as to ours."

Miri gets in front of the camera every day, but it felt transgressive to her to have other people in the room, controlling the camera. To build up her confidence, Philp and Olsson spent a long time playing around with the camera with her.

"We tested how close up we could go, physically," Philp says. "Does she shy away or is she game? You have to feel out your subject on a given day and capture the energy when it's there. I find it hard to film by template. I have more faith in going with the flow of the film and the subject," Philp says ■

For further information about *Book of Miri*, see catalogue in reverse section.



Book of Miri Photo: Annica Miri Höglund



Photo: Linda Wassberg

KATRINE PHILP

Born 1978, Denmark. Former dancer and choreographer, Philp is a graduate in documentary direction from the National Film School of Denmark in 2009 and in film production design from the Danish Design School in 2003. Her documentary film *Silence in a Noisy World* (2008), produced at the film school, is winner of Rio de Janeiro's Audience Award. *Book of Miri* (2009), is produced at the National Film School of Denmark.



The Red Chapel Photo: René Johannsen

DISGUISED AS COMMUNISTS

For 20 days, the reporter Mads Brügger toured North Korea with two Danish-Korean comics and a TV crew. Officially, they were a theatrical troupe on cultural exchange. Unofficially, they were peeking behind the facade of a dictatorship. How that turned out can be seen in the film version of *The Red Chapel*, screening in IDFA's Reflecting Images programme.

BY LOUISE SKOV ANDERSEN

Thousands of fists pump the air with choreographed precision, as the crowd marches into Kim Il-Sung

Square in North Korea's capital, Pyongyang. Right, left, right, left. Endless columns of Koreans demonstrating against the United States, shouting slogans, arms and legs rigidly swinging. At the head of the procession walks a Danish reporter.

The reporter is Mads Brügger and the scene is from his documentary *The Red Chapel*. In 2006, Brügger travelled to North Korea with two comics, Simon Jul and Jacob Nossell, who were both adopted from South Korea as infants - Nossell describes himself as "imported goods" - cracking open the hermetically sealed nation in a combination of playacting and satire. The outcome was a TV series, *The Red Chapel*, broadcast on DR2 in Denmark that

year and now edited into a 90-minute documentary produced by Zentropa Rambuk. In September, the film won the Best Nordic Documentary Award at the Nordisk Panorama festival in Reykjavik.

COMMUNIST TROUPE ON CULTURAL EXCHANGE

The goal of Brügger and his crew's trip was to show the scary true face of the North Korean dictatorship. But how do you go about doing that in a closed, tightly controlled country that does everything it can to isolate itself from any Western influence?

The Danes pretended to be a communist theatrical troupe on cultural exchange. To that end, they had rehearsed a variety act of roughly 20 minutes to perform at North Korea's national theatre, a showcase of Danish culture meeting the Koreans' strict demands for no ideological or political undertones. Nonetheless, Mrs. Pak, the National Theatre's director and the Danish delegation's guide, in no time had gutted the script and the act in the end was anything but apolitical or subtle. "One heart, one mind, one Korea!" Simon Jul was ordered to shout in the closing



The Red Chapel Photo: René Johannsen

Brugger's methods were also criticised in the Danish media. Many expressed their concern that North Koreans the Danes had mingled with on their trip would be punished now that the troupe had revealed its real mission. Others questioned the ethics of lying to arrive at the truth.

act. The unkindest cut of all affected Nossell, who has cerebral palsy. In North Korea, the physically disabled are kept out of sight. Some even claim they are killed. When the Danes were finally allowed to perform their act at the National Theatre, the Danish comic, who was 18 at the time, had been reduced to a bit player. The Koreans even made him pretend to be normal and merely faking it.

"They help me, they smile at me and they speak to me, but I can feel the contempt they have for me. It makes me paranoid," Nossell says in the film.

'DON'T LIE!'

Over their nearly three weeks in Pyongyang, the Danes were increasingly caught up in the North Korean propaganda machine. Meanwhile, they had to be careful to keep a straight face and not slip up about their real reason for being there. The demonstration in Kim Il-Sung Square was the most extreme instance.

"Mads, don't lie," Nossell panicked from his wheelchair, as the marching crowd approached and the Koreans indicated that the Danes should

walk at the head of the procession, perhaps in an attempt to prove to the world that the North Korean dictatorship has foreign supporters.

"Jacob, for your sake and mine, I have to lie," Brügger whispered, before the crowd swept him away.

Back at their hotel that night, Brügger and Nossell watched themselves on national TV leading the parade for the "Dear Leader." "They're coming to get us now," Brügger thought, as the footage rolled across the screen. But no one questioned the three Danes or their motives. After twenty days of play-acting they returned to Denmark with rich footage of day-to-day life under a terror regime.

CULT AND CRITICISM

The TV version of *Det Røde Kapel* met with both fascination and criticism when it was first shown on Danish television in 2006. The team behind the series even received threatening phone calls from North Korea. Meanwhile, viewers were glued to the tube watching Mads Brügger and his fellow travellers on their unconventional journey to

uncover the truth about the North Korean state. The series' blend of black humour and stark gravity quickly made it a cult hit in Denmark.

But Brügger's methods were also criticised in the Danish media. Many expressed their concern that Mrs. Pak and other North Koreans the Danes had mingled with on their trip would be punished now that the troupe had revealed its real mission. Others questioned the ethics of lying to arrive at the truth. For Brügger, whose past work has been labelled "provo-TV," the answer was unequivocally yes. In fact, he told the *Berlingske Tidende* newspaper, crossing journalistic lines is important, both to attract viewers and to uncover the truth.

"I hope this will open people's eyes to how awful the existence of North Korea is," he said. "Indoctrination starts in the cradle. The whole country is like one big cave metaphor, because they don't know what's behind the bamboo curtain. They live in an open-air museum managed by Dracula. Many will probably lose their minds when they are confronted with the outside world." ■

For further information about The Red Chapel, see catalogue in reverse section.



Photo: Mads Brügger

MADS BRÜGGER

Danish reporter, writer and TV producer, born 1972. Best known for his singular style of reporting that has traces of Gonzo and New Journalism and often involves undercover work. An example is the *Danes for Bush* programme that sent Brügger and his sidekick Jakob Boeskov to the US during the 2004 election campaign. Recently Brügger caused a stir with a documentary series, *Quatraro Mysteriet*, in which he and the TV presenter and concept-maker Mikael Berthelsen investigate the 1993 death under mysterious circumstances of European Commission official Antonio Quatraro. Brügger currently hosts *Deadline*, the serious news flagship of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation DR. *The Red Chapel* (2009) IS selected for IDFA's Reflecting Images: Best of Fests.

ZENTROPA

The Red Chapel was produced by Peter Engel for Zentropa Rambuk, a unit under Zentropa, one of Scandinavia's largest film companies. Founded in 1992 by director Lars von Trier and producer Peter Aalbæk Jensen. The company is greatly acknowledged for having reinvigorated the industry with *Dogme 95*. Zentropa catalogue includes films by Lars von Trier, Lone Scherfig, Susanne Bier, Annette K. Olesen, Jørgen Leth and many other prominent Danish directors. Mads Brügger's *The Red Chapel* (2009) selected for IDFA's Reflecting Images: Best of Fests. www.zentropa.dk



Invisible Girls Photo: Framgrab

“I heard a youth researcher say that having friends is one of the most important things for kids in the lowest grades. Kids’ problems more often involve their friends than divorce, alcohol, drugs or violence, as the media would have you believe,”

Sidse Stausholm

CLASSROOM ISOLATION

In every school class there are usually two or three kids who experience social isolation. Sidse Stausholm’s *Invisible Girls* follows three girls struggling with the loneliness that comes with having no friends. The film is one of seven in a series of documentaries with the umbrella title *Coming of Age*.

BY FREJA DAM

Usynlige piger tracks three teenage girls, Maria, Maiken and Silan, who feel left out in school and are struggling to break free of their role as outsiders. Loneliness, the director Sidse Stausholm says, is a vast, all too overlooked problem for children and teens.

“I heard a youth researcher say that having friends is one of the most important things for kids in the lowest grades. Kids’ problems more often involve their friends than divorce, alcohol, drugs or violence, as the media would have you believe,” Stausholm says.

She and the other directors of the *Næsten voksne* series were out to create some very everyday-type documentaries about ordinary young people. “We didn’t want to seem like shocked grownups. We wanted to meet the kids at their level,” she says.

THE LONELINESS TABOO

The director says most people will recognise the feeling of being branded as lonely. “It’s such a taboo,” she says. When she went looking for her youthful protagonists, she found it was much easier to get cutters and anorexics to come forward than kids who are “just” lonely.

“Loneliness is a really hard thing to own up to. It’s not something you choose. There’s nothing cool about it. It’s just painful. This was the toughest casting call I was ever involved in,” she says.

Casting around for her three protagonists, Stausholm was resolved not to make a spectacle of them. She deliberately picked girls who had the strength to break out of the role of outsider. There has to be a light at the end of the tunnel, she says.

“It was really important for me to work with some girls that

I thought had real potential to grow,” Stausholm says. “It’s a heavy subject. They are so upset. And it would be really bleak if the film just left them mired in their problems. So I made an advance agreement with the girls to film over a long period and not abandon them if they were having a hard time.”

At one point, Stausholm grew concerned about where Maiken was heading. Maiken was being teased in school, but luckily she pulled through. “The great thing about teenagers is they are so full of life. They have wild mood swings. All three girls were on a rollercoaster while we were making the film, but luckily they all made it through,” Stausholm says.

DEALING WITH IT YOURSELF

Shooting the film, the director realised how hard it is to film loneliness. In one case, she asked the girls to chat with each other about how they were feeling. Later they recorded some of their statements as dialogue for animated characters.

All three girls have since moved on to other schools. Still, they were nervous up to the film opening about having to confront the same kind of derision they had put behind them. They realise that some of their former classmates might take offence, but they are ready for it. Their primary motivation for doing the film was always to help other kids in similar situations.

The film shows how hard it is to break a negative pattern and how it’s not always possible to get help from outside. Though all three girls’ parents are there for them, neither parents nor teachers were able to change the mechanisms of a group of kids in any meaningful way.

“All three girls came to that realisation. They all found themselves in situations where they had to step up and deal with it themselves,” Stausholm says.

The director hopes that other lonely kids and the people in their lives will see the film and learn from it. “I hope the film will make people realise that it is possible to change your behaviour,” she says. “If we think about our own class in school, we know who was feeling like this at some point. Maybe it was us. Sometimes it’s totally random who is left out.” ■

For further information about *Usynlige piger* / *Invisible Girls*, see catalogue in reverse section.

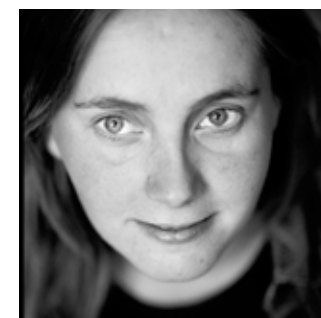


Photo: Jacob Carlsen

SIDSE STAUSHOLM

Born 1977, Denmark. Graduated in journalism from the Danish School of Journalism, 1999. Signed nine documentary films as director since 2000. *Detour to Freedom / Omvej til Frihed* (2001) was nominated at Odense, Göteborg and selected for First Appearance category at IDFA. The same year *Wonderkids*, a series of films to which Stausholm contributed, received two television awards. *Invisible Girls* (2008) selected for IDFA Kids & Docs programme.

Let’s Be Together by Nanna Frank Møller is also selected for IDFA Kids & Docs. See reverse section of this issue and FILM#64, page 15.

Let’s Be Together and *Invisible Girls* are produced by Mette Heide, now of Plus Pictures, and Helle Faber of Bastard Film & TV. Together with *Accidental Terrorist* (see page 11 in this issue) these films are three of seven in the *Coming of Age* series, the umbrella title for films portraying the lives of young people in Denmark today. All three titles are found in the reverse section.

IF I CAN'T DANCE IT'S NOT MY REVOLUTION

An apt choice, emblazoning the cover of this year's CPH:DOX festival programme with a statement by the anarchist Emma Goldman. In seven short years CPH:DOX has grown into Scandinavia's biggest documentary film festival exactly because the organisers have managed to take the festival to the streets while maintaining high artistic ambition and challenging the limits of what documentaries are and can do. This year there is a new and exciting addition to the DOX empire: DOX:LAB

BY SUSANNA NEIMANN

There are 200 films, 15 concerts, 20 debates and a sea of parties and other events on this year's festival programme. "Political and provocative, exquisite and essential, fun and quirky - with an art edge," festival director Tine Fischer says.

"I think the festival's profile is becoming clearer year by year. We have always tried to test the boundaries of the documentary by being open to films and works coming from other traditions - art, fiction, experimental film. As this year's programme very clearly shows, it is in these intersections that interesting movements are taking place."

THE CPH:DOX EMPIRE

The CPH:DOX phenomenon began in 2002 and has since sprouted a long line of initiatives and side-projects that calendar-wise extend far beyond the 10 hectic days of the festival and whose target groups are extremely varied.

DOX-ON-WHEELS sends documentaries out to the farthest corners of Denmark, adding debates, live appearances and other events to the screening programme. DOC ALLIANCE is a partnership between five big European documentary festivals on an online portal providing access to 250 documentaries.

Alongside the festival's film categories and competitions, attractive sub-brands are found, among them DOX:EXPANDED and DOX:CLUB, presenting anything from parties to concerts and seminars.

For industry professionals, DOX:MARKET gives priority access to buyers, festival programmers and

curators. And there is DOX:FORUM - part market event and part learning lab for producers in alternative distribution channels for documentaries.

NEW INITIATIVE: DOX:LAB

This year CPH:DOX is introducing a new international talent program, DOX:LAB, combining a talent workshop with real documentary production. The project has limited funds but offers unlimited creative freedom. Top names from the international documentary film scene will be at hand as instructors.

The participating filmmakers are paired off, so that Nordic filmmakers will be collaborating with their peers from Burma, the Philippines, China, Lebanon, Palestine, Rwanda and Uganda.

In workshops and master classes, the participating filmmakers will receive instruction and sparring from top people in international production. All teams will receive 40,000 Danish kroner (approx. 5,400 euros) to produce their films, which must be finished by June 2010.

"The idea is to bring filmmakers of widely different production cultures and aesthetic approaches together in teams of two. This 'coming together' is the heart, the entire premise, of the project," Fischer says.

"There are obvious differences in approaches to production subsidies and production facilities in the different filmmakers' countries of origin. Coming out of a Danish or Nordic production culture, certain standards and requirements generally determine what films are produced. However, under such professional and formalised subsidy systems, a



certain energy and willingness to take risks are sometimes lost. I hope the persistent energy and aesthetic courage many of the non-Nordic participants are bringing to the table will be an inspiration."

The participating filmmakers are very carefully selected and teamed up "We had a great desire to challenge the invited artists on their methods and aesthetics. Most of the filmmakers we picked, because we are already familiar with their work and because we have great faith in their projects and development potential. We had some help picking international filmmakers from places where our knowledge is less well established," Fischer says.

"We tried to match up the filmmakers in ways that allow them to learn from each other and make interesting things happen. This could be teaming up filmmakers with comparable energy and attitude, like Michael Noer of Denmark and Khvan de la Cruz of the Philippines, or teaming up filmmakers that complement each other because their strengths are in different areas. For instance, we might match up a conceptually strong visual artist with a technically proficient filmmaker.

"It's been a lot of fun but also a huge challenge. I hope every participant will acquire a unique outlook and an international network they can use in the future," Fischer says in late October, shortly before it all breaks loose. ■

CPH:DOX / 6-15 NOVEMBER 2009

Founded in 2003, CPH:DOX Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival screens more than 180 documentary films from around the world. During the ten festival days, CPH:DOX organizes five days of professional seminars and provides an international forum and meeting place with the newly founded DOX:FORUM. This year the festival's new international talent program is launching DOX:LAB, an international talent development program for worldwide documentary filmmakers.



COOL COPENHAGEN

Dream in Copenhagen Photo: Henrik Bohn Ipsen

People filmed in a room in an apartment in a house on a street in a city. The city, Copenhagen, is the subject of a unique film portrait by Max Kestner, one of Denmark's most outstanding young directors.

BY KIM SKOTTE

The usual thing would be to describe the modern city as a tirelessly pulsating organism buzzing with life and activity. High-rises and techno tunes. While Max Kestner's Copenhagen is certainly buzzing with life and energy, *Dreams in Copenhagen* is a much more composite, subtle and poetic portrait of a city than we are used to seeing.

There are any number of cities beneath the city. Cities of horse-drawn carriages, cobblestones, cow barns and wells. Powdered wigs, prelates and foul gutters. All long gone. But if you listen closely, you still sense a city built from old voices and faded pictures.

Many others have lived in the apartment you live in now, however deeply you consider it *your* home. You can belong to the city with every ounce of your body, but the city is only yours on loan.

Dreams in Copenhagen is a film about a city, its architecture and the people who live their lives in it, an anti-bombastic urban symphony where today's cool Copenhagen meets yesterday's entrepreneurial spirit and working-class culture, bound together by an atmospheric score by the Icelandic composer Jóhann Jóhannsson.

MY CITY

"I was born and raised in Copenhagen," Kestner says. "I have a love affair with the city. Copenhagen's size is pretty perfect. It's big enough that you can remain anonymous, but small enough that you can take it all in at once. And there's huge difference from one borough to the next.

"Like a lot of other people, I feel Copenhagen is *my* city more than anyone else's. You get such a close relationship to a city you have lived in for years. Your memories are tied to its streets. That's where you kissed your first girl. That's where you restlessly wandered the streets when she left you again. Your memories are tied to the city and accumulate over time," Kestner says.

"There are sounds and notes and blackbirds chirping when you walk home through the city at five in the morning," he says. "Some streets make me happy, other streets make me sad. One street people find ugly, but I love. Why is that? Why does the city affect me so? That was my premise for making this film."

NOT A TOURIST FILM

Clearly, Max Kestner did not spend the last five years working on a tourist film – the Little Mermaid or Tivoli's marching band are nowhere to be seen. Nor is it a history lesson. Copenhagen is captured in the now. Yet it's not a polemical anti-idyll of raw social realism, pushing a political agenda of street riots, with or without Muhammad cartoons.

A couple of Copenhagen's most heatedly debated

problems get only passing mention, though the film does briefly touch on the ongoing debate on the future of Freetown Christiania and who will define it – still a political hot potato after a decade of a conservative government that inherently cringes at the thought of an autonomous mess like Christiania, for 38 years now a hippie capital in the heart of Copenhagen and one of the city's biggest tourist draws.

A few years ago, when the police evicted the squatters from the Youth House on Jagtvej 69, Copenhagen erupted with unheard-of violence. Were the squatters way off base or was their outrage partly justified, as their clashes with police turned the streets of Nørrebro into a battleground? Kestner doesn't take sides. In fact, he doesn't mention the conflict with a single word. But simply has the camera pan across the empty lot where the Youth House once stood, now just a gaping hole between

"There are any number of cities beneath the city. (...) Many others have lived in the apartment you live in now, however deeply you consider it your home. You can belong to the city with every ounce of your body, but the city is only yours on loan." Max Kestner

numbers 67 and 71, an improvised parking lot covered in graffiti and littered with trash.

Such hints at the nation's capital as a political arena and battleground are rare in Kestner's film. *Dreams in Copenhagen* looks at the city through the director's eyes, revealing Copenhagen in all its poetic diversity. A city of everyday people. Buses and kindergartens, hugs and kisses. Store fronts, avenues, faces, bodies behind windows. How the light changes with the hours of the day.

PLANNING AND ACCIDENT

The urban space enfolds you in a story that's greater than your own.

"The past is a huge presence when you portray a city," he says. "But we made a point not to make it out like everything was better in the old days. Though many of the memories about the city are personal, this is not a nostalgic film. The movement is always forward." Kestner points to the many architects who appear in the film – architects in their studios, discussing and planning the landscape of tomorrow.



Photo: Henrik Bohn Ipsen

"It was always a film about architecture," he says, "but only in a certain sense. I always knew I wasn't smart enough to tell architects anything about architecture, so the film isn't full of critical themes about architecture.

"But, like a lot of people, I am interested in city planning. We should take good care of the city, but we also need to develop it. And that's a challenge. So the film needed some architects, though not so many that it got out of hand. I wanted the film to respect that urban architecture is also made by the hotdog vendor on the corner, by how we use the city. Whether we bike or drive, for instance, has a massive impact on the city's appearance," Kestner says.

"Architects plan the city, but a lot of things can't be planned. It's kind of like John Lennon's famous line that life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans. People are what happen to the city and architects' designs. People living their lives changes all their fancy plans. Life lived is full of quirks and accidents."

VOYEURISTIC POETRY

"We wanted to do a multi-plot story, though the plot could never dominate. The main thing had to be that the individual scenes were attractive," the director says. He never made it a secret that his documentaries contain a powerful element of staging. Real life is hard to plan when you're making a documentary. Having faith in the power of accidents, even positing accidents as a principle, paradoxically, is a really strong argument for

minimising the influence of accidents on the storytelling process. But it's a fine line.

"We didn't just want facades, but people and facades. People, streets and windows," Kestner says, indicating the whimsical voyeuristic poetry that's such an important part of *Dreams in Copenhagen*. Catching a glimpse of someone in a window, we immediately begin to imagine what his or her life is like. But such stray plot lines are fugitive, unless we view the individual people as strokes of light and shade in a composite portrait of the city's face.



Photo: Henrik Bohn Ipsen

"From the outset the film was intended to be a portrait focusing on architecture in brick-and-mortar Copenhagen. Documentary portraits are plentiful, because we are intrinsically interested in other people, but also because the method is so convenient. If you just keep observing a person long enough, you will eventually have enough scenes for a portrait. The same is true for a city. The kaleidoscopic method is a good fit for documentaries."

GROUND RULES

To define how the film would depict the many people in the city, Kestner laid down certain ground rules. People couldn't have chronological stories. They could appear more than once in the film. They could be established as characters. Their lives could touch and intersect, but they should never develop into continuing stories with any kind of suspense. How did their jobs or their love affairs work out? There's no room for that.

In terms of the photography, Kestner made a basic decision never to show a person without also including the city in the frame.

"If we were in an interior, we had to shoot against the window to show the city outside," he says. "If we did an outside shot looking in a window, we had to show the wall of the building around the window. A person couldn't just be someone with a problem or a situation. A person here is seen to be in a room in an apartment in a building on a street in a city."

There were other, more radical, decisions as well. "We had to decide where to put the focus or sharpness," Kestner says. The film is shot in 35 mm. "We decided to put the focus not on the people but on the city. That is, people can come into focus, if they are standing by the front of a building, on a balcony or close to a window. Buildings are always in sharp focus. People are out of focus a lot of the time. This is to hold on to the fact that it's a portrait of a city. Sure, we could have chosen to put people in focus – that's certainly the convention – but we decided to take a risk in this case."



Photo: Henrik Bohn Ipsen

It's a gamble that helps lay a historical grid over the film's portrait of the city, highlighting the idea that the city is a constant, while people come and go – are born, grow up and die, actors in a fleeting shadow play on the ancient stage of the city. One day everyone eventually takes his or her last walk in the city. Other shadows will follow. Happy kids, busy grownups, stooped-over old people will pass by workers' tenements from the 1930s, patrician mansions from the 1700s and the still soulless new buildings in Copenhagen's spanking new districts, where architects and construction workers stride, conducting procedures in hardhats and with eagle eye amid construction noise and dust. Prestigious construction projects in raw concrete and daring, swooping lines one day, too, will be patinaed with people's joys, sorrows, daily routines and, of course, their Copenhagen dreams ■

For further information about *Drømme i København / Dreams in Copenhagen*, see catalogue in reverse section.



Photo: Steen Møller Rasmussen

MAX KESTNER

Born 1969. Graduated in documentary from the National Film School of Denmark, 1997. Lecturer at the National Film School of Denmark. Worked for DR TV, where he made *Partiet / The Party* (2000) and *Supergeil* (1997-1998). *Rejsen på ophavet / Max by Chance* (2004) was chosen for First Appearance at IDFA Amsterdam and received a GulDok for Best Short Documentary at CPH:DOX, 2004. His *Verden i Danmark / The World in Denmark* (2007) received a Danish Robert for Best Short Film. 2009: *Drømme i København / Dreams in Copenhagen*, an anti-bombastic urban symphony, selected for CPH:DOX competition for Best Documentary.



Director Omar Shagawi with his father Munir Shagawi in the background. Photo: Omar Shagawi

MY PALESTINIAN DAD

As a child, every time director Omar Shargawi asked his father about his life and his family's flight from Palestine in 1948, his father invariably closed up. After he became a filmmaker, Shargawi vowed to get his father to tell his story in a documentary. *My Father is from Haifa* turned out to be a therapeutic process that allowed the director to explore his own roots, too.

BY CHRISTIAN MONGAARD

Munir Shargawi, the father of filmmaker Omar Shargawi, was eight years old in 1948 when he fled with his family from Haifa in Palestine to Syria, shortly before the state of Israel was founded. Growing up in Syria, Munir Shargawi arrived in Denmark in 1967, where he married a Danish woman and had three sons. Though Omar's father made Denmark his adopted homeland, he carried in him a pain and a longing that was transmitted to his sons.

Shargawi made his directorial debut in 2008 with the critically acclaimed feature film *Go with Peace Jamil*. His documentary is propelled by a wish to understand his father and his father's pain. By turns touching and funny, the film depicts the close, but hardly untroubled, relationship between father and son, and the son's struggle to convince his father to return to Haifa and visit his childhood home for the first time since he fled there with his family.

"It was always in me that we never made that trip, that he never picked us up and took us there," Shargawi says. The director filmed his father for five years but only got him to go Syria and Israel this May. "Still that was less my premise than how I had never really got to know his story. I only knew the bare bones of his background: that he fled Palestine in 1948, grew up in Syria and ended up in Denmark. That was it.

"Every time I asked him about his life when I was growing up, he always just shut down and didn't want to talk about it. The only details I knew my mother had told me. So the film came out of

my wanting him to tell his story. I wanted to delve into his psyche and find out why he reacts the way he does. What's at the root of his personality, his character and his mood swings, his sorrow and his pain, which I always knew was there and which has marked me and the rest of my family."

UNWILLING SUBJECT

Shargawi and his brothers were, so to speak, fed the Palestine-Israel question with their mother's milk. It's an issue the family has to live with for good and ill. "I was interested in finding out why I feel the same way my father does about so many things, though I never shared his experiences," Shargawi says. "You could say it was therapeutic, because I was also digging into my own roots and background. I didn't know where the feelings I had came from. It couldn't just be because my father was always talking about these things. I almost feel like it's genetic. So the film is a parallel study of him and me."

Shargawi started filming interviews with his father, who was sometimes a rather unwilling

subject. He had to catch him at the right moment, so the film is shot on DV, mobile phones, HD and 16 mm, sometimes even using a concealed camera. Making a virtue out of necessity, Shargawi highlighted the uniquely cinematic look of all the different formats. And he always told his father when he had been secretly filming him.

“By and by I got the idea that it would be fun to visit the house in Haifa – if it was still there and we could find it. I started asking him to make the trip with me, and just getting him accustomed to the idea was a long and hard process. The subject had never been discussed before. The trip then became the impetus for the project. Nothing that happened before we left was planned or designed or scripted. It was all about keeping the camera rolling. I filmed non-stop for five years, which also put a strain on our relationship, of course.”

REPRESENTING A GENERATION

Over the course of the project, Munir Shargawi, 69 – a temperamental, bright and often very funny acquaintance – changed his mind about the trip several times. His health is an issue, something is always getting in the way. “I was trying to understand this struggle inside of him,” Shargawi says. “Why the resistance? I always knew that, in his heart of hearts, he had a desire to go back. But why is it so hard for him to do?”

This is a crux of the film. The filmmaker wasn’t just interested in telling his father’s story, he wanted to tell the story of his father’s whole generation. “What is it that hurts so badly that they don’t go to Palestine? When we finally did go to Haifa and were looking

around for the house where he used to live, everyone came over to talk with him, Jews and Palestinians. He made friends with everyone in no time. Within a day, everyone knew that there was a Palestinian who had returned. They weren’t used to that, neither the Jews nor the Arabs there, and they were all interested in hearing his story,” Shargawi says.

Nor is Munir Shargawi your typical Palestinian. In his view, Palestinians aren’t just victims, they’re idiots, because, unlike the Jews, they have been unable to change their situation. In one of the film’s funnier sequences, he says that if he was a young man today, he would marry an Israeli girl. “When Arab marries Arab, the hash clubs result,” he says.

“That’s also why it was so interesting for me to make this film,” Shargawi says. “If my father were just a beaten man who sat around complaining about his situation all day, going ‘Jews and Israelis are to blame for all my misery,’ he would be a lot less interesting to portray. That angle has been covered so often it sounds like a lament to a lot of people. What was exciting was that he both represented his generation and had these opinions you don’t expect to hear from a Palestinian. He doesn’t say the things we are used to hearing.”

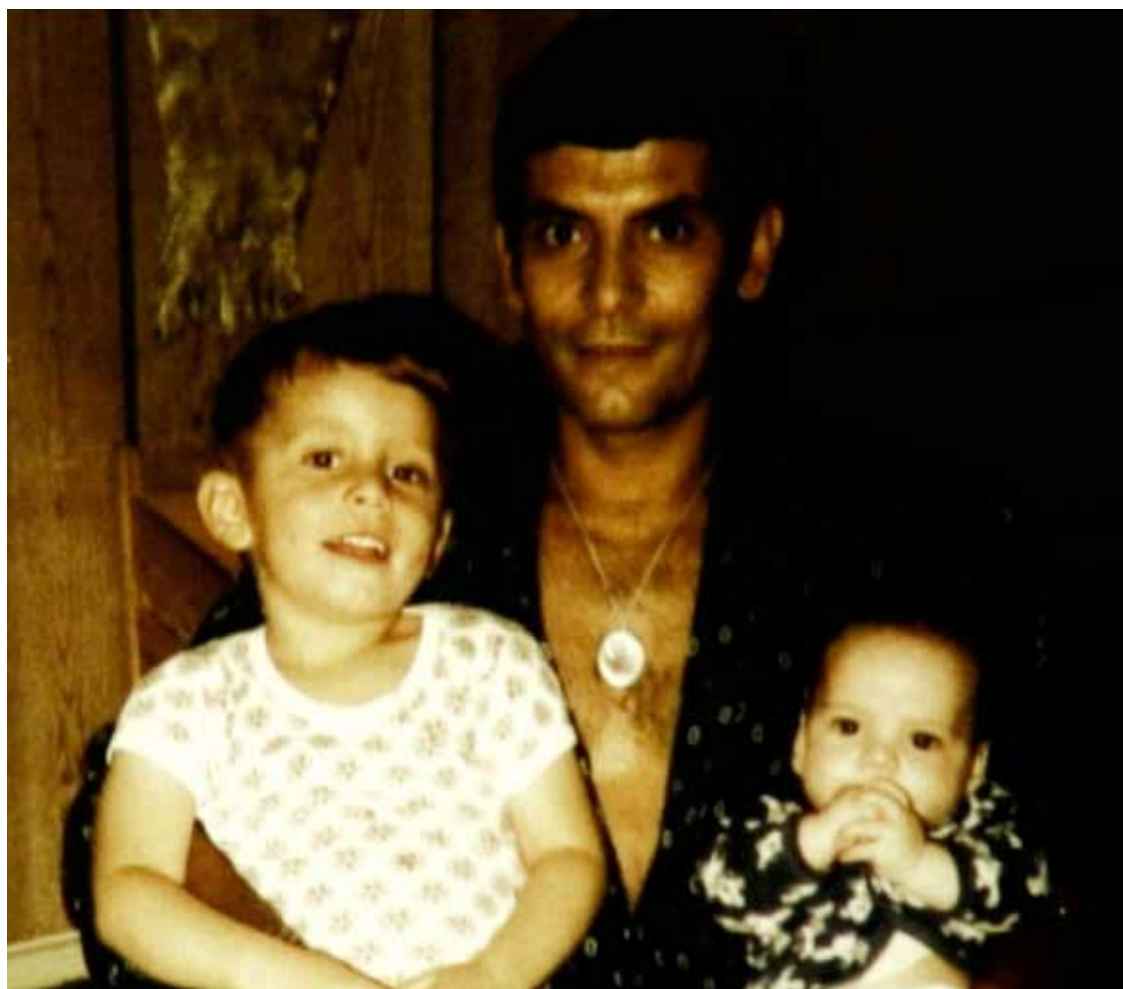
NO LONGER JUST A NOTION

Now that father and son have visited Haifa, their relationship has calmed down a bit Shargawi says. “Now we don’t have to discuss it or fight about it anymore. I sometimes feel it as an absence that we don’t have that to talk about anymore. It bonded us, having this joint mission. It was his mission, too, even as he changed his mind about it so many times.”

Returning to his childhood home has not changed Munir Shargawi’s nature or reconciled him with the past. “But something has changed,” Shargawi says. “Now he knows what it’s really going there. It’s no longer just an idea of a place. Palestine always meant a lot to him, but he never went back there, and I feel he’s found some sort of closure, though I also think he’s still dealing with it. We made the trip in May and, curiously, we haven’t really talked about it that much since we came back. But that’s our relationship in a nutshell. We don’t sit around and talk about it afterwards – how does he feel, how do I feel? None of that.”

For Shargawi personally, the Haifa trip was not only a good experience he shared with his father, it also gave him a new homeland. “I’m not a hundred percent sure what the trip gave me – I’m still processing it,” he says. “Mainly, I shared a good experience with my dad that I would not have had otherwise. That we did this together gives me a sense of peace and joy that I will be able to draw on at dark moments. There’s a sense of satisfaction that we did this. That it wasn’t just a thought – ‘Imagine doing that!’ We really did it, and it gives me a warm feeling when I think about it. I also feel this is a place I would like to return to – even if it is difficult to get there and a difficult place to be – mentally, too. My mother is Danish and I was born in Denmark. Denmark is my country, but something down there is tugging at me. I belong there, too.” ■

For further information about Fra Haifa til Nørrebro / My Father from Haifa, see reverse section.



Munir Shargawi with two of his three sons, Omar and Rune **Photo:** Family album

“I was interested in finding out why I feel the same way my father does about so many things, though I never shared his experiences,” Omar Shagawi

OMAR SHAGAWI

Born 1974, Denmark. Raised by his Danish mother and Palestinian father in Copenhagen. Self-taught director, working previously as a still photographer. Shargawi made his debut as director with the feature film *Gå med fred Jamil – Ma salama Jamil / Go with Peace Jamil* (2008) and was rewarded generously at several international festivals – winning the VPRO Tiger Award in Rotterdam, the Church Prize and FIPRESCI Award in Göteborg, Best Director in Transylvania and the Grand Prix at Warsaw. 2009: *From Haifa til Nørrebro / My Dad is from Haifa* selected for CPH:DOX competition for Best Documentary.



Out of Love Photo: Marek Septimus Wieser

OBSERVATION TO CONSTRUCTION

It's okay for a documentary to stage reality – any documentary will always be a personal interpretation of reality anyway, Birgitte Stærmosé says. In *Out of Love*, the first documentary by this award-winning fiction director, Kosovar-Albanian street kids in richly atmospheric locations recite monologues about their lives, memories and the challenges they face.

BY EVA NOVRUP REDVALL

The feeling of an almost too-real reality convinced Birgitte Stærmosé to try her hand at documentaries. In 2005, she had been invited to sit on a jury at a film festival in Kosovo and got her first experience of life in a post-war country. So many places and landscapes there had a mood of secrecy about them that fascinated her.

"I have always been interested in things that are secret. Pristina is a place that people can't leave, and no one goes there without a special errand," Stærmosé says. "That makes for a heady atmosphere. I was an outsider and everything seemed extremely real to me while I was there. To me that was a very 'documentary feeling' and I got the urge to work with that in a staged form of some kind, making a film that can lift that atmosphere

out of reality, while also putting reality to good use." During the festival, Stærmosé struck up a partnership with a local filmmaker and he suggested making a film about the local street kids. The idea immediately appealed to the Danish director.

"I liked the idea of working with kids in the city," she says. "I wanted to do a film with testimonials by them as they walk through some of the amazing places in the city, as a way of letting us experience fragments of their everyday life. I have done work before interviewing people and staging the interview material, both on stage and film. It's an interesting procedure, because it comes with a number of limitations but also allows for some liberties.

"I had no desire to do a more traditional documentary. That doesn't interest me, and perhaps I don't have the patience for it, either. To do that, you need to be interested in being in a situation and observing it for a long time. I would rather compose something from my observations," the director says.

CHILDREN'S MEMORIES

In 2007 Stærmosé returned to Kosovo to talk with a number of street kids. Her partnership with the local filmmaker had deteriorated in the meantime and instead she got together with another local filmmaker, Kaltrina Krasniqi, who would help her

overcome her project's many language and culture barriers. Together they interviewed 11 street kids based on a far-ranging list of questions about the kids' everyday concerns as well as their memories about the war.

"I didn't want the film to be about the children's personal situations, and I definitely did not want to make it about feeling sorry for them," Stærmosé says. "This process involved finding ways to go against the sense of pity these kids initially evoke in you. Pity is one way of relating to them – it's a way of protecting yourself. *Of course*, you feel sorry for them and they *are* victims, but I didn't see the point in making a film about that. I wanted the film to deal with the human aspects of what was going on inside of them.

"The questions concerned both their day-to-day lives and their memories. The stories that are in the film are the stories they told us. Precisely because they are kids, their memories are really interesting. Children tend to notice other things than grownups do. They don't have the same filters. They just see something and register it. Their memories were a way to get some images of a war I hadn't experienced. Also, it was a way to get other, more interesting, images than we usually get from the news media."

SHARED EXPERIENCE

Once Stærmosé had her interview material, she got the idea to ask the playwright and screenwriter Peter Asmussen to write monologues for the kids, based on their statements. Stærmosé was working on another project with Asmussen at the time and she sensed that he would be able to give the material a lift by transforming the interview statements into more literary texts.

"Peter is good at writing big words and I wanted the kids to be making big statements," Stærmosé says. "That was part of the construction. They should be saying things that were greater than their own



Out of Love Photo: Marek Septimus Wieser

“I didn’t want the film to be about the children’s personal situations, and I definitely did not want to make it about feeling sorry for them (...) I wanted the film to deal with the human aspects of what was going on inside of them.”

For further information about *Ønskebørn / Out of Love*, see catalogue in reverse section.

words, because something greater is involved. Only their inability to express themselves gets in the way. The monologues would amplify something real that usually has a documentary feel. The language should be literate and narrative and rich in imagery but not irrelevant to them, because it builds on their stories.

“The monologues also help shatter the impression that the children were telling their own private stories,” she says. “I was never interested in presenting any one child’s personal experience in the film. What I was interested in was their shared experience and their shared situation. Everyone is telling everyone’s story. They have a shared history, and their stories have a lot of characteristics in common.”

WILLING REALITY

In the film’s monologues the children talk about everything from their after-school work selling cigarettes in the streets to their experience of returning to Pristina as small children after the war: how watching TV suddenly became meaningless, how the tall grass growing between bombed-out buildings provided a semblance of paradise, how they sensed their feeling of worthlessness. They speak directly to the camera, sometimes in an intimate whisper. Sometimes they are alone, sometimes they are with other people.

“The idea always was to have the kids be in real situations and have them say things no one would ever say in that kind of situation. It shifts the balance of what we expect. This isn’t the kind of film that purports to have serendipitously caught something on camera. The film acknowledges that we shaped reality. We willed reality to conform to our design: this is exactly how it had to be,” Stærmoose says.

“My cameraman Marek Wieser and I put a lot of work into the visuals. Also, we really benefited from having a casting session with the kids. We saw how interesting it is when they whisper, how exciting it

is to use a wide-angle lens to go super close up and achieve a sense of physical proximity to the kind of kids you usually don’t get close to,” the director says. “We saw we had lovely sequences of kids just looking into the camera. Moreover, we deliberately worked with the feeling of being close to someone when they aware that you’re looking. We had no urge to be observational. The film is very tightly composed. I was inspired in part by Roy Andersson and his use of long takes. When you hold a frame that long, there has to be something there. So you have to carefully arrange and stage the shot.”

I’M THE ONE TELLING SOMEBODY SOMETHING

Very few of the kids ended up telling their own stories. Stærmoose put children and monologues together, and the kids were paid to be in the film. Stærmoose made it a point to have a clear agreement that the kids were there to do a certain piece of work.

“The kids are participating in something that’s mine,” she says. “I put them in situations that I made up. I choose what they say. I have met documentary filmmakers who say it’s more interesting to hear what the children want to say. I know what they want to say: they don’t want to say anything. Nothing! I want to tell you something, but *they* don’t want to tell you anything. They are not interested. I didn’t make this film for the children’s sake or to give them a voice.”

“As a director, you should acknowledge the fact that you’re making a film, that it’s something *you* want to do,” Stærmoose says. “In that sense, it’s a narcissistic project more than it’s about other people. Sure, a film can deal with a worthy issue and you can take a journalistic approach, but when you make a film you need to acknowledge that’s what you’re doing. *You* are making a film. You need to own up to the fact that *you’re* the one who wants to tell somebody something.” ■



Photo: Jan Buus

BIRGITTE STÆRMOSE

Born 1963, Denmark. M.F.A. in Film and Media Arts from Temple University in Philadelphia. Her previous work includes the award-winning short films *Now, Look at Me* (2001), *Small Avalanches* (2003), *Letters from Denmark* (2006), *Principles of Attraction* (2006) and *Sophie* (2006). *Small Avalanches* was nominated for the UIP Prize for Best European Short at the European Film Awards. *Sophie* was screened in competition at Sundance, selected for New Directors/New Films and awarded the ARTE prize. Stærmoose is currently in development on her debut feature. *Ønskebørn / Out of Love* is her first documentary.

ALPHAVILLE PICTURES COPENHAGEN APS

Founded 2003 by director Christoffer Boe and producer Tine Grew Pfeiffer, both graduates of the National Film School of Denmark. Collaboration started earlier with their first feature film *Reconstruction* (2003, produced by Nordisk Film), which won the Camera d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival as well as the FIPRESCI award for Director of the Year. The first productions carrying the company name are *Allegro* (Christoffer Boe, 2005), and the experimental, low-budget film project entitled *Off Screen* (2006). The film won the Altre Visioni Award in Venice. Titles 2009/2010: the documentary *Ønskebørn / Out of Love* by Birgitte Stærmoose and the feature film *Everything Will be Fine* (working title), by Christoffer Boe.

BODY SCULPTURE

Mirror Photo: Joachim Ladefoged

Mirror zooms in on the body and the extreme changes some people put themselves through. Internationally acclaimed still photographer Joachim Ladefoged makes the leap to moving pictures in *Mirror*, a hyper-aesthetic, wordless 10-minute film about bodybuilders, unfolding in epic slow-motion.

BY ANDERS BUSK

Described by its director as an “art documentary,” *Mirror* is the third and final instalment in Joachim Ladefoged’s project about bodybuilding in Scandinavia, following a book and a photo exhibition that toured several European cities. As a photographer, Ladefoged is best known for his photojournalism from Albania in the late 1990s and for his powerful, disturbing shots from the war in Kosovo.

Visually, he is fascinated by bodybuilders’ extremely sculpted bodies. As a filmmaker, he is fascinated by the personalities of people who lift up to 25 tons of weights every morning to build up a body that is beautiful to some and repugnant to others. “In most sports, the practitioners can measure themselves on something specific,” Ladefoged says. “A 100-meter sprinter has his stopwatch. A weightlifter has his kilos. But bodybuilders only have their mirrors. Hence the title of my project, *Mirror*.” Documenting this struggle with, and against, one’s own mirror image was one of the director’s ambitions for the film.

AESTHETICS TELL THE STORY

Ladefoged first started photographing bodybuilders at the Danish championships in 2001. The idea to document the scene in moving pictures, too, came to him during long hours spent waiting with the bodybuilders for their one or two-minute poses. Ladefoged had brought a small Sony camcorder and, suddenly finding himself with 10 seconds of film of a ripped bodybuilder moving through space with unbelievable grace, he knew that he would never be able to capture anything like it in stills.

The challenge now lay in achieving the aesthetic level of photographs in the film format. “Most documentaries are shot like shit,” Ladefoged says. “The grainy journalistic look has its charms but not all the time. Aesthetics help tell the story, and in

this case the story demanded a high aesthetic level. I originally wanted to include some of my stills in the film, but that didn’t work. And because I didn’t want to lose the advantage of photographs – that you can look at them for a long time – we decided to do the film in slow motion, which gives people time to study the shots. We also dropped the original sound. So the film ended up being very aesthetic and compressed reportage. Consequently, it has a natural time limit – it would be too much of a good thing if it went on for 30 minutes.”

FROM INDIVIDUALIST TO TEAM PLAYER

Usually travelling the world as a loner with a camera bag over his shoulder, to make *Mirror* Ladefoged had to be part of a team. He had to change certain habits accordingly, but overall it was a gift. “I knew what scenes I wanted to include, like the one of the competitors oiling up, posing in front of mirrors and comparing themselves to one another,” Ladefoged says. “I wanted shots of their bulging veins and their concentration before going on stage, and I had a madly skilled team to help me do that. That allowed me to focus on the details – controlling the light source, for instance, to give a new dynamic to a static subject.”

MY VOYEURISM — THEIR NARCISSISM

Ladefoged’s film is about the human body, not just about bodybuilders – though he does find them amazingly photogenic. In a way, the film’s fascination of bodily extremes could have focused on people with anorexia. “But, is that really okay to do?” he says. “It’s an interesting question. As it is, bodybuilders are controversial to a lot of people.”

This basic fascination with people expressing themselves so adamantly through the medium of their own bodies has a special resonance with Ladefoged. For 20 years he was prevented from doing anything too radical with his own body due to the effects of rheumatoid arthritis. It is only in recent years that he has even been able to do sports. So, *Mirror* is also his attempt to dig beneath the surface and examine what really goes on inside the heads of these posing, slickly oiled men and women. “The project is as much about my voyeurism as it is about their narcissism,” he says ■

For further information about *Mirror*, see catalogue in reverse section.

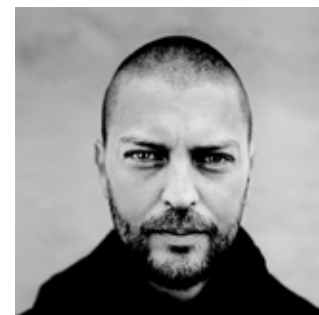


Photo: Joachim Ladefoged

JOACHIM LADEFOGED

Born 1970, Denmark. Professional photographer since 1991. Member of the international photo cooperative, VII. Ladefoged has won a number of awards, among them the prestigious World Press Photo and Picture of the Year USA. His work has embellished *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Newsweek* and *Time*. Author of two books: *Albanians*, 2000, and *Mirror*, 2008, the latter leading to his film debut: *Mirror* (2009), an art documentary which examines the sport of bodybuilding.

BASTARD FILM

For information on *Bastard Film*, refer to page XX.

“The project is as much about my voyeurism as it is about their narcissism,”
Joachim Ladefoged



The interior of McDonald's after the deluge. Photo: Ha Thuc Phu Nam

APOCALYPSE WOW

A McDonald's burger bar without any customers or staff present, gradually floods with water. As the water rises the food and furniture begin to float around, the lights and electrics short circuit and darkness falls, all while the cameras roll registering underwater and above water. The Danish artist collective Superflex' *Flooded McDonald's* is screening at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art.

BY ANDERS KOLD

There is something dreadfully wrong at the outset and in the end, the whole thing goes down in a Titanic-like way. French fries, chairs and the characteristic packaging are floating around within the pallid-turbid stream that the world has become after the water's inexplicable rise.

The film *Flooded McDonald's*, 2008, subscribes to basic cultural tales: the Flood, or the Apocalypse, as well as to a modern horror scenario related to the thawing out of the poles. However, it's not like in the Hollywood movies, where there's an easily grasped and neat little story to hold onto.

The artists have refrained from a dramatizing soundtrack and rejected any other kind of human intervention - it all just happens! And of course, nothing is more anxiety-provoking than the incomprehensible's sudden appearance within the recognizable world which we had been thinking all along was practically and commercially fitted out for the delight and the benefit of all of us. We live and learn, though. My world forms part of yours!

"We live at a time when apocalypse has become a theme. Before, it was something occult, something preachers on someway-out TV channel might talk about, but now it's the REAL apocalypse - climate change etc."
Superflex, Louisiana Revy, 50, no.1.

We meet a standard interior in the global fast food franchise, McDonald's: actually a hand-built model in full scale. Few global brands have been as subject to rage as McDonald's when anti-capitalism demonstrations take place. But even if Superflex are generally on the side of reality in their artistic practice, this particular piece, in all its non-edification, is a much broader statement. The artists themselves call it a *symbolic movie*, because despite its extreme

familiarity, the McDonald's interior is in fact both the whole world and anywhere in the world.

This is essentially how brands operate. And Superflex has a very special relationship to brands: their own name sounds and effectively functions as one. In a number of their works- the best known is their engagement with Guaraná beverage - they have rendered activism thematic along with the pervasive theme of rebellion in a world where technologies that are crucial to people's survival are frequently turned into objects for commercial monopolization. Their biogas system in Africa is also part and parcel of this praxis: the beverage being a fight against Coca-Cola and the biogas being one aspect of a more self-help-oriented approach.

With works like *Free Beer*, from 2005, Superflex has been prodding art as a discussion about *open source* or free access. Here we have items of merchandise from a supermarket which, together with a recipe, constitute a potential microbrewery. The point, however, is also that the art work is the narrative about what is possible: an *image* representing a process. With *Flooded McDonald's*, the commodities are down from the shelves, and the whole mess is sailing around aimlessly *without* the protection of the brand ■

SUPERFLEX / WWW.SUPERFLEX.NET

Superflex was founded in 1993 by Rasmus Nielsen, Jakob Fenger and Bjørnstjerne Christiansen, all graduates of the Royal Danish Academy of Art. They have left their mark on a number of national and international projects, actively penetrating social and political structures. Examples are *Supergas* (1997), a biogas installation which functions as a sustainable energy source for a family in a developing country. *Superchannel* (1999) is a viewer-participating TV channel. *Free Beer* (2005) applies modern free software open source methods to a traditional real-world product - beer.

This article is written on the occasion of the exhibition "This World is Yours" curated by Anders Kold at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark. The film *Flooded McDonald's* is shown at Louisiana until 10 January 2010.

Flooded McDonald's was shot in the bottom of a swimming pool in Thailand. The production was supported by the Danish Film Institute.

METHOD + PRECISION + STRINGENCY

Documentaries should subvert our understanding of reality and, doing so, they should insist on their own version of reality, Jesper Jack says. The Danish Film Institute's new film commissioner for shorts and documentaries is urging documentary filmmakers to think in images and moods, not just issue.
By Jesper Jack

BY ANDERS BUSK

There is a Kierkegaard quote posted on the door to Jesper Jack's office. Most people would have picked a single inspirational line or two, but Jack's selection takes up almost a full page. This might go some way toward explaining the philosophy of the Danish Film Institute's new documentary film consultant: keep simple things simple, sure, but remember that complex things are by definition complex.

The role of a film consultant is complex. It takes the realisation that you're not always smartest and don't always know best. As Kierkegaard put it, in the quote on Jack's door, "... to help is a willingness for the time being to put up with being in the wrong and not understanding what the other person understands."

Jesper became a film consultant in June and is already feeling at home in his new job. "What's so great about this job is you get to be enthusiastic about the things you're working on - while also knowing that everything can always be even better."

KEEPING DOCUMENTARIES VIABLE

Jack is a graduate of the National Film School and he has taught there as well. Consequently, he knows a lot of the people who are now applying to the DFI for funds through him. And, because he will end up also rejecting applications - that's part of the job - he has to be extremely vigilant in upholding a clear boundary between the person and the project.

"It's incredibly important for a consultant to distinguish between the film and the filmmaker," Jack says. "The National Film School's documentary programme operates on the basic philosophy that all stories, to some extent, are about the storyteller himself or herself - that the stories are a kind of conscious or unconscious projection of the

storyteller's own material. The challenge, then, is knowing how to reject a highly personal project without also rejecting the person behind the project."

But a film consultant's role is not all about giving qualified replies to applications and providing coaching from the earliest development through to a film's premiere, you also have to relate to the future viability of documentaries.

"We have to think in terms of new financing and distribution opportunities for the future," Jack says. "TV will not continue to be *the* main mass medium. As we lose access to the broad audience we get via the public service channels, we risk losing something quite fundamental: the ability to inform *everyone*, which is an essential prerequisite of a parliamentary democracy."

Jack's ideas in part involve ways to meet the audience where they are today. He tries to view a film as part of an "activity package" where the film contributes its subjective artistic expression, while Web and mobile media distribute facts and communicate interactively.

"There will be an increasing movement the other way, so that the Web is the first platform that generates hype and maybe even makes a creative contribution, too. Ideally, a film should be communicating actively with the audience. It's a question of getting out the information on the media where it works best," Jack says.

"And, of course, we need to develop storytelling forms to fit the new media," he says. "The medium obviously has an enormous impact on a film's narrative language - there's a huge difference between watching a film in the cinema or at home on your TV."

OBJECTIVITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

While Danish documentaries are in a groove right now, Jack points out that classic documentaries - subjectively experienced depictions of reality - are under great pressure. Some of that pressure comes from the journalistic requirements for a certain level of accuracy or objectivity. But, Jack contends, these requirements do not necessarily apply to documentaries.

"It's a problem that it's become hard to distinguish documentary journalism from the kind of documentaries we try to support," he says. "We need

to further discuss what documentaries really are. As it is, the simple notion that documentaries can have an ideal beyond realism is still news to some people.

"I want to support a development where we communicate not only in words, facts and issues but also in images and moods, starting early on in the process. We are different from journalists and reporters, because we are interested not only in a good story but also, to an extreme degree, in *how* that story is told," Jack says.

And, he emphasizes, this is about a lot more than aesthetics. "You can't just stick cool images on at the end. The images are at least as important in the conceptual phase as the story or the subject, etc. When people come to see me, I want to know how they envision their film visually and sensually - I don't just want to hear their thoughts and arguments. Sometimes we might leaf through some of the photo books I keep stacked on my shelf. I'm a strong proponent of visual armament," he says.

If there's one thing Jack is sick of discussing it's the issue of what constitutes objective truth. "That discussion should be over by now," he says. "As science has shown us, you can't measure anything without also affecting it - you always become part of what you observe. That's a well-known fact everywhere except in the daily press. Indeed, they still want to know if anything was cut out."

"Yes. Of course we cut things out. Films are a subjective reality, but that doesn't preclude taking responsibility for that reality. You can't lose your credibility, and you can't just get sloppy and hide under the cover of art. But documentaries shouldn't be chasing an outdated concept of objective truth or be compelled to relate to certain implied parameters thereof," Jack says.

"By responsibility I mean, you can't just let the camera roll and call what you get on tape the truth. Then you're enormously dependent on chance, and your preceding analysis doesn't make it into the film at all," he says. "You need to make room for reflection, and that's done through editing and staging."

CHALLENGING THE CONSENSUS

Jack's ambitions, moreover, go beyond visual armament and increased attention to form. In terms of content, he has also been doing some thinking about where Danish documentaries should be heading.

"Danish filmmakers are extremely ambitious and there's a tendency to think that geographic distance - sometimes a very great distance - is required to go beyond the local Danish market and make the international festivals. True, an international outlook is a good thing. We need to do

"When people come to see me, I want to know how they envision their film visually and sensually - I don't just want to hear their thoughts and arguments. ... I'm a strong proponent of visual armament," Jesper Jack



Portrait of Jesper Jack, DFI Film Commissioner Photo: Miriam Dalsgaard

a lot more co-productions and creative partnerships with other countries. But we also need to have faith that the country we're in is interesting. Denmark has undergone rapid cultural change in a few short years. Our values have changed dramatically and perhaps our self-image as a socially liberal, open-minded and tolerant people needs updating. That self-image might be worth looking at," he says.

That kind of inquiry would be a perfect match for the documentary genre, and that's exactly Jack's point.

"What's so great about documentaries is they foster empathy and enable us to experience the world through someone else's eyes. That's where a subjective depiction really makes sense: it makes us smarter - about the world and about ourselves," Jack says. "Challenging our self-image - films can do that, make us see things we see every day with fresh eyes. Films can challenge the consensus. We always need that - maybe more so now than ever. In fact, it's striking how few qualified depictions we see of Denmark today."

In general, Jack's ambition for the documentary genre calls for films that challenge convention and automatic, habitual thinking - extending to the genre's own clichés.

"In Denmark, there has been a focus on classical dramaturgy and that's part of the reason why Danish documentaries have been so successful. On the flipside, the films risk becoming cookie-cutter-like, because they all follow the same dramaturgical model," Jack says. "Moreover, there is a tendency - maybe originating from the National Film School - to approach all subjects from a psychological angle. Psychological films are effective, because they speak to the emotions, but they also contain a schema. For the sake of argument, it is possible for someone to become a political activist without having had a domineering father. We should always be trying to break free from schematic, established models of explanation."

"Documentaries should subvert our understanding of reality. That doesn't happen by casting around arbitrarily manner but by thinking about method, precision and stringency before you begin," Jack says. "Editing can't cover up a lack of thinking." ■

JESPER JACK

Born 1969, Denmark. Having been a world traveller, journalist and political activist, Jack graduated from the National Film School of Denmark in 1997. Became an EAVE producer in 2008. Formerly a lecturer at the Film School and a tutor at EDN and 12 for the Future, Jack is a documentary development consultant with experience. Jack has directed, edited, developed and produced numerous documentaries. Together with Henrik Veileborg, he produced the duology *Love on Delivery*, IDFA Silver Wolf nominee and winner of Odense's Audience Award, and *Ticket to Paradise*, won a Special Mention at CPH:DOX. Produced the festival hit *Side by Side* (2008), a Toronto Hot Docs International Spectrum nominee and winner of a Special Mention at Nordic Panorama; and *Restless in Paradise* (2009), which recently opened to critical acclaim. Together with Henrik Veileborg and Anna-Maria Kantarius he produced two films from the Cities on Speed-series: *Mumbai Disconnected* and *Bogotá Change*, both are selected for IDFA's Reflecting Images: Panorama.



Burma VJ Photo: Framegrab

HOW TO HANDLE A HIT

***Burma VJ* has won more than 30 awards at the world's top festivals, including the Joris Ivens Award at IDFA. The film has impressed world leaders like Gordon Brown and Václav Havel and activated thousands of grassroots activists. And it's still going strong today, more than a year after it premiered. FILM met with the Danish producer Lise Lense-Møller for a chat about how she dealt with the success of *Burma VJ*.**

BY LOUISE SKOV ANDERSEN

She actually thought *Burma VJ* was a film with limited distribution potential, not least theatrically, the kind of film that, though it offers an amazing cinema experience, is almost impossible to market without emanating an element of 'obligatory film' about it to someone in the lobby with his tubs of popcorn and cola. People might want to see it, they may even feel they ought to see it, but it's still the kind of film they end up passing over in favour of less demanding fare.

Producer Lise Lense-Møller is not very often proven wrong, but in this case she was way off the mark. *Burma VJ* has enjoyed a successful international run since premiering at CPH:DOX in November 2008. It is the rare documentary that has been able to compete with the big blockbusters for critical and audience attention. Last July, *Burma VJ* opened on 42 screens in the UK and was outperformed only by the new *Harry Potter* movie in terms of revenue per screening. The figures speak for themselves.

Or do they? "It doesn't make any sense to judge a documentary film's success by feature-film criteria. As regards the British opening, only one screening had been scheduled for many of those 42 screens, so if you went by the following week's box-office statistics the film wouldn't look like the big hit it actually was," Lense-Møller says. "Distribution strategies for documentaries have to be invented anew for every new film, if the films are going to go beyond television and festivals."

The strategy for *Burma VJ* had to be readjusted several times, as the film's opportunities expanded. "*Burma VJ* has had the strongest word of mouth I ever saw for any film, so we were able to do things with it that would have been impossible with other films. For months after the premiere, hundreds of inquiries about the film would pour in every day, and it's still far from over. Servicing the demand is a full-time job," Lense-Møller tells FILM, as we meet with her one chilly autumn morning at her film company, Magic Hour Films, in Nørrebro, Copenhagen. It's been almost a year since *Burma VJ* won the prestigious Joris Ivens Award in Amsterdam.

FROM DOWNING STREET TO HOME PARTIES

This is by no means the 52-year-old producer's first acquaintance with film awards and international recognition. Working in the business since the late 1970s, Lense-Møller has more than 40 productions to her name. Still, *Burma VJ* represents a new chapter in her scrapbook.

More than anything, it is the distribution that sets this award-winning documentary – about Burmese video journalists fighting for freedom of expression during the monks' protest and the popular uprising in the country in 2007 – apart from her past productions. Beyond distributing to festivals, cinemas, TV and other traditional platforms, the team behind *Burma VJ* also worked with political organisations and key persons, as well as tireless volunteers and relief organisations, trying to get the film out to as many people as possible. They even set up an ambassador network of people who have a special interest in advancing the film.

"We work with distribution on three levels: 1) 'traditional' film distribution, 2) the political level and 3) interest and grassroots networks," Lense-Møller says. As a result, the film has been screened at more than 100 festivals and at international conferences on press freedom. It has rolled across Gordon and Sarah Brown's flat screen at Downing Street 10 and been the centrepiece of home parties in less prominent homes the world over. Former

Czech president Václav Havel was so impressed by the film that he later habitually handed out signed copies of it to his friends in politics, including US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In China, a fan offered to translate *Burma VJ* into Chinese in return for a free DVD of the film.

“Democratic Voice of Burma – the organisation that the journalists in the film are working for – has a primary goal of raising awareness about conditions in Burma. That’s why they risk their lives every day and that’s why they wanted to work with us on this film. So, apart from our own interest in getting the film out, we also have an obligation to them,” Lense-Møller says. The intensive grassroots efforts have been particularly effective in putting Burma on the map of world politics.

“The three distribution strategies feed each other. A theatrical hit like we had in the UK, which earned us ‘bragging rights’ for nearly upstaging *Harry Potter*, plus the screening at Downing Street 10, helps raise media attention. It helps us recruit even more ambassadors for the film and increases the buzz, which activates grassroots networks and helps our sales agent sell to more TV stations and at somewhat better prices than I got for my other films,” she says.

“It’s an amazing feeling when every door opens like this, but it takes innovative thinking, continuing fine-tuning and a willingness to take risks with the usual distribution strategies,” she says. “For example, long before the DVD release, we decided to hand out free copies to a large number of film ambassadors, who organise private or institutional screenings. That’s a huge job, because there’s no pre-existing system for it and a lot of coordination is needed among the three levels. So, we had to invent new tools and routines to handle that.”

EVERYONE WANTS A PIECE OF THE PIE

The distribution channels were not the only things that set *Burma VJ* apart from Lense-Møller’s past productions. Events in Burma had already made it necessary several times to radically change the film’s form and running time over the course of production, which first began in 2005. “When the monks started their protests, a number of TV stations said they preferred an on-the-spot current affairs report instead of the creative documentary we had set out to make. For the same reason there was a lot of interest among broadcasters, but also some hesitation, about making pre-sale agreements.

Then, when the awards started pouring in, everyone wanted a piece of the pie,” Lense-Møller says.

“We managed to finish the film just in time for its premiere at CPH:DOX and IDFA in 2008, but still hadn’t finalised all the financing agreements. As soon as we won, however, everyone wanted in. Everyday there were new demands about who to list in the credits, and how, and what masters and versions to provide. It was a rather chaotic and ultimately a quite costly period for us,” Lense-Møller says. In the future, she hopes to be in a position where she can insist on settling financing agreements and credit requirements before a film premieres.

“As a producer, you’re in a bind,” she says. “If there is a giant hole in your financing and someone is waving a 100,000 euro cheque in your face, you tend to put up with more than you really like. You can’t tell them to take a hike, because you simply can’t afford to.”

So it was a bit of a shock, albeit a pleasant one, to Lense-Møller and the rest of the team behind *Burma VJ* to see how big their film got. At the same time, the producer certainly understands why so many people were affected by this story of independent Burmese video journalists risking their lives, armed only with tiny camcorders, to report on the Burmese government’s war on its own people.

“It touches on humankind’s deep-rooted need for liberty. We may not live in a repressive society, but there are always dissatisfying situations, which can be dealt with if we do something. These people are doing something. They are doing it without dreaming of becoming heroes, with a courage, humility and patience that’s nothing less than gripping. They make you realise that ordinary people *can* change things,” Lense-Møller says. Shortly after *Burma VJ* premiered, she screened the film in Poland to a group of filmmakers from the former Eastern Bloc nations, who had no trouble relating to its message.

“They felt like it was their story,” Lense-Møller says. “And it is. You don’t have to be from one of the worst military dictatorships in the world to identify with the Burmese journalists’ story.”

FILMS THAT CHANGE THE WORLD

The political climate of the last decade is a major reason why Lense-Møller today concentrates on political documentaries.

“The development over the last eight to ten

years has made people feel that they need to act. I personally made the leap from ‘cultural films’ to films with a greater political engagement in order to get people off the couch,” Lense-Møller says. “Many things have happened politically that have restricted the freedom of speech and the range and nuance of the knowledge about society that we need as citizens. Newspapers and TV stations are increasingly ruled by self-censorship, because of the political climate and the financial demands they are under. That leaves documentaries with an important role to perform. At their best, documentaries provide a service no one else provides.”

Burma VJ is such a film. “When you do documentaries, you want to change the world,” she says. “It’s very rare that a film gets to do that, but this one probably has, to a certain extent. And, of course, that’s a motivation to keep going.” ■

For further information about Burma VJ – Reporting on a Closed Country, see reverse section.



Photo: Jan Buus

LISE LENSE-MØLLER / PRODUCER

Involved in the production of more than 50 Danish features, shorts and documentaries. *Burma VJ* won the Joris Ivens Award at IDFA 2008 and numerous other awards at festivals, including CPH:DOX, Sundance and Cinema for Peace in Berlin. Lense-Møller has served as an instructor in co-production and project development in Denmark and abroad, has been a regular team leader and expert at EAVE, the EU training programme, and lectured at the National Film School of Denmark. Lense-Møller is a founder and owner of the company Magic Hour Films.



Director Anders Østergaard Photo: Magic Hour Films

LOOKING FOR DRAMATIC NERVE

Last year his *Burma VJ: Reporting from a Closed Country* took top honours in Amsterdam. This year it is screening in the Reflecting Images programme and

Anders Østergaard is serving on the jury that will pick a winner competing in the category of Best Mid-Length Documentary. Among the things the Danish filmmaker looks for is “dramatic nerve.”

Serving on a festival jury, though, is new to the Danish documentary ace. “I don’t follow any ideological programme. I intend to approach the job without prejudice,” he says. “Dramatic nerve is extremely important in a documentary of a certain length. The story has to have an epic power to match the format. That’s something I’ll probably take a pretty critical view of as a jury member.”



Into Eternity Photo: Magic Hour Films

SECURING THE FUTURE

Lise Lense-Møller's latest project, *Into Eternity*, is a documentary, directed by Michael Madsen, about the world's first permanent burial chamber for nuclear waste currently under construction in Finland. The burial chamber, known as Onkalo, is an underground storage facility intended to last 100,000 years without human involvement. That's how long it takes for the waste to no longer pose a threat to humankind.

BY LOUISE SKOV ANDERSEN

"The film focuses on the philosophical and existential implications of building something that is supposed to last for 100,000 years. Humankind never did anything remotely like it before and, in essence, we don't know if it will succeed," Lense-Møller says.

"At the same time, the consequences of failure are so vast. The whole world's nuclear power industry is eagerly watching this pioneer project. However, no final decisions have yet been made, or solutions found, regarding how to warn future generations about the facility's lethal contents. We know that knowledge is lost over time, so information and warnings are needed. But how do you communicate so far into the future? What language and symbols do you use? And where do you put the information?

The need for carbon-neutral energy sources has led to a renaissance for nuclear power, but there are still a lot of unsolved problems involving the waste, which indirectly leads to the question of whether atomic energy is the best solution." *Into Eternity* is scheduled to premiere at December's UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

"Once the film is finished, we'll use some of the experiences and methods we amassed in connection with *Burma VJ* to devise the film's distribution,"

"The film focuses on the philosophical and existential implications of building something that is supposed to last for 100,000 years."

Lise Lense-Møller

she says. "We're dealing with other interest groups and networks this time, and we can't be sure that the film will be a festival hit, of course, but we certainly aim for distribution on the same three levels - traditional, political and activist/consumer-based - like we did with *Burma VJ* as a means to put this issue on the agenda as widely and broadly as possible. ■

OBLIGED TO TAKE A STAND

He started out liberating teddy bears from Shell stations. Then he was a squatter. Today, Frank Piasecki Poulsen makes documentaries that bring the Third World home to affluent Westerners. FILM spoke to the Danish filmmaker who runs on spontaneous indignation at the injustices of the world.

BY LOUISE SKOV ANDERSEN

He made his debut in 2005 with *Guerrilla Girl*, a portrait of a city girl who leaves behind her cushy middle-class life to join a training camp for the FARC guerrilla movement deep in the Colombian jungle. In autumn 2010, Frank Piasecki Poulsen is bringing out *Blood in the Mobile*, which documents child workers illegally labouring in eastern Congo mines for stretches of up to a week at a time, extracting the minerals that go into the mobile phones we all have in our pockets.

"Films and TV reports about the Third World quickly seem irrelevant to us here in the West. I'm consumed with how to do stories from that part of the world in ways that make them relevant. *Blood in the Mobile* is an ideal opportunity to do just that. We all have mobile phones. I'm holding mine to my ear right now, and so are you," Poulsen says, when FILM catches him on the mobile network.

OBSESSED WITH INJUSTICE

Poulsen, 34, has been obsessed with inequity since childhood. He grew up in a family that discussed politics at the dinner table, and when he was 12 he decided to do something about all the injustices he was hearing about.

When the oil giant Shell came into the media spotlight for doing business with the South African apartheid government, young Frank joined the Teddy Bear Liberation Front, raiding petrol stations to free the white plush bears, used by Shell as prizes for its customers. Later he became part of Copenhagen's squatter movement and started working for a grassroots TV station, TV Stop.

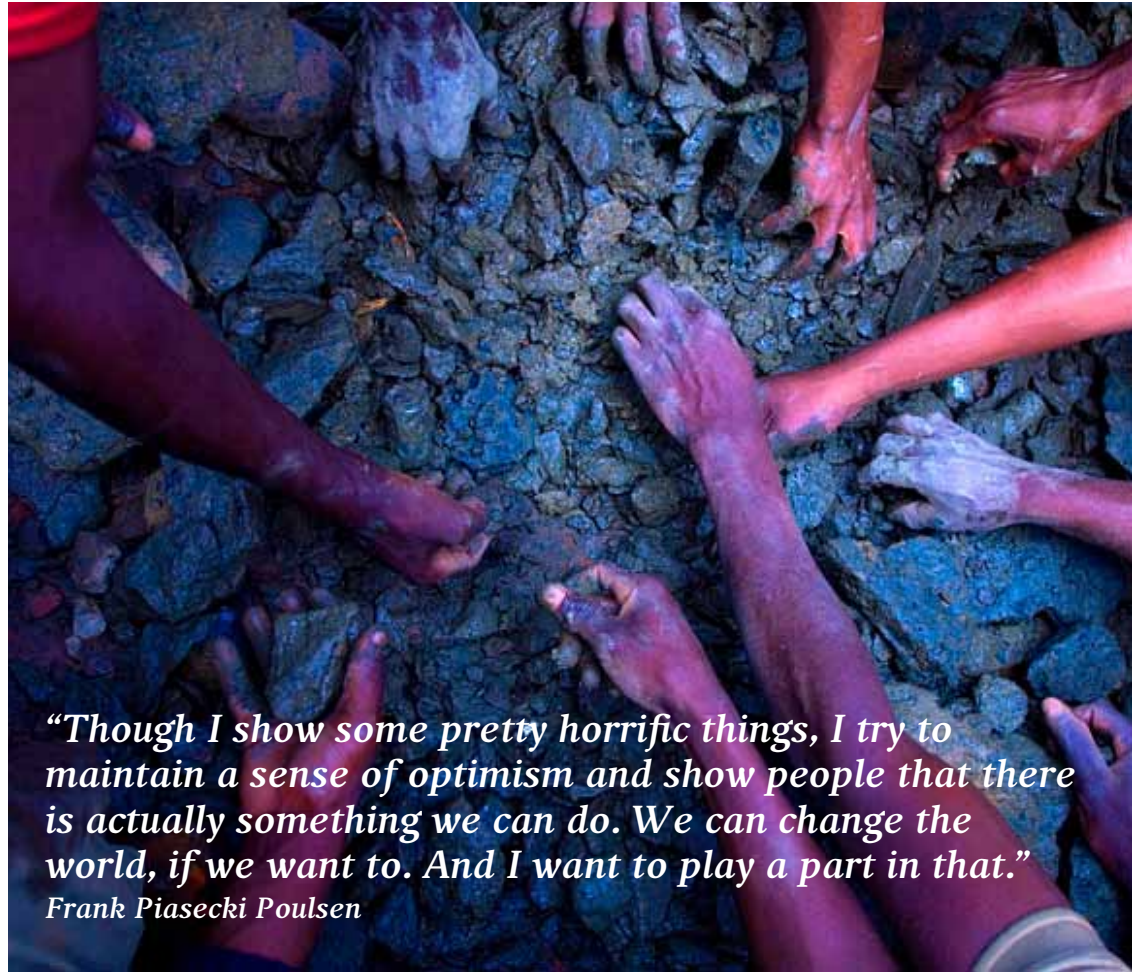
"I have always been obsessed with injustice in the world and the need to do something about it," he says. "Today it's my job. The energy I once used in my work as an activist I've carried over to my professional work."

Poulsen not only gives his audiences a chance to learn about the world's problems, he enables them to do something about them. People need opportunities to act, he says.

"People usually leave the cinema feeling really depressed after this kind of film. 'That's how the world is and there's nothing we can do about it.' I think it's enormously important for the filmmaker to personally take a stand on his subject and point out some avenues of action, so it's not all hopeless," he says. "Though I show some pretty horrific things, I try to maintain



Blood in the Mobile Photo: Frederik Jacobi



“Though I show some pretty horrific things, I try to maintain a sense of optimism and show people that there is actually something we can do. We can change the world, if we want to. And I want to play a part in that.”

Frank Piasecki Poulsen

Blood in the Mobile Photo: Frederik Jacobi

a sense of optimism and show people that there is actually something we can do. We can change the world, if we want to. And I want to play a part in that.”

AUDIENCE-FINANCED AIRLINE TICKETS

Inspired in part by the American media company Brave New Films and the British film “The Age of Stupid,” Poulsen recently launched a campaign in partnership with the new media entrepreneur Mikkel Skov Petersen, an old friend, and the producer Ole Tornbjerg. The campaign aims to finance parts of *Blood in the Mobile* plus give the audience opportunities to actively do something about the problems in Congo. This includes linking to a signature drive against Nokia’s use of these minerals.

On the *Blood in the Mobile* webpage, it has also been possible since September to donate money toward specific expenses, such as airline tickets, like the Obama campaign did in last year’s American election. The hope is that the audience’s involvement will help sway mobile giants like Nokia to own up to their responsibility.

“We’re seeing illegal mining in Congo, but the mobile companies are turning a blind eye. Companies like Nokia have the power. If they demanded to know how their suppliers get their minerals, things would change.”

DISCONNECTING YOUR EMOTIONS

After four trips to Congo, Poulsen and his cameraman are now headed to Nokia’s corporate headquarters in Finland to confront the mobile manufacturer about their Congolese experiences. According to the director, the visit could go one of two ways.

“They can address the issue or they can ignore us,” he says. “So it’s really up to them whether they want to be heroes or villains in my film. Of course, the best thing would be if they said, ‘You’re right, this won’t do.’ They probably won’t, but hope springs eternal.”

Regardless of how it turns out, Poulsen’s visit to Helsinki will be nothing like his visits to the mining town of Bisie in eastern Congo, where he saw dead bodies in the street and learned how hard it was to find a woman who hadn’t been raped within the last year or so.

“People go there voluntarily, hoping to make some money so they can go home and open a small store or start an education. But living there is enormously expensive and, because they have to pay a tax to get out again, most are trapped in the mining area for years. It’s a nightmare,” Poulsen says.

The Danish director has learned to disconnect his emotions when he’s in Congo. Returning to his family in Copenhagen, it’s hard to readapt to normal, everyday life.

“Then I just need to lie down and bawl into a pillow. Still, in those periods when I didn’t leave and didn’t try to do something to change things, I felt worse,” he says.

“I really have a hard time taking domestic Danish problems seriously. ‘My God, is that really a problem?’ I think, when one of my friends whines about having to paint his new apartment. You might say it’s my professional deformation.” ■

For further information about Blood in the Mobile / Blood in the Mobile, see catalogue in reverse section.



Photo: Frederik Jacobi

FRANK PIASECKI POULSEN

Born 1975, Denmark. Poulsen began his film career at a Copenhagen TV network. Graduated from the National Film School of Denmark, 2001. Worked as director, photographer and scriptwriter, primarily for the national broadcaster DR. The themes of his work include youth, politics and third world issues. *Guerrilla Girl* (2005) attracted worldwide interest, was showcased at IDFA’s First Appearance programme, at CPH:DOX, AFI’s Silver Docs, Havana and Sheffield, as well as One World Human Rights Festival, Prague. 2009: *Blood in the Mobile*.

KONCERN TV & FILM PRODUCTION

Founded 1995 by producer Thomas Heurlin. Has since developed into a co-ownership between Thomas Heurlin, Jens Ulrik Pedersen and Lars Seidelin. A major player within the field of TV productions, and documentaries. www.koncern.dk

FRONTLINE SOLDIERS



Armadillo Photo: Lars Skree

When operations become hairy adrenalin addiction and cynicism sets in for the young Danish soldiers at the front line in Afghanistan. This contributes to a widening of the gap between themselves and the Afghan civilians. *Armadillo* is a journey into the minds of the soldiers and their experiences of modern warfare.

In an unprecedented agreement with the Danish army, director Janus Metz and cinematographer Lars Skree were given full access to film a group of Danish soldiers at close

hand throughout their seven months of serving at the frontline in Helmand, Afghanistan. The film is an account of how adrenalin addiction, cynicism and alienation develops in young soldiers, as their idealism succumbs to chaos.

This psychological character-driven drama is set in Camp Armadillo, isolated at the top of a desert ridge, where a group of infantry soldiers are stationed. Mads and Daniel are the leading characters, representing the men who risk their lives for a common purpose.

Armadillo also addresses the current situation and the complexities of the conflict by contrasting the ambition of the international coalition to develop and democratize Afghanistan, with military standard operating procedures on the one hand, and on the other, the wheeling and dealings of the civilians, who struggle for survival, stuck between the fighting powers. ■

Pitching at IDFA Forum. Armadillo will be directed by Janus Metz, produced by Ronnie Fridthjof for Fridthjof Film / www.f-film.dk



Free the Mind Photo: Danish Documentary Production

FREE THE MIND

Are traditional methods of punishment for criminal offenses the right way to go? Brain-scientist Professor Richard Davidson believes that the practice of 'mindfulness' meditation invokes empathy and compassion in the mind. He examines the affects of this meditation on prisoners.

For Professor Davidson there is no doubt that meditation can transform humankind into a more peaceful species. Ordinary people can change their minds through just eight weeks of meditation training. Focus, concentration and calmness are enhanced and generosity becomes a personality trait.

The tool used to determine physical changes in the brain when meditating is the MRI scanner. Through studying Buddhist monks, Davidson has found

that it is possible to re-wire the brain through meditation.

Statistics reveal that 80 percent of American prisoners are repeating offenders. Davidson will conduct an experiment with American prisoners, teaching them how to meditate 'mindfulness,' to see if this affects their criminal behaviour.

Davidson and his staff have given director Phie Ambo exclusive access to his laboratory to follow the research. Moreover Ambo will also meet with the judicial system. The prisoners and their emotional journey during the meditation period, their meeting with loved ones during visiting hours will be followed.

Pitching at IDFA Forum. Free the Mind will be directed by Phie Ambo. Produced by Sigrid Helene Dyekjær for Danish Documentary Production / www.danishdocumentary.com



Borg-McEnroe Love All Photo: Polfoto/PA

DRAMATIC RIVALRY

A dramatic rivalry between two unforgettable legends: Björn Borg and John McEnroe is at the core of this epic story about heroes and adversaries. A universal story of how man needs his worst adversary in order to be the best.

Throughout history, rivalry has been the strongest driving force of mankind. Something the ancient Greeks recognized and systemized

by creating the Olympic games. This film, the very first about tennis, is a tribute to the two legendary figures for whom the period 1978-1981 was one long tennis match Björn Borg and John McEnroe.

Borg, whose game is catlike and classic, attacks the challenge with stoic calm. Adored by women but never shows feelings, as he sees it as a sign of weakness. He quits tennis at 25, as no. 1 after winning Wimbledon five consecutive times. McEnroe, on the other hand, has lightning reactions and great artistry. Flamboyant, unmannerly and emotional, he loses his sense of orientation when Borg leaves tennis.

The film will consist of some 80 percent archive material the remainder new. The directors will also delve into the biology of tennis; by going into the technical details of the rivals' specific style and game play in contrast to the overall game. They will look at how tennis shaped their lives, and how they shaped tennis for future generations. They will mirror the story of two young tennis players against present day figures ■

Pitching at IDFA Forum. Borg-McEnroe Love All, directed by Daniel Dencik and Rasmus Dinesen. Produced by Birgitte Skov and Nynne Selin for SF Film Production.

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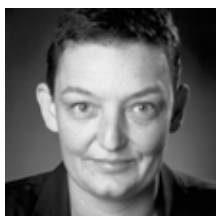
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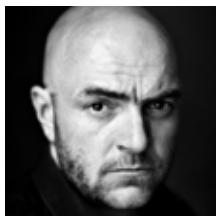
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