

**:/FILM:/**

**# SPECIAL ISSUE  
/EU2012**

THE DANISH FILM INSTITUTE | SPRING 2012

**IN THE BEGINNING  
WAS THE WORD.  
THEN CAME FILM.  
LIGHTS WERE DIMMED  
AND THE SILVER SCREEN  
FLICKERED WITH LIFE.  
SIT BACK AND ENJOY  
THE WORLD OF DANISH  
CINEMA – THE FILMS,  
THE PEOPLE, THE POLICIES  
AND ALL THE REST...**

This FILM Special Issue on Danish cinema is published  
by the Danish Film Institute on the occasion of  
the Danish EU Presidency in the first half of 2012.

This Special Issue on Danish cinema is published on the occasion of the Danish EU Presidency in the first half of 2012. The magazine highlights the special initiatives launched during the presidency offering European audiences a closer look at Denmark as a film nation. These initiatives include a Blu-ray edition of 20 Danish films for embassies, cultural institutes and their local partners, film series and meet-the-director sessions at select European film festivals, a visit by the children's film lab FILM-Y to the Bozar arts centre in Brussels and, finally, European talent meetings to be held in Denmark in spring 2012.

# # SPECIAL ISSUE /EU2012

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# WELCOME

By Minister of Culture,  
Uffe Elbæk

In the first half of 2012, large European audiences will get the chance to meet Danish films and Danish filmmakers – in cinemas, at film centres, libraries and many other places. In return, Danish filmmakers will get a chance to meet you, the European public!

As I see it, our arts and our culture are a vital power source. Through art, we form our identity and see ourselves more clearly. Art can move us to tears and make us feel for others. It can inspire us to change the world. Especially in times of crisis, personal or global, art is a reservoir of ideas and inspiration that enables us to meet the challenges of our day.

Cinema and film culture are important cornerstones of our European democracy – and steppingstones to our economic future. The creative industries provide us with platforms for critical thinking, and they also have great potential for inspiring us to think about growth in new and exciting ways.

In Denmark, we are very proud of our film culture. Accomplished directors create high-quality works that draw audiences to theatres at home and abroad. Young talents are boiling over with ideas for films, and if they can't wait, they just start filming with their mobile phones. Movie merchants boldly take up new production methods and partnerships across cultural and national borders.

For many years, film art and film culture have had a central position in Danish cultural policy. The policy framework has to be strong enough to support a viable industry, while making room for diversity, innovation and the hard-to-pigeonhole visionaries. A framework that also accommodates new storytelling modes through video games, the Internet and mobile phones, because new platforms are central to attracting future audiences, beyond the powerful experiences shared in the darkness of the cinema.

We think we have a lot to offer here in Denmark, and we are excited to be meeting all of you. In the European community, we already have excellent institutions and traditions of movie-making cooperation, but we aim to be even better. Let's join forces and create films with great stories, thrilling images and deep, common values. In short, Danish cinema is ready for its close-up. Are you?

**“CINEMA AND FILM CULTURE ARE IMPORTANT CORNERSTONES OF OUR EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY – AND STEPPINGSTONES TO OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE”**

## INTERNATIONAL MOMENTUM

*Melancholia* won a total of three awards and Susanne Bier was honoured as Best Director at the European Film Awards in December. The event capped off a year of strong accomplishments.

By Kim Skotte

*Melancholia* and Danish cinema celebrated a European triumph at the EFA showdown in December, as Lars von Trier's end-of-the-world fable was pronounced Best European film 2011.

Looking back, 2011 was off to a strong start with Susanne Bier's *In a Better World* winning first a Golden Globe, then an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. While Lars von Trier was declared persona non grata in Cannes, that did not prevent Kirsten Dunst from taking home a major award for *Melancholia*. *Drive*, starring Ryan Gosling and Carey Mulligan, may be an American film, but it was directed by a Dane, Nicolas Winding Refn, who won the Best Director Award in Cannes.

The domestic media periodically declares a crisis in Danish cinema and, in fact, all is not rosy on the home front. Admissions to Danish films fluctuate wildly. Nor is the film industry unaffected by the global financial crisis, falling revenue from DVD sales, etc. Nonetheless, the international success of Danish films highlights the reasons underlying the impact of Danish cinema.

### Cosmopolitans

For decades now, a well-functioning film act and solid political backing have ensured a subsidy system that makes it possible every year to make cinema on other terms than those of the market. Four-year film agreements ensure continuity and give filmmakers peace to work. The National Film School trains new directors, cinematographers, editors and other professionals. Add to that Lars von Trier and his company Zentropa who for years brought much-needed, new dynamism to the Danish film scene.

Success breeds success. Especially after *Dogme95*, this has led to a lot more Danish directors getting opportunities to work abroad. Two-time Palme d'Or-winner Bille August has been a true cosmopolitan for years, working in the international film industry, but he is no longer alone.

Bille August has been joined by Susanne Bier and Nicolas Winding Refn, along with Lone Scherfig who, since winning the Silver Bear in Berlin in 2000 for her *Dogme* comedy *Italian for Beginners*, has helmed several productions in the UK. In 2011, she followed up her international hit, *An Education*, with her US production *One Day*.

### A minority? Not here!

Don't blame Danish cinema for women directors remaining a minority in international film. Numerous outstanding women directors are making their mark in Danish cinema with an agenda that puts the family and the intimate sphere ahead of action-oriented genre films.

Apart from Bier and Scherfig, Annette K. Olesen (*Minor Mishaps*) and Pernille Fischer Christensen have left a clear imprint. While Bier works with emotions on a grand scale, Fischer Christensen is more raw and analytical. She had her big breakthrough with her debut film, *A Soap*, winning the Silver Bear in Berlin. Her latest film, *A Family*, is one of the most acclaimed Danish films of recent years.

### Rivalry a good thing

There was a time when Danish cinema basically amounted to "Lars von Trier and the rest". That's no longer the case. With the groundbreaking *Antichrist* and the apocalyptic and beautiful *Melancholia*, von Trier is absolutely at the centre of cinema today, but he is no longer the sole Dane there. This can lead to friction. Von Trier openly needles Bier, even though she has been making her films at von Trier's own company Zentropa. However, rivalry can be a sign that real prestige is at stake and there is something to fight over.

While Bier's new film, *All You Need is Love*, a romantic comedy starring Pierce Brosnan, is set for release in August 2012, von Trier's *Nymphomaniac* project is still in the incubation phase. Which does not prevent pre-emptive outbreaks of hives at the prospect of that particular cinematic experience!

### From village intrigue to vintage Refn

Thomas Vinterberg, who won the Jury prize in Cannes in 1998 for *The Celebration*, made a long awaited comeback in 2010 with *Submarino*. Vinterberg's next film, *The Hunt*, starring Mads Mikkelsen, is the story of a small lie festering and exploding into an outright witch-hunt in a Danish village. Mikkelsen is also starring as Struensee, a controversial reformer and the Danish queen's lover, in Nikolaj Arcel's lavish historical drama *A Royal Affair*.

Vinterberg co-wrote the screenplay for *The Hunt* with one of the most exciting young talents in Danish cinema, Tobias Lindholm, who, together with Michael Noer, also wrote and directed the documentary-tinged prison drama *R. Lindholm* will be making his solo debut as a director in 2012 with *The Hijacking*.

Danish history is hot again. Bille August is returning to Denmark to direct *Marie Krøyer*, a period drama about love and backstabbing between two of Denmark's most famous artists. The film's turn-of-the-20th-century canvas is stretched between Skagen and Sicily.

And Nicolas Winding Refn? He's putting the pedal to the metal again in *Only God Forgives*. He and Ryan Gosling are off to Thailand to film a drama about a gangster and a cop who decide to let their fists and feet settle their score in a bout of kickboxing. Sounds already like "vintage Refn" ■

# NEWS & NOTES



## FAMOUS FILM KISS

*Drive* brought them together on the red carpet in Cannes. Nicolas Winding Refn and Ryan Gosling have teamed up for another round of stylish neo-noir in the Danish director's *Only God Forgives* which starts shooting in Bangkok in February 2012.

Nicolas Winding Refn and Ryan Gosling in Cannes after winning the Best Director Award for *Drive*. Photo: Stephane Cardinale/Corbis



## A SHORT DANISH OSCAR-HISTORY

Six Danish films have won an Oscar, while a total of 22 Danish films have been nominated for the coveted gold statuettes.

The first time Denmark was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film was in 1957. The film was Erik Balling's *Qivitoq*, but it wasn't until 1988 that Gabriel Axel finally emerged victorious as the first Danish Oscar winner ever for his Isak Dinesen adaptation *Babette's Feast*. The following year Bille August repeated the success with his adaptation of Martin Andersen Nexø's social-realist classic *Pelle the Conqueror*. In 2011, Susanne Bier won for her ethical drama *In a Better World*. Bier was previously

nominated in 2007 for *After the Wedding*.

Danish shorts have proven to be a strong Oscar brand, amassing 11 nominations since 1997. Three films have won: *Election Night* (in 1999) by Anders Thomas Jensen, a three-time nominee; *This Charming Man* (in 2003) by Martin Strange-Hansen; and most recently *The New Tenants* (in 2010) by Joachim Bach.

Denmark's latest Oscar candidate is Ole Christian Madsen's *Superclásico*, a divorce comedy which serves up a bubbly blend of red wine, football, tango and a few injured prides. Anders W. Berthelsen and Paprika Steen play the leads.

## NEXT STOP, ROMANTIC COMEDY

Susanne Bier strikes a lighter note with her next film *All You Need is Love*, teaming up with Pierce Brosnan in a romantic comedy set in scenic Sorrento in southern Italy about a group of people all seeking love. This is Bier's first romantic comedy since *The One and Only* from 1999, one of Danish cinema's biggest boxoffice hits.

Susanne Bier with her Oscar for *In a Better World*. Photo: UPI Photo/Eyevine



## LONE SCHERFIG

A true European director

For more than a decade, she has shown her strength as a fine interpreter of human frailty. Director Lone Scherfig, Oscar-nominated for *An Education* and delivering her latest crop of well-rounded characters in *One Day*, already mastered the art of subtle nuance in her international breakthrough from 2000, the Dogme film *Italian for Beginners*, in which the lives of six damaged souls intersect through an Italian evening course in the Copenhagen suburbs.

This bittersweet tale won Scherfig the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival and is one of Danish cinema-goers'

all-time favourites, in the same league as Susanne Bier's smash hit *The One and Only*. Scherfig went on to direct the Danish-Scottish co-production *Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself* in 2002, her first film in English.

Scherfig, who is in development on a couple of European co-productions, feels singularly at home on the European film scene:

"The films that I am most attached to and inspired by are often European, both the classics and the most recent ones. It is a privilege to be part of a film community this full of diversity and strong, individual voices."



Director Lone Scherfig Photo: Jan Buius



Photo: Jiri Hanzer



Photo: DFI



Photo: Rolf Konow

## ROYAL DANISH

Icons of Danish cultural and political history are explored in a handful of new films. For instance, take a look at famous writer and coffee plantation owner Karen Blixen, the Skagen Painters from the late 1880s and the mad King Christian VII's German physicist Struensee:

## STRUENSEE AND A ROYAL AFFAIR

Nikolaj Arcel's period drama *A Royal Affair* centers on a dramatic love story that changed the course of Danish political history in the early 1770s – a love story between Johann Struensee, physician to the deranged King Christian VII of Denmark and a man of enlightenment, and the English-born Queen of Denmark, Caroline Mathilde.

Caroline and Johann, played by Alicia Vikander and Mads Mikkelsen, dream of a better world for the populace, and through Johann's influence on the King's governance, the power of the aristocracy is diminished and reforms introduced. But it is only a matter of time before the courtiers regain a hold on their King, and Struensee is arrested for treason and decapitated in 1772.

The film was shot on location in the Czech Republic where the production was granted access to a number of buildings typical of the period.

## WIZARDS OF STORYTELLING

Meet three screenwriters

Anders Frithiof August is counted among the younger talents who are expected to keep Danish cinema innovative. His latest script was for *A Funny Man* by Martin P. Zandvliet. Last year he won the Nordisk Film Award, Denmark's top talent prize, for his work on the Oscar-nominated short film *The Pig*, Zandvliet's feature debut *Applause* and Danish Oscar candidate *Superclásico*. August, son of director Bille August, graduated in screenwriting from the National Film School of Denmark in 2007.

Anders Thomas Jensen is a key figure in the popular films of the 2000s. As a screenwriter, he has delivered with great skill in many genres, including Dogme, but his most original work in the early years is to be found in the popular action comedies, "guy flicks", where low-comical loser-types are central. This is also the case with the protagonists of his own films, produced by M&M Productions, *Flickering Lights*, *The Green Butchers* and notably *Adam's Apples*, the latter masterfully combining flippant violent comedy with an allegorical fable

about good and evil. With the script to *Open Hearts* from 2002, Anders Thomas Jensen set off on a long-term collaborative partnership with Susanne Bier, including her upcoming film *All You Need is Love*.

Kim Fupz Aakeson is, next to Anders Thomas Jensen, the most important screenwriter of the past decade. He has a strong hand in realistic everyday dramas such as Annette K. Olesen's *Minor Mishaps*, the Dogme film *In Your Hands*, Paprika Steen's *Aftermath* and Ole Christian Madsen's *Prague*, and he has worked with Pernille Fischer Christensen on all her films. He broke through with Susanne Bier's romantic comedy *The One and Only* from 1999, but has distinguished himself particularly with subdued, intense chamber pieces that focus on couples and family life's painful moments.



Anders Frithiof August. Photo: Kristian Septimius Krogh



Anders Thomas Jensen. Photo: Rolf Konow



Kim Fupz Aakeson. Photo: Rolf Konow

## MARIE KRØYER AND BILLE AUGUST

Bille August is preparing his first Danish production in years, *Marie Krøyer*, which centers on the unhappy marriage between two famous figures in Danish art history:

P.S. Krøyer, a member of the Skagen Painters from the late 1800s who gathered in the northernmost part of Denmark to take advantage of the quality of light and the realist subjects of the local fishermen, and his wife Marie, herself a painter and featured in many of Krøyer's paintings.

"It's been a great experience to try and capture the landscape and the Nordic light from the paintings," Bille August says.

## FEATURE FILMS IN NUMBERS

20 Average number of feature films allocated production subsidy per year over the last decade

2.5M € The average production budget for a Danish feature film in 2011

26% Average national market share over the last decade

65% Percentage of all cinema theatres in Denmark with digital screening technology

6 Number of international co-productions with Danish funding

## BAD GUYS

Excellent actors and good-looking charmers, it makes no difference: Danish actors have taken their turn as the bad guy with the suspicious accent in English-language films. And boy are they good at being bad.



**Ulrich Thomsen** was the first Danish actor to come out as a villain in a James Bond movie, playing Russian chief of security Sasha Davidov in the *The World is Not Enough*. Ten years later Tom Tykwer would cast him as villain Jonas Skarssen in *The International*, a family guy and corrupt international banker.



**Mads Mikkelsen** starred as arch villain Le Chiffre in the Bond movie *Casino Royale*, dressed in immaculate black suits, poker-faced and blood-weeping. In 2011 Paul W.S. Anderson hurled him 300 years back in time in *The Three Musketeers* as scoundrel Rochefort battling among flying war machines a la da Vinci.



**Jesper Christensen** turned up twice as Bond villain Mr White, middleman of terrorist organisation Quantum, first in *Casino Royale* together with Mads Mikkelsen, then in follow-up *Quantum of Solace*. In John Madden's espionage thriller *The Debt* he plays the unnerving Nazi gynecologist Dieter Vogel.



**Nikolaj Lie Kaas** appeared as a Russian gangster in Scott Z. Burns' *Pu-239*, and in Ron Howard's *Angels & Demons* he took the part as the glacial Illuminati assassin Mr Gray.

## BOE AND THE BEAST

### Radical playmates

They first met so long ago neither can remember exactly how. Now actor Nicolas Bro and director Christoffer Boe have finished their sixth film together, the psycho-horror-drama *Beast*, kind of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* meets *Alien*, as Boe says.

No less of a genre tease was their 2006-collaboration *Offscreen* in which they play themselves in a story of a director and his friend the actor who starts filming his life and slowly disintegrates.

Already in 2003, Christoffer Boe made an impact on the international festival scene, with his aesthetically refined debut feature *Reconstruction*, winning him the Camera d'Or in Cannes. The film is an enigmatic love story that slowly dissolves in the labyrinth of the city. Copenhagen was never more cinegenic.

*"He is my muse! Some have beautiful young ladies as their muse, I have Bro. Funny how life plays tricks on you sometimes."*

Boe on Bro



Actor Nicolas Bro and director Christoffer Boe. Photo: Simon Laefelged

## MORE TO WATCH OUT FOR ...

The Hunt. Photo: Per Arnesen



### THE HUNT BY THOMAS VINTERBERG

Mads Mikkelsen takes the lead in Thomas Vinterberg's next drama *The Hunt*, a disturbing depiction of how a lie becomes the truth when gossip, doubt and malice are allowed to flourish. The setting is a small town just before Christmas. Lucas is finally coming to grips with his life. But something goes wrong, and in no time the town finds itself in a state of collective hysteria.

The Hijacking (working title). Photo: Magnus Nordemhof Jenck



### NEW FILM BY TOBIAS LINDHOLM

We land in the midst of a pressing global issue in Tobias Lindholm's new film with the working title *The Hijacking*. Morten, played by Pilou Asbæk, is a chef on a large freighter in the Indian Ocean. After a long voyage he is finally heading home, when suddenly the ship is attacked by pirates and a tough battle for survival begins. Tobias Lindholm brings with him the same ambition that steered his and co-director Michael Noer's feature film debut *R*: to imbue the story with an extreme sense of realism.

Teddy Bear. Framgrab



### TEDDY BEAR BY MADS MATTHIESEN

Dennis is a Hercules. 140 kg of buff muscle. But his looks are deceiving. Inside this massive body hides a little boy still living at home with his pint-sized mother who has driven every ounce of machismo and confidence out of him. Verging on desperation, the giant goes to Thailand to try his luck with one of the many petite girls in Asia's candy land. Danish champion bodybuilder Kim Kold lends his body to the character of Dennis, like he did in Mads Matthiesen's short film *Dennis*, selected for Sundance. *Teddy Bear* is also headed for a world premiere at Sundance.

Excuse Me. Photo: Thomas Marott



### EXCUSE ME BY HENRIK RUBEN GENZ

Of course there will be undertones of madness and brutality in a film by Henrik Ruben Genz, the Danish director whose laid-back style in films like *Chinaman* and *Terrribly Happy* have prompted comparisons to Jim Jarmusch and the Coen brothers. Ruben Genz' latest addition is a warped comedy about a young woman Helene who, according to her mother, was born due to a technical error, and who has always lived in the shadow of her mother's dog. Helene's father left before she was born. Now is definitely the time to look him up.

## FIVE DANISH AWARDS AT EFA 2011

Lars von Trier's *Melancholia* took the top prize and Susanne Bier was presented with the Best Director award at the European Film Awards in Berlin.

When the nominations for the European Film Awards 2011 were announced in November, the Danish film industry had cause for celebration, as one third went to Danish films. As the winners were revealed at the awards night in Berlin, spirits were no less dampened, with *Melancholia* winning Best European Film and Susanne Bier Best Director for *In a Better World*.

*Melancholia* took home an additional two awards, Manuel Alberto Claro for Best Cinematography and Jytte Lehmann for Best Production Design, and actor Mads Mikkelsen received an honorary achievement award.



## DANISH FILM - A SELECTION

The Danish Film Institute publishes a Blu-ray edition of 20 films on the occasion of the Danish EU Presidency, including five feature films:

ANTICHRIST / Lars von Trier  
A FAMILY / Pernille Fischer Christensen  
SUBMARINO / Thomas Vinterberg  
VALHALLA RISING / Nicolas Winding Refn  
IN A BETTER WORLD / Susanne Bier

Read more about the films on the following pages.

A Funny Man. Photo: Björn Bertheussen



## WHAT THE DANES LIKE

**A powerful and moving portrait of a late comedian and a toe-curling satirical road movie with two popular stand-up comedians have caused the Danes to flock to the cinemas in 2011.**

Opening in the seductive style of the sixties, *A Funny Man* uncovers the perennial loneliness that comedian Dirch Passer has found himself in after a fast-tracked rise to fame. A tragic story of a man who lived for attention and found himself trapped in his own legend. With *A Funny Man*, the director-producer duo Martin P. Zandvliet and Mikael Chr. Rieks have drawn another powerful artist portrait, following *Applause*.

The two popular stand-up comedians Frank Hvam and Casper Christensen, who have been riding on the success of their TV satire series *Clown* for years have, as far as we know, not yet been trapped in their own legend. The two celebrities play themselves in *Clown – the Movie*, where they lie, cheat, smoke and fornicate their way through the homeland in a modern fable about morality – and immorality. With admissions in Denmark reaching nearly 900,000 director Mikkel Nørgaard's feature debut ranks as the best-selling Danish film at the domestic boxoffice in over ten years.

[dfi.dk/english](http://dfi.dk/english)

## VON TRIER'S WOMEN

### Self-portraits?

Kirsten Dunst, Charlotte Gainsbourg and Björk have all triumphed in Cannes for their roles in Lars von Trier's films. In 2011 the Best Actress award went to Dunst for her depressed bride Justine who is strangely attuned to the approaching planet Melancholia, Charlotte Gainsbourg received the award back in 2009 for her commanding performance as tormented wife in *Antichrist*, and in 2000 Björk was singled out for her touching, musical depiction of a self-sacrificing mother in *Dancer in the Dark*.

Von Trier has announced that his next project is entitled *The Nymphomaniac*, a film about "a woman's erotic birth".

In Cannes, Kirsten Dunst thanked von Trier for giving her the opportunity to "be so brave in this film, and so free".

Photo: Christian Geisnæs



## DIRECTORS WITH WANDERLUST

### Look out for the new internationals

With a population of just 5.6 million, Denmark could be considered a small film nation. Many Danish directors have felt the need for more elbowroom and working in larger settings. Over the last few decades, there has been great demand for Danish filmmakers and their cool, spare touch. Directors like, for instance, Bille August, Susanne Bier, Lone Scherfig and Nicolas Winding Refn have left – and returned to make more Danish films.

Among the directors currently making their names abroad are Ole Bornedal, Niels Arden Oplev and Ole Christian Madsen.

Bornedal spooked Danish audiences in 1994 with his horror-thriller *Nightwatch*. The film travelled well and Bornedal was invited to Hollywood to direct the remake in 1997. Back in Denmark, he has continued to challenge moviegoers in film after film. Now, working with Sam Raimi, he is ready to present his new American horror movie, *The Possession*, next summer.

Niels Arden Oplev thrilled audiences around the world in 2009 when he visualised Stieg Larsson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* in a Scandinavian production with a classic Nordic feel. In 2011, Oplev signed on to direct the American thriller *Dead Man Down* with Colin Farrell og Noomi Rapace.

Ole Christian Madsen has shot several of his Danish films abroad. *Prague*, starring Mads Mikkelsen, is set in the Czech Republic. Denmark's Oscar candidate, *Superclásico*, was shot on location in Buenos Aires. Madsen recently had to postpone plans to shoot a Danish production partly in India when he got the call to direct the American thriller *Paper Trail*.

## HAND-KNITTED NOIR

### The Killing beats Mad Men

Who would have thought that a Faroe sweater could outshine the cool suits of Madison Avenue? Well, Sarah Lund was the one to pull it off. The heroine of *The Killing* became famous when BBC4 started airing the first season of the Danish TV series in 2010. The 20-episode story, driving at a leisurely pace towards the solving of one single murder mystery, steadily attracted more viewers than the American hit series *Mad Men*, even though its Nordic counterpart was shown in Danish with subtitles, which is usually a party killer for English-speaking audiences. And at the BAFTAs in May, *The Killing* edged out three American dramas – *Mad Men*, *Boardwalk Empire* and *Glee* – to win the award for Best International Series. The second season started up in November.

Scandinavian chills are cool, it seems, turning up in novels, films and on TV. They are, no doubt, riding a wave after the success of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy whose first story, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, was directed by Danish director Niels Arden Oplev – and now ready in an American remake by David Fincher.



Director Nikolaj Arcel and EFA award recipient Mads Mikkelsen on the set of *A Royal Affair*. Photo: Jiri Hanzn

ANTICHRIST BY LARS VON TRIER

# CHALLENGING AND TRANSGRESSIVE

By Kim Skotte

The controversial filmmaker Lars von Trier gives people around him tics every time he opens his mouth. Still, his reputation as a provocateur should not overshadow the fact that he is one of the most distinctive and personal filmmakers working today. A true artist, von Trier is always pushing his own limits as well as the limits of cinematic language.

His early masterpieces, such as *The Element of Crime* and *Europa*, were “cool”, obsessed with cinematic aesthetics, but ever since *Breaking the Waves* from 1996, his films have dealt with violent emotions. And every single one has had a female protagonist. Being the protagonist of a von Trier film is no bed of roses. Accusations of misogyny have been levelled at him, though it really seems to be more about the director creating the distance he needs to grapple with his own tortured feelings.

*Antichrist*, one of von Trier’s most powerful and challenging films, is the story of a married couple who lose their small son and seek refuge and therapeutic closure deep in the woods, in an isolated cabin paradoxically named Eden. Surrounded by nature’s indifferent “evil”, they are engulfed in a maelstrom of grief, depression and violence. A transgressive film, it is also one of the director’s most visually inventive works. Over the years, no less than three of von Trier’s leading actresses have won the Best Actress award in Cannes: Björk for Palme d’Or-winner *Dancer in the Dark*, Kirsten Dunst for *Melancholia*, and Charlotte Gainsbourg for *Antichrist*.

Director Lars von Trier, born 1956.  
Photo by Christian Geisnæs

## ANTICHRIST / 2009

A symbolic, psychological horror drama about a grieving couple who retreats to ‘Eden’, their isolated cabin in the woods, where they hope to repair their broken hearts and troubled marriage. But nature takes its course, and their paradise soon becomes a hell where chaos reigns and only wild animals can feel at home. Charlotte Gainsbourg received the award for Best Actress in Cannes 2009.

Procuded by Meta Louise Foldager for Zentropa Entertainments.

Other films by Lars von Trier:  
*The Element of Crime* (1984)  
*Europa* (1991)  
*Breaking the Waves* (1996)  
*The Idiots* (1998)  
*Dancer in the Dark* (2000)  
*Dogville* (2003)  
*Melancholia* (2011)

Photo by Christian Geisnæs

*Antichrist* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.



“Those demons are my friends. Maybe that’s the advantage of making films: that the demons, which are so painful when you meet them, get a different role. They become your friends when you put them in a film. They become your playmates, co-conspirators.”

Lars von Trier on *Antichrist*  
FILM#66, 2009

*"Once again, the subject was 'Nature', but in a different and more direct way than before. In a more personal way."*

Lars von Trier on *Antichrist*



# A FAMILY BY PERNILLE FISCHER CHRISTENSEN FROM DYNASTY TO FAMILY UNIT

By Kim Skotte

There was a time, not that long ago, when family really meant something. The doctor's son became a doctor, and the baker's son learned the art of baking. The loss of this inherent continuity represents one of the most fundamental upheavals of modern life. Dynasty and lineage have been replaced by a "family unit" hatching self-actualising individuals.

Pernille Fischer Christensen's *A Family* hones in on this essential conflict. *A Family* is about generations and the great divider of generations: death. Ever since the first Rheinwald came to Denmark from Germany carrying a sack of flour on his back, the Rheinwald family has baked bread of the finest quality, eventually earning the seal of Purveyor to the Royal Danish Court. When master baker Rheinwald finds out he has cancer, he automatically

assumes that his oldest daughter, Ditte, will carry on the family business. But Ditte, a gallery owner, has plans to move to New York with her artist boyfriend.

Christensen won a Silver Bear in Berlin in 2006 for her internationally acclaimed debut film, *A Soap*. Her third feature is likewise created in close collaboration with the versatile screenwriter Kim Fupz Aakeson. The master baker who gets cancer is played by Jesper Christensen. International audiences may recognise Christensen as Mr White from the James Bond movies, while in Denmark he is known first as one of the country's most uncompromising character actors.

Pernille Fischer Christensen, born 1969.  
Photo by Erik Molberg Hansen

## A FAMILY / 2010

Ditte owns a gallery, has a loving boyfriend, and her dream job in New York is within reach. But Ditte is also the youngest generation of the famous bakery dynasty, the Rheinwalds, and when her beloved, but dominating father comes down with a serious illness, Ditte is faced with a grueling decision: to pursue her own dreams, or to continue the legacy of her family. *A Family* won the award for Best Film at Los Angeles Film Festival and the Film Critics Award at the Berlin Film Festival.

*Produced by Sisse Graum Jørgensen and Vinca Wiedemann for Zentropa Entertainments.*

*Other films by Pernille Fischer Christensen:  
A Soap (2006)  
Dancers (2008)*



Photo by Rolf Konow

*A Family* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.

"I like it if the characters seem a bit ambiguous and can be interpreted in different ways – that there's no ultimate answer. It's really important to allow the audience to add to the story themselves and have different opinions about these people and why they act the way they do. ... I find it exciting to focus on the unspoken, underlying things that appear in glimpses and cracks."

Pernille Fischer Christensen on *A Family*  
FILM#68, 2010



SUBMARINO BY THOMAS VINTERBERG

# TWO BROTHERS STRUGGLING FOR A LIFE

“I was going into this project with a sense of purity and nakedness. I didn’t have any bells and whistles or mannerisms to lean on, and that was a good feeling. I felt a bit like I did back in the day when we dressed down with the Dogme rules.”

Thomas Vinterberg on *Submarino*  
FILM#68, 2010



By Kim Skotte

*The Celebration* gave Thomas Vinterberg an early breakthrough of the kind others can only dream about. With Lars von Trier, Vinterberg had launched the international film manifesto Dogme95. In 1998, they both had films in the main competition at Cannes. *The Celebration* and *The Idiots* were the first two films made according to the Dogme rules. Vinterberg, who was just 29, took home the laurels. His handheld film about incest in an outwardly respectable upper-class family won the Prix du Jury and became a phenomenon wherever it went.

Getting over an early success can be hard. Vinterberg’s follow-up, *It’s All About Love*, was a lovely, ambitious film that flopped. In 2007, he made *When a Man Comes Home*,

his first Danish-language film since *The Celebration*. But it was not until *Submarino* that the director truly returned, not just to the Danish language but also to his best form.

*Submarino* is about two brothers who have both taken a wrong turn in life. Nick is an alcoholic who is always in and out of prison. His younger brother is a drug addict and single parent to a young boy. The film may have all the trappings of kitchen-sink realism, but behind the grey exteriors – the film was shot in one of Copenhagen’s more unglamorous outer boroughs – it is a timeless drama of two brothers struggling to make a life for themselves against all odds. *Submarino* won the Nordic Council Film Prize in 2010.

## SUBMARINO / 2010

A story about two estranged brothers, marked by a childhood of gloom. They were separated from each other at a young age by a tragedy that split their entire family. Today, Nick’s life is drenched in alcohol and plagued by violence, while his kid brother, a solo-parent, struggles as a junkie to give his son a better life. Their paths cross, making a confrontation inevitable, but is redemption possible? *Submarino* was selected for the Berlin Film Festival’s main competition and won the Nordic Council Film Prize.

Produced by Morten Kaufmann for Nimbus Film.

Other films by Thomas Vinterberg:  
*The Celebration* (1998)  
*It’s All About Love* (2003)  
*Dear Wendy* (2005)



Photo by Per Amesen

Director Thomas Vinterberg, born 1969.  
Photo by Jan Buus

*Submarino* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.



*“The two brothers have a kind of alliance. The film’s dramatic engine, I suppose, is how they reach out to each other but always come up short. They are trying to get back to what they shared when they were kids. If they had found each other in time, they would have been able to help each other out.”*

Thomas Vinterberg on *Submarino*  
FILM#68, 2010

VALHALLA RISING BY NICOLAS WINDING REFN

# ACTION-PACKED VISUAL EPIC

By Kim Skotte

It is a rare thing for a cool film with car chases and ultra-violence to win awards at prestigious film festivals. But that's what happened when Nicolas Winding Refn won Best Director at Cannes 2011 for the Hollywood production *Drive*. Refn was launched into an elite international orbit, but the 41-year-old Danish director had already built up a solid international following over the years.

Refn's still-growing cult status goes back to his *Pusher* trilogy, three films from the Danish drug underground, combining raw realism with a refined sense of style. His first English-language film, *Fear X*, starring John Turturro earned the director little more than strangling debt. Later, in 2009, his British prison film *Bronson* was singled out as exceptionally violent – and exceptionally good.

A well-developed love of graphic images and genre-film quotations shot through with an original sense of cinematic style marks Refn's films. That is also the case in his epic *Valhalla Rising*, starring Mads Mikkelsen as a tattooed, one-eyed warrior. Cast into slavery, One-Eye fights to the death as a gladiator in the Scottish mud. He escapes and gets passage on a Viking ship bound for the New World. *Valhalla Rising* is a visual myth, more action than plot but with unforgettable images crafted by an original image-maker and film buff with a very un-Danish taste for the graphically starkest fare on cinema's menu.

## VALHALLA RISING / 2010

For years One-Eye, a mute warrior of supernatural strength, has been held prisoner by the chieftain Barde. Aided by a boy, Are, he kills his captor and together they escape, beginning a journey into the heart of darkness. On their flight from bounty hunters, One-Eye and Are board a Viking vessel, but the ship is soon engulfed by an endless fog that disintegrates only when they sight an unknown land. As the new land reveals its secrets and the Vikings meet a ghastly fate, One-Eye discovers his true self.

*Produced by Johnny Andersen, Bo Ehrhardt and Henrik Danstrup Holst for Nimbus Film, One Eye Production, La Belle Allee Productions Ltd and Blind Eye Productions.*

*Other films by Nicolas Winding Refn: Pusher (1996) Bronson (2009) Drive (2011)*



Photo by Deann Rogers

Director Nicolas Winding, born 1970. Photo by Jan Buus

*Valhalla Rising* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.

*"I see art as an act of violence. The only difference between the two is that in real life violence destroys, whereas art inspires."*

Nicolas Winding Refn on *Valhalla Rising*



## IN A BETTER WORLD BY SUSANNE BIER

# A STORYTELLER WITH FEELINGS FIRST

By Kim Skotte

Which is it, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth – or turn the other cheek? The dilemma at the heart of *In a Better World* is a lot like that, both for the boy who is brutally bullied at school and the Swedish doctor in a refugee camp in a civil-war-ravaged African nation who is forced to confront the brutal warlord Big Man.

Hard-hitting moral dilemmas staged with emotional drama and compelling performances have become something of a specialty for Susanne Bier. In a country where people like to downplay their feelings, Bier represents a less bashful approach. Her films know that cinema is an art that speaks first to the emotions.

That approach earned Bier an Academy Award for *In a Better World* in 2011, the crowning achievement so far in a career that has steadily grown since her promising debut with *Freud Leaving Home* in 1990. Nine years later, *The One and Only*, a romantic comedy, became one of the most-seen Danish films ever.

Still, it was not until her subsequent partnership with the screenwriter Anders Thomas Jensen that Bier really found and refined her style. From 2002 to 2006, they brought us *Open Hearts*, *Brothers* and *After the Wedding*, which were big hits with audiences and critics. This period also saw the first offers coming in from America. Bier directed her first American feature, *Things We Lost in the Fire* in 2007, and *Brothers* was remade by Jim Sheridan in 2009.

### IN A BETTER WORLD / 2010

The story traces elements from a refugee camp in Africa to the grey humdrum of everyday life in a Danish provincial town. The lives of two Danish families cross each other, and an extraordinary but risky friendship comes into bud. But loneliness, frailty and sorrow lie in wait. Soon, friendship transforms into a dangerous alliance and a breathtaking pursuit in which life is at stake. *In a Better World* won a Golden Globe and an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, and Bier took home the Best Director Award for her film at the European Film Awards 2011.

Produced by Sisse Graum Jørgensen for Zentropa Entertainments.

Other films by Susanne Bier:  
*The One and Only* (1999)  
*Open Hearts* (2002)  
*Brothers* (2004)  
*After the Wedding* (2006)



Director Susanne Bier, born 1960.  
 Photo by Robin Skjoldborg



“I’m occupied much more with morals than politics. I’m definitely a pragmatic person, though I have a hard time relating to the kind of pragmatism that makes someone a good politician. This doesn’t mean that I don’t want to make a ‘political’ film (...) Because films work so much on the emotional level, there’s a conceptual layer that’s hard to include in that kind of story. Even in most so-called political films, it’s the human stories that move you.”

Susanne Bier on *In A Better World*  
 FILMupdate, July 2010



*“Our experiment in this film is about looking at how little it really takes before a child – or an adult – thinks something is deeply unjust. It really doesn’t take much, and I find that profoundly interesting. And scary.”*

Susanne Bier on *In a Better World*  
FILMupdate, July 2010

## WHEN WRONG IS OH SO RIGHT

Documentaries are cool. In Denmark the popularity of documentary films has reached heights that were unimaginable ten years ago. Today young Danish filmmakers are falling over each other to interpret reality and challenge the boundaries of the documentary genre.

By Per Juul Carlsen

Since its inception in 2003, CPH:DOX has grown into Scandinavia's biggest documentary film festival 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 success illustrates the rampant exuberance in Danish documentary cinema over the past decade. Standout names like Anders Østergaard, Eva Mulvad, Pernille Rose Grønkjær, Phie Ambo, Michael Madsen and Janus Metz are leading a generation of talented filmmakers who have created an immensely positive atmosphere around Danish documentaries, both at home and abroad, and experienced directors like Jørgen Leth are still going strong, attracting new and young audiences to his singular film art.

No doubt it's the documentary scene's time to shine. New, inventive distribution efforts where, for instance, a film is shown and discussed simultaneously in cinemas across the country, are drawing Danes to cinemas. The big public service TV channels are happy to air documentaries in primetime. And every year, CPH:DOX is a style-conscious showcase for the doc scene, expanding its boundaries and giving it a distinct identity. Docs are in fact cool in Denmark.

### Public policy and the power of storytelling

It's tempting to posit that at least part of the explanation for the success lies with the general Danish interest in realism. This much, at least, is certain: Surrealistic fantasies are not the thing for Northern Europeans. For their part, they have always produced a steady stream of films and literature about the challenges of everyday life.

Clearly, a central element in the rise of Danish documentaries is that of money and active public funding. The current Danish film policy, through specific talent subsidy schemes, encourages filmmakers to explore documentary forms and stories. Every year a big lump of funds is allocated to the production of documentaries, not just feature-length docs of the kind that fills Danish cinema seats but also more experimental and challenging titles. This all ensures a flow of highly diverse films.

If one characteristic defines today's Danish documentaries it's their ability to *tell a story*. The National Film School of Denmark deserves a great deal of credit for that. Now in its 46th year, the school has always been an important hub in Danish cinema. Since the establishment of the school's TV programme in the mid nineties, eight graduating classes of documentarians have gone through a course of study that puts a premium on working in

a personal, artistic vocabulary, while equipping graduates with a full range of narrative tools, from journalism, fiction and documentary films.

### Truth is a personal matter

The trend of mixing fiction and documentary is not a new phenomenon, explored by veteran filmmakers such as Jon Bang Carlsen and Jørgen Leth years back. Recently, though, the trend has raised eyebrows. Proponents of classic journalism and documentarism claim that many of today's documentaries manipulate reality instead of documenting it. A filmmaker who is often accused of doing just that is the reporter and TV host Mads Brügger. His *The Red Chapel* won the prestigious World Cinema Jury Prize at Sundance in 2010, but the director was harshly criticised because he and his crew travelled to North Korea under the pretence of being a theatrical troupe.

Brügger's new film has already received its share of scepticism, as well. *The Ambassador*, which opened the IDFA film festival in Amsterdam, has Brügger going to the Central African Republic on a diplomatic passport, obtained through shady channels, which gives him unfettered access to all the goods of the country, especially diamonds. He goes all out, acting the part of a shameless Western diplomat sporting a cigarette holder and riding boots, even though he is really a filmmaker, of course. It's a far cry from the classic documentary ideal of the fly on the wall.

In some cases, the line between fiction and reality is blurred almost beyond recognition, as the filmmaker pursues his goal of making an eye-catching and original film. Christian Sønderby Jepsen's *The Will* follows two brothers who are waiting to receive a large inheritance. Though everything in *The Will* really happened, the protagonists so willingly put their private lives on display, and the director so consistently uses elements from the realm of fiction, that it sometimes becomes hard to tell this documentary from a work of fiction.

How manipulated a statement do *The Will* and *The Ambassador* present? That's something to discuss. Then again, these young documentary filmmakers might claim that truth is always a personal matter and that the classic documentary goal of making truthful films – *cinéma vérité*, as the French call it – is a romantic mirage. In any event, the rest of us can conclude that, while these documentarians may not be doing the right thing, in doing the wrong thing they are inarguably onto something right ■

# NEWS & NOTES



## LETH IN TOP FORM

Jørgen Leth has been a significant figure on the cultural scene for nearly 50 years as director of more than 40 forceful, personal and poetic short and documentary films, as poet, sports commentator and much more. But he has never been as popular as he is today, and even attracting young audiences. Jørgen Leth's artistic creed – that rules, preferably self-made, unleash creativity – has inspired many a filmmaker, from the Dogme movement to the National Film School whose head Poul Nesgaard often shows *The Five Obstructions* to visitors to give them an understanding of the school's teaching methods.

Jørgen Leth in *The Five Obstructions* made in collaboration with Lars von Trier. Photo: Dan Holmberg.



## BRINGING POLITICS TO SUNDANCE

The Arab Spring in Cairo, a youth movement in Putin's Russia and the seedy business of diplomatic maneuvering in the Central African Republic are the hot topics of three documentaries that have already made noise internationally. The three films have been selected for competition at the Sundance Film Festival.

### 1/2 REVOLUTION BY OMAR SHARGAWI & KARIM EL HAKIM

"The police started shooting against the demonstrators. As we gave first aid to somebody who was injured, we were arrested and beaten by the secret police who dragged us off to a military prison in the middle of the desert. It all happened very quickly. We started out as spectators of a demonstration, and suddenly we were in the middle of a revolution." Director Omar Shargawi.

### PUTIN'S KISS BY LISE BIRK PEDERSEN

"Meeting Masha and the youth organisation Nashi was a huge eye-opener. Nashi is very seductive. Their headquarters were entirely done in red and white, and their flag and logo were absolutely everywhere. Then Masha sat down in front of me and said, 'Our plan is to turn Russia into the global leader of the 21st century.'" Director Lise Birk Pedersen. *Putin's Kiss* was in competition at the IDFA fest in Amsterdam.

### THE AMBASSADOR BY MADS BRÜGGER

"I wanted to make an Africa film that had funny moments amidst all the horror and I wanted to make a documentary that took Africa back to Graham Greene and *The Wild Geese* – Africa of the 1970s. You can find that in the Central African Republic, a country that hardly anyone ever heard about." Director Mads Brügger. *The Ambassador* opened the IDFA doc festival in Amsterdam.

## 30 MILLION VIEWERS

*Burma VJ* makes an impact

If success is measured by awards and viewers, Anders Østergaard's *Burma VJ* has plenty. Since its release in 2008 the film has won at least 50 awards and gathered an estimated 30 million viewers worldwide. Not a bad set of numbers for the Danish director's Oscar-nominated documentary about undercover video journalists in Burma reporting from their closed country during the monks' dramatic uprising in September 2007.

In October 2011 the film received a Special Commendation from the jury behind a new annual award, the Puma.Creative celebrating films that make a difference.

*Burma VJ* is produced by Lise Lense Møller of Magic Hour Films who is credited with other award-winning documentaries such as Michael Madsen's *Into Eternity*.

## Q&A / NICK FRASER

Nick Fraser is Commissioning Editor at the BBC and is responsible for the co-production, pre-sale and acquisition of international documentary films.

*In terms of documentary films, how would you describe Danish cinema?*

I think of high-end cinematic documentaries like Janus Metz' *Armadillo*. Danish documentaries have learned a lot from Danish fictions. They do not only address important and interesting subjects but do it in a cinematic way. They say important things elegantly, and to be a documentary filmmaker means something in Danish culture.

*What are its strengths?*

A lot of the quality in Danish documentaries comes from the enlightened collaboration between the good filmmakers and the Danish Film Institute and the Danish broadcasters. All this means that Denmark has a film culture that is astonishingly successful. Not only in relation to its size as a country, but by any standards. I'm very envious.

## MORE TO WATCH OUT FOR ...



### FREE THE MIND BY PHIE AMBO

Awardwinning director Phie Ambo (*Family*, 2001) follows a renowned neuroscientist on a mission: Dr Richard Davidson wants to make the world a better place, and as he sees it, the change must come from within the brain itself. Davidson conducts an unusual experiment: He is going to teach American war veterans breathing and yoga. As Davidson's research has shown, the brain is plastic, which means that we can actively contribute to the shaping of our own personalities and thereby change our life journey to the better.



### THE WILL BY CHRISTIAN SØNDERBY JEPSEN

We dive deep into the intimate life of Henrik, a young man bidding his time as he waits for a large inheritance from his granddad. Ever since he and his brother Christian were little they have heard endless stories of the fortune they had coming to them. Christian Sønderby Jepsen paints a darkly shaded family story akin to Thomas Vinterberg's *The Celebration*.



### BALLROOM DANCER BY ANDREAS KOEFOED AND CHRISTIAN BONKE

Slavik, once the world's number one Latin dancer, has teamed up with his new lover Anna to make one final attempt to regain his title. Following their struggle on and off stage, *Ballroom Dancer* offers a rare glimpse into the glittering world of ballroom dancing.



### LOVE ADDICT BY PERNILLE ROSE GRØNKJÆR

"I had never heard about the term 'love addict' before," says director Pernille Rose Grønkjær who had a huge success with *The Monastery*, an awardwinner in Amsterdam. But then she stumbled on a rehab centre in Arizona that treated people with "love addiction". Her film tells the story of Jennifer, Eliza, Tracy, Christian and other love addicts who struggle with the all-consuming nature of love when it has become a drug.

## DANISH FILM - A SELECTION

The Danish Film Institute publishes a Blu-ray edition of 20 films on the occasion of the Danish EU Presidency, including five documentaries:

- INTO ETERNITY / Michael Madsen
- OUT OF LOVE / Birgitte Stærmosé
- ARMADILLO / Janus Metz
- THE GOOD LIFE / Eva Mulvad
- THE PRESIDENT / Christoffer Guldbrandsen

Read more about the films on the following pages.

[dfi.dk/danishfilms](http://dfi.dk/danishfilms)



Burma VJ – Reporting from a Closed Country. Framgrab



Love Addict. Framgrab

The Will. Framgrab

Framgrab

Photo: Lars Søren

Photo: Johan Staal Winthreik

Ballroom Dancer. Framgrab

*"I found myself in the middle of a reality which was magnificent in itself, surrounded by death, manipulation and big emotions. An epic tale that unfolded before my eyes."*

Christian Sønderby Jepsen on meeting his main character from *The Will*



INTO ETERNITY BY MICHAEL MADSEN

# A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION

By Per Juul Carlsen

Michael Madsen may have made three films and that may make him a filmmaker, but his third film still looks more like the offspring of the collaboration between an artist and a philosopher.

*Into Eternity* is, in principle, a documentary about the Onkalo complex in Finland, where nuclear waste will be stored for the next 100,000 years without danger to humans and nature. But the film is also a philosophical investigation of what it means to store something for 100,000 years. Should we even allow ourselves to do that? asks Madsen the philosopher, crafting his film as a warning to future generations who may not even know what radioactivity is. He is well aided by Madsen the creative image-maker who brings an abstract subject to life in visual experiments and weird compositions. Shots

of a moose hiding in the snow behind a clump of trees or exploding rocks in ultra-slow-motion give *Into Eternity* the look of fiction films like Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker*. Playing around with the classic setup of talking experts, Madsen crosscuts between the Finnish professors to make it look like they are listening to each other. He even allows them to giggle a bit in the middle of a deeply serious discussion.

Even in a time when the documentary genre is constantly looking to expand its boundaries, *Into Eternity* takes a unique tack.

## INTO ETERNITY / 2009

Every day, all over the world, large amounts of high level radioactive waste are placed in interim storages which are vulnerable to natural or manmade disasters. In Finland the world's first permanent storage is being constructed – a huge system of underground tunnels hewn out of solid rock. It is essential that this storage lasts at least 100,000 years, as this is how long the waste remains hazardous. When the waste has been deposited, the facility will be sealed off, never to be reopened. But how can we warn our descendants of the waste we left behind?

Produced by Lise Lense-Møller for Magic Hour Films.

Other films by Michael Madsen:

*Celestial Night* (2003)

*To Damascus* (2005)

*The Average of the Average* (2011)



Director Michael Madsen, born 1971. Photo by Søren Solkær Starbird

"I seriously doubt that we will still be here in 100,000 years. That there will be people around who think like us. It may well be that they have two arms and two legs and still look like us, but they will most likely perceive the world differently. How, then, should we understand what we're building today that is to last so long, and how do we communicate it to the future? This was what I wanted to explore."

Michael Madsen on *Into Eternity*  
FILM#70, 2010



*“In relation to the long term perspective, the safest solution would be that the place were forgotten – as opposed to having some kind of marker, a rune stone which could warn about the dangers buried on the site. The real threat to the facility is not so much the forces of nature unleashed during a coming ice age, but human curiosity. And here lies a paradox: how do you create oblivion?”*

## OUT OF LOVE BY BIRGITTE STÆRMOSE

# CONSTRUCTED REALITY

"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. 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."

Birgitte Stærmoose on *Out of Love*  
FILM#67, 2009

By Per Juul Carlsen

Birgitte Stærmoose's *Out of Love* is a beautiful example of how you always have to keep moving to reach the audience. Fundamentalist documentarians and journalists would say that *Out of Love* doesn't document anything, since the film's words and situations are all constructed. But in a media world, where images of starving African children with bloated bellies and flies crawling around their eyes have a grim tendency to lose their impact once you have seen them a few times, you have to find new ways to wake up the world.

If Stærmoose had gone the usual route, setting up her camera in front of a bunch of insecure Kosovo-Albanian children, ordinary Western viewers would have been immune. The kids, in all their trivial misery, would just have been the usual victims of war.

Instead, the director constructs a small poetic slice of reality running all of 22 minutes. First, she interviewed a number of orphaned children about their lives in Kosovo's capital Pristina. Then she gave their statements to a writer who shaped the words into lines like, "There's only one reason why I'm speaking with you, and that's because I'm hungry. I'm so hungry I could eat your money. I could eat anything in the world, including you, if you were dead, like my dad." Finally, Stærmoose had other kids speak the lines in various cinegenic setups, like the boy gutting a freshly caught fish while he tells us his life's story. The film may be constructed, but it makes you see reality with fresh eyes.

Director Birgitte Stærmoose, born 1963.  
Photo by Jette Jers

## OUT OF LOVE / 2009

Fusing documentary and fiction, *Out of Love* depicts the lives of children trying to survive the aftermath of war in Kosovo by selling cigarettes in the streets. Through monologues performed by the children against the eerie backdrops of Pristina, the film tells their gripping and sad story of memory, loss and fear. *Out of Love* was nominated for Best European Short at the European Film Awards and received a special mention at Berlin Film Festival.

Produced by Jesper Morthorst for  
Alphaville Pictures Copenhagen.

Other films by Birgitte Stærmoose:  
*Now, Look at Me* (short, 2001)  
*Small Avalanches* (short, 2003)  
*Room 304* (2011)

Photo by Marek Septimus Wieser

*Out of Love* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.



ARMADILLO BY JANUS METZ

# SCRATCHING THE VARNISH ON OUR CIVILISATION

By Per Juul Carlsen

“This is an earthquake in the nation’s self-image,” the Danish author Carsten Jensen wrote in April 2010, inserting *Armadillo* in the national debate. All the way up to its world premiere in Cannes that May, politicians were discussing *Armadillo* – even if they hadn’t seen it yet – primarily because of Jensen’s mention of the scene where Danish soldiers kill five Taliban fighters. The film got a mixed reception when it opened in Denmark. Right-wing politicians considered it a monument to the soldiers’ bravery, while others on the left called for an investigation of the film’s dramatic climax, where the Taliban fighters are blown to bits. People were asking, Shouldn’t they have had a chance to surrender? And, Why does one of the Danish soldiers talk about “liquidating” the enemy?

Director Janus Metz had not planned to cause an earthquake or topple any ministers. He was simply happy to get a reaction. “My premise was open-minded curiosity about what’s happening in Afghanistan – how little we really need to scratch the varnish on our civilisation before we get to some dark primal forces,” Metz says. In that respect, *Armadillo* accomplished its goal. We may discuss what the film shows, but few of us will ever forget the shots of a group of strapping Danish lads, raised on tolerance and humanism, shouting “fucking cool” after taking five human lives.

## ARMADILLO / 2010

An upfront account of growing cynicism and adrenaline addiction in young soldiers at war. Mads and Daniel are serving their first mission in Helmand, Afghanistan. Their platoon is stationed in Camp Armadillo, right on the Helmand frontline, fighting tough battles against the Talebans. The soldiers are there to help the Afghans, but as fighting gets tougher and operations increasingly hairy, they become cynical, widening the gap between themselves and the Afghan civilisation. As the first documentary ever, *Armadillo* received the Grand Prix at Semaine de la Critique in Cannes.

Produced by Ronnie Fridthjof and Sara Stockmann for Fridthjof Film.

Other films by Janus Metz:  
*Township Boys* (2006)  
*Love on Delivery* (2008)  
*Ticket to Paradise* (2008)



Director Janus Metz, born 1974.  
 Photo by Robin Skjoldborg

“With *Armadillo*, I was curious to explore how the micro level of war – where human interaction takes place – affects one of the greatest conflicts of our time. How politics meets practice in the war zone.”

Janus Metz on *Armadillo*

A photograph of a military installation. In the foreground, there is a wooden structure partially obscured by a tangle of barbed wire. To the right, a soldier in camouflage gear is seen from behind, looking out over a grassy field. In the background, a long, multi-tiered barbed wire fence stretches across the horizon. On the left, a dark, multi-story watchtower stands on a slight rise. The sky is a pale, hazy blue with some light clouds.

*"I've always been interested in making film about people who go through life altering experiences. It involves a 'rite de passage' where they are ultimately faced with themselves and their own humanity – it is universal and basic. In the context of war and the young men who are fighting them, I was interested to find out how the perception of masculinity, the good, the bad, the civilized and the barbaric, is reflected in action and how these concepts are adapted in this 'coming of age' story."*

Janus Metz on *Armadillo*

## THE GOOD LIFE BY EVA MULVAD

# WHEN THE MONEY RUNS OUT

By Per Juul Carlsen

*The Good Life* could have been a fiction-feature. All it needs is a couple of clever plot twists. Its intimacy and strong characters seem closer to a chamber play by Bergman or Cassavetes than to a documentary.

This is especially true because of the two protagonists. Mette Beckman, 83, and her daughter Annemette, 56, unabashedly tell all about themselves and their stranded lives. Once, they were without a care in the world, living off the family fortune. Now the money has all been squandered and the two women, who never worked a day in their lives, are living a less-than-sweet life on the Portuguese sun coast on Mette's modest public pension.

"The thought of working is still taboo to me," Annemette says. At times, their tiny apartment is shaken by the temper tantrums of a middle-aged teenager

blaming her aging mother for everything. It's easy to point a finger at a 56-year-old woman who refuses to work. But who knows how the psyche adapts in someone who was raised on all play and no work?

Across from such unusual lives, all normal views of guilt and responsibility fall short. And that's where this feature-length documentary shines. It has no good or bad characters, just victims of life's vicissitudes. And unlike a fiction film, it offers no solutions or neatly tied-up ends. That's one reason why pitiless reality is such a powerful presence in *The Good Life* – even if the film is a lot like fiction.

Director Eva Mulvad, born 1972.  
Photo: Self-portrait

### THE GOOD LIFE / 2010

Two women, mother and daughter, live on the sunny Portuguese coast. They have relished the 'good life' with ample pleasure and a total absence of work. Now, however, their wealth has run out. How do they cope with a life of poverty after having been born into wealth? How do they manage to find a job and keep it, when nobody in the family has ever worked? And who is to blame now that the sweet and dreamy life has turned into a nightmare? *The Good Life* won the Best Documentary Award at Karlovy Vary Film Festival.

Produced by Sigrid Dyekjær for Danish Documentary Production.

Other films by Eva Mulvad:  
*Enemies of Happiness* (2006)  
*The Samurai Case* (2011)

Photo by Pedro Claudio

*The Good Life* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.



"The ambition for "The Good Life" was to create a film that mimicked a novel: complex character descriptions and a less plot-oriented narrative. A film about many things at the same time: shattered dreams, upbringing, wealth and decadence told through the leftovers from a mental as well as physical bankruptcy."

Eva Mulvad on *The Good Life*



*“It took me three years to collect the scenes I needed to create ‘The Good Life’ – the story about a mother and daughter who have gone from being part of the wealthy European upper class to a poor life on tick in a small apartment close to the Portuguese Riviera.”*

*Eva Mulyad on The Good Life*



## THE PRESIDENT BY CHRISTOFFER GULDBRANDSEN

# A FLY ON THE WALL IN THE EU

By Per Juul Carlsen

The biggest myth of the documentary genre is that of the fly on the wall – the filmmaker who sneaks up on his choice of subject and documents without influencing. Christoffer Guldbrandsen is such a fly, but his many and often influential years as a fly on various walls have also made him a fly in the ointment of power – a fly with a taste for designer wallpaper and marble floors.

Guldbrandsen has often been allowed in behind closed doors where politicians make important decisions. In several instances, his films have also helped shape events. *The Road to Europe*, for example, led to ill feeling between the EU and the Turkish authorities, while *Vote for Change* painted such an uncool picture of the Danish politician Naser Khader that his career eventually crumbled.

Even so, politicians still let Guldbrandsen in to buzz around their walls. In *The President* (2011), the filmmaker interviews a long line of European former leaders about the longstanding effort to put in place a single EU president who would unite Europe's headstrong leaders. Their tone is surprisingly candid. And they don't shy away from intrigue and antipathy. Italian Silvio Berlusconi is slapped around and former German chancellor Gerhard Schröder barely conceals his strained relationship with Jacques Chirac of France. The laying bare of political infighting is the great strength of this traditional TV documentary that also manages to give its difficult material some lightness and humour.



Director Christoffer Guldbrandsen, born 1971.  
Photo by Jeppe Gudmundsen-Holmgreen

### THE PRESIDENT / 2011

The incisive and unsettling story about the man who became the first President of Europe – against his own will. Told in a charged and unflinching manner by current and former heads of state, *The President* shows how Europe got its first president and offers stunning insight into the workings of the EU.

Produced by Stine Meldgaard Madsen and Ane Mandrup Pedersen for Guldbrandsen.

Other films by Christoffer Guldbrandsen:  
*The Road to Europe* (2003)  
*The Secret War* (2006)  
*Vote for Change* (2009)

“The EU is incredibly important. But we lose interest when it gets too abstract (...) I try to put some faces on the decision-making processes in Brussels and focus on the dysfunction in the EU. The European Council is like the school class from hell. It consists of some very big personalities who are used to getting their way, individually. This is about intrigue, emotion and power games on a very fundamental level.”

Christoffer Guldbrandsen on *The President*  
Metroexpress, April 2011

## THE JOY OF STORYTELLING

Whether it's a lively musical about a teenage boy with pubic-hair problems or a darkly funny animated film about the cruel realities of the schoolyard, murderous teachers and inattentive parents, it all comes down to respect for the audience and the desire to tell them a good story.

By Christian  
Monggaard

Just as kids need books where they can read about themselves and see their own everyday life mirrored in a constructive, intelligent and, hopefully, entertaining way, they need films that do the same. Films that give them a sense of what it's like to live in a modern, changing, sometimes shocking world full of fear, war and unrest but also a world where there is light, hope and understanding for all the things we don't know.

Cinema is a popular and pervasive art form among children and teens, and so the filmmaker takes on considerable responsibility. Above all, it's important to take the target audience seriously and not fall for the temptation to let messages and issues dictate the story. At the end of the day, it's all about telling good stories that are engaging and bear the signature of the person behind it.

That is exactly what Danish films for children and teens do, at their best. Of course, the quality of the films and the audience's interest have waxed and waned over the years, but even in lean times skilled and dedicated filmmakers have shown the will and the ability to make relevant and entertaining films for and about our youngest audiences.

### Modern classics

While children's films and lots of folksy family films have been produced in Denmark since the 1940s, and especially in the 1950s, the story of Danish children's and teen films does not really get started until the 1970s and 1980s.

This is largely because of two factors: in the wake of the counterculture and women's liberation, a new generation of filmmakers wanted to tell stories about their own early years, and there was an increase in public funding for films for children and youth.

Film funding in Denmark started in 1965. In 1972, the Danish Film Institute was established, and it began awarding essential production and development subsidies to the film industry following a quality assessment of individual projects conducted by film commissioners. In 1976, a special commissionership for children and youth film was instituted, and since 1982 at least 25 percent of the Danish Film Institute's total subsidies have been earmarked for films for children and youth.

The result was a flowering of modern classics. Highlights include Søren Kragh-Jacobsen's *Wanna See my Beautiful Navel?* (1978) and *Rubber Tarzan* (1981), Bille August's *Zappa* (1983), *Buster's World* (1984) and *Twist and Shout* (1984), Nils Malmros' *Boys* (1977) and *The Tree of Knowledge* (1981), Jannik Hastrup's *Circcleen*-series (1968), Hastrup and Flemming Quist-Møller's *Benny's Bathtub* (1971), and Morten Arnfred's *Me and Charly* (1978) and *Johnny Larsen* (1979) – to mention just a few films that are rich in imagination, realism and humour as well as seriousness, either adapting popular

Danish books or based on more personal stories written by the directors themselves.

Today, a quarter of all film subsidies still go to children and youth films, divided among shorts, documentaries and features. Without a doubt, this is the direct reason why the Danish film industry continues to put a priority on a youthful audience that has only become harder to reach, with TV, game consoles, computers and the Internet clamouring for their attention.

### Genre, realism and animation

In recent years, one of the biggest challenges to the Danish film industry has come from English-language blockbusters like *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and the *Harry Potter* films. Not only are they huge event movies, they also tell relevant stories about finding yourself and your place in a confusing and overwhelming world.

Fortunately, as Natasha Arthy with *Miracle* (2000) and *Fighter* (2007), Ole Bornedal with the sci-fi thriller *The Substitute* (2007) and Nikolaj Arcel with *Island of Lost Souls* (2007) have shown, it is possible to make fun and exciting Danish genre films that can compete visually with the big American movies, even as they are set in a recognisable Danish everyday and take up issues that youthful audiences will recognize, revolving around school, boyfriends and girlfriends, parents, identity, friendship and the future.

But that's just one facet of Danish children and teen films. Another, more naturalistic strain picks up the thread from the 1970s and 1980s of empathetic everyday realism, in such films as the *Karla* trilogy (2007, 2009 and 2010) and *Max Embarrassing 1 and 2* (2008 and 2011).

Last, but not least, we come to animation. Denmark has always had a strong animation tradition that shows no signs of abating. Recent films such as *Terkel in Trouble* (2004), *The Ugly Duckling and Me* (2006), *Sunshine Barry & the Disco Worms* (2008) and *Ronal The Barbarian* (2011) have mainly been 3D-animated and have all featured a strong dose of anarchic irreverence. Still, there have been a few notable 2D-animated exceptions like *The Great Bear* (2011). In the pre-digital era, more traditional, though no less effective, hand-drawn films drew kids to cinemas, including *Jungledyret Hugo* (1993, 1996 and 2007) and *Help! I'm a Fish* (2000), plus the socially and politically engaged films by the creator of *Circcleen*, Jannik Hastrup, *Samson & Sally* (1984), *War of the Birds* (1990) and *The Boy who Wanted to be a Bear* (2003).

Danish children and teen films vary widely in style, expression and content, underscoring the diversity of the field. The best of these films are all carried by an interest in and not least a respect for the inner and outer lives of their young audiences ■

# NEWS & NOTES

## SUPER HEROES, DANISH STYLE



**Get to know five much-loved heroes of Danish children's films from the past decades, from sweet-tempered Ditte to hard-boiled Terkel who's all soft inside.**

### DITTE

Ditte is a poor girl who endures so much hardship but never loses her childish innocence. *Ditte*, *Child of Man* is gripping social-realism – a precursor to actual Danish children's films. (1946)



### CIRCLEEN

A fairy-sized little girl with unruly black hair and a polka-dot dress. When Circleen isn't out having adventures with her friends, the two little mice, she lives in a matchbox on the artist's desk. Jannik Hastrup is the grand old man of Danish animation. (1968)



### RUBBER TARZAN

"Everyone's good at something. You just have to find out what it is," Ole the crane operator encourages his young friend Ivan Olsen, aka Rubber Tarzan. Søren Kragh-Jacobsen's *Rubber Tarzan* has been called the world's best children's film. (1981)



### DENNIS P

A dead father, an overprotective mother, girl troubles and no pubes! Dennis, 12, does not have an easy time in Natasha Arthy's *Miracle* which blends realism with fantastical and musical elements. (2000)



### TERKEL

Terkel is in sixth grade. He has curly hair, braces on his teeth, an annoying little sister and he's a bit of a wuss. *Terkel in Trouble* has foul language, lots of violence and bawdy humour. Danish kids love Terkel, while Norway banned the film for children. (2004)

# WATCH OUT FOR ...

## YOU & ME FOREVER BY KASPAR MUNK

Teenagers are a tough audience to reach. They enjoy loads of entertainment options, and they're off to the next thing in no time. Nevertheless director Kaspar Munk has ventured into making films for and about teens, when life is at its most difficult, confusing and intense.

2010 saw the release of *Hold Me Tight* about school bullying. This year Munk is to release *You & Me Forever*, a coming-of-age story created largely through improvisation, giving full play to the young actors to imbue their characters with life and authenticity.

The story is about soul mates Laura and Christine whose friendship is put to the test when they come across the mysterious and fascinating Maria. Munk's sensitivity towards stories tackling issues of peer pressure has made some Danish critics liken him to Nils Malmros, one of Danish cinema's great interpreters of the dynamics of teenage life.



You & Me Forever. Framgrab

## THE TWITCHERS BY CHRISTIAN DYEKJÆR

An ornithological children's comedy? Not many of those going around these days. However, that's the unique blend in Christian Dyekjær's story about 12-year-old Victor and his father who attend the Annual Ornithology Competition, where Victor wants to prove his worth to his father by spotting a rare bird and win 1st prize. Victor's plan seems reasonable enough, since last year's winner, Daniel, is home with a broken leg. At least that's what Victor thinks. Suddenly, Daniel shows up and the match intensifies.

*The Twitchers*, taking its name from the term for a bird-watcher who tries to spot as many rare varieties as possible, is shot in a unique nature area and is mixed with comic relief as we are introduced to all the weird and exotic rules of the world of bird-watching.



The Twitchers. Framgrab

# ANIMATION

**Original storylines, youthful graphic cockiness and easy access to cutting-edge technology seem to lie behind the success of Danish animation in recent years. Another reason for the growth spurt in the business is the significant talent pool that is nurtured by the National Film School's animation programme and, not least, the Animation Workshop in Viborg which boasts a strong international profile.**

**Here are some of the upcoming animation films to watch out for.**



Carlo's Casino. Framgrab



Framgrab

## Q&A / MARYANNE REDPATH

**Maryanne Redpath is the director of the Generation section of the Berlin International Film Festival, the most prominent festival event for children and youth films.**

*In terms of children and youth films, how would you describe Danish cinema?*

I believe the Danish film industry recognises – as we do – that young audiences respond to being challenged cinematically, in terms of both form and content. Classical children's films, with all the necessary ingredients which don't pander to the standard expectations, are produced as well as films not intentionally made for children and youth but indeed worthy of being seen by these audiences. There is a spirit of adventure and of testing the boundaries, the desire to experiment and to try and find out just what young people might respond to and what makes them tick. The Danish film industry shows a good example to other countries which are trying to come to terms with the amazing potential of the younger cinema audiences.

*What are the challenges?*

The main challenge is to stay fresh and authentic, to not be content with established success but to keep on exploring the boundaries. Another challenge is the marketing and distribution of films which fall out of the grid of definition, especially in terms of genre. New labels have to be established which draw attention to all kinds of films suitable for younger audiences. Distributors have to be prepared to take risks on the market – in Denmark and the rest of the world.



Rubber T. Framgrab



Director Anders Morgenthaler. Photo: Self-portrait

## CARLO'S CASINO BY JAN RAHBK

Director Jan Rahbek's feature film debut springs from the director's love of kitschy B-movies with giant robots and cool exotica music. Mani the Monkey is a beach officer on a monkey island trying to win the heart of beautiful Lulu, while investigating his rival Carlo's plans to build a giant casino on his beach. Rahbek promises lots of whimsical humour.

## NEW OLSEN BANDEN FILM BY JØRGEN LERDAM

The Olsen Gang, a legendary trio of lovable small-time crooks with big money dreams, have lent their name to more than a dozen live action films since 1968. The first time the three friends Egon, Benny and Kjeld appeared in an animated version was in 2010. Now they are returning in a new adventure involving a sea gull, diving suits, a rubber raft, a seaplane and a piece of cake.

## RUBBER T BY MICHAEL HEGNER

Following the theatrical success of *Freddy Frogface* last year, producer Nina Crone is releasing her second film from the popular Danish children's books by Ole Lund Kirkegaard who had a real knack for writing in solidarity with his young readers – as in the story of Rubber Tarzan, turned into film for the first time in 1981 by Søren Kragh-Jacobsen (see opposite side), about Ivan who is bullied in school but meets his kindred spirit in the crane driver Ole. By experienced animation director Michael Hegner.

## COPENHAGEN BOMBAY

**Production company with a focus on the offbeat**

It's important for the European animation industry to do things its own way instead of trying to copy the Americans, says director Anders Morgenthaler. No doubt he and producer Sarita Christensen also went their own way in 2006 as they founded Copenhagen Bombay, by now a dynamic production company and animation studio with a serious ambition to nurture the offbeat and quirky sides of children and family entertainment. The company also has a strong cross-media vision, integrating new technologies and new partners in their business concept. Books, games, web stories and toys are all part of Bombay's brands.

# FOCUS ON CHILDREN & YOUTH

Illustration: Dorte Bengtsson



## DANISH FILM - A SELECTION

The Danish Film Institute publishes a Blu-ray edition of 20 films on the occasion of the Danish EU Presidency, including five films for children:

- WE SHALL OVERCOME / Niels Arden Oplev
- THE SUBSTITUTE / Ole Bornedal
- FIGHTER / Natasha Arthy
- KARLA AND JONAS / Charlotte Sachs Bostrup
- THE GREAT BEAR / Esben Toft Jacobsen

Read more about the films on the following pages.



## 25%

Danish films for children and young people have been consistent over the years and more so since 1982 when new legislation stated that at least 25% of state subsidies for film production should be earmarked to films for children and youth. Today the Danish Film Institute still allocates 25% of its grants to films and activities for children and young people.

## EXPERIENCE, UNDERSTAND, CREATE

Children and teens should be given the best opportunities to experience, understand and create moving images! That's the premise of the Danish Film Institute's film and media teaching that reaches out to all ages: Kids can *experience* lots of films during school hours under a nationwide school cinema programme; they can get a deeper *understanding* of the films by working with them in the classroom and making use of free study guides; and they can *create* their own films in the FILM-X film lab, giving them a hands-on experience with the media, and access film production guides.

## MORE THAN JUST FILMS

Moving images are the perfect mirror for children and young people to reflect their dreams and desires. However, traditional films are not the only source to fuel their imagination. Inventive, entertaining and engaging stories have long spread to other platforms such as mobile phones, Internet and video games, all playing an increasingly important part in the young generation's experience with moving images, and the Danish Film Institute has widened the field for support accordingly.

## DANISH XBOX HIT

### Limbo in black-and-white

A boy with fiery eyes wanders through ink-black forests in search of his sister, fending against towering tarantulas and sinister swamps. This black-and-white dreamland is the simple and effective setup in Danish Xbox hit and international prizewinner *Limbo*, a game for young people developed with support from the Danish Film Institute's subsidy scheme for video games, acknowledged as a legitimate cultural product for young audiences and a business worth stimulating.

*Limbo* is produced by the Danish company Playdead.

# FILM-Y IN BRUSSELS

## MAKE YOUR OWN CAR CHASE

Children creating their own film is what it's all about in FILM-Y, the Danish Film Institute's mobile film studio that will be visiting the Bozar arts centre in Brussels during the Danish EU Presidency.

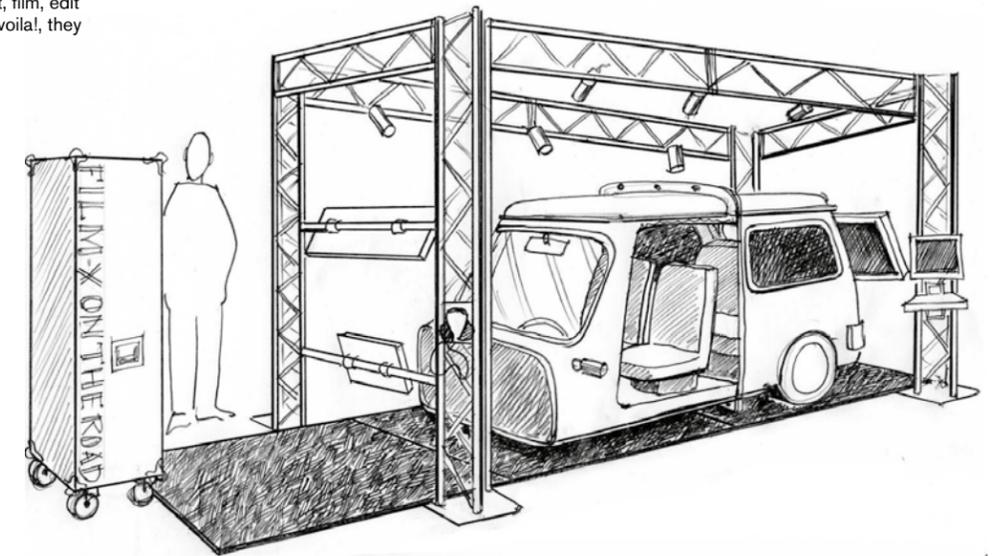
FILM-Y gives children and teens a unique opportunity to experiment with cinema and produce their own films. The interactive studio invites them to have a look behind the illusion of film, providing them with an insight into technique and the tools of storytelling.

The children team up in film crews and work from their own ideas and scripts. They direct, act, film, edit and design the sound. Within a few hours, voila!, they have their own 3-5 minute film.

FILM-Y consists of an actual Morris Mini wired with microphones and equipped with a back projection. There is a choice of four films as frameworks for a car-chase story.

FILM-Y is inspired by FILM-X at the Cinematheque in Copenhagen. Since opening in 2002, this interactive film studio with its five stages, sound studio and editing computers has been a success, both for school classes and families with children.

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



A car chase in the making. FILM-Y during a visit in Damascus in 2009. Now Belgian school children can make their own film at FILM-Y in Brussels. Photo: DFI

*FILM-Y gave me the opportunity to tell my own story - for the first time.*

13-year-old girl, Damascus, Syria

WE SHALL OVERCOME BY NIELS ARDEN OPLEV

# ETERNAL STORY ABOUT CONFRONTING OPPRESSION

By Christian Monggaard

Before his big international breakthrough as the director of the blockbusting first Stieg Larsson adaptation, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Niels Arden Oplev challenged audiences with films like his formally experimental drug drama *Portland* and his absurd comedy *Chop Chop*. He later reached a wide audience with *We Shall Overcome* and *Worlds Apart*, proving beyond a doubt that it is possible to make quality films in the often-maligned family-film genre.

*We Shall Overcome* is based on Oplev's own childhood in late-1960s rural Denmark. A young boy, Frits is inspired by a progressive teacher and Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech to launch his own rebellion against a sadistic, misanthropic headmaster.

Frits learned to take care of himself at an early age. His beloved father is mentally unstable and his mother struggles to keep the family together, even as everyone in their small-town community looks at them with distrust. From his father, the boy gets his well-developed sense of justice and practical resolve. From his teacher, he gets the courage and inspiration to act.

A solid piece of traditional storytelling *We Shall Overcome* hits home with the audience. Unadorned, clever, with a stylistically sure touch in describing its period and milieu, the film tells a universal and eternal story about confronting oppression in all its forms. It is also a very well acted film, centring on the impressive and substantial talents of its young star, Janus Dissing Rathke.



Director Niels Arden Oplev, born 1961. Photo by Johan Bergmark

## WE SHALL OVERCOME / 2006

13-year-old Frits has fallen out of favour with the headmaster of his school. The year is 1969. The world is changing rapidly, and corporal punishment has been banned. The tyrannical headmaster, however, has not bothered to notice. Frits spends his summer holidays in front of the family's first television and is influenced by the winds of change. When the headmaster steps over the line, Frits takes up battle against the authorities. *We Shall Overcome* won the Crystal Bear in Berlin as well as 26 other international awards.

Produced by Sisse Graum Jørgensen for Zentropa Entertainments.

Other films by Niels Arden Oplev:  
*Portland* (1996)  
*Worlds Apart* (2008)  
*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2009)

*We Shall Overcome* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.

"My ambition was to describe an age and a state of mind, but I also want to entertain. That's how the story came to me. From the beginning, it had a strong plot, which I think has a lot to do with the powerful antagonist. When I was four feet tall, the principal was formidably intimidating and I almost vomited from fear when I had to go to his office. So it became a David and Goliath story."

Niels Arden Oplev on *We Shall Overcome*  
 FILM#48, 2006

Photo by Ole Krøgh-Jacobsen and Thomas Petri



*“I didn’t want it to be a depressing story set in autumn when everything is grey and the fields are heavy with moisture. I wanted the story to be tough, but I also wanted the childhood feeling of summer. This warmth also helps carry Frits through. Moreover, I like how starkly the beauty of summer and the pastoral scenery contrasts with Frits’ world in school.”*

Niels Arden Oplev on *We Shall Overcome*  
FILM#48, 2006

THE SUBSTITUTE BY OLE BORNEDAL

# IN YOUR FACE, HARD-HITTING, UPROARIOUS

By Christian Monggaard

In his first film, the thriller *Nightwatch*, Ole Bornedal proved that it is possible to make an effective and supremely watchable genre film in Denmark, almost singlehandedly triggering the new wave of Danish films that has been washing over the world for the last nearly 20 years. Since then, Bornedal has tried to challenge himself and his audience, often slinging out provocative opinions in a confrontational and funny style.

A high-water mark for the director is the sci-fi thriller *The Substitute*. An alien comes to earth to learn the secret of human compassion and love. These qualities, she believes, make humans invincible. In fact, the voice-over says, they save the world from going under.

The alien disguises herself as a sixth-grade substitute teacher, but she is found out by the class misfit Carl who

recently lost his mother and now lives alone with his younger sister and their distant father. Having a human anchor-point in Carl, his trouble at school and the family's grief at the loss of his mother is precisely what makes *The Substitute* such a successful and powerful film.

Like Steven Spielberg at his best, Bornedal makes sure to establish a convincing setting and a cast of characters we feel for and worry about, before he unleashes all the effects and high jinks.

*The Substitute* is funny, thrilling and scary – and it has something to say. Plus, it has a star in Paprika Steen who delivers a phenomenal performance as a highly intelligent, emotionless alien pulling no punches in her mockery of Carl and his classmates who in her eyes are nothing but replaceable lab rats.

Director Ole Bornedal, born 1959.  
Photo by Erik Aavatsmark



Photo by Erik Aavatsmark

## THE SUBSTITUTE / 2007

Sixth Grade gets a new substitute teacher. She wants to train the class for an international competition in Paris. But something isn't right. How is she able to read kids' minds? Why is she so mean? And how does she manage to convince everyone's parents she is so great when the whole class knows she is really an alien? *The Substitute* has won awards in Malmö, Chemnitz and Oulu.

Produced by Michael Obel for Thura Film.

Other films by Ole Bornedal:  
*Nightwatch* (1994)  
*Just Another Love Story* (2007)  
*Deliver Us from Evil* (2009)

*The Substitute* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.

"The protagonist, Karl, has lost his mother and can move on in his life by confronting his demons. I like that theme, because I think it's true."

Ole Bornedal on *The Substitute*  
FILM#57, 2007



*“The Substitute is this very serious, painfully told story that suddenly, within the premises of its world, has the audacity to veer abruptly into the impossible and fantastic. In this brutal clash, something new and rarely seen emerges – at least I haven’t seen it before. It’s like a spaceship landing in the middle of a Dogme film and aliens piling out. It’s a strange hybrid form. You follow this tragic, introverted psychological drama about a boy who has lost everything, who is dissociating himself from reality, and suddenly an alien forces him out of his shell.”*

Ole Bornedal on *The Substitute*  
FILM #57, 2007

## FIGHTER BY NATASHA ARTHY

# POETIC KUNG FU ADVENTURE

By Christian  
Monggaard

Natasha Arthy got her film training in the Children and Youth Department of Denmark's big public service station DR TV. She learned to take her youthful audience seriously and engage them with stories that are both colourful and edifying. Later, she demonstrated this skill in her first film, *Miracle*, a musical comedy about a boy hitting puberty like a brick wall.

The director picks up a very different genre in her most recent film, *Fighter*, employing kung fu film trappings to tell the compelling story of a 17-year-old second-generation immigrant in Denmark. Aïcha dreams of becoming a skilled martial arts fighter, but her Turkish-born parents won't hear of it. They want their daughter to do well in school, study medicine and marry well, like her older brother.

Adding to her troubles, Aïcha falls for a native Danish boy, Emil, who also practices martial arts. What does a young woman do when she is torn between her traditional Turkish roots and her more modern Danish day-to-day?

Arthy peppers a realistic story with fantasy sequences that are straight out of a classic kung fu flick. In these scenes, Aïcha very acrobatically – and very symbolically – fights a masked warrior who is blocking her from living her dreams. This magic element and Arthy's never-less-than contagious joy of storytelling add uplift to *Fighter*. What could have been just another well-meaning issue film about generations and culture gaps in Denmark unfolds as an imaginative, thrilling and at times very funny and poetic adventure about being young and having to make decisions in your life.

### FIGHTER / 2007

Aïcha, a high-school student, is a passionate kung fu fighter. Her Turkish parents expect her to get good grades, but school does not inspire her. Defying her family, Aïcha starts secretly training at a professional, co-ed kung fu club. A boy, Emil, helps Aïcha train for the club championship and they fall in love. But the rules of life are not as simple as the rules of kung fu, and Aïcha is forced to decide who she is and what she wants. The kung fu scenes are choreographed by kung fu master Xian Gao (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*).

Produced by Johnny Andersen for Nimbus Film.

Other films by Natasha Arthy:  
*Miracle* (2000)  
*Old, New, Borrowed and Blue* (2003)



Photo by Jens Jørgensen

Director Natasha Arthy, born 1969.  
Photo by Robin Skjoldborg

*Fighter* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.

"I wanted to do the story of a female protagonist breaking away, without using words. Her fighting is also an effective contrast to feminine stereotypes."

Natasha Arthy on *Fighter*  
FILM#62, 2008



# KARLA AND JONAS BY CHARLOTTE SACHS BOSTRUP

## THE INNER LIFE OF A TEENAGER

By Christian  
Monggaard

If there is one thing Charlotte Sachs Bostrup gets, it's how wild and topsy-turvy a teen's emotions can be. She has proven this in three fine films based on the *Karla* books, a popular series for preteens written by Renée Toft Simonsen. What's it like to want a boyfriend, being afraid to call up the boy you have a crush on and always being mad at your mother, even if she is actually pretty nice and considerate? Bostrup nails it.

Elena Arndt-Jensen, who plays Karla, just keeps getting better from one film to the next. And she's been growing up. In *Karla and Jonas*, she is almost a young lady – old enough, at any rate, to get a major crush on Jonas, a boy she met in the second film, *Karla and Katrine*.

Bursting with humour and drama, the *Karla* films don't gloss over the sometimes confusing realities of contemporary family life, including so-called bonus kids and parents. Karla's mother and recovering alcoholic dad are divorced. She lives with her mother, her mother's new husband and her younger brother.

Jonas, for his part, lives in a children's home outside of Copenhagen. He dreams of finding his mother who lives in Aarhus at the other end of the country. Karla wants to help and together they set out across the country on an eventful trip that teaches them a lot about themselves, and each other – just as it should be in a quality film for children and teens.

### KARLA AND JONAS / 2010

13-year-old Karla takes pity on her friend, the orphaned Jonas who doesn't have a 'real' family. Inspired by the television programme *Without a Trace*, Karla accompanies Jonas on an exciting, but dangerous journey to a big city, where they believe they will find Jonas' biological mother. *Karla and Jonas* is director Charlotte Sachs Bostrup's third adaptation of Renée Toft Simonsen's *Karla* stories.

Produced by Thomas Heinesen for Nordisk Film.

Other films by Charlotte Sachs Bostrup:  
*Anja & Viktor* (2001)  
*Karla's World* (2007)  
*Karla and Katrine* (2009)



Director Charlotte Sachs Bostrup, born 1963  
Photo by Miklos Szabo

Photo by David Baking

*Karla and Jonas* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.

“Dealing with the problems and feelings of children at a deep and serious level, is both important and exciting to me. And the story of Karla offers exactly that; To show the complexity of their psychology and emotions, so that a young audience can identify with the characters and recognize situations from their own lives, and an older audience hopefully remember, that small people don't necessarily have small feelings.”

Charlotte Sachs Bostrup on *Karla and Jonas*



## THE GREAT BEAR BY ESBEN TOFT JACOBSEN

# WOODLAND FAIRY TALE

By Christian  
Monggaard

Esben Toft Jacobsen is a promising and already prominent name in Danish animation. Jacobsen's films place him squarely in a proud tradition of entertaining as well as socially and humanly engaging animation. His graduation film from the National Film School of Denmark, *Having a Brother*, introduced his singular visual style, a mix of old and new, contemporary and traditional animation technologies. The film also proved that he knows how to tell a sweet and touching story about sibling rivalry.

Jacobsen's first feature, *The Great Bear*, is another story of two siblings. Jonathan and his younger sister Sophie encounter the title bear in the vast, mysterious forest stretching out at the end of their grandfather's yard. It is a stunning and original-looking film. Young audiences will laugh at the two kids' never-ending quibbling and delight at the forest dwellers, the bull-headed moose and the hordes of frogs that can make it rain by croaking.

Like Jonathan and Sophie, young viewers are bound to fall for the giant, not-at-all dangerous bear, shudder at the big, dark forest and jeer at the lone, vengeful hunter obsessed with killing the bear that has driven all humans from the woods.

Children may even learn a thing or two about the fear of what we don't understand. Tolerance and respect for nature and all living creatures are important themes in Jacobsen's film. While very much its own, *The Great Bear* is also a sly tip of the hat to Hayao Miyazaki, the Japanese master animator, humanist and environmentalist.

### THE GREAT BEAR / 2011

11-year-old Jonathan usually spends his vacations alone with his grandfather who lives on the edge of a vast forest populated by mythical animals. This year his kid sister Sophie joins him. But it is not cool to be stuck with a little sister, so he does what he can to avoid her. He succeeds entirely too well: Sophie is kidnapped by a giant 1000-year-old bear. Now, Jonathan has to venture into the heart of the forest to confront the strange beings that dwell there and rescue his sister.

Produced by Petter Lindblad for  
Copenhagen Bombay.

Other films by Esben Toft Jacobsen:  
*Having a Brother* (short, 2006)  
*Kiwi & Strit* (short, 2008)

Frammegrab



Director Esben Toft Jacobsen, born 1977.  
Photo by Mia Elisabeth

"A bear is exciting because it's a dual creature. It's both cute and terrifying, cuddly teddy bear and savage predator. And, it's the epitome of a Nordic animal."

Esben Toft Jacobsen on *The Great Bear*  
FILM#71, 2011

*The Great Bear* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.



*“There is no clear distinction between good and evil in The Great Bear. As there isn’t in real life. My ambition is to tell a story that entertains but has no obvious outcome and you sense there are many more layers behind what you see and hear.”*

# 100 YEARS OF DANISH CINEMA

There are two major epochs in Danish film history separated by almost 100 years: the silent era and Dogme95. Both times, Danish cinema has played a bigger role on the world stage than anyone would expect from a nation of little more than five million people.

By Morten Pål

The aftershock from the Dogme movement is still felt a dozen years later as an optimistic feeling of creative joy. With the movement came a peak in Danish cinema at the end of the 20th century that gave Danish films a shot in the arm and put the nation's cinema on the world map.

The first great peak came nearly a century before – during a period of five or six years before World War I.

## The first peak: Nordisk Film and the silent era

It started out big. Silent films were obviously universal in a whole other way than talking pictures, and no language barriers stood in the way of Nordisk Film, founded in 1906, exporting its exotic melodramas to countries around the world.

Danish films gave birth to some of the first real film stars, notably Asta Nielsen who had a sensual breakthrough in *The Abyss* (1910) and a few years later made a great career for herself in Germany.

World War I gradually choked off much of the lucrative film exports, and Danish films had to adjust to a smaller scale. Before then, the director Benjamin Christensen's self-produced action film *Sealed Orders* (1914) had showed him to be a very sophisticated storyteller for his time.

At Nordisk Film, a daring young reporter was getting his game ready for the long haul. He was Carl Theodor Dreyer, the biggest name in Danish cinema before Lars von Trier. Dreyer directed his first film, *The President*, in 1918. Like Asta Nielsen, he, too, went abroad to pursue his ambitious dreams.

In 1925, Dreyer briefly returned to Denmark and made his best Danish silent, *Master of the House*, working in a genre that has been intensely cultivated in Danish films over the years: the family drama, with an ironical-humorous air.

Three years later, he had his crucial breakthrough in France with the classic *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, followed by the hypnotic horror fantasy *Vampyr* (1932).

Back in Denmark, he proceeded to put out such distinctive but infrequent works as *Day of Wrath* (1943), *The Word* (1955) and *Gertrud* (1964), increasingly finding himself in an isolated position as an uncompromising loner who had a hard time finding financing for his projects.

## A few notable splashes

After the introduction of sound films, Danish films were forced to focus on the tiny domestic market, and countless folk comedies were turned out over the following decade.

In the 1940s, World War II and the German occupation of Denmark gave rise to a new gravity. Danish cinema grew up, thanks to such directors as Bodil Ipsen, Johan Jacobsen, Ole Palsbo, and Bjarne and Astrid Henning-Jensen. The

last two attracted international attention in 1947 with their social-realist portrayal of a young girl, *Ditte, Child of Man* (1946).

The changing cultural climate in the 1950s once again threw Danish films back to a rather crude level that persisted up to 1964, when substantial state funding for film production was finally instituted. The first product of the new policy to make a splash was Henning Carlsen's successful adaptation of Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* (1966). By and by, Danish cinema built up a solid tradition of kitchen-sink realism, with the addition in the 1970s of a sure touch for the crime genre.

Still, Danish films did not have much international impact until von Trier appeared in 1984 and resolutely started making his very un-Danish films in English, his stylish debut feature *The Element of Crime* winning him the Grand Prix Technique in Cannes.

In the late 1980s, Gabriel Axel's *Babette's Feast* and Bille August's *Pelle the Conqueror* both won Oscars for Best Foreign Language Film. August also followed up von Trier's triumph in Cannes by winning the Palme d'Or for *Pelle*.

## The second peak: Dogme and a new generation of actors

Another decade would pass before Danish films again caught the world's eye. That happened when Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg put their Dogme95 theories of challenging filmmaking practice to work in *The Idiots* and *The Celebration*, both from 1998.

The Dogme movement also gave us other notable films, such as Søren Kragh-Jacobsen's *Mifune* (1999), Lone Scherfig's *Italian for Beginners* (2000) and Susanne Bier's *Open Hearts* (2002).

Von Trier had already established his name as Danish cinema's leading provocateur and cinematic modernist with his genre-busting *The Kingdom* (TV series, 1994 and 97) and *Breaking the Waves* (1996). Under the Dogme banner, the one-man army became a movement armed with a textbook aesthetic.

The most important thing about the Dogme rules was the way they turned the spotlight on the actor, downplaying the photographic showiness that can drain all spontaneous life out of a film. In turn, Dogme became a training ground for a new generation of internationally recognised Danish actors, such as Mads Mikkelsen, Ulrich Thomsen and Iben Hjejle ■

# NEWS & NOTES

## CARL THEODOR DREYER

### The great master

Carl Theodor Dreyer (1889-1968) is without compare the most important Danish film director of all time. Dreyer's output as a director totals 14 features, as well as eight short and documentary films. After his debut at Nordisk Film in 1919, he made films in Sweden, Norway, Germany and France and did not make his home in Denmark again until 1934. His most famous film is *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928). Other major works include the eerie and mysterious *Vampyr* (1932) and *The Word* (1955). *Gertrud* (1964), Dreyer's last film, had its world premiere in Paris and was widely panned by critics. Only French New Wave directors and critics like Jean-Luc Godard and André Téchiné defended the film's qualities.

There continues to be enormous interest in Dreyer all over the world. When the Toronto International Film Festival in 2010 published its "Essential 100" – a list of the 100 best films of all time selected by leading film experts – Dreyer's *Joan of Arc* was number one.

The Passion of Joan of Arc. Photo: DFI



[english.carlthdreyer.dk](http://english.carlthdreyer.dk)

## THE LAND OF SEXUAL FREEDOM

### Free speech and free love are two important concepts for the Danes

Danish cinema played a key role in creating the mythology of Liberated Scandinavia when Denmark, as the first country in the world, abolished the censorship of pornographic images in 1969. This immediately led to the production of more or less explicitly erotic films that for a short while created a worldwide sensation. A legendary example is the series of so-called bedside films, eight in all, a kind of erotic (and mildly pornographic) folk comedies produced by the old, illustrious company Palladium.



John Hübner's Bedroom Mazurka. Photo: DFI



## NORDISK FILM – THE WORLD'S OLDEST FILM COMPANY

The polar bear bestrides the globe. Roaring vigorously, it is literally on top of the world. The Nordic nations take up an outsized amount of space on the European segment of the planet, while the word Copenhagen stretches like a belt across most of Central Europe.

From 1908 to roughly 1916, Nordisk Film was one of the biggest film companies in the market with branches and sales agents all over the world. Throughout the 1920s, the company was still selling exotic melodramas, comedies and historical extravaganzas to such distant regions as India, Egypt, Japan and Argentina.

With the advent of sound film around 1930, Danish cinema became a purely Danish matter. Almost 40 years would pass before Nordisk Film found a new golden egg thanks to its "house director", Erik Balling. Balling had already directed more than 20 features before he came up with the brilliant concept of "Olsen-banden". The first film about the lovable trio of stary-eyed jailbirds premiered in 1968. A new instalment in the series followed almost every year – for a total of 13 features. The films were even exported, mainly to the other countries in Scandinavia but also to East Germany, where audiences lapped up Balling's ingenious blend of folk comedy, working class satire and crime capers.

Nordisk Film has always excelled at extending its activities to all links in the chain: production, distribution and cinema operation. Since 1987, the company has been a major player in the TV market. It has also expanded into video and DVD distribution. In 1992, Nordisk merged with the Egmont publishing company.

In 2008, Nordisk Film acquired a 50% stake in Zentropa and set up the TrustNordisk distribution company. The company has expanded strongly in the Scandinavian countries and is engaged in numerous co-productions, primarily with other Nordic partners, for instance on the Millennium trilogy.

Meanwhile, films are still being produced at the old studios in Valby, where Nordisk has been based since 1906. The company's aim is broad, with comedies, teen films, animation, works by first-time directors and sure-fire hits like Olsen-banden, now in animated version.

[europeanfilmgateway.eu](http://europeanfilmgateway.eu)  
[dfi.dk/danishfilmhistory](http://dfi.dk/danishfilmhistory)

## IN THE HEART OF COPENHAGEN

### The DFI Film House

With its large clock built into the floor by the entrance, the DFI Film House greets its audience with a reminder that on these premises, the time-based art form of film is king.

Located in central Copenhagen, the DFI Film House is home to the Cinematheque where films from around the world, classic as well as contemporary, are put into new and often surprising contexts.

However, the DFI Film House is much more than watching films – with late-night events, seminars, director meetings, the national film and television library, the national stills archive, and a videoteque with more than 1500 titles in the catalogue.

The building also houses the cafe and restaurant SULT, named after Henning Carlsen's famous classic, and the children's film lab FILM-X.



The big see-through clock at the DFI Film House is created by artist Christian Lemmerz. Photo: Jan Buus

## EUROPEAN FILM GATEWAY

### A key to the European film heritage

Opening in 2011, EFG is a portal to Carl Theodor Dreyer, Fellini, Mussolini, The Beatles and all the other personalities that have shaped modern Europe. EFG provides direct visual access to the European film heritage and the treasures stored in 16 European archives, including more than 500,000 digitised films, photos, images and texts. Denmark is contributing material from the National Filmography, including the earliest clips from the Danish film heritage, rare commercials from the 1940s and documentaries about and by Dreyer.



## DANISH FILM – A SELECTION

The Danish Film Institute publishes a Blu-ray edition of 20 films on the occasion of the Danish EU Presidency, including five classics:

HUNGER / Henning Carlsen  
A SUNDAY IN HELL / Jørgen Leth  
BABETTE'S FEAST / Gabriel Axel  
WALTZING REGITZE / Kaspar Rostrup  
EUROPA / Lars von Trier

Read more about the films on the following pages.



The Abyss. Photo: DFI

## FILMBYEN & ZENTROPA

The companies behind the Dogme films were Zentropa, founded in 1992 by Lars von Trier and producer Peter Aalbæk Jensen, and Nimbus Film, established in 1993 with Vinterberg as the central figure. Together with several smaller outfits they settled in 1999 in studio facilities and offices in Filmbyen, "Film Town", on the outskirts of Copenhagen.

The area is a former military base, matching perfectly with the genesis of the company. Zentropa grew out of von Trier and Aalbæk Jensen's first feature film together, *Europa* (1991), set in an alluring, post-war ravaged Germany, and took its name from

the sleeping-car company which plays a major role in the film.

Zentropa is greatly acknowledged for having reinvigorated the Danish film industry, bringing a unique blend of art and anarchy to the business of filmmaking, which has also made noise internationally. Having had its share of financial hardships in recent years, Zentropa is still one of the most important production companies in Scandinavia and has opened several international outfits throughout Europe. The two founding fathers share 25% of the company, another 25% is owned by employees and close associates, and the last 50% is owned by Nordisk Film.

Producer Peter Aalbæk Jensen is Mr Zentropa, here reclining in front of the company's impressive trophy wall.  
Photo: Claus Bjørn Larsen



## ASTA NIELSEN

### Danish diva

Asta Nielsen (1881-1972) was one of the first actresses of her day to wholeheartedly devote herself to a career in the movies. From 1910 to 1932, she acted in more than 70 features – three of them Danish, the rest German. In her debut film, *The Abyss* (Urban Gad, 1910), Nielsen is already demonstrating her low-key acting style that is perfectly suited for the screen, while her erotic charisma blew the audience away. A huge success, the film was also a milestone of film production at the time. Nielsen's career came into full bloom in Germany, where she was known as "Die Asta". As an aside, she once played across from a young, unknown Swedish actress, Greta Garbo.

## DOGME95

Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg presented their Dogme manifesto on 20 March, 1995, in the Odéon Theatre in Paris as part of the celebration of cinema's 100-year anniversary. The manifesto was a protest against the time's superficial and technologically overloaded movie style, especially the one coming out of Hollywood. Instead, they championed for a truer, simpler mode of production – as specified in a set of ten rules known as The Vow of Chastity. The first five Danish films applying to these rules, released 1998-2000, attracted considerable attention: Vinterberg's *The Celebration*, von Trier's *The Idiots*, Søren Kragh-Jacobsen's *Mifune*, Kristian Levring's *The King is Alive* and Lone Scherfig's *Italian for Beginners*.



The four original Dogme brothers in von Trier's golf car on the Zentropa grounds. Photo: Lars Hegsted

HUNGER BY HENNING CARLSEN

# A WINDOW INTO THE PSYCHE OF A STARVING YOUNG WRITER

By Morten Pål

Hunger is Henning Carlsen's masterpiece in a large, varied, always interesting body of work. Admirers of the film include the writer Paul Auster and the tough American critic Pauline Kael, who called it "a classic of the starving-young-artist genre".

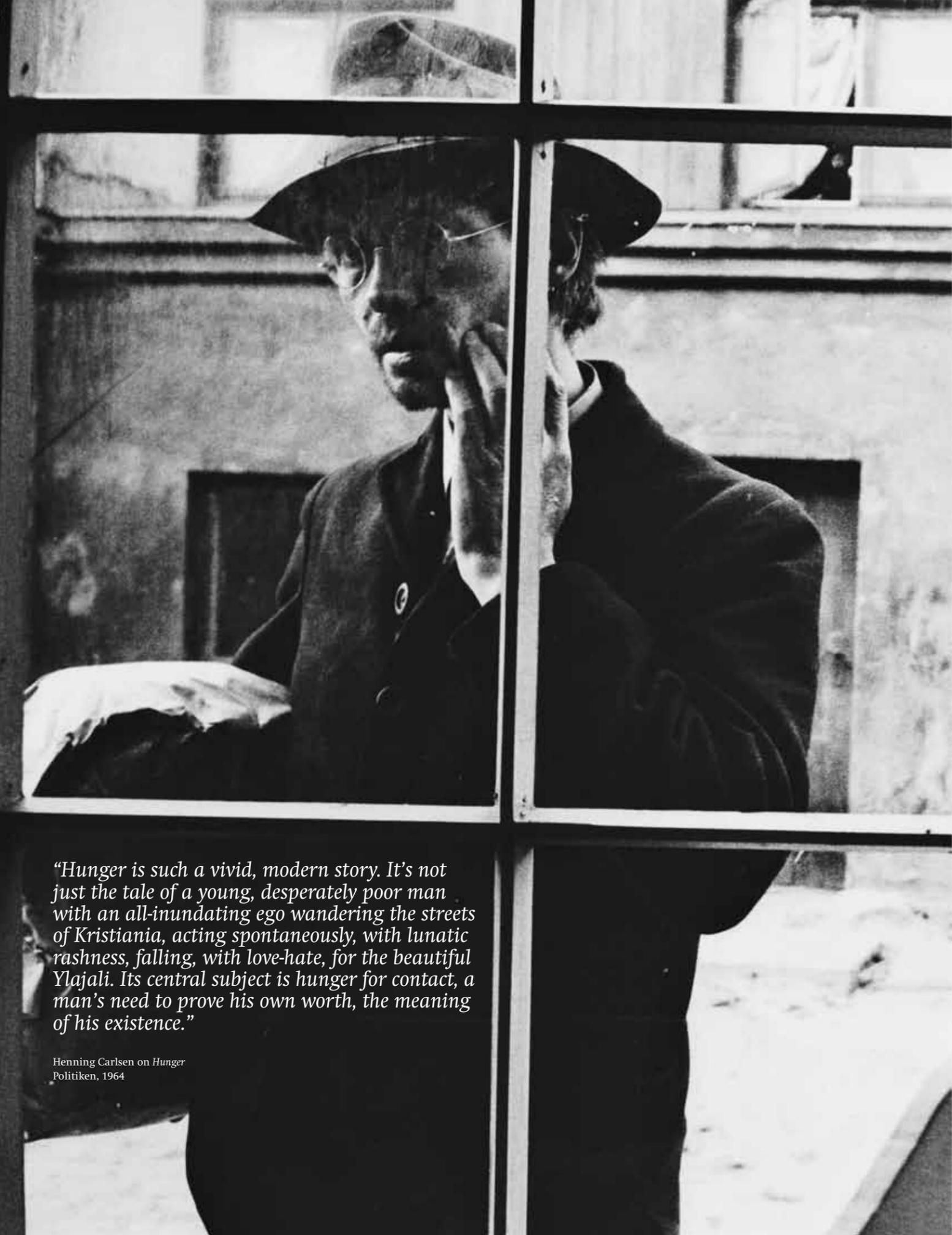
At the core of the film is Per Oscarsson's intensely lived-in, partly improvised performance as an aspiring writer aimlessly wandering the streets of Norway's capital, Kristiania, in the late 19th century. Recreated with great virtuosity, the town is a poetic reflection of the protagonist's ragged mind.

Carlsen found a deeply agreeable material in Nobel laureate Knut Hamsun's pioneering first-person novel from 1890. Plumbing the feverish, hypersensitive consciousness of a starving writer, the film – shot in

masterful black and white by Henning Kristiansen – becomes a visual tale that shares the book's tremulous heartbeat.

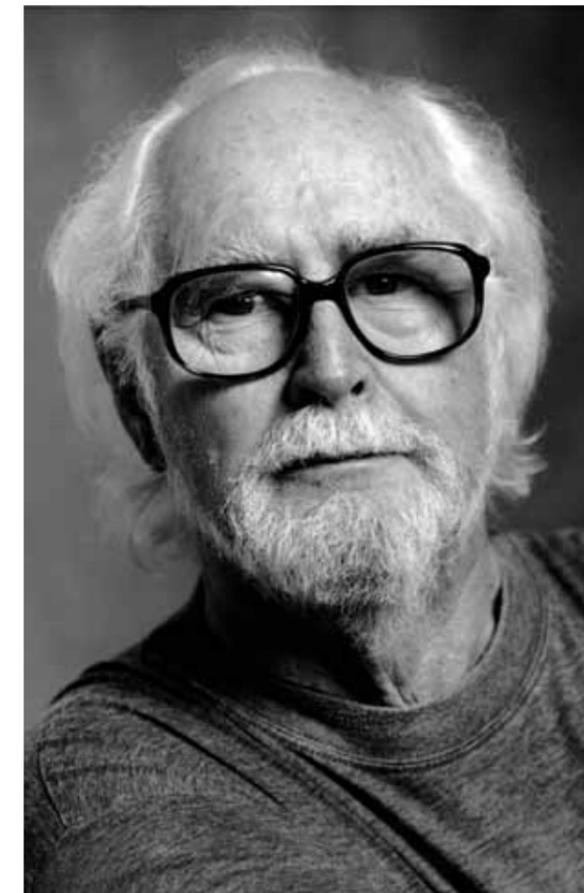
The profoundly isolated protagonist has nothing but his pride to cling to, which he does with eccentric obstinacy. He refuses to ask anyone for help. He won't admit his misery to a friend. Fortifying his pride, he hocks his overcoat to help another hungry person. Oscarsson's gaunt, ravaged physique and burning eyes give a singular, youthfully volatile and heroic life to his portrayal of a contradictory loner who is both aristocrat and vagabond, gentle dreamer and unpredictable choleric.

Oscarsson won the Best Actor award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1966. For Carlsen, the film was an artistic peak, yet to be surpassed in a 54-year directing career.



*"Hunger is such a vivid, modern story. It's not just the tale of a young, desperately poor man with an all-inundating ego wandering the streets of Kristiania, acting spontaneously, with lunatic rashness, falling, with love-hate, for the beautiful Ylajali. Its central subject is hunger for contact, a man's need to prove his own worth, the meaning of his existence."*

Henning Carlsen on *Hunger*  
Politiken, 1964



Director Henning Carlsen, born 1927.  
Photo by Ole Haupt

Photo by Jesper Hem

*Hunger* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.

## HUNGER / 1966

Pontus, a young penniless poet, wanders about the 1890's freezing Oslo in search of love and work, while trying to preserve his self-respect and integrity. A newspaper editor offers to publish an article by him, but Pontus is too proud to receive an advance payment. When he cannot pay his rent, his landlord throws him out. *Hunger* exhausts him and blurs the boundary between fantasy and reality. *Hunger* is based on Knut Hamsun's novel. The film was well-received in Cannes 1966, where Per Oscarsson won the Best Actor Award.

*Produced by Henning Carlsen, Göran Lindgren for Henning Carlsen Film, Sandrew Film & Teater AB and Studio ABC.*

*Other films by Henning Carlsen:*  
*Dilemma* (1962)  
*Oviri* (1986)  
*Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2012)

*"This young man stands as an expression not only of the material side but also the spiritual side of existence. Starving, he sees everyone owing everyone else money, rampant money-grubbing, a new city blooming without consideration for what is already there. Life is unbearable to him."*

Henning Carlsen on *Hunger*  
Frederiksborg Amts Avis, 1965



A SUNDAY IN HELL BY JØRGEN LETH

# CYCLING AS AESTHETIC RITUAL

By Morten Piił

Insatiable curiosity, a distinct sense of beauty, a joy of play and a love of slick surfaces are the main elements driving this film by Jørgen Leth.

The director does not create dramas in the usual sense in his essayistic fiction films. However, in his many sports films, mostly on cycling, the athletes themselves supply the drama on a silver platter, with Leth as a fascinated spectator and narrator.

In spring 1976, no fewer than 28 Danish camera operators immortalised the world's toughest one-day bike race, the Paris-Roubaix classic, an epic test of a cyclist's physical stamina and mental acuity. The intensive camera coverage allowed Leth to track the race in all its key phases. Praising the great feats and breaking down the failures, he puts us right in the thick of it.

Leth has been an exceedingly popular cycling commentator on Danish TV 2. He sees the sport of cycling as a rousing drama, an aesthetic ritual bringing out and purifying the riders' unique, often heroic personalities and skills. Leth's unmistakable mix of professional objectivity, psychological insight and feel for the sport's mythology, communicated in his signature narration, has made the film a classic in its field, an x-ray of a big sporting event illuminated by an incisive and enthusiastic mind.

Leth found a large audience with his successful collaboration with Lars von Trier, *The Five Obstructions* in 2003. But he had a lifelong body of work behind him. *A Sunday in Hell* is a highlight. Leth wanted to make what he calls the "ultimate cycling film", and he succeeded.

## A SUNDAY IN HELL / 1977

Director and poet Jørgen Leth is obsessed with bicycle racing as a ritual expression of human victory and defeat, and from this obsession he has made the unique *A Sunday in Hell*. The Sunday is April 11, 1976, when the classic and grueling annual bicycle race Paris-Roubaix was held, and the Hell is the cobblestone field roads of Northern France, where the champions of bicycle racing battle for victory. With an army of photographers, Leth followed the race in all of its details, and he has edited the footage into a mythic and spectacular documentary.

Produced by Jørgen Leth and Christian Clausen for Steen Herdel Film.

Other films by Jørgen Leth:  
*The Perfect Human* (1967)  
*Stars and Watercarriers* (1973)  
*66 Scenes from America* (1981)  
*The Five Obstructions*  
 (with Lars von Trier, 2003)  
*Erotic Man* (2010)

Photo by Heine Pedersen and Vibeke Winding

*A Sunday in Hell* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.



Director Jørgen Leth, born 1937.  
 Photo by Tomas Leth

"The idea of sacrifice or total commitment is a crucial element in my films. It plays a very important role in my description of people's efforts and achievements, of the challenges they undertake. We are of course dealing here with concepts that have religious resonances."

Jørgen Leth on *A Sunday in Hell*  
 The Danish Directors, 2003



*“Outstanding sports accomplishments resemble Greek theatre, where all kinds of characters and traits were put on expressive display – heroes, villains, virtue and vice.”*

Jørgen Leth on *A Sunday In Hell*  
The Danish Directors, 2003

“Everything had to be grey, drab and somber, and then suddenly at the end there was to be that feast. You need the grey tones as a contrast to the feast, which is all in colour. So we moved the entire film to the west coast of Jutland ... We needed a small society and with only a few inhabitants who lived in humble white houses and huts with black seaweed on the roofs. On the other hand we did absolutely everything to ensure that the actual feast was truly grandiose. We ordered everything from Paris, so all the porcelain and silver were completely authentic.”

Gabriel Axel on *Babette's Feast*  
The Danish Directors, 2003



## BABETTE'S FEAST BY GABRIEL AXEL FRENCH REFINEMENT AND NORDIC CRUDENESS

By Morten Piił

Gabriel Axel has a unique position in Danish cinema as the only director with a mostly French background. He went to secondary school in Paris and acted in Louis Jouvet's theatre ensemble, before he moved to Denmark.

In Denmark, he brought out a mixed bag of films, before he returned to Paris in 1977 and spent years re-inventing himself as a director of big, critically acclaimed TV productions.

*Babette's Feast*, describing a culture clash between French refinement and Nordic crudeness, strikes a personal note with the director, whose personality holds both Gallic sharpness and Nordic broadness. Above all, *Babette* is a whimsical fable about the vagaries of fate – and about the artistic ability of a lone genius. Babette, an aristocratic French housekeeper forced into exile, is

clearly a proud artist, whose cooking successfully unifies spirit and matter.

The film is based on a short story by the world-famous Danish writer Karen Blixen, also known under her pen name Isak Dinesen. Axel unspools the story at an easy pace, likely inspired by the Danish master director Carl Theodor Dreyer. Axel also steeps the film in Dreyer's spirit by almost exclusively casting actors from Dreyer's films. The main exception is Bodil Kjer, a great Danish star of the stage and screen, who shines as one of two fine, pious sisters in the lead.

As the first Danish film ever, *Babette's Feast* won an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 1988.

### BABETTE'S FEAST / 1987

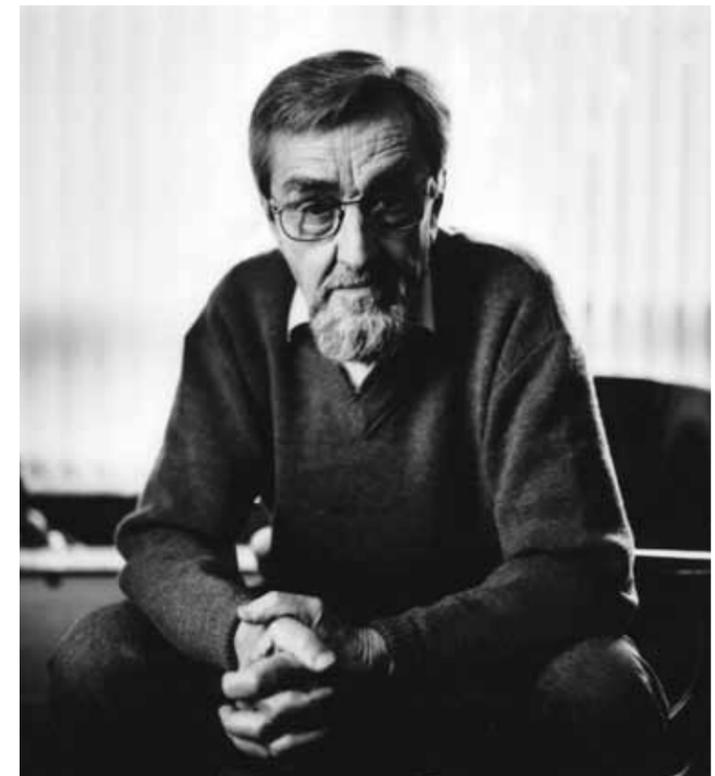
The chef Babette flees France after the Paris Commune uprising of 1871. She is taken in as a housekeeper in the poor fishing village home of two puritanical spinsters who consider food beyond oatmeal almost sinful. When Babette by chance comes into money, she blows it all on serving up the ultimate gourmet meal for the dazed villagers. The film is based on a short story by Isak Dinesen (Karen Blixen). *Babette's Feast* was the first Danish film ever to win an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film and was shown in Un Certain Regard in Cannes.

Produced by Bo Christensen for  
Panorama Film International and  
Nordisk Film Production.

Other films by Gabriel Axel:  
*Nothing but trouble* (1955)  
*Paradise and Back* (1964)  
*Laila the Pure* (2001)

Photo by Peter Gabriel

*Babette's Feast* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.



Director Gabriel Axel, born 1918.  
Photo by Jan Buus



*“We had to make a lot of concrete changes in Blixen’s story in order to recreate it cinematically, but the aim throughout was to be faithful to the spirit of her tale and to make it work on film. I also used a narrator so that the film viewers would be able to hear Karen Blixen’s own language. Out of respect and deference for the storyteller, I had the narrator draw attention to the fact that the viewers were about to hear a good story.”*

WALTZING REGITZE BY KASPAR ROSTRUP

# ANATOMY OF A MARRIAGE

By Morten Pii

Danish cinema has a strong tradition in the unique genre known as “folk comedy”. These easily accessible films appeal to a wide audience with broad humour, clearly outlined characters and simple plots, often added a dash of the sentimental. The director Kaspar Rostrup takes a familiar narrative form to a higher level in *Waltzing Regitze*, anatomising a working-class couple over the course of their long and emotionally charged life together. It is a marriage of opposites: Regitze is an assertive heroine with a strong sense of justice. Karl Aage is meeker, a melancholy antihero. We first meet them at a garden party in a very Danish locale, their allotment garden and cottage.

On the surface, everything is rosy. The party is folksy and fun in a very Danish way, but Karl Aage is weighed down with the burden of his knowledge about Regitze. He knows they are at a turning point. What has she meant to him? What were the highlights of their life together? He can't help looking back. “Tonight it's like all doors are open, and I'm going in and out of all of them,” he says.

Flashbacks show us the couple's quite ordinary life, from the first time they meet, during Nazi Germany's occupation of Denmark, from 1940-45. But behind the bland, everyday exterior, we find big, fierce emotions as well as quiet, loving forbearance. The couple is played by Ghita Nørby and Frits Helmuth, two great stars of the Danish stage and screen who had played across from each other several times before.

“It's about seeing the big in the small. The whole Shakespearean palette is in us all. Each of us contains all the colours for a big drama. Only, the brushstrokes tend to be a bit smaller in this country.”

Kaspar Rostrup on *Waltzing Regitze*  
Berlingske Tidende, 1989

## WALTZING REGITZE / 1989

*Waltzing Regitze* tells of a working class marriage that has survived all obstacles because true love and mutual respect always prevailed. Tempestuous Regitze and conformist Karl Aage live through wartime hardships and familial strifes and upheavals and are now preparing for their annual summer party over which the shadow of tragedy is suddenly cast. *Waltzing Regitze* was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1990.

Produced by Lars Kolvig for Nordisk Film Production.

Other films by Kaspar Rostrup:  
*Jeppe of The Hill* (1981)  
*A Place Nearby* (2000)



Director Kaspar Rostrup, born 1940.  
Photo by Hans Andersen

*Waltzing Regitze* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.

EUROPA BY LARS VON TRIER

# HALLUCINATORY DEPICTION OF GERMANY IN THE YEAR ZERO

By Morten Pii

In his typical fashion, Lars von Trier, the most important Danish filmmaker of the last several decades, saw the World War II and its aftermath from an entirely different angle.

His award-winning graduation film at the National Film School of Denmark, *Images of a Relief*, depicted the martyrdom of a German officer in the days after Denmark's liberation. A similar suggestive sense of doom is evoked in *Europa*, von Trier's hallucinatory depiction of Germany in the year zero – winter 1945, after the nation's defeat at war.

In its virtuosically composed black-and-white frames, interspersed with colour sequences and double exposures, *Europa* is arguably the most stylistically ambitious Danish film ever. It remains the director's visually most

impressive work. Von Trier would later go to the opposite extreme with his handheld Dogme aesthetics, but only after he had made this gloriously politically incorrect monument to the fall of the Third Reich.

Max von Sydow's narrator takes us into a dreamlike world of night, rain and fog. Good will, in the figure of Jean-Marc Barr's visiting young American, is powerless against the forces of old Europe in its death throes.

Idealism fails, as so often in von Trier. More than anything, however, the film is a paradox-riddled romp brimming with moments of aesthetic visual bliss. It is shot through with shivering, childish delight at the dark beauty of decay, as a mythological train with untold wagons makes its way through a romantically ruined Europe.

"It's the same story in each of the three films (in *Europa* trilogy). The inquiring humanist who leaves his home terrain and journeys out into nature ends up going to rack and ruin. In *Europa* nature, the jungle, was a wartorn Europe, and in penetrating in the humanist ends up succumbing to its laws. You find the same story in the other films, for in each of them people end up being trapped and destroyed by the very search in which they're engaged."

Lars Von Trier on *Europa*  
The Danish Directors, 2003

## EUROPA / 1991

In 1945, just after Germany's surrender, Leo, a young American of German descent, wants to be of help in the old Fatherland and signs on as a sleeping car conductor with the Zentropa Express company. He soon finds himself turned into a pawn between the power elite and Nazi terrorists gone underground. *Europa* won the Prix Technique and the Special Jury Prize at Cannes. Third part of von Trier's *Europa* Trilogy.

Produced by Peter Aalbæk Jensen, Bo Christensen and Lene Nielsen for Nordisk Film Production.

Other films by Lars von Trier:  
*The Element of Crime* (1984)  
*Breaking the Waves* (1996)  
*The Idiots* (1998)  
*Dancer in the Dark* (2000)  
*Dogville* (2003)  
*Antichrist* (2009)  
*Melancholia* (2011)



Director Lars von Trier, born 1956.  
Photo by Rolf Konow

*Europa* is one of the 20 films on the EU 2012 Blu-ray box set published by the Danish Film Institute.

# NURTURING TALENT

Everyone talks about talent. Discovering, developing and nurturing talent. Danish film policy puts a high priority on talent development – even from the very first stages of the development chain – with programmes for teaching, education and funding.



*Accidentes Gloriosos* is one of the results from CPH:DOX's talent workshop DOX:LAB. Photo: DOX:LAB

Who knows, maybe the next Lars von Trier is already tearing up a kindergarten playroom somewhere? In fact, a new initiative by the Danish Film Institute invites kindergarteners to visit the interactive film studio FILM-X, where they can spend a few hours making their very own film.

Danish film policy has a focus on creating a teeming ecosystems of new film talents. Giving pre-schoolers the opportunity to experience the creative processes of filmmaking is one of the initiatives that focus on talent at every level. Practical and theoretical understand of media is taught in the classroom at several stages of the elementary school system. Young people looking for a career in film have several options: on the opposite page, you will find an introduction to some of these – the National Film School of Denmark, the European Film College and the DFI Film Workshop. In addition are the alternative film schools, such as Super 16 and Super 8, and numerous open workshops across the country. As for animation, the Animation Academy in Viborg offers programmes and courses on a variety of levels.

One option for recent film-school graduates to get film funding is New Danish Screen. This talent development scheme gives new generations of filmmakers and gamemakers an opportunity to push their limits and create new experiences for cinema and television audiences. New Danish Screen targets new talent working on the professional level as well as less experienced filmmakers. What counts is enabling manifested talent to develop, test out new ideas or change course from their past productions. Such internationally acclaimed films as *R* and *The Ambassador* were funded by New Danish Screen.

## PLACES & SPACES

**Auteur or team player? As a filmmaker you have to be a bit of both. FILM looks at three hatcheries for new film talent that all recognise the singular dynamic and skill of finding and holding onto one's voice and artistic expression while working in close collaboration on a film production.**

See opposite page.



## THE NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL OF DENMARK / TALENT THRIVES ON CHALLENGE

The National Film School of Denmark in Copenhagen is a state school, financially supported by the Danish Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Founded in 1966, the school is situated on an islet in Copenhagen Harbour.

The school offers four study programmes: film, TV, screenwriting and animation / game directing. The number of students is around 100. The programmes take four years, except for the two-year screenwriting programme. As an art school, the Film School aims to develop and nurture each student's unique talent. At the same time, it is absolutely key that students learn the craft of filmmaking to ensure their future employment in the film and media industry.

**Poul Nesgaard, Director:**

*"We accept students based on their talent and their life experience, which has hopefully grounded their talent in their individual personality. The school's task is to control the individual student's idiosyncrasies. We should not be giving them their talent. They already have that. We should help unfurl their talent through practice and critique. Talent thrives on challenge."*

The school is not a playground, every day is structured. The philosophy is that boundaries and structure will give the students the security to unleash their creativity. Witness the Dogme movement – or Lars von Trier setting obstructions for Jørgen Leth in *The Five Obstructions*. We should be 'obstructing' the students, allowing them to find their own legs to stand on.

Students at the Film School will be central players in our shared media reality. Their ethics and language and ability to create stories, their view of reality, will influence the way we perceive the world."

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



## THE EUROPEAN FILM COLLEGE / GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

In the hilly, primeval landscape around Ebeltoft in Jutland lies the European Film College, a residential training institution under the Danish folk high school system, which provides an all-round foundation course in the key aspects of filmmaking.

With an international learning environment where 115 students and their teachers from all over the world live together on campus during the 34 weeks course, the philosophy is based on democratic education and individual roots in a global citizenship.

**Mette Damgaard-Sørensen, Principal:**

*"Our foremost task is to pick up on the perceptions of the new generations. Young people today have grown up in a visual culture and express themselves visually quite intuitively. We should provide our students with the necessary skills and courage to express their experiences, thoughts and ideas – acknowledging a European film tradition. We should identify and cultivate talent, that is, help students find and develop their own personal voice."*

The European Film College has an international dimension that is very important: students and teachers have to live and communicate across cultures, languages and traditions. It is a daily pleasure to see 115 people from all over the world living close together and making films in collaboration – without conflict.

Of utmost importance for future filmmakers is the ability to adapt and not be rigid in terms of formats or budgets, while holding onto their own voice. Discipline is crucial, as well, the ability to keep yourself going, working continually, regardless of external circumstances and economic conditions."

[europeanfilmcollege.com](http://europeanfilmcollege.com)



## THE FILM WORKSHOP / A FREE HAND

The Danish Film Institute's Film Workshop, founded in 1970 in response to the counter-culture and a desire to democratise the mass media, aims to foster experimental cinema and talent development. The Film Workshop annually supports around 50 productions in all genres, mainly by providing access to professional production equipment, grants to basic production costs, and consulting. The Film Workshop also supports talent development via seminars, workshops and outreach projects. The program is mainly aimed at young people who have the potential for a professional career in film.

**Prami Larsen, Head of workshop:**

*"The Film Workshop places very few limitations on filmmakers, in the belief that experience and awareness take time. It takes time to develop as a filmmaker. It takes time to develop a film project that will survive the meeting with your own ambitions. On the other hand, we show trust in the filmmaker and the crew. The film crew gets access to some of the best equipment on the market."*

Once the Film Workshop's consultants have agreed on the framework of a project, the filmmakers have the time and freedom to reach their goals. They can't make the excuse that someone or something has set certain rules or time restrictions. Having talent is first and foremost a question of how you manage it. The young filmmakers are given responsibility for doing just that. This method produces good results. Some go on to the National Film School, a lot go directly into the business.

It's a dynamic support system that provokes, and is provoked by, new filmmakers. And so it's constantly changing. The Film Workshop should not look like the National Film School or any other talent-development option. There are many paths to cinema.

[dfi.dk/filmworkshop](http://dfi.dk/filmworkshop)

## EUROPEAN TALENT MEETINGS

**Inspiring dialogue and new creative networks are on the agenda when emerging filmmakers from across the continent are invited to meet in Denmark in spring 2012**

Denmark's two leading festivals, CPH PIX and CPH:DOX, are hosting talent meetings in spring 2012 in collaboration with the Danish Film Institute.

The Copenhagen film festival CPH PIX, running 12-29 April, is inviting European film talents to meetings with their Danish colleagues and other industry professionals. The purpose is to nurture dialogue and to strengthen the European film networks.

The talent meetings organised by CPH:DOX, which will also take place in Denmark, focus on new creative forms of collaboration. In a special edition of the festival's cross-cultural workshop DOX:LAB, six European directors will meet and, in pairs, develop a film project, starting off with a workshop during spring 2012.

# LET'S TALK CINEMATIC SUSTAINABILITY

Henrik Bo Nielsen  
CEO  
Danish Film Institute

We live in a time of great challenges, as political, economic and climate problems mount. There is good reason, therefore, to ask whether culture and the arts can help us find a way out of the crisis. Will the global crisis in all its ramifications, which are also being felt in the European film industry, force us into new ways of developing, producing and distributing moving pictures? Will we learn to tell stories in new ways? And if so, who will teach us?

The brilliant Danish architect Bjarke Ingels springs to mind as an obvious source of inspiration. When he and his team work on projects like apartment buildings, the Denmark Pavilion at the World Expo in Shanghai or the new garbage incineration plant in outer Copenhagen that will double as a ski slope, they do so under the banner of "hedonistic sustainability!"

Sustainability not motivated by fear, anxiety or guilt but by a belief that sustainable cities and buildings actually raise our quality of life. It should be a matter of desire and opportunity. It should be about having fun. As this successful Danish architect sees it, limitations and problems just add incentive to his studio's creative processes.

If architects can pick up the gauntlet and look at the necessary changes and new conditions as a creative challenge, can't we, in the film industry, do so as well? At the very least, we can make sure that the public film policy doesn't get in the way of change.

A public film policy sets a framework for the unfolding of film culture. The new Danish Film Accord, in effect until the end of 2014, has widened the scope. The many players in the industry now have better opportunities and new spaces for developing, innovating, experimenting and for cultivating new talent. Only, the wider scope and the new spaces should be put to use, or they will go to waste.

In times of crisis it can be tempting to play it safe, do what you always do, settle for the tried and true. But do we honestly think that strategy will work in the long term? No, of course not.

We need boldness, a willingness to take risks and radical experimentation. On all levels. We must never let caution and fear dictate film and cultural policy. We should confront the vast challenges of our time with the belief that the European film industry, with all its creative forces, can create a film culture that is sustained by joy, desire, engagement or indignation. At the core of it all are sustainable visual stories that challenge, enrich and endure. Stories that reflect human dilemmas and the times we live in, while showing us the way forward.

Out of the changes imposed upon us by the times we are in, by economic circumstances and changing technologies, new gains can be achieved and the film industry's own proposals for hedonistic sustainability can be explored. Certainly, it can only be more fun than fear and trepidation.

**"WE SHOULD CONFRONT THE VAST CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME WITH THE BELIEF THAT THE EUROPEAN FILM INDUSTRY, WITH ALL ITS CREATIVE FORCES, CAN CREATE A FILM CULTURE THAT IS SUSTAINED BY JOY, DESIRE, ENGAGEMENT OR INDIGNATION"**



## DANISH FILM INITIATIVES DURING THE EU PRESIDENCY

The Danish Film Institute launches four major initiatives during spring 2012 in collaboration with various partners.

### Twenty highlights on Blu-ray

A selection of twenty Danish films are made available on a special Blu-ray edition giving embassies, cultural institutes and local partners the opportunity to show Danish films.

The films are as follows:

#### FEATURE FILMS – A SELECTION

ANTICHRIST / Lars von Trier  
A FAMILY / Pernille Fischer Christensen  
SUBMARINO / Thomas Vinterberg  
VALHALLA RISING / Nicolas Winding Refn  
IN A BETTER WORLD / Susanne Bier

#### FILMS FOR CHILDREN – A SELECTION

WE SHALL OVERCOME / Niels Arden Oplev  
THE SUBSTITUTE / Ole Bornedal  
FIGHTER / Natasha Arthy  
KARLA AND JONAS / Charlotte Sachs Bostrup  
THE GREAT BEAR / Esben Toft Jacobsen

#### DOCUMENTARIES – A SELECTION

INTO ETERNITY / Michael Madsen  
OUT OF LOVE / Birgitte Stærmosé  
ARMADILLO / Janus Metz  
THE GOOD LIFE / Eva Mulvad  
THE PRESIDENT / Christoffer Guldbrandsen

#### DANISH CLASSICS – A SELECTION

HUNGER / Henning Carlsen  
A SUNDAY IN HELL / Jørgen Leth  
BABETTE'S FEAST / Gabriel Axel  
WALTZING REGITZE / Kaspar Rostrup  
EUROPA / Lars von Trier

### Danish films at European festivals

Special film series, seminars and director meetings are some of the numerous festival activities to be presented in 2012 to bring Europeans closer to Danish films and their creators.

### FILM-Y in Brussels

Belgian school children are invited to make their own film when FILM-Y, the Danish Film Institute's mobile film studio, lands in the Bozar art centre in Brussels in February 2012.

### European talent meetings

Denmark's two leading festivals, CPH PIX and CPH:DOX, are hosting talent meetings in spring 2012 in collaboration with the Danish Film Institute. The purpose is to nurture dialogue and new creative networks.

### See more

Eu2012.dk  
dfi.dk/eu2012

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