

BURMA VJ

Life is at stake for the Burmese video journalists aiming their hidden lenses at compromising scenes during the rebellion of monks against Burma's military power in 2007.

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LOVE ON DELIVERY

In a windblown corner of Denmark 575 Thai Women live with their Danish husbands. How and why Thai women marry Danish men is the focus in *Love on Delivery* and *Ticket to Paradise*.

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STRONG DEBUT

The star voice of the Royal Chapel Choir Jorgis is a gifted soprano. His vocal coach delivers a shocking note: Jorgis' voice is about to break. Andreas Koefoed's *12 Tones Down*.

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FILM

#64

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JORIS IVENS **BURMA VJ**
SILVER WOLF **LOVE ON DELIVERY**
MOVIES THAT MATTER **BURMA VJ**
STUDENT COMPETITION **12 TONES DOWN**
KIDS & DOCS **12 TONES DOWN, LITTLE MISS GROWN-UP**
REFLECTING IMAGES: **PANORAMA TICKET TO PARADISE, A DAY IN THE SMOKE**

THE FILM

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Burma VJ - Reporting from a Closed Country. Framgrab



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Ticket to Paradise. Photo: "Skree" Lars Skree



12 Tones Down. Photo: Mads Emil Hilmer



A Day in the Smoke. Photo: Mads Emil Hilmer



Little Miss Grown-Up. Photo: Viktoria Blomberg



Burma VJ. Framgrab

Following a string of successful documentaries, Anders Høgsbro Østergaard plunged into deep water with a film about video activism in Burma. Initially conceived as a small story about personal engagement and courage, the project switched gear after the rebellion of Burmese monks in 2007, expanding into a human drama with a strong vein of high-risk journalism. The title of the film is *Burma VJ – Reporting from a Closed Country*.

BY LARS MOVIN

In late August, Anders Høgsbro Østergaard presented his still unfinished project *Burma VJ* at the annual convergence of Danish documentary

filmmakers at the European Film College in Ebeltoft. Plainly, he was a bit chagrined that real-life events had interfered with his film in ways that hindered him from treating his material as freely and creatively as he had planned.

Østergaard originally set out to make a small half-hour portrait of a young Burmese video reporter, a member of an underground network of activists who frequently risk their lives to document the oppressive conditions in the country.

Then, in 2007, chaotic events involving a rebellion of Buddhist monks against Burma's military junta not only threw the local video reporters into the assignment of a lifetime, it also forced the Danish filmmaker to retool his project.

VOLATILE MATERIAL

"To begin with, I was mainly interested in my

central character as a documentarian," Østergaard says. "He and his friends have to film with their cameras concealed in bags, which obviously is a major restriction on what they are able to document. My interest, then, was more about why they were even doing what they were doing. Why do they expose themselves to such risk? What are their thoughts about it and how are they affected by what they do? I was fascinated by my protagonist's almost instinctive need to document the world, which apparently came before any considerations about what political goals they might serve. My film was a small, intimate, psychological affair. Then came the rebellion."

As real life upended his plans, Østergaard quickly saw that the dramatic turn of events in Burma was putting much more volatile material in his hands, giving the film a whole other potential

“I was fascinated by my protagonist’s almost instinctive need to document the world, which apparently came before any considerations about what political goals they might serve.”

as an epic tale of high-political drama. At the same time, the material presented an obligation. As the only filmmakers in the world, Østergaard and his team now, had an opportunity to tell the story of the rebelling monks from a bird’s eye perspective. While everyone else had only pieces of the story, Østergaard and his crew suddenly had at their disposal an impressive volume of footage that allowed them to more or less reconstruct the whole sequence of events. Once a creative documentarian, Østergaard was now a chronicler of world history.

A BROAD INVENTORY OF IDEAS

Anders Østergaard (b. 1965) made a big impression on Danish cinemagoers in 2006 with *Gasolin’*, a documentary about a singularly popular Danish rock band from the 1970s. Though *Gasolin’*, fronted by charismatic singer Kim Larsen, never gained a following outside Scandinavia, in Denmark they enjoyed years of Beatles-like stardom. Following its 1978 break-up, the group became part of the Danish cultural heritage. The *Gasolin’* film drew 223,000 Danes to cinemas, an exceptionally high number, not just for a documentary but by any standard.

A narrative move he employed in *Gasolin’* has become almost emblematic of Østergaard’s approach to the documentary format. The film is carried by a wealth of archival footage and held together by a series of new interviews, but Østergaard then went a step further, constructing a number of scenes with stand-ins for the four musicians inhabiting the streets of Copenhagen of shadows or ghostlike figures. The method serves

both to illustrate story elements not covered by archival footage and to filmically represent how the band, even though it broke up 30 years ago, remains a vibrant presence to this day. The music lives on.

Mixing documentary footage with staged shots has been a hallmark of Østergaard’s films almost from the beginning. A rare exception was *Gensyn med Johannesburg* (1996). In this relatively conventional documentary, Østergaard follows the Danish filmmaker Henning Carlsen on a trip to South Africa to revisit some of the people who appeared in Carlsen’s *Dilemma*, a pioneering 1961 docudrama based on a novel by Nadine Gordimer and shot without the consent of the South African authorities.

In his next film, *Troldkarlen* (1999), about the Swedish jazzman Jan Johansson who died on an icy road in 1968 at the age of just 37, Østergaard truly came into his own as a documentary filmmaker wielding a remarkably wide repertoire of filmic ideas, including the use of staged shots. Notoriously, he recreated Johansson’s fatal car accident with a stand-in behind the wheel.

This tendency was accentuated in *Tintin et moi* (2003), a film about Hergé, the creator of Tintin, that became Østergaard’s international breakthrough. Adding 3D effects to Hergé’s cartoons let the camera explore an otherwise two-dimensional universe, while a special animation technique brought the deceased cartoonist back to life. Hergé, whose real name was Georges Rémi, was almost as famous for being tight-lipped about his thought and feelings as for his comic adventures about the intrepid reporter Tintin. Accordingly, it caused widespread surprise in

1971 when an interview by a French student, Numa Sadoul, spontaneously evolved into a four-day talk. Without warning, the cartoonist had opened the floodgates, casting his 23-year-old listener in the role of psychoanalyst and commiserator. Østergaard wanted the audiotapes of this legendary interview to be the core of his film and, after long deliberation, the trustees of Hergé’s estate finally released them. But the Danish filmmaker wasn’t content simply to include Hergé’s voice on the soundtrack. Using so-called sketch-line animation, he resurrected his subject as a speaking cartoon character, breathing life into material that, in the hands of a less inventive filmmaker, could easily have become just another dusty archival montage with talking heads.

THE DEMOCRATIC VOICE OF BURMA

Making a documentary about conditions in Burma, a country infamous for cracking down hard on any sign of insurrection or civil disobedience, not to mention any form of journalistic activity, was clearly an altogether more daunting challenge than bringing a documentary about a cartoonist vibrantly to life in moving pictures.

Like North Korea, Burma – or Myanmar, as the country is officially known – has nearly hermetically been sealed to the outside world for years. As in most dictatorships, the powers that be, firmly control all media. As a result, most Burmese live in relative ignorance about what goes on outside their local area and, conversely, very little information leaks out to the international community.

Even so, Burma has a tiny network of independent video reporters operating under extremely difficult circumstances to gather all the concealed-camera footage as they can to document their brutal and impoverished reality. These activities are coordinated by the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), an Oslo-based organisation that edits the clandestine footage into news stories, which are then broadcast back into Burma and fed

to the international media. Detailed knowledge about the DVB’s activities came to us through the courtesy of Jan Krogsgaard, a Danish video artist who has travelled widely in the region and assembled an extensive network of contacts.

For obvious reasons, Østergaard couldn’t disclose the identity of his film’s protagonist, a 27-year-old video reporter known as “Joshua,” or name any of the other activists supplying this rich material. Accordingly, the film revolves around a person whose face we never see. The filmmaker answered that challenge in part by concluding that, even though we can’t see the protagonist, we can still see with him.

“It’s always exciting to crawl into another person’s head and experience the world through his eyes,” Østergaard says. “Once we’d figured out how we were going to experience Burma through Joshua’s eyes, we started debating how to connect all his footage and how to depict the circumstances he was working under. To be sure, Joshua’s has authentic footage documenting things, but often what happens just before or just after his shots is just as exciting. From this emerged the idea of *the camera that’s never turned off*, that keeps on rolling even when it’s hidden in a bag when the cameraman runs into a policeman, say, and slings the blarney to save his hide.”

NO SCOOPS

Nonetheless, Østergaard didn’t actually ask his protagonist to leave his camera on. Instead, as in his past films, he decided to recreate the situations around the authentic shots, including telephone

conversations and other elements in the film, in close collaboration with the people involved. It seemed obvious, then, for the filmmakers at the documentary meeting in Ebeltoft to ask for his thoughts about the concept of authenticity.

“Veracity is important,” Østergaard told the crowd. “We have to provide a truthful representation. If we summarise a sequence of events or switch around shots, it has to be true to how the energies were moving around. Hence, how you experience a documentary depends on whether you decide to trust the filmmaker’s truthfulness about the material, as he experiences it.”

The discussion then zoomed in on the boundary between reconstruction and fakery:

“Put briefly, my thoughts about what to recreate and what not to recreate rest on one simple premise: not to do scoops. I can’t do anything that would outshine the authentic material. I can’t do anything that, if authentic, would make it around the world. However, I can film the internal lines, the little stories that, although they aren’t scoops, are important pieces to make my story work. In short, I recreate the internal lines, while the external lines are authentic,” Østergaard says. “Right around there is where I draw the line.” ■

For further information on Burma VJ, see reverse section.

Østergaard on the boundary between reconstruction and fakery: “My thoughts about what to recreate and what not to recreate rest on one simple premise: not to do scoops. I can’t do anything that would outshine the authentic material.”



Director Anders Høgsbro Østergaard. Photo: Jan Buus

ANDERS HØGSBRO ØSTERGAARD

Born 1965. Graduated from the Danish School of Journalism in 1991. Copywriter at an advertising agency and as a researcher on documentary programmes. Awarded Best Documentary at Odense International Film Festival in 1999 for *The Magus*. Writer-director on the international coproduction *Tintin et moi* (2003), and the documentary about one of Denmark’s most popular rock bands *Gasolin’* (2006), which had a successful run at the domestic box office with 223,000 admissions. 2008: *Burma VJ* (2008): selected for Joris Ivens Competition and Movies That Matter, IDFA, Amsterdam. *Så kort og mærkeligt livet er*, about the Danish poet Dan Turéll, was selected for the opening gala at CPH:DOX.

MAGIC HOUR FILMS

Magic Hour was set up in 1984 by producer Lise Lense-Møller, the company has produced a wealth of documentaries: *On the Way to Paradise* (Suvii Helminen): Best Documentary Award at Odense, 2007; *My Eyes!* (Erlend E. Mo) Silver Cub Award, IDFA, 2006, Best Short Film in Sao Paulo, 2007, Odense, 2006, and CPH:DOX, 2006. Cinematic Vision Short Award, Silver Docs 2007, USA. Special Mention in Greece, 2007. Grand Prix 2007 in Belarus; Jury Special Award at Hyderabad, 2007; *Can You Die in Heaven?* (Erlend E. Mo): Best Film Award, Juvenile Jury, Odense, 2005. Best Children’s Doc, Best Sound, GoldDok 2005; *In a Soldiers Footsteps* (Mette Zeruneith): IDFA and CPH:DOX, and Toronto. GoldDok 2005 and FIPA 2006. *With a Right to Kill* (Morten Henriksen, Peter Øvig Knudsen): Danish Academy Award 2004. For more titles please refer to www.magichourfilms.dk



Burma VJ. Framegrab



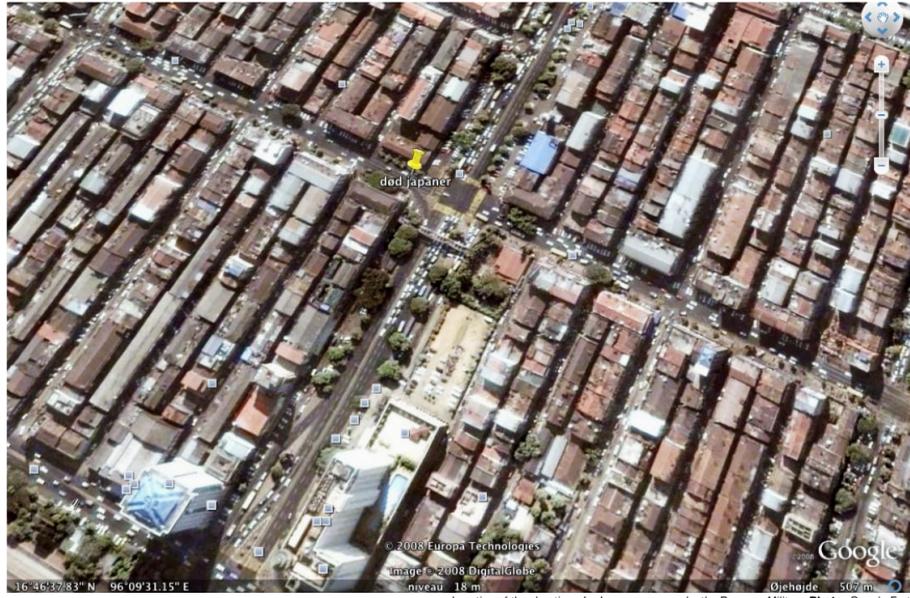
Burma VJ. Framegrab



Burma VJ. Framegrab



Burma VJ. Framegrab



Location of the shooting of a Japanese person by the Burmese Military. Photo: Google Earth



Photo: Katinka Schyberg

JANUS BILLESKOV JANSEN / EDITOR

Born 1951. A director and editor, Billeskov Jansen first started working in the Danish film industry in 1970. He has edited a large number of internationally acknowledged feature films and documentaries and directed numerous Danish documentaries. Since 1979, he has taught editing and narratology at the National Film School of Denmark. Billeskov Jansen has worked with influential Danish directors, most significantly a lifelong creative collaboration with the Palme d'Or and Academy Award-winning director Bille August. Billeskov Jansen is the editor of *Family*, a documentary that won the Joris Ivens Award in 2001. He is also recipient of Danish Film Academy Awards in 1984, 1988 and 1995, and an Honorary Bodil Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005.

THANK YOU, GOOGLE EARTH

Janus Billeskov Jansen has done a bit of everything in his long career as a film editor. Even so, *Burma VJ – Reporting from a Closed Country* was a challenge out of the ordinary, not least owing to the jumble of footage shot by anonymous video reporters in isolated Burma.

BY LARS MOVIN

Nearly two years ago, when Janus Billeskov Jansen was hired to edit Anders Høgsbro Østergaard's *Burma VJ – Reporting from a Closed Country*, the project was supposed to be a short film, of perhaps half an hour, about a video reporter in Burma. A small psychological portrait, with the director trying to understand the forces that propel someone to risk his life to get a few, relatively limited stories in the can. Then the protests of Burmese monks in autumn 2007 changed the reality of Burma and, in turn, completely transformed Østergaard's film.

"The whole thing was more or less over in a week," Billeskov Jansen says. "When we started working on the film again, in January 2008, the historical sequence of events was already in place. However, footage was flooding in now, both from Thailand and Oslo, where the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) is headquartered. Our task subsequently consisted in identifying all the new footage, dating it and sorting out what really happened – what was action and what was reaction, what it meant when the monks took to the streets and how they related to the civilian population and the military, respectively. All those things."

For a start, the filmmakers faced the problem that the tapes they received in Denmark had been recorded over in Burma or Thailand, so there

was no guarantee that the footage was in actual chronological order. Also, they didn't know how many photographers had been present at the different events. Finally, it seemed almost impossible to pin down what shots had been made on what days. Then help arrived from an unexpected place:

"We discovered that we could log on to Google Earth and locate Rangoon, zoom in as far as we could go and still maintain relatively good resolution," Billeskov Jansen says, "much higher quality images than you get if you look at Copenhagen, for instance. At first, I wondered about that, but then I tried looking at other areas where you would expect the West to have military interests and the images of those places generally looked better, too. That way, we were able to identify the locations of buildings and streets we recognised from the videotapes. After a few weeks' work, we had mapped out the events that happened over the seven days of the protests down to the smallest detail, and also identified where and when the various shots were made."

"We were able to identify ... buildings and streets ... down to the smallest detail, and also identified where and when the various shots were made."

What was the biggest challenge in this project for you as an editor?

"Several things. Apart from the problems of identifying the footage, it made our work extra difficult that the reporters in Burma didn't have a lot of tapes. So when things came to a head and got

increasingly confrontational, they had to record on top of the shots they already had from the earlier, more peaceful phase, where all you saw was monks marching in the streets," Billeskov Jansen says.

"Then, it was a challenge to edit footage in which a language is spoken that you don't understand. We actually had to fly someone down from DVB in Oslo, because it was impossible to track down an interpreter in Denmark," Billeskov Jansen says. "Furthermore, we sent some of the material as MP3 files to Thailand to have it translated there. Another problem was that we needed very exact translations, since the film would be shown with subtitles almost everywhere in the world. More than a literal 1:1 translation of the words, we needed translators with a profound understanding of the culture. So, part of the film's editing rhythm was dictated by the simple need to give people time to read the subtitles."

How did you, as an editor, experience the task of fusing authentic footage and re-enactments into a meaningful whole?

"It's a very delicate balance, obviously," Billeskov Jansen says. "If the re-enactments don't work, and the film loses credibility even at a single point, you risk the whole house of cards collapsing. Fortunately for us, the majority of people who will be watching this film do not approve of what is going on in Burma. Nonetheless, even though we had to manipulate the material – and making a film you always do – it's important that we did so based on such in-depth knowledge of the material that we didn't make any untrue statements. All along, we were vigilant about sticking to the truth." ■

For further information on Burma VJ, see reverse section.

FILM ME! FILM ME!



Burma VJ. Framegrab

The network of independent video reporters operating in Burma today, coordinated by, among others, the Democratic Voice of Burma, is far from unique. The phenomenon of video activism has been around almost as long as portable video equipment itself.

BY LARS MOVIN

It wasn't long after Sony launched its so-called PortaPak, the first portable video recording device for the consumer market, in 1965, before a whole new type of media activists sprang up in the US. The actions of political groups, including

the Videofreex, Video Free America, Paper Tiger Television, Global Village, Top Value Television and, prominently, the Raindance Corporation, helped create alternatives to the commercial media companies that had been enjoying monopoly-like status. The phenomenon of guerrilla television triggered an out-and-out media revolution. As video



Burma VJ. Framegrab



Burma VJ. Framegrab



Burma VJ. Framegrab



Burma VJ. Framegrab

camcorders kept getting cheaper and better over the years, alternative footage also began to penetrate to the established media.

One of many small breakthroughs in that direction came in 1988, when the video artist Paul Garrin used his Hi8 camera to document police officers with covered badge numbers harassing and beating homeless people living in New York's Tompkins Square Park, right outside Garrin's windows. The harassment, it turned out, was a step in a larger plan to stimulate real-estate prices in the hip East Village neighbourhood. Circulating on network news shows, Garrin's footage not only shined a light on the background for the events but also contributed to charges being brought against the officers involved.

While Garrin's effort mainly caused a stir in the US, a similar event a few years later, in spring 1991, drew the world's attention. George Holliday was a plumber who by coincidence aimed his camcorder on a group of Los Angeles police officers beating up an African American man, Rodney King. Holliday submitted his tape to the local TV station, KTLA, and within days no one would ever again doubt that documentary video recordings originating outside the media circuit could change the world.

THE DOVE FROM CHECHNYA

Naturally, video activism has also played a part outside the US. In the years around the break-up of the Soviet Union, countless video reporters were thorns in the eye of the crumbling empire, as they brought the totalitarian state's secrets to light and documented dramatic events in the transitional phase

The phenomenon of guerrilla television triggered an out-and-out media revolution. As video camcorders kept getting cheaper and better over the years, alternative footage also began to penetrate to the established media.

following the fall of the Berlin Wall in autumn 1989.

This would be a good time to mention Juris Podnieks, a Latvian filmmaker who time and again risked his life to document the revolts leading to Latvia's independence in 1991. The project culminated in tragedy when two cameramen were killed during the occupation of the TV station in Riga, an event described in the film *End of Empire* (1991). "Film me, film me!" Andris Slapins called out to a colleague, as he collapsed - demonstrating even, in this ultimate moment, his commitment to documenting for posterity the Soviet oppression of his people.

Other cases abound. Notable among them is the secret group of Chechen women who for years have struggled at considerable risk to video-document the high toll that Russia's "dirty war" is taking on Chechen civilians. Heading the initiative is Zainap Gashaeva, known as Coca ("The Dove"). Born in exile, in Kazakhstan, this self-employed woman and mother of four continually gathers video footage, which is then smuggled to the West, to raise the international community's awareness of the situation in Chechnya. Moreover, she hopes, the tapes will be useful in a possible legal aftermath.

NO EFFECT WITHOUT DISTRIBUTION

Since the mid-1990s, Gashaeva has been working with a human rights organisation, Echo of War. This is a typical pattern in recent video activism. The early pioneers often faced the problem that their footage, no matter how sensational, had limited effect unless they got access to distribution channels. Consequently, the years around 2000 saw the emergence of a number of international organisations that are primarily dedicated to organising and coordinating the activities of the usually independent video reporters, and making sure their footage is processed and distributed.

One high-profile organisation is Witness (www.witness.org), which hands out camcorders to grassroots organisations around the world in order to prevent or document human rights abuses. Based in New York, Witness was established in 1992 by initiative of the Reebok Human Rights Foundation, in partnership with the musician and activist Peter Gabriel, largely as an effect of the Rodney King episode in Los Angeles the year before. In this respect as well, George Holliday's documentation of police brutality made an impact far into the future. ■



Love on Delivery. Photo: Henrik Bohn Ipsen

ARRANGED MARRIAGES THAIS & DANES

The films take us to a windblown corner of North Jutland, where 575 Thai women live with their Danish husbands. Fifteen years ago there was only Sommai, a former sex worker from Pattaya. Opening with *Sommai*, the two films describe a network of strong, resolute Thai women who, through their marriages in Denmark, provide for themselves and an entire village in Thailand. Underlying Janus Metz' documentaries, *Love on Delivery* and *Ticket to Paradise*, is a focus on globalisation, poverty, prostitution and the universal need for security and love. Allan Berg Nielsen's reflects on these two works, selected for IDFA.

BY ALLAN BERG NIELSEN

The location is introduced in beautiful photography by cinematographers Lars Skree and Henrik Bohn Ipsen. There is authority to these shots. A Jutlandic landscape that's much, much more than a windswept corner of the country. A region and a people with a singular way of life, great dignity and their integrity intact. The photography conforms to my vision of the place that was shaped sometime back in the Romantic Age. *Sommai* is introduced with similar beauty and sureness. At first, it's all about her. Once a stranger to these parts, she is now so integrated as anyone can be who looks different and comes from the other side of the globe. Then the story begins. All is well and good. I feel in good hands, from the beginning of the first documentary, *Love on Delivery*. I know I'll stick with it. I sense that right away, because there's a real story here, a love story that continues and concludes in part two, *Ticket to Paradise*.



Love on Delivery. Photo: Henrik Bohn Ipsen



Ticket to Paradise. Photo: Lars Skree

Throughout this dual film project, Metz collaborated with an ethnographer, Sine Plambech, and it's interesting to note the degree to which scientific and cinematic methods and understanding merge.

LOVE ON DELIVERY

Sommaï has been asked to arrange a marriage. She has done so before, found women in her home village and partnered them with men in Denmark. These women stick together, and we get to know two of them. As usual, Sommaï has three months to get the job done, the duration of a tourist visa. The person we now turn our attention to, her sister's daughter, arrives and is uneasily plunged right into things: classified ad, replies, choosing, meeting the man. Kjeld is his name, a nice, shy guy. Her helpers leave. Despondent, she stands in the doorway of the man's house, the first truly gripping scene. What will become of her, this young woman, Kae?

This is a TV documentary, sure, but it looks nothing like reporting. It's an elementary tale, and I want to know how it continues and ends, for now. Happily? (Meanwhile, there is a certain amount of required material to go through. The story appears to be set inside a social anthropological study.)

The film is a study of a unique, friendly community in a sweeping landscape. Another man found his girlfriend in the same

way. As he soberly recounts, it "wasn't love, but I thought she was... nice!" That's one way to put it in our language, a colloquial Danish that the documentary also describes in a special linguistic sub-plot. The region's dialect is intact and the Thai women speak it in their own distinct way, underscoring their peculiarity.

Toward the end of the first film, I realise that, formally, this is an ethnographic project, a case study of carefully arranged marriages. But inside this piece of scientific fieldwork, Marion Tuor, the editor, delicately teases out a story that grows in intensity as the couple's feelings change. It simply keeps getting more beautiful. And of course, I'm riveted, the documentary's title nudging my mind, "The Story of How Kae Met Kjeld".

TICKET TO PARADISE

A temporary climax to the story occurs at the opening of the second film, *Ticket to Paradise*. The segment is handled with such filmic resolve that it surely has to rank among the many splendid weddings in film history, and among the oddest. It's certainly lovely, in its stylised detachment and precise truncation. Here, editor Marion Tuor, seamlessly fuses the two films' parallel ambitions, the social anthropologist's and the filmmaker's, rational explanation and sentimental movement. Throughout this dual film project, director Janus Metz collaborated with an ethnographer, Sine Plambech, and it's interesting to note the degree to which scientific and cinematic methods and understanding merge.

The wedding is followed by separation. Kae's visa has expired and she has to leave the country. I sense that things will not turn out well. Kjeld reveals as much, by a verbal conjugation, in an elegant flash-forward, describing the first few days after the wedding as the richest of his life. So, I think, things are bound to go wrong soon. The scenes linger, carrying the narrative bulk, often without dialogue. The overall tone is subdued, as are the internal monologues.

Then everyone, with his or her own serious task, seeks out Kae in the women's remote village, and the scientific project takes over. We arrive in Thailand, and in the village. Now doing fieldwork, we sit in on a series of arranged and directed interactions that, subject by subject, uncover the village's economic and moral situation. Now, I'll do well to forget my romantically shaped outlook and, with it, love. This is all about the facts.

All the while, Skree's cinematographic line continues unbroken, Tour's editing still tells the story in whole scenes and – because the necessary journalism is subordinated to these

moves (with brief reporting excursions: one to the city, to the bars and the culture there, and one of painful negotiations with a child father and ex-husband, a dramatic highlight) – I grow increasingly concerned (what happens to Kae and Kjeld during all these side stores?), subjected as I am to the editing's unrelentingly calm turning, its resting in a scene until a moment before the scene dies, the wistfulness behind rare smiles (what's Kjeld thinking during all this, his honeymoon?).

The two films explain a slew of issues. The carefully rendered scenes are even more revealing and the understatement and hesitant rhythm tell me that the films understand that we won't get to know everything. We can't. What do these women's short sentences and long silences also say? What really goes on behind Kae's wistful gaze? Kjeld is finding out ■

For further information about Love on Delivery and Ticket to Paradise, see reverse section



Ticket to Paradise. Photo: Lars Skree



Love on Delivery. Photo: Henrik Bohn Ipsen

The two films explain a slew of issues. The carefully rendered scenes are even more revealing and the understatement and hesitant rhythm tell me that the films understand that we won't get to know everything.



Janus Metz. Photo: Cosmo Film Doc

JANUS METZ

Born 1974, Denmark. Arts graduate from Roskilde University. Worked as a researcher on documentary film projects. Metz lived in Johannesburg for one year (2002-03), working on a South African drama series, *Soul City*. The stay inspired him to make his debut film, the documentary *Township Boys* (2006). In 2006 he also produced the programme *Clandestine* for the national broadcaster DR, which follows a group of illegal African migrants through Sahara on their way to Europe. 2008: Two films chosen for IDFA Amsterdam: *Love on Delivery* for the Silver Wolf Competition, *Ticket to Paradise* for Reflecting Images/Panorama.

COSMO DOC

Cosmo Doc was established in 2003 in order to create a company dedicated to the development and production of high-end authored documentaries. The company's core staff consists of the three producers Jesper Jack, Anna-Maria Kantarius and Henrik Veileborg and the production manager Monica Hellström covering a wide range of development and production expertise. Cosmo Doc is working with new talent as well as established filmmakers to create a productive mixture of experience and new approaches to documentary filmmaking. Cosmo Doc's filmography consists of several award-winning films including Emmy nominees: *Prostitution behind the Veil* (Nahid Persson, 2004) is an intimate rendering of two women in Iran subjected to male hypocrisy. In *Smiling in a Warzone* (Simone Aaberg Kern, Magnus Bejmar 2005) art meets cinema in the artist-director Simone's micro-global performance flying a small plane to Kabul. Christoffer Gulbrandsen's *The Secret War*, about Danish military involvement in Iraq stands out as one of the companies most controversial films, attracting strong political discussions on its TV release in 2006. Two films chosen for the IDFA Amsterdam 2008: *Love on Delivery* for the Silver Wolf Competition, *Ticket to Paradise* for Reflecting Images/Panorama. Currently Cosmo Doc is working with the film directors Eva Mulvad (*Enemies of Happiness*), Max Kestner (*Max by Chance*) and Andreas Møl Dalsgaard (*Afghan Muscles*) among others.

BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS

In his final year of television at the National Film School of Denmark, Andreas Koefoed has already two films selected for IDFA. *12 Notes Down*, partly biographical, is about a gifted choir boy whose voice is about to break. *A Day in the Smoke* is a film depicting a bar in downtown Cairo, where men of all social classes, young and old, meet and talk about money, politics and women. Although thematically very different, the language of both films appears to have a confident style and thoroughness.

AF FREDERIK DIRKS GOTTLIEB

12 NOTES DOWN — A PERSONAL STORY

12 Notes Down follows Jorgis, a boy who has sung in a boys' choir most of his life. As invariably happens, his voice starts changing and Jorgis has some tough times ahead after he has to leave

the choir. A classic rites of passage story, the film is a portrait of a young man confronting the adult life ahead of him. Director Andreas Koefoed says:

"*12 Notes Down* is a personal yet universal story of losing your identity in the tough transition from childhood to adolescence. It describes what it's like to be forced to leave

behind something you love and move on in your life toward all the things you don't know yet. You lose something, but you gain something else – I find that touching."

Koefoed himself is no stranger to his protagonist's situation. When he was Jorgis' age, he sang in the boys' choir at the same school and went through some of the same experiences.

"The film's story is a lot like my own. As a boy, I was in the same situation Jorgis is in. You live a classic, aesthetic lifestyle and all of a sudden it's over. You go from feted choirboy to being a regular kid who goes out drinking and thinks about girls. Our shared experience with the choir created a bond between Jorgis and myself, and I think being in the film in a way helped him through his difficult phase."

Watching the film, you never doubt that Koefoed's familiarity with his subject allowed him to get into his protagonist's head. Moreover, the director employs various aesthetic effects to underscore the personal angle. For the opening sequence in *12 Notes Down*, he uses a remote-controlled camera that swivels before it finally settles on Jorgis singing.

"I use alternative ways of filming that usually are seen only in fiction films. Take the camera that swivels 360 degrees in the opening sequence. It's a way to tell the scene slowly. And you avoid too much editing, which hopefully lets you feel what he is feeling. It takes incredible timing and you risk losing identification and momentum."

"I put a premium on following a person in motion, for instance by filming over someone's shoulder, so you're included and share the experience with him or her. In *12 Notes Down*, I keep the person in the frame all the time. You see the action reflected in his face, giving you a high level of identification and involvement."

Koefoed singles out this unfolding character depiction as an essential element in making the kind of film he excels at – and likes himself.

"I spend a lot of time with my characters, getting to know their world. I try to depict the journey they are on, the development they are undergoing. I want to experience the world for good and ill and depict life's beautiful and decisive moments as well as I can. If I'm touched by what's happening in front

of me and the camera, there's a good chance that others will, too, when they watch the film."

A DAY IN THE SMOKE — AN EXPERIMENT IN FORM AND EXPRESSION

Koefoed put a lot of thought into the visuals of his latest film, *A Day in the Smoke*. We enter into a local smokers' café in Cairo via an elegant gliding camera, showing the café's male clientele and finally settling on the film's fulcrum, a young poet. In beautiful Arabic, he recites his just finished poem about the café. It's a place where all kinds of people meet and we follow several generations of local regulars discussing everything between heaven and earth. Men of all ages from different social strata come here to smoke hookahs, eagerly filling their lungs with smoke that's like fuel for their sociable conversation.

"In this film, I tried to do portraits that have the character of still photos, examining the men's faces and postures in fixed framings. The men are sitting down, which makes it easy to capture them. The room is covered in murals and I enjoyed composing frames where the men

merge with the background murals and themselves become paintings. I used a dolly to slowly pan across people's faces and introduce the café's dusty, smoky atmosphere. The café has an easy pace, and so the camera is slow, too. This film is more observing than *12 Notes Down* and much less adamant about getting into its characters' heads. It just wants to observe and occasionally listen to what's being said."

Koefoed describes *A Day in the Smoke* as an experiment in form. Usually, he works with just one narrative track, but in this film he experiments with several. The film illustrates a typical day at the local café and you sense that everyone there has strong longings – to leave Cairo or for lost love.

"In Cairo, it was an advantage that people knew that I didn't understand their language. That made them speak more freely. Also, it's fascinating to shoot such a beautiful place and such handsome faces. Shooting abroad is visually stimulating, though it can be hard to be as exact, because you don't have the same understanding of the language or the culture."

"The film's narrative form required

very little interference by the director. Unlike *12 Notes Down*, the film's free, experimental form made the result exciting enough in itself. Only the poet, the narrative meta-observer sitting outside the café, was placed there by the director."

"The poet can be seen as the film's narrator, who uses his observations at the café as grist for his poems: the men's conversations, the smell of tea, the changing light. His poetry creates a framework that ties the film's small stories together. I could

place any scene from the café within that framework and still have it make sense. I actually wanted the shoeshine boy to be the narrator, but he didn't want to do it, because he thought shining shoes was demeaning and because his mother didn't know he was working as a shoeshine. So the poet got the job."

For further information about *12 Notes Down* and *A Day in the Smoke*, see reverse section

ANDREAS KOEFOED

Born 1979, Denmark. Koefoed graduated in sociology from Copenhagen University. Since 2001, he has worked as director and cinematographer on documentary films and music videos. 2008: studying at the National Film School of Denmark and editing for Danish television and Magnum Photos in New York. Two of his works selected for IDFA, Amsterdam: *12 Notes Down* (2008) for Kids & Docs and the Student Competition; and *A Day in the Smoke* (2008) for Reflecting Images: Panorama.



Andreas Koefoed. Photo: Mads Emil Hilmer



12 Notes Down. Photo: Mads Emil Hilmer



A Day in the Smoke. Photo: Mads Emil Hilmer



PORTRAIT OF A CLASS SOCIETY

Little Miss Grown-Up. Photo: Viktoria Blomberg

Among today's most sympathetic spokesperson for young Danes is Anders Gustafsson, a Swedish filmmaker whose documentary, co-written and directed with Patrick Book, *Little Miss Grown-Up*, underscores the observation that not all young people grow up in ideal conditions.

BY SOPHIE ENGBERG SONNE

"Teens are wallowing in luxury" would be a typical tabloid headline describing young people today. Teens demand designer goods and mobile phones and have no idea how tough life can be, the claim goes. But that's not how the world looks to Xenia. A 14-year-old girl living in Ishøj, a Copenhagen satellite suburb, with her mother and three younger siblings, Xenia has all but taken on the role of father in the family (their actual father left years ago). She is so committed to her brothers and sisters that it's becoming detrimental to her schoolwork and her social life. Xenia is the film's protagonist and uncrowned heroine. She is honest and funny and a far cry from the media image of pampered teens. A strong, tough girl who takes on responsibility, Xenia has a lot to struggle with.

Since graduating from the National Film School of Denmark in 1997 Anders Gustafsson has orbited Danish youth - in his documentaries and his highly acclaimed fictional feature *Scratch* (2003), which, along with other

films, such as *Kick'n Rush* (Aage Rais Nordentoft, 2003), *Rule no. 1* (Oliver Ussing, 2003), and *Life Hits* (Christian E. Christiansen, 2006), breathed new life into Danish youth films. "Youth films were a much-maligned genre for years," Gustafsson says. "But then came a series of quality teen films, reminding producers that it is, in fact, possible to make youth films that sell tickets."

SYMPATHETIC PORTRAITS

In 1998, Swedish cinema had opened the playing field for raw portraits of a new generation with Lukas Moodysson's youth film *Show Me Love*. Perhaps Gustafsson's Swedish roots go some way toward explaining why he joined in putting the spotlight back on young people. Like the work of his fellow countryman Moodysson, Gustafsson's films are honest. They don't unnecessarily dress up reality, nor do they overplay the importance of social heritage.

Gustafsson's films simply empathize with their characters, showing the world as young people see it. That's expressed in the extended interview sequences of Xenia and Amanda candidly discussing their thoughts, dreams and concerns. Xenia worries that her mother won't be able to take care of the three young ones, when Xenia leaves for continuation school. It's hard not to be touched by her little-adult concern for her mother, and it's a tremendous relief to witness her behave like any other young person at continuation school, even though that's not an easy thing for her to do.

TV PORTRAIT OF A GENERATION

Little Miss Grown-Up is the first in a series of seven documentaries about young people in Denmark, 2008. The films will be broadcast on Danish TV next spring under the title of *Coming of Age*.

Gustafsson co-directed his contribution with his friend and colleague Patrik Book. "Patrik comes from a whole other end of the film scene, but we take a similar view of society and the world," Gustafsson says. "The project outline said the films should not be afraid to stir debate. We interpreted that as a licence to be critical of society," he says.

"And there is every good reason to be critical of today's society. Though life is good for most Danes, a small segment lives in what's known as 'relative poverty.' We wanted to make a film that looks at that life. Sure, Denmark has a good social safety net - case in point, Xenia is able to go to continuation school - but class differences still exist in Denmark - socially, culturally and economically. We wanted to underscore how we don't all have equal conditions for getting by in society," he says. Even so, the two filmmakers were determined not to do a story of victimisation. "We wanted a strong person to be the film's hero," Gustafsson says ■

For further information about *Little Miss Grown-Up*, see reverse section.

COMING OF AGE - NEW FILM SERIES

Little Miss Grown-Up is the first in a series of seven new, artistic documentaries, jointly titled *Coming of Age (Næsten Voksen)*. The complete series will be screened at IDFA's market. Sales are handled by DR International Sales. The series is conceived as a generational portrait of young Danes today. The films are the initiative of two producers, Mette Heide (Team Productions) and Helle Faber (Bastard Film), in partnership with the Danish Film Institute and TV 2/Danmark. The *Coming of Age* film series will be shown on prime time TV 2/Danmark in spring 2009. *Let's Be Together*, another film in the series, is the subject of the article on the following page.

ANDERS GUSTAFSSON

Born 1967, Sweden. Graduated from the National Film School of Denmark, 1997. Gustafsson's graduation film, *Svensk Roulette*, won the Nordic Short Film Award at Nordisk Panorama, and was nominated for a Student Film Oscar in 1998. His documentary film *Soccer Boy* (2001) won Best Documentary Odense, and was selected for Kids & Docs at IDFA, Amsterdam. The lead in Gustafsson's feature film debut, *Scratch* (2003), Stephanie Leøn, received Best Actress Award at Copenhagen and Rimouski festivals. *Scratch* was also selected for the Berlin Film Festival. He made his second feature in Sweden: *Percy, Buffalo Bill og mig* (2005). 2008: *Little Miss Grown-Up*, selected for IDFA Amsterdam, shared with Gustafsson's other film *Amanda's 2 Verdener* Best Documentary at Copenhagen's Buster festival.

PATRIK BOOK

Born 1968, Sweden. Autodidact. Has worked in the field of film direction between 1992 and 2005. Appointed by SBS TV A/S as producer in 2005-2006. Composer of music since 1983

TEAM PRODUCTIONS & BASTARD FILM

For information on Team Productions refer to page 17; for Bastard Film refer to page 15.



Anders Gustafsson. Photo: Stig Staig



Patrik Book. Photo: Viktoria Blomberg

DARING TO STICK OUT

Nanna Frank Møller's *Let's Be Together* is an identity story about a boy grappling for a foothold between genders and nationalities.

BY SOPHIE ENGBERG SONNE

Hairon lives in an ordinary Danish subdivision in an ordinary provincial town. But there's nothing ordinary about Hairon. We see that from the opening shot. Tough and vulnerable at once, the Danish-Brazilian boy stands before the bathroom mirror, draining a can of hairspray into his styled hairdo. His lips are bright with pink lip-gloss and he waves his long arms with feminine grace.

Hairon isn't ordinary, that much is clear to himself and his surroundings. Never more so than the day his stepfather takes him fishing. Looking like a pretty odd bird, in his waders and fishing gear, Hairon pesters his dad for a pair of Dior sunglasses

"Above all, the film is about being a teenager, facing resistance - and about the need to feel loved."

costing more than 250 euros. His dad smiles and says, "There are times when I feel like you aren't living in the real world."

Hairon's story has become a film, *Let's Be Together*. It all began when the Bastard Film production company asked Nanna Frank Møller to do a portrait of this Danish-Brazilian boy with a penchant for women's clothing, and the director was soon fascinated by the unusual kid who dared to stick out. "Portraying someone this young, it's important to find out why he wants to be in the film. He told me that he wanted people to know what it feels like to be him. Acknowledging the feelings inside of him takes courage,

and I respected him for that," Frank Møller says.

Deciding to build the film around a meeting of father and son, the director followed Hairon when he left for Brazil to be reunited with his biological father after a separation of nearly four years. "I had to find a filmic frame, and I was looking for a universal story that everybody could mirror themselves in," Frank Møller says. "Hairon hadn't seen his biological father since he was 11 years old, and I imagined there'd be a compelling story in their meeting."

And right she was. In a low-key, discreet fashion the film tracks Hairon's journey from his everyday life in Denmark to Vitória, Brazil, where his father is somewhat taken aback by his son, who no longer wants to be a boy and is exploring an ambiguous territory in between genders. As it turns out, his father, too, has a history of gender issues. After a dramatic argument between father and son, his



Let's Be Together. Photo: Helle Moos

NANNA FRANK MØLLER

Born 1972, Denmark. Graduate from the National Film School of Denmark, 1999. Has edited several films, mostly documentaries, among them *The Land of Human Beings - My Film about Greenland* (2006). Her directorial debut *Someone Like You* (2007) won the Grand Prix for Best Danish Film at Odense. *Let's Be Together* (2008): selected for Dox Awards competition at CPH:DOX. Her next project is one of the four films in *Cities on Speed* (see page 32).



Nanna Frank Møller. Photo: Rikke Sofie Møller

BASTARD FILM

Founded 2000. Co-owned by producer Helle Faber and Søren Steen Jespersen (CEO), Thomas Stokholm Vorf (producer) and Miki Mistrati (journalist). The company produces investigative TV and feature-length documentaries for the Danish and international market. International titles include: *The Red Gold* (Signe Mølgaard, 2004); *Enemies of Happiness* (Eva Mulvad, 2006), winner of IDFA's Silver Wolf Award; *The World in Denmark* (Max Kestner, 2007); *Two Men - 12 Drawings* (Vibeke Heide-Jørgensen, 2007); 69 (Nikolaj Viborg, 2008); *Let's Be Together* (Nanna Frank Møller, 2008), selected for competition CPH:DOX; and *Little Miss Grown-Up* (Anders Gustafsson & Patrik Book, 2008), selected for IDFA Kids & Docs. Films in progress: *Blekingegadebanden* and *Shanghai Space*.

TEAM PRODUCTIONS

Team Productions and Bastard Film co-produced *Coming of Age*, a series of seven films, of which *Let's Be Together* is part. For information on Team Productions refer to page 17.

THE CRIME OF CRIMES



Saving Saddam. Framegrab

In *Saving Saddam*, Bill Wiley, a Canadian lawyer, wants to abolish the death penalty. The film is produced by Mette Heide and Michael Christoffersen for Team Productions, the company that produced *Milosevic on Trial*, about The Hague Tribunal.

BY ALLAN BERG NIELSEN

There it inevitably ended, on the podium, with the steps leading up to it. Did anyone count the steps? The black-hooded executioner ties a black kerchief around Saddam's neck, next the noose, which looks just so. The mobile phone video shows all, and it's not pretty. It's every bit as horrifying as the ghastly video of the trial against Elena and Nicolae Ceausescu with its unshakable image of the two of them wearing their overcoats in the chilly schoolroom where a military court was hastily convened.

The protagonist of *Saving Saddam*, Bill Wiley, a Canadian lawyer, wants to prevent the same thing from happening again. He wants a fair trial according to internationally recognised rules. He wants the killing to stop. As an initial step, he wants to abolish the death penalty. Esteban Uyarra and Michael Christoffersen's film looks at this lost opportunity.

The film opens by saying what we already know, that he failed. The phone rings. Picking it up, he says he's been in Baghdad for 19 months, trying to save Saddam Hussein. When the film opens, we know that the project it describes won't succeed. The film then closes with the same scene of the phone call.

In the meantime, Wiley's experiences over those 19 months have made us much the wiser. They trace the film's storyline – ambition, hope, hard work, resistance, persuasion, stubbornness, a victory of sorts just before the final defeat and disappointment. Saddam may hang, but in a way he still wins. Deboarding a plane in Canada, Wiley exclaims, "I'm alive!" But of course, he lost. The film tells us how and why.

As Wiley first saw his role as advisor, he would fight for Saddam Hussein getting a fair trial. But the new Iraqi government wants revenge. As do the demonstrators in the streets, the politicians and the prosecutors. Even the judges want it all along, a lot would indicate. What Saddam and his defence team want is less certain.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW

Wiley is grounded in international criminal law. "My job, my moral duty," he says, "is to try and save any man whose life is in peril without respect to his goodness or lack thereof. So if it turns out in the judgement that I've succeeded, at least in this one case, I will be very, very satisfied."

Wiley is a lawyer from Canada with years of experience in international criminal law. He comes to Iraq from Congo, where he worked as an investigator for the UN's International Criminal Court, a relatively new permanent tribunal. Wiley quit because of poor security, after several UN officers were killed. Now in Iraq, the UN has assigned him to monitor the trials against Saddam Hussein and his cohorts to make sure they get due process. Thus, he is a UN observer when the Iraq Special Tribunal opens the trial against Saddam. As a foreign attorney, he can't actually appear in the trial, though he can serve as an advisor outside the courtroom.

The trial was set up and funded by the American government through an entity known as the Regime Crimes Liaison Office (RCLO), with the Americans providing funding and logistics. Soon realising that Saddam's defence is a shambles, RCLO, i.e., the Americans, hires Wiley to step in as an advisor to

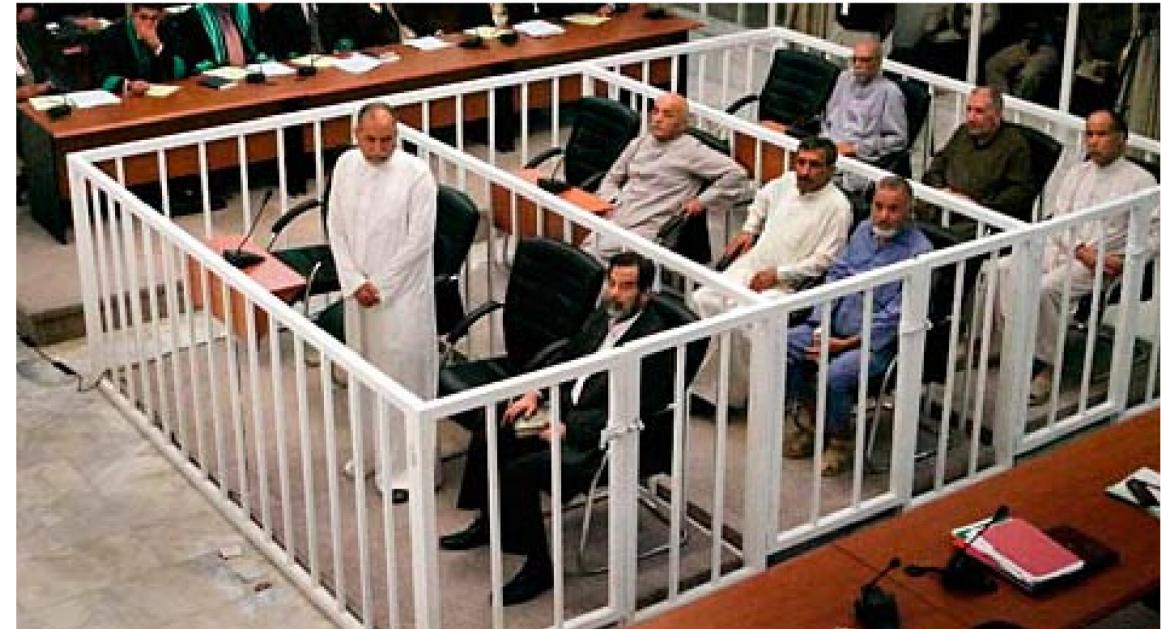
the defence team, though without the defence's consent. Wiley eventually manages to establish a rapport with them and lends his assistance, though that side story gradually descends into chaos. Our protagonist, then, comes to Iraq as a neutral observer for the UN, but then switches roles when the Americans employ him to ensure that the trial meets international standards. As a climax, he writes Saddam Hussein's closing document, the final statement by the defence, though it fails to avert the death penalty. As he says at one point, "Maybe we were naive..."

GROWING AWARENESS

As the story unfolds, we realise it's about this strange naivety. How certain Western political institutions have a hard time putting themselves in someone else's place, understanding that others don't automatically accept the Western concept of democracy or the Western view of law. Wiley is divided. He has his long legal education, his broad base of knowledge, yet he somehow understands Saddam's reluctance to accept him on his defence team.

His growing awareness, expressed as mounting frustration, is edited as an inevitable development for the protagonist. Wiley is constantly thrown into conflict between his idealism and his sense of reality. Meanwhile, he is falling under the influence of Najeeb Al-Naumi, the utterly disillusioned head of the defence team and his intellectual equal. The film's other focal point, Najeeb is a profoundly fascinating character, and the film effectively pits him against Wiley. Ironic disillusion versus naive idealism. Najeeb is a former minister of justice in Qatar, where he now runs a law firm.

In principle, no foreigners are allowed in the actual courtroom. Nonetheless, when the time comes for Saddam and his daughter to pick their defendants, their choices include Najeeb of



Saving Saddam. Photo: Framegrab

"Say what you want about the tribunal and the trial against Saddam Hussein, but it was, and still is, a real attempt to have a judicial process according to international principles, a first in the region. But of course, such trials always have a political dimension, this one more than most." Michael Christoffersen

Qatar and Ramsey Clark, a former United States Attorney General on his own political mission (the once defended Slobodan Milosevic), as well as an Egyptian and some Iraqi attorneys. Bending the rules, the tribunal allowed the foreign attorneys in. The defence attorneys are a motley crew. Sometimes they're in Baghdad, at other times they meet in Amman, where Saddam's daughter is staying, or in Damascus. Mainly working out of his Qatar office, Najeeb increasingly isolates himself, when he begins to sense that the others have a totally different agenda. This is the context of a key scene, a confidential call between Najeeb and Wiley, outlining the trial's complicated standoffs: Saddam versus vengeance, a concept he essentially recognises, and Saddam versus a new, flimsy international court he does not recognise.

THREE FILMS, ONE EXPERIENCE

Christoffersen co-directed *Saving Saddam* with Esteban Uyarra, who made his name as a daring documentarian with his 2004 film about the invasion of Iraq, *War Feels Like War*. Christoffersen had already made two films about international war crimes tribunals: *Milosevic on Trial* (2007) and *Genocide: The Judgement* (1999) – respectively about the tribunal in The Hague, 2002-2006, and the tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania, 1994, that convicted the mayor of Taba, Rwanda, for a number of serious crimes relating to the massacres in his town. *Genocide's* main character,

the Swedish judge Lennart Aspegren, characterises the UN tribunal as the first human rights trial since Nuremberg, an experiment with the potential of international law to prosecute the crime of crimes – murders of civilians, genocide and other crimes against humanity.

All three films centre on the crime of crimes and the historically still quite young international justice system prosecuting such cases. Each film fuses the story and a charismatic central character with an understanding of the law and ethics – as effectively embodied in gentle, thoughtful Aspegren in *Genocide*, tough and efficient Geoffrey Nice in *Milosevic on Trial* and frustrated Wiley in *Saving Saddam*. The three works, as a whole, constitute a collective journalistic and documentary experience of international law. Filmed on location, Christoffersen's films uniquely document the ambition for a comprehensive legal system during its early formative years.

After his third experience with the subject, Christoffersen says, "Say what you want about the tribunal and the trial of Saddam, but it was, and still is, a real attempt to have a judicial process according to international principles, a first in the region. But of course, such cases always have a political dimension, this one more than most, and ultimately that was a decisive factor. Writing off the trial as an unfair political charade is way too simplistic, to the best of my opinion." ■



Framegrab



Photo: Bente Jøger Alsing

ESTEBAN UYARRA (IMAGE LEFT)

Born 1970, Spain. Award-winning director, editor and cinematographer of documentary films. Worked for several UK television channels, including the BBC and Channel 4. Films include the feature-length documentary *The Light in the Dark*, *The Runner* and *War Feels Like War*, the latter screened worldwide, and was nominated for the prestigious Grierson Award.

MICHAEL CHRISTOFFERSEN (IMAGE RIGHT)

Born 1954, Denmark. Has been working as a documentary director since the 1980s. Founded Team Productions with Mette Heide in 1999. Has directed and produced several international documentaries, including *Genocide: The Judgement* (1999) for BBC and SVT about a trial at the Rwanda court, and the feature-length, behind-the-scenes documentaries *Milosevic on Trial* (2007) and *Saving Saddam* (2008).

TEAM PRODUCTIONS

Founded 1999 by producer Mette Heide and director Michael Christoffersen. Produces national and international documentaries to clients ranging from the Danish broadcasters and BBC to a wide range of European national broadcasters. Productions: Mette Heide from Team Productions was executive producer on the worldwide media event and documentary series *Why Democracy?* (2007), comprising ten one-hour films on the subject of contemporary democracy. Two company signature films are the extraordinary behind-the-scenes achievements *Milosevic on Trial* (2007) and *Saving Saddam* (2008). Short documentaries include *Little Grown-up* (Anders Gustafsson, 2008), chosen for Kids & Docs at IDFA, Amsterdam.

For further information about *Saving Saddam*, see reverse section.

My Iranian Paradise is a personal film about Iranian history and Persian culture by a Danish filmmaker who spent most of her childhood and youth in Tehran. Annette Mari Olsen relates the grand narrative through small stories, as always in close collaboration with co-director Katia Forbert Petersen. The two have teamed up in Danish documentaries for more than 20 years around a shared ambition to promote understanding and build bridges between cultures.



My Iranian Paradise. Photo: Katia Forbert Petersen

BRIDGEBUILDING

BY TUE STEEN MÜLLER

The two women filmmakers first met in Poland, at the film school in Lodz, in the early seventies, and later hooked up again in Denmark. Katia Forbert Petersen originally fled Poland with her parents in the late sixties and has since, mainly lived in Denmark, working as a photographer, director and producer. The child of a Danish-Polish couple who met in Iran, Annette Mari Olsen lived 22 years in Iran in her childhood and youth. After years of preparation, she has now made a film about her former homeland, *My Iranian Paradise*.

Since starting Sfinx Film in 1988, the two filmmakers, who mainly speak Polish in the office, have produced a variety of stories about people living in the modern, multicultural reality. A significant vision for Sfinx Film/TV's productions, they say, is promoting insight into and understanding of what happens when people from different cultures meet. They know it from their own lives, and say, smiling, "Insight and understanding, that's what we hope our new film will give the audience."

AXIS OF EVIL

Olsen is also the film's central character. Taking the audience back in time through her own family's history, she offers a far more nuanced image of a country that George W. Bush has branded a member of the 'Axis of Evil.' The film features a wealth of characters that Olsen meets on her way – men, women, families, children, women in chadors, a dervish – all held together by Olsen's monologue referring to her family's history and reflecting on present-day Iran.

"My father was a guest worker and my mother was a refugee," Olsen narrates, framing the film in the story of her father, a Danish engineer who goes to Iran for the Kampsax company to work on the famed trans-Iranian railroad. When his stint ends, her father stays in Iran. He meets a Polish woman, a survivor of Stalin's gulag who ended up in hospitable Iran on

her way back to Poland, like so many other Poles. They marry and have Annette, who enjoys a happy childhood and youth in her beloved Tehran, a city she returns to in her new film. Her family remains in Tehran until shortly before the revolution and Khomeini's takeover in 1979.

ONLY A PRETEXT

Annette Olsen (AO): My family's history and mine are only a pretext to say what's on our minds. We wanted to craft a nuanced worldview in a film that speaks about the past but points to the future.

Katia Forbert Petersen (KFP): We both grew up in systems that have collapsed. We wanted to convey how fragile an individual is in relation to the big political picture, so we used the personal story, as seen through Annette's eyes, to follow the development of a country that the West has had very close ties to historically, but the younger generations only know very little about.

It sounds to me that you have a message?

KFB: Open your eyes. See what's going on in the world. Take a stand. You never know the day before the sun sets. We've done a number of what we call bridge-building films about diverse cultures. We were drawing on that experience here.

AO: We wanted to make an appeal to multicultural tolerance. There once was, and in fact there still is, room in Iran for all religions. The Catholic church that I grew up with in Tehran still exists there today, although they tread softly. Iran also has a large Christian minority, especially Armenians.

HIDDEN CAMERA

How did you manage such a large subject?

KFP: We worked on the manuscript for a long time, so the film's construction was carefully planned. The manuscript was at hand to keep things from spinning out of control. We previously made two children's films in Iran, and in doing so we made friends and contacts. The manuscript, for a large part, was written to sort out the historical facts.

Most of the meetings we show in the film were pretty spontaneous.

Tell me about the shoot.

KFP: We shot ninety percent of the film with a hidden camera, even though we had permits. You need one permit for one street and another permit for another street. We didn't film illegally. We used a hidden camera mostly for practical reasons. Luckily, unpredictable things always happen in documentaries and we're experienced enough to know how to improvise. Take the scene of the woman at the Polish cemetery, for instance.

A very moving scene ...

AO: Yes. This woman has a life that's all her own. She has her own peace in the cemetery she tends, even though the religion it represents isn't her own. That doesn't matter to her. Nor does it matter to the man by the bridge, who asks me if I can make out the writing on one of the tombstones for the people who died building the bridge. He watches as the Star of David appears – the symbol of the Mosaic faith, I tell him.

IRANIAN WOMEN

You're especially critical about the situation of Iranian women?

AO: The film should not be seen as saying that everything is well in Iran. Many different women wear chadors. One forthrightly lists what she has witnessed by way of violence, incarceration and execution. She used to be in exile, but she never really found her place abroad and returned to Iran. Naturally, she appears in the film under an alias.

KFP: Freethinking people in Iran end up in jail. That's what it was like in communist Poland, too.

AO: Iran is a land of paradoxes. Take the woman who had a nose-job, like so many Iranian women. It's almost like she's wearing a hairband. I wouldn't even call it a scarf. Women defy the rules, even when representatives of the authorities are all around. They don't speak up. One day they will, maybe, when they feel like it.



My Iranian Paradise. Photo: Framegrab



My Iranian Paradise. Photo: Katia Forbert Petersen

MAY YOUR HANDS NOT HURT

Olsen speaks Farsi with a Tehran accent. Naturally, that was a huge advantage for the tiny crew – two directors, one front and centre and one behind the camera. One performs while the other records, as Forbert puts it. In a land of paradoxes where shooting permits are mandatory.

AO: To film in Iran, you need a permit from the Ministry of Culture. Besides, you must have a partnership with an Iranian producer, who has to show the film to the authorities, or he won't get a permit to do his next film.

We sent him the film through cyberspace and told him he had two weeks to let us know if he wanted to be listed in the end credits. He asked us to cut the beach scenes from the start of the

picture. If the authorities saw those, he said, they'd pull the plug on the film. So he is willing to take a confrontation with them.

The two filmmakers have fond memories of the film production and a sense of warm gratitude to the people they met.

AO: A beautiful thing about Persian is you don't say thank you. If I give you a cup of coffee, I say: "may your hands not hurt." So the message from our partner went: Tell Mrs. Katia, May her hands not hurt! As thanks for the beautiful shots she took ■

For further information about My Iranian Paradise, see reverse section.

Katja Forbert Petersen: "We wanted to convey how fragile an individual is in relation to the big political picture ... to follow the development of a country that the West has had very close ties to historically but the younger generations only know very little about."



Photo: Sfinx Film/TV



Photo: Sfinx Film/TV

ANNETTE MARI OLSEN (IMAGE LEFT)

Born 1947, Denmark. Grew up in Iran and England. Film director, producer and editor. Master of Arts from the Polish Film School, Lodz (1973). Set up Sfinx Film/TV in 1988 together with Katia Forbert Petersen.

KATIA FORBERT PETERSEN (IMAGE RIGHT)

Born 1949, Poland. Graduate cinematographer from the Polish Film School. Resident in Denmark since 1969. She has shot some 150 films, including a number of features and worked on camera for German television (ZDF) and the Canadian Film Board. Among others, she has received the Annual Prize from the Association of Danish Cinematographers in 1992, and The Golden Mermaid from WIFT (Women in Film and Television), Copenhagen in 2001.

SFINX FILM/TV

Founded 1989 by Annette Mari Olsen and Katia Forbert Petersen, both graduates from the film school in Lodz, Poland. Although continuously working with other filmmakers on individual productions, the company produces films primarily by the two directors, who also edit (Annette Mari Olsen) and shoot (Katia Forbert Petersen). Specialize in contemporary issues and educational films. Of core interest are stories on multi-ethnicity and cross-cultural encounters. An important number of children's films include *Behind the Mountains* (2004), which follows two girls in a refugee camp in Iran. Another characteristic of their work is the portrayal of extraordinary women, such as *God Gave Her a Mercedes-Benz* (1992), a colourful story of *Mama Benz from Togo*, and *They Don't Burn Priests, Do They?* (1997), about a controversial Danish woman priest.

MOPED HEARTS

After his high-octane *Vesterbro* (2007), Michael Noer figured he'd done enough films about teenagers drinking and acting out, at least for a while. Then his production manager told him about a gang of reckless yet sensitive, moped-riding kids from Odense. In all ways transgressive, *The Wild Hearts* is American Graffiti meets *Jackass* in the road movie format.

BY LARS MOVIN

The Wild Hearts is a documentary road movie about 12 young Danish guys who, as a combined oath of brotherhood, rite of passage and madcap adventure, ride their mopeds 1,300 kilometres from Odense in Denmark to Pomerania in Poland.

Known as The Wild Hearts (De Vilde Hjerter), the gang and its interactions are heavily about bonding through transgression. Meanwhile, as the kitschy nickname implies, a good-sized helping of irony is involved. The members are all in their early or mid-twenties and the whole idea of moped-riding is evidently inspired by their parents' generation that rode mopeds in the 1970s. The gang's universe is riddled with mythology, symbols and ritual, balancing – typically, perhaps, for their generation – between hi-jinx and sincerity, detachment and passion. All the while, gravity lurks just behind the goofball facade.

FREEDOM AND BROTHERHOOD

Though several members of The Wild Hearts are apparently in long-term relationships, they put a big premium on spending time with their buddies. Throughout the film, the young men behave like hybrids of latter-day Vikings and sensitive, metrosexual young guys on wild-man weekends. They are not afraid to show their feelings for each other, directly and unambiguously declaring their love for each other. They share everything, even the most intimate things. They kiss and hug, they are naked around each other, they drink themselves senseless and chase ecstasy together. In an ultimate expression of their common bond, they subject themselves to ritual branding with a heart-shaped iron. All in celebration of what it's all about for them: freedom and brotherhood.

Michael Noer and his cameraman tagged along for the whole ride. We are spared not a single bodily function, as the film unsparingly documents every

aspect of the moped boys' time together, from the most ecstatic highs to the darkest pits of despair and doubt, homesickness, cluelessness and conflict. Even so, the camera politely stays outside closed doors when the guys – in typical bonehead fashion – make a stop at a porno centre on the Danish-German border, giddily pick out a movie each and vanish into separate stalls conveniently equipped with paper towels.

In light thereof, it seems reasonable to ask the director where he personally draws the line:

"I already did one film where we followed someone into one of those stalls," Noer told me. "So it's not that we didn't dare show what goes on in there. But one of the more heated arguments that I had with my editor, Adam Nielsen, when we made the film, was about how we didn't want people to think these guys are gay. Not that there's anything wrong with being gay, obviously, only it's not about that."

"Generally, though, I don't think there's anything you shouldn't film or show, as long as it extends the story," the filmmaker says. "I always make the same deal with people who appear in my films. They give me permission to film anything I want while it's going on, and they for their part always have an unqualified right to have a scene edited out later. Luckily, to date no one has ever asked me to cut anything, at least nothing important."

BETWEEN WILDNESS AND INTIMACY

Noer (b. 1978) is a 2003 graduate of the national Film School of Denmark's TV programme. His graduation film, *En rem af huden*, was a portrait of Ole Ege, a pioneer in Danish pornography in the '50s, '60s and '70s and currently the manager of Copenhagen's Museum Erotica. Though formally less transgressive than its subject, the film did demonstrate a sure craftsman's touch and a fearlessness about facing reality in all its aspects.

Three years later, Noer had a minor breakthrough with *The Earth Beneath My Feet* (2006), a classic one-man-one-camera production about Dan and David, two maladjusted teenage boys staying at Slettebjerggaard, a home for kids whose families are in crisis. The film showed Noer to be an empathic and patient filmmaker with a distinct talent for combining unfeigned interest and loyalty regarding his characters with a highly developed sense of intimacy and nuances in individual scenes.

All the same, Noer surprised everybody in

autumn 2007 when he had his big breakthrough with *Vesterbro*, a documentary about a young couple and their frenzied daily life in one of Copenhagen's most colourful neighbourhoods. While before, he had cloaked his talent in anonymity, he now let it all hang out with explosive force in a film that pulls in even closer on real life than we are used to in a documentary, even as he employed a number of feature-film moves obviously geared to the big screen. From start to finish, *Vesterbro* runs full throttle on all expressive parameters, while also proving that a documentary filmmaker doesn't have to travel halfway around the world to locate a reality he can transform into exotic and engaging storytelling. If *The Earth Beneath My Feet* sometimes gave the impression of straining the filmmaker's expressive ambitions to the maximum, Noer now seemed to have found a form that let him achieve far more without jeopardising his story's natural lightness.

Vesterbro's two protagonists are Noer's neighbours in real life. In a choice move, strengthening the film's sense of authenticity and intimacy, the filmmaker left a camera with his subjects and encouraged them to film their day-to-day life, including when he and his crew weren't around. The result is a film that combines a classic documentary approach with the intimate medium of the video journal familiar mainly from video art and more experimental documentaries.

Noer further explored the method of having his subjects operate the camera in *Doxwise* (see page 30). For this Internet project, he gave camcorders to four young people and asked them to keep a video journal for 10 weeks according to a set of simple guidelines. The tapes were later edited into four times ten episodes, which were then posted on YouTube.

ARCHETYPES

The Wild Hearts, Noer's next project after *Vesterbro* and *Doxwise*, was shot on a trip to Pomerania in Poland that lasted almost four weeks and eventually became exceedingly strenuous for everyone involved, including the crew. In fact, the prospect of doing a documentary genre film, a road doc, was one of the things that turned Noer on to the project:

"To find inspiration for the film, I looked through my DVD collection and realised that road movies made for TV always use the same classic concept where they dispatch Biker Jens (a Danish television personality –ed) or someone like him to Texas to munch on giant burgers and that sort of thing, while very few real documentaries have been made in that genre. These guys had this insane drive and it seemed obvious to try and harness it, now that it fit the genre so well. I figured I could use that to make a film where I'd get to pull some more fictional levers," Noer says.

A major challenge in that respect was how to deal with having 12 main characters:

"One of the first things I did was to get everyone to write a description of themselves," Noer says. "That turned out to be a really good idea, and I'll definitely use it again sometime, because it made them feel that they had invested something in the film project. As in a classic multi-plot story with an ensemble cast,



The Wild Hearts. Photo: Thomas Gerhardt

"These guys had this insane drive and it seemed obvious to try and harness it ... to make a film where I'd get to pull some more fictional levers."



The Wild Hearts. Photo: Thomas Gerhardt

I devised archetypes for them based on what they had written. That allowed us to distill out certain characteristics for me to use later when I sat down and tried to envision the whole film, writing it out from start to finish with scenes and everything. In that respect, the preproduction was a lot like making a fiction film. But of course it's a documentary, so it didn't go like the manuscript said."

Finally, people at the documentary film meeting in Ebeltøft wanted to know if Noer had prodded the action, how much he had tried to influence his cast of characters to do certain things for the sake of the film.

"An interesting thing about this film is that the *The Wild Hearts*, because they were always going for the extreme, were into staging things themselves," Noer says. "Accordingly, we only had to nudge them a little bit in certain directions they were already going. As is often the case in all groups, everyone had taken on or been assigned a certain role or character, and we only had to tighten that up a little bit to make them stand out as archetypes in the film. In that sense, our project is always an extension of theirs." ■

For further information about *The Wild Hearts*, see reverse section.

MICHAEL NOER

Born 1978, Denmark. Graduated from the National Film School of Denmark, 2003. Has several award-winning documentary films to his credit: *Vesterbro* (2007) screened at numerous international festivals including CPH:DOX where it won a Special Mention. *Doxwise Diary* (2008 – www.doxwise.dk) stirred international media attention when it was released on MySpaceTV. *The Wild Hearts* (2008): selected for Dox Award competition CPH:DOX.

COPENHAGEN BOMBAY

Founded in 2006 by producer Sarita Christensen and director Anders Morgenthaler. Partly owned by Nordisk Film. With a specific focus on films for children and young people, the company aims at nurturing the offbeat and absurd rather than conventional family entertainment. Produces feature films, shorts and documentaries for both TV and cinema. Company productions: The documentary *Vesterbro* (Michael Noer, 2008) received a special mention at CPH:DOX. The company has launched a new cinema format for small children, the compiled, 45 minute *Min1Film* (2008) whose concept director is Anders Morgenthaler. *The Apple & The Worm* (Anders Morgenthaler, 2009) is Copenhagen Bombay's first feature film.



Michael Noer. Photo: Ada Seby Bligaard

THE IDIOTS MEETS EASY RIDER

For Adam Nielsen, the main thing in editing *The Wild Hearts* was staying true to the spirit of the material – even if it meant killing a few of his and director Michael Noer's darlings in the process.

BY LARS MOVIN

While Adam Nielsen was editing *Vesterbro* last year, the director presented him with the pilot material for his next film, *The Wild Hearts* (2008). Noer himself had somewhat reluctantly been drawn into the project, but any misgivings Nielsen may have had were immediately dispelled when he saw the footage Noer had shot of a youthful moped gang, The Wild Hearts, trashing a rented holiday cabin over a wild weekend, setting the furniture on fire and branding each other's naked bodies with a heart-shaped iron.

"At the time, there had been a lot of TV shows in the *Jackass* vein that were all about being cruel to each other and laughing about it afterwards," Nielsen says. "But here was a group of kids who clearly had a great deal of affection for each other and primarily wanted to have a good time together. Also, they were completely unabashed and barely acknowledged the presence of Michael and his camera."

"As I see it, a documentary works best when it follows people who act in the now and don't just talk about something that happened in the past. In the case of the guys in *The Wild Hearts*, we obviously wouldn't have to conjure up any action, since they were obviously so consumed by their own project that all we had to do was tag along," Nielsen says.

How did the decision to do a documentary road movie, and relating to an established film genre, affect your editing?

"That actually didn't come up until a bit later on. When Michael shot the first footage, we had no idea that we'd be going on a moped trip to Poland. But when they told us about their plans, it was obvious to go along and film. As we

discussed it, if we could do a kind of blend of *The Idiots* (Lars von Trier, 1998) and *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969), we would be on the right track. Just as in von Trier's film, our characters are embarking on a project that's about testing the boundaries," Nielsen says.

"To answer your question about our thoughts concerning a genre film, we were really more concerned about finding a proper ending to the film. In *Easy Rider* the two leads die at the end, and we knew that probably wasn't going to happen in our film. However, one of the gang members crashed and suffered a serious injury, which, however grave, was a gift to us in a way, because it allowed us to push things more in the direction of *Together* (Lukas Moodysson, 2000) – that is, the kids choose brotherhood over the actual project," Nielsen says.

"... a documentary works best when it follows people who act in the now and don't just talk about something that happened in the past."

You've done music videos and commercials, documentaries and features. What are your criteria for going into a project?

"I've been doing fewer music videos and commercials lately, because I've been involved in this string of extended processes and it's been hard to fit other things in. So I've been turning down a bunch of assignments," Nielsen says. "Actually, I usually base my choices on who I like to work with. When you spend most of your time in an editing room, it's important to be sitting there with someone you can stand being around for the long haul. Fortunately, I have good friends who keep making interesting films, so it's really pretty easy for me to choose." ■

For further information about The Wild Hearts, see reverse section.



The Wild Hearts. Photo: Thomas Gerhardt



Adam Nielsen. Photo: P. Wessel

ADAM NIELSEN – EDITOR

Born 1974, Denmark. Graduated in editing from the National Film School of Denmark, 2003. Shortly after, started the company Little Machine with fellow editor Peter Brandt. Has edited or co-edited several features, including *Brothers* (Susanne Bier, 2004), *Fidibus* (Hella Joof, 2006), *The Candidate* (Kasper Barfoed, 2008), as well as numerous documentaries, among them *Inside Outside* (Andreas Johnsen & Nis Boye Rasmussen, 2005), *Den sidste dans* (Eva Mulvad og Allan Nagel, 2005), *Enemies of Happiness* (Eva Mulvad, 2006), *Ghosts of Cité Soleil* (Asger Leth, 2006), *Vesterbro* (Michael Noer, 2007), *Good Copy Bad Copy* (Andreas Johnsen, Henrik Moltke & Ralf Christensen, 2007), *Solange on Love* (Tine Katinka Jensen, 2008) and *The Wild Hearts* (Michael Noer, 2008).

ROSKILDE NEVER LEAVES YOU

Ulrik Wivel spent eight years gathering footage for his film about the Roskilde music festival, a four-day frenzy where, the director says, "It's hard not to experience ecstasy."

BY CHRISTIAN MONGGAARD

"The Roskilde Festival is part of a well-rounded education," Ulrik Wivel says. The new documentary by this filmmaker, artist and former ballet dancer zooms in on the popular music festival held every July that attracts big-name bands and upwards of 80,000 people from all over the world.

"I don't think Roskilde ever really leaves your body," he says. "It wasn't in me now, like my life as a dancer is."

It took Wivel eight festivals and changing crews of co-directors, camera and sound people to get together enough material for *Roskilde*, an intoxicating look at the festival in all its spontaneity, musical celebration and temporary madness.

It took him so long, mainly because he only had four days to shoot every year – the festival opens on a Thursday and closes on a Sunday. In between festivals, Wivel continually went over the footage to see if he had enough to finish the film.

"It wasn't until I found myself standing there in the middle of the festival with a tiny crew and no budget that it dawned on me that you really only have four days to shoot every year," he says. "It wasn't going to be easy. It took me eight years to get my footage, which works out nicely to a classic 30-40 days of shooting."

Having spent most of his life at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen and other ballet houses around the world, Wivel never really had a "normal" youth, he says. As a case in point, he had never even been to the Roskilde Festival before he agreed to do a documentary about it.

"The Roskilde project had a natural attraction to me, and it was one of the first films to come my way," Wivel says. "It didn't come out of going to the festival all my teenage years and camping out in a tent. On the contrary, I never even went! My curiosity about it was wildly piqued.

"A lot of people are looking for new ways to experience the world. Dreaming you're someone else, I think, will be familiar to a lot of people. They are fascinated by Roskilde, which gives them four days to cut loose and try out all sort of roles," the filmmaker says.



Roskilde. Photo: Framgrab

A MULTI-PLOT FILM

Like the festival, *Roskilde* opens on a Thursday and closes on a Sunday, while mixing up eight years worth of shots in between. "The film tracks a natural arc," Wivel says. "In fact, the time frame was the only thing we had a specific use for in structuring the film.

"I wanted to make everything as sensual as possible, and as real and true as possible to what the festival is like and how I experience it," he says. "I deliberately tried not to do anything too psychedelic, abstract or clever. It just seemed so obvious that you have to surrender to the synergy and energy of the place, because you're up against such a huge force.

"I had allied myself with a bunch of people who, like me, are used to strange shooting conditions and thinking in terms of scenes, even if they weren't written down in advance," he says. "We had a clear rule not to overplan or overthink things and be taken by surprise instead. I think it's rare for a filmmaker to be standing in the middle of something without the slightest idea what to do or what you might end up with. That's a very raw and real experience. You need a powerful intuition and a fully functioning sensory apparatus."

It didn't take long for the filmmaker and his team to realise that they couldn't simply stand there with their cameras and hope for something groovy to happen. They had to cast the film and make agreements with festival-goers to be recurring characters in the story. "We needed some potentially good leads to follow," Wivel says.

"I tried devising some rules to get a dramaturgical handle on things," he says. "I decided early on that the film couldn't be carried by a single character. It had to be a multi-plot film. I saw Roskilde as the beast. And the festival itself as the resistance and the fulcrum, and I tried to communicate that to my co-directors.

"All the characters are archetypes of sorts. And there is a clash of interests at the festival, between those who just want to party, and reach the state of ecstasy, and those who'll go to any length to look out for the crowd: fire-fighters, police and guards. There's this weird kind of beautiful symbiosis between the two forces grinding together. It's all very peaceful. And notably, that's only possible because of the festival is grounded in respect. The world could learn a thing or two from that," Wivel says ■

For further information about Roskilde, see reverse section



Ulrik Wivel. Photo: Noam Griegst

ULRIK WIVEL

Born 1967. Former dancer at the Royal Danish Ballet and New York City Ballet. Today he is an acknowledged filmmaker. His films include: the New York portraits *Dancer* (2000), honoured with a Special Mention at the New York Film Festival, and *Staceyann Chin* (2001). In 2003 came the poetic dance film *Urge*, followed by the award-winning films *This Is Me Walking* (2004) and *I You Love* (2005). 2008: the documentary *Roskilde* and the feature film drama *Comeback*.

BAROK FILM

Founded in 2000 by director Anne Regitze Wivel. Originally a documentary company, having since expanded into the field of feature films. Formerly a sister company to Skandinavisk Film Kompagni. Became independent in 2002. Among a substantial body of documentaries are *Max by Chance* (Max Kestner, 2004), *The Mind of My Father* (Vibe Mogensen, 2005) and *The Land of Human Beings – My Film about Greenland* (Anne Regitze Wivel, 2006). The company's first feature film is *Silk Road* (Jytte Rex, 2004), followed by their second, *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* (Zacharias Kunuk, Norman Cohn, 2006), an epic tragedy set in the 1920s, depicting the threats of civilization on Inuit life.

ROSKILDE FESTIVAL

The Roskilde Festival, Northern Europe's biggest culture and music festival, has existed since 1971. The Roskilde Festival is a non-profit organisation comprising about 25 full-time employees and 25,000 volunteers during the actual festival. Each year, the Roskilde Festival Charity Society, the organisation behind the festival, donates the profits from the festival directly to humanitarian and cultural purposes. www.roskilde-festival.dk



This chant was heard across the land in the 1980s, a decade when the Danish national football team played better than ever before. A new documentary, *Danish Dynamite*, is an enthusiastic and engaging report from the football fest that culminated in Denmark taking the 1992 European Championship. FILM talks to the directors and editor about how Danish mentality and the national spirit are portrayed in the film.

BY CHRISTIAN MONGGAARD

In the 1980s, Denmark became a football nation to reckon with. Under coach Sepp Piontek, a German who ushered in a new era of professionalism, the Danish national squad delivered two astounding performances, at the 1984 European Championship in France and the 1986 World Cup in Mexico. Later, his otherwise widely derided successor, Richard Møller Nielsen, led Denmark to victory in a stunning upset at the 1992 European Championship in Sweden.

Those were golden years for Danish soccer, and Carsten Søsted and Mads Kamp Thulstrup's *Danish Dynamite* bring them to life with humour, engagement and the unmitigated enthusiasm of true football fans. Both directors are from the mid-1970s and the 1984 final round in France is a real highlight from their childhood. Meeting in 1996 at the European Film College in Ebeltoft, Denmark, Søsted and Thulstrup quickly decided that, if someone else didn't do a film about the eighties football fest soon, they would.

The two directors wrote the script for *Danish Dynamite* with editor Daniel Dencik and, talking it over with Karoline Leth, the film's producer, they found a shape for the story that worked. "We wanted to delve into the really big games and use them as an engine," Søsted says. "Picking the right games and using them as dramatic pivots, we imagined would give us a good film. We knew it should open with Sepp Piontek taking over as coach of the national squad. In a brainstorming session with Karoline, we decided that the different national coaches would be another pivot in the film. At that point, Mads and I felt ready to go. Then, late one night in a bar, a friend told us to 'Wrap it up with 1992, naturally.' It was the obvious climax to the whole thing."

NOT A NOSTALGIC FILM

Danish Dynamite is not only about football, it also paints a portrait of a small nation, Denmark, that never, at least not until Piontek, took sports as seriously as other European nations did. The always happy Danish football supporter, the "roligan" (peaceful hooligan), soon became a symbol of the Danes' laidback, self-deprecating national character.

"The Danish mentality and spirit was always there as a separate layer in the project, though we didn't initially define it to ourselves," Søsted says. "Again, it was Karoline who said, 'You've also given a lot of thought to the impact on us, as Danes, of the national football success up through the 1980s.' And we had. I guess I, especially, had this homespun philosophy that football was hugely important to our national self-image."

The two filmmakers had a clear idea that the film would mainly consist of archival footage – games, interviews, reports, funny outtakes from TV. "Listening to a bunch of old coots relate anecdotes is all well and good, but you get that on TV sports shows every weekend," Søsted says.

"Eighty percent of the film is archival footage – which presented a major obstacle, because it's pretty expensive," he says. "Then again, you save money by not having to shoot so much, so we fought for it, because we were convinced that the footage would reveal a bunch of situations that

would make the audience feel they were there, making them relive the moments that made such an impression on Mads and me as kids."

For Daniel Dencik, the editor, it was important that the film had a modern component. It should be apparent that the film was made in 2008 and not in 1992. "I specifically did not want to make a nostalgic film," Dencik says. "The football sequences should offer a now experience, as if the games were being played while you're watching the film. Also, I realised, you never really see football in edited form. We only watch it in live-produced TV broadcasts. It was a real revelation for me to edit this material. Unfortunately, we only had a single camera most of the time, because no one had saved the raw tapes."

PUTTING FOOTBALL GEEKERY ON HOLD

One of the greatest challenges of making *Danish Dynamite* was forging a workable dramatic form. From 1984 to 1986, the Danish national team enjoyed an almost unbroken string of victories, culminating in the 6-1 win over Uruguay at the World Cup finals in Mexico. That's great for football fans, but it doesn't work in a film. The thrill quickly wears off. So Søsted, Kamp Thulstrup and Dencik decided to switch certain games around chronologically to create the necessary drama. They took some flack for that when the film opened in Denmark, but Søsted stands by the decision.

"Mads and I are huge football freaks and statisticians ourselves, but we promised ourselves to go beyond that," he says. "What mattered was making the most entertaining film possible – and that meant saving the football geekery for another day."

"The film had to do several things," he says, "including entertaining audiences and attracting them to cinemas. It's not encyclopaedic. And so, even though I think there's some substance to the criticism, it's off the mark. It represents a basic misconception about documentaries."

"It's crazy that people in 2008 still think of a documentary as an objective description of the world. Obviously, there are a few things they aren't teaching in schools. The moment you start photographing something, you've selected a section of reality, which is your subjective perception of that reality," Søsted says.

Dencik agrees: "I'm not a big believer in the perfect continuity cut, the cut that simply sticks to naturalism. That's why TV language is so far from film language."

"It's striking the degree to which something becomes film by how you shorten, change, distort or extend things," Dencik says. "Imagine the amazing product you'd get if football audiences abandoned the demand for live broadcasts. If viewers could live with watching the game at a few hours' delay, they could get a whole other experience. A couple of film editors could judge how best to put the game together instead of just running it. Then again, I doubt that I'd be willing to wait several hours to watch the game myself. Sports today is so centred on the feeling of experiencing something in the now." ■

For further information on *Danish Dynamite*, see reverse section.

"Listening to a bunch of old coots relate anecdotes is all well and good, but you get that on TV sports shows every weekend." Carsten Søsted



Mads Kamp Thulstrup. Photo: Unknown



Carsten Søsted. Photo: Unknown



Daniel Dencik. Photo: Emil Noel

MADS KAMP THULSTRUP

Born 1975, Denmark. Thulstrup graduated as director of fiction from the National Film School of Denmark, 2005. Paradoxically the football documentary *Danish Dynamite* (2008) was his directorial debut.

CARSTEN SØSTED

Born 1973, Denmark. Søsted worked as an assistant editor at Zentropa from 1997-2002, working on Lars von Trier's *The Idiots* and *Dancer in the Dark*, Per Fly's *The Bench* and Susanne Bier's *Open Hearts*. Freelance editor for television (including Unit 1), various commercials, shortfilms, documentaries and feature films. Co-writer with Rasmus V. Nielsen on the award-winning short fiction *Little Man*, recipient of honours in Giffoni, Chicago, and Buster, Copenhagen. Directorial debut: *Danish Dynamite* (2008).

DANIEL DENCIK

Born 1972, Sweden. Film editor, scriptwriter and director. His awards includes: Best Editor (2005 Danish Film Academy Nominee), twice invited to Cannes (*Dark Horse*, 2005 & *Happy Now*, 2004, the latter, winner of Cinéfondation). In 2003 he edited the international success *Noi the Albino*, winner at 20 festivals worldwide (Rotterdam, Denver, Edinburgh, Brussels, Angers among others). Has also received honours for his scripts, with awards from Jerusalem, Mannheim-Heidelberg and Warsaw. His work also includes two books of poetry and a collection of short stories, for which the Danish government gave Dencik a three-year grant for artistic achievement in 2001.

SF FILM PRODUCTION

Founded in 1997 under the name Formerly known as Tju-Bang Film, SF Film Production is the Danish production unit of Svensk Filmindustri AB. The goal of the company is to produce films with high artistic value that have potential on different platforms: 2-4 fiction features (the main driver), 2-4 documentaries and short-films per year; also international co-productions, TV-series and short formats for the internet. The latter is where new talent can be spotted and more experienced people can try their hand. At the same time fiction and documentaries are interdependent in developing the creative environment that makes it all possible. The company has signed acclaimed titles such as *Arn I* and *Arn II* (Peter Flinth, 2007 & 2008); *The Monastery* (Pernille Rose Grønkjær, 2006), recipient of more than a dozen awards including IDFA's Joris Ivens; *Mechanical Love* (Phie Ambo, 2007), selected for IDFA; *Everything is Relative* (Mikala Krogh), selected for Danish Dox Awards at CPH.DOX.

JAGTVEJ 69

In spring 2007, Jagtvej 69 street signs like the above were pasted all over Copenhagen, not just at the actual address in Nørrebro, as sly winks to the abounding confusion. Meanwhile, you could be sure to see the number '69' graffitied on walls in cities all across Europe. Everyone was talking about 'Ungdomshuset' that spring. For 25 years, the 'Youth House' at Jagtvej 69 had served as a refuge for self-governing groups of young people.

BY FREDERIK DIRKS GOTTLIEB

69, directed and shot by first-time filmmaker Nikolaj Viborg, looks at the dramatic events leading up to the authorities clearing Ungdomshuset on 1 March 2007 and the conflict that ensued. The film recently won the prestigious talent New Nordic Voices award at Nordisk Panorama 2008.

In 2006, when Viborg first started filming at Copenhagen's Ungdomshuset, he had no idea he'd end up with a film documenting one of the longest and costliest conflicts in Copenhagen's history. Although, as early as 2006, it was clear that the controversy surrounding the house had become a political quagmire, few people probably expected to see the streets of Nørrebro transformed into a war zone with hurled cobblestones, burning cars, teargas and violent altercations between hooded youths and battle-ready police.

RISKY BUSINESS

Shot in the heat of battle, the film offers a unique look at what went on inside the walls of Ungdomshuset right up to the time it was cleared. Meanwhile, the film contains impressive and frightening footage of the turmoil in the streets during the conflict. Personally manning a camera, Viborg filmed among the bedlam. "I was probably less afraid than I should have been," he says. "You become distanced to everything that's going on when you're watching it through the camera. You barely realise you're caught in a hail of cobblestones when you're fiddling with your camera."



69. Photo: Framegrab

The conflict revealed Danish youth culture to be part of a greater European community. Sympathisers from other European countries came to Copenhagen to support Ungdomshuset and the culture it represents, a sign that young Danes aren't alone in feeling overlooked and alienated in the society they live in.

YOUTH HOUSE FOR ALL

Alongside the many violent scenes, the film shows sides of the activists that go beyond the usual media images, offering an altogether different view of Danish youth culture. Gone are the black hoods and Molotov cocktails. Instead, we follow a group of flesh-and-blood young people who are concerned for their house and the fond sense of community it represents to them.

Viborg himself used to frequent Ungdomshuset when he was younger, which proved to be an advantage in making 69. "My background gave me a leg up on other filmmakers and reporters," he says. "Though it was years ago and I myself wasn't a youth activist, it was still an advantage that many of the people there knew me."

Viborg's footage from inside Ungdomshuset offers a first-ever glimpse at the decision-making process inside Ungdomshuset leading up to demonstrations and other political actions, and how the people there thought, felt and strategised about the battles for their house. Following a central character, Mads, the film takes an empathic look at his fight against a system he doesn't believe in.

MAJORITY IS NOT DEMOCRACY

69 comes at a time when the conflict is less visible in Copenhagen, but its theme is still highly relevant, Viborg says,

"The film reflects on the normalisation conflict you see going on in a lot of places," the director

says. "The same thing is happening in Christiania, and similar tendencies are seen in other European cities. If one listens to the majority and forgets the minority, this leads to disharmony in society. The film's focus is less on the conflict of Ungdomshuset than on the ongoing marginalisation that is present today and how this is alienating some people from their own society." ■

For further information on 69, see reverse section.



Nikolaj Viborg. Photo: Unknown

NIKOLAJ VIBORG

Born 1982, Denmark. Attended the European Film College in 2003. Assisted in the editing of several high profile documentaries, including *The Swenkas*, *Afghan Muscles*, and *The Secret War*. Photographed most of the footage for 69.

BASTARD FILM

For information on Bastard Film, refer to page 15.

WIKIPEDIA ON 'UNGDOMSHUSET'

Ungdomshuset (literally 'the Youth House') was the popular name of the building formally named Folkets Hus ('The People's House') located at Jagtvej 69 in Copenhagen. It was an underground music venue and a rendezvous point for various anarchist groups from 1982 until 2007. Since the mid-1990s, the ongoing conflict between the municipal council of Copenhagen and the activists occupying the premises had made the building the object of intense media attention and public debate. Police started to clear the building early on 1 March 2007. Demolition began on 5 March and was completed two days later.

HAPPY PEOPLE?

Study after study reports Danes the world's happiest people and Denmark the world's best country to live in. It's sometimes tempting to think of our cosy Scandinavian nook as 'paradise on earth'. Three Danish filmmakers got an itch to scuff up that image a little.

BY FREDERIK DIRKS GOTTLIEB

Paradise introduces us to a selection of people united by a single fact: they all live in Denmark, in "paradise." But how much of a paradise is Denmark really? The film follows a mother and father whose son has been stationed in Iraq, a young couple expecting their first child, a family of refugees who have been waiting six years for residence permits with no contact to the world outside the refugee centre. Beyond a strong bond of love, the three families share a feeling of uncertainty and fear for the future.

"The idea for *Paradise* arose at a film festival when we realised how concerned we all were about the turn Denmark was taking," Sami Saif, one of three directors, says – the others Jens Loftager and Erland E. Mo. "We saw fear spreading

film collaboratively – too often, documentary filmmaking can be a lonely process – and we operated with consensus decision-making."

ALL SHADES OF FEAR

As the three filmmakers see it, people in the modern world are suffused with fear: fear of not being good enough for society, fear of being excluded from society.

"*Paradise* is about living in a modern society whose leaders go to such lengths to tell everyone how great it is, while the people living in it are struggling to see this paradise. We wanted to convey a sense of the elementary fear slithering like a snake through this paradise, with each story providing a picture of a society that allows itself to be controlled by fear – destructive fear, dividing us instead of uniting us," Saif says.



Paradise. Photo: Framegrab

through Danish society and we thought it would be interesting to describe that fear in a documentary. We all saw Denmark as heading away from the vision of the 'paradisiacal' society."

THREE DIRECTORS – ONE VOICE

The three directors represent three different temperaments in Danish documentary filmmaking. Each has demonstrated his directing talent separately. What was their premise for making a film together?

"From the beginning, we strove to erase the impression of multiple directors and find a common voice," Saif says. "We agreed that the film should have a unified look, as if it had been made by a single director with one vision and one outlook. That was our premise. It was liberating to realise a

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

The film reflects a society in change, perhaps even undergoing a kind of identity crisis, but it also describes the comfort found in the things we love most. Gone is the fear of the future when a young one is born. Gone is the war hell of Iraq when you're in the security of your family. It's up to you to create paradise.

"Everything depends on the beholder," Saif says. "A flag is a flag, but people experience a flag in extremely different ways. To some, a flag is a piece of synthetic material chemically treated to be weather resistant, while to others a flag is a warm feeling in the bottom of their heart, a tear in the corner of their eye. We have strived to make a film for everyone – for better or worse, depending on the beholder." ■

JENS LOFTAGER

Born 1954. Bachelor of philosophy, University of Aarhus, 1976. Bachelor of film studies, University of Copenhagen, 1979. Head of Aarhus Film Workshop 1981-82. Film critic and co-editor of the magazine MacGuffin 1978-85. Graduated as film director from the National Film School of Denmark in 1989.

ERLAND E. MO

Born 1967, Norway. Studied literature and Scandinavian languages at Oslo University 1986-90, and film and TV at Volda University College 1990-92. Has produced and directed for NRK's Children and Youth Department and DR's Children and Youth Department. Among his award-winning films is *My Eyes* (2006), which won the IDFA Silver Cub Award, the GuldDok for Best Sound at CPH:DOX, Best Documentary Short in Sao Paolo, and Cinematic Vision Short Award at the SilverDocs AFI (Discovery Channel Documentary Festival).

SAMI SAIF

Born 1972, Denmark. Graduated in documentary film direction at the National Film School of Denmark, 1997. Apart from working on productions at DR TV Children & Youth Department, Saif has also been engaged as a documentary film consultant at Zentropa Real. Directed the controversial, unpublished *The Video Diary of Ricardo Lopez* (2000). *Family* (2001), codirected with Phie Ambo, won the Joris Ivens Award at IDFA Amsterdam.

ZENTROPA ENTERTAINMENTS

Founded 1992 by director Lars von Trier and producer Peter Aalbæk Jensen. One of the largest production companies in Scandinavia. Has established a platform for young filmmakers and veteran directors alike, and covers feature film production as well as a range of services within DVD manufacture, digital communications and concept development. Is greatly acknowledged for having reinvigorated the industry with *Dogme 95*. In 2008, Nordisk Film bought fifty percent of Zentropa's shares, thus becoming co-owner. Owned the companies Zentropa GRRR (produced animations) and Zentropa Real (produced documentaries). Zentropa's international breakthrough came with Lars von Trier's *Breaking the Waves* (1996). Renown continued with Lone Scherfig's Berlin winner *Italian for Beginners* (2000). For more about feature films: www.dfi.dk/danish films. Shorts include Oscar nominee *At Night* (2007). Documentaries include Katia Forbert Petersen's *Von Trier's 100 Eyes* (2000), exploring *Dancer in the Dark*; and Sami Saif's *Dogville Confessions* (2003). Trier and Jørgen Leth's own journey into the phenomenon of filmmaking, *The Five Obstructions* (2003), has been chosen for festivals worldwide and generously awarded.



Jens Loftager. Photo: Unknown



Erland E. Mo. Photo: P. Wessel



Sami Saif. Photo: Jan Buus

For further information on Paradise, see reverse section.

A FILM IS A FILM IS A FILM... IS A FILM... IS A FILM...

Experimentation is the key focus for a large section of the documentary scene in Denmark – new modes of narrative, new production methods and a variety of alternative distribution platforms are surfacing, encouraged by the DFI.

BY SUSANNA NEIMANN

A documentary series on MySpace; an interactive film for teenagers on their mobile telephones; a daily short on the online edition of one of Denmark's largest newspapers, and an autobiographical artistic portrait recorded on mobile telephones are among the many projects which have been produced and supported by the Danish Film Institute (DFI) during the last years

DOXWISE WEBISODES ON MYSPACE

Doxwise is an online documentary series that chronicles ten weeks in the lives of four young people. The director, Michael Noer (page 20–21)

equipped each with a camera to document, individually, their own lives. In the Fall of 2007, a total of 40 episodes were showcased in the course of 11 weeks about Sabrina, Esben, Pierre and Amanda, whilst internet users communicated with them directly via MySpace.

The cast is comprised of your average everyday young person—yet each has his or her own unique story, concerns, longings and doubts. Sabrina, 20, is a University student who lives with her female lover. Esben, 23, is a bartender and drummer who is looking for love. Pierre, 18, smokes too much hash but is doing everything in his power to quit. Amanda, only 18, is acutely affected by her mother's battle with cancer.

"I'm attempting to mix a cocktail of YouTube and Aristotle," says Michael Noer. and although the

series is inspired by the internet's intimate video blog genre, the director has worked with some of the classic cinematic tools available. The protagonists are carefully chosen according to both the inner and external conflicts they are experiencing in their lives, and their many hours of recordings are edited by Noer to 2-3 highly effective minutes.

"It is an intimate, honest documentary, produced for young people, by young people about young people, targeted specifically to speak to this generation of internet-TV users. It is a method where you get close-up to the protagonists, as they use the camera as their own personal confidante. Our hope is that we, by giving young people insight into the lives of other young people, their thoughts and decisions, can get them to see the opportunities in their own lives," says director Michael Noer.

DOXWISE is a part of the outreach program DOX NETWISE, initiated by Prami Larsen of the DFI

Film Workshop and produced by Copenhagen Bombay.

www.doxwise.dk

CLIPS CINEMATIC ART MEETS THE INTERNET NEWSPAPER

In CLIPS we meet Niels Hansen, who has lived in his peaceful, cozy house in Christiania for 24 years, the young prostitute Saeng, a novice bartender in Pattaya, Thailand and Brian Mphahlele, from South Africa, who gives us his raw testimony on the price he has had to pay for his political convictions and faith in justice, equality and liberty.

These are examples from the 12 short films that were premiered daily this autumn on Politiken.tv under the title CLIPS. CLIPS is a collaboration between the Danish newspaper Politiken online edition and the Danish Film Institute.



Doxwise. Framegrab



Clips: Novice. Framegrab



Pinly and Flau. Framegrab

The concept behind CLIPS is to exhibit cinematic art in an on-line news format. Can filmmakers capture our imagination with a cinematic message of 3-5 minutes that carries their individual artistic identity and impact? CLIPS will examine this possibility.

The experience of producing *Novice*, about the young 'bar girls' in Thailand has been a positive for the director, Janus Metz. Metz participates in IDFA with *Love on Delivery* and *Ticket to Paradise*. Scenes from *Novice* were originally filmed for these two documentaries, but were omitted due to dramatic purposes.

"For me *Novice* gives greater perspective and depth to the original films' theme. At the same time it serves as a film in its own right, and it has been both challenging and fun to effectively tell and formulate a well-rounded story in such a limited format. It has required great precision," says Janus Metz.

120 Danish directors, editors and cinematographers have been invited to contribute to CLIPS, and the result is 12 very distinct films. The editorial team behind CLIPS is more than satisfied with the results so far. "It has, as we had hoped, attracted both experienced filmmakers as well as younger talent, all with meaningful documentary productions behind them. The projects range from pure cinematic poetry, to small intense portraits to personal essays," says Dola Bonfils, consultant at the DFI, who hopes the project will continue into 2009.

politiken.tv

MOBILE FILM CELL PHONES & THE INTERNET

In 2008 the DFI started a new scheme of supporting a series of small film narratives, designed to meet the younger generation where they already spend much of their time: on cell phones and the internet.

"With mobile films we would like to engage the younger generation on their own turf, on the platforms and social networks that they are already participating in: cell phones, YouTube, Arto etc. We will experiment with narratives and idioms in this miniature format and encourage the youngsters themselves to be co-creators in the narrative, and that they will find it attractive enough to distribute them

among their own friends," says DFI's consultant for children and youth, Miriam Nørgaard, who, together with TV 2 supports the project.

Among the cell phone movies that have received financial support are: *Pinly and Flau*, six small narratives which chronicles embarrassing teenage experiences told through animated protagonists, the twins Pinly and Flau. The series is based on actual experiences of young people, which were collected through TV 2's children's homepage.

The series is directed by Martin Strange-Hansen, who in 2002 won a mini-Oscar for his graduation film *Feeding Desire*, and in 2003 won an Oscar for Best Short Film for *This Charming Man*. Martin Strange Hansen attempts to use viewer identification and what he likes to call 'the curling of your toes' principal:

"2-3 minutes is too short a time-frame to establish complex feelings, but when the story, which is told is based upon reality, and it becomes accessible, you think, "Wow, thank goodness that wasn't me!"

Malene Flindt Pedersen, head of the development unit at the DFI, emphasizes that the cell phone project will contribute to gaining experience with the small, interactive formats for the DFI and the industry.

"Suddenly we have to be aware of some completely different economic and ethical aspects than usual, for example, that young people, or their parents, cannot incur extra charges on their mobile telephone bills when they forward these films, and so on. And the films absolutely can not be used for bullying or teasing purposes – we have worked hard to ensure that this does not happen, even with the youngsters themselves as co-creators.

Pinly and Flau is produced by Ole Tornbjerg for Konkern TV and Film Production. The mobile telephone films have yet to be released.

There are many other groundbreaking projects in the pipeline. Among them, *Suicide*, which has just received financial support from New Danish Screen. *Suicide* is a hybrid between documentary and fiction. A type of kaleidoscope road movie, with an authentic protagonist in the form of artist Jakob Boeskov, who searches for his artistic expression and masculine identity by assuming different roles in his life.

Material for this film has already been recorded, with the idea to film the remaining scenes using a cell phone. ■



Artistic Director, New Danish Screen / Jakob Kirstein Hegel. Photo: Per Morten Abrahamsen

NEW FORMATS NEW TALENTS NEW COMPANIES

Since 2007, New Danish Screen, the talent development program has supported documentary films that experiment with new forms of cinematic and narrative expression. Artistic director Jakob Hogel shares his experiences.

BY EVA NOVRUP REDVALL

New Danish Screen was established in 2003 to develop new talent in the Danish film industry by giving them an opportunity to seek out and try new ideas in respect to what has previously been tried. Anders Morgenthaler's *Princess*, a combination of live action and animation, Christopher Boe's *Offscreen*, an experimental film in which the main character is given

the camera, and Pernille Fischer Christensen's *Soap*, an intense drama filmed in just two apartments, are among the films that have been viewed at international festivals and have received worldwide attention.

At the same time a number of both shorter and longer productions have gained national attention and have been important in promoting new names and in encouraging innovation as opposed to the familiar aspects in Danish cinema.

OPEN MINDED

Since 2007 New Danish Screen, building upon collaboration between Danish Film Institute (DFI) together with DR and TV 2/Danmark, has also supported documentary filmmaking. In the same year former film consultant and founder as well

as director of the documentary film company Cosmo Doc, Jacob Høgel was appointed artistic director. He regards the inclusion of documentary filmmaking as a natural development, not least because New Danish Screen is keen not to distinguish between the boundaries of fiction and non-fiction and other genres.

"In New Danish Screen we strive to remain open-minded toward what the individual filmmaker wants to investigate, and focus upon that which the individual filmmaker can, or wants to achieve. The starting point is the applicants premise and their energy, and we try to assist them in defining their ideas as clearly and as concrete as possible. This openness extends also to crossover genres and hybrid genres.

"New ideas don't generally arise through thinking in the box. As such, both script and project development function on the same economic and creative basis, regardless whether a project is presented as fiction or documentary, and more and more of the films we are involved with find themselves in the regions between the two."

ROCK'N'ROLL PRODUCTIONS

When working with documentary films it is the norm, as early as presenting a new project, to be asked to define both its genre and length. New Danish Screen supports films of various lengths, and Jacob Høgel regards it as an advantage to allow a particular project's development and potential be the deciding factors along the way rather than to set in stone many things ahead of time. When it comes to the documentary format it is sometimes necessary to have the freedom to respond quickly, as often reality cannot wait for protracted deliberations.

"What we can do is to initiate projects that require particular haste. Some filmmakers don't require a long time to consider things. There is more learning by doing and often it is a case of capturing the moment. We have projects developing as they are filmed, and this form of *rock'n'roll* production must also have a place in the industry."

NEW FORMATS AND HOOKS

According to Jacob Høgel there are three categories of applicants to New Danish Screen. There are many applications from emerging talent looking to debut, applications from people approaching filmmaking

from associated fields, for example journalists or artists, and then there are the boundary pushing projects from more experienced filmmakers. Since August 2007, 100 projects have applied for support of which around 30 have received a letter of interest.

He describes the range of documentary films emerging from New Danish Screen as a broad sweep of different projects, that are not only seeking recognition at festivals and in the cinema, but are also looking to renew traditional TV-formats and to be used as potential pilots for possible TV-series.

Formats and premises are being experimented with in many different ways. Among the current projects there are, for example, attempts to renew the historical documentary and the artist portrait format; two exhausted genres that are in need of an overhaul.

RISK TAKING!

The two first documentary films from New Danish Screen were shown at the CPH:DOX Festival. Christian Sønderby's *Side by Side* is a staged documentary film about the conflicts that occur over the garden hedge between two neighbours. In *Jesper and I*, artist Ulrik Crone paints a portrait of the Danish punk-legend Jesper Reisinger with a mixture of visual effects.

Jakob Høgel is looking forward to the release of the first films, even though he himself describes New Danish Screen as a playground, it is a playground where film is considered as a means of communication. There is less focus on viewing numbers, demographics and target groups. Rather the focus is on knowing one's audience, and on what the different films can add to the Danish film industry.

"The hope is of course that new significant visions of format, of people and production companies emerge out of New Danish Screen. Even though the focus is upon the individual talent and their development, one should also remember that from a production perspective it is very demanding to gamble on new talent. In my experience there is now a greater willingness for risk-taking within the film industry. Therefore it is important that we now support the documentary film format and make sure that the individual projects do not come under pressure economically and undermine the incentive to experiment." ■



Black Heart. Photo: Ada Søby Bligaard

NEW TALENT FROM SUPER 16

Ada Søby Bligaard is one of the new talents from the alternative filmskole Super16. *Black Heart*, her graduation film, was selected for the Danish Dox Awards Competition at the Copenhagen documentary film festival CPH:DOX 2008. Bligaard was also director for the festival's trailer.

Black Heart is a post 9-11 story that follows in the footsteps of three New Yorkers, each struggling with loss.

Marina, who married after a head-over-heels affair 10 years previous, is now struggling as a solo mother of two. Tim is employed at a record company in Brooklyn, recognizing that freedom is proportionately the opposite of the amount of one's assets. And Josh has just lost everything in a blaze of fire. The fourth character is New York, as it pulls itself together after the tragedy and the scar that has remained.

The film, to be released in 2009, is produced by Morten Kjems Juhl for Fine & Mellow ■

BLEKINGEGADE-BANDEN THE POLITICAL CRIME OF THE NATION

Blekingegadebanden, a Danish documentary film to be released 20 March 2009, is the true story of a group of young radical Danes, who began as political activists, and became involved with a complex organization that functioned on different levels – both legally and illegally. They not only lost touch with their own moral principles, but placed their own and others' lives at risk to raise finance for a mission that for them had a greater cause. The group was disclosed in 1989 after 15 years of performing the biggest heists in the history of Denmark and causing the death of a



Anders Riis Hansen. Photo: Thomas Skyum

22-year-old policeman.

Blekingegadebanden is an adaptation of Peter Øvig Knudsen's non-fiction bestseller of the same name from 2007. Søren Steen Jespersen of Bastard Film is producer, Anders Riis-Hansen director ■



Space Shanghai. Photo: Bastard Film

CITIES ON SPEED ENORMOUS CHALLENGES

Supported by DR and the DFI, *Cities on Speed* is a series of four films, dealing with different themes and cities, and with a special focus on the problems arising from migration from rural areas to urban centers. As a result cities are expanding rapidly and enormous challenges are being faced. The four films bring into focus the problems that are looming. Expected release is scheduled for autumn 2009:

The first film carries the working title *Space / Shanghai*: Shanghai, the financial centre of the world's fastest-

growing economy, is experiencing enormous growth. Every 20 minutes a skyscraper is constructed. Citizens are trying to adjust to the transformation. Directed by Nanna Frank Møller for Bastard Film.

Garbage / Cairo: This city produces 10,000 tons of garbage each day. Sanitation companies cannot keep up with the growing piles of garbage. In all quarters of Cairo, citizens are suffering from the consequences. Solutions are required urgently. Directed by Mikala Krogh for Nimbus Film.

Traffic / Mumbai: The infrastructure of the city is on the point of collapse, threatening to put an end to its economic growth. The streets are already heavily congested, and soon

the world's cheapest car will hit the street. An eight-lane highway on pillars offshore, running parallel to the landline, is under construction to relieve the situation – but only to bring on new challenges. Directed by Camilla Nielsson & Frederik Jacobi for Cosmo Doc.

Behaviour / Bogota: 15 years ago Bogotá had the world's highest murder rate and kidnappings were the order of the day. Today, the unorthodox initiatives of two mayors have changed the course of the Columbian capital. The crime rate has dropped dramatically, but there are still problems to be solved. Directed by Eva Mulvad for Cosmo Film Doc ■



IMPRESSIVE DEBUT

Solange on Love follows Tine Katinka Jensen's awardwinning graduation film *Angie*. The film, produced by Vibeke Vogel and Elise Lund Larsen, is the first production from the newly established Bullit Film. *Solange on Love* was released in August 2008.

The film depicts the lives of two young Chilean women, both carrying the name Solange. They come from different backgrounds and are at different stages of their lives. But they share common ground in their struggle to be with the one person they love under the pressures of challenges from the outside world.

Jensen shot the film while on a journey in Chile after a long period of illness: "I was fascinated by the quirky and original characters from environments I didn't know existed. Drawn toward a rawness, strength and pride in being different. People who are living on the edge. Perhaps we share contempt for death. It must not be something that is planned. The confrontation. This is where it all begins, and for me it becomes magical." ■



To Have and to Hold. Photo: Erik Molberg Hansen

DRAMA-DOC ON VIOLENCE

To Have and to Hold, directed by Mette Rix and produced with support from the DFI Film Workshop, is a story about domestic violence, and consisting of two portraits, one of a violent man,

the other, a female victim of violence. The film shows how important it is for people, who are either subject to or themselves the perpetrators of violence, to receive help to neutralize the violent element in their lives.

Rix' drama-documentary uses a poetical language to express the repressive silence experienced by the protagonists who live their lives in solace. In between the acts of violence, rage lives on and is transformed into loneliness and isolation. Rix' film attempts to answer the question, why some men are violent and why their women don't leave them?

CBA Film handles international sales. Website: www.magtenoverlivet.dk ■