

SEE NL



Loznitsa *in Cannes competition*

Getting Animated
in Annecy

Dutch VR *goes to Cannes*

4 years of New Screen NL

Julius Ponten:
Producer on the Move

Scorsese
comes to EYE

Issue #27 May 2017 Cannes / Annecy issue

**NL FILM
FONDS**



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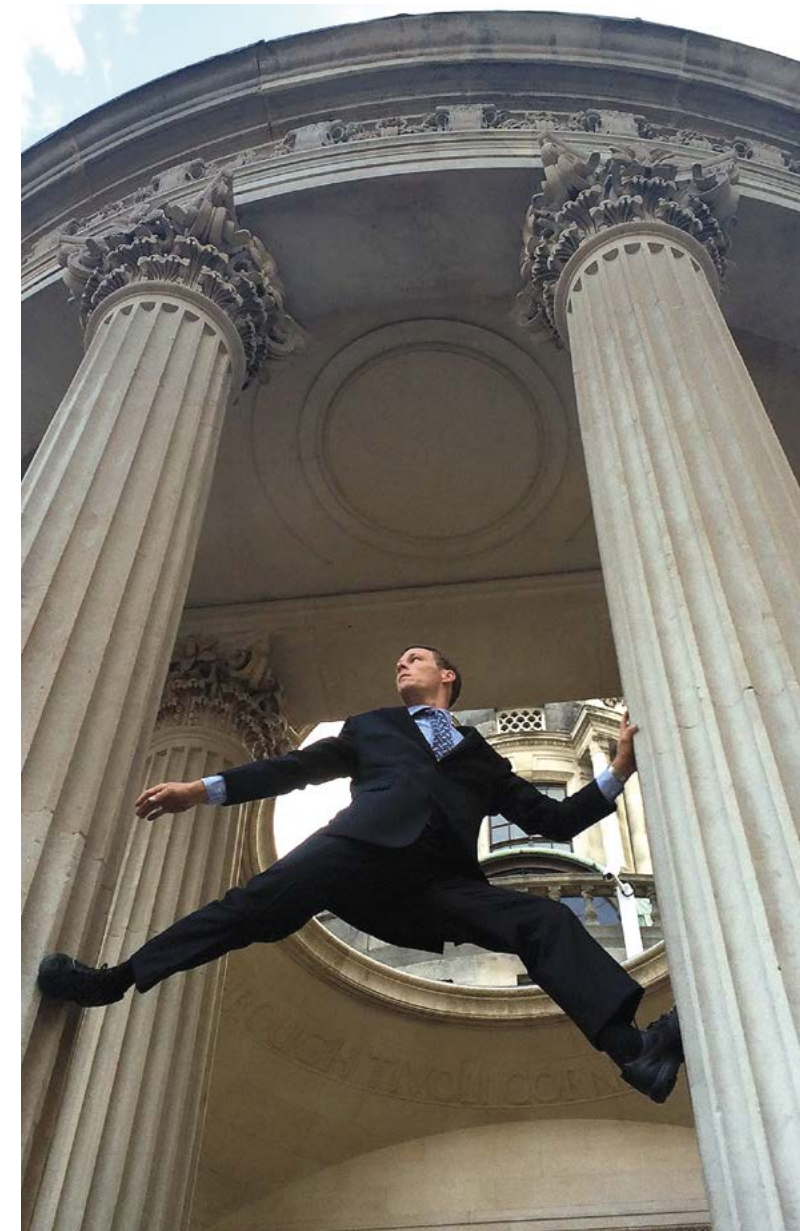
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Photo: Petra van der Ree

Dutch designer Sabine Marcelis, who is transforming the Cannes 2017 Netherlands Pavilion into a walk-in 3D Mondrian installation

Doing it in Stijl

The Dutch Pavilion will undergo a radical refit at Cannes 2017 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the influential art movement De Stijl. Nick Cunningham reports.

The line of national pavilions at the top of the Croisette are rarely noted for their sense of design aesthetic, nor for their attempts to up the ergonomic ante. They are, in the main, places to sit, drink endless cups of coffee and talk the crusty old business of film. This is not a criticism that can be leveled at the Dutch however, whose Cannes marquees have, in recent years, showcased the work of the country's leading designers, furniture manufacturers, lighting gurus and wallpaperistas. All done to instill a cooler vibe, fire the imagination, pay tribute to the heritage of Dutch design and heighten the experience of serious cinematic exchange among the Dutch and international film community.

This year designer Sabine Marcelis is taking the design brief into the realms of the fantastical as she transforms the Netherlands Pavilion into a walk-in 3D Mondriaan, replete with illuminated blocks of primary colours, bordered (of course) in black. Somewhat of a shooting star, Marcelis boasts an impressive (and diverse) client list that includes Céline, Rabobank and legendary Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas. For her, the Cannes commission is

part of an already packed 2017 that includes projects for Art Basel, Milan's Salone de Mobili and a photo-feature in Wallpaper magazine.

"I have taken Mondriaan's Composition in Red, Yellow and Blue and extruded it so it becomes a 75-square metre space," she says. "When you are standing at the entrance to the pavilion you see the painting but it is flat. But when you start to move through, the painting is pulled apart because the colour blocks are three-dimensional objects. These are pure shapes, pure compositions. A lot of my work is in these very pure forms. The concept is to celebrate this iconic man from De Stijl movement and transform his work, 100 years later, into a space using materials that are very modern."

The materials that Marcelis uses most are glass and resin, continually infused with both natural and artificial light as she searches for 'moments of wonder'. "These materials have the ability to be more transparent or more opaque and I play with that juxtaposition, with gradations of colour and gradations of translucency. I think that has become a sort of signature in my work. They are the tools to create an interesting effect."

"I have taken into account that there will be light coming into the Cannes pavilion, so it's going to interact with the colour and it's

going to cast some colourful shadows on the floor," she adds. "The space is forever changing during the day because the position of the natural light is changing, so that is a very interesting notion to play with."

The commemoration of the work of De Stijl is supported by EYE, the Netherlands Film Fund, the Netherlands Film Commission and leading design and architecture hub Het Nieuwe Instituut. Artists within De Stijl, such as Piet Mondriaan and Gerrit Rietveld, looked to achieve abstraction and universality through reverting to axiomatic forms and colours, hence the vertical and horizontal framing and the use of black and white, and primary colours.

Not only does the Cannes commission present Marcelis with a window onto some of the world's leading cinematic creatives, it also allows her to refine her *modus operandi*. "It is an interesting challenge when you are working within architecture, or interior spaces. When I am just making free, artistic work I can selfishly do whatever I want and I don't have to think about anybody else's needs. But with the Dutch Pavilion, it is interesting to work with other people who have separate, professional needs. Together you find nice solutions and I think you are also forced to think creatively in a different way to create a functioning space without tainting the concept."



Director & script: Sergei Loznitsa **Production:** Slot Machine (FR)
Co-Production: Graniet Film (NL), Looks Film (DE), Studio Uljana
 Kim (LT) **Sales:** Wild Bunch

Do not go gentle



Sergei Loznitsa

Ukrainian director Sergei Loznitsa is beginning to seem like an honorary Dutchman, writes Geoffrey Macnab, which is why the Dutch are happy to celebrate their involvement in his Cannes competition contender A Gentle Creature.

Loznitsa first worked in The Netherlands on the post-production for his award-winning *In The Fog* (2012). He did the sound editing at WarnierPosta and has been coming back ever since. Among other projects, Loznitsa also brought the documentary *Maidan* to Amsterdam and, of course, *A Gentle Creature*. He is a regular presence, too, at festivals like IFFR and IDFA.

Loznitsa was drawn to The Netherlands initially because he had a Dutch sound supervisor, Michel Schöpping, but now relishes his Dutch connections. That's why, when he was preparing *A Gentle Creature*, he rang Peter Warnier, founder of WarnierPosta, and explained to him that the film had a French producer who wanted him to do the post-production in Paris – but that he'd prefer to come back to Amsterdam.

To make this happen, Warnier decided to come on board the project as a co-producer as well as a sound editor. He joined forces with his neighbour and friend, theatre and film producer Marc Van Warmerdam from Graniet Film. (Van Warmerdam and Warnier rent premises in the same building; they've known each other for 30 years and they have worked often on films directed by Marc's celebrated brother Alex.) This enabled *A Gentle Creature* to be structured as a Dutch minority co-production.

“Eastern Europeans... let's say they need less words. He is not really a big talker. He makes these wonderful films... he's a man of few words but big ideas,” Warnier observes of Loznitsa's manner in the studio. The director doesn't need to explain at great length what he wants. There is a shorthand between him and his trusted collaborators.

For the Ukrainian filmmaker, there were several different attractions to being back in The Netherlands. One was the expertise of Warnier and his colleagues. The other was that he already knew them, liked them and enjoyed working with them.

“Marc was very enthusiastic about the script and very energetic, which I loved. I would say that Marc and Peter's participation in the project was of crucial importance and I greatly appreciate their input in the film,” Loznitsa reflects. “In general, I'm very fond of The

Netherlands and indeed there is a special affinity. I have a company in The Netherlands called Atoms & Void, and we have already produced two feature-length documentaries (*Maidan* and *The Event*) and several shorts. I'm very grateful to the Film Fund, to Doreen Boonekamp and to Screen NL's Frank Peijnenburg for their support of my work.”

A Gentle Creature is one of Dostoevsky's best known short stories but the Ukrainian director is quick to point out that his film isn't exactly an adaptation. “I think we all read it. If not at school, at least by the age of 20, every Russian speaking person with a certain degree of education and interest in literature, would have read it.

“Loznitsa makes these wonderful films... he's a man of few words but big ideas”

However, if we are talking about my film – the only thing it has in common with Dostoevsky's story is the title perhaps, the fact that the main protagonist is a young woman. All the other links are rather meta-physical and subconscious. After all, my story is set in contemporary Russia and the suffering inflicted on the main character is not caused just by one specific person.”

The choice of Amsterdam of *A Gentle Creature* for its post-production wasn't just driven by ▶

Do not go gentle

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Loznitsa's love of Netherlands culture. It is also a testament to the impact of the Dutch cash rebate system since it was introduced in 2014. Loznitsa and his French producer Marianne Slot of Slot Machine were able to secure significant financing in The Netherlands. Warnier points out how in the past many productions like this, as well as Dutch productions themselves, would have gone to Belgium or elsewhere to do post. Now, they can stay Dutch. Since 2014, the post-production sector in The Netherlands has begun to blossom again. "We see extra work coming and we see more interest from filmmakers abroad in making films in Holland," Warnier confirms.

Warnier himself is now in the process of opening a new Dolby Atmos Studio which is bound to attract the attention of more international producers. This is an expensive and ambitious venture. However, the demand justifies the new facility, which is due to open later this year.

Alongside WarnierPosta, the sound guru has also established his own private production company, Wild At Art, through which he can come on board projects as producer or as co-producer. A former musician, Warnier used to be a studio bass player. In his late 20s, he became fascinated by sound design for film.

Both as a producer and sound technician, Warnier has a hunger to

work on big international projects – but to do so in Amsterdam rather than travel abroad. Seven years ago, he was one of the sound designers on David Verbeek's Cannes entry *R U There* (2010). The sound mixing was completed in France at a studio with state of the art facilities. It has been his ambition ever since to

"I'm very fond of The Netherlands and indeed there is a special affinity"

ensure the Dutch have similar capacity. Even before the cash rebate was installed, he tried to work on foreign co-productions. (His credits range from Greek auteur Yorgos Lanthimos' *The Lobster* to Latin American project *El Cinco*.) Now, with the rebate in place and production and post-production activity on the rise, banks are prepared to support film and TV projects in a way that would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

Having made *A Gentle Creature* with Loznitsa, he is set to work with the Ukrainian again on his next project, a feature documentary about the Stalin-era show trials and terror, and potentially on his next dramatic feature too. The new doc, which will be based on Russian archive footage, is called *The Trial*. A new dramatic feature, which Warnier and Van Warmerdam will also co-produce, is titled *Donbass*.

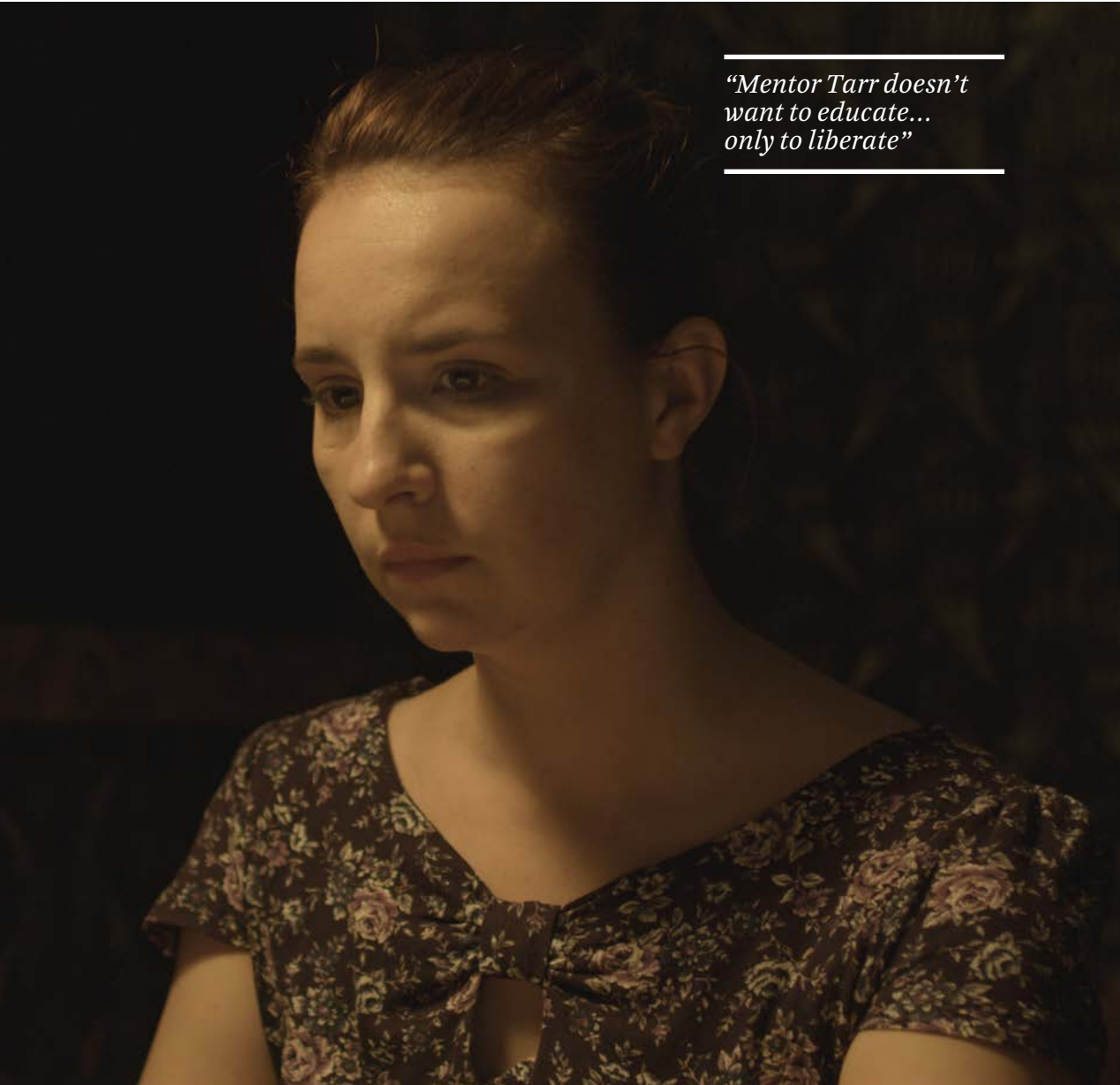
Ask Loznitsa whether he sees fictional films as easier to make than documentaries and he suggests the reverse is the case. "As far as I'm concerned, fiction imposes very strict limitations and rules. You have to work with a big crew, you have a much bigger budget, you have the equipment, which takes a long time to set up. In general, I don't like any improvisation on the set – I rehearse with the actors and extras for about three months before the shoot. This is the only way to ensure that the film of 2 hours and 20 min duration will be shot in 25 shooting days."

Next on Loznitsa's horizon is the world premiere in Cannes. "It's a great honour and a great challenge," he says of *A Gentle Creature*'s selection. "Of course, as far as I'm concerned, it's the best place in the world to premiere one's film and it's a place where cinema matters more than anything else in the world. And, what's most important for me, it gives one extra possibilities to find support for new projects, the possibilities to carry on..."

In a year in which representation from The Netherlands in official selection in Cannes is limited, *A Gentle Creature* is the title that the Dutch are bound to be rooting for in the race for the Palme D'Or.



Maidan
Director & script: Sergei Loznitsa
Production: Atoms & Void (NL)



“Mentor Tarr doesn’t want to educate... only to liberate”

Lejla land



Young Dutch director Stijn Bouma will be at the Cannes Cinéfondation this year with his short film *Lejla*. This was a project nurtured at the Sarajevo Film Academy under the guidance of legendary Hungarian director Béla Tarr (until recently the Head of the Academy). Geoffrey Macnab reports.

Stijn Bouma is full of praise for Béla Tarr, both as teacher and mentor. When he compared notes with friends at other film schools, he realised just how much creative freedom Tarr gave him. “He doesn’t want to educate... only to liberate,” Bouma stresses. There were seldom complaints about the length of a project or a student’s choice of subject matter.

The Hungarian also provided the students with workshops and master-classes from some inspirational figures. Bouma ticks them off one by one: Tsai Ming Liang, Pedro Costa, Carlos Reygadas, Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Victor Erice – and that was just the last semester. Bouma was able to meet and talk with them all. “The best thing was to see the passion of all these filmmakers. Even though they do

things very differently, they have a certain drive and passion in what they are doing. That infects you.”

Tarr himself was equally passionate. He also had an uncanny knack of realising just where students were with a project. If they were overconfident, Tarr would bring them down a notch or two. If they were insecure, he would give them self-belief. He could be warm and gentle... or very harsh if that was what was required.

Supported by the Film Fund, *Lejla* is inspired by the young director’s observations of life in Bosnia. He noticed that there was a great desire among the country’s youth to leave. There were no job opportunities for them there. The scars of the siege and wars of the 1990s are still painfully evident. “I was hearing stories about people wanting to leave for Austria or Germany – and to live a different life,” Bouma recalls. “They feel that they don’t have opportunities and that the country isn’t progressing. There seems to be quite some disillusionment.”

One of the assignments Tarr had set the students was to use a story from James Joyce’s *Dubliners* as a starting point for a film. Joyce’s story *Eveline* was about a young woman who had to decide whether or not to leave Dublin with her lover. “It is only five pages but when I read the whole book, this story gave me one of the strongest impressions,” the director recalls.

Lejla is the equivalent of *Eveline* in the Joyce story. Bouma acknowledges that he was unsure, as an outsider, whether to address squarely the subject of Bosnia’s recent war past. However, he was able to find young non-professional actors whose situation resembled that of the lovers in Joyce’s tale. Lejla Hadžić plays the eponymous Lejla while Vedad Terzić was cast as Vedad, the love interest who may take her away from her homeland.

Bouma himself came to filmmaking in a roundabout way. He grew up in Hoorn, a small town outside Amsterdam. His father is an accountant and his mother works in a hospital lab. Growing up, he watched *Jurassic Park* and *Star Wars* but didn’t have a specialist interest in cinema. Then, when he was 17, he became a passionate cinephile after he saw *2001: Space Odyssey*. “From that point on, I just dived into film history,” he remembers. After high school, he took a degree in film studies. He also worked as an intern at Circe Films. Eventually, after he took his masters, he headed to Tarr’s programme in Sarajevo.

Since making *Lejla*, Bouma has shot another project, his graduation film *Regained Memory*, currently in post-production. He has also formed his own production company, Alchemic, together with two colleagues and is hoping to make his first feature soon. In the meantime, he is looking forward to Cannes, the festival which has long been regarded as the perfect springboard for young talent.

Director & script: Stijn Bouma
Production: Sarajevo Film Academy (BA),
Alchemic Film (NL)

When the going gets tough...

Cannes Film Festival Producer Julius Ponten



New Amsterdam is a hybrid company but on a far bigger scale

**PRODUCERS
ON THE
MOVE**

at the Cannes International Film Festival 2017

Wolf
Director & script: Jim Taihuttu Production:
Habbekrats (NL) Co-Production: NTR (NL)
Sales: XYZ Films



Geoffrey Macnab talks to producer Julius Ponten, the Netherlands' nod for Producer on the Move at Cannes 2017.

"Producing is a tough job. In the morning, you can get a call saying you've got a million. Then, at the end of the day, someone says 'fuck your project, you are a stupid guy...'" Julius Ponten reflects on the ups and downs of his career. "I try never to be too happy and never to cry too hard. You need to be able to keep this balance."

At this stage, Ponten's career appears to have had many more ups than downs. He has been chosen to be one of European Film Promotion's Producers On the Move at Cannes this year. As one of the founding partners of the New Amsterdam Film Company, he has a bulging slate of projects in development, shooting and in post-production. Ponten is a networker extraordinaire, with numerous contacts in The Netherlands and beyond.

It's a sign of the producer's ambition that, two years ago, realising he was going to be making bigger movies, he closed down his old company

Habbekrats and started up New Amsterdam instead. "I realised that my company would be too small – it was only me as a producer with Victor Ponten and Jim Taihuttu as directors," he says of Habbekrats, whereas at the new outfit he is working alongside other established producers, among them Sander Verdonk.

Taihuttu (his collaborator on the breakthrough films *Rabat* and *Wolf*) and brother Victor (with whom he is currently shooting the feature film *Catacombs*) are still partners in New Amsterdam, and Ponten continues his collaboration with director Michiel ten Horn (*The Deflowering of Eva van End*). Ponten is currently financing *The East*, a film about the Indonesian War of Independence set 1946, to be directed by Taihuttu. "At the end of the day, we realised we should grow into a bigger company."

At Habbekrats, Ponten had combined the production of feature films with making commercials and shooting music videos for Dutch hip hop artists. New Amsterdam is also a hybrid company but on a bigger scale.

Ponten's route into the film industry began when he was 19, studying law, and set up his first company, Triomf, which did "everything in the cultural sector." He helped put on exhibitions but was also a driver and technician for theatre productions. In 2003/2004, Ponten began to produce films, working with Taihuttu and ten Horn, who were film students at the time. "I wanted to learn how to produce films," he remembers of this period.

"It is different than producing theatre or producing a party – to develop a story, then shoot the movie and release the film... there are a lot of different aspects." He also realised that a successful film has far more lasting "impact" than a play, and is not as ephemeral as a party.

Ponten didn't grow up in a cinephile family. "My parents never took me along to the cinema. I didn't grow up with a lot of movies." But when he was starting out as a producer a decade ago, there were some Dutch films which inspired him, such as the early work of David Lammers. That said, Dutch films weren't his major influence. "I was more inspired by crossover and independent Hollywood movies – films that had a strong story but also had an impact on society, like *The Insider*, that was about the tobacco industry but also a really good thriller."

The movies made by Habbekrats always tended to be rooted in street culture. *Wolf* for example was set in the world of kickboxing and organised crime. "I wouldn't say that I grew up in the streets. That's not true. But I am connected to the hip hop mentality... if people don't give it to you, you just go there and take it – that is grounded in our way of doing business."

As for glam festivals like Cannes, Ponten regards them with mixed feelings. "It is one of the important places to be and you can do a lot of stuff." He pauses. "Everybody likes Cannes... and everybody hates it!"

Film nomad



Photo: Ulysse del Drago

Mahdi Fleifel

Born in Dubai, Mahdi Fleifel grew up in Copenhagen, graduated in London and has lived the past two years in The Netherlands. He recently returned from Athens where he was filming about the plight of Palestinian refugees. Now he is selected for Cannes Short Film Competition. Nick Cunningham talks to the nomadic filmmaker.

The path to Cannes has been somewhat unorthodox for director Mahdi Fleifel. In 2014 he moved to The Netherlands to develop his feature debut *Men in the Sun* at the Amsterdam-based Binger. The film, the true story of three Palestinian refugees attempting to flee Athens, has proved difficult to finance.

“I was a refugee myself,” explains Fleifel, best known for a series of documentaries about Palestinians seeking a new life in Europe. “My parents were Palestinian refugees from Lebanon. They came to Denmark when I was nine, so I have always wanted to tell this story, because it helps me to make sense of my world and my life.”

So when, in 2016, he was offered a small development grant from the Danish Film Institute, AFAC (Arab Cultural and Cinema Fund) and Creative Europe, Fleifel experienced a light bulb moment. Why not turn the result of a development period with activities such as location scouting, a workshop for non-actors and a shoot for test scenes into a stand-alone short film based on his feature script, and aim to get it into Cannes? And that is exactly what he did, with the 15-minute *A Drowning Man*.

The short film, set against a sumptuous Hellenic background and with a cast comprised of Athens-based Palestinian refugees, tells a poignant story of day-to-day survival on the streets of the Greek capital, an existence that includes begging, theft and prostitution. “The actors were from registered camps, as they had a degree of stability in their lives and could dedicate themselves to acting workshops, and the idea of being involved in a film was exciting to them,” Fleifel explains. “Unregistered refugees did not want to have anything to do with cameras or filmmakers. ‘Just leave us alone’, they said, ‘we are just passing through’.”

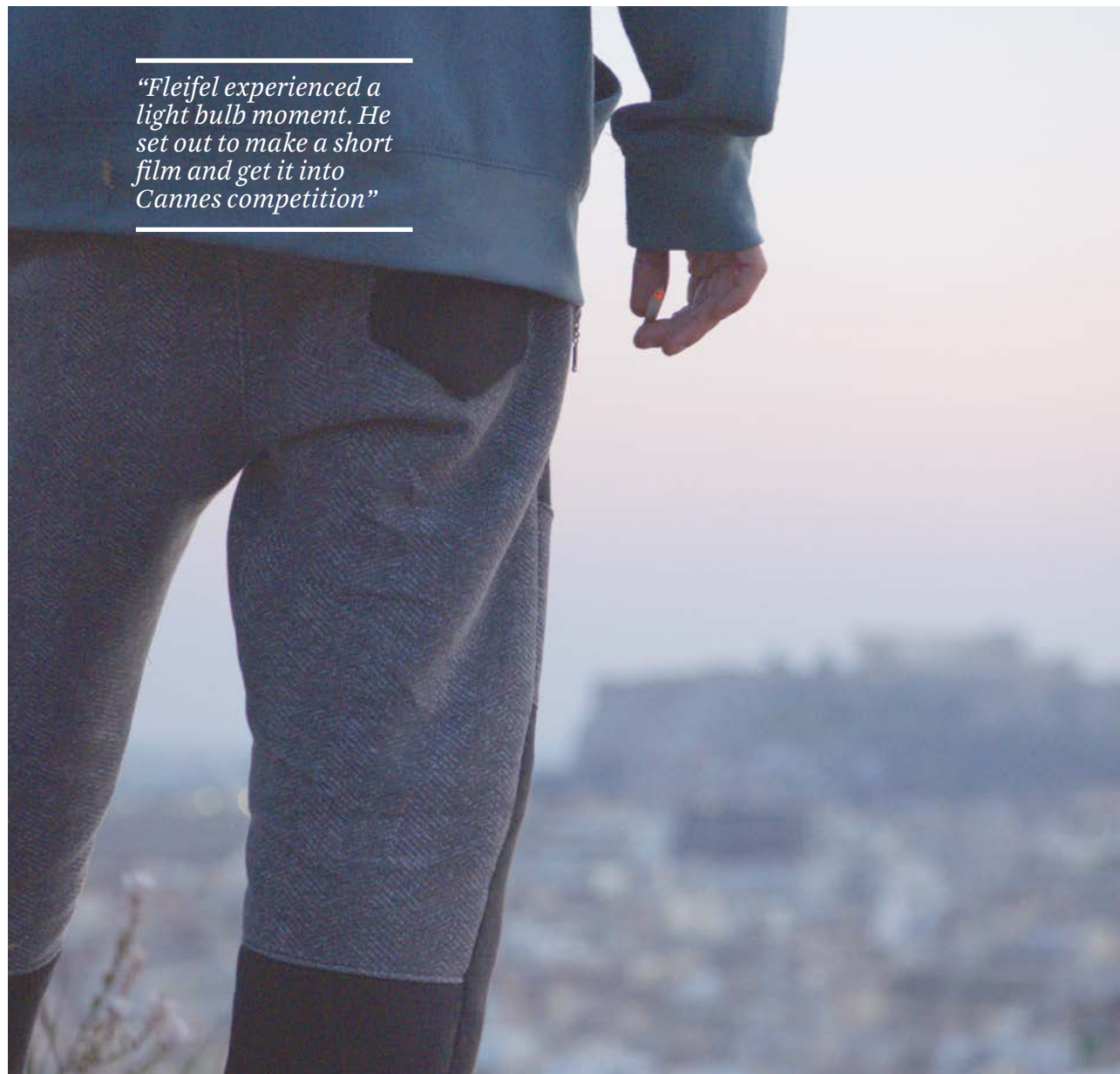
Fleifel studied at the Binger after graduating from the National Film and Television School in the UK. He considers the two years he spent in Amsterdam so far as very formative, and enthuses about his considerable number of Dutch

friends and professional colleagues. But while response from The Netherlands to the Cannes selection has been enthusiastic, he bemoans the zero response thus far from the UK, where he lived for 13 years and continues to run a production company (Nakba FilmWorks Ltd).

A Drowning Man is the only film from Denmark in selection at Cannes, which means that the Danish Film Institute spotlight is very much on director Fleifel. “They were brave enough to give me development support. The fact that I am the only filmmaker representing Denmark in Cannes this year is crazy. Of course they’re happy about this, especially since they only came on board at the very last minute. They gave us the grant in February, and now, two months later we’re in Cannes. I think I have given them a good return on their money. That’s my way of saying thank you – I mean, if you guys are willing to support me, I won’t waste your money nor your time. I am here to make cinema, period.”

“I guess it was good that nobody had these Cannes expectations, but nevertheless I wanted to push for that. It was an opportunity to do a stand alone short and prove that I could do fiction and not just documentary. So I took whatever opportunity I was given and made the most of it,” he concludes.

Cannes Film Festival Short Competition *A Drowning Man* ◊ Mahdi Fleifel



“Fleifel experienced a light bulb moment. He set out to make a short film and get it into Cannes competition”

Director & script: Mahdi Fleifel
Production: Final Cut for Real (Denmark),
Nakba FilmWorks Ltd (UK)
Co-Production: Homemade Films (GR)

Scotch & Waterboys

Cannes Marché

Waterboys ◊ Robert Jan Westdijk



Photo: Geert Spaaijer

Robert Jan Westdijk

Waterboys is a Dutch film with a very Scottish flavour. Inspired by the music of the Edinburgh-born Mike Scott and his rock band The Waterboys, and also by the Edinburgh-set Inspector Rebus novels of crime writer Ian Rankin, director Robert Jan Westdijk decided to shoot much of the film in Scotland.

Screening in Cannes Marché, the director is hopeful of a selection for the Edinburgh Film Festival in June. Geoffrey Macnab reports.

Waterboys is a road movie, following troubled, middle-aged crime novelist Victor (Leopold Witte) who heads to Scotland on a road trip with his estranged 20-year-old son Zack. Victor is a huge fan of the eponymous band and is desperate to see them perform, but can the pair reconcile their considerable differences en route?

Westdijk's 1995 debut feature *Little Sister* was a worldwide success and put Dutch cinema back on the map after the heady days of Verhoeven et al in the 1970s. In 2003 he directed the New York-based romcom hit *Philine Says Sorry*.

In preparation for shooting *Waterboys*, Westdijk visited Edinburgh several times, getting to know "every nook and cranny of the place." He and his lead actor went there on a scouting/research trip and loved the experience. Westdijk speaks admiringly of the cinematic qualities of Auld Reekie (as the city is nicknamed), its atmospheric greyness, the beauty of its old buildings and the many mysterious courtyards and alleyways. It's an undulating city with its castle on a hill and the mountainous Arthur's Seat surrounding it. That provides a strong contrast to The Netherlands where, as the director points out, "we all know that everything is flat."

The screenplay was written before Westdijk pitched story to the band's leader Scott. With the untranslated Dutch screenplay lying between them on table, Scott agreed to play a special gig in Amsterdam, footage of which would be used in the film. The concert was a dream come true for Westdijk but next morning he awoke with a start. Now all this had to be turned into cinematic reality.

"I suddenly realised I don't have actors, I don't have a crew, I don't have any money!" he remembers. Luckily Westdijk had enlisted the support of Maarten van der Ven as fellow producer. "I realised that, on this type of film, I needed a mix of experience and people who really want to go for it, who really wanted to go the extra mile. Maarten had produced several shorts and is a very experienced line producer.

This is his first feature. I met him a few days after I had met Mike Scott, and I knew he was the right person. That was one of the happiest weeks in my professional career. I got Mike Scott... and I got Maarten!"

Working on a lowish budget, the filmmakers were heartened by the encouragement they received from their Scottish partners, among them Edinburgh Council, Creative Scotland and the local crew members. They were shooting in the summer, at a time when Edinburgh was swarming with tourists, but still had plenty of freedom.

The *Waterboys* founder was intrigued at being approached out of the blue by a Dutch filmmaker who wanted him to collaborate on a movie. No, there isn't a soundtrack album as such but the *Waterboys* staged a concert specially for the film and they performed one of their most famous and most raucous songs, Don't Bang The Drum, in a new, much more wistful acoustic version, featuring just a violin and a keyboard. Scott has already seen the film. His verdict? "He calls it fab!" The band's fiddler, Steve Wickham, is also a fan. "He was very touched by the emotional line of the film, I think because he as a 20-year old son himself."

Waterboys was backed by the Film Fund's lowbudget scheme and has already been distributed successfully in The Netherlands (through Paradiso) and is being sold internationally by Paris-based Wide Management.

"I suddenly realised I don't have actors, I don't have a crew, I don't have any money!"



Director & script: Robert Jan Westdijk
Production: VENFILM (NL), Grote Broer Filmwerken (NL)
Co-Production: Wild at Art (NL)



Cannes Film Festival NEXT VR

The Night Watch  Maarten Treurniet

“All fields are being explored in *The Netherlands*: live action, fiction, documentary, animation, photogrammetry and tech”



Director & script: Maarten Treurniet
Production: 25FPS (NL)

Raising the VR periscope



Maarten Treurniet

SeeNL talks to Submarine Channel’s new director Michel Reilhac and ground-breaking Dutch director Maarten Treurniet ahead of the Cannes NEXT VR sidebar.

“Amsterdam is becoming a major hub for creative VR in Europe,” underlines Michel Reilhac, the internationally renowned trans-media producer/VR filmmaker, now heading up Submarine Channel. Together with the Film Fund he will present a programme of four Dutch VR projects at Cannes NEXT 2017.

“VR Days Europe, the first ever VR-only festival, was devised in The Netherlands, and is thriving. VR Base (founded by Dutch Daan Kip) is the first European VR incubator, now spreading to Berlin and Paris. Many innovative studios and companies are experimenting and making great work. All fields are being explored here: live action, fiction, documentary, animation, photogrammetry and tech,” Reilhac adds.

The four Dutch projects at Cannes NEXT are Submarine Channel’s *Ashes to Ashes*, “a surreal tragicomedy in virtual reality”; *Februar* by Maarten

Isaäk de Heer, a 2D animated panorama for VR, and *What Do We Care 4* by Steye Hallema, described as “a crazy innovative music video that shows the whole world how cool VR is”. The fourth project is *The Night Watch*, by Maarten Treurniet, director of the acclaimed *The Heineken Kidnapping* (2015).

Treurniet tells how other filmmakers had warned him that it was well-nigh impossible to edit and to tell stories in a fluid way in 360° VR, but the director refused to accept their gloomy analysis of the medium’s cinematic possibilities. It helped that Treurniet had an inquiring, scientific mind. Before becoming a filmmaker, he had studied electronics and is a self-confessed “computer nerd.” He felt that there could be a scientific solution – a way of guiding viewers’ eyes so that they would follow a film narrative without becoming distracted. The trick was to provide a “point of attention” for these viewers; to know how to use horizons and to be able to judge when to use fast and slow editing.

Treurniet’s 6-minute film, supported by the Film Fund’s New Screen NL, is the story of a nightwatchman following a stranger in a factory. “Because he is alone, your point of attention is easier,” the director explains. If there had been four or five different actors, the film would have been more difficult to edit – but still not impossible. He wrote the script and developed the project at Amsterdam-based 25FPS. There are certain obvious restrictions

when you are shooting in the round in VR. For the crew to stay out of sight, they have to make themselves scarce. The technicians can’t see how a scene is going – unless they are wearing VR goggles themselves. Another criticism of VR is that it is not a collective experience. Each viewer is having his or her own experience. Treurniet’s way of getting round this was through use of sound. Everyone is wearing the goggles but they don’t have headphones. They’re all listening to the same speakers. This means they react to visuals, noise, music and dialogue at the same time.

At this stage in VR’s development, Treurniet believes that feature-length movies would prove too strenuous. However, he would now like to make a 25-minute VR movie and believes that he has solved the problem of how to tell live action stories using the form. Treurniet has already made an iPhone app and Android app to provide viewers with an alternative way of watching his film.

Submarine Channel’s Reilhac sums up the potential of VR and why The Netherlands is the perfect location for its exploitation. “It is why I decided to move here, to live and work where it is creatively happening. Submarine Channel has an international reputation for innovative interactive content. We will continue to explore interactive story in all its variations. VR is the most exciting new avenue to explore immersive experiences in that context, and this is what we will focus on.”

Take five producers



Five of The Netherlands' most dynamic young producers will undergo the Cannes Producers Network treatment of meetings and events designed to stimulate international co-pro and optimize networking. Nick Cunningham talks vision, ambition and Cannes expectations with each of the Dutch producers on parade.



Noortje Wilschut, Family Affair Films

"I want to tell stories and produce films that cling on to you, that make you wonder, that hurt a little and stay with you when you walk out of the cinema," professes fledgling producer Noortje Wilschut of Family Affair Films. Wilschut's first job for the company was as production manager on Ursula Antoniak's multi award-winning *Nothing Personal* (2009) and cites Antoniak's latest film *Beyond Words*, which was shot Summer 2016 in Berlin, as a personal success. "It was not my first credit as a producer but, for sure, the one of which I am the most proud. For me, the film is already a success though it has not been released yet."

Wilschut extols the virtues of co-production. "I prefer to co-produce naturally, it makes the most sense. But then there are so many beautiful stories that need to be told that are not directly linked to The Netherlands. And I am so happy

that we get to be a part of those too, such as *The Blue Wave*, a Turkish/Greek/German/Dutch film, supported by the NFF-HBF scheme. And in a way, when we co-produce a film it becomes natural, with the Dutch talent attached."

In Cannes Wilschut will be banging the drum for Guido van Driel's second feature, the feminist drama *Bloody Marie* ("a film about a female alcoholic with balls!"), and *The Hague Hilton*, to be directed by Boris Paval Conen, which the company plans to shoot 2018/2019. The film tells the story of a guard working in the detention centre of the Yugoslavia Tribunal in Scheveningen.



Erik Glijnis, Lemming Film

Lemming's Erik Glijnis is eyeing up Cannes 2017 with specific networking objectives, to find production partners that share his ideas and passions about film and to home in on sales agents and

distributors, especially for the feature *Nocturne*, which will be completed at the end of summer 2017.

He will also be pitching *Fokker* by writer Oscar van Woensel (*Penoza*), a historical biopic based on the life of Anthony Fokker, one of greatest aviation pioneers of the 20th century. Also on Glijnis' pitch slate is Viktor van der Valk's *The Photo Camera*, in which an exaggerated insurance claim for a stolen camera sets in motion an unforeseen chain of events.

"During my time at the Netherlands Film Academy in Amsterdam I worked extensively with two directors, documentary director Guido Hendriks and fiction director Van der Valk," Glijnis states. "In these two directors I found partners I wanted to continue working with after graduating. With Hendriks I finished an award-winning documentary which opened IDFA 2016 (*Stranger in Paradise*) and is now travelling the world." (See page 34)

"I'm really eager to learn more about working on an international level, that's also the reason why I'm loving my work at Lemming Film. All the projects I'm currently working on are co-productions," he adds.



Brothers (Broers) © Bram Schouw



Katja Draaijer, BALDR Film

A keen internationalist, Katja Draaijer points out that BALDR Film focuses on the development and production of high-quality features and docs from filmmakers with a distinctive personal signature. "Stories which surprise, inspire, engage and inform," she underlines.

Draaijer produced the low-budget high-impact doc *Those Who Feel the Fire Burning* by feature debutant Morgan Knibbe. The film won several national and international prizes plus a nomination for Best Feature-length Documentary at IDFA 2014. "The Dutch production landscape is crowded with talented and passionate producers and filmmakers with a strong tradition in documentaries, and is known for its open attitude towards international co-production," she points out.

"Our company is international in scope," she adds "From the start in 2012 we've established several

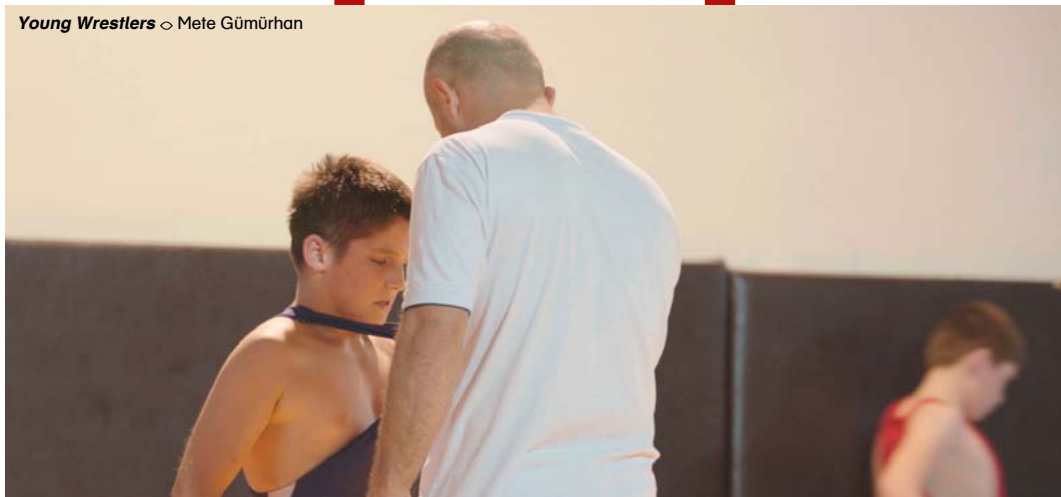
co-productions with a variety of countries, often working with the NFF-HBF co-production scheme and treaties with, for example, Belgium and Norway. We are currently co-producing *Between Two Worlds*, a documentary with Denmark and Sweden, by Danish director Janus Metz (*Armadillo*, Grand Prize Cannes Semaine de la Critique).

In Cannes Draaijer will be promoting and seeking sales agents for the feature film *Brothers* by Bram Schouw and the documentary *Etgar Keret: Based on a True Story* by director Stephane Kaas (a co-production with Israel). Both are first-time directors.

Take five producers

Continued from page 23

Young Wrestlers ◊ Mete Gümürhan



Aydin Dehzad

Aydin Dehzad, Kaliber Film

“At Kaliber Film we don’t make any distinction in style whether we produce a fiction film or a documentary. The story, the writer, and the director are leading in what we do. We make our decision depending on their stories,” stresses company co-owner Dehzad.

Over the past ten years the company has received numerous nominations and awards at some of the world’s most prestigious film

festivals but the one Dehzad cherishes the most is the Special Mention at Berlinale 2016 for Mete Gümürhan’s first feature doc *Young Wrestlers* (currently wowing Dutch audiences and critics).

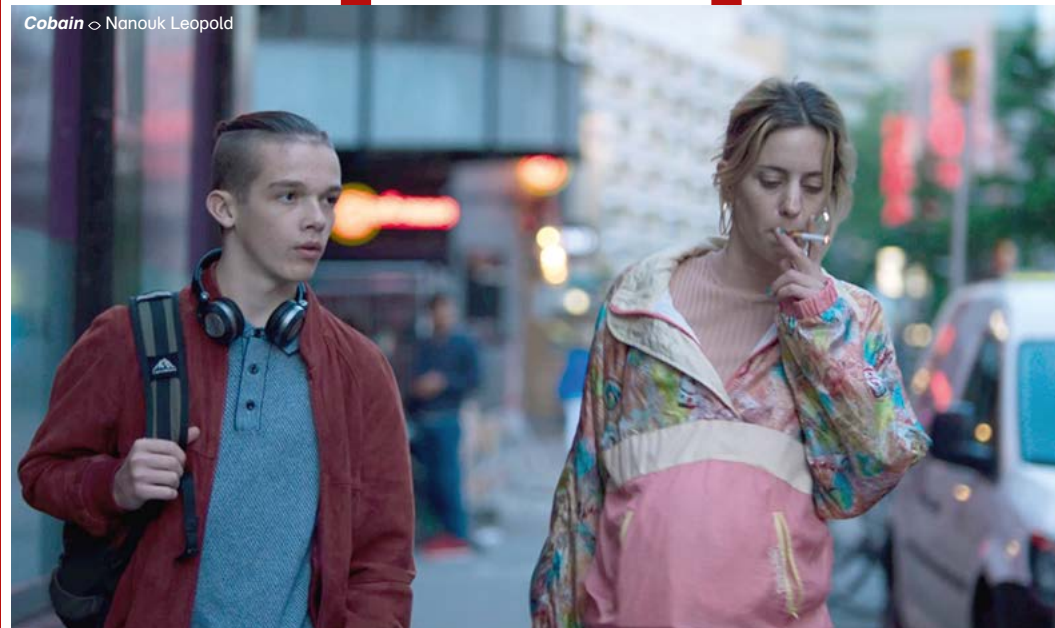
The producer explains his co-pro rationale. “At a time when securing local financing is becoming increasingly difficult, it is even more imperative to get creative in terms of sourcing new funding besides state and private, and finding new audiences. Therefore markets at festivals such as Cannes serve not only as a tool to enhance the quality of a project and expand its scope but also as a wonderful finance mechanism.”

At the Cannes Producers Network Kaliber Film will be pitching and promoting *Mnk Boy*, to be directed

by Mete Gümürhan. When 12-year-old Zeki moves from the ghettos of Rotterdam to the gated communities of Istanbul to make a new start, the challenges he faces leave him no choice other than to become a superhero. In the transmedia doc series *Big Village* director Beri Shalmashi asks how you return home to East Kurdistan after your childhood village has been bombed out of existence. Dehzad is hoping to find co-producers, broadcasters, distributors and international sales agents to help package and close the financing, and is especially interested in partners from mainly Europe.

“We’re also looking for high-quality international projects, good business contacts and new opportunities for co-operation.”

Cobain ◊ Nanouk Leopold



Lisette Kelder

Lisette Kelder, Circe Films

“I want to produce strong author-driven films and I am looking for authentic filmmakers with a unique signature,” is the standard mantra of independent film producers. But when it is said by somebody who has worked with Nanouk Leopold, Peter Greenaway and Andrea

Arnold, and is currently packaging productions for the highly talented Dutch directors Sacha Polak and Peter Hoogendoorn, then it is worth taking seriously.

“*Cobain*, the latest feature by Leopold, is a feature film that I financed and produced (together with owner and producer of Circe Films – Stienette Bosklopper) from beginning to end,” stresses Circe Films’ Lisette Kelder. “I am proud of the amount of financing we raised and the partners attached. It is a solid Dutch/Belgian/German co-production with production support from Eurimages, amongst

others. Before joining Circe Films I worked on the award-winning *Nightwatching* by Peter Greenaway, Andrea Arnold’s *Fish Tank* and Nanouk Leopold’s *It’s All So Quiet*.”

In addition to closing deals on Leopold’s *Cobain*, currently in post-production, Kelder will be drumming up interest on Hoogendoorn’s second feature *Goeree* (his award-winning debut *Between 10 and 12* was selected for Venice Days 2014) and Sacha Polak’s 10-episode drama series *Avrupa* (co-written with Circe Films boss Stienette Bosklopper). The company produced Polak’s audacious debut *Hemel* (2012).

Animation for change



Five Dutch films (including two minority co-productions) are selected for leading animation festival Annecy in June 2017. Nick Cunningham reports.

The Dutch selections at Annecy 2017 could not be any different in terms of subject and form, ranging from the highly polemical *The Human Slaughterhouse* (Commissioned Films in Competition) to the charming *Sleepwalking*, the latest adventure of the building block characters George and Paul, playing in TV Films Competition.

The Human Slaughterhouse was commissioned by Amnesty International in November 2016 to support its campaign against the ritual torture and execution of peaceful demonstrators across Syria in institutions such as Saydnaya Prison. The film was co-directed by Dutch animator Simon Buijs and Italian Cesare Davolio, and is the first work as part of their joint IOO collective, based in The Netherlands. (IOO stands for In Our Opinion).

The 3-minute film tells the harrowing story of a prisoner condemned to death and is based on the real life accounts of former prison guards, officials and detainees. Over five years, as many as 13,000 people, most of them civilians believed to be opposed to the government, were hanged at Saydnaya in secret.

“Telling this story in animation is much easier,” underlines Buijs. “A live-action story about the same

subject would be very difficult to watch, too confronting. Animation allows you to digest hard subjects but can still strike a chord and be believable without making the subject too distant.”

The origins of the 5-minute *Sleepwalking* (the second of 26 episodes in the George and Paul series) can be traced back to Annecy 2006 where filmmakers Joost van den Bosch and Erik Verkerk first came up with the idea. George and Paul are best friends, both made out of primary colour wooden building blocks, who go on adventures together. In their Annecy competition selection, George protects Paul from (mild) danger as he somnambulates over tight robes and down steep slopes. The film, created and directed by Rotterdam-based Ka-Ching Cartoons and co-produced by Pedri Animation (NL) and Beast Animation (BE) for Dutch broadcaster NTR and Flemish station VRT-KETNET, has already won Best Dutch animation at the Holland Animation Film Festival 2017.

“They are two characters that we all know, two opposites who are best friends, like Laurel and Hardy,” comments Van den Bosch of a project that was a long time in gestation due to the economic climate in the mid-noughties. So they put it on the shelf until a change of management at broadcaster NTR re-animated the process.

“When we took it off the shelf and presented it again the ball started

rolling. We went to Cartoon Forum in France, we got Belgian partners and then we created the first episodes. Now we are really happy that finally, after all these years, we are in competition in Annecy with some of the greatest shows currently on TV!”

Tamara Shogaolu’s Egyptian/US/ Indonesian/Dutch co-production *Half a Life* takes the audience on an intimate journey into the life of a young gay activist in present-day Egypt. The film is produced by Ato Ato Pictures, a global production company partly located in Amsterdam, and is selected for Short Film Competition. “We felt an urgency to share this story first because of the active persecution of LGBT individuals in Egypt at the moment,” says Shogaolu.

The minority co-production *The Gap*, directed by Flemish filmmaker Patrick Vandebroek (Dutch co-producer is seriousFilm and supported by the Netherlands Film Fund) plays in Short Films ‘Perspectives’ 2. In the film a creature made out of blocks chases an amorphous red shape across a dramatic linear landscape. The animation is CGI but created to seem handdrawn.

Jasmijn Cedee’s short film *Tour (Toer)*, a wildly impressionistic study of cyclists in a velodrome, is selected for Student Comp. The Annecy nod follows numerous selections at international festivals including FILMFEST Dresden and the Filmed by Bike Film Festival in Portland, Oregon.

Tour (Toer)
Director: Jasmijn Cedee Production:
KASK - Ghent School of Arts (BE)



Dorien van de Pas

Dorien van de Pas, head of New Screen NL at the Netherlands Film Fund, reflects on four years of investment in (and dedication to) talent development, animated and live action shorts, low budget and cinematic experiment. Nick Cunningham reports.

“New Screen is a space in which to experiment, to take risks, to be courageous and to develop daring projects. But also a place for writers and filmmakers who are still at the start of their career, developing their signature,” is how New Screen NL head Van de Pas defines the work of her department. This, of course, would be impossible to deliver without a solid structure of initiatives designed to support Dutch filmmakers, both in pastoral and financial terms. As importantly, these support mechanisms are designed to fire the cinematic soul, as evidenced by the impressive number of films selected at the world’s leading festivals over the past four years.

The work of New Screen NL begins with the discovery and recognition of talent, Van de Pas underlines, and it is imperative to hold the

nerve even when that talent fails. “New talents must take risks – that helps them improve. And if things work out and their work is recognized by international festivals and by audiences, then everyone is happy.”

Van de Pas references the slew of new Dutch filmmakers who have impressed at leading ‘A’ fests, and whose work has received backing from her department. These include Sam de Jong whose feature debut *Prince* was selected for Berlin Generation 14plus in 2016 (where it received a Special Mention) after receiving low-budget support from New Screen NL. “Sam de Jong and producer Gijs Kerbosch decided that they wanted to move quickly and not wait for years to make the film. The New Screen NL low budget scheme is meant for projects of young teams, who want to be flexible and fast. You see a lot of hybrid films there, mixtures of fiction and documentary.” *Prince* went on to receive a US theatrical release, thanks in part to the collaboration with VICE.

Mees Peijnenburg’s short film *Hole in my Heart* (post-production funding by New Screen NL) premiered at Berlin 2015 and was submitted to the Academy Awards in the Best Live Action Short category. His TV short *We Will Never Be Royals* (One Night Stand funding through New Screen NL and the public broadcasters) won two Golden Calves at the Netherlands Film Festival 2015. Peijnenburg is currently developing his feature

debut within the Fund’s Oversteek scheme. Other Dutch talents whose long-form debuts were developed via Oversteek include Martijn Maria Smits (whose *Waldstille* was selected for San Sebastian New Directors) and the outrageously talented Daan Bakker (*Quality Time*, IFFR Tiger-nominated).

New Screen NL’s short film programme, which offers €30,000 for the production of shorts by young and highly promising filmmakers, has revealed outstanding talents in the form of Ena Sendijarevic, whose multi award-winning *Import* debuted in Quinzaine 2016, and Charlotte Scott-Wilson whose drama *Hold On*, about a cellist who must overcome a massive onset of nerves before a concert, won Best Narrative Short at Tribeca 2016. “This short film programme is one of my favourite schemes because you can see how filmmakers, when they have a really strong idea and a good producer, can really take a step forward. They are not always perfect films, but you can see how these talents are developing their own signature.”

“It is important that writers and directors find their own voice, know their strengths and weaknesses and know which people can get the best out of them, and find a good balance between freedom, space for experiment and coaching as well as understand the formal rules of a fund,” Van de Pas adds.

New Screen NL is a core partner within The Netherlands’ growing

*Clara van Gool’s audacious *Voices of Finance* tells the story of the banking crisis through the cinematic medium of dance*



Voices of Finance
Director & script: Clara van Gool
Production: KeyFilm (NL)



“It is easier for the Fund to find the filmmakers and they can better find us”

If the Sun Explodes
Director & script: Hanna van Niekerk
Production: Hazazah Pictures (NL)
Co-Production: UAB Ahil (LT)

Continued from page 29

animation sector, with schemes designed to support both emerging talent, such as the Academy Award-nominated team of Job, Joris & Marieke (*A Single Life*), and established makers like internationally-acclaimed Rosto (*Splintertime*, 2015; *The Monster of Nix*, 2011). Van de Pas cites Marlies van der Wel whose highly ambitious Berlinale 2016/Sundance 2017 selection *Jonas and the Whale* received New Screen NL support.

Van der Wel also made *Sabaku* within the Fund's Ultra Kort programme, a collaboration with Fonds 21 and Pathé. “We match four 2-minute animations with the blockbusters screened in Pathé cinemas. These shorts are able to reach out to large audiences.”

Job, Joris & Marieke's *A Single Life* was also served up as a prestige Pathé hors d'oeuvre. The team's follow-up, the medium-length *Otto* (funded within the Kort! Programme with NTR and New Screen NL), was selected for TIFF 2016 and won a plethora of international awards. The trio are now working on their feature debut. “At New Screen NL we match filmmakers with script coaches and other experts since people are training on the job. With the input of experienced professionals they can develop themselves and their work, and that is what we stimulate very much at New Screen NL. We see that as our task.”

The Fund's celebrated Wildcard scheme was opened up in 2014 to

include feature and animation filmmakers besides documentarians. First launched in 2009, the scheme gives selected visionary young talents, who have just graduated at film or art schools with a strong film, complete creative license – within the constraints of a smallish budget – to make whatever film they want. Two fiction Wildcards (each worth €80,000) are offered every year, as well three for documentary and one for animation (€40,000 each). “It is really interesting to see how, when you give the filmmakers the support and offer them help if they need it, they really make great strides forward.”

Morgan Knibbe's tour de force Wildcard documentary *Those Who Feel the Fire Burning* was selected for IDFA 2014. “He made it with €40,000 which is of course not enough money for this kind of film – but he managed. Also, there was the first feature film of Hanna van Niekerk, *If the Sun Explodes*. It is a road feature produced in Lithuania. It's energetic, personal and very strong. The film received good reviews and a Dutch release.” Van Niekerk is now working on a film within the Kort! programme and a 45-minute drama within the One Night Stand scheme.

The challenging, sometimes avant-garde, Dutch aesthetic is catered for by New Screen NL in collaboration with the Fund for Creative Industries. Transmedia and experimental projects include the multi award-winning *De Asielzoekmachine* by Eefje Blankevoort & Els van Driel

(a cross-media project investigating Dutch asylum policy) and *Future Cities* by Yvonne Brandwijk and Stephanie Bakker which picked up third prize in the 2017 World Press Photo Competition for Digital Storytelling. What's more, New Screen NL looks to be at the forefront of the development of VR projects via its involvement with Biennale College-Cinema. Besides that, it invests in Art films through De Verbeelding scheme (co-managed with the Mondriaan Fund) that introduces artists to producers and increases their access to funding and distribution outlets. A project that was realised via De Verbeelding funding is Fiona Tan's much-heralded 2015 IFFR Tiger nomination *History's Future*. New Screen NL is also open to applications from filmmakers and producers of experimental or innovative films, such as Clara van Gool's audacious *Voices of Finance*, telling the story of the banking crisis through the cinematic medium of dance.

“Four years ago we created a space where young and talented film professionals could develop their true potential,” concludes Van de Pas. “Before then there were less possibilities for debutants. So we opened our doors, changed our way of working, gave them more possibilities and also started to work with consultants in the decision making process. Now there is a dedicated space for them and for innovative projects, so it is easier for us to find the filmmakers and they can better find us.”



Photo: Deutsche Kinemathek / M. Stefanowski

Raging Bull, boxing shorts and boxing gloves

Geoffrey Macnab talks to EYE's Jaap Guldemond about the museum's latest tentpole exhibition.

Amsterdam holds a fond place in the memory of legendary American filmmaker, Martin Scorsese. He was there during the heady, flowerpower days of the late 1960s and even shot a segment of his 1967 feature *Who's That Knocking On My Door* in the city. He visited the celebrated concert hall Paradiso and helped to give some script advice to Dutch director Pim de la Parra, helping co-script his film *Obsessions*.

Scorsese will (hopefully) be back in town this summer for the launch of a major new show devoted to his life and work, Martin Scorsese - The Exhibition and film programme, due to be run at EYE from late May to early September. Alongside the

exhibition and full retrospective of Scorsese's film work, there will be a programme of the director's own favourite films drawn from the collections of EYE and the Film Foundation which Scorsese helped set up in 1990 to further the cause of film preservation.

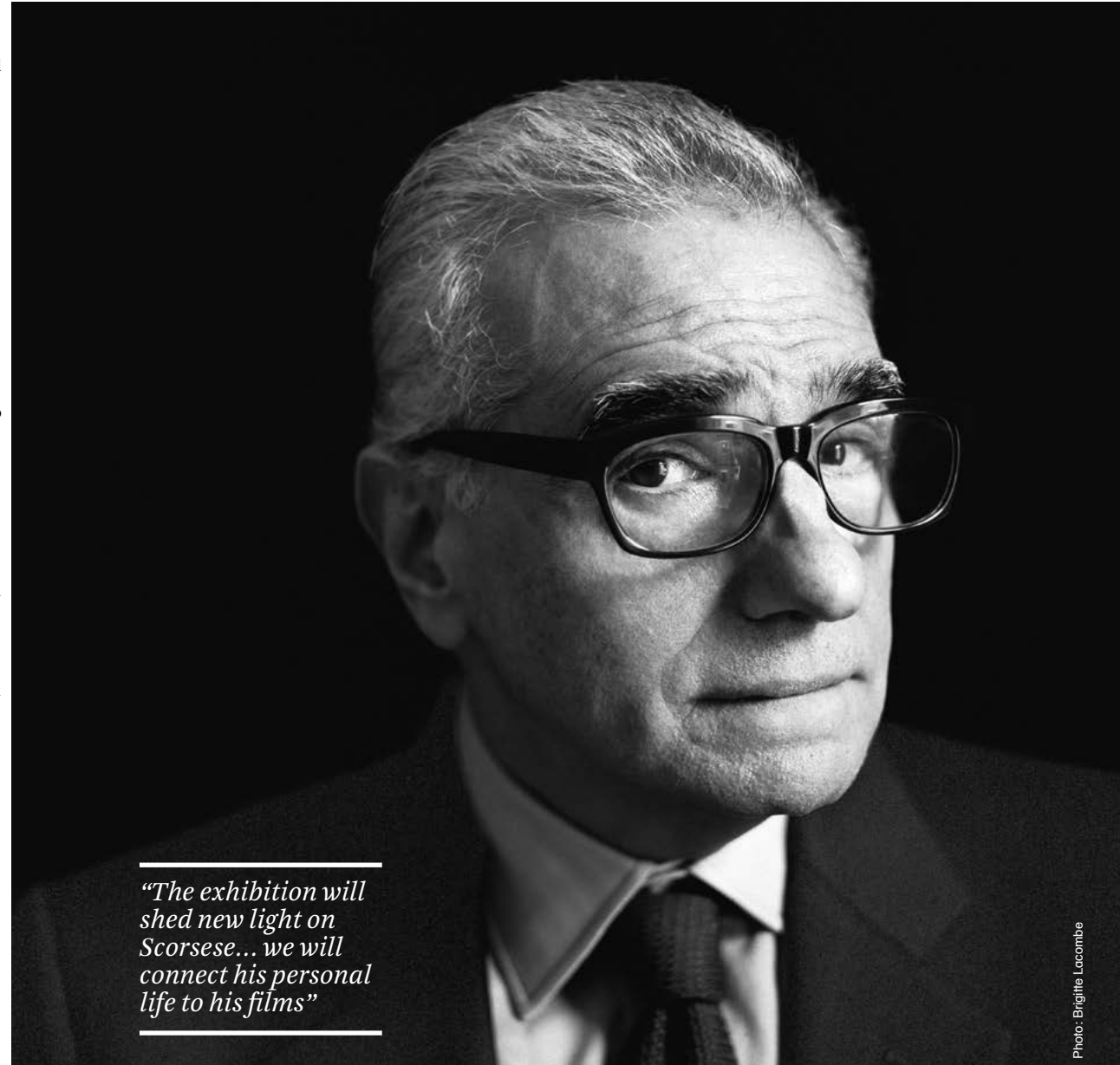
Scorsese isn't exactly a neglected filmmaker. He has been the subject of many books. His gangster movies (*Mean Streets*, *Goodfellas*, *Casino*, *The Departed* et al) have a huge popular following. He is revered by cinephiles both for his own filmmaking and for his work championing the films of others. The exhibition at EYE has already been seen in Paris, Melbourne and New York. You might not think there is anything new to say about him – but Scorsese is one of those figures with such rich backstories and so much mystery still clinging to him that there are always fresh revelations about him to be unearthed.

According to Jaap Guldemond, Director of Exhibitions at EYE, the show will offer some new perspectives on its subject. Guldemond also points out that this is the first major exhibition to be devoted to Scorsese. Yes, he has many retrospectives but his career has never before been looked at in a major museum exhibition. Scorsese fans are bound to be utterly fascinated by an event which includes many precious objects from his own collection (among them the boxing gloves from *Raging Bull*), hundreds of private documents and photographs.

There are audio-files and unpublished interviews too. "Some of the objects you're going to see were literally taken off walls and shelves in my home and my office, and editing room," Scorsese commented in advance of the exhibition. Part of the material comes from the collection of actor Robert De Niro, the star of many of his films.

"In that sense, it is quite something new," Guldemond says. "And because we have all those private documents, the exhibition will shed new light on the person. What we have tried to do is to connect his personal life and his films. Exhibition visitors will be able to follow some intriguing trails which link events in his personal life to scenes in his movies. As everyone knows, family looms very large for the director. So does religion. He is unique among contemporary directors in that he can deal in equally convincing fashion with mob conspiracies and crises of faith and religion. His work can be very extravagant and melodramatic – but is also often austere in the extreme.

"As a passionate movie lover, he fills his films with references to cinema history. He takes his vocation very seriously. His metaphors for discussing film are instructive. He describes it both in sacral, religious terms and as an addiction. He often cites the famous quote from Frank Capra: "film is a disease. When it infects your bloodstream, it takes over as the number one hormone... the antidote to film is more film."



"The exhibition will shed new light on Scorsese... we will connect his personal life to his films"

Photo: Brigitte Lacombe

The films selected for True Stories are not cosy crowd-pleasers but often confrontational and challenging



Strangers in Paradise
 Director & script: Guido Hendrikkx Production:
 Zeppers Film & TV (NL) - Frank van den Engel
 Co-Production: VPRO (NL)

Strangers in Manhattan



Guido Hendrikkx

The best European documentary films don't often surface in North America. Yes, there are VOD platforms hungry for doc fare, and festivals like Hot Docs and Sundance select some of the works – but getting exposure is still often a struggle. That's why European Film Promotion's brand new True Stories: New Non Fiction From Europe showcase at the Metrograph in New York City has been welcomed with such enthusiasm by the European doc community. Geoffrey Macnab reports.

EFP's 38 member organisations are backing the initiative, which has been overseen by project directors Karen Arikian and Nora Goldstein and supported by Creative Europe. As she points out, New York was the obvious place for staging such an event: the city is the centre of the US documentary world and also the place where distributors like IFC and Magnolia are based. The Metrograph is a suitably classy venue and its programmers, Jacob Perlin and Aliza Ma, were passionate about the idea of a doc showcase right from the outset.

"They are true cinephiles," Arikian says. "They're curating this and they know what their audience wants. We were very happy to have such passionate and committed partners for the launch of True Stories."

The inaugural programme showcases eight exceptional films, four of them US premieres. IDFA 2016 opener *Strangers in Paradise*, directed by Guido Hendrikkx and supported by the Netherlands Film Fund, audaciously tackles the European migration crisis by presenting a series of anti and pro-immigration arguments followed by a bureaucrat's dispassionate approach to a group of newly arrived, real-life refugees on the Italian island of Sicily. "I wanted to shoot in a location where newly arrived migrants entered Europe," says Hendrikkx. "For me, this was the most distinct location to represent the clash between Europe and the refugees, and their most unadulterated power relationship... The place where they set foot in the new world."

Poignantly, New York audiences will have the chance to see the final film work from the great Austrian director Michael Glawogger, who died in 2014. *Untitled*, as it is being called, was put together by editor Monika Willi and is made up of footage shot by Glawogger in the Balkans, Italy, Northwest and West Africa.

The films selected for True Stories are not cosy crowd-pleasers but

often confrontational and challenging. And most of the titles don't have US distribution, the exception being opening film *Last Men In Aleppo* (Documentary Grand Jury Prize, Sundance) which will be released by Grasshopper Films. Not only will these and the other films be shown in the Metrograph, they will also be made available online on an experimental basis via VOD platform Kanopy. "We had almost 40 submissions but in this first year, Jacob and Aliza were interested in 8 to 10 films," Arikian explains.

The filmmakers behind several of the titles will be in attendance at their screenings. "We tried to get as many filmmakers over as we could. That's what we do at EFP." There will be Q&As, an opening night reception and industry networking opportunities. The aim now is to make True Stories, which is backed by the Creative Europe, a regular fixture in the calendar. If the inaugural event is a success, a travelling component could be considered for future editions.

"We have to get through edition one. Then, it will be a question of budget and also of the interest of the EFP members," Arikian reflects on how the showcase might now evolve. "Our goal is to strengthen this programme in the US. The films are challenging but they are beautiful and they're thoughtful and they are dealing with issues of importance."



Cannes Classics

***Mirror of Holland* by Bert Haanstra**

Dutch filmmaker Bert Haanstra's brilliant and experimental Palme d'Or winning short *Mirror of Holland* (1950) has been selected for the 2017 Cannes Classics

programme. In the film Haanstra transforms The Netherlands by recording dramatic reflections in the country's waterways, and then flips the images with

mesmerizing results. Haanstra received an Academy Award for his documentary *Glas* (1958) and further nominations for *Alleman* (1964) and *Bij de beesten* (1972).