



SEE NL

Atlantic. one of five Dutch features in Toronto

Gernandt stars in NFF opener *Reckless*

Remembering *Theo van Gogh*

Dutch producers talk *Production Incentive*

Between 10 and 12 **bound for Venice**



Issue #16 September 2014 Toronto issue



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Still: *Frailer*



Giorgio Gosetti – Dir, Venice Days

Every time I leave Amsterdam I return to Italy with a film in my heart. Sometimes I can select it, sometimes I cannot. But this year that film was *Between 10 and 12*, and it is in my programme for 2014.

It is really surprising that a debut film can be such a mature work. In it we see a family tragedy through the eyes of a young girl. She is not directly involved in the tragedy, but she is the most human person concerned with the story.

After a film that is only 62 minutes in length – such confidence to present a complete drama of only 62 minutes! – I could see that this is a real author, a true film director, who is able to articulate the certainty of the cinema he wants to make and can put the viewer right inside the drama, offering a unique approach and a unique point of view. This is the cinema that I love. I simply could not step away from the film.

From the beginning I was a fan of Dutch cinema. Like many others my

first meeting with it was through the fabulous documentaries of Joris Ivens. When I was involved in Mystfest I discovered Dick Maas and showed his excellent *Amsterdamed*. When I came to Venice, I encountered the cinema of Anton Corbijn. And then I formed a very personal relationship with the fantastic film director Paul Verhoeven. More recently in Venice Days we have had the chance to screen *The Last Days of Emma Blank* by Alex van Warmerdam, which was a great success.

When you see a new Dutch film you encounter something original every time, whether or not you actually like it. It is impossible to confuse it with a Danish film or with a Flemish film or a German film. It is Dutch.

Why is this? I think at the end of the day it is a matter of light, a brilliant and clear light that enables you to see reality in a very detailed way, and at the same time a summary of ideas. It's not just a matter of camera, it is a matter of point of view. It reminds me of Italian cinema, also defined by the light it casts.

You Dutch have a point of view of reality which is absolutely unique, a point of view which cannot be confused with the cinema of anywhere else. Whether it is the films of Dick Maas, or Alex van Warmerdam, or Paul Verhoeven or Peter Hoogendoorn, it is a unique perspective. It is consistent. It is Dutch.

COLOPHON

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Photo: Marnie Blok

Cover still ◊ *Atlantic*. ◊ **Director:** Jan-Willem van Ewijk
Script: Jan-Willem van Ewijk **Production:** Augustus Productions (NL)
in co-production with Man's Film (BE), Endorphine Produktion (DE)
Sales: Fortissimo Films

Kinder measures



Photo: Jaap Vreenegeer

Still: *Fidgety Bram*

September 2014 will see the launch of a new cross-border fund for the script-development of Dutch/German films for kids. Netherlands Film Fund CEO Doreen Boonekamp explains all to Nick Cunningham.

To preface the upcoming co-production treaty between The Netherlands and Germany, the €100,000 Co-Development Children's Film Fund will be co-launched by The Netherlands Film Fund and Germany's Mitteldeutsche (MDM) regional fund in order to bankroll script development on films for young audiences. Both sides will contribute €50,000 each to the new initiative and it is expected that more German regional funds will come on board in the near future.

This co-development fund will, in essence, aim to support high quality projects that will appeal to cinema audiences in both countries and beyond. The projects should be about contemporary matters and told from the perspective of children, and preferably based on an original story.

Both sides will call for proposals for live action feature films, with no limitations regarding style or genre. Individual script coaching and/or coaching in the context of workshops will form core parts of the agreement.

Interest in such an agreement stems from an inaugural round table meeting at Cannes 2013, organised by the Netherlands Film Fund, and consisting of leading players within the kids' film sector from both countries. The success of follow-up talks at last year's Cinekid 2013 convinced both sides that a formally ratified and rubber-stamped accord was desirable.

'The Germans like the Dutch system'

"There is history here," points out the Netherlands Film Fund CEO Doreen Boonekamp, one of the main architects of the initiative. "The Germans like the Dutch system, all the way back to our Cinema Junior funding scheme." (Launched in 2003 Cinema Junior launched the careers of such films as *Bonkers* (284,170 visitors, 57 int'l festivals, 14 int'l awards, 108 int'l sales), *Kauwboy* (27.000 visitors, 101 int'l festivals, 23 int'l awards, 21 int'l sales) and *Fidgety Bram* (129.199 visitors, 9 int'l festivals).

Comments MDM director Manfred Schmidt: "We are looking forward to fostering the collaboration between Dutch and German film professionals in their joint efforts to develop exciting and charming film stories for children. Stories that will find their audience in both countries and beyond."

The Dutch are proud of their successful reputation for the production and export of films for younger audiences. These films perform excellently at home, sell well within the international marketplace and are selected for myriad international festivals. That German producers wish to mirror this success is both a nod towards the sector's success in the Netherlands and a strong indication that things can only get better from a co-production perspective, especially as future projects may well benefit from Production Incentive cash rebates in the future.

So what, then, can German producers learn from the Dutch in terms of the developing their children's sector? "All discussions have been focussing on how to reach an audience," comments Boonekamp. "Distribution and marketing are very crucial within this whole story. We are told by German producers that German theatres are mainly keen on big and very commercial adaptations, and that there is a US dominance, and that cinemas seem less interested in original children's films. But strong and original films for children work very well here in The Netherlands, and that is what the Germans want to learn. How and why? They are very aware of this vast but as yet untapped market for kids films back home."

Welcome boost

The Dutch industry has reacted with a predictable mix of relief and enthusiasm to the new Netherlands Film Production Incentive, reports Geoffrey Macnab.

The scheme was only announced formally in Cannes in May but the Film Fund has already made its first round of investments, pumping €8.5 million into 34 different projects.

“My response was that I felt finally, finally, after 20 years of reaching out to co-producers in other countries, asking them to be interested in my projects, they can reach out to us!” says Hanneke Niens of KeyFilm.

“Of course, I was very delighted to hear the news,” agrees Topkapi Films’ Frans van Gestel, a company with a strong co-production tradition. “The more co-productions you do, the more substantially you are present in these co-productions, the more possibilities you have in terms of reciprocity.”

Arnold Heslenfeld, van Gestel’s partner and co-founder of Topkapi, and Leontine Petit, boss of Lemming Film, make a similar point. This is a case of a virtuous circle - the more you co-produce, the more you are able to co-produce. The high profile sales agents and international distributors begin to recognize your name and to treat you with greater respect.

As Niens points out, the old prejudices that the Dutch have nothing to offer as co-production partners have now been obliterated. “Foreign producers were never interested in reaching out to us because we couldn’t come up with substantial money.”

The days when all the Dutch could offer was €250,000 from the Film Fund are now over. The Netherlands is a viable co-production partner. Insiders point out that the scheme isn’t aimed at attracting big budget American films. The maximum the Fund will invest through the incentive is €1 million – not a substantial amount if you are trying to make *Star Wars* but significant money for films in the €2 million to €6 million. “That makes it very attractive to shoot for arthouse and crossover films from all over Europe,” van Gestel observes.

Producers are keen that the new cash rebate system won’t suffer from the controversy that invariably dogs new soft money schemes. There are always middlemen and foreign financiers who smell opportunity and see such schemes as a chance to make easy money.

“I don’t have the feeling that the money runs to projects where it doesn’t belong. Absolutely not. It is really the opposite. I really see beautiful projects coming in,” Niens states. Without the new scheme, the KeyFilm boss adds, the company

would never have come on board a project like Austrian director Virgil Widrich’s *The Night Of A Thousand Hours*. The film, billed as a mix between Agatha Christie whodunnit, costume drama and family drama with ultra-modern digital effects and projections, received €336,450 from the new incentive on top of the regular Film Fund contribution.

“When you want to enter a co-production as a minority partner, you have to come up with at least 10% of the budget. That’s what you need to be an official European co-production,” Niens explains.

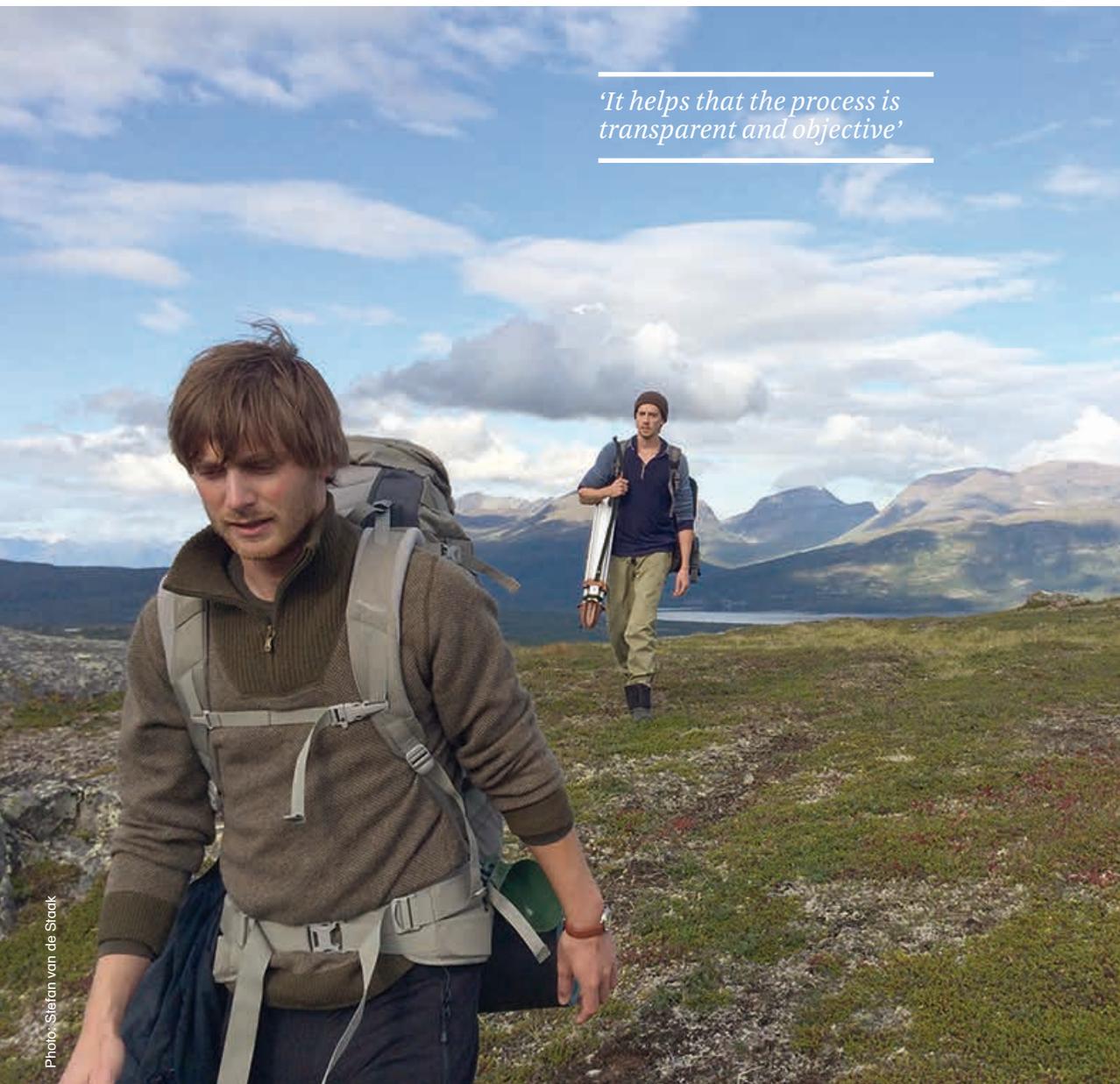
One obvious upside of the incentive is that the ailing Dutch post-production industry now looks set for revival. Technicians who recently had to find work in TV or commercials or head to Belgium (where the Film Tax Shelter has been in existence for several years) should now find gainful employment on Dutch feature films. “It is going well now but we had serious problems there,” van Gestel acknowledges. Around 20% to 30% of Dutch post-production companies are thought to have gone “belly up.”

In most European countries, working as a minority co-producer is what Niens calls your “bread and butter.” It gives you the time and the money to develop your own projects. The Dutch are therefore likely to see

‘I really see beautiful projects coming in’



Shooting still from *Beyond Sleep*, supported by the Film Production Incentive



'It helps that the process is transparent and objective'

Photo: Sietan van de Staak

Still: *Beyond Sleep*

a mini-production boom. The Dutch still don't have studio facilities like Babelsberg in Germany or Pinewood Shepperton in the UK. There is talk now, though, of investing in new sound stages.

"We don't need studios on that scale. What we do need is a smaller version of that – a studio complex with a lot of good visual effects, sound effects and post-production facilities," says van Gestel. He warns that the Dutch shouldn't risk building a big studio complex when there is always the danger that the incentive might end or a production dip. "It's not about scale. It is about quality," he says.

Niens argues that Amsterdam itself can be regarded as a *de facto* studio. All the services that foreign filmmakers might need to make their movies can be found in the city. What also encourages the local industry is the Government's change of attitude. In recent years, politicians have waged an undeclared war on arts organisations, cutting cultural subsidies in savage fashion and portraying them in their public announcement as being in some way parasitical. Now, they acknowledge that film (in particular) can drive employment and inward investment at home – as well as promoting the Netherlands abroad.

It remains to be seen how local distributors will cope if there is a

glut of new Dutch minority and majority co-pros. It's a stipulation that applicants must have a distributor in place before they apply for money from the new incentive.

Several producers have observed that the application process for the new funding is more stringent than expected. "The Film Fund asks for detailed paperwork," says Topkapi's Heslenfeld. However, producers accept that the regulations are in place to weed out production companies who aren't professional or serious enough. It helps, too, that the process is transparent and objective.

Petit of Lemming Film is an example of a Dutch producer who somehow managed to co-produce on a prolific scale in spite of the lack of an incentive. Her credits include Mexican festival favourite *Heli* and *The Lobster*, a high-profile forthcoming feature by director/screenwriter Yorgos Lanthimos.

***The Lobster* has now received funding** from the new incentive but, at the point Lemming first came on board, there was no guarantee this would be available. "We really, really believed in the project. We basically stalked him (the film's producer Ed Guiney) a little bit!" she recalls.

While companies like Lemming and Topkapi managed to co-produce even throughout the lean years, other Dutch production companies

pursued a more insular strategy. Now, with the incentive in place, that is bound to change – and the Dutch will become more significant players in the European co-production sector.

The Lemming boss pays tribute to Doreen Boonekamp, CEO of the Netherlands Film Fund, both as a lobbyist and as a manager. "We could not have had anyone better from my point of view," Petit says of the speed with which Boonekamp put the new incentive in place.

Boonekamp herself is modest about her achievements. Like the Dutch producers, she welcomes the stimulus the new incentive has given the post-production sector. "We saw that when we received the applications. A lot of the applications had more work especially for the (Dutch) post-production industry."

She is also heartened by the "very positive" response from the international industry to the announcement of the new financial incentive. Now, Boonekamp insists, the industry won't stand still. "When times change, we can change as well," she says. "We also need to invest in our facilities and infrastructure in the Netherlands so we can have the highest quality we can offer."

Location Lowlands



Bas van der Ree

The twin launch of the Netherlands Film Commission and the Film Production Incentive looks set to galvanise interest in Holland both as a production partner and as a location for increasing numbers of international shoots. New film commissioner Bas van der Ree talks to Nick Cunningham.

The Netherlands has a lot to offer the international film community. It has a sophisticated road and rail infrastructure, beautiful landscapes, polders, beaches, technically skilled and professional crews, highly talented creatives, islands, ports, ultra modern cities, medieval towns and 800 years of diverse and dramatic architectural styles. And unfettered access to a dozen neighbouring countries.

Now following the launch of the Netherlands Film Commission it has an official, centralized body to promote these advantages on the international stage. What's more, on top of existing selective funds, the country has a lot of new production cash available, by way of €19.4 million in cash rebates, to

entice the best projects and talent to shoot within Dutch borders.

“My intention as film commissioner is to attract international producers with whom we can work on a high co-production level,” comments new commissioner Bas van der Ree. **“The Film Fund offers a cash rebate incentive of 30% on films production spending in The Netherlands up to a maximum grant of €1 million which is a serious incentive for producers trying to finance their films.”**

In layman's terms the film commission will act as the official liaison between the local business infrastructure and international production companies looking to benefit from shooting in The Netherlands, as well as stress the financial advantages of such an agreement. **“I believe that the combination of the new commission and the financing possibilities generate a feeling of confidence and reliability among international professionals, and pride among the Dutch filmmakers,”** Van der Ree adds.

The Fund established the film commission via its portal (filmcommission.nl) and with the first edition of the production guide that offers up information about every resource, location and professional advantage that the country has to offer. **“I have been location scouting for 20 years**

throughout the Netherlands and throughout Europe, so I know what producers are looking for,” Van der Ree explains of his previous work within Dutch production. **“So we wanted to have a production guide that is thoroughly filmic and not touristic, and something that would stand out from other production guides that are out there. I think we did this very successfully using an enormous variety of diverse and dramatic locations, all replicated on the website where we are also establishing an executive and ongoing developing database and from production assistants to DOPs to line producers to potential co-production partner companies, an essential productive tool for professionals and producers.”**

Other advantages include the country's lack of union regulations. **“We don't have any union limits. In some countries, regulations deter producers from getting in to start co-producing. We have an easy going, well-regulated and film friendly environment which international producers would benefit from.”**

And no discussion of the benefits that The Netherlands can bestow would be complete without mention of the Dutch light that has enabled Dutch painters to produce works of astounding luminosity over the years. **“Our light can distinguish the work of any DOP,”** Van der Ree concludes.



‘Generates a feeling of confidence and reliability among professionals’

Location: Cycling tunnel in The Netherlands

Remembering Theo

Still: *Luger*

Commencing October 10 2014, EYE will host a programme of all the features, and a selection of the award-winning TV work, of maverick filmmaker, interviewer, actor, columnist and polemicist Theo van Gogh who was murdered ten years ago this year. The programme will conclude November 2, exactly a decade after Van Gogh's death. Nick Cunningham reports.

The murder of Theo van Gogh in November 2004 was a shocking reminder that even within one of the most open and liberal societies in the world, where the right to free speech is considered sacrosanct, the voice of the dissenter, the irritant, the provocateur can still, all so easily, be silenced.

This autumn, ten years on, numerous cultural institutions across the Netherlands will pay tribute to Theo van Gogh. His production company Column Film is set to premiere the feature film *02/11 Het Spel van de wolf* (*The Wolf's Game*) at the Dutch Film Festival before the film goes on general release. The play *Theo van*

Gogh Speaks will show in Amsterdam before going on tour. And as one would expect, numerous television programmes have been commissioned and scheduled to coincide with the anniversary.

EYE is planning its own retrospective, but with the focus less on the controversy surrounding both Van Gogh's life and death, more on his sublime gifts as a filmmaker.

'He made 13 features in little more than 20 years'

"For us an important reason for the programme is that we want to stress his qualities as a director," comments EYE programmer Leo van Hee. "In the years after his death it was pointed out that he was a very provocative person. But we think it is time to stress the fact that he was an important filmmaker in the Netherlands. He made thirteen features in a little more than 20 years which is a lot for a Dutch director, and may even be the most films anyone made during that period in the Netherlands."

Van Gogh's filmmaking career started with *Luger* in 1982 and ended all too prematurely with *06/05*, a fictional film about the assassination of the controversial Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn. In between, he made a number of critically acclaimed films such as

06, Blind Date and Interview, remade in English in the years following his death by John Turturro, Stanley Tucci and Steve Buscemi respectively.

"When you look at his films it tells a lot about how Dutch culture developed from the early 1980s until the year of his death," Van Hee continues. "He was an excellent actors' director and a very strong low budget/no budget filmmaker who could make great works on a shoestring. Films like *Interview and 06* of course, but also his early works. After *Luger* he made *A Day at the Beach*, which I think is one of the most beautiful Dutch films of the 1980s. I think a lot of people have forgotten about these films."

EYE is looking to re-unite many of Van Gogh's casts and crew during the programme, and to host extended Q&As that will shed more light on the works. The museum will also stage a live version of *06* with a new soundtrack. "There was no soundtrack originally for this film except for short musical intermezzos," explains Van Hee. "His regular composer Rainer Hensel who did most of the soundtrack for his films proposed a live event for *06* so that is what we intend to do."

In addition, new 35mm prints have been produced for eleven of the films. "This is very important for EYE as it reflects our activities in preservation and restoration," Van Hee concludes.

Man from *Atlantic*.

Jan-Willem van Ewijk



No, producer Bero Beyer isn't a wind surfer himself, writes Geoffrey Macnab. It just so happened that a collaborator, sound designer Peter Flamman, mentioned that he knew a young director called Jan-Willem van Ewijk who seemed a real talent.

Beyer was intrigued and agreed to meet the director. "Thanks to this mutual acquaintance, we sat down and he (van Ewijk) pitched me a few of the stories he was working on."

One of these was about a young Moroccan man attempting to windsurf to Europe. "*Atlantic* struck a chord with me," Beyer recalls. "It seemed to have relevance, it had ambition and it had... an intense feeling of being with the character even while he is lost at sea."

Beyer co-wrote and produced Hany Abu-Assad's Oscar nominated *Paradise Now*, which had been developed through the Sundance Lab. He was therefore encouraged that Van Ewijk's script for *Atlantic*. (originally entitled *Land*) was also selected for the Sundance Lab. The project was then further developed

at the Binger in Amsterdam. *Atlantic* screens in the Discovery section of Toronto 2014 and has also been selected for Busan.

The story is partly inspired by the director's own experiences as a surf tourist in Morocco. At first, he had relished his time in an exotic resort. Only later did he realise "the crushing influence" the Europeans had on the local community. Unlike the tourists, the locals can't leave. The film's main protagonist is Fettah, a young Moroccan excited by the glamorous world of the tourists, but who suffers loneliness and alienation once the summer finishes and they all leave the small fishing village. His reaction is to embark on an epic 500 mile journey by windsurf board toward the promised land of Europe.

The film attracted support from the Netherlands Film Fund and Belgian funds (VAF, Communauté française) as well as from the German MDM and Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg. The Moroccan co-producer was Agora Film. Van Ewijk may have been a newcomer but his screenplay caught the imagination of financiers.

Shooting at sea was every bit as challenging as might have been expected. "We made it a point of the film to be authentic," Beyer recalls. "We did not have a budget like *Kon-Tiki* or *Life Of Pi*. We decided we were going to do it the other way. We

were going to use stuntmen and surfers all performing their own stunts. Everything you see is real." Among the cast was Boujmaa Guilloul, one of the top wind surfers in the world. The main character was played by Fettah Ahllmara, also a brilliant windsurfer.

This was gruelling, physical work. "If you imagine the entire crew were in the wind, in and out of the water all the time, that is extremely exhausting." Cinematographer Jasper Wolf was charged with "capturing the intensity and intimacy of the scenes and being fully immersed in the storytelling."

Wolf researched the project thoroughly, preparing for the problems he knew he would encounter shooting in high waves and stormy scenes, whether from a boat or from a helicopter.

Beyer describes *Atlantic*. as "an arthouse film" and as a "road movie on the water." The intention was to give the film an epic quality but also to heighten its lyricism. Music played its part in this process. "We used a huge choir and orchestra to give the film the same intensity and largeness that the ocean has."

The producer compliments his director on holding his nerve during the process. "He deserves a lot of credit for being able to survive. The intensity was overwhelming. It could easily have swept him over."



Atlantic. ◊ **Director:** Jan-Willem van Ewijk **Script:** Jan-Willem van Ewijk **Production:** Augustus Productions (NL) in co-production with Man's Film (BE), Endorphine Produktion (DE) **Sales:** Fortissimo Films

Torn Apart



Photo: Alex Wuijls

Shariff Korver

Imagine being perched precariously between two cultures but not fully belonging to either. That is the predicament of the young Dutch Moroccan police officer in Shariff Korver's debut feature *The Intruder*, which premieres in Toronto's Discovery section. Geoffrey Macnab reports.

Police officer Samir (Nasrdin Dchar) has a Moroccan father and a Dutch mother. When he goes undercover, investigating a Moroccan drugs family, he feels torn apart. "I came up with this guy who wanted to fit in, he wanted to belong," he says of the paradox at the heart of his film. "But, in order to belong, he had to become somebody else."

Rather than make a social realist drama about the plight of immigrants in Dutch society, Korver has made a crime thriller. He insists that *The Intruder* is rooted in real events. "There are Moroccan families - they're not gangs - they're more like drug families. I combined part of society and part of the actual drugs world from the Netherlands into a story," Korver explains.

The Intruder was shot on 35mm. Korver wanted it to seem cinematic. He is critical of films that imitate documentary by having the camera "run after the character" in order to create realism. "I wanted to communicate the feel of the character through composition and colour," he says of his own approach. His ambition was for the film to seem "authentic" without abandoning its sense of craft and aesthetics. He wanted to make a film that entertained audiences but also "gave them something to think about."

After leaving the Dutch Film Academy in 2011, Korver approached leading Dutch production outfit Lemming Film. The company was immediately interested in the ideas behind *The Intruder*. He recruited Rogier de Blok, a writer best known for his work on arthouse titles like *Calimucho* (Eugenie Jansen) and David Verbeek's *RU There*, to co-script the project.

The Intruder was backed through the Netherlands Film Fund's Oversteek programme, which supports directors making their first or second movies. Its budget may have been relatively modest (around €800,000) but its ambition was obvious. Korver shot in Morocco, in the Belgian Ardennes, in Amsterdam and in Rotterdam. "When you see the movie, you don't feel it is low budget."

Lead actor Nasrdin Dchar (who also appeared in Jim Taihuttu's *Wolf*) had to "put on 10 kilos of muscle" to play his role as the undercover cop. Dchar came on board *The Intruder* early on and helped with the development of the screenplay. Rachid el Ghazoui (well known in The Netherlands as a rapper) was also cast.

The Intruder is a film in which perspectives are constantly shifting. Early on, Samir regards the Moroccan drugs dealers as crooks. He sees only the caricatured image that his colleagues have of them as hard-bitten criminals, "gangsters who do bad things." However, the longer he spends with them, the more he understands their personalities. He begins to understand that these are people "with families and kids and principles."

Korver researched the project in detail, interviewing former undercover officers and drawing on his "double perspective" as a Dutch-Venezuelan. "I am able to understand both sides," he suggests. "We wanted to reach the mainstream public and the Dutch-Moroccan youth...but we also wanted to reach the arthouse public. It's not just about cops and gangsters. It's a movie about what is happening in Holland right now."



Photo: Victor Arnolds

The Intruder > Director: Shariff Korver
Script: Rogier de Blok, Shariff Korver
Production: Lemming Film

Song of Passing



Mijke de Jong

The deeply personal *Frailer* is a collaboration between Mijke de Jong and the four actresses from her 1997 feature *Brittle* (Broos). Geoffrey Macnab reports.

In *Frailer*, the four sisters from Mijke de Jong's popular drama *Brittle* come together again but the difference now is that one, Mouse (Leonoor Pauw), has lung cancer and has not long to live. The film is at times seeringly painful to watch, given that it chronicles the actual death of actress Pauw, and over the course of 80 minutes, everybody involved - performers, director, crew and audience - are forced to confront the boundaries between fiction and reality.

De Jong is quick to point out that *Frailer* is not a film about cancer. This is no terminal illness melodrama. As the director notes, life develops "another meaning" for the sisters as they try to make sense of what is happening. The film is dealing with raw and sometimes contradictory emotions, among them love, humour, anger, fear and grief.

Nor is *Frailer* inspired by other movies. The impetus to make it came three years ago when the director and her collaborators on *Brittle* discovered that Pauw was ill. "We had to make this film," De Jong declares. "Leonoor wanted to leave life as a creator. She wanted to make this film. We decided to join forces to manage the sorrow and to try to get a grip on the transience (of life)."

On set, in spite of the circumstances in which the film was conceived, "life was life." The participants were too busy with their work to grieve Leonoor's illness, and when shooting began Leonoor herself was in reasonable spirits. "Beside the sorrow, we also had fun," De Jong states. There was a very small crew. The atmosphere was intense and intimate. "I think everybody on the shoot learned something about life and death."

De Jong describes the look of the film as being like that of a "kaleidoscopic poem." There was a lot of improvisation.

Cinematographer Ton Peters made use of abstract imagery including footage shot on i-phones, and the director pays tribute to the subtlety and sensitivity of her actresses, for all of whom this was an intensely personal project.

The film, produced by Ellen Havenith of PRPL and Topkapi Films, spent seven months in

post-production as the director and editor Dorith Vincken imposed a narrative shape on all the material that had been filmed.

The film receives its premiere in the Contemporary World Cinema strand of the Toronto International Film Festival. Throughout her career, De Jong has made several internationally acclaimed, award-winning films that probe into the lives of their characters in a forensic and insightful way.

While *Bluebird* (winner of Crystal Bear Berlinale 2005 and Dutch Foreign-language Oscar submission 2005), *Katia's Sister* (Locarno Youth Jury Special Mention, 2008) and *Joy* (Golden Calves for Best Feature and Best Script) were all closely focused studies of teenage girls, the characters in *Frailer* are older - now well into middle age - but the director's technique remains the same. There is never anything glib about her work. She never shows characters simply on the surface but is always ready to explore their characters and motivations in painstaking depth.

What's more, De Jong challenges her performers, enabling them to deliver performances of integrity, depth and authenticity, and never more so than in *Brittle*. "The actresses are much more than that (just actresses)," De Jong underlines. "We made the film together."



Frailer ◊ Director: Mijke de Jong
Production: Topkapi Films & PRPL

Not so childish secrets



Dennis Bots

Dennis Bots has established an international reputation for directing films for young audiences. In *Secrets of War*, selected for Tiff Kids, the setting is a Holland ravaged by war. He talks to Nick Cunningham.

There are at least two incontrovertible facts about cinema from The Netherlands. Firstly, 'films for kids' has become an established Dutch brand, and lauded as such across international markets. Secondly, Dutch filmmakers have a long standing pre-occupation with the Second World War. What seems kind of unusual is that not so many Dutch filmmakers have fused the concepts and made kids' films within a WWII context.

Dennis Bots' *Secrets of War* bucks the trend. The film is based on the best-selling novel by Jacques Vriens. (Bots' 2012 *Cool Kids Don't Cry*, which has recently spawned a Norwegian remake, was also a Vriens adaptation.)

"The producers (Rinkel Film/Bijker Productions) wanted to do another movie of a book by Jacques, and

asked me if I would like to make it," Bots explains. "I wondered at first if I wanted to make a war movie. There are so many movies about the war in Holland and I didn't know if I could add something to the ones that are already there, but when I read the book I was really and immediately interested in making this movie, because it is not just a movie about war, it is mainly a movie about friendship."

'A child actor is very honest, as is his audience'

The film concerns two best friends, Tuur and Lambert, one with a father in the Dutch Resistance, the other whose father is a leading Nazi collaborator. Into their lives comes Maartje, a girl of the same age, but with a secret that will drive a wedge between the young friends.

"At the beginning it is a movie about two kids and how they live together, playing war in the woods. At the end of the movie the war is in their lives," explains Bots, underlining the highly mature and nuanced performances of the three young actors. "There are very few war films for children. This is the first where you can really feel how it is to live in the conflict and how difficult it is to experience those different opinions and attitudes. That's why I really wanted to make it."

Bots does not pay much heed to the nightmare mantra that warns against working with children (and animals). For him, the process of directing kids is altogether more satisfying and enjoyable than directing adults.

"A child actor is very honest, as is his audience, and I like the challenge of getting them into the right feeling, the right emotions, and I think that child actors can bring great depth to their parts, and that is a challenge for me every time," he stresses. "I can relate to them. As an actress from one of my films told me, I am in touch with my inner child. I like filmmaking. I like to tell stories. I like to get my audience into a feeling, into emotions. With children's movies you can really deliver films that the audience can identify with. Children really go into the world that you create as a director."

Bots' next two films are designed for young audiences as well, and both will be produced by Amsterdam-based Bijker Productions. In *The Sword of D'Artagnan*, Isabel (11) begins a quest to find the fabled weapon of the fourth Musketeer. The film will be released Autumn 2015. In *Falko*, the son of a medieval printer must save his father from death as a heretic following the publication of a devastating letter written by Martin Luther. *Falko* is slated for an Autumn 2017 release.



Secrets of War ◊ Director: Dennis Bots Script: Karen van Holst Pellekaan Production: Rinkel Film (NL), Bijker Film & TV (NL) in co-production with Living Stone (BE), Tarantula (LU) Sales: Sola Media

Inland Island



Siebren de Haan and Lonnie van Brummelen

Lonnie van Brummelen and Siebren de Haan's *Episode of the Sea* is a labour of love, three and a half years in the making, that documents the lives of the fishing community of Urk, an island set upon land reclaimed from the sea. The filmmakers speak to Nick Cunningham.

In *Episode of the Sea*, selected for Toronto's Wavelengths section, experimental artists Van Brummelen and De Haan invoke their notion of the "drifting studio practice" - creating a work that is not defined by representation, but rather "moves along with things". In 2011, they took the opportunity to experiment with this practice when they were invited to conduct artistic fieldwork research in the fishing community of Urk.

The sea surrounding Urk was drained in the mid-part of the 20th century, but the islanders remained fisherfolk at heart, and found new fishing grounds in the North Sea. They also retained their customs, their language and their sense of insularity, slowly gaining a mistrust of "strangers", ie non Urkers. An

initial period of great prosperity, defined by the use of bigger boats and higher yields, rolled into years of decline as stringent European quotas and increasing oil prices took their toll.

Over the years a great curiosity developed among journalists and news-gatherers about this odd community and the islanders' wariness of "strangers" increased. When it came to their own immersion into the community, Van Brummelen and De Haan decided, therefore, to adopt an approach that gave room for dialogue.

"The days when they were 'heroes of the sea' were long gone"

"The Dutch government had just announced a stiff package of budget cuts for cultural spending, and cultural producers were cast as scroungers for relying on subsidies," Van Brummelen comments. "When we introduced ourselves to a group of fishermen as artists, we therefore discreetly added that the reputation of our sector had recently suffered some damage. The fishermen nodded that for them too, the days when they were 'heroes of the sea' were long gone: nowadays, they were seen as pirates who were fishing the world's oceans dry. Together we sighed that we shared an image

problem—this is how our collaboration started."

The pair made sound recordings of the islanders' conversations which they transcribed word for word. Then they condensed the hundreds of pages into a script and asked the fishermen to perform this on camera. Some of them could not participate for religious or other reasons, but volunteers from the local theatre club Urk op de Planken (Urk treading the boards) replaced their island neighbours.

"The script was adopted by the inhabitants in their own biblical vocabulary. We found devoted collaborators in them. They gradually took over the directing and coached each other on how to give the most compelling delivery," De Haan adds.

So what do the filmmakers consider the work to be? A documentary? A piece of polemic? A catalogue of the anachronistic lifestyles of the fishing community? "Our striving for more realist encounters makes it probably a documentary engagement, but we immersed ourselves in their story and included staged scenes. In that sense the film is probably (not a) documentary as defined by the film industry," Van Brummelen states.

"As artists we consider *Episode of the Sea* simply an artwork, however an artwork that recites cinematic traditions," De Haan concludes.



Episode of the Sea ◊ Director: Lonnie van Brummelen, Siebren de Haan Script: Lonnie van Brummelen, Siebren de Haan Production: Van Brummelen & De Haan

Real to Reel



Peter Hoogendoorn

Peter Hoogendoorn's feature debut *Between 10 and 12*, selected for Venice Days, is a drama shot in real time and inspired by the tragic death of his sister when he was in his teens. Nick Cunningham reports.

The subject of Peter Hoogendoorn's *Between 10 and 12* - how a family reacts to the news of a sister/daughter's death in a car crash - is far from abstract, but what the film sets out to portray, quite successfully, is an existential state of nothingness as each member is forced to contemplate the new void that has opened up in their own lives.

In his press notes Hoogendoorn puts it rather lyrically. "There are no codes or rules about how to deal with loss. All that is left is to travel through time and space. A journey through a vacuum, stripped of all irrelevancies."

In interview he places this state of being within the real-time context of the film. A police car arrives at a house. The police officers inform a teenage boy (Mike), accompanied by

his girlfriend Katja, of the terrible news. They are then transported by car to his father, and then the three are driven to a distraught mother, always with the same grim purpose.

"I saw it more as an opportunity to film a state of mind," Hoogendoorn stresses. "Normally you can control a lot of things. You know that a car travels from A to B and that everything has a name. You know what a thing is and how it connects with other things. But what happens in the film is a sort of meditation within an atmosphere of impossibility, where nothing has any meaning anymore, and everything is just sound or movement."

At the heart of the film, produced by first-time feature producer Keren Cogan, is the teenage Katja, girlfriend of Mike, who is present in most of the scenes. While we do not see the drama through her eyes as such, her status as both as an insider and as an objective outsider makes her the fulcrum for the film's action, as well as the link between the audience and the other family members whose suffering renders them impenetrable.

"The problem is that if your characters are not allowed to develop then it stays a little bit flat, of course," comments Hoogendoorn of the limitations of watching the family members grieve within the real-time format. "Of

course it was my purpose that Mike and his father should react in the same way, and the mother is screaming, and we therefore recognized that Katja is the most interesting character as she is an insider because of the situation but also an outsider as she is not one of the family."

The emotional maelstrom is self-evident throughout the film, but it is internalized and therefore the small and the mundane aspects of life, and Katja's small acts of kindness and concern, take on a wider significance.

Hoogendoorn talks at length about capturing the energy within a scene, and this is quite often distilled within the "in-between moments" of awkwardness that the characters experience. This "energy" is further enhanced by his choice to shoot very long takes, which allows him to crank up the dramatic tension to uncomfortable levels.

"In the film the ordinary things are more than just what you look at. It may look like nothing is happening, but everything is breaking and is fragile... the small dialogues people have, not clean dialogue as you usually have in films - it is interesting to watch people and observe these in-between moments. I like to capture that, and in doing this I try to capture the right energy for the story, and the flow of what is possible."

Fantasia of Colour

Old silent movies were shot in black and white, surely? Think of Charlie Chaplin or *The Cabinet Of Dr Caligari* and the images that spring to mind aren't shaded in colour. However, a new book, *Fantasia Of Color in Early Cinema*, is set to scotch many people's preconceptions about early cinema, reports Geoffrey Macnab.

As the book's co-author Giovanna Fossati, Chief Curator at EYE Filmmuseum, points out, up to 70% of early silent films were shown in colour. "That was something rediscovered only recently by historians - about 30 years ago, when more research was done in the archives. The general public still doesn't know about it," Fossati says.

Martin Scorsese's *Hugo*, partly inspired by silent pioneer and magician Georges Méliès, hinted at the part colour played in early cinema. Fossati points out that as early as the late 1890s, black and white images were being coloured. "In The EYE collection we have a few films from 1897/98 with colours supplied by hand. Then, various techniques like tinting, toning and also stencilling were also applied until the late 1920s."

The colour would generally be added in the post-production. In early cinema, before the emergence of figures like DW Griffith, filmmakers weren't regarded as

"auteurs." They were not always concerned with the choice of colours to be added to the footage they had shot.

As for Chaplin, the tramp in the bowler hat was regularly seen in colour. "One of the reasons we know the Chaplin comedies as black and white is that they were so popular that they were copied in black and white. Originally, they were distributed in colour, although maybe just in one or two tints."

German expressionist classics like *Dr Caligari*, hailed by admirers today for their moody, atmospheric use of chiaroscuro, were likewise once seen in colour. "It's very, very subtle. It's only tints with the blue for nights and orange and yellows, but the colour was there."

In her essay in the book, Fossati argues that the "disappearance of early colour techniques from many of the later releases of the films was also due to a purist idea that came later in the 20s and 30s, which labelled early colour as a primitive addition to the pureness of (black and white) cinematography." An added reason for sticking to black and white was that it was cheaper to duplicate.

The book will be presented at a special conference, *The Colour Fantastic: Chromatic Worlds of Silent Cinema*, which will take place at EYE 29-31 March, 2015. Fossati's

co-authors are film historians and academics Tom Gunning and Joshua Yumibe.

"We've been talking about this project for a long time, for at least five or six years," Fossati explains. Her connection with Gunning stretches back to the mid-1990s when they met at a workshop on colour in silent cinema organised by the Nederlands Filmmuseum (today EYE). "Since then, our common love for colour has inspired various ideas for follow-up publications. About five years ago, Tom came up with this idea for creating an illustrated volume really focusing on early films," Fossati recalls.

The three fellow enthusiasts have put the book together despite being "scattered" across Europe and North America. It combines lavish illustration with scholarly essays. The 200 images of colour silent films will be full page. "Hopefully, the book will provide a full immersion in these images," Fossati says.

The additional aim is to make the English-language book affordable to general readers and not to price it so highly that only specialists will buy it. "Although we are aiming at a general audience, this is not a book that will sell in thousands," Fossati notes. "On the other hand, it's also true that it's a book where the images are central."

'70% of early silent cinema was shown in colour'



Still: *Les Parisiennes* (USA 1897)

Dutch, in short

Two striking new short films from Dutch directors received their international premieres at the Locarno Festival in Switzerland this summer. Geoffrey Macnab tells more.

Shipwreck, a documentary by Morgan Knibbe, explores the aftermath of the 2013 disaster in which a boat carrying 500 Eritrean refugees sunk off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa. The film won both the Silver Leopard and the Locarno short film nomination for the European Film Awards.

Kookaburra Love by Sjoerd Oostrik is both a meditation on frustration and violence among the young generation and an account of a breakup of a relationship, chronicled via a WhatsApp conversation.

In *Shipwreck*, Knibbe tells the story of Abraham, one of the survivors of the 2013 catastrophe that played out on the edge of Europe. "Getting in contact with the refugees was very hard," the director recalls. "Lampedusa was swarming with journalists and the refugees were fed up with them. Some of them tried to force the refugees to do interviews, or they would secretly film them from a distance. There were too many of them (journalists) and they were competitive with each other. It was very discouraging for me and I felt like I was part of a sick media circus."

Knibbe ended up staying on the island for 10 days and made contact with Abraham, a young refugee who was staying in a camp 20 minutes from the centre of town. They played football together and eventually reached an understanding. Knibbe was open about his project and explained why he wanted to film the refugees. "When the subject is very delicate and fragile, it is not good to rush things," he states.

Lampedusa is a beautiful island. The people there are friendly and hospitable - and yet the authorities did little to save the drowning Eritreans. "Fishermen are prohibited from rescuing refugees. According to the government, rescuing drowning refugees is similar to human smuggling," the director explains.

Knibbe has been heartened by the response to the film in Locarno. "The reactions have been positive until now: people seem to be touched by the film and some people have shown a strong emotional reaction," he says. "People have told me that they appreciate that the film does not seem to be judgmental, but that it takes them along on an experience that gives them a chance to really relate with the refugees. This reaction is a huge honour for me."

Sjoerd Oostrik has also been heartened by the response to *Kookaburra Love* (even if one or two

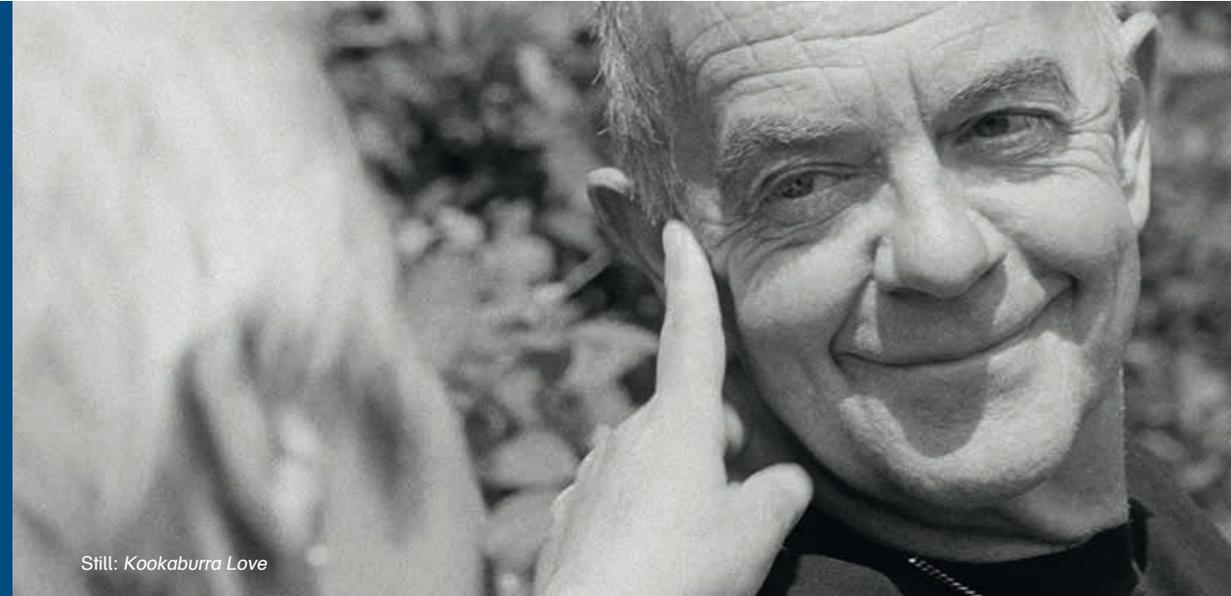
spectators did walk out of screenings during some of the film's more extreme moments.)

The film was made with Wildcard prize money from the Film Fund (see page 40). Oostrik had complete liberty to make exactly the film he wanted. "There's no broadcaster involved, there is no commissioning editor involved. You have carte blanche - and that's actually a rare situation in most cases for filmmakers." The director was working closely with a mentor, the filmmaker and editor Albert Elings. "What he (Elings) told me was to start collecting images and then edit and, while editing, develop the rest of the film."

In other words, this was a complete reversal of usual filmmaking methods. The images and sound came before the script. Only relatively late in the process did Oostrik come up with the idea of using the WhatsApp conversation between the lovers.

The film was made through dynamic young production company and photo agency 100% Halal, which also produces pop promos and commercials.

As for Locarno, Oostrik describes it as "amazing," but acknowledges some of the audience were shocked by the horse butchering scenes in *Kookaburra Love*. "But that's OK - it's not a film for everyone!"



Still: *Kookaburra Love*



Still: *Shipwreck*

Kookaburra Love ◊ Director: Sjoerd Oostrik
Script: Sjoerd Oostrik Production: 100% Halal

Shipwreck ◊ Director: Morgan Knibbe
Production: Dieptescherpte, De Correspondent

Reckless behaviour



Joram Lürsen

Joram Lürsen's *Reckless* is a masterclass in economy, an edge of your seat thriller that calls on the talents of a mere three actors, and is played out in a small apartment constructed on a studio set. The director talks to Nick Cunningham about his Netherlands Film Festival opener.

Director Joram Lürsen would be delighted if *Reckless* (Dutch title *Bloedlink*) saw audience returns around the 150,000 mark. It is what he calls a 'middle film' – highly commercial but made on a budget of less than a million euros. Bigger budgets, he maintains, convert to unreasonable box-office expectations. So the less money spent in production outlay, the smaller the potential disappointment of investors. "Sixty copies, 150,000 spectators and then we have done brilliantly," he states.

Which is not an unreasonable demand, given the film's cast of bright new Dutch stars - Tygo Gernandt (*Süskind*), Marwen Kenzari (*Wolf*) and feature debutante Sarah Chronis who puts in a powerhouse performance against her illustrious leads – and a story that teems with

tension and deceit while offering a riot of plot twists.

The premise is simple. Two sons decide to make their fortune by kidnapping and holding to ransom the daughter of a tycoon. As one would expect, things do not go to plan, and little by little the balance of power shifts away from the men to an increasingly capable heroine.

On the first day of rehearsal, Lürsen explains, Gernandt and Kenzari had just come off the set of the light-hearted romantic comedy *Hartenstraat* (Sanne Vogel), but they lost no time in immersing themselves into a state of brooding and violent intensity. "The first thing they wanted to do was to get rid of that feeling that they were friends, and the romantic feeling from the last film. But after half a day they were hitting each other and putting a gag-ball into the mouth of Sarah. So that was a funny start."

"Sarah was very sweet but very brave," Lürsen adds. "She trusted the other actors in the way that we all worked. Very brave doing all that I asked, but very intense and very focussed, and wonderful for this part."

The film is produced by Topkapi Films and is a remake of the British film *The Disappearance of Alice Creed* (J Blakeson, 2009). Lürsen and screenwriter Frank Ketelaar were looking to develop a psychological thriller when Ketelaar

came across Blakeson's film. For them, it ticked all the right boxes and, to cut a long story short, decided to remake it rather than use it for mere inspiration. Topkapi's Frans van Gestel cut a deal with the original's producers and presented the project to his team.

"It's not important for me if the film was made before," says Lürsen. "It's more important when I ask 'if this script was written for me, would I like to do it?'" So I thought of new actors and of a new perspective on the original idea, and I started working on it with Frank. We changed it a bit, but it was very nice working on it."

It is not very common to see a Dutch remake of an international film, it is more likely to see a Netherlands film exported for remake. Two of Lürsen's films, for example, have spawned international remakes, with a German remake of his *Love is All* due for release in December 2014.

"This time it was the other way round," he concedes. "I enjoyed the experience a lot. It's not that I looked at the original film 20 times to see how they did it. You can see that it works, but then as a director you do your version of it. You do your point of view story-wise, and how you think the characters should be developed, and then it will be a completely different movie."



'150,000 spectators and we have done brilliantly'

High Pitch



Signe Zeilich-Jensen

This year's Holland Film Meeting will play out against a backdrop of soaring confidence within the Dutch production sector. HFM director Signe Zeilich-Jensen tells Nick Cunningham how this greatly benefits an event that is dedicated to fruitful and ongoing European co-production.

"It now makes more sense for professionals from Europe to get more acquainted with the Dutch industry in Utrecht in September," Zeilich-Jensen stresses. "These recent changes in the Dutch production landscape will drive interest our way."

The Holland Film Meeting is the international business arm of the Netherlands Film Festival with a remit to forge co-production links between European producers and their European counterparts. The event's core element is the HFM Co-production Platform where 21 high quality Dutch and European projects are presented to a wide selection of influential and talented (potential) co-producers, sales companies, distributors and financiers. After the Cannes launch

of the Film Production Incentive and Commission, interest in the Platform has spiked. "Yes, in Cannes there were already more people interested in coming to us. These initiatives mean that we can attract more ambitious projects to The Netherlands," she underlines. "Putting a co-production together is quite a technical thing so if you have the feeling that there are more possibilities financially then of course that makes it more interesting content-wise to get in contact with the filmmakers in the Netherlands. I hope it will be a success, especially on the artistic side and not just as a technical solution. The Production Incentive will really give the possibility for the Dutch to show what they can offer."

"There is more pride in the industry and that works in a good way," Zeilich-Jensen adds. "And if there is more self-confidence you are able to achieve more. I hope it will prove that the Dutch filmmakers can find a secure place internationally."

Over the years, the great and the good of Dutch arthouse and crossover directing talent have come to the Holland Film Meeting to persuade international co-producers of the benefits in investing in their films, talent such as Nanouk Leopold (*Wolfsbergen*), Paula van der Oest (*Black Butterflies*) and Tamar van den Dop (*Supernova*). Simone van Dusseldorp's *Life According to Nino*,

which opens Cinekid 2014 (see page 34), was pitched in Utrecht in 2010. The previous year Dutch producer Bero Beyer presented *Atlantic*. (Jan-Willem van Ewijk) which is selected for Toronto 2014 (see page 14). Likewise, box-office successes such as *Sonny Boy* (Maria Peters) and *Winter in Wartime* by Martin Koolhoven started their careers in Utrecht.

This year's crop of future features to be presented at the Co-production Platform include *Forbidden Love* by Nicole van Kilsdonk (*Patatje Oorlog*, Best Dutch Youth Film at Cinekid 2011) and Mischa Kamp's *Hairdresser's Salon Beatrix*, produced by BosBros. The prolific Rinkel Film will attend with *In God's Name*, Arno Toonen's true story of a Dutch playboy priest, while internationally-renowned photographer Erwin Olaf will pitch his debut feature *A Shining Flaw*, the story of Casanova's first love, together with Eyeworks Film. In addition Paula van der Oest will pitch her new project *Tonio*.

Non-Dutch projects in Platform selection, looking to benefit from future tax credits and the sterling efforts of the new film commission, include Marion Hänsel's *Upstream*.

"It is wonderful that somebody like Marion Hänsel applied again this year, especially after she pitched her last film *Tenderness* here in 2012," concludes Zeilich-Jensen.

Nino to Amsterdam



Simone van Dusseldorp

Cinekid opener *Life According To Nino*, directed by Simone van Dusseldorp and scripted by Urszula Antoniak, is a children's film with a dark undertow, writes Geoffrey Macnab.

In the film, eight year-old Nino (Rohan Timmermans) is trying to cope after the sudden death of his mother in an accident. His father (Koen de Graeve) is utterly grief-stricken and struggling to hold himself together.

When Van Dusseldorp was shown the script by the producers, she was surprised that Antoniak, who has made such films as *Code Blue* and *Nothing Personal*, didn't want to direct it herself. Antoniak told her that she didn't want to focus on a kids' film. The director makes it very clear, nonetheless, that she was making her own film after being finding the subject matter immediately intriguing. "I liked the story a lot. It was very moving," she remembers, adding that its plotting didn't follow predictable lines. The material also had a strong personal resonance for her. "When I was ten, my best friend drowned,"

the director recalls of a grim incident from her school days. "I know how, when you're a child, you have a fantasy to cope with it." Children, she elaborates, often use "magical thinking" which enables them to overcome the trauma of the death of a loved one. Adults aren't always so well adjusted. "That's very interesting, the balance of the story."

'Rohan was very talented and intelligent'

Van Dusseldorp was determined to make a film that her own daughter could enjoy. At an early test screening with adults, audiences felt the material contained too much suspense for children. She therefore made a "lighter" version. But then she found that she had swung too far the other way.

"I showed this 'light' version to my daughter and she said, 'mum, no, this is too nice. I want to feel the tension and the danger.'" Van Dusseldorp realised that she couldn't hide the heavy elements at the story's core. The trick was to combine the darker elements with lighter, more playful material. (In the film, Nino deals with his bereavement by holding long conversations with his rabbit, which he imagines can talk back to him.)

Yes, it was a struggle to cast Nino. "I like children with outspoken

personalities." Eventually, she found Timmermans. He was around nine years old and had already appeared as a stand-in in the 2012 *Alfie The Little Werewolf*. "I knew he already had experience of being on set...I thought, ok, I can work with him. He was very talented and intelligent." It helped, too, that he had a good rapport with De Graeve, who took him bowling in breaks between filming.

Antoniak has already seen an early cut of the film and has given it her blessing. "Her angle was a little bit more dark. I wanted to make the film more for children," comments Van Dusseldorp.

Life According To Nino was produced by Dutch companies Family Affair Films and Waterland Film with Savage Film as the Belgian co-producer. Now, Van Dusseldorp is preparing new projects, among them a film for Topkapi Films that is aimed at adult audiences. This project, which also deals with grief and which features ghosts, marks a break from her usual work which has been mainly aimed at children. So why is she keen to make a film for grown ups?

"I've been making films for children for more than ten years. I am very proud of these films but I want to move on. In every film I want to challenge myself and now I am ready for something new," Van Dusseldorp reflects.



Photo: Kris Dewitte

***Life According to Nino* ◊ Director:** Simone van Dusseldorp
Script: Urszula Antoniak **Production:** Family Affair Films (NL), Waterland Film (NL), in co-production with Savage Film (BE) **Sales:** Attraction Distribution

It's Child Play



'For children the digital world is second nature'

Festival director Sannette Naeyé and Dutch Culture Minister Jet Bussemaker



Fleur Winters

CineKid, about to celebrate its 28th edition 14-18 October, is one of the pre-eminent children's film festivals in Europe, and an event which matters as much to the kids themselves as to the professionals working in the sector. Geoffrey Macnab reports.

Cinekid, held in an old gas works in central Amsterdam, reflects the seriousness with which the Dutch industry regards children's cinema. As its logo points out, this is an event "where children's programming isn't just kids' stuff."

Fleur Winters, Head of CineKid for Professionals, oversees a range of industry initiatives that are attracting increasing numbers of buyers, sellers and producers. At the same time, children attend in droves - not just for the screenings, they are also drawn to the MediaLab which has installations, games and apps for them to explore. There is a "gadget corner" and there are mini-media academies where the children can learn about coding and hacking. "Basically, it's like a digital playground. Kids come in. They spend a whole afternoon or it could

be a whole day. They connect to different forms of art and media," Winters explains. "Children adapt. For them the digital world is almost second nature."

This year, CineKid launches a new training lab for screenwriters for kids' movies (live action and animation). The aim is to have a 3-4 day programme in advance of the festival, for delegates firstly to attend CineKid and then go on to the Berlinale where they will participate in the festival's Generations programme. The new lab is already supported by Norwegian, Swedish, Icelandic and Belgian funders as well as the Dutch.

Another new initiative is Producers One on One, through which international producers will be brought together for 15 minute "speed-dating" sessions where they can explore opportunities to work together. Brazil, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Poland are participating and producers from each country will meet potential international partners.

Meanwhile, industry and kids will come face to face at the new "Test & Pitch" sessions. Projects in development that were previously pitched at the co-production market will be presented to a target group of (English-speaking) children with buyers in the room. At most industry events, producers presenting kids' projects pitch them

to audiences of adult funders and commissioners. In CineKid, they will now be able to see how those projects "play" with the audience at which they are aimed.

Another new initiative is to bring Dutch and international book publishers to CineKid to explore which children's books are suitable for adaptation into film, or as the starting point for apps or games. Additionally CineKid is hosting a special masterclass on "remakes" of kids' movies. Dutch hit *Cool Kids' Don't Cry* will be shown alongside the Norwegian version of the film. Producers, directors and writers from both versions will then discuss the opportunities and challenges in the "remake" sector.

The organisers are heartened by the recent announcement of the €20,000 Eurimages Development Award for "Best Film Project" in the Junior co-production market. This is bound to act as a further incentive for producers to bring their projects to CineKid. The overall message is that CineKid is continuing to thrive despite the recent loss of Government backing.

"We are constantly on the lookout for new partners and new initiatives," Winters states. "That's CineKid's DNA. We are never set. We always continue to innovate... and our audience requires us to do so. They move so quickly. We need to move even quicker."

Green Shoots

In Autumn 2014 The Netherlands Film Fund will facilitate an eco-manager to encourage sustainable practice on Dutch film sets. Nick Cunningham reports.

“The industry clearly sees the importance and benefits of producing films as sustainably as possible,” stresses Doreen Boonekamp, CEO of the Netherlands Film Fund.

The Film Fund will underline this commitment to green filmmaking with a sustainability manager in the Autumn of 2014. The brief will be twofold, firstly to encourage and report on sustainable innovation on an industry level and secondly to work directly with production and facilities companies to convince professional staff of the necessity of green filmmaking.

Chai Locher, since 2012 project leader of the Green Film Making Project (GFMP), a Strawberry Earth initiative, welcomes this. “It’s not just us in a corner of the industry acting as an irritant any more,” he stresses.

The aims of the GFMP have always been clear and unambiguous, to guide the film industry into a future that demands an ethical approach to matters environmental. The challenge for Project staff has been to convince Dutch film professionals to make the business

of filmmaking more sustainable on all levels through the application of best practice. The benefits, green exponents argue, are not just environmental, they can also make a difference to the bottom line.

The beauty of the GFMP approach is that its effectiveness lies in how it chooses to deliver its message and get parties involved. It is not a top-down, hammer-blow proselytizing organization. Nor does it solely lobby presidents and prime ministers. Rather it seeks to convince at grass roots level, dealing directly with the producers, the creative entrepreneurs, the technicians, the operatives, those who are closest to the action and therefore most capable of effecting change.

“At GFMP we have chosen to work with the people who do it on the ground,” agrees Locher. “Together with our partners we constantly search for ways at production level to get people moving, and to introduce this idea of sustainability and sustainable innovation. From there we can look to translate it into policy or into funding regulations but really starting with the people who do it.”

One such hands-on producer is Gijs Kerbosch of production house 100% Halal, who was an early adopter of green practice. After Kerbosch was shown the revolutionary *Spiderman 2* sustainability film, that described

how the production’s eco manager galvanised the approach to sustainability across all departments, there was, for him, no turning back.

“I thought we need that. We also have to take a look at the entire process and determine where we can make greener choices,” Kerbosch points out. “We didn’t have time to do it ourselves, so we needed to find somebody for our Kort! film to make the set greener and come up with solutions.”

Improvements included locating the project in Amsterdam, choosing digital over film and streamlining transportation practice, persuading staff to leave their cars at home and go to work on foot, bike or tram. The financial gains were not spectacular, as it was a mere 3-day shoot, but those will come in the future, Kerbosch argues. “My company does features and commercials too, and photography, so there are so many more shooting days. When you apply the work this sustainability manager does on that scale, then it will pay for itself.”

Concludes Boonekamp: “Green filmmaking has truly landed in the industry and we are very dedicated to working on this next step.”



Wildcard winners 2013

Funding

Born to be Wild

The Wildcard system is opening up its remit, and is set to embrace non-doc filmmakers too. Geoffrey Macnab reports.

Wildcard is a Netherlands Film Fund initiative aimed at supporting maverick new filmmaking talent. First launched five years ago, it gives selected visionary young directors complete creative license – within the constraints of a smallish budget – to do whatever they want. Now, Wildcard backing is to be made available to fiction films and animation as well as to docs.

As of this year, winners of the new fiction Wildcards will receive €80,000 to make a film. For documentary and animation projects, €40,000 is available. Three Wildcards are available every year for fiction, two for documentary and one for animation. “This is one of the very good possibilities to open up (opportunities) to the film students who just finished their film academy to take their first professional steps,” Doreen Boonekamp, CEO of the Film Fund, says of the funding initiative.

Generally, filmmakers at the beginning of their careers have to answer to fund managers, producers, patrons and commissioners. Their radicalism and originality can be trampled out of them as they are forced to behave according to traditional conventions. It is little wonder that

they sometimes feel they are tethered by invisible strings. Wildcard is intended to cut away these strings and to liberate the tyro directors to express themselves loudly using their own voices. Coaches are appointed to mentor and encourage them – but there is nobody breathing down their necks, telling them, ‘no, this idea is too radical’ or ‘no, audiences won’t understand that.’

The tone of the Wildcards was set when the very first awards were given in 2009. Among the projects supported was Edward Cook’s wondrously eccentric and bizarre *Los*, a documentary that explored the strange way the sea between the Swedes and the Norwegians seemed to make people forget their everyday modern lives and revert to Viking type.

All the Wildcard films are screened at the Netherlands Film Festival in Utrecht and the Film Fund does its best to help them secure distribution.

Boonekamp is encouraged by the number of female directors who have won Wildcards. Among these are Marta Jurkiewicz, whose ingenious new film *10* profiles ten different men from the same neighbourhood. The youngest is a small baby. The oldest is 99 years old. She received the award thanks to her graduation doc *Daughters* which she made at the Netherlands Film and Television Academy.

There is also increasing evidence that Wildcard films are catching the attention of international festivals. For example, earlier this summer, *Kookaburra Love* by Wildcard winner Sjoerd Oostrik was screened at the Locarno Festival in Switzerland. “Basically, the idea of the prize is that you get complete liberty to make whatever you want. There is no television station involved. There is no commissioning editor involved,” Oostrik enthuses of the scheme. “You have complete carte blanche to make whatever you want. That is actually a rare situation in most cases for filmmakers. I thought I should make the most of it!”

Kookaburra Love (profiled on page 28) is a determinedly experimental affair that Oostrik started making long before he had a completed script in his mind. In other words, it is not the type that a more traditional funding system would ever have supported.

By comparison with other Film Fund schemes, the amount of money on offer with the Wildcards is modest. Nonetheless, since 2009, the scheme has consistently identified exciting new documentary talent that might otherwise have been left behind. Expanding the Wildcard to encompass fiction and animation can only help deepen the talent pool.

Short Cuts



Photo: Jason Wyche

EYE on McCall

Revolutionary structuralist filmmaker Anthony McCall receives the full EYE treatment 28 September - 30 November 2014 with an exhibition of his stunning light sculptures. The British McCall turned his back on the art world in the late 1980s but returned 20 years later with his digitally-projected 'solid light' series that emphasize the sculptural properties inherent within a beam of light.

"Anthony was not interested so much in the image as in the projector, and specifically the light through the projector," explains EYE director of Exhibitions Jaap Guldmond. "With this very simple starting point he created a body of work that is amazingly well developed, projecting these strange but beautiful cones of light. For me this is really like presenting part of the history of the *avant garde*, like what I did with Oskar Fischinger. We will present some of Anthony's older works from the 60s and 70s but also some later ones. It is very self-referential and questions what is the essence of film, but is also beautiful and interactive. As an audience you are walking through these cones. It is an amazing body of work."

Desmet Collection

As the world commemorates the outbreak of war 100 years ago it is worth drawing attention to the EYE Museum's Desmet Collection, which includes a selection of film posters (from both the Entente and Central powers) that were used during the war within the neutral territory of The Netherlands.

The overall collection, donated a year after Jean Desmet's death in 1956, is vast and includes films, posters, books, archival materials and film ephemera amassed by the Desmet distribution company for a decade until its closure in 1916. Contained within it are masterpieces by D.W. Griffith and Louis Feuillade, numerous silent star vehicles and

productions from the film companies Pathé, Gaumont and Edison.

The collection includes 933 films in total, nearly all of which originate from the period between 1907-1916, and nearly all 'one-reelers', with a running time lasting no longer than 10 minutes. The collection additionally includes approximately 2,000 posters and around 700 photographs. The donation from the Desmet family in 1957 forms an important base for the current collection of silent films at EYE. It is the particular combination of films, posters, photographs and business archives that makes the Desmet Collection so valuable, providing an incredible insight into the early years of cinema.



Filibus* (Filibus, de geheimzinnige luchtpirate), 1915 / Mario Roncoroni / Corona Films Collectie EYE



Still: They Have Escaped

Dutch Autumn of Film

In addition to the five Dutch features selected for Toronto and the Venice Days nod for *Between 10 and 12*, a profusion of Dutch minority co-productions grace the programmes of the 2014 Autumn festivals.

Toronto is top heavy with Dutch minority co-productions which number seven in total. **Midnight Madness** world premieres the Belgian Jonas Govaerts' *Cub*, co-produced by Submarine. In the film Sam and the rest of his troupe of young cub scouts find themselves in a forest filled with deadly traps, placed there by a psychopathic huntsman.

The Pieter van Huystee-backed *The Yes Men Are Revolting*, directed by Laura Nix and The Yes Men world premieres in **TIFF Docs** while **Toronto Vanguard**

screens Jukka Pekka Valkeapää's *They Have Escaped* (Dutch co-producer Revolver Media).

In **Toronto Wavelengths** are *Jauju* by Lisandro Alonso, co-produced by the Dutch Fortuna Films, and the Ukraine *Maidan*, by Sergei Loznitsa (producer: Atom & Void), which chronicles the recent Ukrainian uprising. Both films premiered in Cannes 2014.

In **Toronto Contemporary World Cinema** are two Dutch minority co-pros that world-premiered at Locarno in August. *Men Who Save the World* (Liew Seng Tata), co-produced by Volya Films, was selected for **Locarno's Concorso Cineasti del Presente** section. Argentinian director Martín Rejtman's *Two Shots Fired* (Dutch co-producer Waterland Film)

screened in **Locarno Concorso Internazionale**, as did the Greek *A Blast*, directed by Syllas Tzoumerkas (Dutch co-producer PRPL).

In September **Venice Days** world-premieres the Uruguayan *The Midfielder*, Adrián Biniez's story of an Argentinean football team captain, which was selected for CineMart 2012 and was recipient of HBF Plus funding (Dutch co-producer Topkapi Films). Also in Venice Days is Jukka Pekka Valkeapää's *They Have Escaped*, a "visually told story of love, escape, hope, violence and survival."

In addition, Dutch co-productions in San Sebastian (both in **Horizontes Latinos**) are Celina Murga's *The Third Bank*, which was boarded by Waterland Films and premiered in Berlinale 2014, and Lisandro Alonso's *Jauju*.

In Short

Toronto Short Cuts
A Single Life directed and produced by Job, Joris & Marieke. Pia travels through aspects of her life each time she plays a mysterious vinyl single.
The Last Days of Summer, written and directed by Feike Santbergen. A phone call changes everything for three teenage friends enjoying a day on the beach.

San Seb Intl Film Students Meeting
Onno the Oblivious directed by Viktor van der Valk. Onno is stuck. He is lost. He has many questions and too few answers.



Tygo Gernandt

One of Holland's leading actors, Tygo Gernandt has displayed incredible versatility across many film, TV and theatre productions and has a chameleon like ability to lose himself in roles.

He received rave reviews for his role in the Pieter Kuijpers hit *Godforsaken*, for which he won a Golden Calf for best actor. He also shared the best actor

Golden Calf with his four co-stars of *Schnitzel Paradise* (Martin Koolhoven). Gernandt also starred in the popular romantic comedy *Hartenstraat*, directed by Sanne Vogel, and the war movie *Süskind* (Rudolf van den Berg).

His most recent film *Reckless*, by Joram Lürsen, will open the Netherlands Film Festival in September 2014.

Comments Lürsen: "Tygo is very sweet but very intense, and if he decides to go for it he really goes for it. If you see him working you think he is completely out of control - he is so wild - but every movement and every sound is worked out upfront. But he has complete control over what he is doing... But if there were ten of him on set I would be dead at the end of the film."