FEATURED FILMS

BEAUTY REFUGEE
I DREAMED ABOUT POL POT
THE GENIUS AND THE BOYS
BLOOD CALLS YOU
THE FACE OF THE ENEMY
I DON’T WANNA LIVE THIS LIFE
BANANAS!*
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I Dreamed about Pol Pot by Julia Stanislawska & Michael Krotkiewski

Student Competition
Mr Governor by Måns Månsson

Reflecting Images & DOC U!
I Don't Wanna Live This Life by Renzo Aneröd & Bo Harringer

Reflecting Images
Bananas!*
The Genius and the Boys by Bosse Lindquist
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"EXCUSE ME!" A young man bumps into me with a bulging carrier bag. I’m right in the middle of the crowd outside one of the cinemas on the film festival island of Lido, Venice. Almost a thousand people are defying the unpleasantly sticky weather to form a queue so long that it will be talked about for the rest of the festival. I meet an Italian TV crew who have managed to push their way to the front and are filming the crowd. Someone wonders what film they’re showing:

"It’s a Swedish documentary!" my colleague replies.

I get goose bumps just thinking about it. The film that caused such a rumpus and got the festival planners scrambling to put on extra screenings is Erik Gandini’s Videocracy. Now on a triumphant tour around the world, the film has sparked widespread discussion about freedom of the press and media. Recently it was even screened at the EU parliament in Strasbourg as part of an ongoing debate.

**SWEDISH DOCUMENTARIES ARE remarkably successful right now, and many of them are of such a high journalistic quality that their influence is both cultural and political. Many of the films are engaging without taking an explicit stance. They don’t deliver a ready-packaged opinion, but rather paint a picture that the viewer can continue to fill in long after the closing credits roll.

Fredrik Gertten’s Bananas!* is just such a film, featuring a David and Goliath legal battle in the USA with a lawyer representing Nicaraguan banana workers on one side and the banana giant Dole on the other. The film has provoked reactions all around the world, even giving rise to new legal proceedings. Dole tried to sue the filmmakers for spreading falsehoods, but were forced, under enormous pressure, to withdraw their lawsuit. This represents a victory not only for a small Swedish film company, but for freedom of speech in general.

When we have so many excellent films to offer, it’s hardly surprising that the world’s leading festivals are queuing up to screen them. I have only mentioned two films, but at this year’s IDFA we are breaking all previous records with nine films selected. And CPH:DOX screened no fewer than 17 Swedish films!

**THREE YEARS AGO,** when I took over as CEO for the Swedish Film Institute, I dreamed that one day the Danes would come to us for advice on how to make films. So when this year’s CPH:DOX is featuring a Focus on Sweden and putting on a seminar entitled "Why do the Swedes make such good films?", I have to pinch myself.

Has that day finally dawned? Well, you just have to turn the pages of this issue of Swedish Film to drink in some of our many examples of success.

**Cissi Elwin Frenkel**
CEO, Swedish Film Institute
#3/2009

5 BANANAS!
Read all about Fredrik Gerttens David-versus-Goliath battle against fruit corporation Dole.

6 NEWS
The latest from the world of Swedish documentary film.

8 BLOOD CALLS YOU
After a bad relationship director Linda Thorgren started digging in the history of the female side of her family. And found patterns of domestic violence and falling for the wrong guys.

10 FACE OF THE ENEMY
Fearless director/artist Erik Pauser takes his Vietnamese war documentary to IDFA.

12 BEAUTY REFUGEE
Meet the family where 26 of the 29 members have had cosmetic surgery. The exception — director Claudia Lisboa. Who has made a film about her family and their quest for eternal beauty.

14 VIDEOCRACY
Cover boy Erik Gandini’s documentary about Silvio Berlusconi and television is stirring up controversy in Italy.

20 TINE FISCHER
Danish festival CPH:DOX looks north for inspiration and presents a special focus on Swedish films this year.

22 LIKE A PASCHA
Debutant director Svante Tidholm takes you behind the scenes of Pascha – the biggest brothel in Europe.

24 THE GENIUS AND THE BOYS
Director Bosse Lindquist has made a documentary about Carleton Gajdusek; Nobel Prize winner, star of the science world — and paedophile.

26 I DREAMED ABOUT POL POT AND KHIEU SAMPHAN – POL POT’S DEPUTY
Two Swedish documentaries this fall concentrate on the long shadow dictator Pol Pot has cast over the country of Cambodia.

30 DIRTY DIARIES
Mia Engberg’s feminist porn project has gotten all the way from Sweden to Conan O’Brien’s talk show.

32 WHEN I’M GROWN UP
Come rain or come sunshine: veteran film maker Rainer Hartleb will still make his documentaries about Stockholm suburb Jordbro.

36 REGRETTERS
A camera, two men and a story about changing your sex – and regretting it.

40 NEW DOCS
All the fresh Swedish documentaries.
Currently in the spotlight for his documentary *Bananas!* about the Nicaraguan banana workers' struggle against the Dole corporation, Fredrik Gertten was sued this summer by the multinational fruit giant. In October Dole withdrew the action, and Gertten’s production company WG took back its counter claim against Dole. The headline-grabbing film is set to screen at IDFA in the Reflecting Images section.

**Why did Dole withdraw the action?**

“About a week before they withdrew the action, Dole were making extremely hostile noises in the Swedish press. Then when the Swedish parliament invited major retailers in for talks and I was invited to lunch with the Minister for Culture to discuss the film, it transpired that the retailers were far from happy. There were so many questions from customers that they asked Dole to back off. It’s always hard to know how a major corporation views a small country like Sweden, but it could be that they thought there was a risk that the bad publicity would spread,” says Fredrik Gertten.

**What’s your take on the situation so far?**

“That it’s extremely expensive to be sued! We’ve already run up costs of at least SEK 600,000. And there’s nothing to indicate that we’ll get any compensation for those costs. Nor does it seem that our financial backers for the film will help us out. It’s the new financial reality that you’re on your own when problems arise. And that makes it hard, because the companies in this part of the industry are often very small.”

**How does it affect you, your profession and the future of documentaries if the people you feature try to stop screenings, like they did at the *Bananas!* premiere at the Los Angeles Film Festival, or if they sue the filmmakers?**

“If a company like Dole doesn’t lose, and lose big time, in a case like this, then there’s a danger for documentary filmmakers, because financial backers, producers, distributors and others might hesitate to get involved in a project where a major corporation is involved. It takes real solidarity to stand up to attacks and forces like these. It was fantastic, for example, that the German documentary filmmakers in AG DOK and the International Federation of Journalists, which represents 600,000 journalists around the world, gave us their support.”

**How do you feel now?**

“It’s nice just to be able to focus on getting the film out. It’s been sold to various countries, and we’re drawing up a contract for theatrical release in the UK and America.”

HENRIK EMILSON

*Follow the whole story at www.bananasthemovie.com*

**FACTS**

**FREDRIK GERTTEN**

Born: 1956 in Malmö.

Background: Filmmaker and journalist. Worked as a journalist for magazines, radio and television in Africa, Latin America, Asia and around Europe during the 80s and 90s. Has made a number of acclaimed documentaries: *The Great Bridge* (2001) together with Lars Westman and *An Ordinary Family* (2005).

Currently: His latest documentary, *Bananas!* casts light on global food policy.
In Bo Harringer and Renzo Aneröd's disturbing documentary *I Don't Wanna Live This Life* we encounter Henke and Sebbe, two young men from Gothenburg in society's gutter. Regular GHB users and small-time criminals, the two of them lack all joie de vivre and hope for the future. The film is due to screen in two sections at IDFA in Amsterdam.

“We want to show a slice of reality that nobody else cares about. We let the young people have their say without any prompting,” says Harringer.

The film duo’s previous documentary *Under en blågul himmel* looked at a number of Gothenburg’s youth sub-cultures, and it was while shooting the film that they came into contact with Sebbe and his friend Johnny.

At the beginning of *I Don’t Wanna Live This Life* we find out that Johnny has just killed himself. Depression is the thing that Henke, Sebbe and many of the other young people featured in the film seem to have in common. During the course of the film Henke gets taken into custody, overdoses several times on GHB and makes two serious suicide attempts. He gets prescribed a number of medicines, but doesn’t ever get any real help. There’s a marked feeling of anger in the film at society’s inability to deal with these problems, but Harringer feels that the outlook isn’t relentlessly bleak:

“We arranged a special screening of the film for local politicians in Gothenburg, since when they have agreed that all GHB overdoses must be reported to social services. Beforehand, nobody cared at all about these young people. It just goes to show that film can affect the world we live in.”

PER NYSTRÖM

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**MÅNS MÅNSSON • MR GOVERNOR**

**Student power**

Måns Månsson's critically acclaimed, cinéma vérité-inspired documentary *Mr Governor (Hr Landshövding)* is in the IDFA Competition for Student Documentary. The film was warmly received at the Berlin Film Festival 2009 and was nominated for a Swedish Film Award in January this year. Månsson previously directed short docs *Clyde* (2001), *Stockholm Street* (2003) and *Kinchen* (2005).

**EO LIN LARSSON**
**Women in focus**

For the second year running, the Swedish Film Institute and pubcaster Sveriges Television (SVT) have set up a project to promote Swedish documentaries. Filmmakers across Sweden are being encouraged to submit proposals for a 13-minute documentary. Eight films will eventually be selected to take part.

This year’s theme is The Woman in My Life. Free interpretation is the name of the game, and proposals have streamed in.

“Our aim is to rally Sweden’s best documentary makers. We’re hoping for lots of original ideas and personal films with a high level of ambition”, says Tove Torbiörnsson, documentary film commissioner at the Film Institute.

A similar project took place in 2008. The theme then was People in Focus 2008, which attracted more than 300 applicants, both newcomers and established filmmakers.

“We started the project to give people an opportunity to stretch their film narrative skills, and we’re aiming primarily at experienced filmmakers. Nonetheless, we expect to see some newcomers behind the chosen films. Our aim is for the films to reflect a broad cross-section of voices that will form a whole.”

Why did you choose the theme The Woman in My Life?

“Basically, we’d like to encourage more films that feature women. We’re always on the lookout for new perspectives on the world around us.”

The resulting films will be broadcast on SVT during spring 2010.

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**Successful run for animated doc**

Hanna Heilborn and David Aronowitsch’s animated documentary Slaves (Slavar), has had a successful run on the festival circuit since it picked up the Silver Cub Award for best short documentary at last year’s IDFA. In February, the film won a special mention in the Berlin Film Festival’s Generation 14 Plus section, was awarded Best Short Animation and the Unicef Award at Annecy, and won awards at amongst others Cinequest, DOXA Doc, IT’S ALL TRUE Int'l Documentary FF, Tempo and Melbourne.

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**Naked at IDFA**

Experimental artist Tove Kjellmark’s short film Naked, about a toy panda that goes into surgery at a large Swedish hospital, has been chosen for IDFA’s Paradocs. In her work, Kjellmark, who has previously had films screened at the Oberhausen and Tempo film festivals, seeks to examine the rules that govern humanity and the contradictions of the human experience.
True blood

Linda Thorgren’s marriage ended in a personal nightmare of physical and psychological abuse. Instead of turning in on herself, she has reached out with a deeply personal documentary, Blood Calls You. WORDS EMMA GRAY MUNTHE PHOTO JOHAN BERGMARK

“T
took eleven years before my parents’ marriage ended in catastrophe. For me and Alexis it went faster.” With those words begins director Linda Thorgren’s intensely personal film, Blood Calls You, which centers on domestic violence and her own relationship with an abusive man. Next we see her trying to get a restraining order to prevent Alexis from harassing her and their daughter. If there is usually a lot of shame and stigma around the whole issue, Thorgren chose to go the completely other way, uncompromisingly turning her camera on herself and her family.

“I’ve certainly had my ups and downs during the making of the film, and I’ve certainly struggled with a feeling of shame. Some days I really wondered what I was doing, but I never felt like giving up. That sense of shame actually spurred me on, because I don’t want to be any part of it. It’s shame that screws things up even more for people who find themselves in a situation like that. People kept telling me to write a book instead of making a film, because they thought a film would become far too personal. But there is no reason to be ashamed, and film is my way of expressing myself."

Did you ever feel that it was too personal?

“For sure I did. It was a tough film to make, but I felt that I had to. It was a very long process, it took almost three years to make the film – and I definitely can’t say that I knew where it was going the whole time. I started by going to Cuba, where Alexis and I first met, and filmed some stuff there. Then we cut some of the material, filmed some more and went back to the editing room again. It was a process, where we filmed and edited our way to the story – without really knowing where it was heading.

Indeed. During that process, Thorgren discovered that domestic violence was a pattern that had actually run through her family for generations. Not only had she and her sister been through similar relationships with men, her mother, her grandmother and her great grandmother had been there too. All in all, four generations of abuse.

“In a way, it was almost a relief to discover that there was a pattern in my family. Because even though you know that you’re not alone in a situation like that, it certainly feels like it. ‘How did I get into this? Am I stupid?’ You quite easily blame yourself. To discover that you’re a part of a problem running through several generations makes it a lot easier to bear.”

How did making the film, and seeing the final result, affect your family?

“You know what? This film has basically opened up everyone who has taken part of it, in the end it has definitely been a positive experience for us. Sure, there has been a lot of drama surrounding both the film and us, especially when Alexis suddenly died – but for me and my mother it’s been very good, and my relationship with my father is actually better than ever.”

“People kept telling me to write a book instead of making a film, because they thought a film would get far too personal”

FACTS
LINDA THORGREN
Background: Director and screenwriter currently studying for a masters degree in Film Production at Dramatiska Institutet. Previous work includes the TV documentary Havana Boy.
Currently: Blood Calls You, a documentary about the physical and psychological abuse she has suffered in her own life.
Voices from the other side

Documentary filmmaker Erik Pauser is keen to explore the personal side of the miseries of war. In his latest film, *The Face of the Enemy*, he takes a look at the Vietnam War from the perspective of the Vietnamese themselves. The film is set to premiere in the Silver Wolf Competition at IDFA.

WORDS LOTTEN SUNGDREN PHOTO MARIA RAMSTRÖM

Not one to shy away from sensitive political issues, he is a regular traveller to the world’s trouble spots. He has travelled to Palestine and North Korea to make his absorbing documentaries and works of art about the conflicts that have plagued those countries. Yet intrepid artist and filmmaker Erik Pauser has no interest in serving up political analysis or overt moral lessons in his work.

“IT’s the personal voices that I’m interested in,” he explains. “Understanding how people feel and how they experience war and what it brings. I stay close to people for a long time, trying to get close to their feelings in an attempt to get to grips with the subject.”

**THIS IS PRECISELY** the approach he has taken in his two most recent projects, treating his subject, the Vietnam War, in a personal, sensitive and nakedly honest way. In the first of them, *The Two Faces of Roman Martinez* (2005), a Vietnam veteran talks about his experiences of the war and how they have shaped the rest of his life. The work was divided into two parts; one video installation and one documentary. In the second work, *The Face of the Enemy*, which is set to premiere at IDFA in the Silver Wolf Competition, Pauser looks instead at the war from a Vietnamese viewpoint.

“I’m interested in the way history is presented, the point of view that governs it. In the case of the Vietnam War, everything was told from the American side. In Vietnam itself they still don’t talk about how the ‘American War’, as they call it, really was. Instead they gloss over it with stories of bravery and heroism. Officially, nobody’s allowed to talk about it in any other way.”

He made his first trip to Vietnam in 2005. Four more journeys followed. Pauser conducted more than fifty interviews and shot almost two hundred hours of film, not to mention the seemingly endless hours of translation and painstaking research. The finished work is now complete, consisting once again of a video installation and a documentary.

FACTS ERIK PAUSER

**Born:** 1963 in Brasilia.

**Background:** An artist and filmmaker for more than thirty years, Erik Pauser’s work includes *Lucky People Center International* (1999), *Tong Tana – The Lost Paradise* (2001) and *To Rachel* (2003).

**Currently:** *The Face of the Enemy*, taking part in the Silver Wolf Competition at IDFA.
Vanity fair

Beauty Refugee is the result of nine years of filming and a lifetime of struggle to be loved and respected for the person one is. Claudia Lisboa confronts her family once and for all, and the result will be premiered as part of the Silver Wolf Competition at IDFA in Amsterdam.

WORDS CHRISTINA HÖGLUND

Grandmother bends over her eagerly-awaited grandchild and whispers surreptitiously in her ear:

“When you grow up you can have everything you desire; you can have lovely full breasts, we can fix a new nose, yes, you can have a perfect body.”

“My daughter was just four months old and my mother thought she was too chubby!” Claudia Lisboa exclaims.

It’s an event that serves to explain her escape from her family in Brazil. She sees herself as a beauty refugee from her relatives, all 29 of whom, apart from Claudia herself, have had nips and tucks to their noses and chins, Botox injections in their lips,
eyelids and liposuction on their stomachs and thighs. Not just once but many times: not just the women, but the men, too. Claudia’s brother, Sergio, a cosmetic surgeon, is always at the ready to get out his scalpel to rectify any slight imperfections before the next time the family all get together.

In the wake of depression and quitting her medical studies, Claudia headed for Paris. She had, however, completed a degree in literature. From Paris she intended simply to pay a visit to a friend in Sweden, but ended up staying put: “Coming to Sweden was like coming to another planet. Women didn’t walk around plastered in makeup wearing high heels.”

Four years later, something incredible happened. Coming back to see her family for the first time since she left, she didn’t recognise her own mother:

“When I got through customs at the airport I saw my sister and a woman next to her I didn’t know. It took a full 30 seconds before I realised it was my mum. Wanting to surprise me, she hadn’t mentioned her operations.”

**BEAUTY REFUGEE IS** not just about a cosmetically enhanced family and their quest for perfection, but also about an inner wound that will not heal, about vulnerability and not being loved for the person one is.

“I was so angry with them. And it was when my daughter Kim was born that I recognised the challenge: ‘Here I am with a person who’s going to grow up with all the baggage I’m carrying around with me.’ It gave me the courage to confront things head on. If Kim sees things more clearly than I did, then she’ll find it easier to get on in her life. That’s what I believe we as parents should do, teach children what’s important from the start. It’s not about power or status or money, but so that our children can develop better, develop their intellectual capacity and attain some kind of broader perspective…”

**Can you really make a change to the world?**

Claudia laughs, saying that she must sound like a megalomaniac.

“It comes at such a high price. Family conflicts have been a source of creativity throughout history, but there are certainly other conflicts that are more interesting, aren’t there? Instead of tussling with our parents we can maybe solve other problems, take on new challenges that we haven’t got room for today.”

**FACTS**

**CLAUDIA LISBOA**

**Born:** 1963 in Brasilia.

**Background:** In Brazil she worked with film, video and freelance photography. In 1991 she came to Sweden, where she continues to work. Her short films include *Astrid bor fortfarande här*, about skinheads and girls (1996) and *Assistenten* (2003).

**Currently:** Her film *Beauty Refugee* is competing for the Silver Wolf at IDFA. She also directs commercials together with her husband.
Born and raised in Italy, Swedish filmmaker Erik Gandini went back to his native country to shoot the controversial *Videocracy*, a documentary about the relationship between television and politics. Just don’t expect the film to be broadcast on Italian television!

**TELEVISION — DRUG OF A NATION**

The Swedish documentary *Videocracy* has certainly been hitting the headlines in Italy. When the Berlusconi-owned TV channels banned the trailer for the film and the Berlusconi-controlled state television RAI followed suit, everyone was suddenly aware of the film. What followed were chaotic screenings during the Venice Film Festival, and almost a hundred prints of the film were distributed around Italian cinemas. The film has been debated back and forth in all kinds of forums. And this summer’s unfolding sex scandals surrounding the prime minister have, of course, hardly served to dampen the interest.

“People have got the notion that it’s a full frontal attack on Berlusconi, but it isn’t. Italians who see it says it’s like a horror film, but one that doesn’t end when they walk out of the cinema. Some say that it gives them a pain in the stomach and makes them want to throw up. Many Italian journalists I’ve spoken to say they agree with what’s shown in the film, but that they would never dare to write it,” says Gandini.

**THE REVOLUTION STARTED** with a black-and-white local television broadcast. At a tiny restaurant table sits a besuited, moustachioed presenter talking on the telephone to quiz contestants. He asks them questions, and if they answer correctly, a woman in →
a mask takes off an item of clothing and does a few awkward dance steps for the camera.

Fast forward thirty years, and Erik Gandini’s documentary *Videocracy* starts with a clip of this stripping housewife. Since the late 1970s, television and political power in Italy have grown ever closer. For three decades Silvio Berlusconi has played the part of successful politician and powerful media mogul. Three decades of simpering, semi-naked women, veline, alongside clothed male presenters.

**THE FIRST TIME** I spoke to Gandini about *Videocracy*, the film was still at the editing stage several months ahead of its premiere. Back then he had no idea of the commotion the film would cause. And no idea that it would be such a success.

“I’m surprised that no one has done this before,” Gandini said at the time. “Still, it’s almost impossible to make documentaries in Italy, there’s no market for them. And it’s hard for an Italian filmmaker to break into this world. Nobody cares about Sweden, we didn’t need to dress up, act like Borat, we were regarded as harmless anyway.”

*Videocracy* isn’t a politically investigative documentary with a loud moral message. It doesn’t need to be. Instead, Gandini has consciously chosen discretion, following people both in and outside the circles of power of Italian television, and those outside who would like to get in.

We meet Ricky, a 26-year old karate fan who lives at home with his mother. Rick can sing and dance...
like Ricky Martin, yet he tries in vain to get through the auditions that will get him a foot on the ladder in the television industry. We also meet Lele Mora, a successful agent and manager for reality television hopefuls, who can turn anyone with talent into a celebrity. Then we have Fabrizio Corona, a playboy paparazzo who looks down on celebrities and sees himself as a modern Robin Hood: “I take from the rich and keep everything for myself.” And above all floats Berlusconi, “il Presidente”, whose personality, in Gandini’s eyes, serves to explain why things in Italy have gone the way they have.

“His television channels are a reflection of his dream world. Berlusconi, for example, doesn’t like the colour green, so there’s no green on any of the sets. When we filmed him and his entourage on Sardinia, someone remarked that he’s such a natural person, that he’s genuine. He genuinely wants to have fun and only live in the here and now. And while he’s been having fun, he’s become Italy’s most powerful man, a prime minister with immunity,” says Gandini.

TOGETHER WITH HIS editor Johan Söderberg, Gandini has produced a dramatic mixture of sound and images that give Videocracy an intimidating, black comedy feel that leaves a bitter aftertaste. It’s all too easy to laugh at Rick’s dreams, at all the young girls with their bored expressions dancing for the camera, and at Mora’s almost surreally white luxury mansion. But it’s laughter that is hollow.

The concept of Videocracy centres on the power of image in modern society. Gandini speaks of “the evilness of banality”.

“It can seem easy at first to dismiss a country that focuses on semi-naked women, football and fun. But it’s highly depressing to examine up close. Banality is an amazingly powerful weapon,” says Gandini, citing figures which show that Italy lies
way behind other European countries in terms of equality and freedom of the press.

Some people think that celebrity-fixated television culture is omnipresent, that what we see in Videocracy isn’t a specifically Italian phenomenon.

“IT’s quite true that the culture of banality is global, but in Italy it’s so bound up with political power. It Italy it has been used as a political tool, and that makes the country an extreme case.”

WITH HIS ITALIAN roots – Gandini grew up in Bergamo but moved to Sweden at the age of 19 – he was more than familiar with Italian television. But it was only after several acclaimed documentaries – Raja Sarajevo, Sacrificio, Surplus, Gitmo – that he felt that the time was right to turn back to the country of his birth. A chilling statistic spurred him into action: for eighty percent of the Italian population, television is the sole source of information.

“There are few countries in the world where television and power are so inextricably linked. What’s not on television doesn’t get noticed. Say the word “televisione” to the Italians and they think of power, almost automatically. When something gets so all-powerful, it has a huge impact on ordinary people. I hope this film, and the frightening example that Italy sets, will get people thinking,” says Gandini.

Why do you think Videocracy has had such an effect?

“My film paints a really true picture of Italy. It’s not a left wing polemic, but rather a humble film. I don’t like being called a political filmmaker; my political opinions are not what drives me. I don’t want to be seen as anybody’s mouthpiece, I’m independent.”

What does Ricky think? He must at least be something of a celebrity by now?

“Yes, he was on the red carpet at the premiere in Venice. He works in a factory where he makes rubber packaging, but he has started to get offers and has even appeared on a few programmes. After the screening in Venice he said that, having seen the film, he wasn’t sure whether he really wanted to be famous after all.”
A Svedese and his ugly truths

It was, like in the Temptations’ song, the third of September. That day one Erik Gandini, Stockholm-based, Bergamo-born documentarian, rolled (rowed?) into the 66th Venice Film Festival with a piece of work on “how you destroy a democracy via tits and ass”. Democracy in case: Italy. Target of interest: Silvio Berlusconi. Title of work: Videocracy.

Soil of international premiere: again, Italy. Possibly a hot potato in the eye of the festival, programmed outside of all regular sections – with a single scheduled screening. Did they want it to discretely disappear while still being able to take pride in being controversial? Such an outrageously conspiracy-tinged theory was indeed aired. We will never know whether or not it was mere nonsense.

Any which way, that single screening turned out so chock-full of curious spectators that more of them immediately had to be arranged. Chunks of Italian media (bar, notably, those owned by Signore B) reported from the hot spot. What ugly truths, if any, was this Svedese thinking of presenting?

Quite a few, seemingly. As Screen International’s Italy correspondent Lee Marshall observed upon viewing Gandini’s scenario: “a horror sci-fi (–) sadly a long way from fantasy”. Not a mondo movie this time. Many of his peers, already converted and well impressed, shared similar sentiments.

September 4th, Videocracy, scheduled for 30 Italian prints, opened in over 80. These days, it’s been screened at festivals all over the world. But for Gandini, it’s most probably that third of September that he’ll always remember.

JAN LUMHOLDT

Chaos outside screening of Erik Gandini’s Videocracy in Venice.
Copenhagen loves Swedish film

This year, Danish documentary film festival CPH:DOX is looking north, with a focus on contemporary Swedish documentaries and the way they reflect Swedish society. WORDS HENRIK EMILSSON PHOTO FRANS HÅLLOVIST

“There is an attention to creative detail at all levels”

“There are plenty of reasons why the young Swedish film scene is so exciting right now. For one, there’s so much talent. Another is that Swedish film is simmering with creativity, artistic boldness and a striking sense of style. It can be artistically ambitious and playful at the same time,” says Tine Fischer, head of the CPH:DOX festival in Copenhagen.

With a special focus on neighbouring Sweden, this year’s festival, the sixth in succession, runs from 6-15 November. Some 15 films have been selected both from this year’s crop and from 2008. The programme includes Erik Gandini’s *Videocracy*, Mikel Cee Karlsson’s *Greetings from the Woods*, Henrik Hellström and Fredrik Wenzel’s *Broder Daniel Forever*, Måns Månsson’s *Mr Governor* and Jesper Ganslandt’s fictional *The Ape*, plus work by the artist Nathalie Djurberg, all films which Tine Fischer feels “provide a snapshot of Swedish film right now”.

**IN FISCHER’S VIEW** it’s interesting that many Swedish filmmakers work independently outside the established channels and institutions, in contrast to the situation in Denmark, for example. CPH:DOX has concentrated not only on production companies like Atmo, Fasad, Plattform and Acne, but also on outsiders such as the short films director Robin Färdig and art video director Anders Kreuger.

“Many of the filmmakers come from backgrounds other than film, such as music, art, fashion, design, theatre and advertising. It’s very noticeable that even though many Swedish films are pure auteur works, there is an attention to creative detail at all levels: the settings, editing, music and graphics,” says Tine Fischer.

Fischer insists that CPH:DOX is not attempting to define national characteristics or a generation of filmmakers, because the films are so different.

“But they’re all amazingly interesting and inspiring both in cinematic terms and in relation to new production forms. That’s why we’re screening them this year. At the same time, Swedish films have gone a long way towards re-defining the concept of independence in a way that it’s high time we in Denmark took notice of.”

**TINE FISCHER DOES**, however, see a common denominator in the wide range of Swedish documentaries: politics.

“Yes, the Swedes have succeeded in making politics cool again. Many of the new Swedish films illustrate issues such as conformity in the Swedish welfare state and have a wonderful sense of self irony in relation to society. The political documentary is hardly new, but in Swedish hands it has become interesting because of its aesthetic experiments and the fact that it isn’t so heavily themed as many documentaries out there.”

Some of the directors have been invited to the festival (Gandini, Månsson and Ganslandt) together with Mia Engberg and the Swedish Film Institute’s feature film commissioner Peter “Piodor” Gustafsson and documentary film commissioner, Tove Torbiörnsson. A seminar on the theme of developing Swedish talent will also be held during the course of the festival.

*For more information visit www.cphdox.dk*
A sense of belonging

First time director Svante Tidholm’s Like a Pascha is a documentary about life on the inside of the enormous Pascha brothel in Cologne. A multi-storey building of hotel rooms, shops, restaurants and – sex workers. WORDS KLAS EKMAN PHOTO SARA MAC KEY

It was during the 2006 football World Cup in Germany that Svante Tidholm, then aged 29, first discovered the enormous Pascha brothel in Cologne. The Swedish media had gone into overdrive with warnings of how hordes of the country’s football fans would be visiting prostitutes in between matches. And since Tidholm had already worked on issues of masculinity and sexuality, he went along to see what was actually happening. Somewhere in the back of his mind was a documentary film project, but he wasn’t quite prepared for what he would find.

What Tidholm did find was a multi-storey building full of sex workers, hair salons, restaurants, hotel rooms and everything else that the people working there and their clients might possibly need.

“Naturally, my first reaction was ‘My God, what kind of place is this?’ But I was struck by how something that in Sweden would be so shrouded in taboo was seen as quite normal and laid-back. And when I asked if we could go in and film them, they were happy to say yes.”

NOW, SOME THREE years after his first visit, Like a Pascha is ready to screen. Tidholm previously worked as a programmer at the dotcom company Spray, and wrote a book, Loser, about his experiences during that period. Since leaving the company he has studied psychology and also worked as a journalist.

It was when he was researching an essay that he realised what he really wanted to be was a documentary filmmaker. Via director Erik Gandini, Tidholm began working at production company Atmo as a director’s assistant. Like a Pascha is his first solo film. That its release comes roughly at the same time as two other highly-acclaimed Atmo productions, Gandini’s Videocracy and Tarik Saleh’s Metropia, is a pure coincidence.

“It’s a fortunate or unfortunate coincidence. A whole group of Atmo films come along, and then it’s quiet again for a few years. But it’s been a highly intensive period at the office with everyone finishing off their projects.”

The result of his visits to Pascha is a surprisingly warm film. Tidholm and his film crew were there on twelve occasions, staying for three to five days in the hotel part of the building. Despite some decidedly odd characters and a highly explicit group sex scene filmed on the roof, the atmosphere at the brothel appears almost, well… cosy.

“Well, it was, almost, and that’s probably because there are two completely different worlds inside and outside Pascha. And as in all places which set their own rules, a strong sense of belonging develops. The same thing probably applied to the Abu Ghraib prison guards in Iraq.”

Did anything strike you as absurd while you were shooting the film?

“Yes, the gangbangs. They took a bit of getting used to, but I think they’re still amusing. I mean, you can still maintain your artistic integrity even if you see someone’s naked butt.”
used to. The first time I witnessed one I felt really uneasy. It feels a bit strange being so close to other men when they’re having sex. And it’s been hard to talk about it coming back home, because people have reacted so strangely. Some people thought I was quite sordid too, that just being there was suspect in itself.”

Was it hard to get the go-ahead for the film?
“Not at Atmo, it fits the bill for investigative, society-oriented films made at an artistic level. On the other hand it wasn’t so easy to get financial backers for such a thorny subject. They were worried about my motives for making the film. I hope that those who didn’t dare to get involved will regret it when they see the end result.”

Why did they think it was problematic?
“I wanted to make a film about why men think sex is so important. They didn’t believe you could be above that kind of thing, and seemed to think I was there just to look at tits. And I’ve lost count of the times I’ve heard people worried that I’d make a new Buy Bye Beauty (the film that’s best known for the fact that its maker, Pål Hollender, had sex with one of the prostitutes he met). People don’t seem able to believe that you can be in that environment without getting horny. But that’s definitely not the case. It’s embarrassing to think like that. You can still maintain your artistic integrity even if you see someone’s naked butt. The people at the brothel also found it hard to understand: they found it slightly insulting that I didn’t go off to a room with one of the girls. It took a while for the owner to accept my no for what it was.”

Did you gain any new insights?
“Maybe that the men who go there are looking for, and get, something more than just an orgasm. Like attention and love of a kind, in the sense that it makes them feel secure. The fact that it’s all an act doesn’t seem to matter much. But I did realise that there aren’t any dirty old men or whores, just people with different boundaries.”
The lost boys

Genius and Nobel Prize-winner Carleton Gajdusek was a paedophile who adopted 57 boys. Gajdusek was a highly complex man, and director Bo Lindquist describes making the documentary *The Genius and the Boys* as a moral minefield.

Despite the fact that American Nobel prize-winner Carleton Gajdusek’s friends and colleagues are some of the world’s leading scientists and academics, none of them put 2 and 2 together and figured out that he was a paedophile.

“It’s one of the things that surprised me the most, the obvious suppression displayed by such unusually perceptive people who don’t normally miss a single trick,” says director Bo Lindquist.

Head of the Documentary Department at pubcaster Sveriges Radio, Bo Lindquist has directed and produced a number of radio, television and film documentaries including *The Rebels* and *In the Name of God*, about the genocide in Rwanda. He first encountered Gajdusek back in 1992 via a mutual acquaintance. Lindquist was immediately fascinated by his genius and his expeditions to the world’s most remote places, expeditions that led to the discovery of kuru, a CJD-like condition in a cannibal tribe in New Guinea.

“There were no scandals surrounding him. He was a scientist and pioneer of the modern kind, a talented author who wrote more than a million diary pages and shot 800 hours of film.”

IN THE COURSE of his trips Gajdusek adopted no fewer than 57 boys, all of whom he took home with him to America. In 1996 one of his adopted sons accused him of child molesting, and after pleading guilty, Gajdusek was sentenced to a year in prison.

“Before I knew of his inclinations I’d tried to get him to agree to take part in a film, and when he was convicted I saw an opportunity. Sitting in prison, he would be bored and in need of intellectual stimulation. But he still said no. It was only in 2002 when I had virtually abandoned my plans that he eventually said yes.”

According to Lindquist, Gajdusek was the kind of paedophile who saw nothing wrong in his actions, and his desire to “set the record straight” prompted him to take part in the project. In addition to various interviews, Lindquist was given access to Gajdusek’s unique film and image archives from his trips and laboratories. Further persuasion prompted many of his colleagues to take part in the film, including one of the founders of chaos theory, Benoît Mandelbrot, Robert Gallo, who discovered HIV and the neurologist Oliver Sacks. One of Gajdusek’s victims also appears in the film.

*The Genius and the Boys* is a highly visual documentary, thanks to its extensive, often very striking, archive material. It deals with highly sensitive and complex subjects, not only paedophilia, but also cannibalism, making Lindquist’s job all the more difficult.

“It’s a minefield, and making the film has been tough. Sensitive subjects like this make people understandably nervous. Some people even considered pulling out of the project halfway through. If it goes wrong, the worst possible consequences might result. But in my view it’s a balanced film, and it would be hard to view it as a showcase for paedophilia. That’s the most important thing. I’ve run it past the psychiatrists at Save the Children who work with abused children, and they see it as a very accurate portrayal of reality and the way things can be. I’ve also shown it to men who were themselves abused as children. But it’s still possible that some might regard it as politically incorrect.”

Bo Lindquist never got to show Gajdusek the finished film: he died three weeks before they were due to meet. But the famous scientist was himself a major film fan: his European home was just 50 metres away from IDFA in Amsterdam. He regularly visited the festival and always took in as many films as he could.
“It’s still possible that some might regard it as politically incorrect”
LIFE AFTER POL POT

No fewer than two Swedish documentaries this fall tell the story of Pol Pot and the Kampuchea he left after years of oppression and genocide. In Khieu Samphan – Pol Pot’s Deputy directors David Aronowitsch and Staffan Lindberg meet up with Pol Pot’s right hand man. In I Dreamed about Pol Pot Julia Stanislawksa and Michael Krotkiewski follow Gunnar Bergström, returning to the country for the first time in 30 years. The film will be screened at the IDFA festival.

Khieu Samphan – Pol Pot’s Deputy

His brother’s keeper

WORDS PETER FRÖBERG IDLING

For 30 years Khieu Samphan was Pol Pot’s right hand man in an oppressive regime that caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people in Kampuchea. For a long time he has remained silent, but in David Aronowitsch and Staffan Lindberg’s Khieu Samphan – Pol Pot’s Deputy he finds his voice once again.

He looks like any other elderly man in Cambodia. But for 30 years, Khieu Samphan was Pol Pot’s henchman and head of state in the Khmer Rouge’s Democratic Kampuchea, perhaps the bloodiest regime of the entire 20th century.

30 years have passed since the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge, ten years since the death of Pol Pot. But thanks to political horse trading, Khieu Samphan and other regime leaders are still at liberty. They have maintained a low profile, but the fact remains that the people behind some of the worst crimes against humanity the world has known have escaped the hand of justice. Escaped that is until a few years ago. A UN-backed court has now put them on trial.

After a year of wrangling, documentary filmmakers David Aronowitsch and Staffan Lindberg finally got the contradictory Khieu Samphan to agree to a filmed interview. The interview makes up the opening of Khieu Samphan – Pol Pot’s Deputy – one of the most in-depth studies of the former head of state ever undertaken.

“Working as a journalist in Cambodia is tough, but one advantage is that you can have direct access to people like this,” explains Staffan Lindberg, who once worked on the Phnom Penh Post.

Khieu Samphan’s life is not without drama. In the 50s he did a PhD in Paris, taking up a seat in parliament on his return to Cambodia. He developed a reputation as an unbribable politician in a system rife with corruption. In 1967, however, government violence against members of the opposition forced Khieu Samphan underground. He joined the left-wing guerrilla group, the Khmer Rouge, later becoming the spokesman to the world for this secret movement. So much so that it was long assumed, wrongly it turned out, that he was its actual leader. In 1976 he was appointed head of state. When the revolution finally drowned itself in blood and Vietnam intervened, he fled to the jungle once again.
and took up the struggle against the invader, fighting on for two further decades alongside Pol Pot.

**IN THEIR FILM**, Aronowitsch and Lindberg paint a portrait of a man full of contradictions. Talking to them, Khieu Samphan is unexpectedly amenable. But he is not above mixing confidences with actual lies. He demands to read out lengthy passages from the book he has written to clear his name. And in a number of almost surreal scenes he serves as an enthusiastic guide to some of the last outposts of the Khmer Rouge.

“In one way he’s rather vain, unlike Pol Pot who never felt the need to be noticed. But Samphan is hard to pin down. He keeps assuming different roles,” says Aronowitsch.

The Khmer Rouge leadership emerges as a kind of arcane sect centred around the charismatic Pol Pot. Previously, Khieu Samphan has distanced himself from Pol Pot, describing himself merely as a figure head for the regime. Yet in Aronowitsch and Lindberg’s film he stresses his great respect for the dictator.

“His rosy view of Pol Pot is shocking. It’s a falsehood that becomes ever more apparent. According to Khieu Samphan, he and Pol Pot were patriots, and had it not been for them, Cambodia would have been wiped out by Vietnam. He regards what they

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**FACTS**

**DAVID ARONOWITSCH AND STAFFAN LINDBERG**

**Background:** David Aronowitsch was born 1964 in Stockholm and has worked with documentary films for almost 20 years. He has made several films, including last year’s highly-acclaimed Slaves (together with Hanna Heilborn), which has won a number of prestigious awards.

Staffan Lindberg was born in 1972 in Stockholm. He is a journalist and has been working for the big Swedish newspapers like Dagens Nyheter, Sydsvenska Dagbladet and Aftonbladet. He has written and travelled extensively in Cambodia and Asia. He has also worked for the Phnom Penh Post.

**Currently:** Their latest film is Khieu Samphan – Pol Pot’s Deputy, an exploration of the motives and personality of Samphan.

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“One aim of our film is to follow how he was shaped by something positive that turned into a nightmare”

did as a sacrifice for their country,” says Staffan Lindberg.

One central issue is how much responsibility Khieu Samphan bore for the devastating policies of the Khmer Rouge. What part did he play, for example, in the decision to evacuate the country’s towns in the wake of their 1975 victory in the civil war? Millions of people were sent on a forced march in temperatures in excess of 40 degrees. Tens of thousands of them died. He has repeatedly claimed that the evacuation came as a surprise to him.

“He probably knew a lot less than you might think, despite being head of state. The only thing you can state with certainty is his total loyalty to Pol Pot. One aim of our film is to follow how he was shaped by something positive that turned into a nightmare. He fought for independence from colonial power and wanted to raise the people out of poverty. That’s understandable. You can also understand why he wanted to fight against the USA’s bombing: that itself was virtually genocide, too. But when is the point at which engagement turns into something extremely brutal?” asks David Arnowitsch.

“I can’t imagine that he personally signed any death warrants. But he was pivotal in the Khmer Rouge’s takeover of power. He was the dictator’s right hand man, like Albert Speer to Hitler. In that respect, his guilt is considerable,” he continues.

JUST WHY KHEU Samphan is now choosing to embrace Pol Pot and Nuon Chea, the two people considered directly responsible for the death of so very many people, is hard to understand.

“Perhaps he’s hoping that history will re-evaluate him. The Cambodians, at least: that they will come to regard the Khmer Rouge as patriots,” says Staffan Lindberg.

“But he himself remains an enigma.”

I Dreamed about Pol Pot

A trip of forgiveness

“<i>I dreamed about Pol Pot</i>” film makers Julia Stanislawska and Michael Krotkiewski follows Gunnar Bergström back to Cambodia. A country he left thirty years ago without ever noticing all the horrible things that went on behind his back.

Around thirty years ago a Swedish delegation visited Cambodia – Democratic Kampuchea as it then was – ruled by the dictator Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge henchmen. The aim of the trip was to document Kampuchea and to show the world what a fine example it was setting. The delegation, made up of Jan Myrdal, Gunnar Bergström, Marita Wikander and Hedda Ekerwald, even got to meet
Pol Pot himself, but never noticed any of the terrible things that his regime was doing.

Last year Gunnar Bergström went back to Cambodia for the first time since then. The trip was part of a joint initiative launched by Sweden’s Living History Forum and the Documentation Center of Cambodia. The Forum also invited Dramatiska Institutet students Julia Stanislawska and Michael Krotkiewski to document Bergström’s return to Cambodia. The upshot was the film *I Dreamed about Pol Pot*, which has been selected to compete at Amsterdam’s prestigious IDFA festival.

"There’s a very special feel to Cambodia, quite different from India and Thailand, where I’ve also spent some time. And I had also started asking myself all kinds of questions after reading Peter Fröberg Idling’s book *Pol Pot’s Smile.*"

Michael tells how he hovered between feelings of sympathy for Bergström and incredulity at how the delegation had failed to notice what was actually happening.

"Part of me felt at home with the ideology of changing the world, so I recognised some of myself in Gunnar. It’s so easy to develop such misunderstandings," he says.

**IN THE FILM** we see a decidedly remorseful Gunnar Bergström in a number of moving scenes where he apologises to the local population for the error of his previous ways. It’s almost as if the entire trip is a kind of catharsis for his part. And despite the fact that many of the people lost large swathes of their families under the Pol Pot regime, few of them seem to bear him any ill will.

"Some of this I feel is down to cultural differences. People don’t express anger in the same way. A smile in Cambodia doesn’t mean the same thing as a smile in Sweden. Gunnar’s presence aroused many feelings and emotions, and I hope we managed to show the real feelings that the people harboured."

"I think Gunnar made the trip to beg forgiveness and to show what can happen when one doesn’t think for oneself," Julia Stanislawska concludes. ■

"A smile in Cambodia doesn’t mean the same thing as a smile in Sweden"
The porn identity

The world appears to be starved of feminist pornography. Reactions to documentary filmmaker Mia Engberg’s underground project *Dirty Diaries* have flooded in from all corners of the globe. Even American talk show host Conan O’Brien has joined the debate.

“I’m still shocked over the amount of attention we’ve attracted,” says Mia Engberg. “I’ve always regarded *Dirty Diaries* as a minor underground project, but now distributors and journalists from all over the world are getting in touch. My own distributor is currently negotiating with five or six different countries, including the US. And every article that gets written generates hundreds of blog responses. You can work on some films as much as you like without anyone writing about them. But this is the exact opposite: it feels like a snowball that just keeps on getting bigger.”

ProducEr and documEntary filmmaker Mia Engberg seems truly bewildered by the way her mailbox has been inundated with both praise and condemnation since the premiere of *Dirty Diaries*. Interest in the twelve pornography films directed by women filmmakers seems boundless. Even Conan O’Brien’s talk show on America’s NBC has joined the debate.

“That’s almost the coolest thing that’s happened to me in my whole career. The fact that they’ve acknowledged our little project with films made on mobile phones on such a massive show is quite amazing. Not only that, they made their own Dirty Diary, where a woman’s highest pleasure is getting her feet massaged while she watches Oprah Winfrey!”

An established Swedish documentary maker, Mia Engberg began wondering a few years ago about the way sex is depicted on film. The upshot was her lesbian erotic film *Selma & Sofie* (2001). Returning to the theme in *Dirty Diaries*, she has opted instead to be the producer, and to bring other directors and artists onboard.

“I wanted a range of voices and viewpoints. If you’re going to bite off a subject like feminist porn, a project needs diversity. My task has been to help my directors to realise their ideas, and many of them have made films that I might not have dared to make myself.”

Do you think that attitudes to feminist porn have changed since you made *Selma & Sofie*?

“We made that film with strict guidelines as to what it shouldn’t contain: no exploitation, no breast
“It feels like a snowball that just keeps on getting bigger”

implants, no erect penises. But in the end there was nothing left. Fear and caution don’t exactly encourage creativity. Sexuality comes from another source: you have to be allowed to tear down the barriers and taboos. So this time round I said: ‘just dig out all the things that turn you on and let them run free’.”

Do you yourself find the films a turn-on?

“I have to think back to when I first saw them, because now I’ve been sitting for hours with the technical crew working on things like the right shade of red for a vagina. But, yes… there are several of the films I find a turn-on, even though most of them are more thought-provoking and provocative than erotic. All of them are based on a cinematic or conceptual idea. That’s part of the experiment. Can you make an interesting film about sex?”

FACTS MIA ENGBERG

Background: Has worked as a documentary filmmaker since the mid 90s. Her films often feature those on the edge of society: gays, skinheads, vegans, gender-benders and street children. Hit the headlines with her lesbian love film Selma & Sofie (2002).
Currently: She has produced Dirty Diaries, a collection of feminist pornography shorts by 12 filmmakers.
From Jordbro with love

Rainer Hartleb just can’t seem to break away from Jordbro. One of the true veterans of Swedish documentaries, it was back in 1972 that he started documenting the lives of young people in the Stockholm suburb. Now he’s back with his seventh Jordbro film, *When I’m Grown Up*, about a new class of children growing up with a new crop of hopes and dreams. WORDS LOVE SVENSSON PHOTO SANDRA QVIST

When Rainer Hartleb was eight years old his stepfather was appointed conductor at Stockholm’s famous Berns Salonger, and the family moved to Sweden from the war-inflicted ruins of Berlin.

“I thought I was moving to a land of mountain tops and white snow, but the city was full of grey slush when we arrived, not exactly what I’d imagined,” laughs Rainer Hartleb.

He immediately became “the German”, the only foreign-born pupil at the Swedish school where he started in 1952. But having survived the chaos of post-war Germany, his focus was on immersing himself in Swedish life and, above all, on mastering the language.

“My struggle with Swedish was a tough fight. My exercise books from that time look like battlefields, but I didn’t give up. It was all about sentence construction and more sentence construction…”

NOW ALMOST 60 years later we’re sitting in Rainer Hartleb’s pocket-sized combination of studio, office and editing room in Stockholm’s Södermalm discussing his latest film *When I’m Grown Up*. Maybe in some way he has come full circle with this film about an elementary school class in the suburb of Jordbro a few kilometres to the south. We follow children from the first to the ninth grade, and like Hartleb, many of them have their roots in a different culture, with various wars often casting a shadow over their families.

This is by no means the first, but actually the seventh film Hartleb has made about Jordbro and its inhabitants (and depending on how you count them, there may be more). Influenced by the zeitgeist and social anthropology, Rainer Hartleb came to Jordbro for the first time as a newly-fledged television producer in 1972, and began to follow a group of children. He made a film about them and their lives every other year, and when they passed out of elementary school in grade nine, the film suite came to a natural conclusion.

“At that time they were teenagers heading off in all kinds of directions, who thought that what we were doing interfered with their lives. But five years later when we turned up without cameras for a →
class reunion, there was real disappointment that we weren’t going to carry on,” Rainer Hartleb re-
calls.

SO THERE FOLLOWED four more films about the Jord-
bro children, now adults with children of their own. The project has become something of a unique doc-
ument of Swedish, perhaps all western world, soci-
ety and its developments. Together with the British 
Up series and the Koltzow films in Germany, the 
project has spawned research, essays and books 
around the world.

By the turn of the millennium Hartleb had been 
away from Jordbro for more than five years, and 
wasn’t at all certain whether he would return.

“But I got a kind of millennium bug myself, and 
thought ‘Jordbro – what’s the school like now?’ I got 
the idea of somehow placing images of the first day 
of school in 1999 alongside those of 1972,” says 
Hartleb.

Hartleb got back on the local train heading south 
of the city and started filming a new school class in 
Jordbro, and has now followed them right through 
elementary school. To begin with he thought that 
When I’m Grown Up would be a film just about 
school, but realised in the editing room that it 
should be a portrait of young people who happen to 
be in the same class, with school and Jordbro itself
as the environment which helps to shape their lives. There we find Tolga, who wanted to be a professional footballer, but who saw his school grades tumble and his parents’ disapproving looks as he spent all his time on the football pitch. We find Narcisa, who goes back to her roots in Bosnia, and comes home determined to take up a course in social studies. And there there’s Sara, for whom the world is her oyster, having left school with top grades.

As in all of Rainer Hartleb’s films there’s an amazing power in the rhythm and dynamics of film material from different times yet featuring the same people.

“The older material is a sort of reinforcement that puts things in their place. It allows me to get a little further inside the main characters, and it binds me closer to them, sharpens my critical faculties because I know where they’re coming from. I already know a lot about these people, we go back a long way,” says Hartleb.

He has been following people from Jordbro for more than thirty years. Can he possibly be up for more films?

“We’ll see, perhaps if the impulse comes from the protagonists themselves. But rather than fret about it now, I’m just going to take one film at a time,” Rainer Hartleb concludes.
No regrets

Marcus Lindeen changed from being a radio journalist to a director. Other changes are more difficult and more enduring. Like those for the two men featured in Lindeen’s film *Regretters*. Two men who changed gender – and regretted it.

WORDS NIKLAS ERIKSSON PHOTO SANDRA OVIST
Can you go through a sex change and then, well, regret it? What happens to your identity? How do you come to terms with your choice? And what does society think?

These are questions that the radio journalist, now writer-director Marcus Lindeen has been researching for the past few years.

“For me, it’s an interesting metaphor. It’s such a defining thing to lie on the operating table and dream that it will be better on the other side. And then to realize that it’s not: I can’t think of anything worse,” says Marcus Lindeen.

The documentary *Regretters* features two men, Mikael and Orlando, who have done exactly that – regretted their choice. The film is based on a conversation between the two of them. They talk of love, dreams and their relationship to their own bodies in what might be best described as a gender-political chamber play. In Orlando’s case the situation is ambiguous. He still wears a flamboyant red outfit and a diamond eardrop, talking about himself as the third sex. But Mikael definitely wants to press the cancel button. During the time the film was being shot he had his new breasts surgically removed and no longer wanted to identify himself as a woman.

THE FILM HAS been a long time in the offing. It started when Marcus did a radio interview with Mikael. After the programme, Orlando called in to say that he recognised himself for the first time in his life. For eleven years he had been married to a man who had no idea about his anatomical secret.

Marcus realized this was a story that needed →
Not even 25, Lindeen already felt constricted by journalism. He enrolled at Dramatiska Institutet to study directing, declaring that he wanted to "re-discover himself as a director". He even contemplated changing his name.

"My second name is Folke. I wanted to become the artist Marcus Folke. But after a while I calmed down and realised what my true driving forces were. I love journalism, its basis in the real world. I'm not the kind who could sit in his room and think: 'a father, a mother, an uninvited guest – what happens next?'

Maybe everyone cannot relate to a sex change that brings regret. But Lindeen’s latest film touches on questions of how we live our lives that everyone can share. For his own part, Lindeen sees it broadly in terms of a dramatic relationship to life choices. The myriad life-defining choices that all of us face fill him with "enormous anxiety".

Given his lovingly compiled collection of newspaper cuttings, I ask Marcus Lindeen a question worthy of any qualified psychiatrist: Are you a completist?

"Yes, it’s my secret Achilles’ heel. It slows down my work more than anything else."

By way of example, he cites the extensive research he did prior to the film. He got in touch with the German transsexual society. He talked to more than thirty elderly gays to gain access to private video material from the 50s and 60s. He borrowed heaps of research material from a university in Finland, and tracked down clips from the Italian Mondo Cane films from the early 60s. But none of this was used in the final film.

"It's just that I go crazy if I don't have the whole picture. So yes, what a relief, I can finally now come out as a completist," he laughs.

**FACTS**

**MARCUS LINDEEN**


Background: In 2008, Marcus Lindeen graduated as a director from Dramatiska Institutet in Stockholm. Before going into film and theatre he used to be a journalist, hosting cultural shows at both Sveriges Radio and SVT.

Currently: With his first documentary feature *Regretters*. His debut play was a stage production of the film at Stockholm City Theater, where actors portrayed the two men.
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Distributes documentaries and educational material for high school and college. We provide pedagogical solutions in different areas with the purpose of simplifying and explaining.

**In-job training and education**
Producing, purchasing and providing films and e-learning in different areas mainly focusing on the business world.

Swedish Film AB, Box 6014, SE-171 06 Solna, Sweden. Phone: +46 8 445 25 50, fax: +46 8 445 25 60. Contact us through www.swedishfilm.se or info@swedishfilm.se
Beauty Refugee

My family is into plastic surgery and their surgeon is my brother. He has operated on 24 family members. The film is about the relations within my family and their relation to their own bodies, to the pain – physical, psychological and metaphysical – caused by these serial operations. A darkly humorous portrait of a family in its quest for happiness that is never achieved, where values such as hard work and love stand in contrast to a fixation with appearances.

Bananas!

One third of the price of the average banana covers the cost of pesticides. All over the world, banana plantation workers are suffering and dying from the effects of these pesticides. Cancer, kidney failure, sterility. Juan Dominguez, a million-dollar personal injury lawyer in Los Angeles, is on his biggest case ever. Dole Fruit and Dove Chemicals are on trial. And history is about to be made.

Blood Calls You

Director Linda Thorgren met the love of her life in Cuba. After moving to Sweden, getting married and having a daughter the physical and psychological abuse begins. Linda starts to investigate why the history of abuse repeats itself in her family, and what she needs to do to save her daughter.

ORIGINAL TITLE / original title
Beauty Refugee / Banañas!
Blood Calls You / I krig och kärlek
Bananas!* / Bananas!

DIRECTOR / director
Claudia Lisboa / Linda Thorgren / Fredrik Gertten

PRODUCER / producer
Malla Grapengiesser / Stina Gardell / Margarete Jangård

PRODUCED BY / produced by
Hysteria Film AB / WG Film / Mantaray Film

SCREENING DETAILS / screening details
HD-CAM, 52 min / HD/Digibeta, 58/93 min / TO BE RELEASED January 2010

SALES / sales
Hysteria Film AB / TBA / Autlook Filmsales

40
Dirty Diaries

For the first time in Swedish cinema history: feminist pornography! Filmmaker Mia Engberg asked a number of Swedish artists and filmmakers to make their own porno films using a mobile telephone camera. The result is 12 films with a combined length of 104 minutes by some of the most promising names on the Swedish arts scene.

Original Title Dirty Diaries Directors Elin Magnusson, Sara Kaaman & Ester Martin Bergmark, Nelli & Andreas, Asa Sandzen, Pella Kagerman, Tora Martens, Wolfe Madam, Ingid Ryberg, Universal Pussy, Joanna Rydel, Marit Ostberg, Jennifer Rainsford Producers Mia Engberg and Goran Olsson Produced by Story AB with support from Swedish Film Institute/Anne-Marie Sjoholm Fermein and Andrea Lasmanis Screening Details Digibeta, 104 min Released September 3, 2009 Sales Njutafilms

The Face of the Enemy

The Face of the Enemy tells the story of the Vietnamese that fought in “The American” war, in their own words. Whilst for the most part following the chronology of the war, the film focuses more on the personal stories of these characters than on the main events of the war. Here the veterans have the chance, often for the first time, to recall the experiences that changed their lives.

Original Title The Face of the Enemy Directors Erik Pauser Producers Per Forsgren, Staffan Julen, Erik Pauser Produced by Brandklipparen and Eden film for DR & SVT & YLE with support from Swedish Film Institute, The Arts Grants Committee, the Acorn Johnson Foundation Screening Details Digibeta, 58/75 min To be Released 2009 Sales DR International

Erik Pauser works as a director, producer and visual artist. He has shown his installations in galleries and museums in a number of different countries. His films have won prizes at several distinguished festivals. Previous films include Lucky People Center International, directed and edited with Johan Soderberg. He is currently producing Men Who Swim Together for, among others, BBC – Storyville.

Familia

For thirty years Naty and her husband Daniel have lived together, constantly fighting poverty, but with little to offer their first three children. Now they want something better for their youngest son Nata, who is six years old. Familia is an intimate story of migration and defiance in truly global times.

Original Title Familia Directors Mikael Wiström, Alberto Herskovits Producer Mikael Wiström Produced by Månahren Film & TV/Mikael Wiström, Venatana Film AB/ Alberto Herskovits, SVT Dokumentär/Ingemar Persson and Otto Fagerstedt with support from Swedish Film Institute/Peter “Picado” Gustafsson and Lisa Ohlin, Nordisk Film & TV Fond, MEDIA, NRK/Tore Tomter and YLE PST/Jenny Westergard Screening Details Digibeta, 58/82 min To be Released February, 2010 Sales Månahren Film & TV/Mikael Wiström

Mikael Wiström has been producing and directing documentary films since graduating from Dramatiska Institutet in 1981. Among his many films are the award-winning predecessors to Familia, The Other Shore and Compadre. Alberto Herskovits was born in Argentina and raised in Germany. He studied film in Germany and USA. Since 1990 he has been working as a documentary film director and screenwriter in Sweden.
The Genius and the Boys
Carleton Gajdusek was a great genius of the 20th century, a Noble prize winner and also a man who has been convicted for having sex with an underaged foster-son. This documentary film explores an extraordinary 20th century life, full of contradiction. How is it that humans can switch within milliseconds, between total intelligence, and total self-delusion?

ORIGINAL TITLE The Genius and the Boys DIRECTOR Bosse Lindquist PRODUCER Jonas Kellagher PRODUCED BY SVT, Eight Millimeters AB and ARTE in co-operation with BBC SCREENING DETAILS Digibeta, 90 min TO BE RELEASED/RELEASED June, 2009 SALES SVT Sales

Bosse Lindquist, born in 1954, is a Swedish radio and TV producer and writer. Head of the national radio broadcaster Swedish Radio’s Documentary Department since 2007. He has been an author and award-winning director of documentaries since 1988.

I don’t Wanna Live this Life
Henke and Sebbe are in their 20s and surrounded by death. One by one, their friends are dying. When their best friend Jonny jumps off a bridge, everything falls apart. A GHB fix is their only solace. Henke and Sebbe live a life without joy, a life they don’t want to live. GHB is one of the deadliest drugs of our time.

ORIGINAL TITLE Jag vill inte leva detta livet DIRECTORS Bo Harringer & Renzo Aneröd PRODUCER Bo Harringer PRODUCED BY Filmateljén 89 AB in co-production with SVT and Film i Väst with support from Swedish Film Institute/Tove Torböömsson, The Swedish Inheritance Fund and Sensus SCREENING DETAILS HD-CAM, 74 min RELEASED March 2009 SALES TBA

Bo Harringer has worked as a photographer, film cameraman and documentary filmmaker for 25 years. In 1993 he was one of the founders of FILMEP/DEMIN, a network of filmmakers in Gothenburg. Renzo Aneröd is a writer and documentary filmmaker. Harringer and Aneröd’s previous film collaborations include Under en blågul himmel (2004) and Islams barn i Folkhemmet (2006).

I Dreamed about Pol Pot
In 1978 Gunnar Bergström and three other Swedes did a tour of Democratic Kampuchea – personally invited by Pol Pot to tell the West that his vision of the perfect society was true. In I Dreamed about Pol Pot Bergström returns to apologize to the people for supporting a regime responsible for killing nearly a quarter of Cambodia’s population. He faces survivors and examines his own role in this dark period of human history.

ORIGINAL TITLE Jag drömde om Pol Pot DIRECTORS Julia Stanislawska and Michael Krotkiewski PRODUCER Per Å Holmquist PRODUCED BY Dramatiska Institutet, Forum för levande historia SCREENING DETAILS Digibeta, 36 min RELEASED August, 2009 SALES Dramatiska Institutet

Julia Stanislawska was born in Sweden and grew up in South Asia, East Africa and Europe. She has a background in fine art and has previously directed Marta, a film about a survivor of Ravensbrück Women’s Concentration Camp. Michael Krotkiewski has a background in journalism, political science and film studies. He has made a few short films one of which, Civil Disobedience, was shown on SVT. Both are currently studying documentary filmmaking at Dramatiska Institutet.
Like a Pascha

Europe’s biggest brothel, 11 floors high. Hundreds of women for sale. And a Swedish feminist man, looking to understand how men’s obsession with sex can explain why manhood is in deep crisis.

Khieu Samphan – Pol Pot’s Deputy

The film is a search into the personality of Khieu Samphan. He was the head of state of one of the most brutal regimes ever, the Khmer Rouge-regime in Democratic Kampuchea. We followed him for one and half years before his arrest in 2007. He is shortly to face trial charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity. The film gives insight into his mindset, his life today and his close relationship with Pol Pot. The film is a unique story about an ex-leader, the time before his arrest and before he is put on trial.

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Love at War

“There can only be an unhappy ending to this,” people say when they hear about the love of Palestinian, Osama, and his Israeli wife, Jasmin. Their home countries separate them through racist laws and lack of security. They choose exile, but soon rosy dreams turn into despair in an inhospitable Europe. Will their love survive?
Paria

Fear of the erratic, the unknown, the ugly and the grotesque is fear of life itself. Disabilities are something we should embrace rather than shun. When we acknowledge our disabilities they turn into super powers.

Regretters

Orlando and Mikael go under the knife in hope of finding their true selves, only to realize that life on the other side isn’t as they dreamed. Now well into their 60s, the two meet for the first time to talk about their lives and the one defining regret they both share: their sex change.

The Plan

The planet is threatened with destruction. There is a brilliant plan that will save humanity... We know now that we will all have to enter into a different world. In The Plan you will meet people with one major focus: to drive this profound global change towards something new and positive. With the help of their stories, their thoughts and plans we’ve weaved an inspiring, emotional and optimistic entity.
**TwinBrothers**

Gustav and Oscar are twins. In the film we follow the brothers from 9 to 19 years of age, through their journey of adolescence and struggle for identity on their way to becoming grown-ups. How their different situations and personalities shape them and how time prepares them for life ahead.

**Videocracy**

In *Videocracy* Erik Gandini returns to his country of birth portraying from the inside the consequences of a TV-experiment that Italians have been subjected to for 30 years. He gets unique access to the most powerful spheres, even the President’s summer retreat in Sardinia. Unveiling a remarkable story, born out of the scary reality of TV-republic Italy, a country where the step from TV-showgirl to Minister for Gender Equality is only natural.

**When I’m Grown Up**

Ten children, with roots in different worlds, start school together in form 1 and are then followed on camera all the way through the nine years of basic education. The film begins in 1999. Location: the Stockholm suburb of Jordbro. When the nine years are over, the adolescents part company. Ahead of them lie the opportunities of life.
Gunnar Bergström visited Cambodia in August 1978. It was then called Democratic Kampuchea and had become one of the most terror filled and destructive regimes of the 20th century.

As chairman of the Swedish-Kampuchean friendship association, Gunnar and three other Swedes came there as ‘eye witnesses’. They had been especially invited to show the world that Pol Pot’s vision of the perfect society was true, and belie alarming reports that had been seeping out of refugee camps and ‘imperialist’ media.

Entering an otherwise closed country they dined with Pol Pot and followed the Khmer Rouge through a maze of propaganda and denial. When the group returned to Europe they continued to take an active role in promoting the regime. On national TV, as well as in printed media, they denied refugees’ stories of persecution, torture and genocide and told the West that this was a country of hard working, fair people living in rural bliss.

After thirty years Gunnar returns to Cambodia to apologize, and is confronted by the reality behind a deeply distorted dream. The significance of an apology thirty years on, what it is for, what it might achieve in terms of peace and reconciliation and for whom, are questions that hang engagingly over his journey.

I dreamed about Pol Pot
A documentary film by Julia Stanislawska and Michael Krotkiewski

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