Reality bites

Babak Najafi's first feature Sebbe hits Berlin

Three Swedish shorts in competition at Berlinale

Partners in crime: directors Fares and Espinosa

Swedish post-production goes international

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Short is beautiful

THERE’S A CELEBRATION going on that you can hardly have failed to notice: Congratulations Berlinale – 60 years old this year! You seem more vivacious and sprightly than ever! Anniversaries provide a good opportunity to stop and take stock of history, and Sweden is the only Nordic country to have scooped no fewer than three Golden Bears for feature films over the years. We have Arne Mattsson, Ingmar Bergman and Jan Troell to thank for those. Counting in our other awards, the total is considerably higher.

Alf Sjöberg’s Miss Julie didn’t win a Golden Bear, but it did pick up the Palme d’Or in Cannes in the same year that the Berlinale began back in 1951. This year it’s set to screen again in the Retrospective: Play It Again...! section of the festival.

BUT BACK TO the present. Back to the cramped apartment where 15-year-old Sebbe lives with his mother. Competing in the Generation 14plus section, Babak Najafi’s debut feature shows us Swedish underclass life out in the suburbs. And in common with many other acclaimed feature film newcomers, Babak Najafi arrives on the scene with a number of celebrated short films to his name. No doubt you’ll be seeing more of him in the future, and those of you who want to catch up with him now can read the interview in this edition of Swedish Film.

I am so proud of our record for nurturing short films in Sweden. This is done in the full conviction that many of the major filmmakers of the future are operating in short films right now, and that those filmmakers are worth investing in, properly. Now we are seeing that conviction pay off, both through a wealth of short films of high international class, and the feature film successes which so often follow in their wake.

THIS EDITION of Swedish Film is a true feast for anyone interested in short films. Naturally, we feature the three competitors in this year’s Berlinale. We have Joanna Rytel’s Unplay, which questions the balance of power in sexuality. Here too is Ruben Östlund, an established features director, competing this year with his short film Incident by a Bank. And last but by no means least, Jonas Odell is back once again on German soil. He won the 2006 Golden Bear for his Never Like the First Time!. This time around he’s competing with his animated short, Tussilago.

As the only representatives of the Nordic countries, these three films are competing in a field of 25 entries in Berlinale Shorts. And it wouldn’t surprise me if in 40 years’ time, when the Berlinale is celebrating its 100th anniversary, they will be high on the list when it’s once again time to look back on some of the many film gems of the festival’s distinguished history.

Cissi Elwin Frenkel
CEO, Swedish Film Institute

CEO’S LETTER

ISSN 1654-0050
WE CONGRATULATE OUR CO-PRODUCTIONS AT BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2010

IF I WANT TO WHISTLE I WHISTLE IN COMPETITION
THE KILLER INSIDE ME IN COMPETITION
THE FAMILY IN COMPETITION
SEBBE IN GENERATION 14PLUS
TUSSILAGO IN BERLINALE SHORTS
HÄNDELSER VID BANK IN BERLINALE SHORTS

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#1 2010

8 NEWS
A concert film set in the woods, two new film commissioners and a couple of short films set for the Berlinale.

16 SEBBE
Director Babak Najafi wants Swedish film to be about something else than the discreet charm of the bourgeoisie.

20 FILMTECKNARNA
Music videos for the likes of Madonna and U2. Memorable commercials. Award winning short films. Now Swedish animators and production company FilmTecknarna are taking it to the next level.

24 BETWEEN TWO FIRES
It’s grim up north. After making documentaries Agnieszka Lukasiak takes the leap into feature film with a story about refugees and isolation in the most remote part of Sweden.

27 BIRTHDAY
Sundance darling Jenifer Malmqvist is back at the festival for the second time in three years.

28 THIS IS ALASKA
Prized directors Gunilla Heilborn and Mårten Nilsson and their ensemble seek adventure in this short, which is screening in Rotterdam and competing in Clermont-Ferrand.

30 EASY MONEY & BALLS
Young, talented and all over each other’s films: directors Josef Fares and Daniel Espinosa on why they love working together.

35 AMONG US
Heaven must be missing an angel. Because someone from above is helping a traumatized couple in Johan Brisinger’s new drama.

38 SEEDS OF THE FALL INSTEAD OF ABRACADABRA
Patrik Eklund’s last short Instead of Abracadabra was shown in Sundance just a year ago and is shortlisted for an Oscar nomination. The new one – Seeds of the Fall – takes him back to Sundance yet again.

40 MISS JULIE
Veteran actress Anita Björk reminisces about her part in the film that took her to the very first Berlinale. Back in 1951.

42 POST-PRODUCTION
Internationally successful and constantly in demand: post-production companies are the latest success story in the Swedish film industry.

47 NEW FILMS
All the info about the latest Swedish films.
Among Us

**IN POST-PRODUCTION**

A poignant, suspenseful and hopeful drama that flirts with the fantastical! Ernst and Cecilia live a contented married life, until an unexpected event turns their whole world upside down; one that tests their faith as husband and wife, and as parents. A chance encounter with a mysterious stranger, Walter, changes their lives in an unexpected way.

**TENTATIVE DELIVERY:** March 2010  
**DIRECTED BY:** Johan Brisinger (Suddenly)  
**CAST:** Michael Nyqvist, (The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, As It Is in Heaven, Day and Night) Izabella Scorupco (Golden Eye – James Bond), Tchéky Karyo (Golden Eye – James Bond, Nikita)  
**GENRE:** Drama  
**COUNTRY:** Sweden

Klara

**IN POST-PRODUCTION**

Klara feels like an outcast and has trouble making friends. Most of the girls in her class are into horseback riding. Klara has to lie in order not to reveal that she is a total beginner, but before she manages to rein in the deception she’s signed up for a major riding competition... She is saved by Jonte, a boy her own age, who helps her practice in secret. This is a story about the faltering steps out of childhood, the first exciting stirrings of love, and horses of course.

**BASED ON THE SUCCESSFUL NOVELS BY PIA HAGMARS**

**TENTATIVE DELIVERY:** March 2010  
**DIRECTED BY:** Alexander Moberg  
**CAST:** Rebecca Plymholt, Joe Lützow, Kjell Bergqvist, Regina Lund  
**GENRE:** Children Feature  
**COUNTRY:** Sweden

The Plan

**IN POST-PRODUCTION**

It is said that the earth and mankind are threatened. The climate change, population growth, species extinction, resource consumption and so on, are running wild. It is said that we are in a terrible hurry to change our way of thinking and living so we can turn the big ship Earth around. Some say that we have only five to ten years left to do it. Short time? Sure. But not if we have a really good plan. The Plan is an optimistic film. It gives you strength, hope and inspiration. It’s a film about the ability humans have to make plans. It will change your way of thinking.

**TENTATIVE DELIVERY:** March 2010  
**PRODUCER:** Michael Stenberg and David Österberg  
**GENRE:** Documentary  
**COUNTRY:** Sweden

The Hunters 2

**IN DEVELOPMENT**

A sequel from the renowned director of major box office hit “The Hunters”. The Hunters 2 is a sequel to the smash hit The Hunters that received 2 wins and 2 nominations at the Swedish National Academy Award. Sundvall is one of Scandinavia’s most driven directors, best known for his excellent thrillers.

**TENTATIVE DELIVERY:** December 2010  
**DIRECTED BY:** Kjell Sundvall  
**CAST:** Peter Stormare (Entourage, Prison Break, Fargo), Rolf Lassgård (After Wedding, Under the Sun, The Hunters)  
**GENRE:** Action/Drama  
**COUNTRY:** Sweden

The Catwalk

**IN PRE-PRODUCTION**


**TENTATIVE DELIVERY:** December 2010  
**DIRECTED BY:** Denize Karabuda  
**CAST:** TBA  
**GENRE:** Drama/Comedy  
**COUNTRY:** Sweden
ERIK ENOCKSSON JESPER GANSLANDT SKINNSKATTEBERG

Forest Murmurs

People like to see and hear his music performed. But for composer Erik Enocksson, creation is what counts, not live performance. The solution: Skinnskatteberg, a concert film shot in the forest, screened at Clermont-Ferrand.

“I wanted to do the right thing. I felt I’d taken organic sound as far as I could and wanted to, and that the instruments I’d based my work on (the pedal organ, guitar, piano, and chimes) needed to be immortalised and celebrated in their own right,” says Enocksson about the background to the film.

It was film director Jesper Ganslandt who suggested filming the concert project in the forest just outside Skinnskatteberg in central Sweden. The two men have worked together since their joint breakthrough with Falkenberg Farewell (Farväl Falkenberg) in 2006, and they’ve spent quite some time together at Enocksson’s nearby family home.

This is by no means an average music film. Enocksson and his musicians play their songs amid birdsong, creaking branches and droning mosquitoes. The setting was chosen for its natural qualities, the idea being that the music would feed off the forest noises, creating a unique live concert.

“I wanted the concert to feel as natural and immediate as possible. The good thing about staging it in the forest is that you can’t control the sounds that get into the music. And not just the sounds – we couldn’t control the weather, either. The day before filming it rained, so that also made its way into the film’s sound and imagery,” says Ganslandt.

Wasn’t it hard to get the sound right? I’m thinking of instruments going out of tune in the cold and damp, and acoustics that are very different from those in a studio…

“I believe in choosing a setting and then just live with the consequences. And if a piano goes out of tune, well that’s part of it. The sound is all down to Pawel Luckis (the legendary sound technician with Jazz Stockholm). Without his expertise it wouldn’t have been the same film. Given the difficult filming conditions, I could never have hoped for such amazing sound as he managed to create,” says Enocksson.

ELIN LARSSON
FACTS

JESPER GANSLANDT & ERIK ENOCKSSON

Background: Ganslandt made his feature debut in 2006 with the critically acclaimed Falkenberg Farewell (Farväl Falkenberg), which won the FIPRESCI prize in Lisbon and was nominated for a Guld bagge award. His second feature, The Ape (Apan), was selected for Venice Days and Toronto's Vanguard section in 2009. Music composer Enocksson got his breakthrough in Falkenberg Farewell, and has continued to work with Ganslandt ever since. He is the composer of the music for the highly acclaimed Burrowing (Man tänker sitt, 2009). Enocksson released his album With its dark tail curled 'round the garage in 2008.

Currently: Skinnskatteberg is being screened in a special section in Clermont-Ferrand. It is due to be released on DVD later this year by Fasad Film and Kning Disk.
**IF I WANT TO WHISTLE, I WHISTLE**

They came for post-production

Swedish co-production *If I Want to Whistle, I Whistle*, the first feature from Romanian director Florin Şerban, has been selected for competition at the Berlin Film Festival. The film, about a teenage prisoner who falls in love with a Psychology student, kidnaps her and tries to escape five days before his release, won the CineLink Work in Progress Award at Sarajevo IFF in August 2009.

Post-production was completed in Sweden in December. The Swedish co-producers are Film i Väst and The Chimney Pot.

ELIN LARSSON

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**Wedding Photographer to Berlin**

Ulf Malmros' *The Wedding Photographer* (*Bröllopsfotografen*) is set to screen in the Berlin Film Festival's European Film Market. This partly autobiographical film, about a young man from a small town who dreams of becoming a photographer in Stockholm, is directed, screenwriter and editor Malmros' sixth feature, following successes such as *A Summer Tale*, *Slim Susie* and *God Save the King*. The *Wedding Photographer* was one of Sweden's major box office successes last year, picking up no fewer than three Guldbagge award nominations.

MATTIAS DAHLSTRÖM
Ruben Östlund is in the limelight at the Berlin festival with his short film, *Incident by a Bank* (Händelse vid bank). The film is a warm-up for his upcoming feature, *Play* – both of them take place in real time, and both are about robberies.

Ruben Östlund, whose critically-acclaimed *Involuntary* (De ofrivilliga) premiered in Un Certain Regard at Cannes 2008, has been warming up for his next feature with a short film, *Incident by a Bank*. Taking place in real time, the film is based on a failed robbery attempt at a Stockholm department store actually witnessed by Ruben Östlund himself and his producer Erik Hemmendorf. Inspiration came from the fact that robberies are so often depicted in films and on TV in a way that doesn’t square with reality:

“The reality in this case was positively surreal. And in common with all the films I’ve made, I think it’s important to give reflections of the setting that I feel are true. That’s why I was so keen to provide a different perspective on something that’s so common in films and the media.”

Östlund’s upcoming feature *Play* has much in common with the short: it takes place in real time, is based on real events and concerns a kind of robbery. This time we follow a gang of young immigrants who use sophisticated rhetoric and a good cop/bad cop approach to get some Swedish youths to hand over their valuables. By the end, the robbers and their victims even shake hands before they part. Unlike so many other directors, Ruben Östlund isn’t secretive about the plot of his film, not even the ending. Here, his inspiration comes from You Tube:

“It’s something I find really interesting right now. When I watch a clip on You Tube, the title of the clip nearly always tells me what’s going to happen. For example: ‘Failed robbery attempt at Stockholm’s NK department store’. What’s going to happen isn’t interesting. What is interesting is what the event actually looked like.”

His view is that by revealing what’s going to happen beforehand, you sharpen the viewer’s attention, putting greater emphasis on the interpretation.

"Most of what’s shown on television is based on intrigue, and what makes us watch is the action itself. There’s no real emphasis on interpretation, and as such it’s almost always lacking in credibility. Fake, fake, fake,” says Ruben Östlund.

Incident by a Bank will premiere in Berlinale Shorts. *Play* is set to premiere in spring 2011.
NEWS

Millennium films on a roll
Swedish production company Yellowbird is celebrating the immense success of the Millennium trilogy. Close to 11 million people in Scandinavia, Spain, France, Italy and Germany have seen the first two parts (The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, The Girl Who Played with Fire). All in all, the trilogy has been sold to 39 countries. In addition, the first film is set for at US premiere in March. The final part, The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet’s Nest, opened in Sweden in November.

ELIN LARSSON

Videocracy around the world
Having created quite a stir at its international premiere in Venice in September, Erik Gandini’s Videocracy, produced by Atmo, has successfully toured the festival circuit with stops including Toronto, Hampton, Bergen, Sao Paolo, CPH:DOX, IDFA, Bratislava and Docpoint. So far, this study of Italian PM Berlusconi’s power over the Italian media has been sold to over a dozen European countries, and will open in the US on February 12.

ELIN LARSSON

Bananas for peace
Fredrik Gertten’s documentary Bananas!* is screening in the Culinary Cinema section at the Berlinale. It is also one of the nominees for the Cinema for Peace Award, an award for films that promote peace and international understanding. Presenters at the gala night at the Berlinale are amongst others Mikhail Gorbachev and Leonardo Di Caprio.

The film, about the struggle of Nicaraguan banana workers against the Dole Corporation, stirred up huge controversy in 2009, with Dole filing a lawsuit against Gertten, producer Margarete Jangård and production company WG Film. After heavy criticism and an anti-SLAPP motion filed by the filmmakers, Dole finally dropped the lawsuit back in October.

ELIN LARSSON

FILMING IN SWEDEN
Deep forests, archipelagos, mountains, lakes, open landscape, modern cities, medieval towns, villages, midsummer light
a minimum of security issues, internationally experienced film crews and equipment houses
history to be proud of, Ingmar Bergman, Jan Troell, Greta Garbo, Ingrid Bergman, Lasse Hallström, to name a few

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Virtually everything she does is provocative. Joanna Rytel is an artist who has made films in which she dances for animals, masturbates in front of a cat, or films herself trying to get a guy with autism to fall in love with her. In the now world-famous episode film collection *Dirty Diaries* she exposes herself in various public places in her *Flasher Girl on Tour*. And in *Unplay*, screening in Berlinale Shorts, she films herself telling her boyfriend that she has just fucked his friend.

*Unplay* sticks a well-directed thorn right in the skin of our patriarchal society. In its straightforward yet suggestive way it shows the male desire not to lose face and to try to emerge with honour intact. The sparring between the men just serves to emphasise this. Obviously, the woman ought to be able to have sex on the same terms. And here, as ever, Joanna Rytel manages to lay bare our conventionality.

“It’s hard to put one’s finger on what it is that provokes such reactions to what I do. My work takes various forms, but taking the liberty to do certain things that people recognise yet don’t really want to face up to, well, that’s probably what touches a nerve.”

Joanna’s raison d’être is to get people to question themselves, and provocation is her dearest – and often necessary – weapon. She came to many people’s attention when she and a friend from the feminist art group Unfucked Pussy hijacked the finals of Miss Sweden in 2001 by getting on the stage with banners about dirty old men and masturbation. And she has continued to confront the way society regards women’s bodies: *Dirty Diaries* was an attempt to reclaim power over sexuality based on women’s own terms.

“You need a statement like that to get people to understand that as a feminist you don’t have to hate pornography. Feminists have their sexuality too.”

In similar vein, Joanna, who is currently expecting her first child, is working on a screenplay with the working title *Let the Right One Get Pregnant*. The proposed film questions the whole notion of having, being able or not being able to have children. Male infertility is a sure-fire subject with which Joanna, given her track record, will be able to provoke a strong reaction from at least half the population.

**JOANNA RYTEL UNPLAY**

**Feminism, porn and provocation**

**FACTS**

**JOANNA RYTEL**

*Born:* 1974 in Warsaw.

*Background:* Moved to Sweden when she was seven, grew up in Gothenburg. Studied at the University of Gothenburg School of Photography and Film and at Konstfack in Stockholm. She has created an internet-based abortion cemetery, celebrated her “happy aborted babies’ birthday” in an installation, and staged a performance dressed as a sex worker.

*Currently:* Her short film *Unplay* is set to screen in Berlinale Shorts.
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At the start of this year Suzanne Glansborg took up her post as the new film commissioner for features at the Swedish Film Institute. With 30 years’ experience in the industry, many of them spent as a buyer of feature films for various TV channels, she has a wide contact network and an eye for a good screenplay, something she will no doubt benefit from in her new job.

“I’m really fond of reading scripts and seeing how the story is built up with its various characters,” says Suzanne Glansborg. “It’s something of an exaggeration to say that good screenplays are lacking in Swedish film right now. Of those I’ve read in my new position so far, I can see there are plenty of good storytellers out there, and that gives me hope for a bright future,” she continues.

Last year was one of the best for Swedish films, with awards raining down on Swedish directors and actors at festivals around the world. Keeping up the momentum of that international success will obviously be one of her aims.

“Swedish films are regarded as exotic abroad. Of course, it’s fantastic that we’ve received such acclaim for our films, made on what in international terms are fairly modest budgets. I’d be delighted to see more stories that are slightly off-the-wall.”

What else would you like to see as a film commissioner?

“I’d like to see a more dynamic industry with more women both behind and in front of the camera.”

Having taken up the post of film commissioner for features last autumn, he’s hoping to instill more boldness into the Swedish film industry. What’s needed, in Lars G Lindström’s view, is a mixture of mass appeal productions and more artistic projects, giving the latter a chance to find their audience.

“In recent years Swedish film has received a real boost,” he says, referring to the new generation of filmmakers who have shot to prominence both in Sweden and internationally.

“There’s a new generation of filmmakers centred on production companies like Sankt Paul, Fasad and Plattform, who have made a profile for themselves sure in the knowledge of the type of films they want to make. That’s a trend I’m hoping to encourage and develop.”

Lindström’s many years as a producer at Stockholm’s Stadsteater, where he was a founding member and the artistic director of the Backstage venue, gave him a wealth of experience. His most recent position was with Nordisk Film Productions Sverige, where he produced Daniel Espinosa’s Babylon Disease and Åke Sandgren’s award winning To Love Someone.

“Swedish film has received a real boost”

“I’ve spent a lot of time pinning down ideas, something I think will serve me well in my new job as film commissioner. But unfortunately the Swedish Film Institute still has limited resources where Swedish films are concerned, so there’s a need to be extra painstaking, sensitive to what applicants want to do with their projects. We need to distribute funding to create a repertoire that includes mass-appeal films as well as more artistic projects, never forgetting the quality aspects.”

What’s the current standing of Swedish film, in your opinion?

“Good. The best film of last year in my view was The Girl (Flickan) by Fredrik Edfeldt and Karin Arrhenius. A fantastically well-crafted production where the screenplay, direction, cinematography, editing and design all come together to allow a rather delicate, character-driven drama to evolve. And it’s also very pleasing to see the success of the Millennium films both at home and abroad, something we haven’t really experienced before.”

PAOLA LANGDAL
Bittersweet youth

After the much celebrated short film *Elixir* Babak Najafi’s debut feature about 15-year-old Sebbe gives the audience an insight in a rarely touched subject in Swedish film: the life of the very poor. *Sebbe* will compete at the Berlin Film Festival in the section Generation 14plus.

WORDS HYNEK PALLAS PHOTO SANDRA QVIST
In 1972 the US government had the apartment blocks of Pruitt-Igoe in St Louis blown up and razed to the ground. Riddled with poverty and crime, they had become a symbol of segregation.

Whether it's actually Pruitt-Igoe that's tumbling down in a flickering sequence from Babak Najafi's feature film debut Sebbe isn't clear, but the implications, as the main character watches the video clip on his computer, are just the same.

Based on an original screenplay by Najafi himself, Sebbe is about poverty in an otherwise affluent society, manifested in an anonymous suburban apartment complex. 15-year-old Sebbe lives alone with his mother, Eva. Bullied at school, he often plays truant, and is happiest in his own world fixing various gadgets. Eva has a job delivering newspapers, but turns up late for work because she'd rather be drinking beer. The film shows the class divide in the area:
FACTS
BABAK NAJAFI

Born: 1975 in Iran, but grew up in Uppsala, Sweden.

Background: Between 1998 and 2002 he studied Film Directing at Stockholm’s Dramatiska Institutet. He has made several films, among them Pablo’s Birthday (Pablos födelsedag, short, 2001) and Elixir (short, 2004).

Currently: His first feature film Sebbe will compete at the Berlin Film Festival in Generation 14plus.
unlike her neighbours, Eva can’t even afford a birthday present for her son.

Babak Najafi has already touched on class issues in his short film *Elixir*, in which the immigrants of the suburbs are a contrasting underclass to the Swedes of the city itself.

“One of the premises for *Sebbe* was to make a film about a social group we never see in Swedish feature films, the very poor. And that’s down to settings. Swedish films are always set in middle or upper class environments,” says Najafi.

“Depictions of the suburbs are almost always about criminality. You have to ask yourself what the people in the 90s who made films in the suburbs found so exciting. They milked the cow then moved on. But the cow is still there.”

**THE SUBURBS WE see in *Sebbe* are different from those that permeated Swedish films a decade ago.**

Back then they featured immigrants who were exotic or dangerous. By contrast, this place is more reminiscent of Andrea Arnold’s modern kitchen sink realism, with magical elements that give it a soul – regardless of how gloomy it gets.

Through isolated shots of the buildings themselves, the concrete passageways between them and shabby communal laundry facilities, Najafi adds character to his setting. You understand why the 15-year-old thinks the place itself is oppressive, and why he dreams of knocking the whole damned lot down.

“No bastard wants to live in buildings like that really,” says Najafi when I ask him about the blown-up apartment blocks and how they fit into his film.

Another premise was not to make a film, in Najafi’s own words, “about Mustafa or Ahmed” – because of the expectations people have of a Swedish director with a foreign background.

“After *Elixir* a lot of projects landed in my lap – all of them about immigrants – none of which I wanted to take on. And when I said no it was as if I was being ungrateful.”

Not basing the film in something autobiographical like immigration was also a question of his change of perspective in the project.

“To begin with *Sebbe* was going to be about a character with a Chilean background, but then people would have regarded it as a film about “them”, rather than as a story.”

And by “people” Najafi doesn’t mean those who read the arts pages in the newspapers or go to art house cinemas. “I wanted to reach out to the people who read young people’s magazines. I didn’t want them to see the film and say ‘this is a film about them, not about me.’ *Sebbe* and Eva are Swedes, and it’s important that they look Swedish, and convincingly so.”

Mindful of this, he set about casting unknown faces for his central characters. Eva is played by Eva Melander, an actress with a background in the theatre. Sebbe – played by “Sebbe” (Sebastian) Hiort af Ornäs – is a 17 year-old chosen by Najafi from a regular upper secondary school, where he also went to study how young people talk and move. “It’s quite some time since I was young,” he explains.

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN mother and son is central to the film – painting what, for a Swedish film, is an unusually harsh portrait of the mother, interspersed and made more complicated by moments of tenderness.**

“It’s usually fathers who are the mean ones in films,” says Najafi, explaining that the story is nonetheless one of general appeal.

“Most people have experienced a separation, and I think they can identify with those feelings regardless of who is involved.”

With *Sebbe* Najafi says he wanted to make an anti-intellectual film, in the sense that it’s not one of those dramas you need to analyse too deeply. He cites two of his favourite directors, Fatih Akin and Alejandro González Iñárritu.

“They’re somewhere in the middle: their films are not too heavy, the intellectual side doesn’t kill thoughts and feelings, but neither are they over-eager to please the masses. Basically, a film should be like a good song – an emotional journey where you don’t know where you’re going to end up.”

**“One of the premises for *Sebbe* was to make a film about a social group we never see in Swedish feature films, the very poor”**
Their head office has been in Stockholm since they first opened in 1981, but it’s on the international stage that FilmTecknarna have made their name and been most active. With commercials for the likes of Hummer, BMW and Bondingtons and music videos for U2 and Madonna, their visual style has become world famous. A year ago they opened an office in New York as part of their strategy to gain a stronger foothold on the US market. And now they want to expand even more: with their new subsidiary FilmTecknarna Fiction they’re hoping to strengthen their position in filmmaking still further.

“We were a bunch of inspired amateurs who started FilmTecknarna with the dream of making films,” says CEO Lars Ohlson about the reasons why he, Jonas Odell and Stig Bergqvist founded the company almost thirty years ago. “To finance our projects we made commercials, and they virtually took over, but now we want to broadcast the fact that we have another string to our bow.”

WITH THE CREATIVE talents of Jonas Odell spurring them on, FilmTecknarna have produced a number of highly-acclaimed short films alongside their commercials and music videos. Odell is behind a number of successful shorts, such as Never Like the First Time! (Aldrig som första gången!), winner of the Golden Bear at the 2006 Berlin Film Festival. And with FilmTecknarna Fiction they’re hoping that more will follow.

Why is it important to have a separate film company?

“Regardless of whether we’ve made fictional films, commercials or music videos, we’ve always aimed at telling a story in a visually arresting way. But previously we’ve felt as if the various parts of the company have fused together. FilmTecknarna Fiction will help to keep the film part separate,” says Lars Ohlson.

The first short out of the new company’s blocks is Jonas Odell’s Tussilago, which will be competing at this year’s Berlin Film Festival. And the company is also involved in producing the Who (Vem) films, based on the popular eponymous children’s books by Swedish illustrator Stina Wirsén and directed by Jessica Laurén.

PRODUCER AT THE new outfit is Linda Hambäck, previously with the parent company, who asserts that Odell’s film is just the beginning of their new wave of productions:

“I’m so looking forward to seeing where this takes us. Filmtecknarna have a lot of talented directors under contract who want to make films, so our aim is to produce shorts and television series on an ongoing basis, then eventually to look at full length features,” she says.

Will they be animated films, or what are your plans?

“For some time now we’ve been mixing live and animations in our productions. Our goal is to continue making shorts with an emphasis on creativity, but the story itself will ultimately decide the format we use,” she concludes.

“We’ve always aimed at telling a story in a visually arresting way”
**FACTS FILMTECKNARNA**

FilmTecknarna, based in Stockholm and New York, is a storytelling and design-based production company known for its groundbreaking work using live action, 2D and 3D animation.

The company was created by Lars Ohlson, Jonas Odell, and Stig Bergqvist in 1981.

They have made several international advertising campaigns for companies like Absolut, BMW, Boddingtons, McDonald’s, Hummer and Southern Comfort. They have also made music videos for Madonna (“Music”), Franz Ferdinand (“Take me out”) and U2 (“Windows in the Skies”) and several short films, including the award-winning “Lies”, directed by Jonas Odell.

In 2009 FilmTecknarna started FilmTecknarna Fiction, which is focused on developing and producing TV series and fictional films.
Telling small stories

THE WAVE OF terrorism in 1970s West Germany is the theme of Jonas Odell’s new animated short, Tussilago. Odell, who has previously won both a Golden Bear and a Swedish Guldbagge for his animated documentaries Never Like the First Time! (Aldrig som första gången!) and Lies (Lögner) has once again chosen a documentary format to get to the heart of his subject matter.

Tussilago is based on the true story of a Swedish woman who entered into a relationship with the West German terrorist Norbert Kröcher in the mid-70s. But Odell is reluctant to describe his films as documentaries.

“I’m not a documentary film maker by trade, and I’m not sure what can be called a documentary. All I’ve wanted to do is select powerful stories that I think are worth telling. The animated format lets me package a story that would otherwise be difficult to bring into the open.”

THE FILM IS based on interviews with the Swedish woman, whose fascinating yet rather everyday accounts of her relationship with Kröcher are illustrated by Odell’s highly personal animations.

“In films and art the Red Army Fraction and other German terror groups are often given some sort of mythical status, regardless of whether they’re portrayed as romantic rebels or cold-blooded murderers. I’m not interested in that approach. My ambition hasn’t been to tell a grandiose story, but a small one instead.”

Much of your work has been with commercials and music videos. How do you find working in those formats?

“I like making music videos because I like playing a part in the codes of popular culture: it makes for an interesting art form. Commercials are basically just a job, but the advantage they have is that you can make them quickly and still experiment with new means of expression.”

“The animated format lets me package a story that would otherwise be difficult to bring into the open”
STINA WIRSÉN • JESSICA TESSAN LAURÉN

Popular children’s books hit the big screen

STINA WIRSÉN IS the creator of a series of hugely popular children books that show small children how to get along together. The books (Who’s Angry?, Who’s Pretty?, etc.) so captured the imagination of animator and director Jessica Tessan Laurén that she contacted Wirsén with a view to working together.

“I’ve always loved the humorous yet serious undertone of her books. When I was on the lookout for a new project, I knew this was something I simply had to do,” says the director.

Having worked as an illustrator and author of children’s books for twenty years, Stina Wirsén had received similar requests before, but had always said no. So it was with a mixture of anticipation and trepidation that she finally allowed her Who? books to transfer to the screen.

“I wrote the books together with my son when he was starting out at nursery. That’s where I came into contact with a whole heap of youngsters who gave me inspiration for the stories,” says Wirsén.

“The readers are so young, and recognition is so important at that age. I felt that the characters would be suitable for animation, but I wanted the films to be as close to the books as possible.”

STINA WIRSÉN DESCRIBES working on the films as highly educational. She was used to working entirely by herself in her studio in Stockholm. Now she would have to cooperate and compromise.

“I must confess it was hard to hand over control at first,” she says with a smile. “But as a piece of teamwork everything has been fantastic. Jessica made sketches from the screenplay that I filled in at their offices with specific details. Then everything was drawn by hand and fed into the computer by the incredibly talented animators Dockhus in Trollhättan.”

Both Stina Wirsén and Jessica Laurén are delighted with the resulting films, which are due to screen at the Göteborg Film Festival and on pubcaster Sveriges Television this spring.

“I hope the Who? films will be just as popular as the books. They certainly deserve it,” Jessica Laurén concludes.

FACTS STINA WIRSÉN

Author of children’s books and illustrator at Sweden’s leading daily newspaper Dagens Nyheter. Her popular series of books, Who?, have now become animated films to which she has contributed the screenplays and designs.

JESSICA TESSAN LAURÉN

Has worked as a director and animator of short films for FilmTecknarna and other companies since 1994. Her most recent project as a director is the Who? films, currently scheduled to be broadcast by pubcaster Sveriges Television.
Between a rock and a hard place

In the wake of two personal documentaries, Agnieszka Lukasiak is moving over to features, marking her debut with the dark and powerful drama *Between Two Fires*. And her choice of location – north of the Arctic Circle – serves to heighten the vulnerability of the film’s main character.

**HERSELF A POLITICAL** refugee who came to Sweden from Poland with her parents in the 1980s, Agnieszka Lukasiak’s previous films have been the highly up-close and personal documentaries *Algeria: The Nameless War* and *Forgotten* (*Bortglömda*). She had initially planned a documentary as her next film, but that wasn’t to be:

“Before we shot *Forgotten* I went to a refugee centre in Sweden to do some research for my next project. I met a woman there from Kazakhstan who told me how she had fled with her daughter, and having been a refugee myself, I was very taken by her situation.”

Agnieszka Lukasiak visited the woman several times, then in the meantime got involved with *Forgotten* in Poland. When she got back, the woman had been deported. She decided to make a feature film based on the woman’s experiences instead.

“Sometimes a feature can be more real than a documentary. To start with, there are so many things you can’t show in a documentary, things that have already happened that people can only talk about. They’ve already managed to filter things out of their memories. And secondly, you rarely get to see those incredibly private moments in a →

Kiruna, Sweden’s most northerly city, lies some way north of the Arctic Circle, with the Midnight Sun in the summer and the Northern Lights gracing its winters. With only 18,000 inhabitants, it has an air of cold desolation, surrounded by endless expanses of snow and mountains. Fleeing their native Belarus, it’s here that Marta and her daughter end up. Behind her are Mafiosi with paedophile intent, ahead lie difficult choices, and her hopes of a better life are put to the test when she finds herself equally under threat in Sweden as in the country she has left behind. *Between Two Fires*, the feature debut by documentary filmmaker Agnieszka Lukasiak, is a dark and gripping drama which mixes elements of thriller and romance.

“Loneliness is a big problem in Sweden: people often face their problems entirely by themselves”
documentary. If something dramatic or private happens, you don’t exactly get your camera out and start filming.”

Hardly surprisingly, Agnieszka Lukasiak wanted to be a theatre director as a child: her father was a director, and she had virtually grown up behind the stage in various theatres. But when she got to Sweden she was too young to study directing. The only school that took students under the age of 18 was the Lodz film school in Poland, where Roman Polanski, Andrzej Wajda and Krzysztof Kieslowski had studied. The school also offered training in theatre directing, but during the five years of the course, film came to dominate her studies. First documentary filmmaking, then features, something she fully intends to continue with going forward.

“Yes, I love feature films. Making films has become a bit of an obsession, something I dream of all the time. Documentaries are more problematic in every way. They’re also emotionally difficult: sometimes it feels as if you’re exploiting people, because you want to show something that they would prefer to hide. And they themselves rarely get much out of being in the film. They don’t get paid. So you have to give so much of yourself to get them involved. If I had the offer of making one documentary a year, I wouldn’t be able to cope on an emotional level, because it takes so long to wind down afterwards.”

**Making Features, in** her view, is nothing but fun: everyone’s read the script, and everyone gets paid. And even though filming *Between Two Fires* was tough, especially for Magda Poplawska, who plays the lead and features in 126 scenes, everyone was pleased with the final result.

“She’s seen it seven times. But we were under intense time restrictions, with no time for extra coverage. I had to edit scenes in my head during the shoot, and of everything we filmed, only six takes didn’t make it to the final cut. Lots of the scenes were pretty tough emotionally, too.”

**Living in** a small city in winter in the middle of nowhere only added to the challenge. But Kiruna was a crucial choice, explains Lukasiak, who is now based in London, having lived in several countries apart from Poland and Sweden.

“Loneliness is a big problem in Sweden: people often face their problems entirely by themselves. So Sweden really lends itself to internal drama of the kind my film depicts. And Kiruna is like Sweden times ten, even more extreme and desolate. I did have an offer to shoot the film in England, which would actually have worked because problems like Marta’s are everywhere. But I wouldn’t have got this environment which makes everything so much worse. It’s like a reflection of the inner world she inhabits. She’s all alone in this vast whiteness, it’s just awful”, concludes Agnieszka Lukasiak with a burst of wry laughter.

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**FACTS: AGNIESZKA LUKASIAK**

**Born:** 1977 in Poland, came to Sweden as a political refugee in 1984.

**Studied at** Dramatiska Institutet in Stockholm and the National Polish Film School in Lodz. Her documentary *Algeria – The Nameless War* was selected for competition at IDFA 2002.

**Currently:** In the news with her debut feature *Between Two Fires.*
Many happy returns

Not everyone can boast that they’ve competed at Sundance. But Jenifer Malmqvist certainly can. Birthday (Födelsedag) is her second short at the festival in just three years.

WORDS ELIN LARSSON

In 2007 Malmqvist received an unexpected call. Without her knowledge, her father had sent Peace Talk (I fred) to Sundance. And it had been accepted.

“I was in the changing room after a hard session at the gym when he called. There I was, stark naked, jumping up and down and shrieking. The other women there just stared at me. What a scene...!”

This January she was back at Park City. Birthday, her graduation film from the Lodz Film School, centres on two women starting a family. When one of them reveals a secret, a war in miniature breaks out. Everything is played out in a barren, suggestive landscape reminiscent of Andrei Zvyagintsev’s The Return (2003). Yet that’s where the similarities end – Malmqvist uses a rather special, almost surrealistic humour - without losing the sense of closeness to the film’s characters or distancing herself from the realistic basis of her material.

How did you get the idea for the film?

“First of all I wrote a parallel story with the same characters in two different time periods. The present-day scenes contained a kind of moral conflict that interested me. I’ve thought a lot about what people think is natural and unnatural, and how attitudes change through history. What does ‘natural’ actually mean? Nothing’s really natural, just culturally acceptable. You don’t notice this in the film, apart from the fact that I knew I wanted a pared-down landscape that would make a strong impression.”

FACTS JENIFER MALMQVIST

Born: 1973 in Göteborg
Background: After directing amateur theatre, Malmqvist studied filmmaking in Sweden and Poland. She has written and directed several award-winning shorts, including Angel Schmangel (Ängel Bängel, 2003) and Peace Talk (I fred, 2004), which was selected for the Sundance Film Festival in 2007. In 2009 she was awarded the Bo Widerberg Scholarship.

Currently: In competition at Sundance with Birthday (Födelsedag).
Northern exposure

Filmmakers Gunilla Heilborn and Mårten Nilsson have been working together for a long time. Best known for their award-winning What You Do (Hur man gör), a charming look at how to make a film, the couple’s latest short, This Is Alaska, is in competition at Clermont-Ferrand.

WORDS JONAS HOLMBERG PHOTO MARKUS EDIN

With its panoramic windows facing the street, their office is in Stockholm’s trendy Södermalm. On the wall is a large reproduction of an oil painting: a young man, his thick hair parted to one side, a rope around his shoulders and leaning on an ice pick, looks up to the heavens. It’s a portrait of Sir Edmund Hillary, the climber who one day in 1953 was the first person to scale Mount Everest. Many adventurers before him had tried and perished in the attempt.

The wastes of the extreme north west of America are not quite so treacherous, but the characters in This Is Alaska, dressed like mountaineers in their fur-collared anoraks, are also in search of adventure. Mostly shot in the Swedish ski resort of Åre, the film formed part of a dance performance at the Göteborg Opera choreographed by Heilborn. But it stands up remarkably well as a work in its own right.

“This is Alaska was fun and quick to make. It wasn’t meticulously planned, but a lot of people like it”, says Nilsson. “Now it’s screening in Rotterdam and competing in Clermont-Ferrand. Oops! Sometimes things are best when you don’t think about them too much.”

For someone who makes such seemingly precise and intellectually demanding films, Mårten Nilsson is unexpectedly fond of expressions like “oops”. Gunilla Heilborn says that his bad memory is actually an asset. In fact, he likes to work spontaneously and quickly, without too much reflection. When he appears surprised that This Is Alaska has been interpreted politically, despite its quotations from John Stuart Mill, Heilborn intercedes: “Well, of course there’s a political dimension. This Is Alaska pokes fun at the naïve liberal view that everything will work out as long as everyone’s allowed to do what they want.”

THE CHARACTERS IN This Is Alaska call themselves extreme individualists. Tired of society, they have sought to get as far away from it all as possible. Yet they still form a society that meets in a log cabin to discuss various threats against individualism.

This is not the first film by the couple that explores the tensions between the individual and the group. “It began with The Lodge (Sportstugan, 2005), with its dig at reality television such as The Farm”, says Heilborn. “Relationships between two people can be rather dull. Groups open up those relationships.”

Heilborn and Nilsson themselves work in a group, often using the same actors in their films. “It’s more supportive when you know each other,” says Heilborn. “But occasionally we have to take in new people; otherwise the group might get too claustrophobic.”

Neither do they want their films to be shut-in. All kind of things are allowed to happen. “I don’t like being too prescriptive”, says Heilborn, a theme echoed by Nilsson: “When you ignore the rule book that insists that because it’s winter in one scene, it has to be winter in the next, things start to open up. It’s more fun, too.”
MÅRTEN NILSSON
Born: 1962.
Background: Has directed a considerable number of shorts since his debut Alexander (1988). His 2007 film What You Do (Hur man gör), codirected with Heilborn, won a Guldbagge award for Best Short Film. He also works as cameraman, and was responsible to the cinematography in the youth drama Night Bus 807 (Nattbus 807).
Currently: This Is Alaska, which won the award for best Swedish short at the Uppsala Short Film Festival 2009, is in the competition at Clermont-Ferrand.

GUNILLA HEILBORN
Born: 1964.
Background: Works as a director of short films and a choreographer, often in-house at Stockholm’s Dansens Hus. Has been codirecting shorts with Mårten Nilsson since 2000.
Currently: This Is Alaska, and as the choreographer of a production by Jenny Andreasson at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm.
Hey man, how you doin’?

Josef Fares enters the room and gives Daniél Espinosa a bear-hug. It’s the first time that these two young men, both established directors, have sat down to be interviewed together. Good friends, it’s also the first time that they both have films on release at the same time. Espinosa with his take on the best-selling Swedish novel *Easy Money* (*Snabba cash*) and Fares with *Balls* (*Farsan*). And vice-versa, in one way and another.

When did you two meet?

**ESPINOSA:** I remember someone telling me ‘There’s an immigrant who’s been accepted on the course at Dramatiska Institutet, you two should be friends!’ Josef had already gained an amazing amount of experience by then, with all the films he’d made. So when we talked about directing, I had to try hard to keep up with him.

**FARES:** Ha ha, I could hardly express myself back then. It’s better now, but I still find it hard to express my thoughts. We’ve always been quite different, both as people and filmmakers. That’s what’s
exciting. Look at our films. They’re like night and day. But we both have a personal style. If you see five minutes of one of our films, you’ll recognise it. And that’s good.

What are those differences?

ESPINOSA: I always feel a little more boring than Josef.

FARES: And I always feel a little more stupid, always laughing everything off. A little less serious. I do all kinds of shit. One of Daniél’s strengths is his ability to create such good drama. He’s very good at seeing people both on an emotional and a professional level. I haven’t seen a single frame where the acting hasn’t been good. And that’s impressive.

ESPINOSA: Josef has this amazing, natural visual ability. In Denmark they say you should reduce the distance between the heart and the hand, between your ambition and your craft. In Josef, they’re already close together.

FARES: He always gives me so many compliments. Hey, we should move in together, man! It’s unusual for two directors to help each other as much as you do, lending a hand on the set.

ESPINOSA: It just felt right. I’d never be able to make a comedy like Kops, but I’ve never learnt so much as when I was on that shoot watching Josef’s skills and invention as a craftsman. Regardless of whether you make dramas or comedies, those are the skills you need to cultivate.

Josef, you worked as the second unit on Easy Money?

FARES: I was there in the major action scenes, taking shots for editing. I could never go onto one of Daniel’s sets and say “What the hell are you doing?” But I could take him to one side and say “Have you thought of such and such…?”

ESPINOSA: And that’s why Josef’s there. Not because he’s the world’s best cameraman….

FARES: Ha!

ESPINOSA: …but I like to have a friend there to consult. During the filming of Leo I was the script assistant. Not because I was good at it, but so that Josef could check things with me occasionally.

Daniél, does it feel odd to be making the film of a book that hundreds of thousands of Swedes have read?

ESPINOSA: I haven’t really been bothered by it. If you are, you might as well give up before you start. On the other hand, it’s always pretty nerve-racking making any film.

Always?

ESPINOSA: After my first film it was such a shock when everyone suddenly started coming up to me and expressing their opinions. What have I done to make you think that of me? But you just have to drop it. In that way it was good having Josef as a friend, because he’d been through it all before.

FARES: Even if you say you don’t care it’s really hard not to let it get to you. With Balls, I hope I won’t care what the critics think. But if they slate it, I’ll be angry and disappointed. My films have gone down well both internationally and in Sweden, but it’s good that I haven’t made my best films yet. A lot of people thought Jalla! Jalla! was charming, but to be honest, I haven’t made any masterpieces. I’m not putting myself down, the films I’ve made are good, but hardly The Godfather or La Haine.

Are there any similarities between Balls and Easy Money?

FARES: In both films the characters in the screenplay have been adapted to suit the actors playing the parts. Often it’s the other way round.

ESPINOSA: That’s one of the few points where we’re the same.

FARES: In comedy it’s very important to take in genuine material that people can bring to the part. Take my dad, you can’t write a script for him. It’s almost the same thing with Gago Mrsic, who plays a fantastic part in Easy Money. There’s a genuine quality there.

Do you feel there’s a better climate for filmmaking in Sweden than when you started out ten years ago?

FARES: Lukas Moodysson’s Show Me Love (Fucking →
Dragomir Mrsic (top), Joel Kinnaman and Lisa Henni (right) in Easy Money. Jan Fares (left) in Balls.
jectives, Back then there were lots of directors in their sixties who were still active. They’ve disappeared. It’s only now that the vacuum they left behind has been filled with new voices which are still not fully formulated. People experiment their way to the directors they want to become, and that’s the best climate of all. It means there’s no given truth. It’s in periods like this that things happen.

FARES: If Daniél and I were footballers, we’d be about 13 years old. Because in this profession, we’re still young.”
Guardian angel

Among Us (Änglavakt) reunites director Johan Brisinger and actor Michael Nyqvist in a bittersweet story of a boy in a coma whose parents find a little supernatural support.

WORDS BY GUNNAR REHLIN

Angels, do they exist? Well, they do in films, at least. In Johan Brisinger’s Among Us, a French speaking, middle-aged angel turns up to help a couple in their hour of need.

“When I first read the screenplay it seemed like a mixture of Woody Allen and Wim Wender’s Wings of Desire”, says Michael Nyqvist, who plays the lead, internationally recognized as the lead in the Millennium-trilogy.

In the film he and Izabella Scorupco (GoldenEye, Vertical Limit) play a couple whose son is in a coma following a serious accident. The wife refuses to give up hope that he’ll survive, the husband is less certain. Then a stranger, played by veteran Turkish-French actor Tchéky Karyo, gets in touch with →
them. Who is he, and where does he come from? An angel? To many, it may seem rather new age, to which Brisinger responds:

“It wasn’t intentionally so. I felt a need to push myself to the limit, to be bold, to let go of my inhibitions. People should be allowed to express themselves, and audiences don’t go to the cinema to see everyday events. As soon as they come across social realism they think: ‘well, that’s not very convincing.’ I wanted to follow a certain escapist tradition, Hans Christian Andersen, Charles Dickens and the like. I started off by writing the heading: ‘A Modern Fairytale’. You have to take risks.

I don’t care about people who think you can’t do that kind of stuff. You’re your own worst enemy if you shy away. But I was actually quite surprised when I got so many positive reactions from people who read the drafts, comments like: ‘unusual, nice to see someone sticking their neck out.’"

AND MICHAEL NYQVIST isn’t one to shy away from the supernatural, either:

“I’m not remotely bothered. People die, and there’s a kind of no man’s land between life and death. What does bother me, on the other hand, is superstition. I think it’s quite dangerous, and I’m not a fan of new age. But I do think we’re lacking a spiritual dimension, and it’s sad to see celebrity culture taking over from thoughts about life and death. We’re becoming one-dimensional, where the only things that matter are what you can buy or the rubbish you watch on television at the weekends. It’s a worrying trend to see diversity given over to blandness.”

UNLIKE WINGS OF DESIRE or Lukas Moodyson’s Lilya 4-Ever, Brisinger’s angel doesn’t have wings:

“There were wings in the screenplay, but they disappeared before we started filming. And not using any special effects was something I learnt from Wenders. I saw the extra material on the DVD for Wings of Desire, which showed how naif it could be if the effects weren’t spot on. So I decided, for example, never to show how the angel walked through walls. I suggested it from the editing instead.”
FACTS

JOHAN BRISINGER


Background: Has worked in films since 1991, both in Sweden and internationally. His 2004 short film Passing Hearts (En del av mitt hjärta) won the Audience Award at the Berlin Film Festival together with various other awards. His debut feature Suddenly (Underbara Älskade, 2006), which he wrote and directed, was nominated for a Guldbagge.

Currently: Has written and directed the film Among Us.

Izabella Scorupco.
FACTS

PATRIK EKLUND


Background: Made his directorial debut with One Christmas Morning (2002), which won several awards. His next short, Situation Frank (2007), was selected for the Critics’ Week in Cannes, and his follow-up, Instead of Abracadabra (2008), won various awards and was the talk of the town at Sundance 2009.

Currently: Working on a feature film.
By any standards, 2009 was a successful year for Patrik Eklund. Not only did his short film *Seeds of the Fall* (*Slitage*) scoop the Critics’ Week award at Cannes, his previous short *Instead of Abracadabra* (*Istället för Abrakadabra*) moved a few steps closer to an Oscar nomination in the Best Short Film category.

Among awards at festivals including Lille, Boston and Los Angeles, *Instead of Abracadabra* also picked up the award for Best Short Film at the Göteborg Film Festival. And as if that wasn’t enough, it was screened at Sundance 2009, where *Seeds of the Fall* is competing this year.

At the moment, Eklund is working on the screenplay for a feature. He’s hoping to finish it this spring and start shooting in the autumn. Somewhat reluctant to reveal what the film is all about, he nonetheless confirms that it will be another black comedy.

“People will recognise the tone and the bleak humour from my short films. But I’m pretty sure that on a visual level, the feature will be rather different from the shorts.”

**How does directing a feature compare with directing shorts?**

“They’re two completely different processes. When you’re making a short it’s easier to take short cuts, but you can’t cheat in the same way with a feature. And writing the screenplay obviously takes longer too: every week you’re shuffling various scenes round, trying to get a more stable base and a clearer idea what type of story you want to tell.”

There’s a very individual atmosphere in Eklund’s short films. The basic tone is dark, but it’s balanced out by a special kind of absurd humour.

“Yes, I always try to counteract the screenplay with dry humour. But I’m careful not to let the humour go too far and get silly. The important thing is to tell a good story.”

**Where do you get your inspiration?**

“Sometimes stories that friends have told me can inspire me to a screenplay. I often start with a scene and let the story grow as I’m writing. I think it makes the writing process more creative. When I’ve finished, the original scene might not even make it to the finished film. But it’s a good way of finding a golden thread to run all the way through. Where other directors are concerned, Kaurismäki stands out. There’s something in that dry style of his that appeals to me. A couple of Alejandro Jodorowsky’s films, *The Holy Mountain* and *El Topo* have also influenced me, plus some of David Lynch’s and Alexander Payne’s films.”

Although he now lives in Stockholm, Eklund grew up in the far north of Sweden. And he made both *Seeds of the Fall* and *Instead of Abracadabra* when he was living in the northern city of Umeå.

**Have you been inspired by your northern Swedish background in your films?**

“It’s not something I think about. But maybe their still, pared-down style come subconsciously from my northern roots,” smiles Eklund.”
ANITA BJÖRK MISS JULIE
The Berlin Film Festival celebrates its 60th birthday this year with the section Retrospective: Play It Again.! Among the films chosen is Miss Julie (Fröken Julie, 1951), director Alf Sjöberg’s adaptation of August Strindberg’s world famous play. Starring Anita Björk.

FACTS ANITA BJÖRK
Anita Björk was born in 1923 in Dalarna and grew up in an artistic family. At the age of 19 she gained a place as a student at the Royal Dramatic Theatre, which was to become her place of work for many years to come. Her breakthrough as a stage actress came in 1948, and subsequently she worked primarily with Ingmar Bergman on a number of theatre productions.

She became known to international audiences in the title role of Alf Sjöberg’s 1951 film of Miss Julie, (Fröken Julie) which won the Palme d’Or at Cannes. This led to a number of offers from Hollywood, but it has mostly been on the Swedish stage and screen that her career has continued. Her many famous roles include that of the Swedish Queen Victoria in The Best Intentions (Den goda viljan, 1991), written by Ingmar Bergman.

Miss Julie will screen at this year’s Berlin Film Festival in the Retrospective: Play It Again! section.

“I remember it well. White, with large red roses and green ribbons. Quite a lovely dress. Very tasteful.”

It’s January 2010 in the Old Town of Stockholm. Anita Björk reminisces over the very first Berlinale, of June 1951. She was in town, as was co-star Ulf Palme, as was director Alf Sjöberg.

Miss Julie is the English title of the motion picture they brought with them, a dazzling enough adaptation of the Strindberg play to firmly place itself into the front row of world cinema classics immediately and ever since. And Anita Björk as Julie, with the tidy little straw hat neatly pinned on her tilted head, tenderly observing her pet siskin, became the icon of the film, just as instantly – and ever since.

Nice going. Especially since she wasn’t the natural choice for the part.

“Alf Sjöberg had directed Miss Julie on stage in Stockholm with Ulf Palme as Jean and Julie played by Inga Tidblad. It was in 1949 and I saw it and it was a stupendous performance. Then, in 1950, Alf got to make a film of it through Sandrew-Produktion. By now, however, Inga Tidblad was almost 50. She didn’t look it, but these things show on film more than on stage.”

Tidblad was a great lady of the stage at the time. Björk wasn’t yet. Sjöberg decided to enrol the then 27-year-old graduate of the class of ’45 of The Royal Dramatic Theatre’s acting school and with a handful of stage and screen performances under her wing. None of which had anything to do with Miss Julie.

“I FOUND MYSELF in the company of a cast and a director who had lived with this play for years. They even kept the set design from the stage version for the film. During rehearsals they would repeat the same question again and again: ‘What would Inga have done here?’ It was a downright struggle for me at times. Only during the location shots, which were not part of the stage version, I felt I held my own. But at the end of the day, I still couldn’t see the part as mine. I still can’t, to this day.”

Back to June 1951. Two months before, Julie had picked up a Grand Prix at the Cannes festival, something Björk was aware of at the time, but only just.

“We worked at the theatre. My going down there wasn’t even discussed. But I remember hearing about it and thinking ’Quite a blast.’ Then I went back to work.”

FOR THE BERLIN opening, however, a more hands-on plan was put into action.

“Ulf and Alf and I went with Anders Sandrew, the studio head. He had to pay our fare and we stayed at the hotel Am Zoo on Kurfürstendamm. I was given a nice, large room “for representation”, while Ulf and Alf were put into two shacks. Sandrew, as you may know, was a greengrocer turned producer, a frugal man. We settled in just around dinnertime. Sandrew opened a package of sandwiches, brought all the way from Stockholm and wrapped in an old newspaper. He served them with beer and aquavit. I remember it well.”

As mentioned, Anita Björk also remembers the dress she wore at the opening, as well the bust line of some Italian starlet, 16 and yet unknown, Sophia was her name… And of course the film, Björk’s most everlasting contribution in a career that spans eight decades at the time of writing (though retired, she spent a good part of last year performing A.R. Gurney’s Love Letters on stage) and a film that is up there with the Ikiruses, the La Stradas and the Ordets of 1950s celluloid iconography.

“It has been good to me in a way. But I’m really best on stage, where I’ve had some incredible experiences, not least with Bergman. I never got any good screen parts through it, though. Although Hitchcock wanted me for I Confess, a film I never got to do.”

And a film Hitchcock wished he had never got to do either. But that’s another story entirely.

WORDS JAN LUMHOLDT
POST-PRODUCTION STUDIOS
The post-producers

They’re the unsung heroes of Swedish film: the companies that provide post-production. Yet at the same time, the reputations of companies like Fido and The Chimney Pot are growing internationally.

WORDS ROBERT LÅNGSTRÖM ILLUSTRATION ARVID TAPPERT

Just two days before 2010 and the dawn of the new decade, all is calm in the brick-built offices of the Fido animation studio in Stockholm. But the cold is creeping in. Sitting in the meeting room in jeans and a blue hoodie, producer Claes Dietmann is regretting having the radiator removed from the kitchen when they moved in two years ago. In front of him stands a life-size ostrich(!).

“We do lots of animals,” he says. “Organic animation that’s integrated into photography, but also physical effects like masks and dolls. And internationally, we’re doing rather well.”

Welcome to the world of post-production. These aren’t usually the people going up on stage to receive the big film awards. But it’s something that’s crucial to any film’s success. The Swedish companies involved may be small, but they’ve made a name for themselves for delivering high quality at a low cost. When Fido created the →
Fido Film AB
3D animation and visual effects, both digital and physical, for feature films and commercials.

Main sources of pride: Their work on Let the Right One In (Låt den rätte komma in, 2008) and the award for Frostbite (Frostbiten, 2006) at the Los Angeles Screamfest from special effects guru Stan Winston.

Progress in 2009: A record year both in turnover and volume, down in no small measure to their work on the Dutch film Eip!

Plans for the future: To work with large Swedish and international projects. A high level, fully-animated Swedish production would be ideal.

“We’re good at technology in Sweden, quick to test out new things”

e-mail some time ago, and as usual with these things, it took a couple of years to come to fruition. But now it’s ready, and for our part it involved around a hundred clips with the girl,” says Dietmann.

Just like Fido, post-production company The Chimney Pot go beyond the Swedish border in their work. Last year the company co-produced the Bul-
The Chimney Pot (+Ljudligan)
Deal with everything from fully edited films to the supply of film prints, including scanning, lighting, film-out, sound and coordination of lab work.

Main sources of pride:
Working on both large and small projects, on the festival scene and at home in Swedish cinemas, including Let the Right One In (2008), The Girl (2009) and Summer with Göran (2009). Co-produced the Bulgarian film Eastern Plays (2009), screened at Cannes in Directors Fortnight, and the Romanian If I Want to Whistle, I Whistle, in competition at the Berlin Film Festival.

Progress in 2009: A marked increase in international inquiries and a high level of demand for their services in Sweden. Have developed new ways of working, including 4K (The Girl).

Plans for the future: Will be producing the first 3D short film (stereoscopic) at the start of 2010, with good grounds to hope that a major Swedish film project will dare to use the same technology later in the year.
the real skills to use it. That makes communication with the director of prime importance. It’s not unusual for planned effects in a screenplay to be at a cost level five times higher than the budget will allow, so then you have to get the intention and the money to tie up. We always aim to offer the best solution that the budget will allow,” says Dietmann.

**THE FACT THAT** Swedish post-production companies are smaller than many of their international counterparts helps to level out the hierarchy. There’s greater closeness between post-production and the rest of the film crew, and they’re also perceived as being more creative, according to at least, to post-production producer Peter Bengtsson – and he should know. Like the Scarlet Pimpernel, he’s here, there and everywhere, hired by production companies as a fixer of post-production. This means that he decides which companies should work with the film in question. And basically, he has worked with all the post production companies in Sweden. Since he started out back in 1995, he has worked on almost 150 films.

“We’re good at technology in Sweden, quick to test out new things,” says Bengtsson. “When Swedish companies do good post-production work, the reaction out in Europe is one of amazement that such a small country can achieve so much.”

Some of these companies have taken the step up to co-producer and started bringing more international productions into Sweden. The people at Effektstudion Filmgate in Gothenburg co-produced their first feature, *Kenny Begins*, and worked on numerous projects including Lars von Trier’s *Antichrist*. Worked with the new RED camera.

**Plans for the future:** To co-produce their first feature, *Kenny Begins*, and worked on numerous projects including Lars von Trier’s *Antichrist*. Worked with the new RED camera.
We’re proud of Swedish films. Especially proud to be presenting numerous titles at Sundance, Clermont-Ferrand, Rotterdam and Berlin. And we’re very much looking forward to the rest of the year – there’s more to come. Please visit our website www.sfi.se for updated information on Swedish shorts, documentaries and features.
Among Us
An unexpected event dramatically changes Ernst and Cecilia’s orderly life. Ernst rationally puts it down to chance, but Cecilia looks for a meaning in what has happened. They begin to slide further and further apart when a mysterious stranger with unusual powers suddenly enters their world. This meeting forms the basis of a modern fairytale about the courage to believe in life and love.

ORIGINAL TITLE Ånglavakt DIRECTOR Johan Brisinger PRODUCERS Mikael Flodell, Peter Possne PRODUCED BY Drama Svecia and Sonet Film AB in co-production with TV4, Gotlands Filmfond, Filmregion Stockholm-Mälardalen, Nouvago Capital and Nyqvist Film. In cooperation with Canal+ with support from Swedish Film Institute/Peter “Piodor” Gustavsson SCREENWRITER Johan Brisinger PRINCIPAL CAST Michael Nyqvist, Izabella Scorupco, Tchéky Karyo SCREENING DETAILS 35 mm, 93 min TO BE RELEASED March 19, 2010 SALES SF International

Johan Brisinger was born in 1965 and grew up in Stockholm. After graduation from the School of Theatre, Film and Television at UCLA, he went on to become an acclaimed and award-winning director of music videos and commercials. Brisinger achieved popular and critical success with his 2006 feature film debut Suddenly (Underbara älskade), which picked up the Audience Award at the 2007 Guldbagge ceremony.

7X – This Is Our Kids
When you feel powerless, what do you do? How far could you go to retrieve some human dignity? 7X – This Is Our Kids is a movie about the feeling of hopelessness, seen through the eyes of children. It’s a story about what happens when a gun finds its way into some vulnerable children’s hands. A story based on the harsh reality of life, tainted by violence, where the search for dignity takes explosive turns…

ORIGINAL TITLE 7X – Lika barn leka bäst DIRECTOR Emil Jonsvik SCREENWRITER André Sebastie PRINCIPAL CAST Tom Ljungman, Rojda Sekersöz, Susanna Roald, Christopher Mhina PRODUCER Emil Jonsvik PRODUCED BY First Edition Pictures in co-production with Sebastie Film & Media, Katharina, A Lexne AB, Willen, Peter Jonsvik, Inpost, Lilasyster, Conversation Film and Edgen Films. SCREENING DETAILS Digi-beta, 97 min TO BE RELEASED April, 2010 SALES TBA

Emil Jonsvik, born in 1978, has an impressive CV for one so young, with more than 70 productions to his credit (working as everything from director to electrician and editor), amongst them directing the award-winning breakdance documentary Shundig. 7X – This Is Our Kids is his debut feature.

The Ape
Krister, a husband and father, wakes up to the consequences of a tragedy. Confronted with everyday reality, there is no place for escape and Krister is soon forced to face up to his actions. The Ape is about the struggle to hold on to things around us already lost, about recognizing what is left when the life you once had is gone.

ORIGINAL TITLE Apan DIRECTOR Jesper Ganslandt SCREENWRITER Jesper Ganslandt PRINCIPAL CAST Olle Sami, Francoise Joyce, Sean Pietrulewicz, Niclas Gillis PRODUCER Jesper Kurlandsky PRODUCED BY Fasad AB in co-production with Film i Väst AB and SVT with support from Swedish Film Institute/Peter “Piodor” Gustavsson SCREENING DETAILS 35mm, 81 min RELEASED October 23, 2009 SALES TrustNordisk

Jesper Ganslandt, born in 1978, moved from his home town of Falkenberg to Stockholm in 2000, and wrote the screenplay for his debut film Falkenberg Farewell (Farväl Falkenberg, 2006), a major success shown at film festivals around the world. Following his short film Jesper Ganslandts 114:e dröm (2007), the concert film Skinnskatteberg (2008) and his documentary The Film I’m No Longer Talking About (Filmen jag inte pratar om längre), Ganslandt’s second feature The Ape premiered at Venice and Toronto.
Bad Faith

Mona is new in town. A serial killer is on the loose and Mona becomes a witness to one of the murders. She is shocked but also fascinated and as her interest grows into an obsession she decides to find the murderer herself. In the process she is forced to question everything she has believed in. Including her own morality.

**Balls**

Balls is a heart-warming comedy about love, friendship and the art of being a man.

**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 Dow Chemicals are on trial. And history is about to be made.
Behind Blue Skies

The year is 1975. Martin escapes his alcoholic father for the summer job of his life at the exclusive Royal Yacht Club in the idyllic archipelago of Stockholm. He meets true love for the first time and is groomed by Gösta, a playboy at the centre of high society. Martin is inevitably drawn into one of the greatest scandals of all times in Swedish crime history.

Beauty Refugee

My family is into plastic surgery and their surgeon is my brother. He has operated on 28 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.

Between Two Fires

Marta Kowalska, 30, flees from Belarus to Sweden together with her 10-year-old daughter, Anna. The two of them end up in a refugee centre in northern Sweden where they meet Ali, an Algerian. Much to Marta’s distress, Ali tries to befriend Anna. When this fear subsides, love begins to grow between Marta and Ali. And although the couple is far from certain of being granted asylum, they share a belief in a future together.

NEW FILMS
Corridor

When he meets his new neighbour Lotte, Frank is drawn into a claustrophobic nightmare. Gradually her dysfunctional relationship with the scary and jealous Micke invades his well-ordered life and he soon wishes he had never opened the door.

Dear Alice

In the course of an ordinary day Moses, Francis, Karin and Bosse find themselves faced with what seem like trivial decisions to be made, but as their paths cross, their choices prove catastrophic to all involved. Dear Alice is an explosive and fate-entwining drama about rules, ethics, common decency and who we are in our darkest hour.

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.

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Dreams

Fresh out of high school, Goran doesn’t know what he wants to do with his life. Should he stick with his small time gangster friends and make some cash, or listen to Zeko at the fast food stall who thinks you should go to school forever? Right now he is satisfied drinking beer and hitting on girls. But when his mom gets really sick, Goran has to make a choice.

Easy Money

JW is a poor student who lives a double life within the wealthy Stockholm elite. Jorge is a fugitive on the run from the police and the Yugoslavian mafia. Yugoslavian hit man Mrado is trying hard to find Jorge while taking care of his young daughter. Set in contemporary Stockholm, Easy Money is a thriller based on an internationally bestselling novel by Jens Lapidus.

Distant Land

Set on the island of Fårö. Elizabeth has escaped her life in Stockholm due to her son’s death. Confused she abducts a boy from the beach. Cecilia is the lead actress in a film shot on the island. She is married but falls in love with a teenager who supplies her with cocaine. Soon it will be apparent that both of the women are living a lie.

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**Fuerteventura**

A man travels to the Canary Islands to get over the loss of a loved one. He meets a bartender who knows the secret of lucid dreaming, and a mysterious woman from his past. It becomes less and less clear whether his dreams are the result of his memories, or his memories the result of his dreams.

**Gringa**

Manuel is dirt poor and his only way out of Peru is to travel by Gringa. The town Cuzco is full of Gringas, but they are not easily seduced. When he meets the Swedish Lena, he thinks his luck is made, but she has her own agenda.

**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.

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**Familia**

**DIRECTOR** Mikael Wiström, Alberto Herskovits

**PRODUCER** Mikael Wiström

**PRODUCED BY** Månharen Film & TV, Mikael Wiström, Venatana Film AB, Alberto Herskovits, SVT Dokumentär, Ingemar Persson and Otto Fagerstedt with support from Swedish Film Institute, Peter “Pedor” Gustafsson and Lisa Ohlin, Nordisk Film & TV Fond, MEDIA, NRK, Tiore Tomter and YLE FST, Jenny Wästerberg

**SCREENING DETAILS** DigiBeta, 58/82 min

**TO BE RELEASED** Spring, 2010

**SALES** Månharen 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.

**Fuerteventura**

**DIRECTOR** Mattias Sandström

**SCREENWRITER** Mattias Sandström, Ivica Zubak

**PRINCIPAL CAST** Peter Eggers, Lydia Flores García, Ivica Zubak, Luifer Rodríguez

**PRODUCERS** Mattias Sandström, Ivica Zubak

**PRODUCED BY** Too Much

**SCREENING DETAILS** 35 mm, 83 min

**TO BE RELEASED** Autumn 2010

**SALES** TBA


**Gringa**

**DIRECTOR** Cesar Galindo

**SCREENWRITER** Mario Guevara, Cesar Galindo

**PRODUCER** Anna G Magnúsdóttir

**PRODUCED BY** LittleBig Productions & Runa Film

**SCREENING DETAILS** DigiBeta, 80 min

**TO BE RELEASED** Autumn, 2010

**SALES** Movieboosters

**Cesar Galindo** is an experienced director and independent film maker. He is originally from Peru, but has lived in Sweden for over 20 years. He has been working with LittleBig Productions on several projects since 2005. Currently he is working on the feature length documentary Yma Sumac – The Movie.
NEW FILMS

Like a Pascha

Europe’s biggest brothel, eleven 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.

*Facing Genocide – Khieu Samphan and Pol Pot*

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. The directors 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.

**ORIGINAL TITLE** Som en Pascha **DIRECTOR** Svante Tidholm **PRODUCER** Erik Gandini **PRODUCED BY** Atmo Media Network AB in co-production with SVT and support from Swedish Film Institute/Tove Torbiörnsson, Norwegian Film Institute/Maria Fuglevaag Warsinski, Slate funding Media Plus Programme 2006, Nordisk Film & TV Fond/Eva Færevaaq, NRK/Tore Tomter, VPRG/Nathalie Windhorst. **SCREENING DETAILS** Digibeta, 52 min. **RELEASED** January, 2010 **SALES** TBA

Svante Tidholm is a journalist, documentary filmmaker, writer and computer programmer. He worked at Spray during the early dotcom boom and has written *Loser* about his experiences at the time. Since 2005 Svante Tidholm has been working on documentaries at the film production company Atmo.

**Metropia**

It’s 2024. The Trexx Group has connected all of Europe’s subway systems into a gigantic network. Roger lives in the suburbs. He hates his job, his relationship is falling apart and he can’t sleep at night. One day, he hears a stranger’s voice inside his head. He decides to find out where it comes from. The truth has consequences beyond his worst fears.

**ORIGINAL TITLE** Metropia **DIRECTOR** Tarik Saleh **SCREENWRITERS** Fredrik Edin, Stig Larsson, Tarik Saleh **VOICES** Vincent Gallo, Juliette Lewis, Udo Kier, Stellan Skarsgård, Alexander Skarsgård, Fares Fares, Sofia Helin **PRODUCER** Kristina Åberg **PRODUCED BY** Atmo Metro AB, in co-production with Zentropa, Tordenfilm, SVT/ Gunnar Carlsson, Film i Väst/Tomas Eskilsson, Sandrew Metronome/Birgitta Holmar, with support from Eurimages, Swedish Film Institute/Peter *Piloto* Gustavsson, Danish Film Institute, Norwegian Film Fund, Nordisk Film & TV Fond, Media Programme, and in association with Canal+, YLE, NRK. **SCREENING DETAILS** 35mm, 86 min. **RELEASED** October 9, 2009 **SALES** TrustNordisk

Tarik Saleh, born in 1972, has directed several award-winning documentaries, most recently *Gitmo – The New Rules of War*, which premiered at IDFA Amsterdam in 2005 and was highly acclaimed on its US premiere in March 2006. He is behind numerous animated shorts and is one of the founders of the production company Atmo.
The Plan DOC

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.

ORIgINAL TITLE The Plan DIRECTORS Michael Stenberg, David Österberg, Fatima Varhos, Johan Gabrielsson, Karin Tötterman, Marianne Gustafsson PRODUCERS Michael Stenberg, David Österberg PRODUCEd BY Biospheric Pictures AB SCREENING DETAILS 35 mm, 90 min TO BE RELEASEd Spring, 2010 SALES Biospheric Pictures AB

Michael Stenberg directed and produced the documentary film The Planet, and has also written and directed a number of Swedish documentaries. David Österberg worked on the music for the Planet project and has written and produced music for films, art installations and the theatre. Jonas Goldmann has previously worked in editing and was also responsible for sound and research on the Planet project.

Regretters DOC

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 what they dreamed of. 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.

ORIgINAL TITLE Ångrarna DIRECTOR Marcus Lindeen PRODUCER Kristina Åberg PRODUCEd BY Almo Media Network AB, in co-production with SVT and YLE with support from Swedish Film Institute/Tove Toröönnson and Nordisk Film & TV Fond SCREENING DETAILS Digi beta, 58 min TO BE RELEASEd RELEASEd 2010 SALES TBA

Marcus Lindeen was born in 1980. Regretters is his first documentary feature and he has also written a stage production based on the same true story for Stockholm’s Stadsteater. The production was selected as one of the best Swedish contemporary plays by The Royal Dramatic Theater and SVT.

Miss Kicki

Kicki has met the love of her life, the Taiwanese businessman Mr Chang, on the internet. But when Kicki’s mother falls ill, she is faced with the fact that she needs to take care of her 16-year-old son Viktor, who grew up with his grandmother. Kicki decides to take Viktor to Taiwan but never tells him about the real reason for the trip. Miss Kicki is a story about our frequent need to get lost before we can find our home.

ORIgINAL TITLE Miss Kicki DIRECTOR Håkon Liu SCREENWRITER Alex Haridi PRODUCER Lizette Jonjic PRODUCEd BY Migma West AB with support from Rookie/Andrea Östlund (SVT, Film i Väst AB, Swedish Film Institute) SCREENING DETAILS 35mm, 88 min RELEASEd February 5, 2010 SALES TBA

Håkon Liu was born in 1975 in Kirkenes, Norway but grew up in Taiwan. He graduated from the School of Film Directing at Göteborg University in 2005, and also studied art at The Oslo National Academy of the Arts. Miss Kicki is Liu’s feature film debut after shorts such as Nights in love (2004) and Lucky Blue (2007, nominated for a Guldbagge), and the TV-series Habib (2008).
Simple Simon

Simon, 18, has Asperger syndrome. He likes space, science and circles but can’t understand feelings. Simon’s life turns into chaos when his brother Sam gets dumped by his girlfriend. Simon realizes it is up to him to find a new girlfriend for Sam to restore the order. Simon knows nothing about love. But he has a scientifically perfect plan.

Sebbe

Sebbe is fifteen and lives with his mother in an apartment that is much too small. He does his best. He never hits back. He loves his mother because she is his. When she fails him, all else fails.

Starring Maja

18-year-old Maja’s dream is to become an actress. She wants to be the centre of attention, wants everyone to see her, to see the beautiful human being she is on the inside. Unfortunately, that person is somewhat hard to see. Grossly overweight, clumsy and socially inept, Maja’s road to success is paved with humour and tragedy as she is dogged by the prejudices of the people around her.

NEW FILMS

Sebbe

Sebbe is his first feature, screening in Generation 14plus at Berlinale 2010.

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ORIGINAL TITLE I rymden finns inga känslor DIRECTOR Andreas Öhman SCREENWRITER Jonathan Sjöberg PRINCIPAL CAST Bill Skarsgård, Martin Wallström, Cecilía Forss, Sofie Hamilton PRODUCERS Bonnie Skoog Feeney, Jonathan Sjöberg PRODUCED BY Naive AB in co-production with Sonet Film AB, SVT, Film i Västernorrland/Ingrid Bergman, Dagsljus, Ljud & Bildmedia AB, Kameraten and Ljudfadern with support from Swedish Film Institute/ Johan Bogaeus SCREENING DETAILS 35 mm, 120 min TO BE RELEASED September, 2010 SALES Sonet Film AB/Peter Possne

Andreas Öhman, born in 1985, is a conceptual and visual director who at the age of 19 received the honorary mention for the short Positive about Negative 2004: “With efficiency and great enthusiasm this film indicates a bright future for its talented director” at the Stockholm Film Festival. Simple Simon is his first feature.

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ORIGINAL TITLE Prinsessa DIRECTOR Teresa Fabik SCREENWRITER Teresa Fabik PRINCIPAL CAST Zandra Andersson, Moa Silén, Anastasios Soulis, Maria Lundqvist PRODUCER Sandra Harms PRODUCED BY Breidablick Film in co-production with Film i Väst AB, Fastnet Films, Sonet Film AB and Canal 5, in co-operation with Film i Dalarna and Canal +, with support from Swedish Film Institute/Lisa Ohlin and Irish Film Board/Simon Perry SCREENING DETAILS 35 mm, 94 min RELEASED September 11, 2009 SALES SF International

Teresa Fabik studied film at Stockholm University 1996–1997, and film directing at Stockholms Filmskola 1997–1998. Her short film The Last Waltz (En sista vals, 2001) received a number of awards at various film festivals. Fabik’s first feature film, The Ketchup Effect (Hip Hip Hora!, 2004) was seen by over 300,000 Swedish moviegoers and received a number of awards, including an Norwegian Amanda Award, the Canal+ Award, and the Nordic Debutant Award at the Göteborg Int’l Film Festival.
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 of Gender Equality is only natural.

The Wedding Photographer

In The Wedding Photographer we meet Robin who is originally from a small town but by chance gets a job as a photographer at an upper class wedding. There he meets the bride’s sister and falls in love. To fit in and make a good impression he does everything to be a part of this new world of friends and their upper class ways, which turns out to be easier said than done.

A Thousand Times Stronger

One day Saga joined the class. She was what you might call “a strong girl”, the kind grownups like. Signe could see the whole thing play out. What happens when a girl comes along, who really just takes it for granted that there should be room enough for her, that she should be allowed to be herself? There was chaos. There was war. There was destruction.

Erik Gandini

Erik Gandini was born and raised in Italy. Has produced and directed a number of internationally acclaimed feature documentaries. Among them are Surplus – Terrorized Into Being Consumers (2003) and Gitmo – the New Rules of War (2005) co-directed with Tarik Saleh.
Director Lee Daniels five hours before the Nordic premiere of Precious at the Stockholm International Film Festival.

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES
2010 IS SEPTEMBER 11!

The 21st Stockholm International Film Festival
Nov 17–28 2010

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