Swedish Film

#2 2011 • A magazine from the Swedish Film Institute

Babes and booze
A toddler ruins a bar in Johannes Nyholm’s controversial comedy Las Palmas

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT
Jens Assur’s Cannes entry recreates a Chinese execution

PLAYBOYS
Ruben Östlund returns to Cannes with PLAY

FEATURED FILMS
HAPPY END
SIMON AND THE OAKS
THE CROWN JEWELS
SOMEWHERE ELSE
A ONE-WAY TO ANTIBES
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A passionate affair

SHINY LIMOUSINES, RED carpets and parties on the beach with the sand between your toes. The Cannes Festival, for many of us, is synonymous with luxury and elegance. And yes, it does feel glamorous when you brush past an A-list celebrity on the Croisette, but there’s a lot of politics bubbling away under all the glitz.

For us, as Swedes, it’s more palpable than ever this year. No fewer than three Swedish films have been selected for the Directors’ Fortnight (Quinzaine des Réalisateurs), by many considered the most political section of the festival.

The Artistic Director of the Quinzaine, Frédéric Boyer, has pronounced Ruben Östlund’s new feature film Play “a masterpiece”. The film is a behavioural study inspired by actual events in which five black boys rob white children using persuasion instead of physical violence. It’s a very controversial subject, and Ruben Östlund, who was last at the festival back in 2008 with Involuntary, has said that he isn’t off to Cannes this year to walk on the red carpet but to promote discussion about the content of Play.

THERE HAS BEEN plenty of discussion already about the two Swedish short films that have also been selected. Johannes Nyholm, another Cannes veteran who has previously been in the Quinzaine with his films Dreams from the Woods (2009) and The Tale of Little Puppetboy (2008), arrives this year with Las Palmas, a film about a middle-aged woman on a package holiday who gets horribly drunk in a bar and annoys her fellow holidaymakers. What’s immediately remarkable about the film is its star, Nyholm’s very own one-year-old daughter! The film, which according to the director himself is a declaration of love for his little girl, has attracted enormous attention. The trailer has already had more than eight million hits on YouTube, and regardless of its reception in Cannes, it’s bound to become quite a talking point on the Croisette.

The other short, the third Swedish film in the Quinzaine, marks the Cannes debut of photographer and director Jens Assur, who has previously unsettled audiences with his 2008 film The Last Dog in Rwanda, an award winner at Tribeca and Clermont-Ferrand. For his latest film Killing the Chickens to Scare the Monkeys, Assur has turned to China and the disturbing public execution of a young woman and other dissidents. Assur’s dramatic narrative style requires the viewer to actively fill in any gaps in the storyline. Just like Ruben Östlund, Assur’s message is not very explicit, and one which the viewer has to dig deep within to uncover.

LEAF THROUGH THESE pages and read about Sweden’s contribution to Cannes, which also includes our Producers on the Move, Berlin award-winning Sebbe producers Mimmí Spång and Rebecka Lafrzen. And when Cannes is over, an exciting summer and autumn await us. Read about a whole raft of other Swedish films due to premiere over the coming months.

Up for discussion and ready to party? – It’s time to get out and mingle on the Croisette. See you there!

Bengt Toll
CEO
Swedish Film Institute

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The Swedish Film Institute’s aims include the promotion, support and development of Swedish films, the allocation of grants, and the promotion of Swedish cinema internationally. ISSN 1654-0050
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By invitation only. No Press.

PETER STORMARE  ROLF LASSGÅRD
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FALSE TRAIL

the importance of tying your own shoes

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Promo Screening
May 14 at 10 AM Palais C
The Munich Film Festival, June 25–July 3, will celebrate its 30th anniversary next year, but this year already sees a major fest of Swedish films. Lone-wolf veteran Roy Andersson gets a major retrospective including features such as *A Swedish Love Story* and *Songs from the Second Floor*, short films, documentaries and commercials. The new guard of Swedish directors will also be represented with films including Daniel Espinosa’s thriller *Easy Money*, Michel Wenzer’s prison documentary *At Night I Fly*, Emil Larsson and Martin Jerr’s disturbing *Savage*, David Giese and Iacobo Patierno’s music documentary *We Call It Skweee* and Andreas Öhman’s drama *Simple Simon*.

Together with the Swedish Film Institute, Filmfest will also be arranging a Co-production Forum for Swedish producers looking for German co-producers. The programme includes meetings, seminars and presentations: five Swedish producers have been selected to present their upcoming projects. But that’s not all: during the festival there will be a Swedish midsummer party where various Swedish artists and disc jockeys will be performing.

Scandinavia’s latest Oscar winner is set to take on the story of Scandinavia’s most Oscar-nominated director. Denmark’s Susanne Bier (whose *In a Better World* picked up an Oscar this year) is directing the television series about Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007), which will also be made into a feature film. The series is being written by Henning Mankell, Bergman’s son-in-law and world famous author of the Wallander books. The film is due to premiere in the spring of 2012 and the television series will be broadcast on pubcaster SVT around Christmas the same year.

Kjell Sundvall’s 1996 film *The Hunters* (*Jägarna*) is one of the most popular Swedish thrillers of the last 20 years. The film about Erik, a Stockholm policeman who goes back to the north of Sweden to investigate illegal hunting but soon uncovers bigger crimes, was seen at the cinema by no fewer than 730,000 Swedes. Now in a somewhat belated sequel, *False Trail*, Erik returns home to find himself involved in a murder investigation. The cast will include Rolf Lassgård (from the original film and the Oscar-nominated *Under the Sun* (*Under solen, 1998*) and the Coen brothers’ favourite Peter Stormare.

The Importance of Tying Your Own Shoes

Scandinavia’s latest Oscar winner is set to take on the story of Scandinavia’s most Oscar-nominated director. Denmark’s Susanne Bier (whose *In a Better World* picked up an Oscar this year) is directing the television series about Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007), which will also be made into a feature film. The series is being written by Henning Mankell, Bergman’s son-in-law and world famous author of the Wallander books. The film is due to premiere in the spring of 2012 and the television series will be broadcast on pubcaster SVT around Christmas the same year.
A new tri

Owned by its three founders Staffan Wallhem, Mattias Nohrborg and Bengt Vernberg, the animation company Forestlight and the National Federation of People’s Parks and Community Centres, TriArt Film is a new purchasing and distribution company for quality film.

Mattias Nohrborg is hoping to carry on where his previous distribution company, Triangelfilm, left off:

“Triangelfilm’s speciality was introducing new directors. We were the ones who first brought the likes of Mike Leigh, Ken Loach and Hal Hartley to Sweden. TriArt wants to seek out their counterparts today. Competition has declined in the art house tradition we move in. OK, there may be 20-25 films per year that the companies really want, but there aren’t many people willing to take a chance on films from unusual countries or unknown directors. The willingness to take risks has fallen away at the same rate that uncertainty about distribution going forward has increased.”

Changes in the distribution market are a key part of TriArt’s thinking. The company website www.triart.se will be a platform where members can watch and discuss quality films. The site is due to launch in August.

“Distribution technology will depend on how screening technology develops in the future. Today you can watch films in completely different ways than before. Cinema no longer reigns supreme: that exclusivity no longer exists. People nowadays are creating their own ways of viewing films, choosing when, where and how they want to watch them”, says Nohrborg.

A star in the making

Swedish film’s actress of the moment is undoubtedly Alicia Vikander.

Earlier this year Alicia Vikander was chosen as one of the “Shooting Stars” of the Berlin Film Festival, and now she’s due to attend the Cannes Film Festival as the Stockholm Film Festival’s “Rising Star”. The 22-year-old actress, whose major breakthrough came with Lisa Langseth’s Pure and will soon appear in Ella Lemhagens The Crown Jewels, has now won her first starring role in Hollywood. Vikander will play opposite Sam Claflin (Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides) in the exorcist thriller The Seventh Son. Sergei Bodrov has been chosen to direct, and both Julianne Moore and Jeff Bridges are rumoured to be in the casting line-up.

Curious Yellow

Last year a relatively new sales company, The Yellow Affair, showed up in Cannes, mainly, as its founder Miira Paasilinna explains, to put down a marker. This year sales are fully underway, with a line-up including the road trip-thriller Gone, Lisa Aschan’s Berlin-hyped She Monkeys (winner of the Nordic Film Prize at the Göteborg Film Festival earlier this year) and last year’s Berlin winner, Babak Najafi’s drama, Sebbe.

“Naturally, stories are important when we’re choosing films,” says Paasilinna, “as is production quality. But our line-up also includes films that take some real risks. We have quite an edgy art house profile that we think will be right for Cannes.”

Based in Stockholm and Helsinki, The Yellow Affair has built up a network of contacts with Swedish and Finnish producers, but also sells films from outside the Nordic region.

“We intend to continue selling good films regardless of where they come from. But of course we’ll continue to develop our relationships with top Swedish and Finnish producers. And right now there are plenty of quality Swedish films, both of the art house and more genre-oriented kind.”
The Swedish Film Institute’s new CEO, Anna Serner, is an unknown name for many in the film industry. But she has plenty of experience when it comes to management and board positions. As she prepares to take charge of Swedish film, she has high hopes and ambitions.

So who is Anna Serner?

“I’m very much my own person. I’m honest and straightforward. In some contexts I’m easygoing, in others I’m very driven by my values. There are some issues that are incredibly important to me. And since they happen to overlap with what the Swedish Film Institute is doing, this new job feels just right.”

What issues are they?

“Above all, I regard culture as essential for society, since it contributes to public debate. For me, film is one of the most important cultural expressions we have, perhaps the most important. But it hasn’t really been properly nurtured. Film doesn’t have a sufficiently prominent position in Sweden today.”

What should be done about that?

“I want the Film Institute to have a more active role, to be more of a mouthpiece for debate. We shouldn’t confine that debate to the world of film, we should reach out to the business world and other groups. If we do that, then I think people will find it easier to understand the value of film, and in turn that might make it easier to get more money for film production.”

A lot of people were hoping that the new CEO of the Swedish Film Institute would be a real film aficionado. Will they be disappointed?

“No, I don’t think so. I hope I can be of use to the industry, so that people have more to rejoice over going forward. And I do love films, something I’m not alone in. When I was young I wanted to work in the film industry. I would never have believed I would end up getting involved in the way I have.”

When the day eventually comes for you to leave the Swedish Film Institute – what would you like to have achieved?

“For us to make twice as many films as we do today, without any reduction in the budget for each film. And I’d also like the enormous Swedish film archive to be even more accessible than it is, something that most people naturally could make use of.”

Film: is it art or commerce?

“It’s both. Neither one should exclude the other. The Film Institute should ensure that commercial films do well, but also make sure that it helps the other, more artistic, films to get made.”

In recent years Swedish film seems to have grown in confidence. Is that justified?

“International results demonstrate that it is. What’s obvious is that the efforts of Cissi (Elwin Frenkel, the Swedish Film Institute’s former CEO) have been successful. I can see the logic behind putting more money into each film, even if it results in fewer films, as one way forward. And since so many important male voices have emerged in recent years, there ought to be just as many important female voices. Bringing those voices to the forefront is a challenge for me.”

In a previous interview you said you didn’t have any favourite films. Do you still hold with that?

“The reason I was evasive is because it’s such a hard question. There are so very many films I love, and they change according to my mood or where I find myself in life. From classics like Bicycle Thieves, through the films of Bergman to everything by John Cassavetes, who was my first love in films. Breaking the Waves was also one of my major experiences, despite the fact that it’s problematic for me as a feminist. It’s one of the few films I’ve seen twice, because I hadn’t fully come to terms with it.”

Where are films best – at home or at the cinema?

“At the cinema, without a doubt. Even though I don’t like the smell of popcorn.”

TEXT MAGNUS VÄSTERBRO
PHOTO JOHAN BERGMARK
Jan Troell “Every day on the set is unique”

Now approaching the age of 80 and with more than half a century of directing behind him, the two times Oscar-nominated Jan Troell is currently filming his fifteenth feature film, Truth and Consequence (Dom över död man).

What's the hardest thing for you these days when you're making a film?
“Keep it living, to stay young in my mind and not to fall for simplistic cinematic solutions. Technical perfection isn’t so important.”

The film is about the Swedish newspaper editor and scholar of comparative religion Torgny Segerstedt, who despite opposition from both the Swedish king and government campaigned against Adolf Hitler. What audience is it aimed at?
“A lot of people still relate to Segerstedt, but most of that generation are dead, so it’s not for them. It can be of interest to any age group, but it doesn’t have an obvious slot in the marketplace. My film Hamsun was in a similarly uncertain position.”

How do you feel that the film industry has changed since you started out?
“There’s an infinite difference compared to making films in the 60s. Back then films weren’t solely produced for entertainment, as they are now. It was easier to make the type of film that interests me. But I’m not good at expressing my views on film policy. Only the parts that affect me.”

What do you enjoy most about your work?
“Working with the crew and the actors. Every day on the set is unique. You have a number of hours at your disposal and have to fight against your own compromises in order to set the bar as high as possible. It’s a race against time.”

Truth and Consequence is set for an autumn 2012 premiere.
Lasse Hallström
"It's about people and conflicts, though a little bloodier than usual."

After major successes in Hollywood, Lasse Hallström will be filming back in Sweden for the first time in 25 years. The thriller The Hypnotist (Hypnotisören), due to premiere in 2013, is set in Stockholm, where the director spent the first 40 years of his life.

“I’ve always wanted to try my hand at the genre, but don’t get many offers for thrillers in the US, probably because I’ve made a name for myself in comedy dramas. In Sweden that wasn’t an issue.”

What attracted you to the project?
“Everything I do is based in my interest in people. This is a black, cruel kind of story, but one with living human elements. It’s about people and conflicts, though a little bloodier than usual. In some ways maybe it's more of a drama than a thriller.”

How do you choose a screenplay?
“Basically I’m an omnivore, but I avoid comedies that are too light and easy, like the ones I used to make for television. I like to surprise myself by changing or mixing genres, but I do feel most at home in comedy dramas since they reflect reality.”

In what way?
“Reality is sad and funny at the same time.”

So what do you do to surprise yourself?
“Your question makes me think about how to get actors to forget simple solutions and act in an authentic way, as closely observed as possible. What do real people do in actual situations, and what do people do in films? I think about that a lot.”

“I hate sentimentality. If something is authentic and true, you can go a long way without it becoming sentimental. I’ve often verged on that territory, and not always on the right side of the line. I want to touch people and to move them; that’s my main interest.”

You’ve made more than 20 films and are active in most parts of the film process. Where are you at your best?
“I have a partly conscious and partly subconscious ability to coax, cajole and manipulate actors into giving their best. It’s a method all of my own, and one that I’ve mastered.”

What’s different about filming in Sweden compared to Hollywood?
“Everyone here speaks Swedish.”

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NEW TALENTS

The freshest faces – and films – from Sweden. Levan Akin targets the middle class in *Certain People* (*Katinkas kalas*). Fijona Jonuzi examines social interaction at a party in her short film *Girl*. And Gustav Danielsson looks at the surreally comic aspects of being a twin in his short *The Twin* (*Tvillingen*).

In **Gustav Danielsson’s** *The Twin* (*Tvillingen*) Gustav, an architect, receives an unexpected visit from Oskar, the twin brother he never knew he had.

This 30-minute short, which is partly set under water, is described by its director Gustav Danielsson, himself a twin, as a surreal comedy about the nature of being a twin, loneliness and the fear of change.

“I must add that not everyone agrees that it’s a comedy. Some people think it’s horrifying! Maybe it depends on how you feel about water...”

With the leads played by Gustav Danielsson’s actual twin brother Oskar and the director himself, the film poses existential questions about being a twin.

*Where did the story come from?*

“I made it up for my girlfriend Daniella as a way of explaining why I held my breath when I slept. She plays my brother’s girlfriend in the film, and acted as director for the scenes when I’m acting with my brother. Holding my breath kept her awake at nights, and I underwent a number of tests to try to find out why I did it. But there’s still nobody who can come up with an answer.”

Gustav Danielsson’s twin brother Oskar is an engineer who hasn’t done any acting before.

“To start with I tried to find a pair of acting twins who were also able to free dive. I used the services of a casting manager, but soon realised it was virtually impossible. At the same time I knew my brother was really eager to play the part. So we did some screen tests, or more accurately, we filmed the whole thing on my iPhone. Then we both went on a one-week intensive course in acting, and it quickly became clear to me that the film would be best and most interesting with Oskar playing the lead. When we were shooting there were a few misunderstandings, because I play the part of Oskar and he plays Gustav!”

“The special effects were another challenge. Much of the film contains trick effects, some of which were done during the shoot, some in post-production. In some of the scenes the actors play against tape markers or body doubles instead of each other. Fredrik Borg, our special effects manager, did a fantastic job on a limited budget. He even wrote his own computer program to manage the special effects on the shoot.”

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**TEXT KAROLINA RAMOVIST**
In Levan Akin's first feature Certain People (Katinkas kalas) a middle class, bohemian-hip birthday party at a country cottage is thrown off balance when an unexpected guest exposes the prejudices of the group.

"It's a critique of society," says Levan Akin, "but instead of a poor girl coming up against aristocratic duplicity, I thought it would be more amusing to take a group of middle class bohemian posers who aren't quite as right-on as they'd like to think."

Akin and screenwriter Lisa Östberg have first hand experience of living in different social groups:

“When my parents got divorced I lived in Danderyd, a very smart part of Stockholm, during the week and in a working class suburb at the weekends. Our first idea was to write about our experiences of living abroad, and we started thinking about the kind of people who thought it was almost their birthright to take a course in film studies in New York, or something equally self-indulgent. Most of those people haven't got a clue about how the other half lives.”

Previously, when Levan Akin collaborated with Erika Stark on the short film The Last Things (Desista sakerna, 2008) they developed a casting process in which the script was altered to suit the actors they chose.

“It's a way to avoid painting yourself into a corner with preconceived ideas of the actors who should play the characters you've dreamt up. One of the characters in Certain People, Carro, was completely re-written during the casting.”

It’s rumoured that a lot of people will recognise themselves in the film. What sort of people?

“Lots of people talk and act like the characters in the film. It’s important for them to be right-on; they even roll their own cigarettes because smoking them looks cool. People like that and all the girls who can’t let go of their Louis Vuitton bags will recognise themselves in the film.”

PHOTO KJELL B PERSSON
Director **Fijona Jonuzi’s** *Girl* is a short film about Hanna, played by Vera Vitali, who meets Andreas, a guy considerably younger than herself, at a convenience store. Instead of going home, Hanna goes back to his place to party with him and his male friends.

“*Girl* works on many levels at the same time and touches on various emotions, that’s why I wanted to make it into a film,” says director Fijona Jonuzi, a 2007 graduate of the Göteborg Film School.

“I wanted to examine what happens when desire and the need for acknowledgement collide. How people assume various roles in order to fit in. It’s fascinating to explore the homosocial aspects of a group of males, but also Hanna’s longing for acknowledgement, all the things that have brought her to the situation in which she finds herself. As I see it, it’s a fairly everyday occurrence, but it’s also a genuine meeting between Andreas and Hanna, and one which has to come to an end so as not to upset the status quo of the group.”

**Why is the film called *Girl***?

“It helps to define a state of mind for the main character Hanna and to clarify that position in a broader perspective. Hanna tries to be a ‘girl’ to fit in with the younger guys, but also in relation to men and boys in a broader, social context,” says Fijona Jonuzi.

The director finds it interesting that a situation in which one woman finds herself in the company of only males is perceived as so threatening. Many of those who have reacted to the film with the most fear and anxiety have been men, she explains.

“They get nervous when they see themselves over-represented in a group!”

*Girl* was made as part of the development of a feature film that Fijona Jonuzi is currently working on. She’s also planning another short film based on one of the characters in the screenplay for the feature.

“I can so relate to the storyline of *Girl* myself. What’s important is the feeling and atmosphere you perceive, the story you yourself create when you see the film. The storyline itself is just a drama: the emotions it arouses in the viewer are what count.”

“*I can so relate to the storyline of *Girl* myself*"
Come and meet the Swedish Film Industry

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Rebecka Lafrenz (left) and Mimmi Spång.
A very good year

2011 looks set to become Garagefilm International’s year. In January producer duo Mimmi Spång and Rebecka Lafrenz won a Guldbagge award for Sweden’s best film of the year, Sebbe. And in May they will be Sweden’s Producers on the Move at the Cannes Film Festival.

**Year 2011 couldn’t have started better for Mimmi Spång and Rebecka Lafrenz, the producer duo who have headed up Garagefilm International since 2007. When the envelope for Best Swedish film of 2010 was opened at the Guldbagge ceremony broadcast live to the Swedish nation, it was their names on the card, for Sebbe. After the elation of victory had died down they allowed themselves to relax for “about two and a half minutes” then got back down to work on the other ongoing projects at their independent production company.**

**AND THE YEAR has carried on just as well as it began, apart from the fact that they won’t be taking any holidays. At the end of May they start shooting their first comedy, directed by Mårten Klingberg, quickly followed by a short from the same director, then (fingers crossed) Mikael Marcimain’s feature film debut later this summer. In addition, documentary filmmaker Ester Martin Bergsmark is currently shooting his debut feature, for which they are executive producers. Not to mention various co-productions that Garagefilm International is involved in.**

“By now we’re pretty used to having several projects on the go at the same time. It’s a talent we’ve been forced to develop,” says Mimmi Spång.

“It feels as if we’ve taken Garagefilm up to the first level. Now the financial backers know who we are and that we can be trusted to deliver the goods. We’ve been approved and business is booming. The next step will be to get more continuity in the work, to even out the peaks and troughs,” adds Rebecka Lafrenz.

This dynamic production duo is clearly a force to be reckoned with, and they are happy to have found each other. They have their own unique voices. “We share a sense of humour and basically we like the same kind of stories: that’s the basis of our partnership,” says Rebecka Lafrenz. The stories they go for tend to have a personal voice, like Babak Najafi’s debut Sebbe or Johan Jonason’s Guidance (Behandlingen, 2009).

“Sebbe was originally written as a short, but we felt it had so much energy that it just had to be re-worked into a feature. Both films are basically simple stories, but they have an attitude, they have their own unique voices. That’s what we’re looking for. What’s the point in writing a story that’s just like all the others?” says Mimmi Spång.

“Virtually all of our films have a link in to contemporary society”

**FACTS: Mimmi Spång, born in 1973 in Stockholm, and Rebecka Lafrenz, born in 1969 in the south of Sweden, are producers and production managers. Together they run the production company Garagefilm. The two of them won a Guldbagge award for Best Swedish Film 2010 for director Babak Najafi’s Sebbe. The film also won the Best First Feature Award at the Berlin Film Festival 2010.**

“Virtually all of our films have a link in to contemporary society. It’s always present, even in comedies, and often it forms the basis of what we do,” adds Rebecka Lafrenz.

**BEING A DUO – there are also two non-executive partners in Garagefilm, the producer Malte Forssell and the screenwriter Håkan Lindhé – is a clear advantage in their view.**

“You go through lots of mood swings during a production. Sometimes you’re anxious, sometimes full of confidence. We help to keep each other grounded. And it wouldn’t be much fun, either, to work by yourself all the time,” Mimmi Spång observes.

“Getting the go-ahead for a film, with all the finance in place, is like winning a million on the lottery, and it’s no fun to be shouting out with joy all by yourself. Basically, you want someone to share it with,” Rebecka Lafrenz concludes.
Ruben Östlund’s career is like that of a talented sportsman. His first feature The Guitar Mongoloid (Gitarrmongot, 2004) became a cult film that promised more. The follow up Involuntary (De ofrivilliga, 2008) marked his international breakthrough: it had its world premiere in the official programme at the Cannes festival and became Sweden’s contribution to the Oscars. And his subsequent short Incident by a Bank (Händelse vid bank, 2010), winner of a Golden Bear award in Berlin, only served to whet the public appetite for his next, longer film.

The pending release of Play, expectations are sky high: people take for granted that Östlund will have developed further and that the upcoming film will be one more step in his rise from promising newcomer to fully-fledged director on the international stage. Demands like this can seem somewhat odd. A sportsman can train harder and more efficiently to produce results that are readily measurable. But a film director...

Well, Ruben Östlund himself seems more stimulated than troubled by the world’s expectations. And he thinks that parallels with the world of sport are highly relevant.

“We’ve used sport references ourselves in the run up to Play. Making a film is a lengthy, tiring business, and now that we’ve reached the editing stage we’ve told each other to hang on in there. It’s like being a long distance runner: it all comes down to the final spurt; it’s now that we have to be better than the others. I like playing the part of the promising director.”

Östlund welcomes Swedish Film to Plattform Produktion’s modest offices in Gothenburg. The editing room where he’s putting the finishing touches to his film was once a sauna, the thermostat still hanging on the wall. “When financial backers come visiting, we turn up the heat and make them sweat. That usually does the trick,” he jokes.

Ruben Östlund himself certainly isn’t afraid of sweat. His attitude is that provided he works hard enough, a film will turn out well. A similar mind-set seems to permeate the tiny company that is Plattform Produktion, which in just a few short years has become one of Sweden’s most interesting providers of documentaries – and features.

“It all comes down to how high you set the bar for your own performance. At Plattform we’ve said that our films have to be up there competing with the best in the field. If you’re going for gold, you have to be prepared to work really hard, harder than everyone else who makes films.”

With Play Ruben Östlund continues to explore human behaviour, group pressures and the roles we play – or are handed – in different situations.

The film was first spawned by an article that his colleague and producer Erik Hennemorff had read in a local newspaper. A group of black boys in their early teens had systematically been robbing other kids – ethnic Swedes as it happened – of mobile phones and other valuables in the centre of Gothenburg. The article revealed how the boys had lured their victims into a trap based on an elaborate social interplay between the perpetrators and their victims. Östlund’s curiosity was immediately aroused: he read the...

His feature film debut The Guitar Mongoloid and highly-acclaimed follow up Involuntary prompted the critics to label him the new hope for the future of Swedish film. Ruben Östlund is planning to live up to expectations on his latest film Play in one last spurt for the finishing line.

TEXT ULF ROOOSVALD PHOTO HENRIK ANDERSSON

PLAY
RUBEN ÖSTLUND
DIRECTOR
PRODUCTION INFO P59
court papers and police reports and set out to interview both parties to the crimes.

"It gave me the basis for the film. Five black boys in central Gothenburg had robbed other kids by using their appearance as a tacit threat, because our homogenous society makes such a thing possible. You read a threat into any group where you don't feel that you belong. The same thing would happen if five whites were to surround one black boy in a black neighbourhood. This notion raised a lot of issues with me, and was something I realised I could use in various ways in a film by changing and reversing the perspectives."

**ON ONE ACTUAL** occasion the five perpetrators had lured three victims to join them on a lengthy journey out from the centre of Gothenburg, and it was this incident which directly inspired Östlund’s film.

Another source of inspiration was the amateur film **Battle at Kruger** – a clip from the South African nature reserve, Kruger Park – which has been viewed on YouTube 60 million times since it was uploaded in 2007. For almost ten minutes a pack of lions, a herd of buffaloes and two crocodiles are locked in an unusual power struggle in which the roles of the hunter and hunted are constantly changing, and one in which the observer is powerless but to look on.

"It’s a very fascinating clip, and I love the way the camera glides over the savannah: here are the unsuspecting buffaloes, there are the crouching lions. You sense that something is about to happen, and it’s intensely exciting."

As a consequence, **Play** begins with a scene from a shopping centre in Gothenburg almost parodying the savannah encounter: the innocent victims are in the middle of a pedestrian precinct, the perpetrators biding their time on a bench some way off.

What follows is a physical and intensive film about children’s relationships and the way the adult world is incapable of getting involved in their conflicts.

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**FACTS**

Ruben Östlund: “When you watch the film you’re immediately struck by how amazingly hard the young actors have worked. The film has a very physical feel to it. There are lots of scenes that made heavy physical demands on the cast, and I think it makes the film all the better. When I can see that someone has made an effort, I feel more engaged as a viewer.”

“The film for these guys has been rather like a sporting event. For certain scenes we set aside three days to shoot. We said: ‘at the end of three days we’ll be at our very best’, and by the end we were saying ‘now we only have five takes left’, and everyone appreciated that type of pressure, everyone gets pleasure from doing a good job.”

FOR THE BOYS who play the main parts, successful takes resulted in pure jubilation.

“After three days of shooting we travelled back by car down the main street in Gothenburg and they wound down the windows and shrieked as if they’d just won a world cup final. I think it’s very important for them to realise that their sacrifices in the end led to something that was really good, to get the pleasure of putting in an effort that paid off in terms of results. In later life they can choose to use that energy as they see fit. I really hope that they’ve learned something valuable from the experience.”

Despite certain similarities with Involuntary, the film set new challenges for the director. Firstly, it’s a sensitive subject. Östlund certainly didn’t want to tell some kind of Robin Hood story about the young robbers, but rather to show how people perceive the behaviour of others in predictable ways, without becoming predictable himself.

Secondly, having made episode films that hang loosely together, this was the first time he had tackled a chronological story.

“In my other films the scenes could have come in almost any order. But because almost all the scenes in Play take place in real time, I haven’t been able to create the drama through editing: it had to be there from the writing stage. It needed quite a bit of preparation in order to work.”

Someone said that there wasn’t a traditional screenplay for Play, but that it was a timeline on a long, long roll of paper.

“Of course I did write a traditional screenplay which we used to get the funding. But the timeline became a way for me to get a handle on what was going on. Previously I’ve never written down the entire sequence of events for a film in such a way. We used it when we were shooting, and also when we were talking with our financial backers. You’re not a fan of too much editing.

“You can achieve things in real time that are difficult to achieve through editing. Small details crop up in relation to everything else that’s going on, and they stand out as equally important. I used the same techniques in Incident by a Bank. You can see a bank robber pressed down with his face in the dirt and probably experiencing the worst moment of his entire life. On the other side of the street someone’s eating ice cream and two people who have been filming the robbery are discussing why there’s no zoom on the camera of their mobile phone. I’m very fond of shifts like that; it’s the way life is.”

THERE ARE, HOWEVER, invisible edits in many of the scenes in Play. These have been achieved using the high definition technology afforded by the RED camera.

“Certain shots and camera movements are created during the edit. It means I can combine different takes without anyone thinking that real time has been interrupted. It also produces an interesting change in work roles: suddenly it’s not the cameraman who decides the shot, but the editor.”

Is Play a typical Plattform-film?

“Yes, many of our films have their origins in something that interests us, a conversation or things like Erik (Hemmendorff) showing me that article. Another thing we agree on is that no script is finished just because you’ve arrived on the set. You see far too many films where it’s obvious that it has been squeezed into a finished screenplay, even though it clearly doesn’t work. Things might be damned hard to change at that stage, but you shouldn’t be afraid of hard work.”

Small details crop up in relation to everything else that’s going on, and they stand out as equally important. I used the same techniques in Incident by a Bank. You can see a bank robber pressed down with his face in the dirt and probably experiencing the worst moment of his entire life. On the other side of the street someone’s eating ice cream and two people who have been filming the robbery are discussing why there’s no zoom on the camera of their mobile phone. I’m very fond of shifts like that; it’s the way life is.”
A Swedish woman on a package holiday in Las Palmas disgraces herself in a bar by getting horribly drunk, turning over a table and annoying the other guests. It could be a scene from a gritty docuseries about holidaymakers abroad on some obscure cable channel.

But Johannes Nyholm’s film *Las Palmas*, shown in Directors’ Fortnight, is actually an art project in which the drunken woman is played by his one-year-old daughter Helmi and the other parts are filled by string puppets.

Born in Umeå in 1974, Nyholm studied art in Gothenburg, where he lives to this day. His first acclaimed film was *Puppetboy* (*Dockpojken*, 2008), a quasi-documentary about Nyholm’s relationship with one of his own clay puppet creations.

Although *Puppetboy* attracted a reasonable amount of attention on its release in 2008, it is nothing compared to the interest that surrounds *Las Palmas*. When Nyholm uploaded the trailer for the film on YouTube it became an overnight hit, viewed by more than eight million people to date. Most people love the clip for its affectionately ironic portrayal of a middle-aged woman off the rails, but others have been disturbed that Nyholm could allow his own baby daughter to play a grown woman with a drinking problem.

Johannes Nyholm, who won the prestigious Ståltrollen award at the Göteborg International Film Festival this winter, claims he wasn’t really prepared for such a strong reaction, but he also understands that some people have been upset. One of *Las Palmas*’ biggest fans, however, is its star Helmi Nyholm.

“She shrieks ‘baby, baby!’ with delight when she sees the film,” declares the proud father.

Despite the huge success of *Las Palmas*, you’ve been working as an artist and filmmaker for a long time. Is there a risk that it might cast a shadow over your other work?

“No, I don’t think so, but it has been a little difficult to find time to do any other work, what with all the fuss.”

**What are you working on now?**

“Partly on the final cut for *Las Palmas* (which hasn’t been completely finished in the screenings that have taken place so far), and partly finishing off a number of other stories I’ve been writing for some time.”

*Party time*

The star of Johannes Nyholm’s new short *Las Palmas* is a toddler acting as a drunk woman. Now, she’s coming to Cannes. Beware, all bartenders.
Behind the news

Jens Assur’s first film, *The Last Dog in Rwanda*, scooped awards all over the world. Set to premiere at Cannes, his second film *Killing the Chickens to Scare the Monkeys* is the disturbing story of an everyday execution.

It all started with a photo-reportage in the British newspaper *The Independent*. Smuggled out from China, the images showed a group of dissidents being executed. In one, taken just before the shots were fired, people could be seen standing and chatting round the accused. Some were smiling, others laughing. The atmosphere was completely relaxed, almost festive.

“That particular image affected me deeply and stuck in my brain. I kept coming back to it, time after time,” says Jens Assur. “The everyday ease surrounding something so dreadful as an execution. Many years later it finally struck me that the picture could form the basis of an entire film. I decided to reconstruct the sequence of events.”

The upshot is the 24 minutes long *Killing the Chickens to Scare the Monkeys*, which takes its name from a Chinese saying: by eliminating your weaker enemies you’ll keep the strong ones at bay.

**Assur’s film takes** a non-chronological approach in which every scene is shot without a cut. It begins with the same images which spawned the idea for the film: a couple of trucks arrive in a field. Soldiers and observers jump off. The accused are taken off and executed, their bodies are then taken away. In all, this opening scene takes 15 minutes, both in real time and on the screen.

“We filmed it five times. It was very difficult to get it absolutely right in every respect, but only one of the takes was completely wrong: one of the soldiers forgot himself and looked into the camera,” says Jens Assur.

In the subsequent scenes he takes us back in time. We follow a woman, one of the people who are executed, up to the events which might have led to her arrest and conviction. But the film leaves a good deal for the viewer to fill in and to clarify.

“For such a challenging film it was actually amazingly fun to make. Partly it was a challenge to find the right balance in the story. I wanted a subtle storyline, one that left certain things up to the viewer. Another challenge was to edit the scenes that are filmed in one take. You can’t cheat: there are no shortcuts.”

**Since its political content made it impossible to film in China itself, the film was shot in Bangkok.**

“Now that it’s finished we’ve shown it to various people with Chinese backgrounds.

“*You can’t cheat: there are no shortcuts*”
Their reactions are very strong indeed. Everyone knows that executions are common in China, but nobody talks about it. Witnessing what actually happens has been a big shock for many," says Assur.

His first film, The Last Dog in Rwanda (Den sista hunden i Rwanda, 2005), is also set in a charged environment, the country that has become notorious for civil war genocide. As a filmmaker Jens Assur is drawn to stories with strong elements of drama. But he hasn’t wanted to make straightforward, mainstream films, choosing to aim instead for a more ‘enlightened’ audience.

"In Sweden we have a tradition of either going for big, domestic crowd pleasers or small-scale experimental films. A good middle tier of smart films is lacking, a Swedish No Country For Old Men or a Swedish Michael Clayton. It’s something I’d like to pursue," he says.

Assur’s upcoming project and first feature film may well be in that territory. He’s currently preparing a screenplay based on a best seller by the investigative journalist Lasse Wierup which presents the rather shocking story of a Swedish police informer who infiltrated criminal gangs but was subsequently let down by his paymasters.

FACTS Born in 1970, Jens Assur first made a name for himself as a photographer for the Swedish tabloid newspaper Expressen. He made his debut as a film director with the short film The Last Dog in Rwanda (Den sista hunden i Rwanda, 2005), about two journalists traveling through that war-torn country. The film was critically acclaimed, winning awards at festivals including Tribeca and Clermont-Ferrand. He has sold the rights to his feature film screenplay Close Far Away to the US production company Mandate (Juno, etc.). For further information visit www.studiojensassur.se.

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A lot of people like to tell us how to live our lives. There are masses of books, magazines and experts giving advice on how to bring up our children, how to tend a garden, how to improve our relationships and our sex lives, or how to make peace with our innermost selves. Not to mention the weight of social convention and the pressures that most of us find impossible to ignore.

In *Stockholm East*, director Simon Kaijser da Silva and screenwriter Pernilla Oljelund point us towards another way of living – one in which love can be as liberating as it can be disruptive and brutal.

“We wanted to tell a story in which love doesn’t just add spice to the narrative, and to show that there are no right, or easy, choices. To show that love can blossom where it shouldn’t, outside the norm, and that you need courage to accept it,” says da Silva.

The film’s main characters are Johan (Mikael Persbrandt, *Everlasting Moments, The Hobbit*) and Anna (Iben Hjejle, *High Fidelity, The Boss of It All*), two people living what appear to be well-ordered lives in apparently perfect homes with their respective partners.

The aftermath of an accident throws them together, and a mutual attraction ensues.

“When they’re together they build a world which rather serves to protect them from everything that has happened previously. I wanted to portray that situation, to make it hypnotic,” da Silva says.

He laughs and looks down into his coffee cup: “You know, some people have described the film as a ‘horror movie for couples.’”

Certainly, the storyline is quite bleak, but one in which hope constantly shines through like a beacon in the winter night.

"Some people have described the film as a 'horror movie for couples'"

“Some people have described the film as a ‘horror movie for couples.’”

“Most people who have been around the block have experienced something similar. But I won’t hide the fact that the serious theme of the film made it harder to find financial backing.”

Simon Kaijser da Silva makes no claim for any overtly political message in the film. Instead, he wants his audience to leave the cinema in a mood of introspection.

“In an ideal world the film would give people the courage to see themselves for who they really are and what they have. A standard romantic comedy doesn’t really pose such questions. For me, *Stockholm East* is about the fact that the decisions we make are entirely our own, and that it takes courage to make them. Especially when the choices open to us are so potentially life-changing.”
FACT: 41-year-old Simon Kaiser da Silva grew up in Nacka, a suburb of Stockholm. Much of his work has been for television, including De halvt dolda (2009), Höök (2007) and Pusselbitar (2001). Stockholm East (Stockholm Östra) is his debut feature.
The big picture

Simon and the Oaks is one of those projects that people have been talking about for years. It has attracted financial backing from five countries, and suffered various re-writes and resignations. Now, at last, director Lisa Ohlin has brought it to the screen.

“It was more than 20 years in the pipeline. Now at last, *Simon and the Oaks* (*Simon och ekarna*) is filmed and finished. After twelve years of backing from 30 financiers in five countries, a walk out by one director, re-writes and all manner of chaos, Lisa Ohlin has managed to shoot Marianne Fredriksson’s epic story about the power of art in 52 days. She also somehow managed to squeeze four seasons into two.

“The snow stayed on the ground for longer than usual. And there was one major question: ‘Will the oak tree come into leaf?’ Every day I got a new photo on my iPhone showing how big the leaves were on the oak tree I planned to use, and I sat and compared them to an old oak leaf. ‘It’s too small, far too small, we’ll have to find a new tree!’ I think just about every oak expert alive was involved in this project. Then there were the little boys, who just kept growing. I was terrified their voices would break. I noticed now when we were editing how their voices had got deeper’.

*FOR THE FIRST* time in her life, Lisa Ohlin has moved from relatively small-scale productions to a truly mammoth project, and it’s something that has clearly suited her:

“It was a challenge in 2010 to make a film set in the 1930s. There are so few authentic environments left, and those that do exist need to have everything modern removed from them. Hundreds of extras have to have clothes from 1939 and be able to move around naturally in them. All this was further complicated by the fact that half the film was shot in other countries. It meant that three months in advance we had to check every single prop we needed in a studio in Hamburg. Take an iron, for example: you have to find a Swedish one from the 30s. It all requires so much forward planning. And

“Every day I got a new photo on my iPhone showing how big the leaves were on the oak tree I planned to use”
Director Lisa Ohlin surrounded by the cast of Simon and the Oaks.
then just the fact of having to communicate with people from other countries, and above all to work with them in a purely technical way. It makes running a major corporation seem like child’s play in comparison!”

Way back in the early 1990s, when it was first mooted as a television series, Lisa Ohlin knew that she wanted to direct *Simon and the Oaks*.

“When I read the book I had a strong feeling that ‘this is about me’. Growing up and feeling slightly apart from your family. My father was a professor of economics, the whole family is full of mathematicians and economists, and here am I who can hardly add up $2+2$. And I was unaware of my Jewish background until I was the same age as Simon in the book. That’s what Marianne Fredriksson often writes about, the feeling that in some way we are strangers in our own lives – I was born into a family and there are things about me that don’t fit in. Then there’s the Jewish thing, those elements of shame and complexity.”

**BEFORE OHLIN HAD** reached the age of six, her family had moved around in a constant triangle between France, the US and Sweden.

“I was linguistically confused when I was little. English was my first language: my mother was American, or rather she was a German who had moved to America, then we moved to France. I learnt French, but not sufficiently to start school, so I had to stay at home with our Spanish au pair. I learnt Swedish from my Norwegian grandmother, but she spoke Norwegian. So when I eventually went to school in Sweden I was teased all the time because I couldn’t speak any one language properly.”

**IT’S ALMOST AS IF Lisa Ohlin was made for co-productions.** And she was the family member who inherited the artistic genes. When we meet in her hotel lobby she’s sitting drawing on her iPhone. Noting my surprise, she points out that art was the first subject she studied.

“When Simon realises that there’s no place in his family for what he’s feeling, he stops communicating, but what opens him up again is music. Music provides him with the key. At times it’s hard to remember that children in those days didn’t have the amazing access to the visual world that we have today. It was through pictures, books and music that they could develop themselves. But because he was adopted, Simon didn’t realise he had an innate talent for music.”

It’s easy to understand why *Simon and the Oaks* was a special film for Lisa Ohlin.

“Yes, remembering that my mother escaped from Berlin the day before Crystal Night in 1938. Being in Berlin and shooting a scene, having been told all my life that I must never ever go there.”

**LISA OHLIN DECIDED** to step down from her post as film commissioner at the Swedish Film Institute, opting instead to direct *Simon and the Oaks* when Björn Runge left the project.

“It may not be great but it’s just a fact that the more money that’s involved, the less control you have as a director. You have to adapt, to work within certain frameworks. If you’re lucky you can create a sound dialogue and argue for what’s important, what needs to be prioritized. I don’t feel that my artistic freedom was ever called into question. Film is a business, and if you make a film like this with 30 financial backers, you can work out for yourself that there’ll be plenty of different opinions. They’re there to support the creative process, not to stifle it. The people involved may not be creatively gifted, but they’re the ones who’ve come up with the money, and you have to respect them for that. You have to find a way of dealing with them.”

**FACTS** Lisa Ohlin was born in 1960 in New York. She has directed 13 films and television series, regularly alternating between drama and comedy. Her breakthrough came with her Guldbagge-nominated *Waiting for the Tenor* (*Veranda för en tenor*, 1998), and she received the directors’ Innovation Award for *Sex, Hope and Love* (*Sex hopp och kärlek*, 2005) at the Toronto Film Festival.
Fear and flashlights

After directing music videos and commercials, Adam Berg has turned his attention to short film. Straight away, IN picked up an award at the Göteborg Film Festival. And Berg has acquired a taste for more.

Director Adam Berg has made a name for himself with his own special kind of music videos and commercials. In 2009 he scooped the most prestigious award of the commercials world, the Film Grand Prix at the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival, for his work with Philips’ Carousel. And this year his short film IN picked up an award at the Göteborg International Film Festival.

“Moving from commercials to a short meant I suddenly found myself with a tenth of the budget to make 100 times more film than I’m used to. It was a challenge, but I had such a lot of fun in the process,” says Berg.

In his atmospheric film, with a screenplay written by Sundance veteran Jens Jonsson, two men enter a train tunnel looking for a lost teddy bear. There in the darkness, with flashlights as their only source of light, unclear and mystical things begin to unfold.

“It’s a film about fear, and what I try to do is create a psychological atmosphere. The further into the tunnel we go, the deeper we dig down into their psyches.”

Another obvious distinction between commercials and pure film is the lack of a client, giving the director much greater scope for personal expression. It’s something that appeals to Berg and something he wants to take further. Right now he’s off to America to work on the screenplays for various features, but nothing definite has so far been decided.

“I might manage to squeeze in some work here in Sweden before I go. Most of the contacts I’ve made so far have been in the States, where there seems to be a greater interest in my work. But what I’m hoping is that IN might pave the way for a feature here at home, too.”

HENRIK EMILSON

“It’s a film about fear, and what I try to do is create a psychological atmosphere”

FACTS Adam Berg was born in 1972 in Eskilstuna. His music videos and commercials have been highly acclaimed: his Carousel commercial for Philips scooped the prestigious Film Grand Prix at the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival. The short film IN is his first venture into fictional film.
Art behind bars

In *At Night I Fly*, documentary filmmaker Michel Wenzer shows us how art and culture offer a means of survival for prisoners serving life in California. The film is a testament to the innate human capacity to be creative, even in the toughest environments.

**TEXT ROGER WILSON**

**THE FILM LOOKS** at "Arts in Correction", a programme that gives prisoners the opportunity to express themselves through art, music and creative writing. Behind the inmates’ tough exteriors we discover both talent and well-expressed views on existential questions. Wenzer gets to listen in on poetry readings and discussions, and his conversations with the prisoners explore the views of life held by people who know they will never leave the institution alive.

"I’ve survived difficult periods myself with the help of art and music, which is what may be prompted me to make this film. It’s the kind of thing I ought to have seen when I was growing up," says Wenzer, who spent most of his early life in a foster home having been forcibly taken into care at the age of nine.

"The film is about people’s capacity for development in virtually impossible situations, and the contrast between this innate capacity and a tough environment can hardly be more obvious than among prisoners serving life," says Wenzer.

The documentary was spawned by a short film about the poet and lifer Spoon Jackson. Wenzer made *Three poems by Spoon Jackson* despite the fact that he was denied permission to film in the prison. Instead, he recorded the poems in question from telephone calls, in which the poet is constantly interrupted by a telephonist explaining how many minutes he has left to talk. Even on the telephone there’s a claustrophobic feeling of being trapped under constant surveillance.

"The contacts I made when making that short eventually led to me being granted permission to film inside New Folsom Prison.
But things were hardly straightforward. For example, we had to go through four security doors before we even got to department C, a prison within the prison. Once inside there are marksmen positioned at strategic points, and prisoners aren't allowed to raise their voices, run or make any sudden movements. And as you would expect, we weren't allowed to be alone with the inmates: an 'information' officer accompanied us everywhere.

Taking part in interviews isn’t always viewed approvingly by other prisoners. The week before Michel Wenzer arrived there one of the inmates had been stabbed to death for talking to a television crew in the exercise yard. But the actual risks involved gave the interviews their unique character. With so much at stake there’s no point in wasting time.

“It’s something of a heightened feeling of reality. Both of us knew that we only had say 20 minutes in which to talk, and that made the people I interviewed far more inclined to open up.”

*AT NIGHT I FLY* succeeds in painting a nuanced and human picture of inmates in the prison, following them in the relative freedom that Arts in Correction has become for them. Yet although the costs involved were small, the programme has now been axed as a result of the financial crisis in the state of California.

“I’m hoping the film will spark a debate about the future of Arts in Corrections and, on a bigger scale, about punishment versus care in general. It’s telling that, a year ago, the California Department of Corrections added ‘and Rehabilitation’ to its name. The film may perhaps make people question the way that prisons are run, both in the US and in other countries.”
Driven by passion

A tragedy led to a cosmic meeting, the upshot of which was a film about two women who fall in love. Yet making Love Stain was hardly a straightforward journey for director Alexandra-Therese Keining and producer Josefine Tengblad.

Director Alexandra-Therese Keining and producer/actress Josefine Tengblad met in somewhat tragic circumstances, following the death of a mutual friend, the actress Johanna Sällström. Yet immediately, both women felt a desire to work together.

“It was a cosmic meeting of minds. At our second meeting Alexandra came up with an idea that felt very close to my heart,” says Tengblad.

The result was Love Stain, a film about two women, Mia and Frida, who fall in love with each other. But their journey to the finished film wasn’t exactly straightforward.

“I don’t think I’ve ever encountered so much resistance. The subject matter made it difficult for us to get financial backing. Several people thought we should make the main characters more exotic: one of them a vegan with dreads, or just to make both of them younger. But we wanted to take two ordinary women,” says Keining.

So how did you manage to sell the idea?

Keining: “There isn’t a Swedish film about the love between two grown-up women. It’s something that hasn’t been done before. So we just kept going until we finally succeeded.”

Basically, it was the strength of our commitment that this was a story which simply had to be told that carried us through,” adds Tengblad.

Strong words, yet the two of them didn’t set out to make an overtly political or hardcore statement. Basically what they wanted was to tell a traditional love story, but one which happens to centre on two women.

The main characters, Mia and Frida, are played by the relatively unknown Ruth Vega Fernandez and Liv Mjönes, but there are some heavyweight names in the supporting roles: Krister Henriksson (the Wallander series), Lena Endre (the Millennium trilogy) and Joakim Nätterqvist (Arn: The Knight Templar). Together with the film crew, the actors formed a very closely-knit group during the shoot, much of which was in remote locations that made it impossible to go home in the evenings. This created a special intimacy in the group.

“We tended to talk a lot about sexuality. There wasn’t any kind of relationship we didn’t discuss on that shoot,” observes Josefine Tengblad.

She and Keining both name sexuality as a strong driving force in the film, the most central moment of which is probably the sex scene (or “love scene” as Tengblad calls it) in which Mia finally realises that she’s in love with Frida.

“It’s an important moment in the film: in purely dramatic terms it’s the end of the first act. Everything prior to it is a build-up, but at that point things get more intense, suddenly there’s more at stake. I wanted to make the scene as honest and genuine as possible, and if I were to show just one scene from the film, that would be it,” says Keining.

ALSO KEY TO the way we perceive the film is the cinematography of Ragna Jorming. She and the director discovered mutual points of reference in Asian cinema when they were developing the visual language: a certain stylised aesthetic, “but not one that’s cold”.

Another crucial element is the score, most of which was written by Marc Collin from the French band Nouvelle Vague. But it’s a song by Joe González, Love Stain, which gave rise to the film’s international title. What stains the film will leave remains to be seen.
FACTS Born in Malmö in 1976, Alexandra-Therese Keining (at right in picture) is a screenwriter and director. She made her debut in 2002 with Hot Dog, and Love Stain is her second feature. Her short film Elegia is also set to premiere this year. Josefine Tengblad (at left in picture) was born in 1978 and has worked as a line producer and production manager on various films, including the Wallander series. Love Stain is her second film as a producer. Her first was Anneli Gelbard’s short film Stilla natt (2004).
Sven-Bertil Taube was born in 1934 in Stockholm and is one of Sweden’s most beloved actors and singers. He started out as a singer of his father’s (the legendary folk music singer Evert) songs and then moved into acting during the sixties with both national and international films including Vibration (Lejon som mar, 1968), Hot Snow (Het snö, 1968), The Buttercup Chain (1970), Puppet on a Chain (1970) and The Eagle has Landed (1976). His recent work includes Richard Hobert’s films about the seven deadly sins and the international hit The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (2009).
The perfect gentleman

In the seventies he played opposite Michael Caine, Donald Sutherland, Robert Duvall and Joan Collins. In his home country Sweden he is known on a first name basis. And at 76 he is as active as ever, with roles in both the international hit The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo and Richard Hobert’s upcoming A One-way to Antibes. Meet Sven-Bertil Taube. Gentleman, singer, actor.

If Sven-Bertil Taube were French or American he’d be an out and out national treasure by now.

He’d be a Johnny Halliday or, say, a Dean Martin. At least.

But somehow he has slipped through the net. He is just Sven-Bertil to the Swedish people. Everyone knows him by his first name and he seems to mean very different things to each one of us.

To some, he’s a great actor of both screen and stage. To some, he’s an ever popular folk singer and a torch bearer for his father, legendary Swedish composer and troubadour Evert Taube, and his evergreen songs. To others, he’s an all-round gifted entertainer and at 76, with his still amazing looks and great silver fox hair he has something of the aura of the quintessential international dandy about him.

Sven-Bertil plays a widower and retired French teacher in the northern Swedish university town of Luleå, who finds out that his son and daughter are trying to sell his house behind his back. He decides it is time to leave.

He buys a single ticket, no return, to Antibes on the French Riviera, where the secret love of his life resides.

“They have been, unbeknown to anyone else, in touch all through my character’s marriage. He’s been living a lie; his marriage a sham, something he has just stayed in for the sake of their kids.”

It reads a bit like a modern take on Ingmar Bergman’s Wild Strawberries. Although this journey continues way further down south through Europe.

“It really is a story about love and relationships, both between men and women, whatever their age, and between fathers and their children. But it’s also a picture that manages to show sides of Sweden that we very seldom see in the movies,” he says.

ONCE UPON A time long ago, Sven-Bertil seemed doomed to be forever seen as the son of his father Evert Taube, whose songs and voice are so revered and loved by the Swedes that his face was recently immortalized on the new 50 kronor note.

His father long gone, it is easier to view Sven-Bertil’s career in quite a different light.

In the early-to-mid-1970s he began a lucrative and successful – but rather short-lived – career as an actor at Columbia Pictures.

“Regrettably, this all happened right before the moment when all the major Hollywood studios went bust and, literally, they all upped sticks and left Europe for California, seemingly overnight.”

Sven-Bertil rather humbly reminisces about the international parts offered to him in the 1970s (“Oh, I don’t know. It was such a
long time ago."), most memorably, as Nazi officer Captain von Neustadt in the World War II classic *The Eagle Has Landed* alongside Michael Caine, Robert Duvall and the two Donalds, Pleasance and Sutherland.

"It was quite an odd life doing those films since at that moment I kept flats in Amsterdam, London and Stockholm at the same time. It was all rather hectic and very, very unpredictable. But working with such great actors and human beings as Michael Caine was an absolute pleasure," he says.

"But I've never been so keen on being as pushy as you have to be to 'make it' in Hollywood. Having been educated at Dramaten (the Swedish National Theatre) you learn to be very humble."

"Also," he laughs, "I've always been quite lazy."
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Myth vs. truth

The story of Saddam Hussein's lost Ferrari Testarossa is the subject of director/artist Axel Petersén's latest short film Tracks of my Tears 2, while his upcoming first feature After Eight (working title) is a psychological thriller set in Swedish party town Båstad.

What unites the two? Petersén's strong will not to be obvious.

It all began on a bus between Lebanon and Syria. The year was 2004 and Axel Petersén found himself next to a Swedish-Iraqi man with an unusual story to tell.

“The man had been asked by one of his cousins to drive a sports car from Saddam Hussein's former garage to Romania via Turkey,” explains Petersén from a sofa in his apartment in central Stockholm. “His Swedish passport meant that he was free to drive it out of the country. He had said no to the offer, but I gathered from what he said that he'd given it some serious thought. Not that he would have earned much money from the arrangement, but just for the thing itself, to drive that particular car through the desert.”

Petersén was fascinated by the story of the dead dictator's sports car. As a director he really wanted to make something of it, but it was to take some time before it came to fruition.

“I made lots of other films, but it was hard to forget Saddam's car. I was in Egypt and Palestine filming other things, but had that story running through my mind all the while. I wasn't sure whether it was true or not, but it fascinated me, as if I'd been told a modern myth. I'd never heard about it either before or since. But it seemed logical - Saddam must have had any number of luxury cars which had to end up somewhere.”

What finally emerged was an installation that did the rounds in various art galleries.
Artist and director Axel Petersén was born in 1979. He lives in Stockholm, and spent his youth both there and in the town of Båstad on the south coast of Sweden. He has made a number of art installations and short films, including the Guldbagge-nominated A Good Friend of Mr World (2009) and Close to God/Far from Home (2010). After Eight (working title), his first feature film, is scheduled to be released in Sweden in late 2011/early 2012.
last year. But Petersén didn't find closure with that. Wanting the story to reach beyond the art world, he started to expand his installation featuring Saddam Hussein's red Ferrari Testarossa. The upshot was his short film *Tracks of my Tears 2*, a work both pressingly intense and dreamlike at the same time. The first half takes the form of a documentary in which Petersén searches for anecdotes about the Ferrari and what it symbolises. The second part is an extended 3D animation of the car travelling at full speed through a barren desert landscape.

It’s left up to the viewer to decide what is fact and what is myth, if such an exercise is of any intrinsic interest. The director himself isn’t exactly giving much away:

“Most people who saw the installation were convinced by the myth, one which I’d distilled from what might well have been a cock-and-bull story. I didn’t feel a need to dispossess them of that. Part of me wanted to hang onto this modern myth, because it’s not very often things like that turn up. People believe in it because they want to believe, because stories like it are so uncommon.”

PARALLEL WITH HIS work on *Tracks of my Tears 2* Petersén has also been filming his first feature. *After Eight* (working title) is a film which seems more easy to categorise than many of his shorts. It centres on two middle-aged men who decide to revive the nightclub they jointly ran with success in the 80s. The club is in the Swedish seaside town of Båstad, famous for its tennis tournament and a somewhat notorious party vibe during the summer months. Serious problems arise for the men when one of them is involved in a hit-and-run accident which he desperately tries to cover up.

Petersén knows the town and its inhabitants – during his youth he spent lots of time in Båstad. And several of the characters in the film are based on people from his background and family.

“When it came to a feature I’d always wanted to make a work of fiction, more precisely a thriller. And the fact that it turned out to be a psychological thriller… well, fine. I wanted to do something Swedish but broad-based at the same time. Something more accessible, more easy-to-read.”

Previously when we spoke you said you wanted to avoid being too explicit – where do you draw the line?

“I thought about this when I was contemplating the film. Yes, I wanted to make a thriller, but at what price? My friends are of the opinion that it’s like all my other films, but I still think it’s more easily accessible. Much comes down to the fact that all the keys I thought should be in place aren’t really necessary. The characters and relationships are explicit enough in themselves.”

“As long as you’re clear what film you’re watching, that’s fine. I love blockbusters where you get all the keys in your hand at once, whether they’re films for children or films about super heroes. I can buy that. The problems arise when it’s neither one thing nor the other, when I’m told to look at things I already know I should look at, things I’ve already grasped.”
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

After box office success with Daybreak and critical acclaim for Mouth to Mouth, director Björn Runge thought he was done with filmmaking. Then along came a Danish screenwriter and a third film that made a trilogy – with a happy ending.

Björn Runge had a major breakthrough with his hugely successful Daybreak (Om jag vänder mig om, 2003). A dark tale of human relationships in meltdown, the film won Swedish Guldbagge awards for best director and best screenplay. And at the 2004 Berlinale, Runge scooped a Silver Bear for outstanding artistic achievement and a Blue Angel for best European film.

Even darker in tone, the follow up Mouth to Mouth (Mun mot mun, 2005) gained favourable reviews, but not the same success at the box office.

What followed was three years of preparation for a potentially major film, Simon and the Oaks, based on Marianne Fredriksson’s best-selling novel of the same name. But when conditions for that project were →
altered, Runge bowed out. By the time he chanced upon Danish author Kim Fupz Aakeson’s screenplay for *Happy End*, the man who just a few years earlier had been touted as the future of Swedish film was working in the theatre, where he’d all but made up his mind to remain.

I LINK UP with Björn Runge at one of his regular workplaces, the City Theatre in Göteborg:

“I connected immediately with Kim Fupz Aakeson’s script, with its storyline and characters. It centres on a group of people who mean a lot to each other, but who aren’t playing straight, and the confrontation that ensues when the truth finally emerges. As it turns out, the confrontation has a positive outcome. Suddenly I was able to tie together the things that happened in my films, which are all about people ridding themselves of bad habits. So it’s turned out as a kind of trilogy, which is quite unusual, given that there’s a new screenwriter,” he says.

As in Runge’s two earlier films, *Happy End* deals with some rather heavy issues: physical abuse, organised crime, addiction, illness, lies and betrayal. But as the title implies, there’s also a vein of hope, and shooting the film, says the director, was a very laid-back and positive experience.

“It was nice to be able to film in the summer: there are lots of outdoor shots, and the colours are excellent. Now, looking back on *Mouth to Mouth*, it’s a genuinely heavy winter film, almost too damned grey. The whole shoot suffered from the fact that we were so intent on repeating the success of *Daybreak*. Everyone was tense: the actors, the producers, myself, we all felt so inhibited. This time it was more easygoing. I asked the actors to make the most of any funny things that might occur in the scenes to inject a little more humour and humanity.”

THIS TIME, TOO, the press weren’t even interested in the shoot in Trollhättan, despite the fact that media darling Gustaf Skarsgård plays one of the leads. This was probably helped by the fact that Lars von Trier was in the area at the same time filming *Melancholia*, in which Gustaf’s big brother Alexander was acting alongside Hollywood stars Kirsten Dunst and Kiefer Sutherland.

“The *Melancholia* actors were staying in a country house in the area under constant scrutiny from journalists, but we were left in peace. It suited us fine. We worked well together, without too much pressure.”

There are certain similarities between the new film and its predecessors, but his years in the theatre have certainly changed Runge as a director. Whereas *Daybreak* and *Mouth to Mouth* were full of short takes and shaky hand-held camera work, *Happy End* has an altogether more static feel.

“I’ve grown accustomed to the stage. I used lots of long takes from the same angle, switching the camera on and letting it run. I didn’t want too many scenes.”

AND WHEREAS THE action in the two previous films centres on a handful of people, *Happy End* has two main characters, both women, played in the film by one of Runge’s favourite actresses, Ann Petrén, and Malin Buska, here making her feature debut.

Runge observes that all three films are a deconstruction of certain gender-determined positions, and this has made them unintentionally controversial. *Daybreak* scored its greatest success at the Berlinale, but the film passed unmentioned at festivals in Eastern Europe. The difference? The jury in Berlin comprised chiefly women, whereas the festival juries in Eastern Europe were made up of men.

But there are sides to Björn Runge which make him somewhat controversial in Sweden too. Reading about him as an artist or talking to his colleagues, one adjective tends to crop up on a regular basis: ‘uncompromising’. In the eyes of a producer, that label must have something of a double-edged appeal.
When he’d finished editing *Mouth to Mouth*, Runge was so exasperated at the lack of resources at his disposal that, as a therapeutic exercise, he wrote down his experiences in the form of a diary. The result was effectively a call to arms for filmmakers in Sweden, a harsh critique of their working situation. Published by the Göteborg International Film Festival, it turned into a wake-up call for the Swedish film industry.

And then came the aborted *Simon and the Oaks* project.

“When *Simon and the Oaks* hit the buffers, I felt as if a lot of people were blaming me for it. But I couldn’t take ownership of the vision under the conditions that were taking shape. I don’t think *Happy End* would have happened if the producer Madeleine Ekman and Zentropa hadn’t made it so clear that they’re not afraid of strong directors,” says Runge.

**The Actors, Too,** had to get used to Runge’s working methods and tempo.

“Many of them said they weren’t used to the intensity we had on the set for *Happy End*.

That surprises me. I don’t let people in the next room talk on their mobiles when we’re shooting, but that should just be standard good manners. When filming starts and we’re getting the feel for the scene, I don’t give up until we’ve found what we’re looking for. I don’t give a toss about being polite and I’m not scared of being angry or stubborn. I look for actors who enjoy working like that, in which case my reputation as uncompromising can be a good thing. Some of the scenes in *Happy End* were pretty tough on the actors.”

*And you were the one who talked about an easygoing shoot. But your films aren’t exactly easygoing.*

“While I was filming I started to think about how I could avoid being pigeonholed. I did have some well-developed plans for a comedy, but that’s on ice at the moment.”

A comedy? That's hard to imagine.

“Really? Then how about a black comedy? But next up, in 2012, producer Madeleine Ekman and I are planning to make a film about the *Daybreak* characters and where they’ve ended up. Next year it will be ten years since the original film. I suddenly became curious about the way they live their lives now. Have they learnt anything? Have they changed their ways or fallen deeper into the patterns of behaviour that weighed them down?”
Working class hero

Destructive marriages and bad relationships provide the drama in Somewhere Else, a darkly humorous movie about life in small-town Sweden. "This is a grown-up film for people who've been round the block," says director Kjell-Åke Andersson.

Kjell-Åke Andersson radiates enthusiasm. And contentment: After 32 years in the film industry as a cameraman, producer and director he has finally made a film where he hasn't had to compromise on the things he holds dear.

"This time round I can't complain if people don't like it," he says.

When we meet for a working lunch at the Film House in Stockholm, Andersson is busy putting the finishing touches to his film. His focus and passion for the job in hand is only slightly disturbed by some nagging doubts he has about the workmen he has engaged to renovate his summer house many miles away in the far south of Sweden.

THE FILM IN question is Somewhere Else (Någon annanstans i Sverige) based on a novel by Hans Gunnarsson. In 2002 Gunnarsson scooped a Swedish Guldbagge award for his screenplay for Days Like This (Leva livet, 2001), a version of one of his own short stories directed by Mikael Håfström, then went on to write screenplays for the Oscar-nominated Evil (Ondskan, 2003) and the Swedish blockbuster films about the knight templar Arn. Now Gunnarsson, a writer known for his razor sharp ability to describe the lives of ordinary people with a mixture of subtle humour and genuine seriousness, has once again turned to a re-working of one of his own stories.

"Hans combines an amazingly visual style of writing with brilliant dialogue. He gets to the heart of what's typically Swedish and makes it something universal," says Kjell-Åke Andersson.

Some­where Else centres on the fictional village of Borunda where, by chance, the lives and fates of a number of people are dramatically thrown together by the events of a single night. We witness destructive marriages, bad relationships and negative life patterns - all cemented within the hard-escape confines of a small community. Filming took place in real homes and settings up in the very north of Sweden, an area not usually featured in films. Andersson uses unconventional camerawork, sounds, rhythms and music to create his own special version of the world for this dark, Short Cuts-style tale.

STUBBLY TO EXTRACT a peppermint-flavoured nicotine substitute from a small box in his hand, he explains his own vision and why he's tired of cinema that's middle of the road and safe.

"I like the way people like Tarkovsky and Kieslowski work, where they establish the special world of each film in just a couple of seconds. This is a grown-up film for people who've been round the block and have a certain amount of experience of life. If you share that, then you'll appreciate the humour and comfort that can exist in all the darkness."

The cast list is impressive, to say the least, including Mikael Persbrandt, from Susanne Bier's Oscar-winning In a Better World and currently shooting Peter Jackson's The Hobbit; the Bergman actress Marie Richardson from Stanley Kubrick's Eyes Wide Shut and Peter Andersson from the Millennium trilogy, to name but a few.

"We have an amazing amount of top quality actors here in Sweden. So it was extra fun to be able to make a film with room for 16 or 17 major roles," says the director.

OVER THE YEARS, Kjell-Åke Andersson has directed what might first appear to be films of very differing nature: dramas such as The Christmas Oratorio (Julloratoriet, 1996) and My Great Big Daddy (Min store tjocke far, 1993) as well as the children's film Butterflies (Pirret, 2007). But a closer look reveals certain elements in common.

"Basically my films have always had a working class perspective, views of the family and explorations of children's attitudes towards adults. In that respect Somewhere Else is a break with the norm, since it's a film entirely about adults," he observes.

In his next project, however, Andersson will be returning to the world of the child: next up is a film version of Asa Linderborg's best-selling autobiographical novel Mig tiger ingen, about a little girl left alone with her alcoholic working father when her mother leaves home.

"It's similar to my own background: I had a troubled childhood and come from working class roots. These days, however, I'm lucky enough to make films and live in a smart part of downtown Stockholm."
Ella Lemhagen, born in 1965 in Uppsala, is one of Sweden’s most successful directors and screenwriters. She made her feature debut in 1996 with *The Dream Prince* (*Drömprinsen – filmen om Em*), but her major breakthrough came three years later with *Tsatziki, Mum and the Policeman* (*Tsatziki, morsan och polisen*, 1999). Her later successes include *If Not* (*Om inte*, 2001), *Immediate Boarding* (*Tur & retur*, 2003), and *Patrik, Age 1.5* (2008).
A very funny tragedy

At first it seemed impossible to film. The budget was too small. But finally everything fell into place, and veteran director Ella Lemhagen actually got to shoot *The Crown Jewels*, a film quite unlike anything she has ever made before.

**“Without a doubt this is the hardest thing I’ve ever done. We’ve worked with two, sometimes three cameras. There are lots of ice hockey scenes, lots of underwater scenes: it’s a long way indeed from two people sitting at a table having a conversation.”**

Swedish Film is having a coffee with Ella Lemhagen just after she’s finished editing *The Crown Jewels* (*Kronjuvelerna*). It’s a film with a long and complicated gestation. Nine years ago Lemhagen was talking to the author Carina Dahl, who showed her the draft of a book she’d been working on for some years. When she started reading, Ella Lemhagen soon reached a conclusion – that it wasn’t a story which could be filmed. Not as it stood, anyway.

“There were three whole files, enough material for a 20-hour television series. But right from the start, I knew I wanted to edit it down to a suitable length for a feature film,” says Lemhagen.

Now it’s set to be both.

**OVER THE FOLLOWING** years Dahl did a rewrite, which Lemhagen once again read. In 2009 Dahl actually published the book. She and Lemhagen co-wrote a screenplay for the film, and they decided to go ahead with a television series, too, which Sveriges Television will be screening later this year.

The main character in the book, film and TV series is Fragrancia (played by Alicia Vikander), a young country girl who is accused of murder. Under interrogation, her life story is revealed, a magical, rambling tale involving Richard Persson, the son of a rich man and her antagonist (played by Bill Skarsgård) and the figure skating fan Pettersson-Jonsson (Björn Gustafsson).

“It’s a very funny tragedy, but really it’s quite a peculiar story. You never know where fact ends and fiction begins,” says the director.

*THE CROWN JEWELS* was filmed last summer in Lithuania, chosen as the setting because of its resemblance in many ways to the Sweden of days gone by.

“It offered us an unusual mixture of north, south, east and west. And we took out anything that could link the settings to any particular time, just to add to the unreality,” says Lemhagen.

She names old silent films and Tim Burton’s heightened realism as part of the inspiration for the characters and atmosphere.

**“Actually, it doesn’t really look like any other film I’ve ever seen”**

“Actually, it doesn’t really look like any other film I’ve ever seen”

“The only Swedish film I can think of that reminds me of what we’ve done is Hasse Alfredson’s *The Simple-Minded Murderer*. That film also plays with time and has some baddies who end up dead!” she laughs.

**ON THE SURFACE** *The Crown Jewels* is quite different from anything Lemhagen has done previously. She herself thinks that its visual style links it to her other work:

“I’ve always worked carefully on images, light and colour. And I would have loved to make this film earlier, if only I’d ever read anything remotely like it,” she observes.

**What was the hardest part?**

“The fact that we didn’t have enough money, even though I had double the budget I’m used to. But the truth is a film like this requires much, much more.”

**Is there any scene in the film that you’re extra proud of?**

“Not really one particular scene, but I’m very pleased with the atmosphere and the visuals as a whole. We have fantastic sets, props and photography. Everyone has worked hard on it. And actually, it doesn’t really look like any other film I’ve ever seen.”
It's springtime for Swedish cinema. No less than 27 Swedish films are represented in this section. Please visit our website www.sfi.se for updated information on Swedish features, documentaries and shorts.
At Night I Fly  
New Folsom Prison: a secluded brutal world, with riots, heavily armed guards and murders between rivaling gangs. In the middle of this we meet a few life sentenced prisoners who take part in the Arts in Correction programme. These men have grown during their time in prison, they have learnt what it really means to be a human being.

The Black Power Mixtape 1967–75  
The Black Power Mixtape 1967–75 examines the evolution of the Black Power Movement in the African-American community and Diaspora from 1967–75. With startlingly fresh and meaningful 16mm footage that has been lying undiscovered in archives in Sweden for the past 30 years, The Black Power Mixtape 1967–75 looks at the people, society, culture and styles that fuelled a change.

After Eight (working title)  
Janne, a 60-year-old party promoter is arranging a nightclub at the annual tennis week in the small coastal town of Båstad, where he also teams up with his older sister Jackie. But an accident turns his life upside down and forced by the people around him, he desperately seeks a way out.

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ORIGINAL TITLE At Night I Fly  
DIRECTOR Michel Wenzer  
PRODUCERS Tobias Janson, Jenny Örnborn  
PRODUCED BY Story in co-production with Pausefilm and Sveriges Television, in collaboration with DR, with support from Swedish Film Institute/Lars G. Lindström  
SCREENING DETAILS HDCam, 94 min  
RELEASED March, 2011  
SALES Story

Michel Wenzer is a film director and composer, educated both at the School of Film Directing, Göteborg University and at the Academy of Music in Gothenburg. His previous film Three Poems by Spoon Jackson (2003) was warmly received when it was shown on pubcaster Sveriges Television. Internationally, it has won prices in various festivals. Michel Wenzer has made music both for film and concert performances.

DOCUMENTARY After Eight (working title)  
DIRECTOR Axel Petersén  
SCREENWRITER Axel Petersén  
PRODUCERS Johannes Brost, Peter Carlberg, Leonore Ekström  
PRODUCED BY Erika Wasserman, Jesper Kurlandsky  
PRODUCED by Story in co-production with Pausefilm and Sveriges Television, in collaboration with Canal+, with support from Swedish Film Institute/Lars G. Lindström  
SCREENING DETAILS 35 mm, appr. 80 min  
TO BE RELEASED Autumn, 2011  
SALES TBD

Axel Petersén, born in 1979, is a director, videoartist and storyteller. His latest short film A Good Friend of Mr. World was Guldbagge-nominated and has been shown at festivals all over the world. He studied at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm 2005-2010 and at FAMU Academy of Performing Arts in Prague 2003-2004 and is represented by Niklas Belenius Gallery in Stockholm. After Eight (working title) is his first feature film.

DOCUMENTARY The Black Power Mixtape 1967–75  
DIRECTOR Göran Hugo Olsson  
PRODUCERS Annika Rogell, in co-production with Joslyn Barnes and Danny Glover  
PRODUCED by Story AB in a co-production with Sveriges Television and Louverture Films, with support from Swedish Film Institute/Lars G. Lindström, Nordic Film & TV Fond and MEDIA Programme of the European Union. The film has been realised with ZDF in co-operation with ARTE. In association with YLE Teema / Rita Leino, Greek Radio Television (ERT) / Irene Gavala-Chardalia, with participation of Radio Télévision Suisse (RTS) / Irène Challand / Gaspard Lamunière and Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) / Tore Tomter  
SCREENING DETAILS HDcam, 52/58/100 min  
RELEASED April 1, 2011  
SALES Story AB

Documentary filmmaker and cinematographer Göran Hugo Olsson, born in 1965, is the co-founder of Story AB. Commissioning Editor at the Swedish Film Institute during 2000-02. Among his documentary film work Fuck You, Fuck You Very Much (1998) was nominated as the second best rock-documentary of all times by legendary Bon Magazine.
Fragancia is arrested for the attempted murder of Richard Persson, an influential man’s son. During the police questioning her amazing and remarkable life is revealed. We follow her through her impoverished childhood, adolescence where she meets the great love of her life, ice hockey star Pettersson-Jonsson and the lead up to the fatal night where the story begins.

The Crown Jewels
Fragancia is arrested for the attempted murder of Richard Persson, an influential man’s son. During the police questioning her amazing and remarkable life is revealed. We follow her through her impoverished childhood, adolescence where she meets the great love of her life, ice hockey star Pettersson-Jonsson and the lead up to the fatal night where the story begins.

Everyone Is Older than I Am
An entertaining, subjective, fun and a bit melancholy documentary about the director’s father’s inability to finish his documentary about his father and as a logic conclusion the problems with fatherhood. For them and therefore for me.

Certain People
A small group of friends are gathered at Katinka’s summer house to celebrate her birthday. The guests are all in their thirties, upper class, art world, liberal humanitarian bohemians. The party sets off on a high note, but when Linda, a blonde game show hostess, is unexpectedly brought to the party, she stretches the groups invisible social rules of hospitality. Contempt starts to grow, thus unfolding the group’s hidden prejudices.
False Trail

It’s been fifteen years since Erik was forced to leave the Norrland Police Department. Since then he has become the National Murder Commission’s best interrogator. When Erik’s boss orders him back to his home town to solve a brutal murder, he hesitantly returns as the thought of going back stirs up unpleasant memories. What at first appears to be a simple murder soon proves to be something much more complicated.

The Guerilla Son DOC

A guerilla fighter sends his five-year-old son to Sweden from the war in Kurdistan. 23 years later the son is to become a father himself. The memories of war has always haunted them, but the history has been buried and nobody has broken the silence. Not until now, when the son decides to confront his father with their past.

Four More Years

When Liberal party leader David Holst falls in love he puts everything at stake—his family, his party and his career. Four More Years is a smart, audacious romantic comedy about breaking taboos on many levels. Never before have we seen politicians portrayed like this in a Swedish film.

The Yellow Affair

Tove Magnusson, born in 1968, is an actress, comedian and director working in theatre, TV and film. She made her feature film debut as a director in 2003 with Fröken Sverige. Four More Years is her second feature as director.
Happy End

Happy End is a fairytale for adults. It’s about five people living in a world of shadows, lined by lies and falsities and only waiting for the truth to appear so that they may be able to continue their lives in another direction. Happy End is the third part of Björn Runge’s trilogy of liberation, commenced with Daybreak and Mouth to Mouth about people who are trying to liberate themselves from destructivity.

He Thinks He's Best

Maria’s uncles, Aldo and Carmine, have been at loggerheads since they were small. In connection to their mother’s funeral Carmine tried to kill Aldo, but their father intervened. Since then they are not on speaking terms. Maria now wants them to meet and reach some kind of reconciliation.

Harbour Songs

In April 1945 thousands of concentration camp survivors arrive to the harbour of smalltown Malmö, Sweden. In unique archive footage we see 10 year old Irene on the quay taking her first shaky steps in freedom. Magnus Gertten’s new documentary investigates the complicated aspects of liberation and the importance of a helping hand.

Maria Kuhlberg

Maria is an educated actress from Dramatiska institutet in Stockholm, her main productions as actress: The Dance of the witches (Häxdansen) and Inspector Winter (Kommissarie Winter) both for pubcaster SVT Drama. He Thinks He’s Best is her debut as a director.
I Am My Own Dolly Parton

Five singers meet at a tribute to Dolly Parton and become friends. All have their dreams which they now decide to try to make come true. The inner trip deals with making choices, with being oneself, with wanting a child, with having a life-threatening disease and with finding someone to love. You can make your dreams come true or you can fail. Your goal is not the important thing but the path you take and what happens along the way.

I Miss You

Tina and Cilla are 15 and live in Piteå in the north of Sweden. They are twin sisters and look identical, but are very different as personalities. On their mother’s birthday, they hurry to catch the school-bus. Cilla is run over by a car and killed. Left behind is Tina, who now has to find her balance in life without her sister.

The Importance of Tying Your Own Shoes

Alex dreams of being in the theatre, but to survive he takes a job as an assistant to a troop of mentally handicapped people at a group living facility. Following a disastrous start, Alex gradually starts to tune in to the charming individuals around him. Together they decide to take part in a national talent competition. Together they decide to take part in a national talent competition.

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Love Always, Carolyn

Carolyn Cassady, the wife and lover of two famous Beat icons, Neal Cassady and Jack Kerouac, is fighting a losing battle for truth. Mythmakers and media have hijacked the story of her life and the memory of the men she loved. Cassady is an intimate yet universal story of a woman’s search for personal recognition and the price of a life in the public eye.

**ORIGINAL TITLE** Love Always, Carolyn
**DIRECTORS** Maria Ramström, Malin Korkeasalo
**PRODUCER** Margarete Jangård
**PRODUCED BY** WG Film in co-production with Film i Skåne/Joakim Strand, with support from Sveriges Television/Hjalmar Palmgren, YLE/ Rila Leino and Swedish Film Institute
**SCREENING DETAILS** DigiBeta, 52 min
**RELEASED** March, 2011

**Maria Ramström,** born in Stockholm 1971, studied as a photographer at the London College of Printing where she graduated in 1996. She's been commissioned as a photographer/filmmaker for various international artists and directed her first short documentary; Outside China Expert, in Shanghai 2005. **Malin Korkeasalo,** born in 1969 in Stockholm graduated from Dramatiska institutet in 2004 where she studied as a cinematographer. She has photographed several of pubcaster SVT’s documentaries and Love Always, Carolyn is Ramström’s and Korkeasalo’s first one hour documentary as directors.

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**Love Stain**

Mia and Frida, both in their thirties, meet each other for the first time at their parent’s engagement party. Mia’s father Lasse is about to get married to Frida’s mother Elisabeth which will make Mia and Frida stepsisters. Lasse’s daughter, Mia, has not visited her father in years and arrives with her boyfriend Tim with whom she is about to get married. As Mia and Frida get to know one another, strong emotions begin to stir between them. Their relationship will turn everything upside down for everyone close to them with dramatic consequences.

**ORIGINAL TITLE** Kyss mig
**DIRECTOR** Alexandra-Therese Keining
**SCREENWRITER** Alexandra-Therese Keining
**PRINCIPAL CAST** Ruth Vega Fernandez, Liv Mjönes, Krister Henriksson, Lena Endre, Joakim Nätterqvist
**PRODUCER** Josefine Tengblad
**PRODUCED BY** Lebox Produktion in co-production with Film i Skåne, Ystad-Österlen Filmfond, Film Fyn A/S, Lady Bird, Sveriges Television in collaboration with RED RENTAL, FilmGear, Nordisk Film Post Production, Supersonic Svendborg, Jorming Film, Lena Endre AB with support from Swedish Film Institute/Suzanne Glansborg
**SCREENING DETAILS** 35 mm, 105 min
**TO BE RELEASED** July 29, 2011

**Alexandra-Therese Keining,** born in 1976, has both directed and written the script for Love Stain, just as her feature debut Hot Dog (2002). Previously she worked as a screenwriter and casting director for companies like Yellow Bird Productions and Hepp Film.

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**A One-way to Antibes**

When George, a half-blind widower, learns that his children have conceived an elaborate plan to get their hands on his assets before he dies, he must confront his life choices. After catching his young home help Maria red-handed in the act of stealing, George blackmails her into assisting him in a counterattack, triggering off a chain reaction in the family. George’s children discover that he has a secret mistress in France.

**ORIGINAL TITLE** En enkel till Antibes
**DIRECTOR** Richard Hobert
**SCREENWRITER** Richard Hobert
**PRINCIPAL CAST** Sven-Bertil Taube, Rebecca Ferguson, Malin Morgan, Dan Ekborg, Ivar Wiklander, Torkel Pettersson and Catherine Rouvel
**PRODUCER** Håkan Bjerking
**PRODUCED BY** Eyefeed in co-operation with Cimbria Film, Sveriges Television, Filmpool Nord, Jens Fischer Film, Richard Hobert Film, Peter Aasa Sameaklifilmer, Ljudbang, Dagsljus, with support from Swedish Film Institute/Suzanne Glansborg
**SCREENING DETAILS** 35 mm, 105 min
**TO BE RELEASED** October 7, 2011

**Richard Hobert,** writer and director, has been awarded the Ingmar Bergman Prize for his work. His previous work include internationally acclaimed films such as Spring of Joy (1993), Run for Your Life (1997), The Eye (1998), Everyone Loves Alice (2002) and Harry’s Daughters (2008).
The Quiet Game
Three women who are complete strangers to each other inherit a house from a woman none of them know. They meet up to try to understand how fate has brought them together.

Savage
Kim grew up in a criminal family on the Swedish countryside. He now wants to atone for his crimes, clean out his debts and free his soul. But he can’t escape the evil blood that floats through his veins. Savage is a film about a double murder in the rural areas of Sweden.

Play
Play is a powerful, provocative and humorous behaviour study by Ruben Östlund, a film inspired by real events in which a group of young black boys repeatedly robbed other children in central Gothenburg. What was remarkable about the robberies was that they were based on smart words rather than threats or violence, the so-called “brother trick.”

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Simon and the Oaks

Simon, a small, dark-haired and bookish young boy, enjoys an idyllic rural childhood in Sweden, as the shadow of World War II descends over Europe. Although raised by loving and working class parents, he feels that he is different. When he finds out that he is adopted, he starts a search for his true self. Simon and the Oaks is based on Marianne Fredriksson’s bestseller with the same title.

Somewhere Else

Alongside a tranquil road somewhere in Sweden live a number of people who are pretty much like people in general. When a highly improbable and catastrophic chain of events besets them, it leads to break up and change. A tragicomic story that feels both familiar and alien at the same time.

She Monkeys

She Monkeys is about the art of survival. We follow 15-year-old Emma, her seven-year-old little sister Sara, and Emma’s newfound friend, Cassandra. Emma and Cassandra meet at the vaulting club and soon develop a symbiotic friendship.

NEW FILMS
TwinBrothers – 53 Scenes from a Childhood DOC

Gustav and Oskar are twins. Oskar has Achondroplasia, a common form of dwarfism. Both have blue eyes and blonde hair. They approach life in different ways. The director, Axel Danielson, has filmed Oskar and Gustav over a ten year period – from nine to nineteen – as they grow up together in an old farmhouse in the country-side, in the very South of Sweden. In 53 scenes in chronological order we follow the brothers through their journey of childhood, adolescence and struggle for identity.

ORIGINAL TITLE PangPangbröder DIRECTOR Axel Danielson EDITOR Niels Pagh, Mikel Cee Karlsson, Axel Danielson PRODUCER Erik Hemmendorff PRODUCED BY Plattform Produktion in co-production with Sveriges Television, Film i Väst, Magic Hour Films with support from Swedish Film Institute/Tove Torbjörnsson, Danish Film Institute, Swedish Arts Grants Committee and Nordisk Film & TV Fond SCREENING DETAILS Digi-beta/HDCAM, approx 100 min TO BE RELEASED 2011 SALES Plattform Produktion

Axel Danielson was born in 1976 in the south of Sweden. Before filmmaking Axel worked as a firefighter and started in 2001 studies at Filmhögskolan, Göteborgs Universitet. His graduation film Sommarlek (2005), received numerous prizes at international film festivals around the world. TwinBrothers is his first feature length film.

Stockholm East

Stockholm East is the lovestory between two strangers, bound together by a tragedy that has taken its toll on both their lives and relationships. When Johan and Anna meet at the railway station connecting Stockholm with the idyllic suburbs where they both live, they embark on a dangerous journey of passion and lies.

ORIGINAL TITLE Stockholm Östra DIRECTOR Simon Kajser Da Silva SCREENWRITER Pemilla Oljelund PRINCIPAL CAST Mikael Persbrandt, Ibien Hjejle, Henrik Norén, Liv Mjönes PRODUCER Maria Nordenberg PRODUCED BY Filmiance International AB in co-production with Nordisk Film Distribution/Lone Korslund, Sveriges Television/Gunnar Carlsson, Nordisk Film Post Production/ Mikael Frisell, Film i Väst/Jessica Ask, Europa Sound Production/Bo Persson, Dagsljus/Helena Sandmark, with support from Swedish Film Institute/Peter “Podor” Gustafsson and Nordisk Film & TV Fond/Hanne Palmqvist SCREENING DETAILS 35 mm, 92 min TO BE RELEASED TBA SALES TrustNordisk

Simon Kajser da Silva was born in Stockholm in 1969. He has directed several acclaimed projects for the pubcaster Sveriges Television, in many different genres; drama, as well as thriller and comedy. Filmmaking for him is about creating a unique world, and then go exploring. Stockholm East is his first feature.

Women with Cows DOC

Women with Cows tells the story of an intricate and painful relationship between two sisters, whose lives revolve around a dozen cows. One sister adores them, the other abhors them. Only when the authorities threaten to close the farm do the sisters see eye to eye. Together, they find an ingenious way of saving the cows and keeping peace.

ORIGINAL TITLE Kokvinnorna DIRECTOR Peter Gerdehag SCREENWRITERS Tell Autin, Peter Gerdehag, Malcolm Dixielius PRODUCERS Lasse Rengfelt, Malcolm Dixielius PRODUCED BY Deep Sea Productions/Gerdehag Photography/Tellereception in co-production with Sveriges Television, with support from Swedish Film Institute/Tove Torbjörnsson and Nordisk Film & TV Fond SCREENING FORMAT HD/Tvix, 96 min RELEASED February 18, 2011 SALES TBA

Peter Gerdehag, born in 1953, is a wildlife photographer, who turned to making films about the rural landscape and the people who live there. The Life and Death of a Farmer (2002) was an instant success, The Horseman (2007) was a record-breaker in cinemas and on TV, awarding Peter a Guldbagge nomination for his camera work.
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