

SEE NL



Van de Velde *opens the Netherlands Film Festival*

A Wolf *in San Sebastian*

Menno Meyjes *adapts best-selling novel The Dinner*

Making it in the US **Dutch-style**

Inside the Holland Film Meeting and Cinekid

Issue #12 September 2013



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A publication by the Netherlands Film Fund and EYE International



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Photo: George Pimentel, WireImage/Getty for TIFF
Steve Gravestock, Associate Director, Toronto International Film Festival

I suppose the first time you fall for a national cinema your subsequent interactions with it will be coloured, in much the same way that we tend to duplicate our romantic relationships.

My first real exposure to Dutch cinema was Paul Verhoeven's 1983 post-modernist classic *The 4th Man*, starring Jeroen Krabbé battling writer's block and Renée Soutendijk as a mysterious platinum blonde femme fatale. Riffing off noir conventions - the ever fragile male ego and the limitations of cinematic symbolism in general (birds dropped from the sky every time Krabbé's author was aroused, or so I recall) - *The 4th Man* was whip smart and combined caustic comedy and an awareness of film form and history with a serious intent (what could be more serious than affronts to male egos, really?). And it was pretty sultry too. In other words, it is what came to be my fallback definition of a good movie. It played, rather famously and to great acclaim, at the Toronto International Film Festival and got me excited about the possibilities of a film festival.

A few years (or a few decades) later, I tend to see and appreciate some of these same qualities in

the movies I like and admire from The Netherlands, but my sense of cinema is far more fleshed out and the picture gets more and more complicated and, not surprisingly, richer.

The first year I selected Dutch films I was very impressed with Nanouk Leopold's absurdist and daring study of female sexuality within the bourgeoisie, *Brownian Movement*, and though not as packed with acerbic humour as *The 4th Man*, it more than made up for this with its curiosity, its courage and its skill. Marco van Geffen's *Among Us* was just as courageous, outlining the impact of globalization and the dangers faced by a rootless, culturally unconnected workforce. Last year, we had the privilege of presenting the world premiere of Michiel ten Horn's *The Deflowering of Eva von End*, a twisted comedy about a neglected teen and her very attractive boarder (from a fine, inventive script by Anne Barhoorn), one of my favourite recent films from the area. And two other films: Antoinette Beumer's sharp road movie *Jackie* and Vincent Bal's anarchic Belgian/Dutch co-production *Nono, the Zigzag Kid*.

In 2013, we will present the North American premiere of Alex van Warmerdam's haunting *Borgman*, a cracked and creepy fairy tale about the middle-classes from one of the finest contemporary Dutch filmmakers, and the world premiere of Menno Meyjes's *The Dinner*, based on an influential novel based on a real life event, which looks fearlessly at contemporary Europe and boasts a great cast, an excellent script, fine direction and bursts of disquieting humour.

For me, the picture just keeps getting more complex, richer and more fulfilling each year.



Photo: Cool BeansPVPictures

The Price of Sugar
(Opening film: Netherlands Film Festival)
“The bottom line was that I really loved the human quality of the relationships between black and white people in the book,” says director Jean van de Velde.

Cover still and pages 2 and 3: *The Price of Sugar*
Director: Jean van de Velde **Script:** Jean van de Velde **Production:** Cool Beans (NL), PV Pictures (NL), Comet Films (DE), Spier Film (SA) **See page 12**

COLOPHON

See NL is published four times per year by EYE International and The Netherlands Film Fund and is distributed to international film professionals.

Editors in chief: Claudia Landsberger (EYE), Jonathan Mees (Netherlands Film Fund) **Executive editor:** Nick Cunningham **Contributors:** Geoffrey Macnab, Steve Gravestock **Concept & Design:** Lava.nl, Amsterdam **Layout:** def., Amsterdam **Printing:** Roto Smeets Grafiservices Printed on FSC paper **Circulation:** 1800 copies © All rights reserved: The Netherlands Film Fund and EYE International 2013

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The Unplaceables

(selected for Locarno Film Festival)

Spijker is a constant and looming presence in the film, physically imposing and possessing of a remarkable tendency towards loud and animated monologue...

See page 18

The Unplaceables Director: René Hazekamp **Script:** René Hazekamp
Production: Riverpark Films



Wolf

(selected for San Sebastian New Directors)

Taihattu knew that casting the lead role would be crucial to the success of his film. He needed someone who could not only act but who would also be convincing in the ring.

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Wolf Director: Jim Taihuttu **Script:** Jim Taihuttu **Production:** Habbekrats
Sales: XYZ Films



Photo: Victor Arnolds

The Dinner
(selected for Toronto International
Film Festival)

*"Most exciting, dramatic
things happen to us in the
framework of our family and
of our existence with our
partners and children,"
writer-director Menno
Meyjes observes. "This is a
thriller about family life."*

See page 24

The Dinner Director: Menno Meyjes
Script: Menno Meyjes **Production:**
Eyeworks Film & TV Drama

Made for Export



Roel Reiné



Miriam Kruishoop



Menno Meyjes

This is the first of a series of profiles of Dutch film professionals working beyond Dutch borders, celebrating their talent and looking at how their career development and subsequent bodies of work have been influenced and informed by the Holland of their upbringing. Geoffrey Macnab kicks off the series with a look at Dutch US-based directors.

From *Basic Instinct* to *Speed*, the Hollywood successes of Dutch directors like Paul Verhoeven and Jan de Bont have been well chronicled. There is now evidence that a new generation of filmmakers and writers from the Netherlands are establishing themselves within the US industry.

Photographer Anton Corbijn has re-invented himself as a movie auteur with credits from (the British made) *Control* to the thriller *The American*, starring George Clooney. He is currently in post-production on the John Le Carré adaptation, *A Most Wanted Man*.

Actress and fashion icon Famke Janssen re-invented herself as a director with her film *Bringing Up Bobby* (2011) while Matthijs van Heijningen Jr recently made his own version of cult horror film *The Thing*.

So what helps the Dutch to flourish in Hollywood? “There is an analytical way of thinking that is drilled into us,” suggests writer-director Menno Meyjes of the disciplined manner in which the Dutch work. He scripted Alice Walker adaptation *The Color Purple* for Steven Spielberg and also collaborated with Spielberg on *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* and *Empire Of The Sun*.

And what brings the Dutch to Hollywood in the first place? Along with the obvious attractions of the film business, the climate seems to help too, according to Dutch director Miriam Kruishoop who has recently completed her new film *Green Card Warriors* in LA.

“Being in LA in February when it is 24 degrees is very attractive! When you find you can do some work there and you have a very inspiring environment, that made it very attractive for us to settle in Los Angeles and move out of Europe,” she says. Back home in the Netherlands, Kruishoop had been one of the youngest directors in the country’s history to make a full-length feature film, completing *Vive Elle* (1998) when she was still a student. She used to go on trips to LA frequently with her husband, British composer and DJ Photek. When the chance came to live and work there, she took it.

Menno Meyjes began his Hollywood career in a somewhat more haphazard fashion. “That’s what I wanted to do. I wanted to be in film,” Meyjes recalls. His first step was to head to the San Francisco Art Institute to study the craft. He had no contacts at all in Hollywood but taught himself to write in English by copying out Ernest Hemingway novels. Eventually, after being hired as a writer on a planned Robert Altman-style Rolling Stones concert movie, and then working on a film about the children’s crusades for Francis Ford Coppola’s American Zoetrope, Meyjes became an established screenwriter.

Meyjes recalls that although many in Hollywood seemed to think he was Spanish or (after he

wrote *The Color Purple*) African American, Spielberg respected his Dutch identity and would always correct the pronunciation of his last name. “Steven, although he seems a quintessentially American filmmaker is, in fact, very very internationally-minded,” he points out.

Meyjes has recently made a film in Holland, *The Dinner*, an adaptation of the bestselling novel by Herman Koch and selected for Toronto 2013. (See pages 20-21)

‘Basically that was my invitation into America...’

One highly prolific Dutch director currently working in Hollywood is Roel Reiné. After winning a Golden Calf in the Netherlands for his debut (Dutch language) feature *The Delivery* (2000), Reiné headed to Los Angeles over a decade ago.

The Delivery had been sold to Lionsgate. “Basically that was my invitation into America,” Reiné recalls of how he was feted after his debut feature. Every three or four months, he would visit LA to meet agents and industry contacts... and then head home to Holland. It was at this point that Paul Verhoeven warned Reiné that to make it in the US, you have to be there all the time. Unless you’re part of the film community, you are quickly forgotten.

“It’s a very long process getting a movie made in America,” Reiné sighs. “There is a saying in Dutch which I will try to translate - when you are not in their eyes, you are

not in their heart!’ If they (Americans) feel you are not here, things stop!”

Having come to LA because Verhoeven suggested it was a smart move, Reiné was taken in hand by Jan de Bont. The celebrated cinematographer turned director had seen and liked Reiné’s early movies. He offered to help produce the younger filmmaker’s Hollywood debut and introduced him round town as “his protégé”.

In these early years, Reiné was represented by ICM. However, he quickly discovered that “having an agent and a manager” gets you in the system but that you have to work hard yourself to have any chance of securing a meaningful job. “The interesting thing about working in America is that getting the first movie is very difficult but, if you have that first movie and it’s successful, then the sky is the limit!”

During his stint in Hollywood, Reiné has learned to be pragmatic. When he first arrived, he was told that he was “the European Michael Bay” and was encouraged by advisors to hold out for a \$20 million movie. Soon, Reiné realised that big budgets come with endless problems in tow.

“I saw a lot of European directors, friends of mine, who had bigger track records (than I did) not working for six or seven years,” Reiné recalls. If they did finally make their big budget theatrical movie and it failed, their careers stalled.

Rather than sit around waiting for the chance to shoot a blockbuster, Reiné decided to lower his expectations and make a lower budget picture. There were practical as well as artistic

reasons for such a decision. As a filmmaker, he felt he needed to hone his craft.

“My main goal when I went to America was not to become an American director. My main goal was to become a really good director,” Reiné reflects. “I believe the 10,000 hour rule.” This is the idea that if you want to become a virtuoso in any field, from classical music to sport, you have to put in the time and work. It’s what prompted Reiné to tell his manager and agent that he needed to make as many movies as possible. From that moment on, he started directing straight to video fare and exploitation pics, taking the helm on such genre projects as *Death Race 2*, *Pistol Whipped* and *Seal Team Eight*.

“Sequels, prequels, Steven Seagal!” the director talks through his choice of material. In six years, he has made 13 American movies. In the process, he has become a much more proficient and versatile director. His movies have also made money.

Reiné is coming back to make a film in the Netherlands, about Dutch admiral Michiel de Ruyter, the hero of the Anglo-Dutch naval wars of the late 17th Century. With his hard-won expertise, Reiné is planning to make a full-blown epic on a relatively modest budget of €5-6 million. *The Admiral*, supported by the Netherlands Film Fund and due to be shot in early 2014, is being made through Klaas de Jong’s Farmhouse Film. Reiné insists he is “not making a green screen” movie dependent on computer-generated imagery. He will be using a real ship as well as a floating dock to ensure maximum authenticity. So how does Holland compare

with Hollywood? “The Dutch in Holland, they’re very competitive,” Reiné says of one aspect of the local film industry he didn’t miss at all. “Everybody is so afraid of each other. Here (in Hollywood), there is a big camaraderie. Everyone is working together and everybody is helping each other. That is a very American way!”

Reiné’s enthusiasm for Hollywood is shared by the similarly enterprising Kruishoop who is likewise developing a Dutch project, a Second World War drama based on Yvonne Keuls’ autobiographical novel *Daniel Maandag*. She also pays tribute to the professionalism of the Hollywood film community. “People have an amazing work ethic. No-one would ever come late. People are highly motivated... I love working with American crews, I really do!” She relishes the fact that people “live and breathe” movies in LA.

In Hollywood, for most Dutch ex-pats in the film business, nationality is not an issue. Nor is sticking together. The UK-based Meyjes draws a comical contrast between the ex-pat English, always keen to meet one another, and the Dutch in LA.

“I always loved that about the English. I used to have quite a few English friends in LA and I would go over to someone else’s house for Sunday lunch...(but) I certainly never heard about Sunday lunch at Paul Verhoeven’s house!”

Both Kruishoop and Meyjes have tackled very American subject matter in their work in Hollywood. Kruishoop’s *Green Card Warriors* (supported by the Netherlands Film Fund) is a story about Latino immigrants and

gang members in LA without legal papers. This is not subject matter that you’d expect a filmmaker who is “born and bred Dutch” to embrace.

“I think the angle that I have on American society can only come from someone who is abroad,” Kruishoop argues. “We (the Dutch) are liberal thinkers. We are opinionated. We are not afraid to put that down and express that.”

Living in LA as an immigrant herself, she has come to see the Latino community as “the heart of LA.” She sees at first hand the struggles that the community faces and was keen to capture its story on screen.

These filmmakers may have made their reputations in Hollywood but they certainly haven’t forgotten their Dutch roots. As Kruishoop puts it: “I think I am very Dutch. To give you a very practical example, I was pitching for a project at Warner Bros. It was a general meeting but I knew they had a project I wanted. I just said to him (the Warner exec), ‘Look, Mr So and So, I know you have this book and I want to adapt it and that’s why I am here.’ American and British people are a little more careful and a little more mannered... Dutch people are very direct and very opinionated - and that has never changed!”



*The Dutch in Hollywood
haven’t forgotten their roots*

Director Roel Reiné on set

Bitter Sweet

Jean van de Velde’s *The Price of Sugar*, based on Cynthia McLeod’s novel about slavery on a Suriname plantation, will open the 2013 Netherlands Film Festival. The director talks to Nick Cunningham.

One could be mistaken for assuming that the 150th anniversary of Holland’s abolition of slavery was the catalyst for Jean van de Velde’s 2013 Netherlands Film Festival opener *The Price of Sugar*. But it wasn’t.

The director first read Cynthia McLeod’s novel in 1997, but after an initial budgetary assessment Van de Velde reckoned that the film would be just too expensive to make. So hopes for an adaptation were put on hold.

When producer Paul Voorthuysen approached Van de Velde in 2009 to make the film, however, advances in CGI technology meant that the film could be made for a considerably lower figure (eventually 4 million euros).

But even then the director/producer pairing were aiming for a 2012 opening date, a whole year before the milestone anniversary. “Yes, if we had more luck we would have opened the film last year. It still took us some time to get the money together.” The timing of the film’s release is nevertheless propitious, Van de Velde concedes.

The period drama, supported by the Netherlands Film Fund, focusses on the relationships between two rich young women, daughters of a plantation owner, and their personal slaves of the same age. “I loved the novel because it had an epic quality, and because I grew up in the colonies of the Congo in the 1960s I had an immediate connection with the

subject,” he stresses. “But the bottom line was that I really loved the human quality of the relationships between black and white people in the book. That was against a background of slavery which was of course harsh and sick.”

The director opines that Dutch interest in Suriname was a “black page” in the country’s colonial past, the “white page” being Indonesia. “Indonesia and the East Asian colonies still have the glow of it being a good time, with beautiful people,” he comments. “The colonisation of Suriname never had that golden glow – it was not that great an economic success. The Dutch community tries to hide that part of history. Both systems were sick, but Indonesia retains its golden shine.”

‘... a black page in Holland’s past’

Given modern Suriname’s lack of sugar plantations the film was shot in South Africa, outside of Durban. Van de Velde adds how tonal accuracy wasn’t a major consideration on set as a greater degree of accuracy could be applied in post-production.

“If you want historical depth, it isn’t that difficult to create it any more,” he points out. “Ten years ago you would have had to come up with matte paintings and very complicated procedures while now we have a very good visual effects department that can create wonderful backgrounds with no effort at all. They have this plug-in called Happy Tree that offers you every tree in the world. And you can set the wind too - that is so easy. So suddenly you can create an atmosphere with palm trees

whereas ten years ago you were stuck with whatever vegetation there was.”

What proved challenging to cast and crew alike was the profusion of hair, make-up and costume changes needed to meet the demands of a complex script. But the young cast proved adept at changing their costumes in the scrublands and the large South African crew performed with increasingly high levels of professionalism. “They were so eager and they didn’t need all these trailers, which was a change for the crew who were used to working with American actors. We all very much wanted this film to be made in the time we had for it,” Van de Velde comments.

The Price of Sugar will premiere in Utrecht before an audience of ministers and dignitaries, both from within and without the Dutch film scene. The high profile event will serve both to remind the Dutch establishment of its colonial responsibilities and to underline the need for investment in quality commercial projects, Van de Velde argues.

“From the first day I hoped that this would be the opening film of the festival this year,” he stresses. “The story has a strong political connotation and many politicians will be there, but it is important to *make* this kind of movie. With all of the budget cuts, it is still important to make big movies with a wide scope. Otherwise we are back to making films set around the kitchen table, having problems and talking about them. This type of film must continue to be made, even though it costs money. That is why *The Price of Sugar* should open our national film festival.”



Photo: Cool BeansPVPictures

The Price of Sugar Director: Jean van de Velde **Script:** Jean van de Velde **Production:** Cool Beans (NL), PV Pictures (NL), Comet Films (DE), Spier Film (SA)

Still: *The Price of Sugar*



Jean van de Velde

Tula: The Revolt

Jeroen Leinders’ *Tula: The Revolt* is another film about slavery, this time within the Dutch colony of Curacao.

The film, which opened in Dutch cinemas in July 2013, stars Hollywood A-lister Danny Glover who accepted the role of Shinisi the ‘elder’ slave as soon as he read the script.

“Because he has been a slave so long (the idea of freedom) becomes a revolution for him, another possibility unimaginable for him,” Glover revealed recently about his character.

Comments Leinders: “The Dutch don’t seem to pay very much attention to their history when it comes to slavery. They would rather turn a page and forget about it. Of course Holland still has colonies ... but we don’t seem to have a lot of time to dive into history to work out why we have a lot of immigrants and why we have a responsibility of our own to live together with them.

“The subject of slavery itself is relevant to many more countries than just the Netherlands and we tried to find a way to show this film to as many people as possible, especially the young people.”

“I thought we needed an appealing cast,” he continues. “And also it was favourable for us to use English language because the Dutch youth tends to look more at films in English than in Dutch. And from a historical point of view the source of actors and actresses is much broader when you cast for an international film, rather than just a Dutch film.”



Still: *Tula: The Revolt*



‘They are generally smaller budget, high quality arthouse films’

Still: *Supernova*

Border? What border?

It’s looking like a perfect marriage. In recent years, the links between Dutch and German cinema have been drawing ever closer. At the 2012 Holland Film Meeting and this year in Cannes, special sessions brought producers and funders from the two countries together. Will the promise of a full-blown co-production treaty strengthen further this new intimacy? Geoffrey Macnab reports.

Speak to representatives of some of the German regional funds and they confirm that they are working more closely with the Dutch than ever before.

Teresa Hoefert de Turégano, Advisor of Film Funding at Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, points out that German producers in the region already have very good relations with their Dutch counterparts.

“That is partially a result of the effort that has been going on in the past couple of years to promote co-productions between the two countries,” she states. “All the work towards a co-production treaty is reinforcing a relationship that already exists and is developing it further.”

In 2011 alone, four international co-productions with Dutch involvement were funded in the Berlin-Brandenburg region, titles such as the Turkish Berlinale competition entry *Our Grand Despair* by Seyfi Teoman (co-produced by Dutch outfit Circe) and Russian master Sergei Loznita’s *In The Fog* (co-produced by the Dutch Lemming Film).

Up and coming Dutch director Jan-Willem van Ewijk’s new feature *Land*. (produced by Augustusfilm) was post-produced

in Berlin-Brandenburg, as will Amsterdam-based Mahmoud al Massad’s *Blessed Benefit*.

There has also been a strong Dutch presence in Lower Saxony and Bremen. Jochen Coldewey, head of funding at Nordmedia, cites Mischa Alexander’s *Sportsman Of The Century* (2006) as one of the first Dutch films to shoot in the region. This was followed by such titles as Tamar van den Dop’s *Supernova* (2013), Saskia Diesing’s *Nena* and Mike van Diem’s *The Surprise* (currently shooting). Coldewey is also giving strong consideration to Joram Lürsen’s *Public Works*, the new feature from Topkapi and Zentropa. The Fund is likely to provide around €250,000 for each of these projects.

Nordmedia, Coldewey explains, is also interested in applications from Dutch documentary makers and from directors of short films.

Filmstiftung Hamburg, Filmstiftung NRW and the Bavarian Film and Television Fund (FFF) are among other funds the Dutch have accessed. Scan the list of recent Dutch/German co-productions and you’ll find such films as Nanouk Leopold’s *Brownian Movement* (2009), a majority Dutch movie which received 20% of its funding from Germany, and Pia Marais’ *Layla Fourie* (2012), a minority Dutch co-production.

“We are connected with the Netherlands as a film country through a good and intense co operation that has grown over the years,” comments Petra Müller, CEO Film und Medienstiftung NRW. “It is through proximity with neighbouring countries that joint projects can be made, like with *Layla Fourie* or *It’s All so Quiet* by Nanouk Leopold.

Every year in Rotterdam we are partners in the Cinemart and development programme.”

It is understandable that Dutch companies like Circe, Lemming, Topkapi , KeyFilm and Augustusfilm want to work regularly with German partners. German enthusiasm for working with Dutch partners may seem more surprising. At present, Holland has a limited soft money scheme and it can’t provide German producers with the same incentives and facilities that their own producers find when they head to Germany. As Hoefert de Turégano puts it, “Of course people are aware of the fact that there is more money in Germany.”

However, the Dutch have set aside funds for co-production and distribution. Doreen Boonekamp, CEO of the Netherlands Film Fund, has been busy preparing the upcoming co-production treaty, as well as facilitating high-level contact and industry meetings between the Dutch and Germans, alongside her counterpart Peter Dinges, CEO of the German Federal Film Board FFA.

In recent years, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg has supported huge titles like Quentin Tarantino’s *Inglourious Basterds* and *Cloud Atlas*, directed by the Wachowskis and Tom Tykwer. The German/Dutch projects are not on the same scale. “They are generally smaller budget, high quality arthouse films. We are not talking about millions and millions of euros,” states Hoefert de Turégano. She attributes the increasing number of co-productions between the Dutch and Germans to the affinities between the producers from the two territories. “Even if it’s a minority Dutch project, we

are supporting the producers in our region. If we know they have relations with these Dutch producers, they work well together and they consistently come up with good projects.”

The key question the Fund sets itself when deciding whether or not to back these kinds of films is whether the projects are really interesting. They’re not necessarily expecting commercial blockbusters or huge amounts of regional spend. Thankfully there is a political will for the Germans and the Dutch to work together and it helps that the countries’ independent producers meet regularly at co-production markets in Rotterdam, Berlin and elsewhere.

Another advantage is a shared sensibility. “If we want to reduce it and take out all the historical issues, there are some common working methodologies that make it easier for professionals from the two industries to work together,” suggests Hoefert de Turégano.

“We have a lot of common themes,” agrees Nordmedia’s Coldewey. “The geography is more or less the same on the Dutch side and the northern German side where we are based in Hannover-Bremen. We have a lot of (shared) cultural themes as well. We are very hopeful and open-minded for future projects, especially in combination with the Netherlands Film Fund.”

The Dutch, Coldewey adds, are always on his mind. “We (Nordmedia) were established just after the Expo 2000 in Hannover. When I look outside my window, the Dutch pavilion (from the Expo) is still standing - so I am reminded of the Dutch every day!”

Urban Wolf

“It feels great!” director Jim Taihuttu enthuses to Geoffrey Macnab about seeing his new film *Wolf* selected for the 2013 San Sebastian Film Festival. “Only three years ago we financed our first movie ourselves and were happy when it actually played in cinemas. This is our second movie and it already made it to the festival. The sky is the limit...”

Wolf isn’t the typical Dutch festival film. It’s a bruising action-drama set against the backcloth of kickboxing and organised crime.

Majid (Marwan Kenzari) is a martial arts fighter from an impoverished inner city background. As his career develops and his reputation for ferocity inside and outside of the ring grows, he is thrown together with some brutal associates.

Taihuttu knew that casting the lead role would be crucial to the success of his film. He needed someone who could not only act but who would also be convincing in the ring.

“We’ve been friends for a couple of years now and during the filming of my previous feature *Rabat*, we started discussing doing a boxing film,” the director reflects on his choice of Kenzari to star in *Wolf*. The actor did all his own stunts. He trained with professional kick boxers. His opponents in the film are likewise hardened professionals.

“When I had completed editing *Rabat*, Marwan started training very intensely and I started writing the script and setting up the production with (producer) Julius Ponten. After a year and a half of training and eating a

million chickens, not only did Marwan look like a kickboxer but he actually became one!”

Yes, the director acknowledges, he is a kickboxing fan himself. This quickly growing sport is seen by outsiders as being especially brutal. However, the cognoscenti point to its grace and subtlety – and the way it brings together elements from a range of different fighting disciplines.

Taihuttu, who also describes himself as a big admirer of traditional boxing movies, follows Martin Scorsese’s example in *Raging Bull* (1980) by shooting in black and white.

“I don’t even think that I would have gone into making movies without *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull* and my favourite, *Mean Streets*,” ponders the filmmaker over Scorsese’s big influence on his career. “But I also love the work of Wim Wenders. From the newer directors, I admire Jacques Audiard and Nicolas Winding Refn, not only their films but the way they move in the world of cinema, the way their career has evolved and the way they work their actors.”

As for the black and white, Taihuttu, knew exactly the look he wanted. He wasn’t after the sleek monochrome you often see in other films shot in the format. He was determined that the images in *Wolf* would be grainy, full textured and naturalistic.

“We scouted for grey and gritty neighbourhoods as well,” Taihuttu recalls. “In the end, we were very happy to shoot the whole film in Kanaleneiland in Utrecht. This is a kind of infamous neighbourhood where people advised us not to shoot, but during the two months

Marwan, myself and (Director of Photography) Lennart Verstegen lived there we encountered nothing but hospitality, and we made a lot of new friends.”

The references to the criminal underworld come from stories the director read in newspapers. “All the crime stuff is based on actual events,” he states. The character of Majid may be fictional but the director insists there are thousands of alienated youngsters like him, just “struggling to survive and feeling left behind in the Dutch suburbs.”

When it came to financing *Wolf*, which has recently been picked up for international sales by US-based XYZ Films, Taihuttu was given a big boost by the success of his previous film *Rabat*. He was already being called “the voice of a new generation.” The director was again working with production company, Habbekrats. When he entered *Wolf* for the Netherlands Film Fund competition for new talent (De Oversteek), he was able to secure a sizeable chunk of the budget for the film.

Not that Taihuttu sees *Wolf* and *Rabat* as direct companion pieces. “*Rabat* was about friendship, this is about betrayal,” explains the director of the distinction between the two films. “*Rabat* was about the summer and the warmth of colours, this is a black and white movie, set in winter. But, most of all, *Rabat* was about a young guy who had to choose between two worlds that keep pulling him in. Majid is a guy pushed away by both these worlds.”

With *Wolf* ready to be shown to audiences in San Sebastian and the Netherlands, Taihuttu is

already busy hatching a new project. This one will have more of a historical flavour. It is to be set in Indonesia in 1948, just as the Dutch colonial era was coming to an end. The film will explore the circumstances behind an extremely bloody war that Dutch historians have long ignored and that isn’t even described as such in the history books.

The story has a very personal resonance for the director. “My grandfather is from Indonesia and his father was a sergeant for the Dutch army in this war.”

There are no more details to reveal other than that actor Marwan Kenzari, fast becoming a kind of muse to Taihuttu, will again feature in an important role.



‘Rabat was about friendship, Wolf is about betrayal’

Wolf Director: Jim Taihuttu **Script:** Jim Taihuttu **Production:** Habbekrats **Sales:** XYZ Films

Still: *Wolf*



Jim Taihuttu

Placing René

René Hazekamp's feature-length doc debut was selected for Locarno's Semaine de la Critique Documentary competition. He talks to Nick Cunningham.

The Unplaceables is a gritty portrait of life on the streets of Rotterdam, as seen through the eyes of the vagrant Spijker and other homeless people working in a community project to clean the city's streets.

Spijker is a constant and looming presence in the film, physically imposing and possessing of a remarkable tendency towards loud and animated monologue. He has also been part of director René Hazekamp's life for almost two decades, the pair meeting sporadically in night bars where the filmmaker would listen to Spijker's long, rambling and highly idiosyncratic speeches.

"I wrote them down mostly on beer mats, so I have a lot of notes from him which I used for various scripts that were never finished," comments Hazekamp. "He is a bum and he doesn't have a home and sometimes he is squatting. It is a hard life to be homeless and an alcoholic and to have enough intellect to survive, and I always wanted to make a film with him."

Hazekamp made a short film *Zwerfmens* in 2008 that included Spijker. Two years later he came across him again by a canal, this time looking a lot worse for wear. "I thought he would die that year and I felt I had to make a documentary about him. So I decided to do it there and then, without funding, without money."

Shooting hours were determined by the respective schedules of Hazekamp and his subject. Spijker and the other homeless

would gather every morning at 8am for community work at the rubbish collection site. The director himself wouldn't generally start work until 10am, so he was granted two hours gratis each morning to shoot his footage at will.

'He's not camera shy. He just doesn't care'

"I work without a sound man, so I used a wireless microphone," Hazekamp continues. "Spijker didn't change at all (when he was being filmed). That's the funny thing about him. He just mumbles. He just goes on like he always does. He is not camera shy. He just doesn't care. Sometimes there were days when he didn't say anything and didn't want me around, but if I kept my distance for an hour or two then he suddenly changed his mood and we could continue filming."

Spijker wasn't always so reliable as a subject in terms of being at the right place at the right time, but this fact served to broaden both the scope and potential of Hazekamp's film. When he began to fold in the lives of other Rotterdam vagrants he knew that he had the material for a documentary feature that may attract not only a wide audience but broadcaster investment as well.

"He didn't turn up some mornings and I thought, well I'm not going to sit here for nothing, so I followed some other interesting people," he confirms. "When I did this for a week I thought this could be more than just a hobby project, so I contacted a local tv station – TV Rijnmond – and got some subsidies from the

Media Fund which made it possible to finish the film."

Hazekamp's career progression so far has been less than orthodox. In the early 1990s he made a series of experimental dance movies, before deciding to be a merchant seaman. On his return he worked for Dutch broadcaster VPRO making music documentaries of 50-minute duration. "It was very productive. We didn't have to ask for funds as the money was always in place. We made a programme a month. Not a lot of money. Not a lot of time. Four days of shooting. Five days of edit. It was like a pressure cooker," he stresses.

He is currently editing his next project *Circus Time* (also for VPRO) which he hopes will be ready in time for (and selected by) IDFA in November 2013. He had planned to make a documentary about dementia but when he was scouting for locations he discovered a school for circus performers. He decided there and then to change tack in his choice of subject matter. He hopes to then return to the subject of dementia, but concedes that it will be a tough film to finance.

"I call it a documentary dance movie, but actually it is neither, more of a drama," he stresses. "So it's is a kind of experimental dance drama documentary about dementia – it is hard to categorise it which makes it very difficult to fund. So we are struggling with it.

"Making films is hard but I am working more or less outside of the system. I am used to little money for all my projects, but I am still affected by this demise of the funding. But my friends are mainly dancers and theatre players, so they have it a lot worse than me," he concludes.



Still: *The Unplaceables*

The Unplaceables Director: René Hazekamp **Script:** René Hazekamp **Production:** Riverpark Films

Focus on Education



Photo: Hans Boddeke

“We really need to be creative!” Florine Wiebenga declares of the challenges facing the education department of EYE. As she explains to Geoffrey Macnab, film education is considered a priority by the Government... even as budgets are being trimmed.

EYE’s flagship education programme is Moviezone, conceived in the late 1990s after the Government decided that children should be taught about visual arts (including film) in a broader, more engaging way. The initial step was to choose 20 movies that could be shown to young people at cinemas throughout the Netherlands, during school hours. Teachers were then provided with educational materials to help them organise discussions about the films being screened, such as *Amelie*, *Little Miss Sunshine* and *21 Grams*.

Over the years, Moviezone has begun to target slightly younger children and to encourage them to watch all sorts of films. “We try to show them that there is a huge range of movies,” Wiebenga says of the strategy to help young cinemagoers engage with everything from arthouse to blockbusters. The aim now is to “skip the teachers” and to reach the would-be film lovers directly.

“The Government wants children to be independent and able to choose themselves,” is how she explains the shift in emphasis. There are still classroom-based activities but the idea now is that kids make up their own minds about “what they are going to visit, what to see and write about for this course. They have to do it in their own time...it’s like homework.”

For obvious reasons, film education is changing. We’re in the midst of a new digital era when movies can be watched on many different platforms. “We are not against watching films online,” Wiebenga says. One new digital initiative is Moviezone’s online drama series, produced together with the production outfit NewBe TV. The self-reflexive storyline follows youngsters who want to become filmmakers. The hope is that the series will be as compelling as any soap opera while also offering valuable lessons on how films are made.

Moviezone’s primary aim is to engage kids of all ages. EYE also organises activities for “youngsters who are really into film and want to do something more with it.” For example, there are Moviezone “juries” at various festivals where young cinephiles assess the merits of different films. There are also practical aspects to Moviezone, among them workshops and masterclasses, where the youngsters can meet film professionals and develop their own film ideas.

“Since we are a museum now, we also have the equipment to let them (the kids) make films. For example, we have a workshop space here with 15 computers where they can edit films and add music. We also have all sorts of equipment like cameras.”

The education team often base workshops around the exhibitions being staged in EYE. For example, when the institute held an exhibition of the work of experimental animator Oskar Fischinger, the kids were given the chance to dabble in abstract animation and make their own Fischinger-style movies. With a new exhibition planned of the

Quay brothers’ work, kids will soon be given the chance to experiment in puppet animation.

Additionally, EYE’s education department has close links with Holland’s leading film schools. Together with the Film Academy, the department is always on the lookout for new talent.

“The aim now is to skip the teachers...”

Film Jewels is a programme designed to give kids a sense of film history. Short films are shown from pioneers like Georges Méliès and (from a later era) Jacques Tati. Kids learn how movies were first shown in fairgrounds and small theatres. They are given a sense of why and when cinema made the transition to sound. The department makes heavy use of the trove of films in EYE’s own collection. These can range from well-known classics to old advertising films.

Wienbega has been working in film education since 2002. She says that it has been a big boost to be able to operate out of EYE’s spectacular new headquarters in the centre of Amsterdam. Nevertheless, the education programme is targeted at kids *all over* the Netherlands, not just those in its major city. One initiative is “Class Film” which encourages kids around the country to rate new movies.

Certain distributors, among them A Film and Amstel, work closely with EYE education and will release some of the films that are championed by the kids. The department also collaborates closely with the children’s film festival, Cinekid. This year, they

are working together on an initiative to bring more high quality kids’ movies from the rest of the world to the Netherlands.

“As soon as a commercial distributor is not interested in a children’s movie, we do research to see if it is possible for us to use this film,” Wienbega explains.

As a child, Wienbega (now 35) received a progressive education that enabled her to study art and film. “We watched movies, made movies,” she recalls, and that early experience fired her with the enthusiasm to give other kids similar opportunities through EYE’s education programmes.

With her programmes reaching 350,000 young people in the Netherlands every year, it is clear that this is one experiment that has already been a resounding success.

No Kidding!



Fleur Winters



Boudewijn Koole



Photo: Yvonne Witte

Monique Ruinen

The excellence of Dutch movies for kids is now taken for granted, writes Geoffrey Macnab, and what's more there seems to be a neverending supply of talent. Box-office hits and festival favourites like Dennis Bots' *Cool Kids Don't Cry* (2012) and Boudewijn Koole's *Kauwboy* (2012) just keep on coming. This year Barbara Bredero's *Class of Fun* passed the 600.000 admissions mark in the Netherlands.

However, this localised expertise is not as deep rooted as it may appear. There are very specific economic and cultural reasons why the children's film sector has flourished over the last two decades.

"Basically, we have (only) about 20 years of experience," suggests Monique Ruinen, consultant at the Netherlands Film Fund, overseeing children's films. One pivotal figure in the children's film boom, she notes, was Burny Bos who founded Bos Bros in 1989 with the express intention of making high quality, intelligent film and TV drama aimed at children and families.

Before Bos, Ruinen recalls, there were no Dutch children's films in the cinemas. She credits the prolific producer with galvanising the sector by beginning to adapt famous children's books for the screen, among them *The Flying Liftboy* (*Abeltje*) by Annie M.G. Schmidt, the so-called "queen of Dutch children's literature."

It was a clever strategy. Parents who read Schmidt's books to their kids, and had read them themselves when they were young, were keen to see what the films would be like. "For the first time, Bos started getting families

to Dutch film because the films were good and because of the famous title. That was basically the start and other people started building on that."

Another important catalyst was the Netherlands Film Fund. As Fleur Winters, head Cinekid For Professionals notes, "they (the Fund) took children's film very seriously." Broadcaster AVRO was likewise an early champion of Bos' work. And also active from early days were production companies like Lemming Film. Soon, a market for family films began to spring up.

'The Fund took children's film very seriously...'

The Film Fund, the Media Fund, CoBO and the public service broadcasters soon joined together to support Cinema Junior, an initiative to back artistic films for children (intended as a counterbalance to the more commercial kids' movies), and because of all this pioneering activity, Dutch directors gained vast experience working in the genre.

In spite of the budget cuts now facing the public film sector, the commitment to children's film hasn't wavered. Out of approximately 20 features that the Netherlands Film Fund supports every year, at least a quarter are likely to be family films. "I do get lots of promising projects on my desk," Ruinen says of the constant stream of children's films that now arrive at the Fund. "The closer it gets to realisation and production funding, the harder the choices!"

While striving to choose the best projects, Ruinen is always looking for a balance between commercial films, artistic films, films for toddlers, films for 6-12 year olds and for young adults. She cites research that underlines how much affection the local audience now has for children's films. In the last decade, 23% of all Dutch films were children's or family films... but they attracted almost 50% of the overall audience for Dutch cinema.

It helps that the Dutch have their own children's film festival, Cinekid. Now 27 years old, the festival has a four-day industry programme (which includes a co-production market) running alongside its screenings of the best kids' movies. "Whereas in previous years we might look at Scandinavia for great children's films, people turn their heads now to Holland," says Cinekid for Professionals chief Fleur Winters.

In order to compete with big American rivals and to produce artistic as well as mainstream commercial fare, Dutch producers still need the help of the Netherlands Film Fund. However, children's films are now a core part of the production programme. They are also increasingly targeted towards the international market. The Fund offers distribution and dubbing support to foreign distributors and sales agents handling Dutch features. Remake rights to Dutch kids' movies are also often sold on. (A Norwegian version of *Cool Kids Don't Cry* is currently in the works.) And Dutch kids' movies regularly turn up in festivals from the Berlinale to Toronto.

In Holland itself, the optimum time for releasing children's films is between St Nicholas Day in early December and Christmas.

"The difficulty is that this field is very crowded also with non-European parties - Disney, Pixar and Dreamworks," stresses Winters. Noting the danger of being eclipsed by aggressively marketed Hollywood movies, distributors are therefore spreading Dutch kids' films more evenly across the calendar.

The very best directors in the Netherlands regularly work on kids' movies. As Boudewijn Koole puts it, the children's cinema arena has become "a kind of playground for younger creatives." Working on youth series for VPRO, Koole himself was able to experiment and stretch himself as a filmmaker in a way that would have been inconceivable on movies made for adults.

"I like the combination of working for children and dealing with a pretty heavy topic," Koole reflects. "We as adults don't have the answers. Sometimes, to go back to that time when you didn't have all these layers - all this knowledge and experience - makes things more honest and clear. That's why I like to go back to the point of view of children. I find it always inspiring!"

Food for Thought

Menno Meyjes’ *The Dinner* is in official selection at the Toronto International Film Festival. The director speaks with Geoffrey Macnab.

Menno Meyjes has had an extraordinarily colourful international career. The Dutch writer-director has scripted films for Steven Spielberg (*Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom*, *The Color Purple*) while making his own movies about bullfighters (*A Matador’s Mistress*) and the ill-starred youth of Adolf Hitler (*Max*). What Meyjes had not done up until now was work back home in Holland.

“You actually have to rearrange the wiring in your whole brain when you get back to Europe,” Meyjes observed when he first moved away from Hollywood. Making a film of Herman Koch’s bestseller *The Dinner* in the Netherlands required a similar readjustment, but it is a process that he has relished.

The book has been a huge success in the Netherlands and tells of two bourgeois couples (brothers Paul and Serge and their wives) who meet in an upmarket Amsterdam restaurant. After the usual small talk, it becomes apparent that an act of extreme violence by their teenage sons threatens to tear their seemingly contented lives apart. The sons’ misdeed has not yet been noticed by the police. It’s up to the parents to decide how far they will go to protect their offspring.

Production credits on the film are taken by American producer Cotty Chubb, whose Dutch wife encouraged him to option the novel. The experienced producer thought Meyjes was the ideal candidate to direct. When Meyjes

read Koch’s work in Dutch he was immediately intrigued by its focus on family relations.

“Most exciting, dramatic things happen to us in the framework of our family and of our existence with our partners and children,” the writer-director observes. “This is a thriller about family life.”

Meyjes was startled by the quality of his Dutch actors

Born and raised in Holland Meyjes felt it would be more “organic” to direct the film, with Chubb’s blessing, in Dutch. So after a highly successful career writing and directing English language movies, Meyjes was finally working in his mother tongue - something that he found both a little strange but a great relief. “Suddenly you are working in a language that you know rather well but everything sounds new again! Had I continued to live in Holland, I probably wouldn’t have been that excited about the language.”

The Dinner is one of a number of recent films by European directors looking at the discontents that lie simmering behind seemingly well adjusted bourgeois families’ existences, such as Roman Polanski’s *Carnage*. In Lynne Ramsay’s *We Need To Talk About Kevin*, adapted from Lionel Shriver’s novel, a mother mulls over the events that led to her son committing a massacre. There are also various Luis Bunuel films (for example, *The Discreet Charm Of The Bourgeoisie* or *The Exterminating*

Angel) in which middle-class protagonists behave in a more and more strained fashion.

Meyjes was startled by the quality of the Dutch actors he worked with on *The Dinner*, among them Jacob Derwig, Kim van Kooten and Thekla Reuten who work extensively on stage as well as screen.

His players were “unbelievably good,” he says. They weren’t big-headed and they didn’t pull stunts or throw tantrums. Their approach, he enthuses, was measured and thoroughly professional. “For me and my casting people, it was lovely. When you’ve been around the block a few times and you’ve been casting in Los Angeles and in London, you know all the stories... we had none of that. There was no baggage.”

Financing *The Dinner* was remarkably straightforward. This wasn’t one of those films on which the producers had to scurry around collecting bits of soft money here and there or putting together a fiendishly complex co-production. “We went to Eyeworks. Founder Reinout Oerlemans and producer Maarten Swart liked the project and basically wrote the cheque,” Meyjes confirms. The Netherlands Film Fund backed the project at both development and post-production stages.

***The Dinner* was made on location, not in a studio.** Meyjes shot the restaurant scenes in Samhoud, a real restaurant in Amsterdam. “All you do is build yourself a box,” Meyjes says of setting up on a studio lot. “You spend all this money and all you’ve got is a box. OK, it’s a little easier to hang a light and you can do a fancier shot...but my whole thing was

that I wanted it to be believable.” With the film premiering in Toronto, Meyjes expects that an English language remake could well follow, but his film has remained, he believes, very true to the book’s Dutch origins. Meyjes’ verdict on the process of working in the Netherlands is clearly that, yes, it is indeed very good to be back home!



Photo: Victor Arnolds

The Dinner Director: Menno Meyjes
Script: Menno Meyjes **Production:** Eyeworks Film & TV Drama

Still: *The Dinner*

Holland Meets Russia



Still: *Matterhorn*

The Holland Film Meeting (HFM) of the Netherlands Film Festival takes on a distinctly Russian flavour in 2013 as producers and funders from both countries weigh up the pros and cons of co-production alliance. Nick Cunningham reports.

To celebrate the recent heightening of *entente cordiale* between the Netherlands and Russia, both countries are pulling out the stops during the second half 2013 to celebrate each other's contribution to European culture, economics and the sciences.

EYE International is presenting a series of Dutch films and programmes at leading Russian festivals (Diederik Ebbinge has already picked up the Audience Award at the Moscow International Film Festival for *Matterhorn*). The 2013 St Petersburg Film Festival will include a large kids' programme which will be rolled out to other Russian events in the coming months. The Netherlands will respond in kind at festivals such as the Netherlands Film Festival and Cinekid, offering a wider business dimension to proceedings. As EYE International's Claudia Landsberger stresses, "Russia with its long tradition in storytelling has a lot to offer, and it can be very interesting for a small country like the Netherlands to partner with a bigger brother. After all, Peter the Great also found refuge in our country some years ago, which shows our ties go back quite some time."

This view is backed up by Holland Film Meeting's Signe Zeilich-Jensen who will not only celebrate the successes of

Russian cinema in Utrecht, but will look to forge strong working relations between Russian professionals and those from the home Dutch industry. "Russia has a strong and long cinematic tradition with many very good film directors with both an individual style and a strong commitment to making beautiful films," she agrees. "There are established, internationally-minded producers but there is also an emerging, and growing, group of producers in Russia that is, like everywhere else, interested in international co-productions and looking for new opportunities."

While some observers fear that the film industry under Putin is geared more towards inward reflection than outward growth – Landsberger notes how the Moscow audience was considerably more enlightened than their government in rewarding *Matterhorn*, a film "about true love, between two men" – Zeilich-Jensen believes that this is the perfect time to sure up these links. "I think maybe it is even more important to retain contact with filmmakers from countries where it is changing politically," she comments. "That is the work we are here to do, to exchange knowledge and talent, and I think that is important anywhere, at any time. That work has no political connotation."

Central to the Holland Meets Russia programme, made in collaboration with Moscow Business Square and the Northern Seas Film Forum (St Petersburg), are case studies of two multi award-winning films with strong Russo-Dutch ties: Utrecht-based Russophile Jos Stelling's *Death and the Girl* and Russian Viktor Kossakovsky's

Vivan las Antipodas. Both directors are invited to discuss their films. Stelling Films' *Death and the Girl* was co-produced with the Russian TVINDIE Film Production while *Vivan las Antipodas* was co-produced with Holland's Lemming Film.

'More strong projects with an international potential'

During the event Utrecht will also play host to a delegation of key Russian funders and producers who will explain their working methods, discuss their recent output and isolate the common areas of interest in order to facilitate ongoing co-operation with the Dutch and European industries.

In addition, a number of high-quality Russian or Russian related projects in development are selected for the Netherlands Production Platform (NPP) co-production market (26-29 September 2013), joining approximately seventeen others from the Netherlands and Europe. These include Proline's adaptation of a Hans Christian Andersen story: *The Dream God* by Russian director Valeriya Gai Germanika.

Seven Dutch projects have been chosen for this year's NPP, including director Peter Greenaway's *Eisenstein in Guanajuato*, produced by Submarine; Fu Works' *The Witch of the Fens* (directed by Thijs Schreuder) and Joost van Ginkel's *La Holandesa*, produced by Smarthouse.

This will be Zeilich-Jensen's third Holland Film Meeting as its head. What changes has she noticed in what Dutch producers have to offer over this period? "I can only judge by what I get on my desk but I think there has been more strong projects with an international potential," she points out. "There will always be good ideas but I think if you look back on these three years we have also been very lucky with a strong film policy by the Film Fund, and also with new young producers who are thinking in a different way about reaching audiences. They are also thinking more internationally, which has affected the way that films have been produced and also how they tell their stories."

Zeilich-Jensen further argues the benefits of NPP selection for both Dutch and international (and new and established) producers alike. "In last year's group there was a very big exchange of mutual understanding among the participants. They had a lot of fun together but it was also good for them to meet and see how, within the project presentations, everybody is nervous and that it's not easy to talk about your work."

"It's nice to realise that you are not alone. And when they go home they leave with a positive feeling and a lot of new contacts and friends," she concludes.

Short Cuts



Ben Verbong

FOCUS GERMANY

After the success of its 2012 Germany/Holland co-pro focus, the Holland Film Meeting will further examine German/Dutch collaboration this year, but with a greater emphasis on story-telling. Professional participants will be looking therefore to explore the type of content that will satisfy audiences from both countries (and beyond) in the future. Leading funders, producers, sales agents, distributors and commissioning editors will gather for a one-day session September 28 to workshop these creative ideas and to hear a keynote address by Dutch director Ben Verbong. Since 1996 Verbong is working in Germany where he directed some 20 films for television as well as 5 feature films. He won the Bayerische Filmpreis three times and the Deutsche Filmpreis (DAS SAMS). The programme is commissioned by the Netherlands Film Fund and the German FFA and presented by former HFM head Ellis Driessen.



Michel Schöpping
Photo: Bas Lösekoot



Jozef van Wissem
Photo: Bjarne Jonasson

TWO GONGS FOR MUSIC MAESTROS

In July 2013 Dutch sound designer and composer Michel Schöpping won the prestigious Alex North Award at the 7th Fumicité International Film Music Festival for his work on the Belgian-Dutch co-production *The Fifth Season* by Peter Brosens and Jessica Woodworth. Schöpping joins a list of heavyweight laureates that include Jerry Goldsmith and Henri Mancini.

From the jury's report: *'Michel Schöpping succeeds in The Fifth Season in bringing together in an organic way all the different layers of the soundtrack (original score, existing music and the sound of the film itself), creating an intense and disquieting atmosphere, which is transformed into an essential element of the narrative.'*

With much Dutch focus placed on Alex van Warmerdam's achievements in Cannes this year it went largely unnoticed that another Dutchman, Jozef van Wissem, minimalist composer and lute player, won the Cannes Soundtrack Award for the score for Jim Jarmusch's competition film *Only Lovers Left Alive*.

A native of New York, Van Wissem regularly collaborates with Jarmusch, Tilda Swinton and Zola Jesus and he is currently working on several more soundtracks for cinema. Van Wissem describes his music as "uncluttered and direct, with a viscerally hypnotic and emotional impact and delivered with an ascetic intensity reflected in the catholic titles."

The New York Times writes of Van Wissem: "As both an avant-garde composer and a baroque lutenist, the Dutch musician Mr van Wissem is no stranger to dichotomy."



Still: Borgman

BORGMAN SUCCESS

Alex van Warmerdam's Cannes competition selection *Borgman* received the largest ever pre-premiere in Dutch cinema history August 28, when it screened in 145 cinemas across The Netherlands. The simultaneous screening was organised by Cinema Digitaal, which digitized all Dutch cinemas in 2012 and which was funded by the Dutch Cinema Exhibitors Association (NVB), the Dutch Film Distributors Association (NVF), the Netherlands Film Fund and the Dutch government, and co-initiated by EYE.

Borgman, the first Dutch selection for Cannes competition in 38 years, is about the malevolent effect that the mysterious Camile Borgman has on the inhabitants of a middle-class Dutch neighbourhood. It has been sold to more than 25 territories by Fortissimo, and has been picked up by numerous international film festivals that include Moscow, Sarajevo, Motovun, Toronto, Hamburg, London, Sitges and Taipei.

After the Cannes screening producer Marc van Warmerdam (brother of Alex) commented: "I am chairman of the Dutch Producers Association and I realised the importance of having a film in competition, whether the last time was 38 or 10 years ago. When you start googling *Borgman* you find articles from all over the world, from Brazil to New Zealand to China wherever. This (selection) makes audiences abroad very aware of Dutch film."



HAGHEFILM LAUNCH

Earlier this year Dutch lab Cineco and its daughter company Haghefilm Conservation were relaunched under the name Haghefilm Digitaal. The new company will be the only full service (post) production facility for film and video in the Netherlands.

The relaunch, which will determine that film producers will have less inclination to go abroad for the technical post-production of their films, was engineered by industry veterans (and festival regulars) Erik Vrolijk and Wibo de Groot, who have over 20 years of international experience in the field of film laboratories, dealing with analogue as well as digital film.

The two entrepreneurs have taken the lead in saving the only film lab in the Netherlands in order to retain film preservation know-how and to safeguard the conservation of Dutch cultural heritage.

At the 2013 Netherlands Production Platform Haghefilm will offer the Haghefilm International Post Production Prize to one of the Works-in-Progress (originally pitched at a previous NPP).



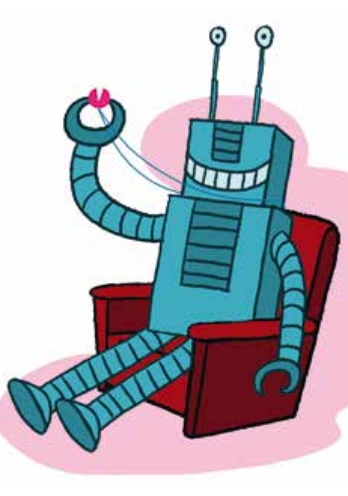
Leontine Petit

PETIT NOD FOR TORONTO LAB

Lemming Film's Leontine Petit is selected to take part in the 4th Producers Lab Toronto (September 4 - 7) at the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival. The event is organised by European Film Promotion (EFP) in collaboration with the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC) and the Toronto International Film Festival. Its objective is to stimulate the development of European-Canadian co-productions.

Petit will be part of a group of 24 talented, experienced and prolific producers from Europe, Canada, Australia and New-Zealand. During the 4-day event they will be seeking out projects with a broad range of possibilities in terms of financing, distribution and creativity. Petit has been selected by the EFP network from the alumni of their prestigious Cannes-based networking platform Producers on the Move.

As a producer Petit is responsible for development and financing at Lemming Film in the Netherlands and Hamster Film in Germany. She is co-owner of both companies. Lemming Film has produced some of the Netherlands' most successful and highly acclaimed Dutch films of recent years, including *In Your Name*, *Tony 10*, *Patatje Oorlog*, *Eep!* and *My Joy*.



PLEASE KLIK HERE!

EYE will play host to the annual KLIK! Amsterdam Animation Festival that runs this year November 12-17. One of the key strands of this year's festival is the focus on the Fabulous 50s, a groundbreaking era in animation influenced greatly by the application of modern design across all strata of society and the use of primary colours and graphic forms.

In addition, as part of this year's Russo/Dutch celebrations, KLIK! will present a celebration of Russian animation in collaboration with the Hermitage Amsterdam, The Amsterdamsche Fonds, The NLR2013 and the International festival of Animation Arts Multivision.

Since its launch in 2007 KLIK! has evolved as a brand with international appeal and range. At the same time KLIK! functions as a platform, knowledge hub and catalyst for the domestic and international animation sector.

Looking for Diederi(c)k

In the Netherlands, Diederiks are like buses. You wait an age for one to come along and then three arrive at once. Diederiks Ebbinge, Van Rooijen and Koopal (ok, the latter spells his forename with a ‘c’) talk to Nick Cunningham.

Climbing the Matterhorn

It has been an excellent year for Diederik Ebbinge whose feature debut *Matterhorn* won over festival audiences in 2013. While many in the Dutch industry saw it initially as an unassuming if quirky television film, distributor Cineart was altogether more confident about its prospects and offered it to IFFR (Rotterdam) Bright Future. Even Ebbinge questioned this rationale.

“I really doubted that decision,” he claims. “I always thought when small movies come out nobody is going to watch them, so maybe it was safer to keep it as a television film. But they convinced me, and after that it was incredible what happened.”

The film won the audience award at Rotterdam and, with the help of EYE International’s Claudia Landsberger, was picked by sales agent Media Luna who sold the film to a slew of international territories including Artsploitation in the US. It was selected for many more international festivals and won another key audience award, at the Moscow International Film Festival. “It was wonderful, and a great push for me to work on my next film,” says Ebbinge.

Director/writer/actor Ebbinge is currently partnered with prolific Dutch producer Frans van Gestel on a “psychological thriller” that spans 30 years, set initially in a cloistered and privilege-laden old Dutch university before a climax

during the recent credit crunch. The human angle is fixed in the relationship between a cultured, moneyed student and a scholarship kid.

“I worked in theatre for almost 20 years and you can be more abstract in theatre than in film, and I bring that abstraction with me to film,” comments Ebbinge. “I’m not really interested in reality. I don’t think you will ever see a film of mine that is really realistic, and I think that must be a residue from my theatre business. I always think bigger than reality. Or at least different from reality.”

Crossover Maestro

When feature/tv director Diederik van Rooijen is asked how he positions himself – arthouse or commercial ? - he opts for a place right in the middle. “I’m an in-betweenier,” he says. “I’m not so arthouse. But you know those US mainstream arthouse directors – the Paul Thomas Andersons, the Alfonso Cuarons, even the David Finchers - they are the ones I look up to the most. But I like to do a bit of mainstream too.”

Van Rooijen has made four features to date – *Bollywood Hero* and *Stella’s War* in 2009, *Taped* (2012) and *Daylight*, released earlier this year. A self-confessed workaholic, Van Rooijen then threw himself into the third season of acclaimed crime series *Penoza*.

“I shot *Stellas’ War* in 17 days and *Taped* in 11 days but with a television show you have to concentrate for 50 days at a stretch. You have an easier overview with a feature film as the scope is so much smaller,” he stresses.

“*Taped* didn’t get a lot of viewers,” he continues, “and I don’t know why, but it’s my greatest movie to date as it got me an American agent and Amercian attention and now I’m reading American scripts. The US business defined the type of concept movie which *Taped* obviously is. They really go for that and I find that the television stuff that I have done is really for them; it has this realism to it and this harshness.”

‘Feature film scope is smaller’

Van Rooijen may have his sights set on the US market, but he is maintaining strong links with his home industry in the Netherlands. “It’s not like I’m burning my own house,” he says.

His *Van Hall* project will be about the financing of the Second World War Dutch Resistance. “It’s not a classical war movie, it is more like *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, with more of a 70’s sense, which is really cool”. He is also developing a film with Dutch production powerhouse Eyeworks about 1970s Dutch dandy/boxer/idol Cor Eversteijn.

“And I feel there is an American thing coming through very soon, which is really nice,” he adds.

Running a Marathon

Director Diederick Koopal was a veteran of several hundred commercials as creative director/writer before he made his feature debut *The Marathon* in 2012. The Eyeworks-produced tale of five slobes who run the Rotterdam Marathon in order to save the garage that employs them attracted a Dutch audience in excess of 400,000.

The film was notable for employing a cast better known for theatre than for mainstream cinema. These include Alex van Warmerdam stalwarts Ariane Schluter and Annet Malherbe and National Theatre player Stefan de Walles.

“Most commercial-based films in the Netherlands normally take tv stars and celebrities and then try to make the film with them,” Koopal notes. “In the end I was able to pick those actors who come from theatre companies and who are not well known to the big audiences. But I knew they were very good and that’s why we did it.”

Earlier this year Koopal made three short films about people who spice up their boring lives on Facebook. His feature trajectory, however, will continue with a film about how a group of school playground dads react when a convicted paedophile moves into the local area. “It will start off as a light-footed film about friendship before turning into a thriller,” he comments.

Another Koopal project is a comedy about a Suriname ex-convict who, after being seduced by a middle-class woman in a gym, decides to become a gigolo. “It’s a kind of coming-of-age film even though he is an older guy. It’s also a film about modern slavery. It’s a comedy but it has a very dark background,” he concludes.



Still: *Matterhorn*



Still: *The Marathon*



Still: *Daylight*



Diederik Ebbinge



Diederick Koopal
Photo: Pief Weymans



Diederik van Rooijen
Photo: Mark Nettenbreijers

Star Profile

Marwan Kenzari

Marwan Kenzari, born in The Hague in 1983, is a Dutch actor of Tunisian origin. After graduating from The Maastricht Theatre Academy Marwan was invited to join the prestigious Toneelgroep Amsterdam (The Netherlands' largest repertory theatre company), where he performed on stages from Moscow to New York.

On the silver screen he has dazzled in Antoinette Beumer's *Loft*, Alex van Warmerdam's *The last Days of Emma Blank* and *Rabat* (Jim Taihuttu). His TV roles include appearances in Dutch TV shows *Penoza* and *Van God Los*. In Jim Taihuttu's *Wolf*, selected for San Sebastian New Directors competition, he plays the main character, Majid.

Comments Taihuttu: "Marwan is a soldier kinda actor but with a distinguished touch. He bites into a role like an animal and refuses to let go. After *Rabat* I was inspired to write a whole movie for him."

