

SEE NL



Alex van Warmerdam
back with Schneider vs Bax

Erik de Bruyn opens
Utrecht with J.Kessels

Cinekid and Holland Film
Meeting open for business

Joram Lürsen on *Public*
Works

Full Contact for **David**
Verbeek in Toronto

Issue #20 September 2015 Venice/TIFF/Netherlands Film Festival



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NL FILM
FONDS



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Cover still: *Schneider vs. Bax* ◊ **Director:** Alex van Warmerdam **Script:** Alex van Warmerdam **Production:** Graniet Film (NL) **Co-production:** CZAR TV(BE) **Sales:** Fortissimo Films **See page 20**

Still: *Full Contact* **See page 22**

COLOPHON

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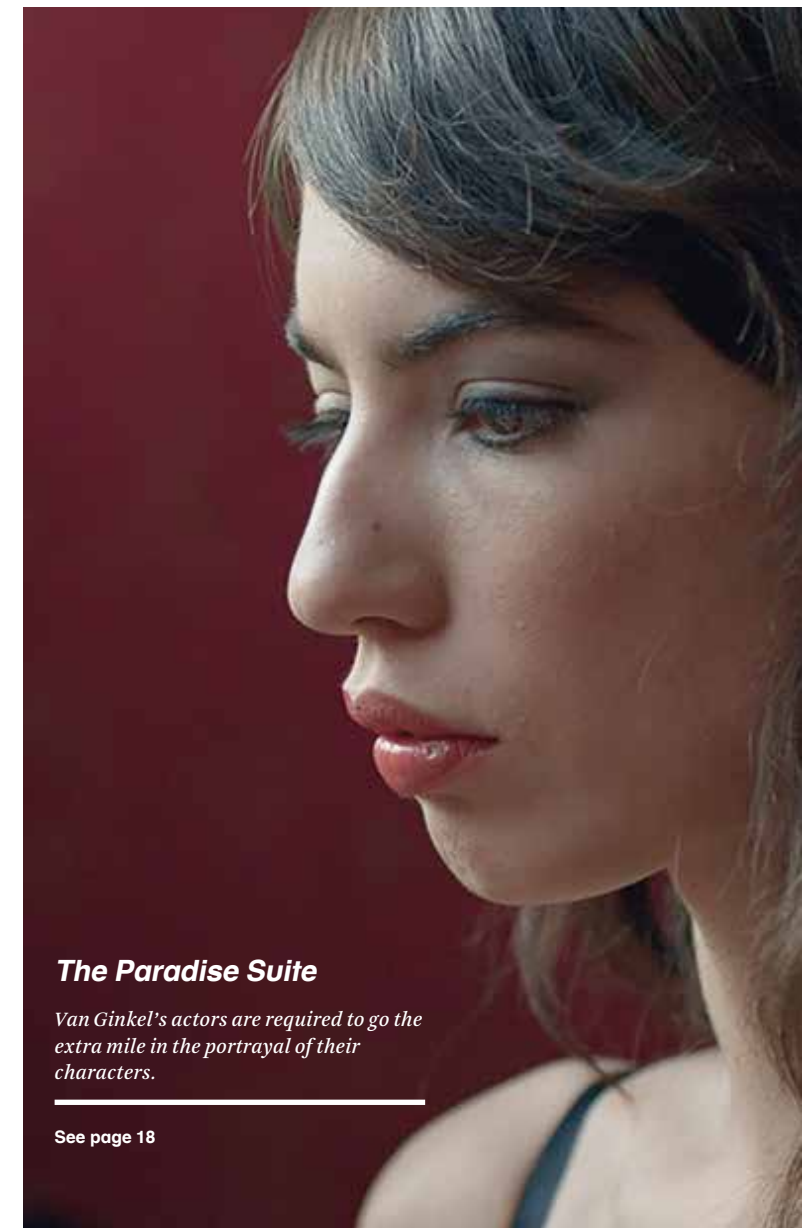


Public Works

With Lürsen on board, financing was secured. Finally, 15 years after the book was first published, the €6 million film edged into production.

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Public Works ◊ **Director:** Joram Lürsen
Script: Frank Ketelaar **Production:** Topkapi
Films (NL) **Co-production:** Menuet (BE),
I'm Film (HU), Mythberg Films (HU)



The Paradise Suite

Van Ginkel's actors are required to go the extra mile in the portrayal of their characters.

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The Paradise Suite ◊ **Director:** Joost van Ginkel **Script:** Joost van
Ginkel **Production:** PRPL (NL), Bastide Films (NL) **Co-production:**
GötaFilm (SE), Film I Väst (SE), KaBoAl Pictures (BU) **Sales:** Media
Luna New Films

Near Neighbours

They are neighbours but their producers have rarely worked as closely together as they might. Now, the filmmaking relationship between Holland and Wallonia (French-speaking Belgium) will be placed on a firmer footing with a new treaty expected to be signed during the HFM in Utrecht, writes Geoffrey Macnab.

For Doreen Boonekamp, the Dutch/Wallloon alliance is long overdue. “Of course, we are neighbouring countries, but up to now we weren’t so much involved in co-productions together,” the director of the Netherlands Film Fund notes. “We wanted to find new ways to connect our talents together. We are both small countries and we are both very keen on really creative co-productions far more than financial co-productions. When you have this common sense [approach] to stimulate the industry and to get involved in international productions, we think we can be really great partners for each other.”

As Boonekamp points out, the Dutch already work very closely with their Flemish-speaking partners in Belgium, with whom they share a similar language and culture. Now, there are various projects underway, both fictional and documentary, in which the Dutch and Wallonians are co-operating, for example *Kebab Royal*, the latest feature from Peter Brosens and Jessica Woodworth, produced by Brussels-based Entre

Chien Et Loup and co-produced by Topkapi Films in Amsterdam.

Meanwhile, Belgian auteur Marion Hänsel is post-producing her new feature *En amont du fleuve*, which has attracted Dutch support from long-time collaborator Digna Sinke of SNG Productions. “Ours is a very, very fruitful collaboration, I think mainly because I have known Digna for a long time, so there is a total trust between us,” stresses Hänsel, who also co-produced Jan-Willem van Ewijk’s much-lauded *Atlantic*., selected for Toronto 2014.

Dutch involvement in *En amont du fleuve*, which was pitched at the 2014 Holland Film Meeting Co-pro Platform, comes courtesy of Film Fund minority co-pro support and the Film Production Incentive. “This makes it something like a 20% co-pro between Belgium and the Netherlands. That was very interesting, otherwise I would not have been able to make the film,” Hänsel points out. While all the shooting took place in Croatia, Dutch personnel filled many key technical slots such as costume designer, composer, sound design, grip, make-up, sound mixing and colour grading. “So it is quite a lot of money we spent in the Holland.”

Hänsel will be presenting selected scenes at the HFM Works-in-Progress sessions (Utrecht) in late September. “And then it will be ready to propose for Berlin, IFFR or

Cannes, or whatever is coming after. And then a theatrical release.”

Prolific Dutch producer Reinier Selen of Rinkel Film also welcomes the new Netherlands/Wallonia treaty. His company is already developing a new feature, *Rafael*, and aiming for Wallonian support. “As a producer and entrepreneur, I feel that I am responsible not just to look in the Netherlands for money to support my films,” he says. “The network of producers from Wallonia becomes more accessible because the funds in each country have acknowledged that co-operation is necessary and officially established.”

By coincidence, the treaty is being signed just as a new regional film fund has been established in the Netherlands, in Limburg. This is in the south of the country, near Maastricht, which adjoins the French part of Belgium. “Wallonia therefore becomes all of a sudden maybe even a more relevant partner than Flanders,” says Selen. “For that reason, one of the films we are developing, which is set in Limburg, will also most logically be co-produced with Wallonia.”

One likely new trend will be for Dutch, Wallonians and Flemish to work more closely than ever before. Producers will have the ability to access funds from all three territories. As the ties between the partners draw tighter, this will lead to increased opportunities for all.



“There is a total trust between us”

En amont du fleuve by Marion Hänsel

Strong Incentive - analysis

The statistics are startling. Just a year after the new Netherlands Film Production Incentive was introduced in the summer of 2014, filmmaking is booming, reports Geoffrey Macnab.

By July 2015, 92 projects had been granted rebates worth €22.3 million. This included 71 feature films, 19 documentaries and two animated films. 59 projects were made as international co-productions. There were clear signs of revival in the post-production sector too.

Thanks to the Incentive, the Dutch are now involved in some very high profile international productions. For example, Martin Koolhoven's new western *Brimstone* stars Dakota Fanning alongside Kit Harrington and Carice van Houten (*Game Of Thrones*). The Dutch are also co-producing *Kebab Royal*, the latest feature from Peter Brosens and Jessica Woodworth (*Altiplano*).

Dutch producers haven't been slow to express their delight at their new-found attractiveness as co-pro partners. "You can really bring something extra to the table," Ellen Havenith of PRPL enthuses of the ammunition the Incentive provides.

Havenith is the Dutch co-producer of Rainer Sarnet's offbeat new fantasy feature *Rehepapp*, set in a Pagan village where werewolves roam and things always go bump in the night. Thanks to the Incentive

and the support of the Film Fund, Havenith was able to bring almost 20% of the budget for the film, which was made by Estonian Homeless Bob Productions.

Rehepapp was put together as an Estonian/Dutch/Polish production. "It made it possible for us to do more in the Netherlands," Havenith says of the Incentive. Top Dutch technicians were enlisted to do the visual effects on the movie.

Being a minority partner on an Estonian movie doesn't seem to offer any immediate benefits but Havenith describes it as "a seed that has been planted for the future." It helped, too, that she "fell in love" with the film. She now has close relations with Katrin Kissa, one of Estonia's most prominent producers. "If I ever need an Estonian co-producer, I know I can get back with her and that she will be there." Havenith has recently completed new Joost van Ginkel movie *The Paradise Suite* (see page 16) which was put together as a Dutch/Bulgarian/Swedish co-pro.

These are just the type of creative alliances that Netherlands Film Fund CEO Doreen Boonekamp was hoping the Incentive would help foster. "Many producers show interest in the rebate and many international co-productions are coming to the Netherlands," she stresses. "We are really happy with the result of this first year."

As Boonekamp notes, it had long been a dream of Martin Koolhoven to make *Brimstone*, which some are billing as the first Dutch western. Boonekamp expresses her satisfaction that the Incentive has helped the *Winter In Wartime* director to fulfill his dream. The film may be shooting in Romania, Spain and Germany rather than the Netherlands but the director, the writer, one of the stars (van Houten) and many of its department heads are Dutch. One of the producers, UK-based Paul Trijbits, is also Dutch. As Boonekamp puts it, "many Dutch people are spreading out all over the world and then connecting again through film."

With the upsurge in production activity sparked by the new Incentive, the hope now is that Dutch films will grab an even bigger share of the local box-office while also travelling abroad. "Of course, we aim to have a strong and sufficient market share in our domestic market. Through the rebate, we see that it is more easy to get the films financed in a healthy, reasonable way and to get them into production," the Fund boss notes.

After intensive film industry lobbying, Dutch politicians were finally persuaded to support the Incentive on both economic and cultural grounds. One year in, all the signs are that the scheme is working in exactly the way the Film Fund and the politicians had hoped.



Rehepapp, co-produced by PRPL

Strong Incentive - numbers

Cash rebates of

€ 22,3 m
granted to



features
docs
animated films

71
19
2

59 international
co-productions
33 Dutch projects

Against total
Dutch production
spend of

€ 108 m



2015 projects



Cherry Tree

Co-produced by House of Netherhorror, fright-pic *Cherry Tree* had its North-American premiere at Fantasia (Montreal) and will have its European premiere at Frightfest (London) August 27 as opening film. The film will be showcased at the Halloween Horror Show, an all-night horror marathon in 40 cinemas across the Netherlands and Belgium. This event will kickstart the film's Benelux home entertainment release. While *Cherry Tree* was shot in Cork, much of the post-production work (colour grading, most of the VFX and sound design) was carried out in the Netherlands by Filmmore and Peter Flamman Geluid bij Beeld. In the film, Faith must have a baby to save her father's life. But the child will be no ordinary baby and the pregnancy will be no ordinary term. Comments co-producer Jan Doense: Brendan McCarthy and John McDonnell, the Irish producers at Fantastic Films, are very experienced horror film producers, so we learned a lot from them. There is so much to learn about financing, making and positioning genre films here in the Netherlands, so it was a great experience for us."

Films supported in 2015:

Adios Amigos (feature film): € 255,731
Director: Albert Jan van Rees
Screenplay: Anne Barnhoorn
Dutch producer: BosBros B.V.

As If I'm Crazy
(original title *Of ik gek ben* - feature film): € 280,202
Director: Frank Lammers
Screenplay: Frank Lammers
Dutch producer: IJswater Films B.V.

Brasserie Valentijn
(feature film): € 237,310
Director: Sanne Vogel
Screenplay: Sanne Vogel and Judith Goudsmit
Dutch producer: Tom de Mol Productions BV

Brimstone (feature film): € 675,147
Director: Martin Koolhoven
Screenplay: Martin Koolhoven
Dutch producer: N279 Entertainment BV

Brothers
(original title: *Broers* - feature film): € 185,000
Director: Bram Schouw
Screenplay: Marcel Roijjaards
Dutch producer: BALDR film B.V.

Bugs (documentary): € 34,024
Director: Andreas Johnsen
Screenplay: Andreas Johnsen
Dutch producer: Submarine BV

Burma Storybook
(documentary): € 52,682
Director: Petr Lom
Screenplay: Corinne van Egeraat, Petr Lom
Dutch producer: ZIN Zonder iemand Niemand
Co-producer: JAB Film (NO)

Cherry Tree (feature film): € 36,419
Director: David Keating
Scenario: Brendan McCarthy
Dutch producer: House of Netherhorror VOF

Citizens of Nature
(documentary): € 96,376
Director: Lonnie van Brummelen and Siebren de Haan
Screenplay: Siebren de Haan and Lonnie van Brummelen
Dutch producer: Family Affair Films BV

Death Of A Soul Man
(documentary): € 76,500
Director: David Kleijwegt
Screenplay: David Kleijwegt
Dutch producer: Zeppers Film & TV B.V.

Desert Zoo (documentary): € 69,050
Director: Catherine van Campen
Screenplay: Catherine van Campen
Dutch producer: Witfilm B.V.

Dreams Are An Illusion
(original title: *Dramen zijn Bedrog* - feature film): € 557,534
Director: Job Gosschalk
Scenario: Tijs van Marle, Elle van Rijn
Dutch producer: Eyeworks Film & TV Drama B.V.

Dummy the Mummy and the Sphinx of Shakaba (feature film): € 340,000
Director: Pim van Hoeve
Scenario: Tijs van Marle
Dutch producer: PV Pictures BV

En amont du fleuve (feature film): € 60,000
Director: Marion Hänsel
Screenplay: Hubert Mingarelli
Dutch producer: SNG Film BV

Falko – Letter of Fire
(feature film): € 465,545
Director: Dennis Bots
Screenplay: Karen van Holst Pellekaan
Dutch producer: Dirk-Jan Bijker Productions BV

A Family Affair (documentary): € 33,866
Director: Tom Fassaert
Screenplay: Tom Fassaert
Dutch producer: Conijn Film B.V.
Co-producers: Danish Documentary Production (DE), Clin d'Oeil (BE)

A Haunting History
(documentary): € 50,135
Director: Femke van Velzen
Screenplay: Ilse van Velzen
Dutch producer: Stichting IFproductions

Hello Bungalow (original title: *Hallo Bungalow* - feature film): € 195,000
Director: Anne de Clercq
Screenplay: Thomas van der Ree
Dutch producer: 2CFILM B.V.

Strong Incentive



Rehepapp

Rehepapp, based on the fantastical and myth-laden novel by Andrus Kivirähk, populated by werewolves, spirits and villagers who will stop at nothing to survive the cold dark winter, will begin shooting again in Estonia in November 2015. Main producer is Tallinn-based Homeless Bob Productions and the director is Rainer Sarnet.

“We had the first shooting period last March and April which went well, although we hoped for snow and there was no snow,” comments co-producer Ellen Havenith of Amsterdam-based PRPL.

The producers remain hopeful of snow next time round. But when nature fails to deliver, special effects rise to the challenge. “One of the VFX characters is a snowman,” stresses Havenith. “Because of the Incentive we were able to bring the VFX to the Netherlands. The three Kratts, which are not human but still important characters in the film (see photo), will be taken care of by STORM Post Production. “The footage I’ve seen so far is amazing and based on the fact that Rainer exactly knows what he want to see. He has been working on this film for seven years now, I think it will turn out to be visually stunning and really something no one has seen before.”

Heart Beat (original title: *Hart Beat* - feature film): € 344,230
Director: Dennis Bots
Screenplay: Anjali Taneja
Dutch producer: Eyeworks Film & TV Drama B.V.

The Hidden Valley
(nature film): € 379,687
Director: Luc Enting
Screenplay: Paul King
Dutch producer: PV Pictures BV

Instant Dreams (documentary): € 69,615
Director: Willem Baptist
Screenplay: Willem Baptist
Dutch producer: Zuidenwind Filmproducties B.V.
Co-producer: Cobra Films CVBA (BE)

Miss Kiet And Her Children
(original title *Juf Kiet en haar Kinderen* - documentary): € 60,638
Director: Petra Lataster-Czisch
Screenplay: Petra Lataster-Czisch
Dutch producer: Lataster&Films V.O.F.

Kebab Royal (feature film): € 70,000
Director: Peter Brosens, Jessica Woodworth
Scenario: Peter Brosens, Jessica Woodworth
Dutch producer: Topkapi Films B.V.
Co-producers: BO Films (BE), Art Fest Ltd (BG), Entre Chien & Loup (BE)

Maaiké, Veterinary Surgeon
(original title *Veearts Maaiké* - documentary): € 64,890
Director: Tijs Tinbergen
Screenplay: Tijs Tinbergen
Dutch producer: Selfmade Films B.V.

Monk (feature film): € 198,490
Director: Ties Schenk
Screenplay: Roosmarijn Rosa de Carvalho
Dutch producer: Viking Film

Mister Frog (feature film): € 447,966
Director: Anna Van der Heide
Screenplay: Mieke de Jong
Dutch producer: BosBros B.V.

A Perfect Game (documentary): € 61,022
Director: Robbert So Kiem Hwat
Screenplay: Lies Janssen
Dutch producer: Volya Films B.V.

Prey* (feature film): € 512,061
Director: Dick Maas
Screenplay: Dick Maas
Dutch producer: Shooting Star Film Company BV

Quality Time (feature film): € 259,797
Director: Daan Bakker
Screenplay: Daan Bakker
Dutch producer: Pupkin Film B.V.
Co-producer: Leader Films (NO)

Rehepapp (*Jesus’ Blood and Red Currants*, feature film): € 64,725
Director: Rainer Sarnet
Screenplay: Rainer Sarnet
Dutch producer: PRPL BV

Renesse (feature film): € 127,483
Director: Willem Gerritsen
Scenario: Gerben Hefebrij
Dutch producer: Tom de Mol Productions BV

Riphagen (feature film): € 492,438
Director: Pieter Kuijpers
Screenplay: Paul Jan Nelissen and Thomas van der Ree
Dutch producer: Pupkin Film BV

Rokjesdag (feature film): € 431,602
Director: Johan Nijenhuis
Screenplay: Eveline Hagenbeek
Dutch producer: Johan Nijenhuis & Co BV

A Real Vermeer
(original title: *Een echte Vermeer* - feature film): € 293,858
Director: Rudolf van den Berg
Screenplay: Jan Eilander
Dutch producer: Rinkel Film B.V.
Co-producers: Fu Works (NL), Cadanza Film (NL), Tarantula (LUX), Nukleus Film (HR)

Russia's Legends
(original title: *Legendes van Rusland* – documentary): € 92,000
Director: Jessica Gorter
Screenplay: Jessica Gorter, Marieke van der Winden
Dutch producer: Zeppers Film & TV B.V.

Sisters (original title *Zusjes* – documentary): € 70,852
Director: Simonka de Jong
Screenplay: Simonka de Jong
Dutch producer: Stichting Lavastromen

Siv Sleeps Astray
(feature film): € 62,500
Director: Catti Edfeldt
Screenplay: Lena Hanno Clyne
Dutch producer: Viking Film

Sneekweek (feature film): € 437,329
Director: Martijn Heijne
Screenplay: Alex van Galen
Dutch producer: Farmhouse TV en Film B.V.
Co-producer: Marmalade Films (BE)

Spy
(original title *Spion* – feature film): € 388,743
Director: Pieter van Rijn
Screenplay: Tijs van Marle
Dutch producer: PV Pictures B.V.

Strike A Pose
(documentary): € 59,442
Director: Ester Gould and Reijer Zwaan
Screenplay: Reijer Zwaan and Ester Gould
Dutch producer: CTM Docs B.V.

To Stay Alive – A Manual
(original title *Overleven* – een Handleiding - documentary): € 44,554
Director: Erik Lieshout
Screenplay: Erik Lieshout
Dutch producer: Stichting seriousFilm
Co-producer: AT-Production (BE)

Tokyo Trial* (feature film): € 830,125
Director: Pieter Verhoeff
Screenplay: Kees van Beijnum
Dutch producer: Fatt Productions B.V.
Co-producer: NHK Japan (JA), Don Carmody Productions (CA)

Tonic Immobility (feature film): € 80,000
Director: Nathalie Teirlinck
Screenplay: Nathalie Teirlinck
Dutch producer: CTM Pictures B.V.
Co-producer: Savage Film (BE), 41 Shadows (DE)

Tonio (feature film): € 454,445
Director: Paula van der Oest
Screenplay: Hugo Heinen
Dutch producer: NL Film & TV B.V.

Tulips, Honour, Love And A Bike (original title Tulpen, Eer, Liefde en een Fiets – feature film): € 261,835
Director: Marleen Gorris
Screenplay: Peter van Wijk

Us (feature film): € 240,000
Director: Rene Eller
Screenplay: Rene Eller
Dutch producer: Habbekrats B.V.

Zama (feature film): € 42,893
Director: Lucrecia Martel
Screenplay: Lucrecia Martel
Dutch producer: Lemming Film B.V.
Co-producers: Rey Cine (AR), Bananeira Filmes (BR), El Deseo (SP), MPM Film (FR)

Upcoming submission date in 2015: 3 November.



Photo: Elmer van der Marel

Tonio

Paula van der Oest's *Tonio*, a tragic tale of loss suffered by a couple after the death of their adult son, wrapped on September 7 after an almost exclusively Amsterdam-based shoot. “The production has been immaculate, both in terms of financing and preparation, and everything so far has gone terrifically well,” comments producer Sytze van der Laan of NL Film and TV. “We are on schedule, so I am very happy. It has been a concentrated shoot on a very ambitious film. We want to access a large audience but still make a cutting edge film out of a difficult literary work.”

“There are only a few films about parents losing their child. It takes place in the heart of Amsterdam, but the emotions are of anywhere, anytime,” he continues. “But shooting in Amsterdam made it special. The city became an important element within the story.”

Road trip to the past



Erik de Bruyn

Erik de Bruyn will open the Netherlands Film Festival with his absurdist road movie *J.Kessels*, fifteen years after his *Wild Mussels* was accorded the same privilege. The director talks to Nick Cunningham.

That old adage, that the book they said could never be written is now the film they said could never be made, seems even more applicable to the latest cinematic opus of Erik de Bruyn, produced by CTM Pictures.

Madcap, absurdist, funny, rude, poignant and at times outrageously un-PC, *J.Kessels* is an adaptation of the best-selling novel by PF Thomése that details how the author Frans (a thinly-veiled portrait of Thomése himself) deals with writer's block by undertaking what may or may not be an imaginary road trip to the Hamburg Reeperbahn with his favourite fictional creation, the chain smoking, Country and Western loving, boozing, schmoozing J.Kessels (who incidentally has a heart of gold). Ostensibly the journey is to apprehend a fugitive,

but for Frans it turns into an odyssey to locate his first love, muse and pre-pubescent fantasy, the Lolita-like Brigitte, known as BB.

De Bruyn was inspired not only by the idea of two older guys (played by Fedja van Huêt and Frank Lammers who starred together in de Bruyn's *Wild Mussels*) having a midlife crisis, but also by a line in the book when the novelist writes of his frustration that his story seems to be going nowhere. "I thought that's interesting, how to make a film out of a book which has such an absurd story. It's the whole concept. He has writer's block and time stands still. And so everything has to get back into motion again. I thought it was very funny, very drily comical and interesting with many layers."

In the film, the characters are continually aware of their status as fictional constructs and openly discuss their 'development', as well as the trajectory of the film narrative. De Bruyn was insistent however on minimizing the book's eventual descent into slapstick, while retaining its essential Beat aesthetic.

"The book was always referring to aspects of this literary generation, these writers like Bukowski and this dirty realism, Kinky Friedman, Jack Kerouac, using a lot of interior monologue, so for me and the scriptwriter Jan Eilander it took quite a while to work out how we

could put that into the film. But there were so many absurd things that by the end I had the feeling that I wanted something more. I wanted a turning point, a more emotional ending." Without giving anything away, the ending de Bruyn and his screenwriter devised seeks to ease the pains of love Frans feels to his very core.

In Utrecht the festival will also premiere a newly mastered version of de Bruyn's *Wild Mussels*, produced in association with EYE, STORM Post Production and Metropolis Film in Utrecht. In addition the director will pitch his animated 2WW project *Lage Zwaluwe*, produced by Submarine, at the HFM Co-pro Platform (see p22). Does he feel in any way daunted by the prospect of directing an animated film?

"Of course not. I'm very excited," de Bruyn responds. "I am not an animator but all films need *mise en scène* and *découpage* and cutting, and you need to tell a story visually with sound effects and sound design. Of course there are animators and story-boarders and a scriptwriter but to bring all of them together you need an overall director. I will be very excited to work on a project like that of course. I love cinema in all its forms so I always like to try new things and in new ways."

J.Kessels ◊ Erik de Bruyn



"I wanted a turning point, a more emotional ending"

Script: Jan Eilander **Production:** CTM Pictures (NL)
Co-production: CZAR TV (BE)

Page to screen



Thomas Rosenboom's 1999 novel *Public Works* was a full-blown literary phenomenon in the Netherlands, writes Geoffrey Macnab. Around 500,000 copies were sold and the book won several top awards.

At the time Lürsen read the epic 700-page book, he hadn't yet made any features. (His debut, kids' football movie *In Orange*, was completed in 2004.) He had mentioned to producer Frans van Gestel (then at Motel Films) that he was interested in adapting *Public Works* but van Gestel told him that the rights had long since been sold to rival production company IDTV. That, Lürsen assumed, was that. He wouldn't get a chance to make his adaptation of Rosenboom's story of two turn-of-the-century cousins trying to rise up the social ladder.

By coincidence, Lürsen's very good friend Frank Ketelaar had written the IDTV screenplay for *Public Works*. The director originally in place fell sick. There was upheaval at IDTV which, in 2008, merged with van Gestel's Motel Films. Several years passed, the screenplay went

through many different drafts, and van Gestel came back to Lürsen to ask if he might take a stab at the film. With Lürsen on board, financing was secured. Finally, 15 years after the book was first published, the €6 million film edged into production.

This was the director's first period movie – and it was on a hugely ambitious scale. Lürsen, though, was determined not to make a “museum” piece. “The way we filmed it and the art direction is modern,” he reflects. “I was lucky that it is set in a part of history in which photography already existed.”

For visual clues, Lürsen and his team drew heavily on the nineteenth century photographs of Amsterdam taken by Jacob Olie. Many of these images were of the huge new buildings springing up in the city, for example Centraal Station. Another important inspiration was the work of Dutch impressionist painter and photographer, George Hendrik Breitner.

Lürsen and his team paid exhaustive attention to costume. “It was a time in which the people who were modern – the entrepreneurs and the “new” money – looked stuffy, black and straight,” the director states. By contrast, the “old” money – the families that had already established themselves – dressed in a far looser and more romantic fashion.

Given that *Public Works* is such a quintessentially Dutch project, it may seem perverse that much of the movie was actually shot in Hungary, at the Origo Studios. That, Lürsen, explains, is simply the way big European co-productions work. “I didn't have problems with that.”

Public Works is one of the most complex and vfx-heavy films ever produced in Holland. Many different techniques were used by Planet X FX (NL) and Digital Apes (Hungary) to create a vast and detailed 3D model of Amsterdam, complete with fancily dressed inhabitants, and other countless assets needed to create a believable cityscape. This 3D model could be matched to the footage shot mainly on a soundstage in Budapest, where a portion of street was build as an actual set.

Public Works was a far more expensive and complex movie than the previous collaborations between Lürsen and producer van Gestel. Nonetheless, their working relationship remained as smooth as ever. “It is the sixth feature film that we have made,” the director says. “It's a relationship that started in 2004 and it is also a friendship. Frans, for me, is the best producer in Holland... I couldn't have done a film like this without him.”

Public Works ◊ Joram Lürsen



...the director's first period movie – made on a hugely ambitious scale.

Script: Frank Ketelaar **Production:** Topkapi Film (NL) **Co-production:** Menuet (BE), I'm Film (HU), Mythberg Films (HU)

Not sweet in Paradise



Joost van Ginkel

Joost van Ginkel's *The Paradise Suite* is a harrowing portrait of how six people must deal with the evil of others within 21st Century Europe. He talks to Nick Cunningham.

The genesis of *The Paradise Suite*, Joost van Ginkel's second film, premiering at the Dutch Film Festival, is as complex as the lives of the film's key protagonists. Set within the polite suburbs, refugee hovels and Red Light district of Amsterdam, the film is a story of vengeance, betrayal, faith and salvation, played out both violently and, at times, with profound tenderness. The film's visuals are accompanied in part by the *Lacrimosa* from Mozart's *Requiem*.

Beautiful Jenya's hopes of being a model are horrendously dashed by the Serbian war criminal Ivica, himself a new and loving father. The saintly African Yaya compromises his faith while elevating his neighbours out of poverty, in the process encountering Jenya and her plight. The Bosnian Seka re-lives the war's atrocities on a daily basis, and seeks the strength to exact vengeance.

Meanwhile an orchestra conductor and his prodigy son must deal with their cold and fractured relationship.

Over two decades ago van Ginkel was working as a cameraman when he met Nedžad, a Bosnian director and refugee, who wanted to make a documentary about the Bosnian refugees in Holland. Van Ginkel shot the doc and filmed people telling their war testimonies. "People told about seeing their children shot in front of them, but at the moment I was filming these stories I did not understand them of course because I didn't speak Bosnian. Later on when I was transcribing the stories I realized what I really filmed the day before."

A little later he worked at the port of Amsterdam with a crew made up of refugees from the Middle East and Africa. There he heard more shocking stories of suffering and survival. "All of these stories I have carried around with me for years. They really opened up my vision on the world."

Van Ginkel was also determined to make a mosaic film, a form that he advocates for the complexities it can elicit both in plotting and characterisation. "I love this form and it gives you as a filmmaker room to intertwine and connect more themes because all our lives are never about one theme or one subject, or one thing," he says. "What I really love is when you bring five or six different people together

at the heart of a film, and they share the same moment at the same time in the same place, but they all have a different perception of the things that are happening."

Van Ginkel's actors are required to go the extra mile in the portrayal of their characters. Some of the scenes involving Jenya (played by Bulgarian Anjela Nedyalkova), for example, are brutal in their violence and (unwilling) sexual engagement. The director was determined however that he and producer Ellen Havenith created a safe haven in which these scenes could be played out. "These are scenes that nobody likes to do on set, really no-one. But we were so specific about what she had to do, and how many times she had to perform them. Anjela was completely cool and she trusted me and she trusted Ellen as we were both so honest about it."

Van Ginkel has no illusions that his wise and authoritative film will make a dent in the treacherous trade of people-trafficking and extortion. "People assume that things in the world are getting worse. This is not the case. Things have *always* been worse. And they will *continue* to be worse. In the 1940s, during the Yugoslavian war, now in Syria. And it will happen in another ten years and another 500 years, because the problem is that human nature will never change. This is my pessimistic view. I don't like it, but it is true."

The Paradise Suite ◊ Joost van Ginkel



"Mosaic form gives you room to intertwine and connect more themes"

Script: Joost van Ginkel **Production:** PRPL (NL), Bastide Films (NL) **Co-production:** GötaFilm (SE), Film I Väst (SE), KaBoAl Pictures (BU)
Sales: Media Luna New Films

Less is more



Alex van Warmerdam

Hot on the heels of his Golden Palm-nominated *Borgman* (2013), leading Dutch film director Alex van Warmerdam decided to pare down his style even further for the follow-up, *Schneider vs. Bax*, he tells Mark Baker.

"I wanted to make two films in quick succession, for a change", Alex van Warmerdam says of the genesis of his ninth feature since his debut, *Abel*, in 1986. "I actually wrote the script for *Schneider vs. Bax* before we had even shot *Borgman*. Usually I finish one film before I even start thinking about the next, but this time I wanted to break my usual routine of film then theatre, film then theatre. I often have ideas while filming and think to myself, 'I must remember that' – but by the time I'm ready to make the next one, I've forgotten them again."

In *Schneider vs. Bax*, selected for Locarno and TIFF, what seems to be a simple assignment for contract killer Schneider turns out to be much more than he expected. "I wanted to make a film with a very simple set-up", van Warmerdam continues of the film's pared-to-the-

bone style. "It's an exercise in form. I also wanted all the action to take place within one day – which is an enormous restriction for a filmmaker." Such restrictions are something van Warmerdam likes to impose on himself in his film work – *Abel* for example contains no cigarettes, trees or telephones. "I also wanted sunlight throughout *Schneider vs. Bax*," he says, "which is pretty difficult with the climate here in the Netherlands."

Light, in fact, plays a major role in *Schneider vs. Bax*. "I wanted to use that light from above," the filmmaker explains. "Like in the old Hollywood films, the old Charlie Chaplins and Buster Keatons. It's a very difficult thing to do achieve, technically." To do this – as so often in his films – van Warmerdam had the houses serving as the principal sets specially built. "I had the little house where Bax is built with a transparent roof – the only problem was, they used a different kind of Perspex from what I wanted. It was all right in natural light, but when I had to use artificial light, it broke the light up. Luckily, we were able to fix it in post-production. This was something I really wanted in the film, this light from above. All the locations have it: the house in the woods has no roof at all; even the industrial building has skylights."

Known for creating or re-arranging even natural settings to his liking, Van Warmerdam added thousands

of twigs to the wood in his 1992 film *De Noorderlingen* (*The Northerners*), to make it look darker and more natural. This time, the process was reversed: "What I mostly did this time was remove things", he says. "Trees, farmhouses, electricity pylons... they all got erased, in the post-production. I even made the horizon flatter, more featureless – once you get going, you get more and more rigorous. I did leave one tree near the house, but a lot of trees along the horizon got cut down to size – I didn't want it ruler-straight, but very plain and simple. I wanted the horizon to be as broad as possible, also to avoid that sense of a recreational area that you can quickly get in the Netherlands. It all got simpler and simpler. Even the dialogues in this film get shorter and shorter. I wanted to tell the story as visually as possible."

Van Warmerdam is reluctant to see any specific message in all this formal reduction, however. "For me, the film itself is what I want to say", he explains.

As for future projects, it is now back to the theatre for van Warmerdam after two films in quick succession. "At present, I'm writing a piece for my theatre company, Mexicaanse Hond," he says. "That's how I earn my daily bread – I do actually have some plans for a new film, but I can't say anything about it yet, I'm afraid."

Schneider vs. Bax ◊ Alex van Warmerdam



"The film itself is what I want to say"

Script: Alex van Warmerdam **Production:** Graniet Film (NL) **Co-production:** CZAR TV(BE) **Sales:** Fortissimo Films

Virtual Warfare



David Verbeek

Photo: Bojan Mredjenovic

David Verbeek describes the making of his new film *Full Contact*, selected for Toronto Platform, to Geoffrey Macnab.

Full Contact explores the psychological torment suffered by an UAV drone pilot. He has been sitting in an air force base in the Nevada desert, taking out targets on the Afghan/Pakistani border. Thematically, the project has overlaps with Verbeek's 2010 feature *R U There*, about a gamer existing more and more in a "virtual" world and struggling to make sense of reality.

Verbeek began developing *Full Contact* way back in 2010. As part of the research, he "reached out" to real drone pilots. Eventually, he made contact with Brandon Bryant, a drone pilot turned whistleblower who spoke out to the media about drone warfare. They met at IDFA (International Documentary Festival Amsterdam) 2014 and struck up an immediate rapport. "At that stage, we were already in post-production," Verbeek recalls. "It was a surreal experience. He (Bryant) saw the film on the editing table and he actually

noticed that there were so many similarities to his own life that I couldn't have known and that weren't in the articles about him. Somehow, I just got it right."

In *Full Contact*, the pilot takes up cage fighting. "We go from the most distant engagement with an opponent possible, through satellite links and on screens, killing without being touched, to the most extreme engagement, just with your bare hands." It turned out that Bryant had also tried cage fighting in his desire to experience warrior combat.

Another overlap was that both the fictional and real-life pilots worked in mundane jobs as baggage handlers after leaving the airforce. The fictional pilot dated a stripper – as did Bryant. All these coincidences convinced Verbeek he had managed to get under the skin of his character. With Bryant involved, Verbeek was able to ensure *Full Contact* had a documentary-like accuracy. "We managed to get very close to reality," Verbeek says. "For me, that was the biggest compliment – that he thought the film was so authentic and that he was a bit freaked out that I knew so much about what he went through."

The project proved hard to finance, an unconventional script with an impressionistic feel. He was determined that Grégoire Colin, star of Claire Denis' *Beau Travail*, should play the lead. ("I was looking

for a character who had the right sense of mystery to embody this role.") Potential backers were wary about a film that didn't stick to traditional genre rules or feature big-name cast.

The Film Fund was aboard from the start. Eventually, Lemming Film secured extra financing from Croatia, where Verbeek ended up shooting the entire film. "Croatia has a very diverse landscape. They have very remote, rocky islands in the middle of nowhere, they have cities that look like they could be in western Europe and they have some scenery that looks like desert."

Verbeek had hoped that *Full Contact* would be the first feature film dealing directly with drone warfare. In the event, other drone-themed films, among them *Good Kill* starring Ethan Hawke, were completed before Verbeek was able to shoot his film. The writer-director, though, is delighted that he was able eventually to make "exactly the film I wanted, without any compromise... The other drone scripts all basically end with the drone pilot quitting the job with a guilt trip about what he has done."

In *Full Contact*, by contrast, that is only the starting point. Verbeek isn't making the movie as a polemic. Its real subject is the "journey the mind undertakes to process a guilt trauma...that is a psychological level the other films don't have."

Full Contact ◊ David Verbeek

"I was looking for a character who had the right sense of mystery"



Photo: Frank van den Eeden

Script: David Verbeek **Production:** Lemming Film (NL) **Co-production:** Nukleus Film (HR) **Sales:** BAC Films

Beauty out of Ugliness



When a hopeful star wins the crown of American Idol, the inhabitants of the US don't take to the streets in joyous rapture, writes Nick Cunningham.

The case of Palestinian Mohammad Assaf is significantly different however. When he won Arab Idol in 2013, singing nationalist songs of unity and beating rivals from other Arab nations, the public response was tumultuous. Thousands gathered for festivities in all the towns and cities across Palestine. He united politicians from all factions and became the symbol of the nationalist cause for people from all walks of life.

His story is now the subject of a film, *The Idol*, directed by twice Academy Award-nominated Hany Abu-Assad (*Omar*), co-produced by KeyFilm and selected for Toronto. Telling Assaf's story from the age of ten through to his victory, it details the numerous hurdles he had to surmount, not least in battling his way to the show's auditions. He was detained at the Egyptian border for two days, then had to scale the wall and force his way into contention

having been told that the doors were closed to new applicants. Even then when it seemed all was lost he sang to his fellow contestants, only for one to offer up his place, convinced of Assaf's star quality.

"He did not give up on letting his voice be heard by the world, he tried to escape all the obstacles, he kept fighting," comments Abu-Assad, who is based in Holland. "The film is really about two things. You have to continue fighting until you get what you want and, secondly, art can change ugliness into beauty."

The film uses actual footage from the streets of Gaza showing the explosive reaction to Assaf's victory. "It is impossible to replicate that same level of excitement, even if you were to get the same crowds together again in the same place. It feels better when it's real. You feel that, oh my god, this is a real story, not fabricated in Hollywood."

While some liken the film to Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*, another tale of a boy's rise from poverty to national prominence via an enormously popular TV programme, Abu-Assad tells how he was influenced more by the Iranian film *The Runner* by Amir Naderi (1978).

"Nobody knows this movie, it's funny that I had inspiration from a film that nobody knows. It is about a homeless boy trying to survive in a port city in Iran, made even before

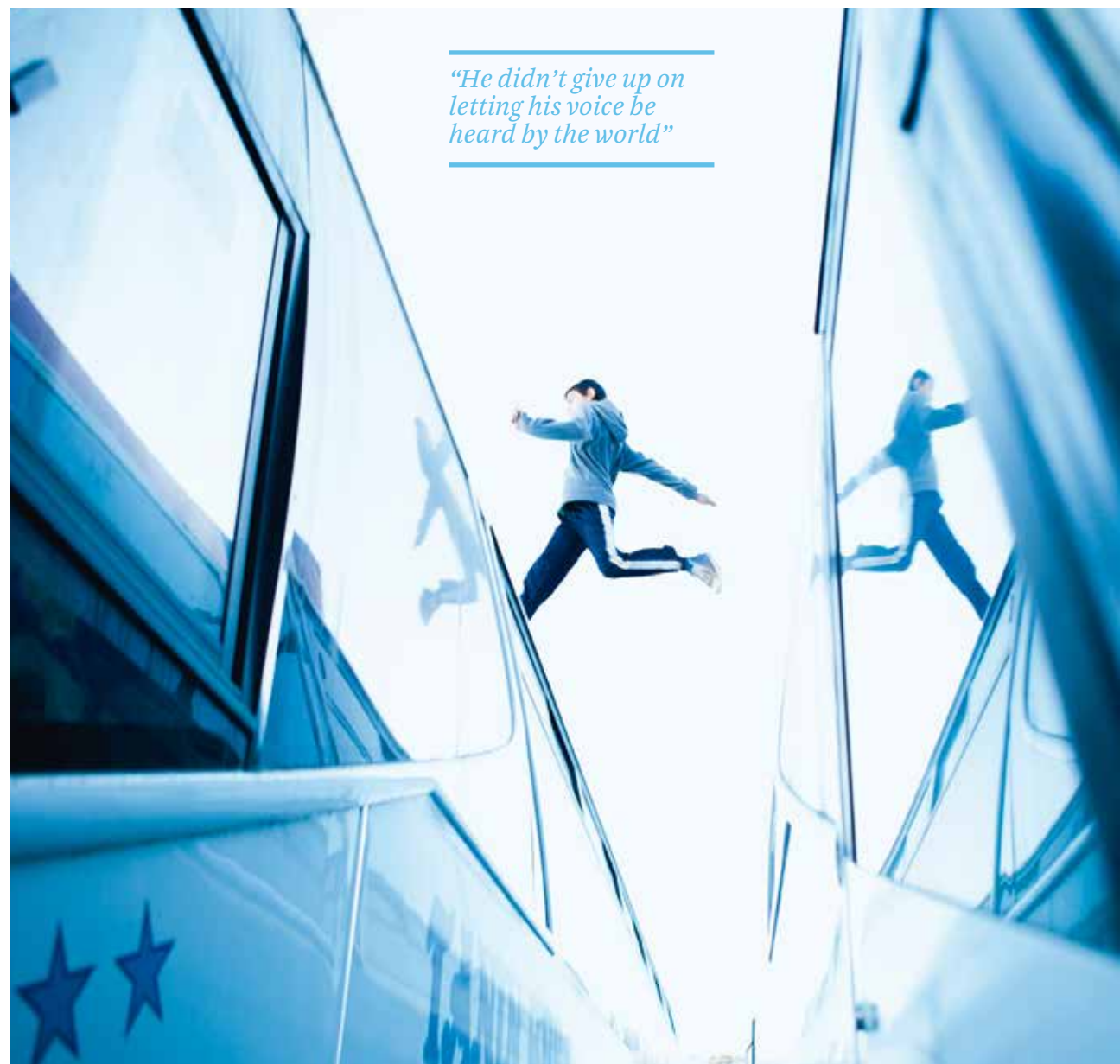
the Islamic revolution. It is one of the masterpieces, a kind of biography of the author himself. And if you watch the movie you will see one scene that I just took. It is a homage for sure, but it is really an amazing movie about fighting until you get what you want."

Abu-Assad makes it clear that he doesn't get involved in festival strategies or distribution choices and that the business side is handled by his very competent producers. Nevertheless when asked about his hopes for the film, he returns to the theme of the good fight, but widening it into the political domain.

"What I hope is the following. I really try to make easily accessible movies but about something that is important. And what is important is these people in Gaza, and in Palestine in general, being neglected. Right now, their narrative is just found in the arthouse cinema. We didn't have the chance yet to give our narrative towards the bigger audience. It is very important to us because the more we get sympathy for our cause the quicker this problem will be resolved peacefully, hoping that the pressure on Israel will be bigger in order to stop the occupation and the repression of the Palestinians. It is very important therefore to let our voice be heard within a bigger, emotional story."

The Idol ◊ Hany Abu-Assad

"He didn't give up on letting his voice be heard by the world"



Script: Hany Abu Assad in collaboration with Sameh Zuabi **Production:** Idol Film Production (UK), Cactus World Film (UK) **Co-production:** KeyFilm (NL), September Film Productions (NL) **Sales:** Seville International

Destination Utrecht



HFM round-table meeting

HFM director Signe Zeilich-Jensen talks to Nick Cunningham about the importance of the event both to European co-pro and to the promotion of the Dutch film sector.

Every September the Holland Film Meeting (HFM), the international arm of the Netherlands Film Festival, acts as a kissing gate for film professionals seeking co-pro finance. Just as Dutch filmmakers heed the Film Fund's call to seek production finance beyond Holland's borders, so international filmmakers are increasingly aware of the minority funding opportunities in the Netherlands, and of course the generous cash rebates available to foreign producers – up to 30% of production spend in the Netherlands – courtesy of the Film Production Incentive.

And so all these producers, Dutch and international alike, meet at the HFM Co-pro Platform, to talk films and co-pro and invariably go home satisfied. The script-to-screen rate of international and Dutch projects pitched at the Platform since its first edition in 2002 currently stands at 54% (143 projects), with a further 13% at advance finance/development stage (34 projects).*

"Film markets like the Holland Film Meeting are so well organised and structured, and people can get the information about the Dutch industry, about finance, production

and locations quickly and efficiently. All these things help people to get as much as possible out of their stay in Utrecht," agrees Zeilich-Jensen. "And then of course with the Incentive and the Film Commission (also launched at Cannes 2014), that makes people more interested in Holland. Even if they are not looking for a specific film right now they see it as an interesting country to get to know."

HFM is one a number of core institutions advocating for the Dutch film industry, alongside the likes of EYE International, the Netherlands Film Fund, Cinekid for Professionals and IFFR/CineMart, promoting the country's output, its filmmakers and its funding mechanisms to the wider world.

"That community feeling is very positive," Zeilich-Jensen concurs. "And the co-operation is becoming more important because we have so little time, and everybody is working so hard, that we need to join forces to be able to help our filmmakers in the most effective way. That's what we are all here for, and therefore it is important to have transparent and good communication with the rest of the organisations."

Highlights of HFM 2015 include a focus on the Netherlands' immediate neighbours, Germany and Belgium – especially the latter given the upcoming co-pro treaty between Holland and the French-

speaking Belgian Community. Using 3-4 case studies, HFM will present examples of films co-produced between these three countries, with input from filmmakers, marketing, sales and distribution experts in an 'Audience across borders' panel. In the closed Script & Beyond session German and Dutch scriptwriters will learn more about each other's work and receive valuable input from experts. The bilateral accord with Wallonia will be celebrated with a closed speed date session for talented producers from both countries.

Also on the agenda is a whole-day examination of European drama series and their continuing success. The popular Dutch series *Holland's Hope* will be forefronted and analysed from financial, screen-writing and broadcast perspectives, alongside other European series.

Dutch projects at the HFM Co-pro Platform include Erik de Bruyn's animated WW2-themed *Lage Zwaluwe*. De Bruyn is already opening the Netherlands Film Festival with the absurdist road-movie *J.Kessels* (see page 14) which he pitched at HFM Co-pro Platform in 2012. Comments Zeilich-Jensen. "I am curious how Erik and his team at the production company Submarine will translate this beautifully drawn universe into film. And it will be very interesting to see how Erik approaches his first animated project."

*it should be noted that abandoned projects account for 33% of the total, but many of these are from the Platform's early years.

Co-production Slot



How does a young Dutch producer become involved in a Brazilian movie set in the world of bull wrangling and cowboys, asks Geoffrey Mabnab.

Viking Film’s Marleen Slot laughs at the question. “I met the *Neon Bull* producer Rachel Ellis and the director Gabriel Mascaro at CineMart four years ago and we had a lovely meeting,” Slot remembers. She was immediately intrigued by the “bull” part of the project.

The film is a social drama set in contemporary Brazil and yet it is set against the backcloth of Vaquejada, an old, traditional sport that involves cowboys pulling down bulls by their tails. “I just loved the setting. Meanwhile, it is also telling an important story,” Slot enthuses of *Neon Bull*. “In this part of Brazil, a lot of people are still poor but you see textile industries are growing so there are a lot of economical changes. That is at the background of the story.”

Slot liked the characters in the film, as described to her during CineMart. Most important of all

though, “we had a great meeting! We just connected. That is the most important thing you need with a co-production.”

Neon Bull, Mascaro’s second fiction feature after his *August Winds* (Locarno 2014) was supported by the Film Fund in collaboration with IFFR’s Hubert Bals Fund Plus, a scheme which helps Dutch producers become involved in international coproductions.

This is not the first time Slot has been involved in an HBF Plus project. She was also part of Argentine director Jazmin Lopez’s *Leones* (2012), which she boarded when she was still part of production company Lemming, just before she set up Viking Film in 2011. “I am very much attracted to Latin America and the way they make cinema,” Slot says of her involvement in films from the region. “I like the people. A lot of the producers there are still really young. They have the same kind of companies that I have... we are on the same page.”

As Slot acknowledges, when you are the minority co-producer on a project shot far away in Latin America, you are not expecting to take the lead. Nonetheless on *Neon Bull*, Slot’s involvement with Ellis and Mascaro stretches back a full four years. “During those four years, we have built a very strong relationship. What I really like about the

relationship is that they take my opinion seriously. They value it.”

Slot was in Brazil for a week during shooting. She was able to help on a practical level, bringing HD tapes (which are cheaper in the Netherlands than in Latin America.) “And to be in the arena with the bulls, that was really special.”

During post-production, Slot was also kept in the loop. “That was really nice. Although you are only a 10% partner (in terms of the budget), it gives you a different involvement and a different feeling,” the Dutch producer says. “It was a very good and creative co-operation.”

Neon Bull is now complete and will premiere in Venice and Toronto. Slot is in talks with potential Dutch distributors for the film, which is being sold internationally by Artscope.

Viking is also pushing ahead with various other new projects, among them two features from young Dutch director Sacha Polak. *Jade* has just received script development backing from the Netherlands Film Fund, and Mike Elliott of Emu Films (*Catch Me Daddy*) has come on board as UK co-producer. Viking will also be the Dutch minority co-producer on Polak’s English-language Virginia Woolf project *Vita & Virginia*.

Neon Bull ◊ Gabriel Mascaro



“It was a very good co-operation both from a business perspective and creatively”

Script: Gabriel Mascaro **Production:** Desvia (BR), Malbicho Cine (UY) **Co-production:** Viking Film (NL) **Sales:** Artscope

Selen's Lot



Dutch co-producer Reinier Selen

The Dutch and the Irish have a good thing going. In recent years, their producers have been working very closely together, and Rebecca Daly's new film *Mammal* is only the latest in a long line of collaborations between Dutch production outfit Rinkel Film and Irish-based Fastnet Films. Geoffrey Macnab reports.

"Mammal is our fifth co-production," says Rinkel managing director Reinier Selen of the ongoing partnership with Fastnet. "We like each other and understand each others' companies."

The relationship stretches back to Urszula Antoniak's multi award-winning *Nothing Personal* (2009). Selen was also a co-producer on Daly's first film, *The Other Side Of Sleep* (2011), which screened that year in Cannes Directors Fortnight, and was keen to become involved in the follow-up. "It was a logical and positive decision to try to work together on the second film."

It helps, Selen adds, that the Irish and the Dutch are "quite similar"

culturally. They are both "very direct, very concrete." They have a natural rapport – and that isn't something always found with co-production partners from elsewhere in Europe. "Even co-producing with Belgium is much different and sometimes much more difficult than it is with Ireland."

Mammal is about the sexual relationship between a woman in her 40s (played by Australian Golden Globe winning actress Rachel Griffiths) and a much younger man. Selen speaks of his admiration of the way that Daly "explores challenging or difficult themes in a very cinematic way. She is not afraid...she is daring enough to take the challenge rather than hiding from it. In that sense, I feel she is quite exceptional."

In all their films together, Selen and Fastnet boss Macdara Kelleher have always "involved each other" in the creative process. They both discussed the casting of Griffiths (whose credits range from *Muriel's Wedding* to HBO's *Six Feet Under*).

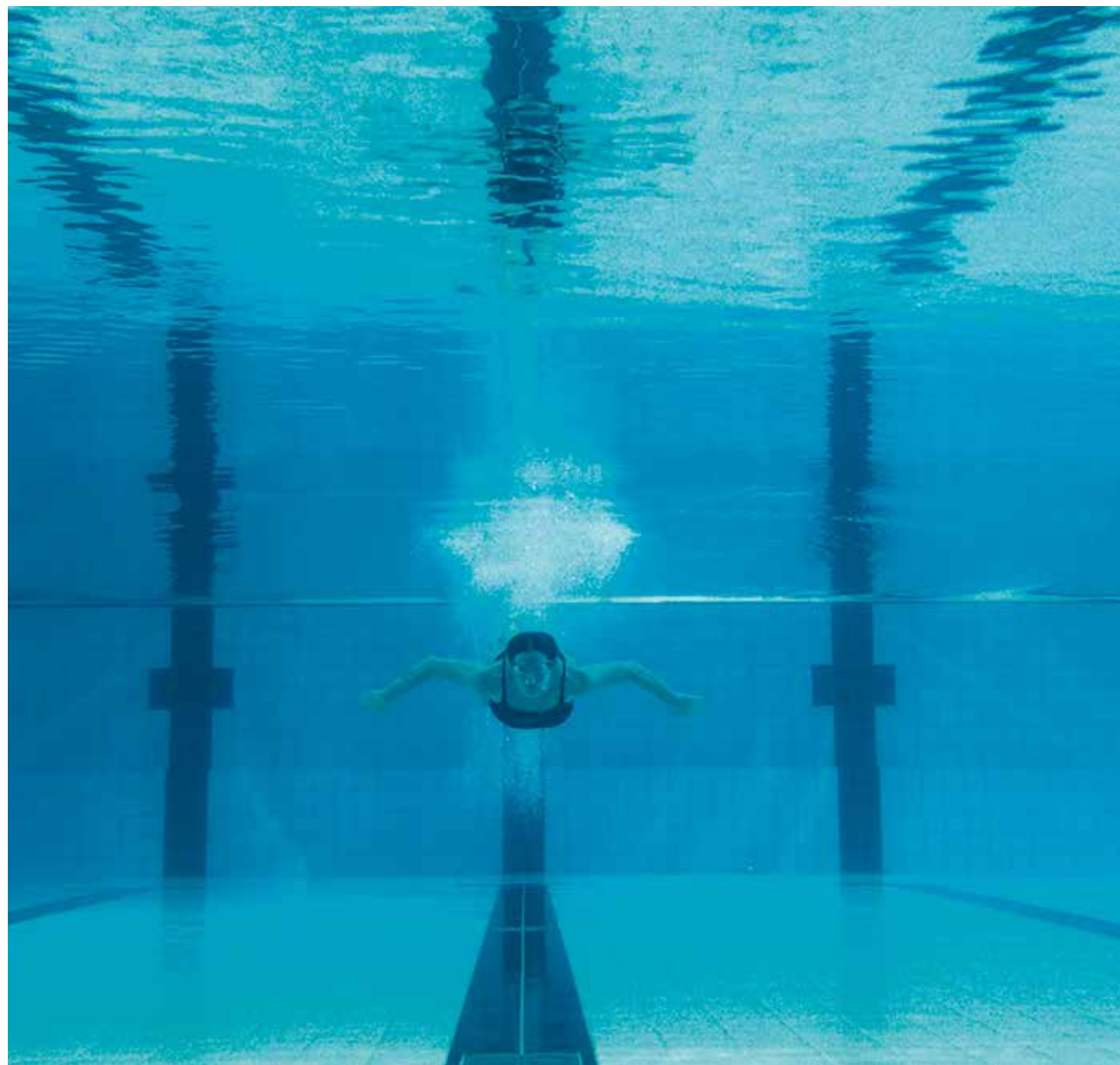
Even before the Australian joined the project, the Netherlands Film Fund agreed to invest in *Mammal*. "Our Fund is not relying so much on such things as star choices, which I appreciate," Selen says of the way the Dutch public financier has supported his work over the years. Selen was able to bring extra money

to *Mammal* through the Film Production Incentive put in place in the Netherlands last year. The system of cash rebates may still "have some wrinkles to iron out" but he sees it as a very positive sign that it can be used on relatively low budget European co-productions.

During shooting in Luxembourg, Selen visited the set. He talks of a "harmonious" production in which a crew that was drawn from seven or eight nationalities worked seamlessly together. "It went quite well. That is what I like about co-producing...you hope that the people you suggest to become part of the cast and crew have an attitude towards collaborating on the set that works in such an international environment."

As ever, Rinkel has several intriguing new projects in development. One, *Rafael*, is a drama based on a true story of a love affair between a Tunisian man and a Dutch woman during the Arab Spring. Mostly set in Lampedusa in Italy, it is being directed by Ben Sombogaart (best known for the Oscar nominated *Twin Sisters*). The company is also pushing ahead with Arne Toonen's *Playboy Priest*, one of the first films to be backed by the new regional fund in Limburg. Very recently, the Netherlands Film Fund also confirmed its financial support.

Mammal ◊ Rebecca Daly



Script: Rebecca Daly **Production:** Fastnet Films (IE) **Co-production:** Rinkel Film (NL), Calac Films (LU) **Sales:** Picture Tree International

A Russian in Paris



Alexander Sokurov

© Bruno Delbonnel

Russian director Alexander Sokurov (*Mother And Son*) is one of the towering figures of contemporary art house cinema: a Golden Lion winner and a regular fixture in competition in Cannes, Venice and Berlin. He is also a perfectionist who makes heavy demands on his producers, writes Geoffrey Macnab.

Els Vandevorst of N279 Entertainment has worked with Sokurov before (on *Father And Son* in 2003) and knew exactly what to expect when she joined his latest project *Francophonía* as Dutch co-producer. "I think every director has to be demanding, otherwise he is not a real director," Vandevorst declares. "I have no complaints." It helped that she has also worked several times with Thomas Kufus of Zero Film, the German producer of *Francophonía*.

After her experiences on *Father And Son*, Vandevorst had been very keen to collaborate again with the Russian director. She asked Kufus last year at the Berlinale if she could come aboard *Francophonía*. At that stage, the film was being put

together as a French-German co-production and there wasn't space for a Dutch collaborator. However, as the project evolved and the budget rose, an opportunity opened up for Vandevorst. She was asked to join the production in August last year, only a month or two before shooting was due to begin.

Vandevorst may have been a latecomer but she has still had a major influence on the project. Some of the shooting was done in the Netherlands, at Rotterdam harbour, and Dutch musicians and post-production technicians were closely involved in the production. Dutch distributor Contact Film is already aboard *Francophonía*, which is sold by Films Boutique.

Sokurov's famous one-shot film *Russian Ark* was made inside The Hermitage in St Petersburg. This time round, the Russian master was partly shooting in the Louvre. No, Vandevorst acknowledges, it is not easy to persuade one of the world's most celebrated museums to open its doors to a film crew. "That was, of course, a very special thing and I don't know if the Louvre will do it again," the Dutch producer states. "Pierre-Olivier [Bardet, producer] made a deal with the Louvre and they were a partner from the start. They are investing money in it and so it became their film as well." Sokurov was allowed to shoot in the museum when it was closed to the

public and he also shot at night. The crew was there working next to the Mona Lisa not just on a single occasion but on eight or nine days.

The project was originally conceived by Sokurov as a documentary. In the course of working on the film, Sokurov introduced more and more fictional elements.

There were obvious linguistic and cultural obstacles to overcome. This was a case of a Russian director working in Paris on a film with Dutch and German collaborators. In the event, shooting went smoothly enough. Sokurov may have a very strong artistic vision but he is also used to working with European partners. It reassured him that he was surrounded by producers he already knew and trusted.

The movie, which features Napoleon briefly, is a meditation on art, war and national identity. In one interview, Sokurov suggested it looks at the "theme of World War II from a humanitarian perspective." The story deals with the rescue of the masterpieces from the Louvre during the German occupation.

Having finished one hugely ambitious project, Vandevorst is at work on another, producing Martin Koolhoven's US-set but European-filmed thriller/western *Brimstone*, supported by both the Film Fund and the Film Incentive.

Francophonía ◊ Alexander Sokurov



Script: Aleksander Sokurov **Production:** Ideale Audience (FR) **Co-production:** N279 Entertainment (NL), Zero One (DE) **Sales:** Films Boutique

EYE is for Archive

EYE doesn't just restore and exhibit its ever-expanding archive of Dutch and international films. It exports them too. Chief Curator Giovanna Fossati explains all.

Over the past 30 years the international market for the exhibition of archive and restored films has grown almost exponentially, to the degree that all the 'A' festivals now have a dedicated 'classics' programme, and a plethora of specialised events have evolved to meet public and academic needs.

Berlinale has its annual retrospective. Cannes runs its equivalent (Cannes Classics) and Venice has its own 'Venice Classics' section too. Add to these the likes of the Pordenone Silent Film Festival, Il Cinema Ritrovato (Bologna), The MoMA International Festival of Film Preservation and the LA-based annual restoration symposium The Reel Thing, and one can grasp the vast international interest in the business of archive and restoration.

And throughout this period, Dutch archivists and restorers have been at the vanguard, raising the bar in terms of quality restoration, but also co-organising, curating, programming and collaborating with these events as a prime partner and stakeholder. "Historically EYE and the Nederlands Filmmuseum [the previous incarnation of EYE] has not only had an interest in the titles to collect and restore but also

in the quality of the restorations," comments EYE Chief Curator Giovanna Fossati. "Interest started really in the 1980s, when we shifted the focus to the quality of the restoration, to look for the best technology available, to restore in the best possible manner the photo quality, the sound, and especially colours which were very central to the work we did."

This led to very high profile collaborations on very notable titles, such as Fritz Lang's *M* for Berlinale Retrospective and the 1922 Rudolph Valentino silent classic *Beyond the Rocks*, believed to be lost but discovered in the EYE collection, and restored for Cannes Classics.

A relatively new player within the dedicated festival circuit is the Lumière Film Festival, held annually every October in Lyon, and presided over by Cannes Film Festival chief Thierry Frémaux. "It feels like the Cannes Classics container has become too small for all the new restored titles that are coming to international attention," comments Fossati of the increased interest in archive and restoration.

The programmes that EYE has to offer the international marketplace in 2015 are numerous and varied, Dutch-themed and international. At the Cinema Ritrovato Festival in Bologna EYE presented a program about the use of colour in early cinema and one on recent silent

film restorations, which included discoveries from the EYE archive such as *Una notte a Calcutta* (Mario Caserini, 1918) and the German comedy *Die Barfusstänzerin* (1918) with Rosa Porten.

The Guanajuato Film Festival in Mexico (July) saw a programme of films made during the last days of the Ottoman Empire. "The Ottoman empire disappeared after the First World War so it means there's a good twenty years of film history that has been fragmented throughout all the new nations that emerged since," comments Fossati.

Other current programmes that can be tweaked or amended to suit the needs/requirements of international archive festivals are (Biking through) Dutch Landscapes, which brings together a vast number of varied documentaries, features, animated and experimental films made in the Netherlands over the last century.

As well as programmes on Dutch animation and the pioneering Masters of Dutch cinema, EYE has also compiled a programme focused on The Dutch Filmliga of filmmakers, critics and cineastes, active between 1927 and 1933 which promoted artistic film and cinema as pure art. Stresses Fossati, "These avant-garde masterwork titles came to the EYE archive because the Filmliga was not only exhibiting the titles but collecting the prints as well, which was very lucky for us." NC

"The EYE archive programmes on offer are numerous and varied"

Primacy of the image

In September 2015 EYE will stage a radical new exhibition on Italian Michelangelo Antonioni, one of the giants of European cinema, Director of Exhibitions Jaap Guldmond explains all to Nick Cunningham.

Sooner or later Jaap Guldmond would get his man. When he started at EYE as exhibition czar back in 2012 Antonioni was, Guldmond says, his number one priority. But for various (very sound) reasons, the tent-pole exhibitions on Kubrick, Cronenberg and latterly William Kentridge, took precedence, were presented with great aplomb and were received rapturously by critics and audiences alike.

“But I have always had a personal affection for Antonioni,” Guldmond confirms. “For me he is one of the most important filmmakers of the second half of the 20th century. And this is to do with his getting rid of the primacy of the narrative. While Hollywood was more interested in filming literature, Antonioni worked from the idea of the image, not storytelling. This is important.”

So when Guldmond heard about an ambitious and large-scale exhibition within Antonioni’s home town of Ferrara in northern Italy, the idea was fixed in his mind to seek its transfer to EYE, albeit re-shaped to fill the angled interiors of the futuristic building, and with a greater emphasis placed on

Antonioni’s strenuous adherence to visual discourse.

In the resulting *Michelangelo Antonioni: il maestro del cinema moderno* event, EYE is dedicating 15 screens to “fragments” of the director’s work. “We have different clips of different films in which you can really see the beautiful way in which he frames the image, his mise-en-scène which is very sophisticated. The connection between the subject and the event is in the primacy of the image... Modernism started with the image.”

Elegant but exacting in his approach to the craft, Antonioni came to international prominence in the early sixties with a trilogy of films characterized by an acute sense of realism, uncompromisingly long takes and a non-narrative aesthetic, all of which contributed to a feeling of dislocation, as experienced by his heroes and protagonists. However, while *L'avventura* (1960), *La notte* (1961) and *L'eclisse* (1962) divided critics on release, they were very popular among global arthouse audiences.

The director’s two most celebrated non-italian films, *Blow Up* (1966) and his epic paean to American counter-culture *Zabriskie Point* (1970), will be given special prominence because of the wealth of associated photographic archive material. What’s more, in what is ostensibly an open-plan exhibition,

Blow Up will be allocated its own closed viewing space. The “visual fragments” from *Zabriskie Point*, on the other hand, will be projected onto the largest screen within the exhibition, better to experience the panoramic scope of the vast desert locations and the (literally) explosive nature of the film’s celebrated last reel.

Guldmond maintains that EYE exhibitions tread an indefinable path somewhere between education and entertainment. “It’s neither one nor the other. If there is an educational aspect then it’s not didactic. It’s not about explaining but showing. And on the other hand it is not simply entertainment, because one of the main roles of the Film Museum is to intensify the knowledge and the pleasure of watching films. So entertainment is not the right word.”

However audiences see it, it certainly hasn’t stopped them arriving in droves to enjoy EYE’s exhibition offer. The recent Kentridge event, for example, has even out-performed the Kubrick exhibition, which started the ball rolling back in 2012 (60,000 visitors to Stanley’s 45,000). “You would meet people in Amsterdam or in Rotterdam and they would ask, ‘Have you seen the Kentridge yet?’” It became a must-see exhibition. You had to have seen this exhibition otherwise you weren’t qualified to talk to those who had!”



“Modernism started with the image.”

Blow-Up, Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966

Kids' Stuff

*"We take kids seriously
and they appreciate that."*



Nienke Poelsma

New Cinekid for Professionals chief Nienke Poelsma talks about the must-attend event for Dutch and int'l professionals working in the kids' sector.

Cinekid, like sister Dutch festivals IFFR (Rotterdam) and IDFA, has achieved pre-eminent status among its sector professionals. IFFR can boast of its credentials in the finance, development and promotion of world cinema, and of course it is home to CineMart. IDFA is arguably the leading doc-fest in the world, certainly in Europe. Cinekid, founded a year before IDFA in 1987, is driven by the same zeal to entertain, inform and inspire, but to a demographic not generally catered for among the plethora of international film events, namely children and youth. And like its fellow Dutch fests, Cinekid's dedication to the finance, production and exploitation of content for kids is paramount.

Key to the success of Cinekid is a clear understanding of the sophisticated needs and tastes of its target audience, CFP head Nienke Poelsma argues. "We have a very curious and smart audience that is very open to discovering new worlds and new ways of getting acquainted with emerging media. They are being raised with it. They are used to new technologies. They have open minds. We take them seriously. They appreciate that. We help develop future audiences for quality cinema."

The five-day CFP event underlines this principle even more in 2015 with the inaugural Test&Pitch with Kids sessions during which producers can pitch their projects to a group of international English-speaking children, gauge their reactions and consult their opinions. What's more, the kids get to be a director for a day, which means they might even have a significant influence on the final outcome of the production.

The theme of the CFP conference this year is The Future is Now! and the event promises to address the ever-increasing speed of media consumption among children alongside non-stop technological innovation, while asking how sector professionals can keep pace in terms of finance, content and delivery.

CFP will also deliver a Media Literacy seminar, powered by Mediawijzer and supported by EYE, and the MediaLab Academy, run in association with the Tribeca Film Institute, will offer masterclasses in new media research practice. As in past years kids can experiment with myriad installations and interactive applications within the vast 1200 square-metre exploratory MediaLab play-hall. The benefits of such a lab to professionals within the production field are obvious. Not only is it great fun for them (as well as the kids) but more importantly, it works as an observation platform to help determine how audiovisual

entertainment for children can be shaped in the future.

In addition, the second edition of Cinekid's 4-month training workshop Script Lab will offer expert coaching to 11 writers from 7 countries (and representing 7 projects) in order to develop their scripts. For this year's edition, experienced coaches Rasmus Horskjaer (Denmark) and the Dutch Boudewijn Koole and Jolein Laarman, director and writer of the multi award-winning *Kauwboy*, will advise and guide the writers.

Core to CFP 2015 once again is the Junior Co-pro Market during which Dutch and international projects are presented to key decision-makers within the global children's media industry. Of the projects pitched in 2014, 39% have been released already, with a further 17% currently in production. Cinekid therefore covers the overall production cycle, from development in the LAB to financing in the junior co-production market, to eventual exploitation at the festival.

"We have a strong industry here [in Holland] but it is quite small, so we need international partners in order to get our films made. The way we work is coming from that need. I think we can see the connections and then do what is necessary to allow the production sector to develop, both in the Netherlands but internationally too."

Top Floor

Floor Onrust



Photo: Maarten Almkinders

Ahead of her attendance at Producers Lab Toronto, producer Floor Onrust talks to Melanie Goodfellow about her upcoming productions.

Amsterdam-based producer Floor Onrust says a good head for numbers and a passion for film were what set her on the path to becoming a producer. “I consider myself creative but not creative enough to be a director. My father was a documentary-maker for TV and my mother was a costume designer and then a talent agent. I saw what it took,” she recounts.

“Producing is perfect for me. It satisfies my love of film and figures and allows me to be creatively involved,” she continues. “I actually like the financial side of films.”

Onrust heads to Canada this September as the Dutch choice for Producers Lab Toronto, a joint initiative between EFP, OMDC (Ontario) and the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) aimed at fostering connections between international producers and the Canadian film industry.

“I don’t have any links with Canadian producers. They’re not in my network but I am curious to explore whether there are ways we can work together,” she says.

Onrust will present *Bloody Mary*, the latest project from graphic novelist and filmmaker Guido van Driel, whose debut film *The Resurrection of a Bastard* opened IFFR 2012.

The new project revolves around an alcoholic creator of erotic graphic novels, suffering from creative block, whose life is given new meaning after she stumbles upon a people-trafficking ring based next door to her flat in Amsterdam’s Red Light district. “It forces her into action, leads her to stop drinking and by the end of the film, find again her eye for beauty. It has a slightly surreal feel,” says Onrust.

It will be the seventh feature-length production for Onrust who set up her Amsterdam-based company Family Affair Films in 2002, shortly after graduating from the Dutch Film and TV Academy. “In the beginning, I produced only short films and worked a lot as a line producer for other companies but then I was asked to produce *Nothing Personal* by Urszula Antoniak and that was the moment when I decided to focus on my own company rather than working for others.”

It also marked the beginning of an ongoing collaboration with

Polish-Dutch filmmaker Antoniak. Onrust went on to produce her 2011 *Code Blue*, alongside Frans van Gestel of Topkapi Film, and Simone van Dusseldorp’s children’s drama *Life According to Nino*, which is based on a screenplay by Antoniak.

Other upcoming productions include experimental artist and filmmaker Fiona Tan’s ambitious *History’s Future*. Part fiction, part documentary work, *History’s Future* stars Irish Mark O’Halloran as a man suffering from amnesia after a mugging, who sets off on a modern-day odyssey across Europe. The cast also includes French Denis Lavant, Irish Brian Gleeson and Dutch actress Johanna ter Steege. A majority Dutch co-production with Germany’s Rohfilm and Ireland’s Vico Films, the hybrid feature involved more than ten financiers and took artist and experimental film-maker Tan, the lead actor Mark O’Halloran and a stripped down crew, on a six-country European tour over the space of six weeks.

“We were ambitious and the budget was tight. It was a roller coaster ride,” says Onrust, who first started working with Tan in 2009, when she handled the logistics for the artist’s audiovisual installation *Disorient* at the Venice Art Biennale. Toronto-based sales company Mongrel International is selling the film, which is set for an early 2016 release in the Netherlands.

“Producing is perfect for me”



Photo: Kris Dewinter/Family Affair Films

Life According to Nino by Simone van Dusseldorp

Short Cuts

EYE on Brazil

On August 14 EYE International kicked off a two-month festival collaboration with the Brazilian organisation SESI (Brazilian Social Services for Industry) that sees a Dutch feature or short film compilation screened every week at more than 50 SESI centres within 35 towns across the Sao Paulo region.

Comments EYE director Sandra den Hamer: “We are very honoured with the sincere and great interest of our Brazilian partners in Dutch cinema. With a programme of 20 Dutch films travelling to 35 cities in the state of Sao Paulo, this is an amazing showcase for a small cinema country like Holland.”

At the same time EYE Int’l is collaborating on the Café Amsterdam festival in Rio with a film programme consisting mainly of book adaptations. Dutch filmmakers in attendance are director/screenwriter Rudolf van den Berg (Tirza), director Reinout Oerlemans (Stricken) and screenwriter Lotte Tabbers (Taking Chances).

Following the screening of Tirza and Taking Chances van den Berg and Tabbers will, together with book authors Arnon Grunberg and Marjolijn Hof, talk with audiences about the process of film adaptation. “We look forward to inspiring meetings between Dutch filmmakers and writers and their Brazilian colleagues within the framework of Café Amsterdam and we hope these will lead to new ideas, new projects and fruitful future co-operations,” adds EYE’s den Hamer.



Minority Co-pro Cafard in Ostend

The animated feature film *Cafard*, produced by Belgian production outfit Tondo Films, and co-produced with the Dutch Topkapi Films alongside Superprod (France) and Tarantula (Wallonia, Belgium) tells the dramatic story of the Belgian wrestler Jean Mordant. Set initially in 1914, Jean vows to avenge his daughter’s rape by German soldiers in Ostend. He therefore enlists in the army, thus commencing a dramatic odyssey around the world.

The film was written and directed by Jan Bultheel, best known as the creator of the animated series *Hazentem International*. The actors played an intense role in the creative process with their movements and facial expressions captured using motion and facial tracking. Wim Willaert

(Offline, Ex-Drummer) plays Mordant while Jean Sebastien Dewaele (Raised) plays his trainer Victor.

Comments Arnold Heslenfeld of Topkapi: “When Arrielle Sleutel approached me for *Cafard* I was almost immediately convinced of the tremendous quality. The story is strong and thoughtful and although the First World War is not directly a topical issue, I see great opportunities internationally. The recent successes of films like *Waltz with Bashir* and *Persepolis* prove that there is a serious market for these types of films. In addition to cinema, I see also great educational opportunities for the story in the Netherlands.”

New Film Fund Consultants

Experienced Dutch professionals Anita Voorham and Jan Eilander took up posts this summer as film consultants at the Netherlands Film Fund to advise on the film plans submitted for consideration. Both professionals bring extensive knowledge and experience in the field of art-house and mainstream film, television drama and documentary. Their experience in the (inter)national film industry fits well with the requirement of filmmakers to look beyond Dutch borders to bolster production finance.

Anita Voorham is a script consultant for television drama and film, both arthouse and mainstream, Dutch and international. She worked as a dramaturgist for NTR and several production companies and wrote the successful series *Gooische Vrouwen*.

Jan Eilander is a (script)writer, musician and film and television

director. Most recently he wrote the screenplay for Erik de Bruyn’s *J.Kessels*, which opens the Netherlands Film Festival 2015. Besides Voorham and

Eilander, Monique Ruinen, Suzanne van Voorst, Renée van der Grinten, Dorien van de Pas and Peter Lindhout are film consultants at the Fund.



Anita Voorham: “Primarily, our role is to find and nurture projects that are distinctive, exciting and can connect to their audience. Development is always a delicate dance of being critical and inspiring, of letting a film mature while maintaining energy. Having worked a lot internationally, which I will continue to do, I will be looking out for projects and teams that can attract the interest of the international industry and be selected at major festivals. Vice versa, I also hope to attract international filmmakers to The Netherlands.”



Jan Eilander: “We need to ensure that our films are as eloquent on the other side of the world as in the Netherlands. That’s only possible when form and content are of the highest quality. My challenge is to help writers and directors maintain the authenticity and originality of their very first idea.”

(OTTO) in TIFF

The 10-minute animated short (*Otto*), directed by Job, Joris & Marieke, has been selected for Toronto. The film is about a girl who loses her imaginary friend. Earlier this year the trio’s 2-minute short *A Single Life* was nominated for an Academy Award in the Best Animated Short Film section.

“With (*Otto*) we made a short that is quite long for us,” comments the company’s Job Roggeveen. “It’s the

first step after *A Single Life*. For the first time people are really expecting something of us, so that’s a really new thing, so we hope to give it a really good tour around the world after its premiere at TIFF.”

The film, submitted to the Dutch committee for Oscar consideration, was part of the Kort! Programme supported by broadcaster NTR, the Film Fund and CoBO.





Fedja van Huêt

Fedja van Huêt is one of the most distinguished film and theatre actors working in the Netherlands. Shortly after graduating from university, he starred in the Oscar award-winning film *Character*, directed by Mike van Diem, and went on to win coveted Dutch Golden Calves for his roles in *Amnesia* and *Nachtrit*. He has starred in some of the Netherlands' landmark films of the past 15 years including *Lucia de B. (Accused)*, *Daylight*, *Guernsey*, *Wolfsbergen*, *Waiter*, *Nadine*, *Loft* and *The Zigzag Kid* with Isabella Rossellini.

He is currently starring in Erik de Bruyn's *J.Kessels*, which opens the Netherlands Film Festival. "We did a lot of casting, but when Fedja came in he just surprised me," comments de Bruyn. "He gave me something that was so dry and funny at the same time, and he had this thoughtfulness in his gaze. He was perfect for this part. He did a great acting job."