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Issue #1 November 2010 / The Documentary issue

**Interview with
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director of IDFA opener
*Position among the Stars***

**Sluizer defends his
controversial *Homeland***

**Premiering at IDFA 2010:
*This is my Picture
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**Why the Amsterdam
film industry
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the need to coproduce**



A publication by the Netherlands Film Fund
and EYE Film Institute Netherlands



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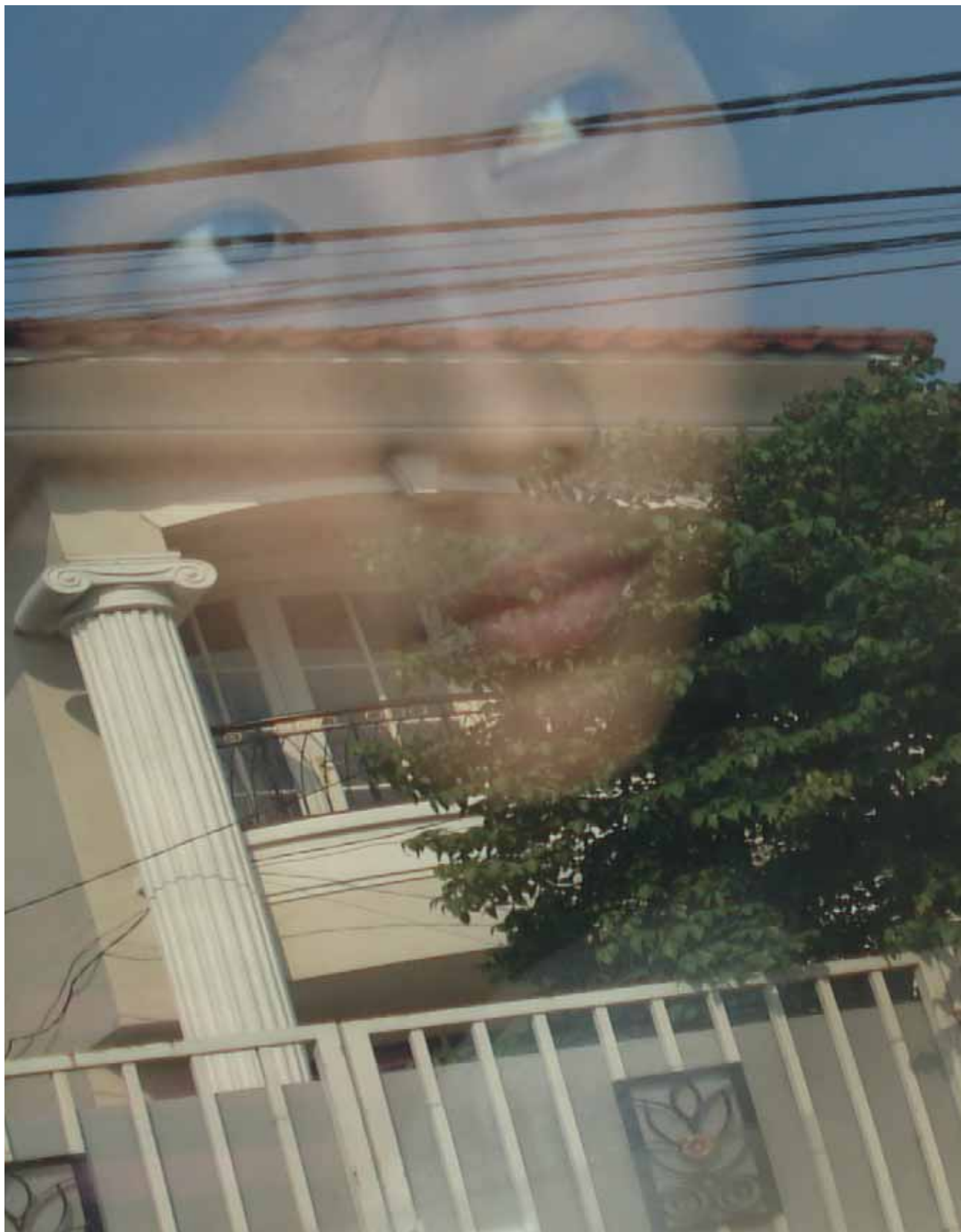
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(cover image: *Position among the Stars*)

Position among the Stars

Leonard Retel Helmrich

One perennial debate in the documentary world is how involved filmmakers should become in the stories they are telling. Helmrich and his producer have had a direct influence on the lives of their subjects.

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Position among the Stars ◊ **Director:** Leonard Retel Helmrich
Production: Scarabee Films **Distribution:** Cinema Delicatessen
Sales Agent: Films Transit

Among Horses and Men

Marjoleine Boonstra

Marjoleine Boonstra's new documentary *Among Horses and Men* is a cowboy film with a difference. Don't expect a typical documentary about inmates in a brutal, dehumanising penal system. Boonstra's approach is lyrical and reflective.

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Among Horses and Men ◊ Director: Marjoleine Boonstra
Production: Viewpoint Productions Distribution: Contact Film
Sales: Illumina Films, Robin Brinster

This is my Picture when I was Dead

Mahmoud Al Massad

This is my Picture when I was Dead takes its cue from an image of four-year-old Bashir's blood-stained body after the Athens attack... "They thought Bashir was dead but he was in a coma," explains director Mahmoud Al Massad.

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This is my picture when I was dead ◊ Director: Mahmoud al Massad
Production: KeyDocs in coproduction with iSee Films Distribution: A-film
Sales agent: tba

Homeland

George Sluizer

Sluizer is unapologetic for the offence his words might cause. "I have a grudge against this man. He made the lives of 100,000 people impossible. I've been angry with Sharon ever since 1982 but it is only now that I have been able to deliver my thoughts in 2010," says Sluizer forcefully.

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Homeland ◊ **Director:** George Sluizer **Production:** Sluizer Films
Distribution: Cinema Delicatessen **Sales:** Sluizer Films

Not Without You

Peter Lataster and Petra Lataster-Czisch

"It is a very intimate experience, making a film about one's parents in this period of their lives. Both of us have never experienced such a period during our filmmaking. We were filmmakers but also the children they liked to have around them as much as they could," Lataster states.

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Not without you ◊ **Director:** Peter Lataster & Petra Lataster-Czisch
Production: Lataster & Films **Distributor:** Riexs Hadders/Mokum Film
Sales: tba

Dutch Harvest



Janine ◊ Director: Paul Cohen Production: IDTV Docs
Distribution: A-Film



The Lie ◊ Director: Robert Oey Production: Interakt

Feature-length Dutch documentaries at IDFA 2010

Not Without You (Niet zonder jou)



Director: Peter Lataster & Petra Lataster-Czisch
Production: Lataster & Films
Distributor: Rieks Hadders/Mokum Film
Not Without You is an intimate and heartbreaking portrait of an elderly couple, celebrated Dutch painter Ger Lataster and Hermine van Hall, filmed by their son and daughter-in-law.

The Terrestrials (Terrestrials)



Director: René Daalder
Production: Staccato Films/ American Scenes Inc. Six students at Santa Cruz digitise the archive of the late LSD guru and futurist Timothy Leary, inspiring their own psychedelic re-evaluation of reality.

Position Among the Stars (Stand van de sterren)



Director: Leonard Retel Helmrich
Production: Scarabee Films
Distribution: Cinema Delicatessen
Sales Agent: Films Transit
 For 12 years, filmmaker Leonard Retel

Helmrich followed an Indonesian family from the slums of Jakarta. This has resulted in the trilogy *The Eye of the Day*, *Shape of the Moon* and now *Position Among the Stars*. Once again the filmmaker shows us the underlying patterns of life in Indonesia.

Release: March 2011

This Is My Picture When I Was Dead



Director: Mahmoud al Massad
Production: KeyDocs in coproduction with iSee Films
Distribution: A-film
Sales agent: tba
 Athens, 1983. The world's press reports that 4-year old Palestinian Bashir is killed in the assassination of his father, Mamoun Meraish, a top PLO lieutenant. But what if death was not the end of his journey?

Homeland



Director: George Sluizer **Production:** Sluizer Films
Distribution: Cinema Delicatessen
Sales: Sluizer Films
 George Sluizer's deeply personal and impassioned *Homeland* is an emotive reflection on war. Sluizer's recent near-death experience provokes a reckoning with his own history. **International Film Festival of Abu Dhabi (14-23 October) awarded the Black Pearl Award**

Among Horses and Men



Director: Marjoleine Boonstra
Production: Viewpoint Productions
Distribution: Contact Film
Sales: Illumina Films, Robin Brinster
Among Horses and Men is about the still, untouched moment of self-reflection in the lives of prisoners. While in prison, the men get the opportunity to gain the trust of a wild horse, whose behaviour reflects their feelings and emotions.

Parradox



Director: In-Soo Radstake
Production: Fu Works
Distribution: BFD
 A touching and humorous rollercoaster ride through the world of European filmmaking from the 1960s to the 1990s. The rise and fall of Pim de la Parra, a crazy, controversial and creative genius, and of his resurrection. A film about creativity and passion, about stupidity and serenity, about tragedy and happiness.

Juvenile Judge (De kinderrechtter)



Director: Maria Mok & Meral Uslu
Production: Meral Uslu & Maria Mok
 For the first time, this film shows publicly how juvenile judges go about their work. It gives a unique view into a world that has been closed to the public until now.

Peddlers of God (Marskramers van God)



Director: Hans Heijnen
Production: Hans Heijnen

After ten Dutch children escaped the fierce Carmelite regime of their home village for a new life in Brazil, they began to learn that religion wasn't as important to people as health, education and work. Finally, the importance of God and religion declined in favour of humanity.

Curaçao



Director: Sarah Vos
Production: Zeppers Film & TV
 A film that reveals the collectively repressed legacy of the Dutch in their former colony, offering a disturbing insight into the influence this has on the contemporary Curaçao community.

L.A. Raeven - Beyond Imagination



Director: Lisa Boerstra
Production: Viewpoint Productions
Sales: Illumina Films, Robin Brinster
 For the artist twins L.A. Raeven, life and work are intrinsically intertwined. This documentary takes us where their imagination and reality collide and coalesce, but it also reveals how painful and difficult it is for Liesbeth and Angelique to detach from their alter-ego.

The New Saint



Director: Allard Detiger
Producer: Volya Films
 A film about Yevgeny Rodionov, an ordinary young Russian boy who was proclaimed a martyr after being taken prisoner and refusing to convert to Islam.

Dutch Harvest

Dutch documentaries released in 2010

All My Tomorrows



Director: Sonia Herman Dolz
Production: Hasten Slowly Films
Distribution: Cinema Delicatessen
Sales: NPO Sales

A few special people share their purest thoughts about 'coping with cancer'. The film shows the connection between the medical, ethical, psychological and social aspects of the disease.

Bastøy



Director: Michel Kapteijns
Production: DNU Film
115 criminals serve their sentences on a state prison island in Norway. Here prisoners learn to deal with responsibility and freedom. The guards don't carry weapons while the prisoners have chainsaws, kitchen knives and screw drivers. Doesn't this sound highly implausible?

Janine



Director: Paul Cohen **Production:** IDTV Docs **Distribution:** A-Film
There are thousands of young musical talents, but at the top of the pile there is only place for a few. How, therefore, has Janine Jansen become the greatest violinist ever in the Netherlands?

Leaving Mandela Park



Director: Saskia Vredeveld
Production: Zeppers Film & TV
Distribution: Cinema Delicatessen
A mosaic of children's dreams in the townships of South Africa and the special drive to escape the harsh reality of everyday existence through music and dance. **Release:** February 2010

Scena del Crimine



Director: Walter Stokman
Production: Zeppers Film
A film about the influence of the Camorra on the city of Naples and its residents. An increasingly violent and intimidating scenario unfolds, experienced from various perspectives. Meanwhile, a forensic expert of the Neapolitan police looks back at his life of dealing with the consequences of Camorra violence over the past 30 years.
Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica di Venezia - Venice Days (Giornate degli Autori)

Shout!



Directors: Ester Gould and Sabine Lubbe Bakker
Production: Pieter van Huystee Film & TV
Best friends Ezat and Bayan, born on the Golan Heights, are granted permission to study in Syria, the homeland of their parents, and the sworn enemy of Israel. Do they go to the country to which their traditional parents have remained faithful, or do they stay in Israel,

the country that can offer them a hip-hop culture but only a second-class status. **Awarded 'The Film We Liked the Most', London International Documentary Festival**

Wistful Wilderness (Tiengemeten)



Director: Digna Sinke
Production: SNG Film
Distribution: Mokum Film
The island Tiengemeten was once reclaimed from the sea, intended for agriculture. In the 1990s a decision was made to set aside land and to allow nature to run its course. Digna Sinke followed the changes in the landscape over a period of 13 years, also recollecting the changes in her own life.

Forgotten Space



Director: Allan Sekula & Noël Burch
Production: doc. eye
Allan Sekula and Noël Burch explore the sea, the 'forgotten space' which forms the arena for the globalisation of freight transport and labour. The film is a visual and analytical essay about the triumphal progress of container-transport logistics and the way in which it influences local communities, workers, farmers and consumers.
Winner of the Special Orizzonti Jury Prize at the at the 67th Venice International Film Festival

The Lie (De leugen)



Director: Robert Oey
Production: Interakt
A musical documentary with a subject that will engage all Dutch people: truth and lies in politics. The film exposes the motives around the political drama in which Ayaan Hirsi Ali was accused of lying about her identity. In the midst of this political story we see the personal tale of the young girl Sadaf, who requested for asylum years ago. While *The Lie* demonstrates the human side of Dutch politics it also exposes how the Netherlands deals with immigrants.

Wilders, the Movie



Director: Joost van der Valk and Mags Gavan
Production: Pieter van Huystee Film & TV
Some people call him a racist, others adore him. Who is Geert Wilders? Who gave him their vote? Why is he so successful? The politician generates discussion, anger and admiration everywhere. On the way to, and during, the parliamentary elections, the filmmakers try to get an insight into the motivations of Wilders and his supporters. A journey that takes us from the Netherlands to London, the United States, ending up in Israel.

Closing in on Tanja (Dichterbij Tanja)



Director: Leo de Boer
Production: Pieter van Huystee Film & TV
A desperate mother and an anti-guerrilla fighter join forces to save her daughter from the Colombian guerrilla movement, the Farc. What inspires a girl from a peaceful district in the Netherlands to burn all bridges and to join one of the most violent guerrilla movements in the world? And does she really want to get out?

Dutch documentaries in production in 2010

Malakeh's Daughters (De Dochters van Malakeh)



Director: *Jet Homoet*
Production: *Bonanza Films*
Two Iranian sisters wrestle with the choice between living out their newly acquired freedom within society or, instead, experiencing the consequences of their great dream to find a suitable husband.

Enjoy your Dinner (Smakelijk eten)



Director: *Walter Grotenhuis*
Production: *Kleine Beer Films*
Throughout the year a world of food is served up on our plate. And what is on our plate changes the world. Has the food that we consume become a matter for our collective conscience?

My long-distance Friend



Director: *Carina Molier and Maria Mok*
Production: *SNG Film*
Struggling to survive in Europe since the age of nine, Zimbabwean OG seeks a balance in her life. Director Carina Molier - her long-distance friend - follows her on her quest for reunification

with her daughter. The film is about the longing for security in an ever globalising world.

To be and not to be



Director: *Frank Scheffer*
Production: *Pieter van Huystee Film & TV*
Frank Scheffer follows the Iranian composer Nader Mashayekhi as he struggles to get his Tehran Philharmonic Orchestra off the ground. The young Iranian musicians reveal another side to life in Iran in the way they perceive and experience contemporary western music.

Tomoko's Dresses



Director: *Aliona van der Horst*
Production: *Zeppers Film*
Using the evolving artwork and music of Tomoko Mukaiyama, both artistic forms dedicated to fertility, this film investigates how women from different countries feel defined by, repulsed by or connected to, their bodies.

Work: the life of Anton Corbijn (Werk, het leven van Anton Corbijn)

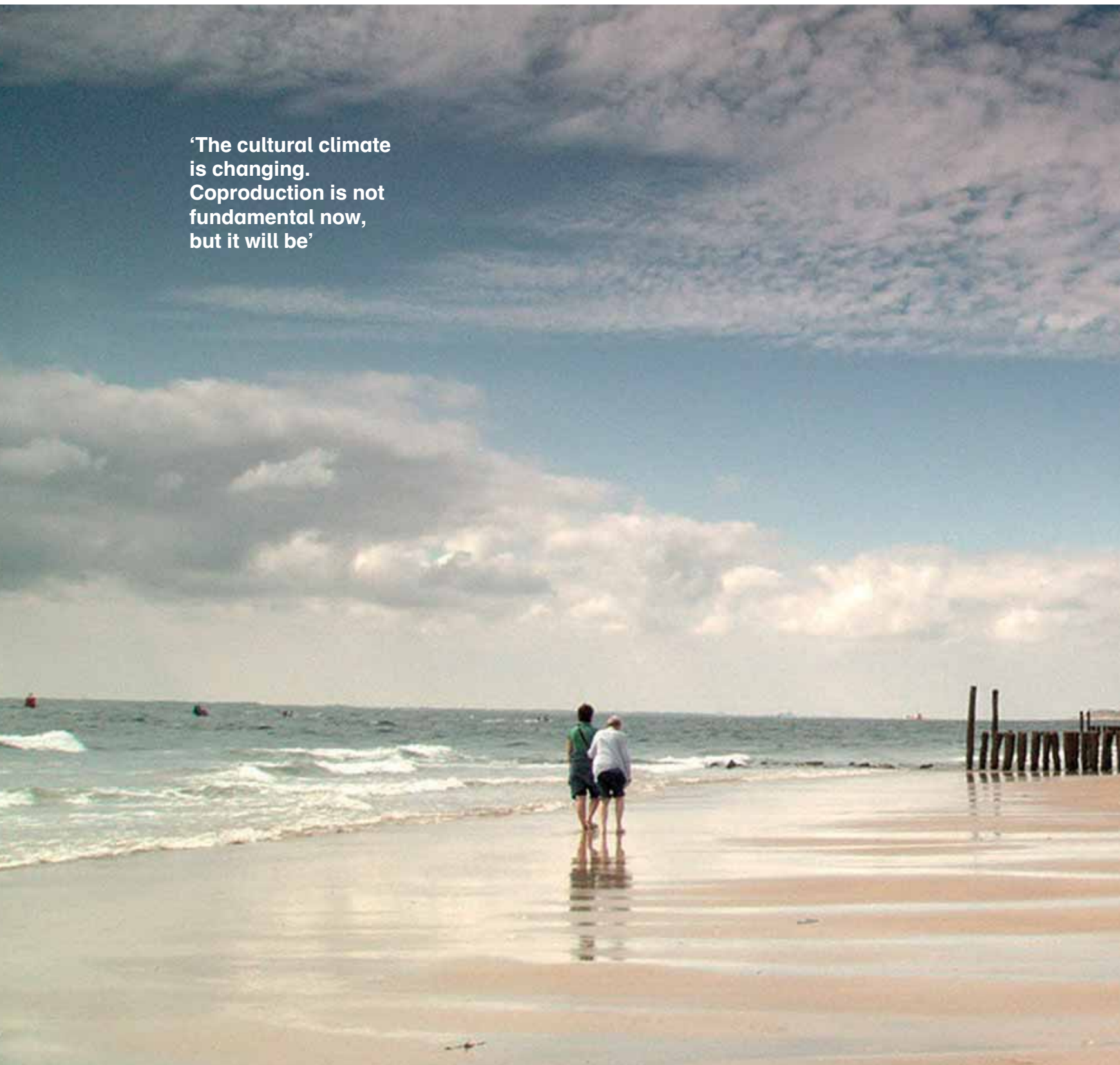


Director: *Klaartje Quirijns*
Production: *Lev Pictures*
An intensely intimate portrait of one of the most prolific and influential artists of the last 30 years, this film is a revelatory look at the drama and conflict inherent within the man himself.



To be and not to be ◊ Director: *Frank Scheffer*
Production: *Pieter van Huystee Film & TV*

**'The cultural climate
is changing.
Coproduction is not
fundamental now,
but it will be'**



Vivan Las Antipodas ◊ Director: Victor Kossakovsky

Follow the money: financing beyond Dutch borders

Now, more than ever, Dutch documentary makers should look beyond national boundaries for inspiration... and for backing. This is the message from many in the Dutch film community. Under the new coalition government, cuts are looming in public financing for the arts - and this is bound to include film. In the face of these cuts, coproduction could be the answer. Geoffrey Macnab asks the Film Fund to explain why.

Traditionally, documentary makers have been able to finance their work through public funding and broadcaster support. However, as Niek Koppen, documentary head at the Netherlands Film Fund, warns, "The cultural climate is changing. Coproduction is not fundamental now, but it will be."

The Flemish are natural partners for the Dutch. A system is already in place for the Film Fund to support Flemish documentary and features in return for matching support from the Flanders Audiovisual Fund in Dutch projects. Each pumps in €50,000 every year into three separate documentary projects from their partner. The one stipulation is that the filmmakers must spend 60% of the investment in the minority coproducing country.

"One of the reasons that the Flemish are very keen on this

is that they haven't done as many feature-length docs as we do here," notes Koppen. "The Flemish Fund has only existed since 2003. Historically, documentaries were mainly developed in co-operation with, and for, television. That's why they really wanted to work with us."

It has long been a truism that the Dutch and Flemish are divided by a common language. They are culturally very different: their senses of humour and even the way they use language vary. A Dutch TV series will be subtitled in Flanders and vice versa.

"We are very happy about the Flemish projects that are accepted by our neighbours, and they are happy also. After two years of working, we have made a balance," says Pierre Drouot, head of The Flemish Film Fund. He acknowledges that there are still cultural differences between the two partners. "It is a process of trying to understand each other." Nonetheless, they are learning to work together ever more closely. "Their producers and our producers are happy," he adds.

Recent collaborations include Klara Van Es's *Lost Down Memory Lane* (2010), about elderly Alzheimer's women patients in a home near Antwerp, a Belgian production which has now passed 5000 admissions at the Dutch box-office since receiving

its Dutch premiere at the Netherlands Film Festival.

Of course, many leading Dutch-based documentary makers have been making coproductions as a matter of course. Companies like Cobos Films and Pieter van Huystee Films work regularly with foreign partners. Leading directors like Heddy Honigmann and Ramon Gieling often choose subjects that are set outside the Netherlands - and it therefore makes sense to put together coproductions.

Others producers would still much rather stay at home and put together their money from Dutch sources exclusively. This isn't something that Koppen encourages. "As funders, we are not willing to work that way anymore," he stresses. "We have to take part in how films are financed all over Europe. We are not an island and financing won't get any easier in the future. Dutch production companies should learn how to do it (coproduction) and to get the experience."

Signalling its increasing international ambition, the Dutch Film Fund recently invested €50,000 in Victor Kossakovsky's *Vivan Las Antipodas*, a huge production which the director has been shooting all around the world, from Argentina to Shanghai. Kossakovsky describes it as "a poem of a multipolar world."

"The point is we would like to do more of these," Koppen declares. "The producers should do more of these co-operations and we should take part in them."

There is already evidence that coproductions are having an increased impact at international festivals. Some look to the example of *The Forgotten Space* by Noel Burch and Allan Sekula, which won the Orizzonti Prize at the Venice Film Festival earlier this autumn, as an example of what coproductions can achieve. The documentary was produced through Doc.Eye Film, the company run by Frank van Reemst and Joost Verhey.

Doreen Boonekamp, head of the Netherlands Film Fund, confirms Koppen's remarks about the increasing significance of coproduction for documentary makers in straitened economic times. "The main principles as to why coproduction is important for feature films are the same for documentary," she states. "It's the value of co-operating in an international network and learning from each other, not just about technical and financial coproduction. It is about sharpening and broadening your creative view."

Three of a Kind

***Position among the Stars*, the opening film of this year's IDFA, is the third and concluding part of a trilogy from Leonard Retel Helmrich. It follows on from *The Eye Of The Day* and *Shape Of The Moon* (which won the Joris Ivens Award for best feature-length doc at IDFA 2004 and the Grand Jury Prize World Cinema Documentary at the following Sundance). The director speaks with Geoffrey Macnab.**

Again, Helmrich's subject is the Sjamsuddin family who live in a working-class part of Jakarta, trying to stay afloat in an Indonesia that is rapidly changing. In the world that the film shows, poverty, globalisation and modernity sit side by side. There is tension between Islam and Christianity. The filmmakers show gambling and corruption as well as very intimate domestic scenes. The gulf between rich and poor is painfully evident. There is a great divide, too, between old and young. In one poignant early sequence, we see a limbless beggar making a call on his cellphone - punching the numbers with his toes.

Not that the film is downbeat about Indonesia. "I am quite optimistic in the sense that they (the Indonesians) are going the way they want to go. In an economic sense, it (Indonesia) is

booming," Helmrich suggests, pointing out that many more Indonesians have bank accounts and access to consumer goods.

"Even people who are poor and begging have a cell phone. What was formerly luxury - being able to communicate - is now a part of life," he notes.

The film unfolds over the course of a year. It shows the run-up to the graduation of the teenage girl and explores the tension between her and her older relatives.

Behind the camera, this was also a family story. As ever, Leonard's producer was his sister, Hetty Naaijken-Retel Helmrich of Scarabee Films. The editor, meanwhile, was his nephew, Jasper Naaijken. (Jasper also helped shoot parts of the film and is now involved in its release, having recently started work for distributor Cinema Delicatessen).

"Maybe it's an Indonesian tradition! There are many family businesses," the director jokes when asked about working with close relatives. He adds that he has an immediate rapport with his sister and nephew. "You don't need too many words to make a decision. That's what I like about it."

Helmrich made the new doc over many months in Indonesia - and used his own camera

system (nicknamed "Steady Wings") to shoot it. This is a camera mount that enables him to roam around and to shoot in a freeflowing, improvisatory way. Whether he is following kids on motorbikes, insects as they scurry across walls and floors, or the old grandmother walking the streets, he always seems to be at the centre of the events. "What I use is a very small and lightweight camera. Most other people say when you have a small and light camera, it is difficult to keep it steady," the director notes, but adds that Steady Wings combined with Tai Chi techniques enable him to keep balance and focus.

One perennial debate in the documentary world is how involved filmmakers should become in the stories they are telling. Helmrich and his producer have had a direct influence on the lives of their subjects. As Hetty explains, when *Shape Of The Moon* won the Joris Ivens award, they donated a large part of their €12,000 prize to the family so that the daughter would be able to study at a better school.

When the daughter became antagonistic towards her family, Helmrich wondered initially if the decision to help her go to the new school had backfired. "But I am sure she would have gone in this direction anyway," he reflects. "I know a few of her girlfriends who live in their

neighbourhood. They are the same."

Much of the editing was done in the unlikely setting of Harvard University, where Helmrich had been invited to work and teach. "Being there, in a very rational environment, was a very good place to edit... many young students came to our viewings," he recalls. The feedback from these students helped him decide what shape the film should take.

In spite of the huge acclaim he received for *Shape Of The Moon* in Sundance, Helmrich says it's still tough to fund his films. He doesn't yet know what the next project will be. "Sometimes I see it as being like fishing," he says of his future ideas. "You have lots of fishing rods. The one that bites - that's the one you take. The others you just don't use anymore."



'Even people who are poor and begging have a cell phone. What was formerly luxury - being able to communicate - is now a part of life'



Position among the Stars ◊ **Producer:** Hetty Naaijken **Production Company:** Scarabee Films **Director:** Leonard Retel Helmrich **Distributor in the Netherlands:** Cinema Delicatessen **Release date in the Netherlands:** March 2011 **World sales:** Film Transit **Budget:** €505,000 **Length:** 109'

They shoot horses

Marjoleine Boonstra's new documentary *Among Horses and Men* is a cowboy film with a difference. Her subjects are prisoners coming toward the end of their sentences who are challenged to tend and communicate with wild horses. These men share very intimate thoughts on camera. Don't expect a typical documentary about inmates in a brutal, dehumanising penal system. Boonstra's approach is lyrical and reflective, explains Geoffrey Macnab.

The director describes the film as a continuation of work she began with her documentary *Bela Bela*, about poets who survived political imprisonment.

"When you are isolated and in prison what are the moments and the possibilities of physical contact?" the director asks. In *Bela Bela*, she asked the poets questions about smell, colour and physical contact.

On one level, *Among Horses and Men* was an easy film to make. The light was beautiful. The rugged western landscapes provided a perfect backdrop. The horses were photogenic. The prison authorities gave her all the access she needed after seeing the director and her producer spend a week researching the project. However, the film is probing away at some raw and

emotional areas in her subjects' pasts.

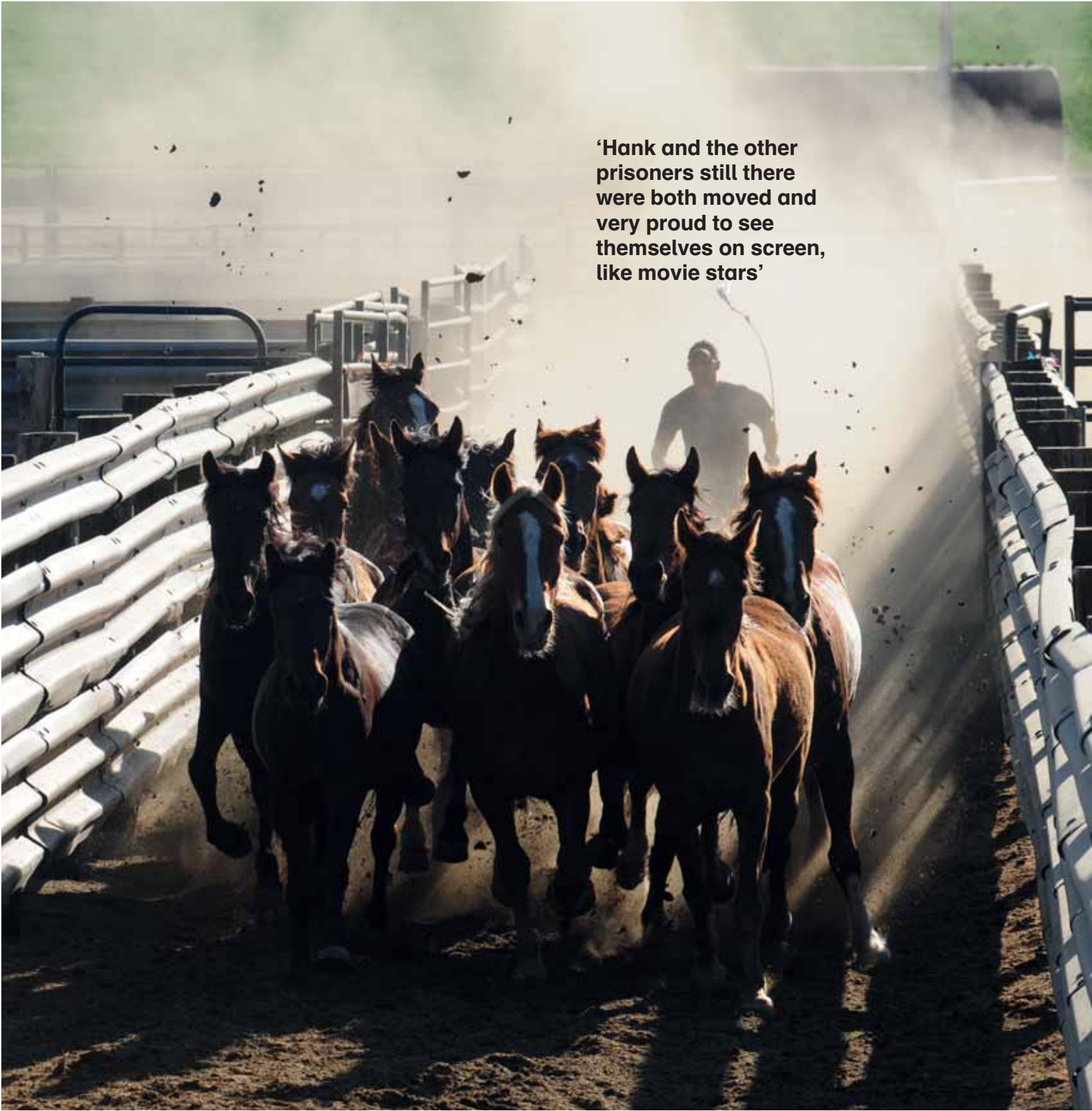
Boonstra was struck immediately by the sensitivity of the horses. "It is maybe not clear now in the documentary but I thought when I started this project that wild horses were wild, dangerous and aggressive! I was really surprised that they were so friendly, the horses."

The prisoners, too, were open and ready to talk. "It's maybe the way I interview them. Maybe I am a little bit a mother figure," she reflects on her uncanny ability to strike up a rapport with them.

She took an early cut of the film back to the prison ranch. "I wanted to know if there were bits in the film they didn't like. Hank and the other prisoners still there were both moved and very proud to see themselves on screen, like movie stars."

Now, Boonstra is contemplating a new documentary about the problems that translators face when trying to capture the feelings and thoughts of writers in a new language. The film will take the same painstaking and poetical approach as her previous docs. "You ask me if there is a need for documentaries like this. I hope so."





‘Hank and the other prisoners still there were both moved and very proud to see themselves on screen, like movie stars’

***Among Horses and Men* ◊ Producer: Valérie Schuit Production Company: Viewpoint Productions Director: Marjoleine Boonstra Distributor in the Netherlands: Contact Film Release date in the Netherlands: February 2011 World sales: Robin Brinster/ Illumina Films Budget: €266,000 Length: 78’**

She said, 'I know a guy who has a picture of himself when he was dead', recalls Al Massad. 'I was curious'



This is my Picture when I was Dead ◊ **Producers:** Hanneke Niens & Hans de Wolf **Production Company:** iSee Film & KeyDocs **Coproduction companies:** ITVS International, VPRO Dubai Entertainment and Media Organisation in association with the Dubai Film Market (Enjaaz). **Director:** Mahmoud al Massad **Distributor in the Netherlands:** A-film **Release date in the Netherlands:** December 2010 **World sales:** tba **Budget:** €500,000 **Length:** 81'

Stranger than fiction

Director Mahmoud Al Massad's *This is my Picture when I was Dead* revolves around the stranger-than-fiction life of political cartoonist Bashir Meraish who nearly died in the assassination of his father, a senior Palestinian Liberation Organisation official, by an Israeli hit squad in Greece in 1983. Melanie Goodfellow investigates.

This is my Picture when I was Dead takes its cue from an image of four-year-old Bashir's blood-stained body after the Athens attack, in which two men on a motorcycle drew up alongside the car carrying Mamoun Meraish and his three children and fired 13 shots into the vehicle. "They thought Bashir was dead but he was in a coma. They did a final check on the bodies at the morgue and at the last minute discovered the child was alive and rushed him to intensive care," explains Al Massad.

Today, Bashir, a satirical cartoonist based in the Jordanian capital of Amman, is still dealing with the legacy of his father's militant past and brutal murder. Netherlands-based director Al Massad, who is Jordanian-born of Palestinian descent, met Bashir through a mutual friend.

"She said, 'I know a guy who has a picture of himself when he

was dead'," recalls Al Massad. "I was curious. I thought it must be someone in their 70s or 80s but when I first met him he was only 28. He told me his story. It was fascinating. He also told me about other strange brushes with death, a near fatal car accident, a photo of him with ten childhood friends in which he is the only one still alive. By 2002, they'd all died, one from a rare blood disease, another in a car accident, another in the Intifada."

"It was impressive stuff but everything was a flashback. I wasn't sure I could make a film about a guy just telling what happened in the past," the director continues. "The whole story was there but I had to work out how to visualise it. I didn't want to make a talking head documentary. It took me a year to figure it out."

A turning point for the film came in September 2008 when British newspaper *The Sunday Times* published a story linking Israel's then foreign minister Tzipi Livni with the death of Mamoun Meraish. The report claimed Livni had been on active duty as an Israeli secret agent in Europe at the time. Bashir's long-forgotten father was back in the news again.

"Suddenly Bashir wanted to know more about his father," says Al Massad. "I decided to follow Bashir for two months,

talking to his mother, digging in with his father's old friends. We discovered a lot of things that even Bashir didn't know."

One friend reveals how Mamoun played a key role in the infamous 1978 hijack of an Israeli bus on the coastal road north of Tel Aviv, an operation led by female Palestinian guerrilla Dalal Moghrabi. The hijack ended in a shoot-out with Israeli forces in which 36 Israeli passengers and nine Palestinians died.

In another scene, Bashir learns he is named after Lebanon Phalange leader Bashir Gayamel for whom his father had deep respect despite their political differences, having met him face to face during fighting between the Palestinians and Phalangists in Beirut in the 1970s.

Like Al Massad's previous documentary *Recycling*, the tale of a former Mujahideen living in the Jordanian city of Zarqua which won the Best World Cinema Cinematography Award at Sundance in 2008, this latest work is also visually arresting. Equipped with a digital Red One camera, Al Massad zooms in tight on Bashir as he goes about everyday life in Jordan, chatting about girlfriends over a water-pipe in an Amman cafe, on the running machine at the gym, discussing his future with his mother who wants him to marry and settle down.

These scenes are cut with accounts of Mamoun's militant exploits, reconstructions of the assassination and car accident and news footage of moments relating to the Middle East conflict such as Yasser Arafat's death in 2004 and the 2008 Israeli siege of Gaza – all of which had an impact on Bashir's life.

"Shooting was the easy part, editing was the hard part. I've never had such a tough time editing. It took over nine months," comments the director. "The structure was the key to capturing the drama of Bashir's story."

The film flits back and forth between Bashir's past and present, oscillating between his personal drama and the world events impacting on his life. At times, Bashir seems detached from the story, a mere observer, or a ghost looking in on his own life.

"With all that has gone on in his life, Bashir sometimes is not sure whether he is dreaming, alive or dead," says Al Massad.

A bitter return

After 25 years making feature films, George Sluizer returns to documentary with *Homeland*, a personal, angry and unapologetically provocative exploration of the Middle East conflict in which he revisits Palestinian refugee families in Beirut he has filmed since 1974. The film's climax is a showdown with controversial Israeli former leader Ariel Sharon, who has been in a coma following a stroke in 2006. Melanie Goodfellow talks to the director.

At the beginning of this swansong Sluizer recounts how his Jewish grandparents fled continental Europe in 1942 only to die in a Japanese camp. Towards the end of the film, the filmmaker says the world would have been a better place if Sharon had perished in Auschwitz.

"It's a project I've had in mind for some time but after I fell ill I decided I had to do it," says the 78-year-old director, who suffered an aneurism on Christmas Day 2007. "I didn't know whether I was to live for two weeks, two months or two years. I was in bed for a year-and-a-half but once I was well enough I just went... This is a film about what I feel and what I think."

Shooting for six weeks from March 2010, Sluizer toured the

Middle East, reuniting with surviving members of the Ham-mad and Jadda families he first caught on camera some 30 years ago within a trilogy of films entitled *Land of the Fathers* (1974-75) *A Reason to go* (1977) and *Adios Beirut* (1982).

"These friends were the starting point but the film is about, you could say, the mistreatment of the Palestinian population on one hand, as commented by the Israeli government on the other," says Sluizer, referring to a series of comments from Israeli politicians and officials who appear in the film.

During the trip, he bears witness to the worsening plight of the Palestinian people, filming house demolitions and settler requisitions in East Jerusalem as well as brutality at the checkpoints and water shortages in the West Bank. This material is cut with footage from the trilogy as well as Sluizer's own very personal commentary.

"I can't run anymore but I was there for every shot, in every place," says Sluizer, who walks with the aid of two walking sticks and sometimes has to resort to a wheelchair in the film. "It was very tough, physically and mentally, because it takes more energy when you can hardly walk and you have a lot of dysfunctional body parts. But it was worth it."

The original trilogy was born out of Sluizer's desire to tell the Palestinian story at a time when, he felt, the world's media was strongly biased towards Israel.

"I decided to do something for the Palestinians, so they would have at least one camera trained on them, at least one ear listening," explains the director. "I focused on two families where the children spoke some English, which made it easier, and where I felt there was some intelligence and sensitivity."

"I wanted to give them some dignity and value. I was trying to discuss the problems which arise when you don't have a country. I was not interested in the fighting. I did not have any violence in my first three films or any killings."

Some 30 years on, there is no such restraint. It is as if Sluizer is finally venting long-contained anger and frustration he feels over the Palestinian plight. In the climactic scene, the director addresses former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon as he lies inert in his hospital bed, accusing him of brutality in the Beirut refugee camp of Sabra and Chatila in 1982.

"I think the world, mostly the Palestinians and me too, would have been better off if you had died in Auschwitz like most of

my Dutch family. Have sweet dreams Mr Sharon. Maybe murderous dreams. You enjoy that. Sleep well," the director reads from a prepared letter.

Sluizer is unapologetic for the offence his words might cause. "I have a grudge against this man. He made the lives of 100,000 people impossible. I've been angry with Sharon ever since 1982 but it is only now that I have been able to deliver my thoughts in 2010," says Sluizer forcefully. "I tell him what I feel. It's not relevant whether I was there or not, the relevance is what I am saying."

"I've tried to close the chapter with this film," concludes Sluizer. "My main regret is that I will never see the resolution of the conflict. I will never know what happens in the end – I am not optimistic."



'It was very tough, physically and mentally, because it takes more energy when you can hardly walk and you have a lot of dysfunctional body parts. But it was worth it'

Homeland ◊ **Producer:** Anne Lordon **Production Company:** Sluizer Films
Associate producers: Joop van Wijk & JB Macrander **Director:** George Sluizer
Distributor in the Netherlands: Cinema Delicatessen **Release date in the Netherlands:** January 2011 **World sales:** Sluizer Films **Budget:** € 280,000 **Length:** 76' ◊ **Homeland** was awarded the Black Pearl Award at the International Film Festival of Abu Dhabi (14-23 October 2010).



‘Sometimes, we would be with them and it wasn’t very special what we were filming. On other days, we would get very beautiful scenes.’

Photo: Gertjan Miedema



Not Without You ◊ **Producer:** Petra Lataster-Czisch **Director:** Peter Lataster & Petra Lataster-Czisch **Distributor in the Netherlands:** Riëks Hadders/Mokum Film **Release date in the Netherlands:** 1st quarter 2011 **World sales:** NPO Sales/ Lataster & Films **Budget:** € 155,000 **Length:** 85'

Not Without You

“These fragments I have shored against my ruins,” is the quote from TS Eliot’s *The Waste Land* that opens *Not Without You*, the new documentary from Peter Lataster and Petra Lataster-Czisch. They started the film a little over two years ago, when Lataster’s father Ger, a well-known painter in the Netherlands, celebrated his 88th birthday. Geoffrey Macnab talks with the filmmakers.

“The reason that we made the film was that we had a big feeling that we needed to document the last journey that they (my parents) were going to join together. My mother was getting ill and my father, being 88, was not in such very good shape. We decided we would be unhappy if we didn’t try to make a film together,” Lataster reflects.

“It was a way to be close to them,” Lataster-Czisch agrees.

This was an artistic endeavour in which they could share. Lataster’s mother, a photographer, and his father, were as serious about the project as the filmmakers.

“It is a very intimate experience, making a film about one’s parents in this period of their lives. Both of us have never experienced such a period during our filmmaking. What was special was that we were always in a double role. We were film-

makers but also the children they liked to have around them as much as they could,” Lataster states. One moment, he would be shooting, the next he would be helping in the kitchen or the garden. The documentary became a very normal part of the elderly couple’s daily life.

“As you can imagine, it was very difficult to decide when to shoot and when not to shoot,” Lataster recalls. “Sometimes, we would be with them and it wasn’t very special what we were filming. On other days, we would get very beautiful scenes.”

Making the documentary was a way for Peter to spend as much time with his parents as possible. Early on, the filmmakers didn’t know if they would show their material in public. They started editing at home and made a rough assembly of the film they were envisaging. Then, in the spring of this year, they started working with editor Mario Steenbergen. They had worked with him before and describe him as “one of the best Dutch editors of documentary”. They credit him with helping them to look at Lataster’s parents as dramatic figures in the story.

“When you are editing, you have some zig-zag periods when you go one way and then another way,” Lataster declares. “After a relatively short time, we decided

we needed to stay very close to the origins of the material and make a very austere film.” The film is set in the house with the elderly couple. The camerawork takes its pace from them. The filmmakers kept the shooting style simple and still, with emphasis placed on long shots. The camera was kept on a tripod. Only incidental music was used. “We decided from the beginning that it would be a very slow film that would be adapted to the tempo of my parents,” adds Lataster.

The filmmakers funded the project themselves. They didn’t write a formal script or apply for money. “We wanted to have the freedom to go anyway we wished,” Lataster says. “That was a very important aspect of making this film - that we didn’t have to report to all sorts of institutions about what we were doing. We wanted to keep it very much in our hands.”

They knew that the documentary needed a dramatic twist where, as Lataster puts it, “you become very conscious of the fact that you are not just witnessing an old couple together but there is also a very considerable threat in their lives.” (This threat was the illness of Lataster’s mother.)

The director acknowledges that he has ‘a knot’ in his stomach when he watches the film with an audience. The documentary

screens in IDFA prior to being released in arthouse cinemas by Mokum Film early next year and, later on, the film will be broadcast on public TV.

Like many other documentary makers in Holland at the moment, Lataster and Lataster-Czisch are wary about the ‘cold wind’ blowing across the Dutch cultural landscape. The new government seems set on slashing support for the arts. They see the best defence as to continue working in the same way they always have done. “It would be foolish to surrender to it - we have to do our best to hold against it. The only way to do that is to make work we think is important.”

Primetime for Dutch teledocs

This autumn, Joost van der Valk and Mags Gavan's *Wilders, the Movie*, about controversial right-wing politician Geert Wilders, achieved the unthinkable for a Dutch documentary. It pulled in one million viewers when it aired during a primetime slot on Holland's second channel Nederland 2. An abridged version of the film is due to air in Britain on the BBC later this year. Melanie Goodfellow reports.

The film was born out of Teledocs, a new strand of feature-length, television documentaries focused on Dutch topics and aimed at primetime, domestic audiences. Launched in 2009, the series has had a bumper first year, racking up ratings at home, prompting international sales interest and even revolutionizing the way local filmmakers work.

Backed by the Netherlands Film Fund, the CoBO Fund and broadcasters AVRO, VPRO, Human, NTR, IKON, NCRV and BOS, Teledocs was created after the Dutch Culture Ministry called for more cooperation between the Film Fund and the television sector.

The move meant the fund could board a CoBO-led initiative to produce a series of popular, feature-length, television documentaries. "It's not in the

fund's brief to get involved in television," explains Niek Koppen, head of documentary at the Netherlands Film Fund. Koppen agreed the fund would put up a large chunk of the budget for the series if the broadcasters guaranteed the films would be aired in primetime slots, before the 10 o'clock news.

"When I arrived at the fund three years ago it really infuriated me the way documentaries were always broadcast after 10.30pm so you have to sit up beyond midnight to see the end of the film," explains Koppen. "I wanted to prove there was a large audience for these types of film."

The scheme aims to back 24 documentaries over four years. There are twice-yearly funding rounds. Only directors with at least one feature length film behind them can apply. The final selection is made by Koppen, CoBO chief Jeanine Hage and commissioning editors from the seven broadcasters.

Successful applications receive €20,000 in development money and then another €300,000 for production. Alongside the funding, the successful directors from the first two rounds also attended lectures on story-telling by British *Climate of Change* director Brian Hill and producer Robert Thirkell.

"I think the biggest challenge for Dutch filmmakers is to make films for a wide audience, with a strong narrative," comments Barbara Truyen, commissioning editor at VPRO who is on the selection committee. To date, four Teledocs have aired and achieved healthy ratings for documentary.

Michiel van Erp's *Beatrix, Queen*, about the lives of the Dutch monarch Queen Beatrix and a group of women with the same name, went out on Christmas Day 2009, attracting an audience of 374,000. *Foute Vrienden (Bad Company)*, about four petty criminals followed by director Roy Dames for 15 years, was watched by 331,000 viewers and then another 50,000 people via the internet.

"It did really well considering it ran at the same time as the extremely popular *The Farmer Wants a Wife* on another channel," says Annemiek van der Zanden, commissioning editor at cultural broadcaster NTR. Leo de Boer's *Closing in on Tanja*, about a young Dutch woman who joined Colombian guerrilla movement the Farc, and hit the headlines after her diary was found and published worldwide, attracted 540,000 viewers. Most spectacularly, *Wilders, the Movie*, which was broadcast on September 12, achieved average ratings of 734,000 spectators to take 10.5% of that night's audience,

peaking at a million viewers in the second half.

"We're currently putting together a shorter, international version. The BBC want to broadcast a 60-minute [version] but after the court case is over," comments producer Pieter van Huystee, referring to the politician's ongoing trial on charges of inciting hatred and discrimination.

Another five Teledocs are now in the final stages of production. These comprise *Hallelujah* about a male choir from Urk, giving unprecedented access to one of the Netherlands' most conservative religious communities; *Damen Fokkens* (working title: *Meet the Fokkens*) that follows twin prostitutes on the verge of retirement, and *Anatomy of a Death* about the murder of the director's sister-in-law.

Perhaps of most international interest within the upcoming bunch are Maaik Krijgsman and Hans Pool's exposé of the Dutch cannabis industry *Nederwiet*, which translates as Dutch weed, and *De Dijk*, a portrait of a Dutch pop institution which contains unseen footage of late soul singer Solomon Burke. In October 2010 the soul singer was on his way to visit the De Dijk, to celebrate the release of an English-language album he had recorded with the band, when he died at Schiphol airport.



Closing in on Tanja ◊ Director: Leo de Boer
Production: Pieter van Huystee Film & TV



'I think the biggest challenge for Dutch filmmakers is to make films for a wide audience, with a strong narrative'

Wilders, the Movie ◊ Director: Joost van der Valk and Mags Gavan
Production: Pieter van Huystee Film & TV

Northern Lights

the burgeoning industry in Amsterdam North

The north of Amsterdam has long been considered the poorer, uglier side of the River IJ, but that image is changing fast as some of the leading film and television companies, including A-Film and IDTV, have chosen to base themselves in the area. Now EYE Film Institute Netherlands is setting up its impressive new site there as well. Chris Evans reports.

The state of the art EYE building, which is situated next to the

old Shell tower, won't be ready until November next year, but already its skeletal structure makes for an imposing image of modernity on the horizon, reflecting the changing face of what has been considered the darker, industrial and gritty side of the city for many years.

Historically, the north of Amsterdam was known for its industry and trade, including the impressive ship-building companies based there from the Middle Ages, but as the

years wore on and the shipyards closed, the area became derelict and run down with poor housing and a bad reputation. But the lure of cheap land has slowly drawn the public and companies back to a region that is starting to reap the benefits.

"The general infrastructure north of the IJ has improved considerably in recent years with new housing, roads, companies and in the next few years a metro line," says Frans van Gestel, producer and managing

director of leading Dutch production company IDTV Film. "We originally set up our offices in a big building (a former warehouse) on the north side with several other film companies, including Preview, Fu Works and leading distributor A-Film. We were a short distance from where the new EYE Film Institute will be. We have since moved to another part of the north, but we are still close to the central station and parking is a lot easier than in the centre, and it's free."



Dutch producer San Fu Maltha, founder of A-Film and head of production outfit Fu Works, agrees that there are definite benefits to relocating in the north of the city. “We originally set up our offices at the former warehouse in the north because it was an area that was cheap with the potential to develop, and the building had a lot of character and personality because it was old.”

But, ironically, Maltha recently decided to move Fu Works closer to the centre because the owners of the building decided to up their prices, exploiting the recent rise in the north’s popularity.

In recent years, more and more companies have sprung up around northern Amsterdam, including major outfits Universal, MTV and The Discovery Channel. There are also modern restaurants, bars and cafes replacing the older local establishments. The area is also being used by producers to shoot locations, an example being David Lammers’ feature *Northern Light*, produced by IDTV.

“We had no problems getting permits from the helpful local council to shoot in the area where there are still plenty of great old industrial sites, as well as parks and plenty of open spaces,” says van Gestel.

When completed, EYE Film Institute Netherlands is expected to draw further interest from the public and industry to the region. The building will comprise four screening rooms, exhibition space, restaurants and bars, and plenty of office space. An adjacent building will house EYE’s collection of titles which will provide the primary content for the Images for the Future archive digitisation scheme.

“Our site is an iconic new urban development, which reflects the changes in the area, but also the modernisation of our institute with the transition from the small, old museum containing mostly analogue material to a

very open modern building with digital content that will be available to all,” says EYE director Sandra den Hamer.

As to whether local production companies will move into the site is yet to be determined, although some have voiced concerns about losing their sense of independence if they were to do so. But other organisations, such as the Netherlands Film Fund, are considering such a move. A decision to do so would have a strong impact on the local area given the Fund’s profile as the leading investor in Dutch film.



Short Cuts

Growth Stats

The Dutch film sector saw a 4.9 % growth from €692 million to €726 million during 2009, as measured in production volume, cinema box office and dvd & blu ray turnover. What's more, in the first half of 2010, production value within Dutch feature films increased to €37 million. This half-yearly figure marks a 30% increase over the past 3 years since the €27 million figure posted in 2007.

In 2009 140 Dutch films were sold to 186 countries. This marks a 60% increase on the 2008 figure.

In 2009, domestic feature and documentary film production achieved a volume of €75 million. In local cinemas Dutch films generated €33 million in box-office revenues, gaining a national market share of 17.4 %. The turnover of all films released in 2009 saw an impressive box-office hike from €165 million in 2008 to €201 million. Turnover from dvd & blu ray sales reached a total of €312 million while dvd & blu ray rental reached €38 million.

In 2009 140 Dutch films were sold to 186 countries. This marks a 60% increase on the 2008 figure.



Brownian Movement

Festival uptake of Dutch films

So far this year, significant numbers of Dutch features, documentaries and coproductions have been selected at renowned international festivals. At Berlinale 2010 the films *Iep, Joy, Drona & ik*, *Jacco's Film* and *The Rainbow Warriors of Waiheke Island* were selected, while Cannes gave nods to *RU There* and *Licht*.

In 2009 631 different international festivals selected Dutch films, amounting to a 26% increase compared to the previous year.

Venice played host to the acclaimed documentaries *Scena del crimine* and *The Forgotten Space* while Toronto audiences were the first to see Nanouk Leopold's much anticipated *Brownian Movement*. In addition, the

'We are also actively going out and asking filmmakers for their material, which is not yet in the archive collection'

Autumn San Sebastian festival selected Hanro Smitsman's thriller *Schemer*. Dutch coproductions were successful at Berlin and Cannes. These included *The Happiest Girl in the World* (Berlin), *My Joy*, *The Light Thief*, *Adrienn Pál* and *Over your Cities Grass will Grow*.

In 2009 631 different international festivals selected Dutch films, amounting to a 26 % increase compared to the previous year.



Images for the Future

The Images for the Future project will restore, preserve and digitise 137,200 hours of video, 22,510 hours of film, 123,900 hours of audio and 2.9m photos from the EYE Film Institute collection and the Institute for Sound and Vision.

In 2007 the Dutch government set aside a staggering €173 million to ensure that the project would be realised by 2014. Already more than a third of the titles have been

digitised. "We are also actively going out and asking filmmakers for their material, which is not yet in the archive collection," says Emjay Rechsteiner, curator for contemporary Dutch film at EYE Film Institute Netherlands. The content will then be made available for distribution on several different platforms, including theatrical, DVD, blu ray and, most importantly, on the Filmotech Holland internet portal, to be launched in 2011.

Filmotech Holland

Imagine every Dutch film from 1896 to the latest premiere, alongside hundreds of international titles, all available at the click of a button and offered within a digital format. This incredible scenario is the ambitious brainchild of EYE Film Institute Netherlands, the Netherlands Association of Feature Film Producers and the Institute for Sound and Vision.

The Filmotech Holland initiative will put money straight into the pocket of the producers whose projects will be accessible to viewers for a small fee (between €1 and €4). Filmmakers/rights holders will receive 65% of revenues

from downloads, with the platform to claim the remaining 35% to cover running costs. The plan is to increase rights-holders' percentage to 80% over the next few years once the site has attracted enough traffic and subsequent downloads.

137,200 hours of video
22,510
hours of film
123,900 hours of audio
to be digitalised

As well as offering material to consumers, Filmotech Holland will also offer a business-to-business application, which will allow distributors to purchase films directly from the site. "Every producer or rights holder gets a login to their film, and then if there is demand from, say, France to buy the film, the producer will get an email [directing him] to the platform. They can then agree directly with the French company on the price and rights," explains Dutch producer Petra Goedings, who is one of the driving forces behind the site.

Digitising Dutch Cinemas

EYE Film Institute Netherland's first initiative as an amalgamated entity is, together with the Netherlands Film Fund and Dutch distributors and exhibitors, to help realise a nationwide digital cinema rollout, at an estimated cost of €38 million. "This has a lot of advantages for commercial cinemas because of the volume of screens to digitise, and for the smaller film clubs and art houses

because this is the only way they can do it, due to prohibitive costs," says EYE director Sandra den Hamer.

The new scheme will be based on the Virtual Print Fee model with distributors and exhibitors contributing approximately €30 million of the costs. The remaining €6 million should come from government and public funding. More than 100 cinema screens have already been digitised using the Virtual Print Fee model across the Netherlands and it is the intention of exhibitors and distributors to oversee the digitisation of the remaining cinemas as soon as possible, before costs rise.

Wildcard successes

The Netherlands Film Fund Wildcard scheme acts as a boost to young Dutch documentary filmmakers looking to take the step up from student film to full length feature. Three recent graduates are chosen each year, and each is awarded €40,000 to make a documentary of their choosing, with additional money set aside for the film's producer and for an external directing coach.

'As soon as I heard I had won the award it was like an energy boost and I started to think about my next project'

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for me," says 2010 award winner Niels van Koevorden, who was selected on the strength of

his short *Lukomir – Six Months Off*, about a small village in Bosnia unaffected by war. "I haven't yet decided what film I'm going to make, but I have a few ideas, such as a film about Sarajevo or the cultural differences between Belgium and Holland," he comments.



Wildcard winners 2010

Joost van der Wiel was granted the award following his *Soles of Ethiopia*, a film about the use of shoes in everyday life in Ethiopia. "The award is really useful as I had to pay for *Soles Of Africa* out of my own pocket," van der Wiel stresses. "The Netherlands Film Fund is also great because it just wants to help you find a more professional way of working." Van der Wiel is researching projects on a Utopian Africa and an old-fashioned southern Dutch village forced to cope with the influences of modern life.

Aboozar Amini struggled with his graduation short film *Kabulteh-rankabul*, about an Afghan family living in Iran, shot on location. "I felt really tired after the shoot, but as soon as I heard I had won the award it was like an energy boost and I started to think about my next project, which should happen soon," he enthuses.

Docs 4 Kids

Launched in 1999 to give kids the opportunity to tell their stories through the medium of film, the

IDFA Kids & Docs project is now an established platform for leading filmmakers to tackle important issues affecting children. "Originally kids would send in their ideas and filmmakers would make a film on it, but this proved difficult so now the filmmakers do their own research, including talking to kids in schools," says IDFA's Meike Statema, who has run the Kids & Docs scheme since 2001.

Ten projects are selected to participate within each six-month workshop, after which an average of seven projects are completed each year. These are then broadcast on the local children's channel Zapp and in the Kids & Docs section of the IDFA festival, where school children are invited to attend the screenings.

The initiative proved so successful that it was picked up and launched as Dok You at the Duisburg DOXS! kids' documentary festival in Germany in 2008, resulting in the completion of six short films. "They started to contact us about five years ago and now have teams of producers and filmmakers working on children's films," explains Statema. "We had two of their films at IDFA last year [*Edna's Day and Mr Rucker*]." The German films are also being used as educational material in local schools with the co-operation of Planet Schule, a department of German broadcaster WDR.

Meanwhile NCRV's Dokument Junior slot, created to complement the Dutch broadcaster's Dokument strand of socially-related documentaries, continues to underline the ongoing commit-

see next page

View from the Edge Column

ment of public broadcasters to the highest standards documentary provision. This year's crop of eight documentaries (two of the ten commissions were broadcast in 2009) were made for a youth audience and embraced kids' topics. All are of 15-minute duration and all are united by the theme of 'I can't choose'. Six of the eight films were supported by the Media Fund.

'The subjects can be difficult and heavy at times but the films are made in such a way as to make it easy for children'

Ten more Dokument Junior shorts will be commissioned for broadcast in 2011 and will, this time, address the theme of 'dilemmas'. "These films are going to be very strong, we have a very good series," comments NCRV producer Yolande van der Blij. "The subjects can be difficult and heavy at times but the films are made in such a way as to make it easy for children to understand and talk about them."

Fund promise to increase investment in development

In September 2010 the Netherlands Film Fund announced its increase in its subsidies for script and project development. This

covers, among other initiatives, extra script-coaching for new and established writers. With an announcement due before year-end about the scale of its heightened investment, the Fund has also committed to placing greater focus on the international release of Dutch films and an increase in its annual coproduction budget, currently set at €1.6 million. The Film Fund is also working closely with EYE Film Institute, and the industry in general, to role out a plan to improve the performance and success of Dutch arthouse and cross-over films through new ways of marketing, promotion and distribution.

Shorts for the Summer

This autumn the Netherlands Film Fund will look to repeat the success of last year's Ultrakort competition which resulted in the production of four ultra-short animated films that were screened theatrically during Summer 2010 before mainstream films. Each 2-minute film has a ceiling budget of €50,000 and once again the four winning films will be shown in over 70 digital screens of the Pathé cinema group, before some of next summer's major releases.



Ultra-short *In a Forest* by Fons Schiedon

Let's rejoice. The Dutch documentary tradition, and its school of filmmakers, is now established and recognised across the world. Through promotion, restoration and excellent programming many classic Dutch films now resonate across all cinephile cultures.

But this glorious past, which comes of commitment combined with a dedication to research and adherence to cinematic style, is not just a museum piece. The Dutch documentary tradition has given birth to an abundance of "Dutch-quality" productions where new and remarkable filmmakers have emerged to continue the long-standing attention to cinematic technique, commitment to in-depth research and the search for, at times, controversial content.

The various financing systems for documentary in the Netherlands are the envy of many European countries, as is the commitment of Dutch broadcasters to the documentary genre.

But these days, the documentary genre is so loosely defined as to make one weary.

Quality television output and experiments in non-fiction cinema are just different parts of the big world of "documentary", although everybody knows how limited the television conception of the word "creative" can sometimes be. Commitment may become mere charity,

quality may become format, subject-matter may just appeal to audiences' good and/or bad consciences. This risk is present in every country.

What's more, it is now commonplace to hear how thin and artificial the frontiers between documentary and fiction actually are, and today it is obvious that the different genres of cinema are moving closer and closer in the eyes of the public, in the programmes and in the festivals, in the very strategies of producers and distributors. And non-fiction cinema has blended again into more general cinema, a fact that is certainly reflected in the new viewing habits of the audiences.

It is therefore important to remember how Dutch non-fiction cinema is so often a matter of experiment, an art-form closely linked with the avant-garde, a constant search for cinematic expressions of thought and feeling.

So let's rejoice again: the Netherlands embodies a unique artistic tradition and gives rare and exceptional attention to the documentary genre. And it is home to a community of audacious artists.

This combination is probably unique in Europe.

Marie-Pierre Duhamel Muller, Programmer, Biennale di Venezia – Mostra del Cinema

Just the facts

Top 10-performing international documentaries in the Netherlands 2008-2010 (to October 2010)

Title	Director	Year of release	admissions
Young@heart (UK)	Stephen Walker, Sally George	2008	22,707
Capitalism, a Love Story (US)	Michael Moore	2009	18,608
Waltz with Bashir (Israel)	Ari Folman	2008	14,189
Exit through the Gift Shop (US/UK)	Banksy	2010	9,306
La Danse (France/US)	Frederick Wiseman	2010	7,408
The September Issue (US)	R.J. Cutler	2009	7,306
Elle s'appelle Sabine (France)	Sandrine Bonnaire	2008	5,259
Youssou Ndour: I Bring what I Love (Sen/Fr/Eg/US)	Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi	2009	3,341

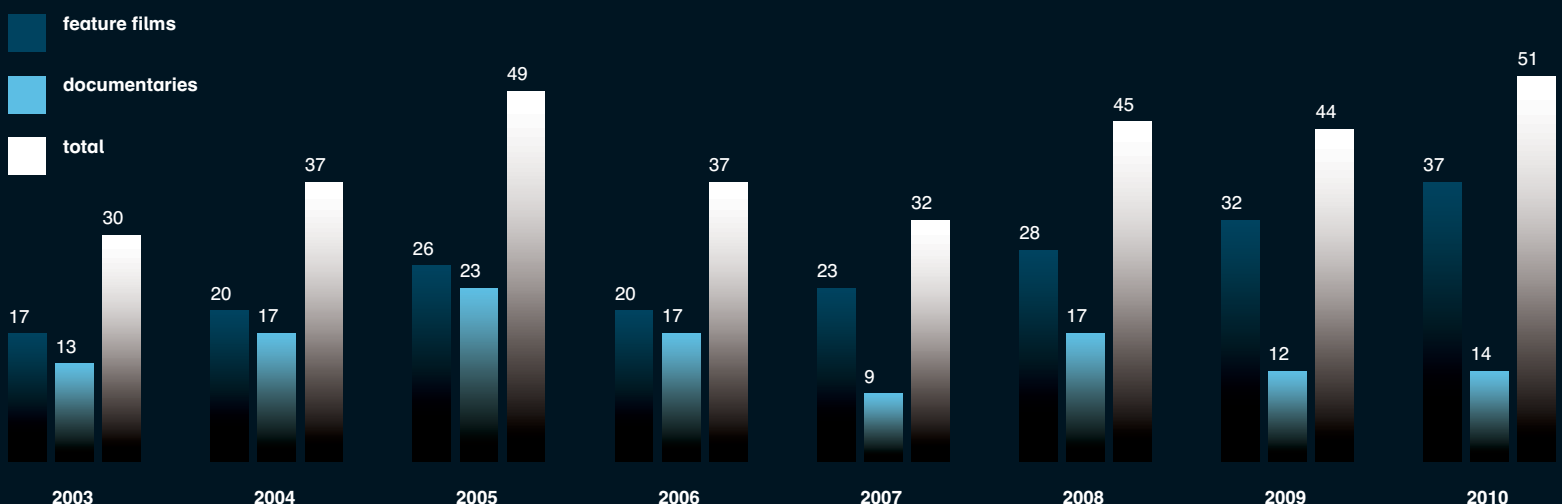
In 2009 the Netherlands Film Fund invested just under €2 million in the development and production of documentaries. The 2010 three-quarter year figure (€1.58 million) indicates that the Fund's investment within the genre remains as committed as ever, with docs accounting for half of all films supported. What is also obvious is that the Dutch public like their docs and are as eager to watch homegrown fare as imports from the great and the good of international documentary cinema. The Dutch doc brand remains as captivating within Dutch borders as it does across most international markets.

Top 15 dutch documentaries 2007- 2010 (to October 2010)

Title	Director	Year of release	admissions
Gold / Goud	Niek Koppen	2007	26,482
Oblivion / El Olvido	Heddy Honigmann	2008	13,198
Contract hotels - djangan loepah!	Hetty Naaijkens-Retel Helmrich	2009	10,108
Fear / Angst	Michiel van Erp	2009	6,441
Lost down Memory Lane	Klara van Es	2010	5,186
A way to get back home: Umoja Live	Peter Slager	2007	5,027
The Player	John Appel	2010	3,741
The year 2602 / Het jaar 2602	André van der Hout & Linda Lyklema	2009	3,434
Janine	Paul Cohen	2010	3,231
See you in Vegas	Antoinette Beumer	2007	3,145
Bloody mondays and strawberry pies	Coco Schrijber	2009	3,129
The Last days of Shishmaref	Jan Louter	2008	3,120
Babaji, an Indian love story	Jiska Rickels	2009	3,093
Crips, Strapped 'n' strong	Joost van der Valk	2009	3,072
Farewell	Ditte Mensink	2010	2,811

(source: NVF)

feature films and feature documentaries released 2003-2010



Who's who?

EYE Film Institute Netherlands, the new national film institute combines an extensive, world-renowned film collection with cutting-edge expertise in restoration and research, with educational programmes and international promotion. EYE promotes film culture, debate, reflection and innovation through adventurous film programming, distribution, research and experimentation.

"These are exciting times as we usher in a new phase of development and modernism. We have already brought all the different merged institutions within EYE together in one building ahead of our move there in 2011, and are in talks with other institutions to merge with us. We are already seeing the advantages of combining functions and ideas. We are particularly hard at work on developing new ways of accessing films, whether it is through the forthcoming VOD site Filmotech or through Instant Cinema, which is a community for new filmmakers to upload our films."

Sandra den Hamer, CEO
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The Netherlands Film Fund is the national agency responsible for supporting film production and cinema in the Netherlands. It focuses on the quality and diversity of feature films, documentaries, shorts, animation and experimental films. The Fund's operations cover participation in development, production, distribution and marketing. It is also responsible for promoting a good climate for the national film industry.

"Our aims are primarily to strengthen the Dutch film industry by continuing to support productions from talented filmmakers - as well as stimulating new talent - and to place a stronger emphasis on international coproduction and co-operation from both creative and financial perspectives. We are strengthening ties with other European funds and will gradually increase our annual coproduction budget. We are also strongly in favour of establishing a soft money scheme to strengthen the economic revenues for film production in the Netherlands."

Doreen Boonekamp, CEO
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Colophon

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