

SEENL

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Nanouk Leopold
discusses her
Brownian Movement

Sylvia Hoeks: the new
Dutch Shooting Star

Top Dutch producers
go abroad in search
of **co-pro cash**

Bokma and Lammers
land in **Berlin**

A Life in the Year of
Lotte Verbeek

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View from the Edge

Guest Column: Berlinale Forum chief Christoph Terhechte



Right now the Netherlands has a surprisingly large number of filmmakers making original, highly individual, very artistic films. That is not the image we had of Dutch film from the recent past, when most of what we saw was a series of untranslatable comedies that were so Dutch as to be rendered unexportable.

Yes, Dutch filmmaking has moved on a long way - but the strange thing is this. What makes the Dutch new wave so original is that these filmmakers have nothing in common. Or at least nothing other than their uniqueness, their inventiveness and their ability to tell interesting stories to international, not just Dutch, audiences.

Take Nanouk Leopold for example whose second film, *Guernsey*, was selected for the Quinzaine in 2005 and whose *Wolfsbergen* was selected for Berlin Forum in 2007. This year we selected her *Brownian Movement* to screen in the Forum. It is a powerful and masterful film from a great filmmaker.

Likewise, Tom Fassaert's documentary *An Angel in Doel* is another excellent film, also in Forum, and like *Brownian Movement*

in that it describes the universal, and not just the Dutch, condition. Esther Rots is another exceptional filmmaker whose *Can Go Through Skin*, selected for Forum in 2009, was shocking in its originality and extraordinary in what it achieved.

But these are all filmmakers who differ greatly in their approach to their craft, and who have, during their short careers to date, developed their own highly unique and idiosyncratic styles.

I am not an expert on Dutch matters but I feel there must be a new way of thinking about cinema in the Netherlands and some kind of incentive that brings all these people together to make films that are much more universal and so much better than what we have been offered in the past.

It's not just about investment. It's a movement. It's about filmmakers being connected, about sharing the common experience of seeing films in the cinemas or discussing them within cinematic publications, of which there are excellent examples in the Netherlands.

It seems to me that there is a common spirit among Dutch filmmakers these days. They have broad minds and they share a wonderful sense of aesthetics.

It is very surprising that in a Forum programme of just 35 international titles we should select three Dutch films in 2009 and two more this year. That, I believe, speaks volumes about the new wave of Dutch filmmaking talent.

Subtle Movement

*Nanouk Leopold discusses her Forum film
Brownian Movement*

‘Somehow all my films are about the relationships between people and how far you can stretch them before they break.’

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Brownian Movement ◊ **Director:** Nanouk Leopold
Script: Nanouk Leopold **Production:** Circe Films
Distribution: Cinéart **Sales Agent:** Films Distribution

Devil in Disguise

Co-producing Berlinale selection The Devil's Double

'This was obviously an amazing story. It's about a man being forced to lose his identity and fighting to regain it. That made it wonderful and universal and not just another film about Iraq.'

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The Devil's Double ◊ **Director:** Lee Tamahori
Script: Michael Thomas **Production:** Corsan (B),
Corrino Media Group and Staccato Films (both NL)
Sales: Corsan World Sales



First Time Lucky

Debutant directors Elbert van Strien and Jaap van Heusden

Remake rights to Van Strien's *Two Eyes Staring* have been optioned by Hollywood star Charlize Theron and van Strien himself is now being courted by Hollywood agents and producers.

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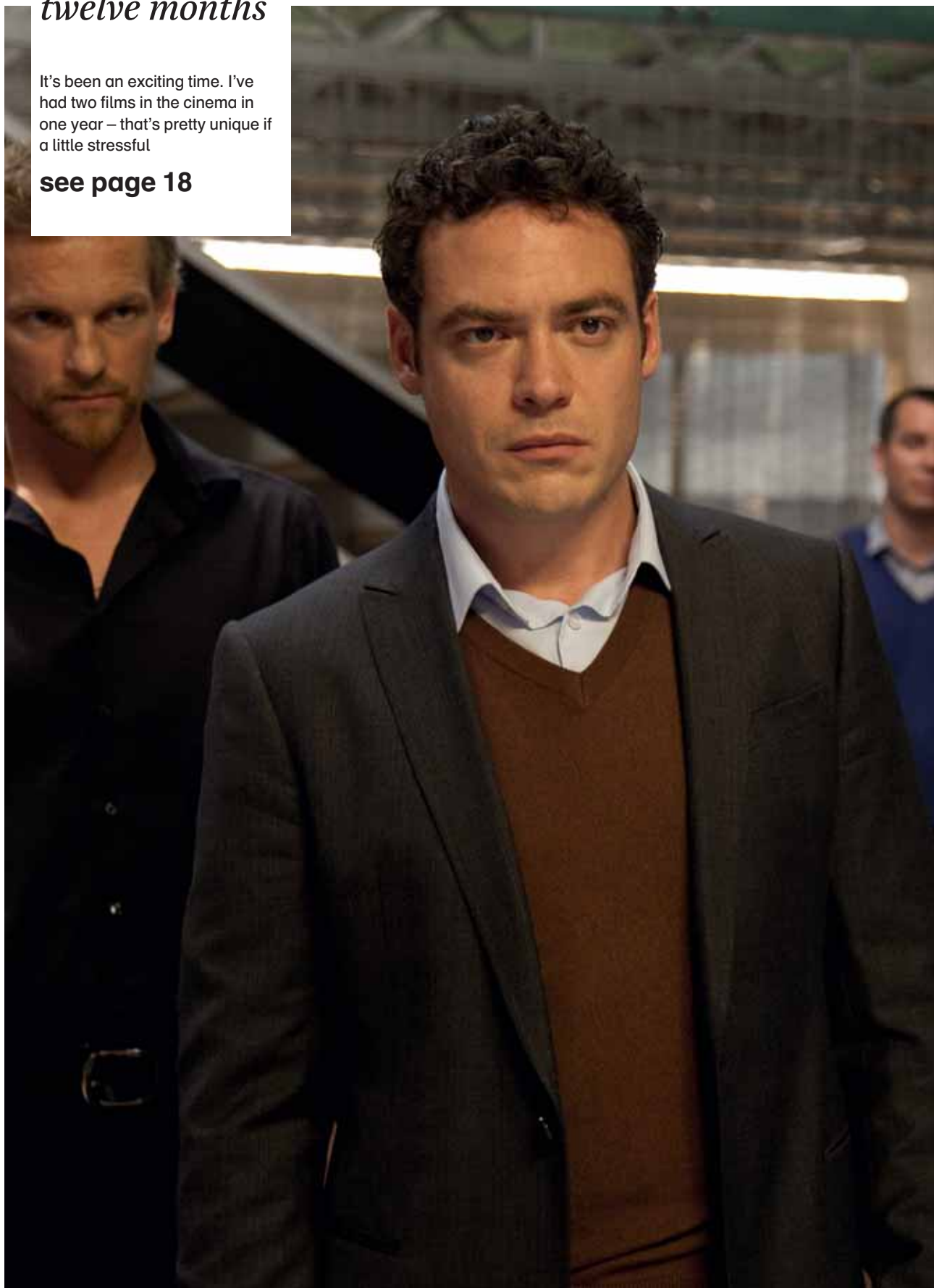
Two Eyes Staring ◊ **Director:** Elbert van Strien
Script: Elbert van Strien, Paulo van Vliet
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Lofty Ambition

Antoinette Beumer on a hectic past twelve months

It's been an exciting time. I've had two films in the cinema in one year – that's pretty unique if a little stressful

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Loft > **Director:** Antoinette Beumer **Script:** Bart de Pauw, Saskia Noort **Production:** Millstreet Films, Pupkin Film, Woestijnvis (B) **Distribution:** Independent Films

The President
Lemming Film



Leontine Petit
Lemming Film



Stienette Bosklopper
Circe Films



Ilse Hughan
Fortuna Films

Co-production Matters

With stringent cuts being applied across all Dutch arts sectors, filmmakers from the Netherlands are advised to look beyond their borders to find production finance. Nick Cunningham talks to three seasoned practitioners of the art of co-pro.

Leontine Petit of Lemming Film, one of the Netherlands' most prolific production houses, sums up the case for co-production very neatly. 'First it's the money,' she stresses. 'Second, there is the technical and artistic talent - and locations - that Holland may not be able to offer. Thirdly, co-production can offer artistic value to the project. There is always a cultural exchange.' But the key to everything, she maintains, if one is to co-produce the highest quality films, is to develop an effective network of international contacts that are, as well as eminently trustworthy, both creative and sympathetic.

Stienette Bosklopper, producer of Nanouk Leopold's *Brownian Movement* concurs. 'If you have a partner who you know and who is only working with the best people, then you are offered access to this high-level talent as well. That is a very important side of co-production.' The experience of co-producing *Brownian Movement* was, therefore, a harmonious one. The film was budgeted at €2.7 million and split between the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium on a 70/20/10 ratio, including Eurimages funding. A cool €1 million was sourced from

the Netherlands Film Fund alone. A worry for Bosklopper was the German tv sale, without which the path to German fund money would have been blocked but the German tv rights were eventually sold to broadcaster 3sat, thus allowing clear access to NRW and FFA funding.

Bosklopper is keen to harness much of her co-production talent for Nanouk Leopold's next film, currently in development with Isabella Films. The project, with a working title of *It's All So Quiet*, is budgeted at €2.5 million. She hopes to shoot late 2011/early 2012 and deliver the film for early 2013.

Like Bosklopper, Petit turned first to her trusted international partners when developing her three co-productions in 2010, *Tony Ten* (NL/Belgium/Germany), *The President* (NL/Hungary/Belgium, shot in Hungary and Morocco) and the youth film *Eep!*, a Dutch/Belgian/Swedish collaboration. Her long-standing relationships with Belgian company A Private View and the German outfits Ma.Je.De and Egoli Tossell, were forged over a decade ago during ACE and EAVE programmes and have remained sound ever since.

The example of Dutch producer Ilse Hughan is altogether different. Although she lives and works part of the year in Amsterdam, Hughan has so far produced her films exclusively out of Buenos Aires, her most notable director being the acclaimed arthouse Argentinian filmmaker Lisandro

Alonso (*Los Muertos*, *Fantasma*, *Liverpool*). So far she has produced without the support of the Netherlands Film Fund, although two of Lisandro's films qualified for Hubert Bals Fund support, administered through the IFFR (Rotterdam Film Festival). 'With the last film of Lisandro (*Liverpool*, 2007), what we did was to get money from the national fund in Argentina,' she comments. 'But co-production is essential. The money from the originating country is never enough.'

'I am always like the spider in the web'

In her capacity as head of the Buenos Aires Film Festival co-production market Hughan has, like Bosklopper and Petit, built a network of co-producers to whom she returns and feels very comfortable collaborating with. These include the French production company Slot Machine, Eddie Saeta Producciones (Spain) and sales agent The Match Factory. 'Producing is one thing, but co-producing is a profession in itself. You only learn through a lot of experience, and you can only be successful if you are able to build up an extensive international network. I am always like the spider in the web, the leading co-producer, trying to raise the interest of other producers and make the co-production puzzle fit for everybody involved.'

Both Bosklopper and Petit regularly perform minority co-producer roles on international projects seeking co-production finance.

Right now Petit is working with Ma.Je.De on Victor Kossakovsky's ambitious documentary *Vivantes Antipodas!*, while Bosklopper, who worked with Romanian producer Ada Solomon on Radu Jude's award-winning *The Happiest Girl in the World* (2009), is hopeful that the Netherlands Film Fund will contribute towards a 20% stake in Jude's next film *Everybody in our Family*.

On the face of it, now seems the best time to make such a request as the Netherlands Film Fund is increasing its investment in minority co-productions from 2011 to €1.8 million from €1.5 million in 2010. The Fund's head of co-production Ger Bouma is confident that this will mean minority support can be granted to up to fourteen international titles this year. 'Our aim is to help producers build up an extensive international network,' he claims. 'This also counts for the Fund itself. We invest in our relations with other funds we already work closely with, and seek further contact with funds from other countries in order to get more Dutch productions co-financed.'

Subtle Movement

Nanouk Leopold's *Brownian Movement*, which screens in the avant-garde Forum section at Berlinale 2011, is a sophisticated portrait of a marriage in crisis following a wife's infidelity conducted in bizarre circumstances. Melanie Goodfellow speaks to the filmmaker.

In the opening scenes of the film, Charlotte rents a sparsely furnished apartment in Brussels and starts entertaining men she meets through her job as doctor at a local hospital. The reason for her behaviour is hard to fathom. On the surface, Charlotte lives a charmed life. She has a flourishing career, an attractive, successful architect husband and a beautiful son.

The men she brings back to the flat by comparison are flawed in some way: one is infirm, another obese, another particularly hairy. Charlotte appears fascinated by their imperfections. Her betrayal of her husband Max is a cold, calculated act, not the result of some chance meeting.

The couple struggle to keep their relationship together following the revelation of Charlotte's actions. Will a move from Brussels to India where the husband is working on a restoration project help them rebuild their life together?

The mystery of personal desires, betrayal, commitment and individual needs versus the compro-

mises demanded by life in a couple or a family are just some of the themes colliding in the film, and indeed are to be found in many of Leopold's previous works such as *Wolfsbergen* which also screened in Forum, in 2007.

'Somehow all my films are about the relationships between people and how far you can stretch them before they break. For me it is a love story. It might be difficult to see it that way because it is also about two people who are very alienated from each other. The question is can they find each other again and will it do any good for them to do so,' says Leopold.

The title *Brownian Movement* takes its cue from the theory surrounding the random movement of particles suspended in a solution. 'Robert Brown discovered the irregular movements are based on little collisions with the atoms that are in the liquid or gas,' explains Leopold. 'In the film, I explore how sometimes your life takes another turn, and even though you can't see it there is a reason for this change of direction.'

As is characteristic of Leopold's work, dialogue is sparse. Leopold allows facial expressions and body language to convey the drama of a situation. 'In the beginning, I wrote more dialogue but cut quite a bit out during the rehearsals. We found there was a lot we didn't need,' she says.

Leopold cites writers such as South African J.M. Coetzee and

French Marguerite Duras as key influences in the stripped down style of her own work. 'I think these writers influenced me more than filmmakers,' she reveals, commenting on Coetzee. 'I enjoy his writing style. It's minimalistic, not too many words, very short sentences, very clear. There is a harshness in his storytelling.'

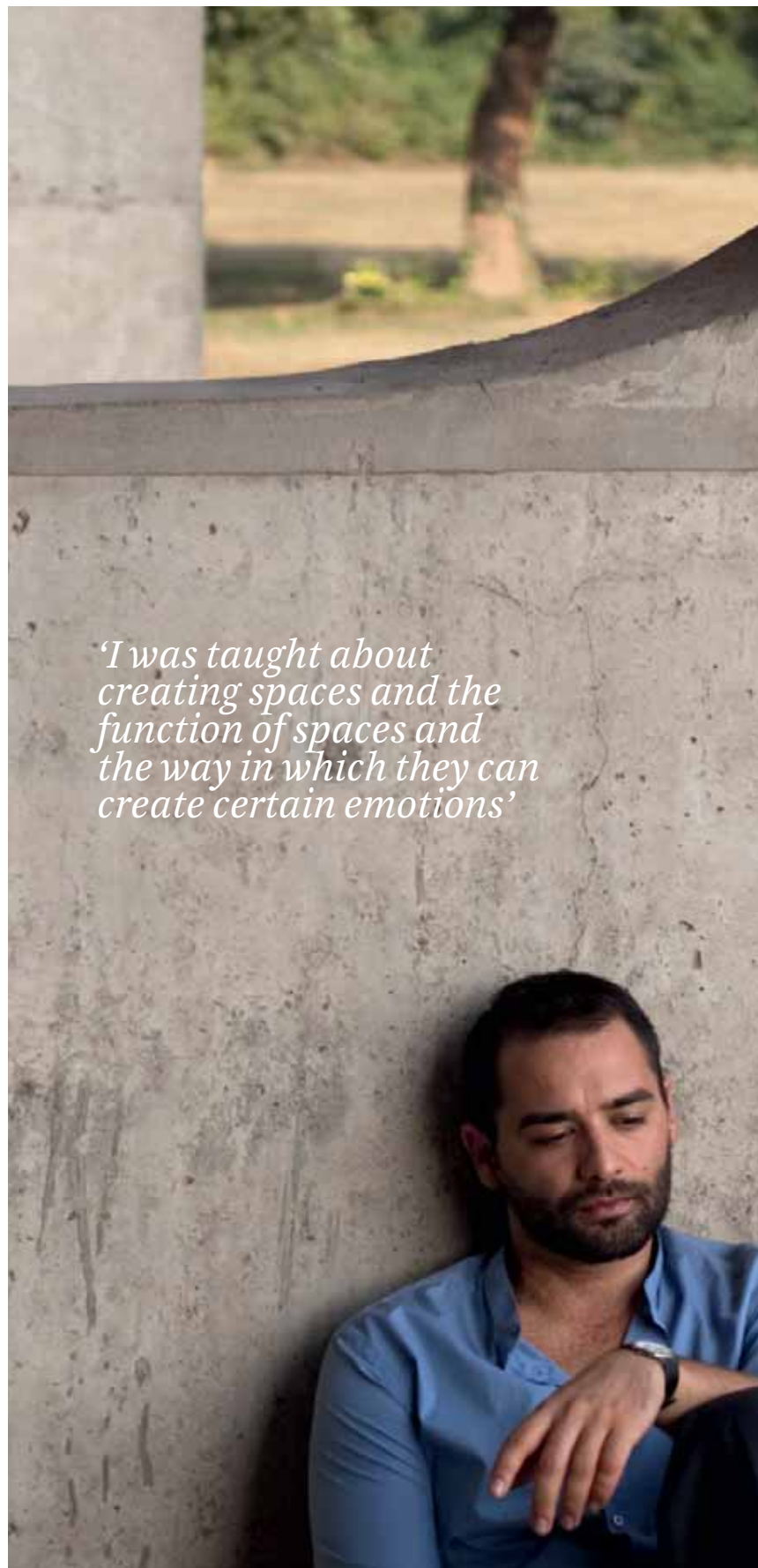
'Somehow all my films are about the relationships between people and how far you can stretch them before they break'

'One woman who saw the film wrote to me and said it reminded her of the works of Marguerite Duras. This was a great compliment for me. She was one of my favourite writers when I was young. There is a simplicity in her writing that I try to emulate in film... I try to make films that aren't there,' adds Leopold.

The success of this attempt in *Brownian Movement* rests in no small part on the performance of German actress Sandra Hüller, who came to Leopold's attention in Hans-Christian Schmid's 2006 film *Requiem*, about an epileptic woman's mental breakdown in the hands of a traditional priest. 'I went to Berlin to try out some scenes and I saw immediately what she could do with her face... she's amazing,' comments Leopold.

Another key element of filmmaking for Leopold is the look of the film and the space in which is shot. Leopold and her long-time collaborator, production designer Elsje de Bruijn, spent months seeking the right backdrops. Key locations include one of Le Corbusier's housing complexes in France and The Mill Owners building in the Indian city of Ahmedabad in India.

'My former education was in art. I was taught about creating spaces and the function of spaces and the way in which they can create certain emotions,' she explains. 'Locations for me are the most important part of the film. For example, I couldn't make the film unless I had the right room for the opening scenes. I try to create emotions by creating a certain environment, it may sound strange but the face is the last thing I want to use to create an emotion.'



*'I was taught about
creating spaces and the
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Brownian Movement ◊ **Director:** Nanouk Leopold
Script: Nanouk Leopold **Production:** Circe Films
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Emjay Rechsteiner
Staccato Films

*‘This was obviously
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The Devil’s Double ◊ **Director:** Lee Tamahori
Script: Michael Thomas **Production:** Corsan (B),
Corrino Media Group and Staccato Films (both NL)
Sales: Corsan World Sales

Devil in Disguise

***The Devil's Double*, selected for 2011 Berlin Panorama, tells the extraordinary story of Latif Yahia, the Iraqi army lieutenant who became the stand-in for Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's sadistic son, Uday. This is a big €15 million international movie, shot in English and with a director (in Lee Tamahori) who once helmed a James Bond movie. Geoffrey Macnab reports.**

It is also a film in which the Dutch connection isn't immediately apparent. However, if it hadn't been for Amsterdam-based producers Emjay Rechsteiner and Michael John Fedun, the project almost certainly would not have been made. Flash back several years to when Rechsteiner's Staccato Films and Fedun's Corrinno Media Group bid for the rights to Yahia's book.

'This was obviously an amazing story. It's about a man being forced to lose his identity and fighting to regain it. That made it wonderful and universal and not just another film about Iraq,' Rechsteiner recalls of the book.

The producers met Yahia when he turned up in Amsterdam in his bullet-proof vest. That was just before Saddam Hussein was tracked down in his pit hole.

'Latif said with a big smile, 'now I finally feel at liberty to disclose

the entire story.' He revealed all of the details that were not yet in the book.'

The Dutch producers had to bid against a number of American film studios for the rights. Fortunately, they had a private investor behind them, Arjen Terpstra, who enabled them to compete on level terms. Yahia liked their approach to the subject matter. They were treating the story as a psychological thriller while the Hollywood studios saw the project more as an action movie. 'No matter how flattering that was to Latif, it was not the direction that he wanted his life story to be portrayed,' says Rechsteiner.

Rechsteiner had come up with an initial treatment based on Latif's book and on the interviews over three consecutive days that the producers had conducted with him. (This treatment and subsequent development had been supported by the Netherlands Film Fund.) They then recruited screenwriter Michael Thomas, best known for his screenplay for Michael Caton Jones' *Scandal*.

'He wrote this really rock and roll script...Michael is an older surf hippie who writes in a very cartooneseque way,' the producer jokes of his screenwriter. 'It's almost as if you are reading a comic book. It's got all these whooshes and whoops - these sounds - written into it.'

Once the script had been licked into shape, the next step was to

scout for directors. Lee Tamahori, director of the award-winning Maori drama *Once Were Warriors* (1994) as well as Bond vehicle *Die Another Day* (2002) seemed an obvious candidate. He could handle intense dramatic scenes as well as action and was used to working with bigish budgets. 'We had a wonderful meeting with him, Michael Fedun and I, and he (Tamahori) blew us away. He said this was going to be the next *Scarface*! He didn't want to tone down the violence. He said it had to be very visceral and that was exactly what we had envisioned ourselves.'

'He said this was going to be the next Scarface'

For Dutch producers, putting together a big international co-production is a challenge. The Netherlands does not have a tax shelter or soft money scheme in place to attract inward investment. 'You are at a disadvantage nowadays initiating a project,' says Rechsteiner. In the case of *The Devil's Double*, the producers were able to raise development money at home but little else.

'Having said that, this turned out to be such a hot property that once the script was developed, the American agencies did open the doors for us and enabled us to meet with the directors we wanted,' Rechsteiner remembers. The key move was approaching Belgian producer/financier Paul Breuls, who runs the sales and production outfit Corsan.

With Breuls on board, and with his backing, the producers were able to offer key talent 'pay or play' deals and thereby to draw the production together and set a definite start date. 'He (Breuls) puts his money where his mouth is. He lived up to his commitment right away.'

The film was largely shot in Malta, where it was eligible for the Maltese cash rebate (worth up to 22% of EU qualifying expenditure.) Post-production was done in Antwerp. Now, the film will launch at Sundance and in Berlin following the film's selection at both festivals.

Corsan is handling international sales with the help of agents CAA and Paradigm. The strategy has been to make the distributors wait. 'We have not shown the film to anyone....they (the buyers) will all see it at the same time,' Rechsteiner concludes.

First time Lucky

Two first-time directors from the Netherlands made an enormous impact with their debut features in 2010, Elbert van Strien whose *Two Eyes Staring* turned heads in Hollywood, and Jaap van Heusden, whose *Win-Win* reveals him to be a keen chronicler of our times. Geoffrey Macnab spoke to both filmmakers

Elbert Van Strien isn't exactly a new face on the Dutch film scene. Now in his mid-40s, he graduated from the Dutch Film Academy in 1993 and was nominated for a student Oscar in 1994. However, the success of his debut feature, supernatural thriller *Two Eyes Staring* (*Zwart Water*, 2010) has given his career a huge boost. Remake rights to the film have been optioned by Hollywood star Charlize Theron and van Strien himself is now being courted by Hollywood agents and producers.

Two Eyes Staring, which van Strien co-wrote with Paulo van Vliet, has its roots in occurrences in van Strien's own life. A decade or so ago, when he was at a very low ebb, he visited an alternative therapist who told him that a deceased relative was 'with me and didn't go away.' Van Strien was sceptical and dismissive of her claims. However, at the age of eight he had had an uncanny experience following the death of his brother (who seemed to appear to him at a window at the very moment of his death). 'I don't believe in ghosts,' he says but acknowledges that the eerie

and irrational are rich realms for filmmakers to explore.

In 2003, Van Strien founded Accento Films with Claudia Brandt. In the run-up to *Two Eyes Staring*, he made several short films, among them *Still World* (2005), a short consisting of stills that was shown at MOMA in New York. (He describes it as 'a story about a journalist of a local newspaper who discovers a conspiracy of mediocrity.')

Van Strien produced *Two Eyes Staring* as well as writing and directing it. 'I have a specific type of film I love to make - intelligent, genre films with deeper layers of philosophical and moral questions underpinning them,' he says of his multi-tasking-approach. Ask the writer-director why it took him so long to make his debut feature and he explains that the genre projects that he likes to make are simply not in vogue in the Netherlands.

'It's very difficult to get these sort of stories off the ground in Holland.' Broadcasters and financiers, he suggests, are wary of such films. He and Brandt therefore decided to go their own way at Accento. 'It is a good position to be in because I am not dependent on other producers now,' he suggests.



Two Eyes Staring ◊ **Director:** Elbert van Strien
Script: Elbert van Strien, Paulo van Vliet
Production: Accento Films

As a kid, young Dutch auteur Jaap van Heusden used to dream of becoming an economist. He was obsessed with numbers and balance sheets. 'When I was 12, 13 and 14, I was very much inspired by economic systems and theories.' He realized early that economics is 'the axis on which society turns.'

Van Heusden's debut feature *Win-Win*, a cautionary tale set during the credit crunch, reflects the director's youthful obsessions. It's about a brilliant young assistant at an investment bank whose relish for number crunching makes him a star trader. He is overwhelmed by his own success and confused by the superficial values of the trading floor.

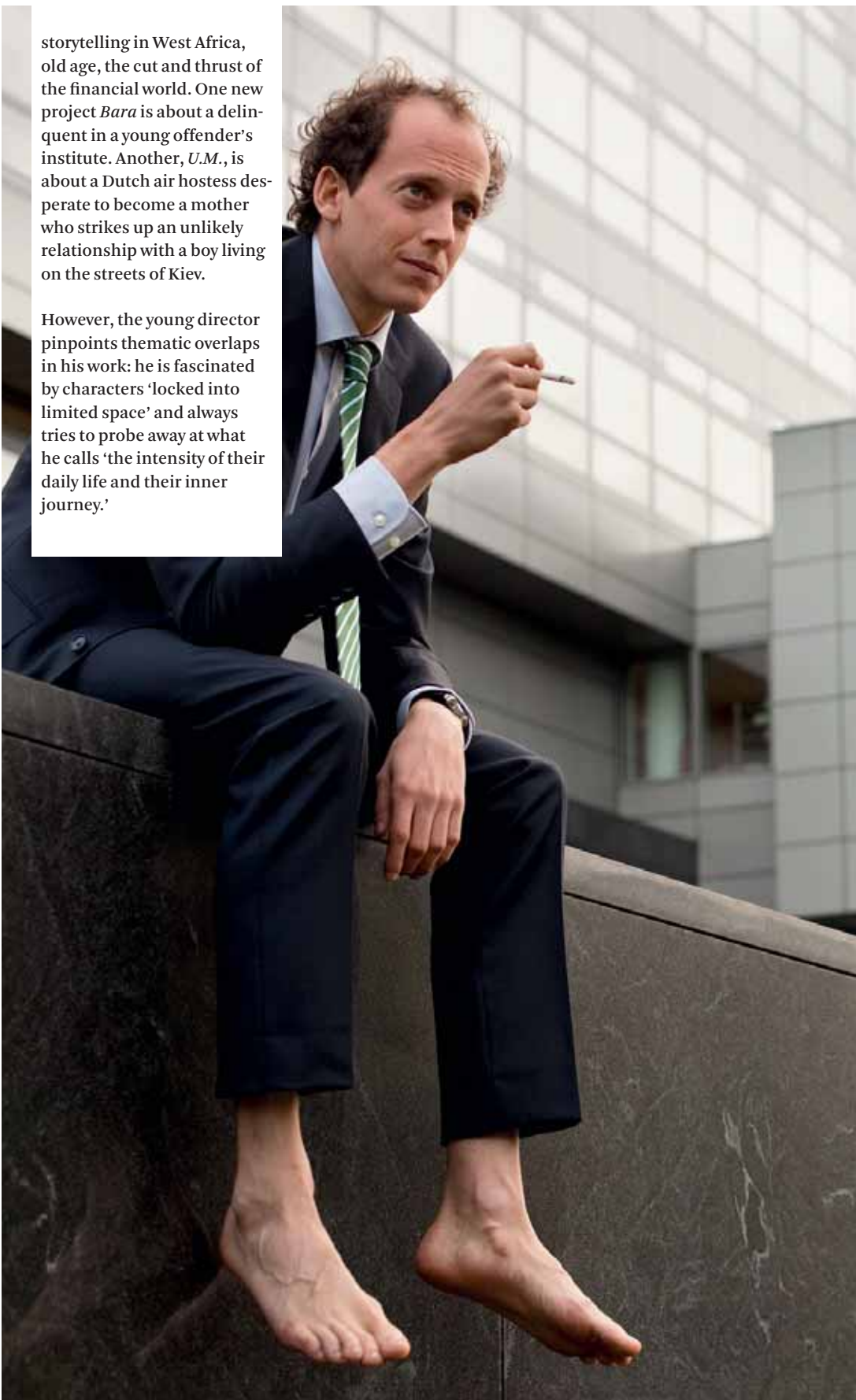
Last year, the Rotterdam Festival heard early about the movie (originally made for TV, but subsequently released theatrically and on dvd in the Benelux by Cinema Delicatessen) and put it in the programme even before they had seen a finished version.

Thirty one year-old van Heusden is especially proud of the performance he elicited from the brilliant young Belgian actor Oscar Van Rompay as the trader. When *Win-Win* screened last summer at the Brooklyn International Film Festival, van Rompay picked up the Best Actor award. 'This was my first feature. I am not so old myself. Oscar van Rompay had not been in front of the camera for even one hour – so the producer and broadcasting company were not completely convinced at the beginning. But when I met Oscar for the first time, I really thought – wow! What a powerful guy.' The award in Brooklyn, he adds, was vindication both for him and for his lead actor.

Over the last decade, the young director has directed fiction and documentary. He acknowledges that he has covered many different subjects – terminal illness,

storytelling in West Africa, old age, the cut and thrust of the financial world. One new project *Bara* is about a delinquent in a young offender's institute. Another, *U.M.*, is about a Dutch air hostess desperate to become a mother who strikes up an unlikely relationship with a boy living on the streets of Kiev.

However, the young director pinpoints thematic overlaps in his work: he is fascinated by characters 'locked into limited space' and always tries to probe away at what he calls 'the intensity of their daily life and their inner journey.'



Win-Win ◊ Director: Jaap van Heusden Script: Jaap van Heusden Production: IJswater Films

Perfect Pitch

Three Dutch projects were pitched at the International Film Festival Rotterdam's CineMart co-production market this January: veteran filmmaker Alex van Warmerdam's darkly comic *Camiel Borgman*, Esther Rot's eagerly awaited second feature *Metafysica* and debut feature *The Sky Above Us* from Marinus Groothof. Melanie Goodfellow investigates.

Camiel Borgman, a story that follows a band of half-devils, or fallen angels, who descend to earth in the guise of ordinary mortals to strengthen their numbers, wreaking havoc in their wake, is Van Warmerdam's fourth project to be pitched at CineMart. 'For me the first reason to take a project to CineMart is because it brings it alive. Once it has been presented there it exists,' says Marc van Warmerdam, the director's producer and brother.

Van Warmerdam says the script has prompted a mixed response. 'There are those who see it as really dark, far darker than anything Alex has done in the past. Then there are those who see it as the funniest thing he has ever done... Alex sees the light side of it. Of course, it's harder to push something that is perceived as being dark, over something that is light-hearted. We'll see.'

The producer thanks CineMart for putting Graniet, the company he runs with Alex, in touch with the Wallonian Le Parti Production which co-produced *Waiter* (2007) and *The Last Days of Emma Blank* (2009). The Brussels-based

company is expected to board this production too but due to changes in the way in which production funding is meted out in Belgium, Graniet is also looking for a Flemish partner this time around. Van Warmerdam says the company is also interested in finding French and Scandinavian partners.

'There are a few territories which are more interested in Alex's films than others and Scandinavia, alongside Russia and Eastern Europe, is one of them. The film is a Dutch film but it would be possible to shoot it somewhere else and we're also considering looking at Scandinavian actors,' he notes.

Beyond Le Parti Production, sales agent Fortissimo is also attached. The company, which has handled nearly all of Van Warmerdam's films, will be pushing pre-sales at Berlin. The producer is looking to secure 35-45% of the projected €3.94 million budget through co-productions, international funds and pre-sales.

Director Esther Rots and her producers Stienette Bosklopper of Circe Film and Hugo Rots of Rots Filmwerk are seeking German and Belgian co-producers for the helmer's second film *Metafysica* about a Dutch woman who becomes involved with Berlin-based political extremists in an attempt to give her life some purpose. The film, budgeted at €2.08 million, has already received development support from the Netherlands Film Fund.

'We are in talks with a German partner but there are no commit-

ments as yet. We're also looking at other possibilities. The main character is Dutch but I'm not set on the nationality of the other characters. They could be German or maybe Slavic. I am quite open on that,' comments Rots.

Metafysica is eagerly awaited following the success of Rots' debut film *Can Go Through Skin* about a woman who flees the city to a dilapidated house in the countryside following a brutal assault. That film premiered to critical acclaim at Berlin's Forum in 2009 and won her a mention in *Take 100: The Future of Film*, a round-up of the top emerging film directors from around the world. 'It all helps but I feel like the stakes are higher this time around,' comments a modest Rots.

'For me the first reason to take a project to CineMart is because it brings it alive'

The third Dutch project at CineMart is Marinus Groothof's debut feature *The Sky Above Us*, that follows three intertwined lives in Belgrade during the NATO bombings in 1999. The project was born out of Groothof's award-winning short on the same subject *Sunset From a Rooftop* which was short-listed for the 2010 Academy Awards. The project has also received development support from the Dutch Film Fund.

'The film looks at how people tried to keep going about their everyday lives while in an extreme or absurd situation,' says producer Sander Verdonk of LEV Pictures who speaks with passion about the project, budgeted at €1.4 million.

Verdonk has already been busy drumming up partners for the film through EAVE and at the Holland Film Meeting of the Netherlands Film Festival. Co-production companies already signed up for the project include Serbian outfit Art & Popcorn, German Unafilm and Croatian Masmass. LEV is hoping to find a sales agent, distributors and further funding possibilities during CineMart.

Beyond the film, LEV is also building a multi-lingual internet site aimed at everyone in and around Belgrade, which will present the true life stories behind the fictional story of the film. 'We've done so much research, spoken to so many people, people who lost family members. We've heard so many stories but we cannot put them all in the film so we will try to incorporate these into a multiplatform approach,' reveals Verdonk.



Alex van Warmerdam
(photo: Anuschka Blommers en Niels Schumm)



Esther Rots



Marinus Groothof
(photo: Yvonne Witte)

Lofty Ambition

It has been a busy 12 months for Dutch director Antoinette Beumer. The 48-year-old Amsterdam-based filmmaker became a household name in 2010 in the Netherlands following the box office success of tragicomedy *The Happy Housewife* and the much hyped thriller *Loft*. Melanie Goodfellow speaks to the director.

'It's been an exciting time. I've had two films in the cinema in one year – that's pretty unique if a little stressful,' says Beumer.

The Happy Housewife, starring Carice van Houten as a well-heeled, suburban wife coming to terms with motherhood, was seen by more than 500,000 people in the Netherlands following its release in April 2010.

Following that, *Loft* attracted some 100,000 spectators in the first two weeks after its release mid-December. It is a remake of Belgian director Eric Van Looy's 2008 hit whodunit. The film follows five men implicated in a murder after the body of a mystery woman is found in a pied-à-terre they share to entertain their mistresses.

Prior to her big screen success, Beumer learned her directing craft at the Amsterdam Theatre School before moving into television. There, she worked on popular series such as *Goudkust (Gold Coast)*, about life in a fictitious, upscale town on the Dutch coast, and *Willemspark*, a family-oriented comedy set against the backdrop of one of Amsterdam's

wealthiest and most exclusive suburbs.

'Originally I wanted to be an actress but while at theatre school I decided that what the director was doing was much more interesting. In my third year, we did some work with a camera and a light bulb went off in my head,' recalls Beumer.

'Film school is focused on *how* to shoot. Theatre school taught me *what* to shoot. I did a lot of acting before I started directing and know the methods. I know what it is like to be directed. I am an actors' director if you like,' she continues.

'I know how to plan and I'm not afraid to work with more than one camera'

Beumer's big screen break came when she was approached by Dutch production powerhouse Eyeworks to develop and direct *The Happy Housewife*. It is based on an adaptation of Heleen van Royen's bestseller about a wealthy young woman coping with post-natal depression.

'The producers liked the way my television work combined drama with humour. They were looking for someone who could deal with the heavy subject of post-natal depression in a light way. I first read the book ten years ago just after I'd had my second child. At

the time I thought it was funny but second time round it really hit me. I had changed in that period,' comments Beumer.

Unusually, the producers had already raised most of the film's €2.1 million budget so Beumer could focus on the business of developing and shooting the film rather than worrying about finance. 'Normally in Holland you have a script and no money. Here, there was money but no script,' says Beumer. 'I was free to focus on making the film. While the writers were writing, I was searching for locations and doing casting sessions. We started working on the film in April 2009 and it premiered the following April. We shot it in 26 days.'

Beumer was approached by the producers of *The Loft* to direct the film after one of them saw a rough cut of *The Happy Housewife*.

'She was impressed by the combination of drama and humour. They also wanted someone who could handle two genres in one film. It's quite difficult to put humour into a thriller,' says Beumer. 'It was a hugely exciting time when they asked me to do the film but also pretty stressful because I went straight out of post-production on one film into pre-production on another.'

Beumer says her television work came in useful when it came to shooting the film which features a large, ensemble cast of seven men and seven women. 'I know how to plan and I'm not afraid to work with more than one camera. I did that with both films and it really

pays off. The actors have more freedom, especially when there is a big scene with a lot of actors,' she explains.

Looking back over the success of the last 12 months, Beumer reflects that she is happy her big screen break came relatively late in her career. 'I didn't make my first film until I was 47 years-old and I've never felt sorry for that. I think the films I've made have worked because I have so much experience... I don't think I would have had the same results if I had made them at the age 20,' she concludes.



Antoinette Beumer

*'I know what it is like
to be directed. I am
an actors' director
if you like'*

Loft ◊ **Director:** Antoinette Beumer **Script:** Bart de Pauw,
Saskia Noort **Production:** Millstreet Films, Pupkin Film,
Woestijnvis (B) **Distribution:** Independent Films

To Be Frank

Just before he was due to begin work on Michael R Roskam's Berlinale bound debut feature *Rundskop* (*Bull-head*), Dutch actor Frank Lammers broke his ankle playing football. Not that this stopped him playing the crumpled, sleazy vet in Roskam's very intense drama set in the world of the Belgian agricultural hormone mafia, explains Geoffrey Macnab.

Lammers had given what he thought was a lousy audition but Roskam immediately hired him. He clearly saw Lammers as the type of powerful character actor who could give the movie an extra depth and intensity. For his part, Lammers relished working in rural Belgium.

I do all kinds of stuff and I like it... it's fun to explore your own borders

The Dutch actor, who was on crutches throughout shooting, looked on with a mix of awe and revulsion at movie's lead actor, Matthias Schoenaerts, who had transformed himself into a hulk-like figure by pumping iron and eating vast quantities of food. 'Gross!' Lammers murmurs at the transformation of his co-star. He had already worked with Schoenaerts on Paul Verhoeven's international hit *Black Book* (2006) and enjoyed collaborating with the Belgian actor again. The two joined forces on two more films,

Erik de Bruyn's international co-productions *Nadine* (2007) and *The President* (2011), before meeting again on Roskam's film. 'I invite him (Schoenaerts) to Holland and he invites me to Belgium. We keep each other working.'

Lammers, born in Southern Holland in 1972, is nothing if not versatile. He is equally adept at comedy (take his roles in *Schnitzel Paradise* and *Hush Hush Baby* for example) and in drama. He won a Best Actor Golden Calf for the film *Night Run*, directed by Dana Nechushtan and produced by Waterland Film. He has presented TV shows and has even directed. As if to underline his range, he won an award last year for Best Director of a stage musical in the Netherlands (beating off *Mary Poppins* in the process.) 'I do all kinds of stuff and I like it... it's fun to explore your own borders. What I'd like to do the most is heavy Ken Loach-like drama but, especially in Holland, that's very difficult.'

His career began in haphazard fashion when he took part in a play at high school. 'All of a sudden I could pick up girls,' is how he explains his initial attraction to acting. Lammers went to drama school in Amsterdam. Since then, he has worked consistently on films and TV productions, taking whichever opportunities have come his way. 'Life is what happens to you when you're busy making other plans,' he quips, quoting John Lennon.



Bokma in Berlin

Emmy award-winning actor Pierre Bokma credits his performance in the late Theo Van Gogh's *Interview* (2003) with alerting German director Ulrich Köhler to his abilities, explains Geoffrey Macnab. Köhler's *Sleeping Sickness*, in which Bokma stars, screens in competition in Berlin.

When the two men met in Amsterdam, Köhler was surprised how well Bokma spoke German. (During his army days, Bokma had been stationed in Germany.) Even before he had fully completed the screenplay for *Sleeping Sickness*, Köhler made it clear he wanted Bokma to play one of the leads.

The film, about western expatriates working in the humanitarian sector in Africa, was eventually shot in Cameroon, a problem for Bokma who wasn't fluent in French, despite being born in Paris. 'It was quite a job!' he recalls of his struggles to master the dialogue. But whatever the linguistic difficulties, Bokma relished his three months in Cameroon and describes the film as one of the highlights of his career.

Bokma's early credits include Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* (1991), in which he appeared alongside acting legends John Gielgud and Erland Josephson. 'All these dwarves and elves! It was quite a bizarre experience,' he remembers. 'John Gielgud said to all the Dutch actors, 'oh, your English is very good but don't over do it,' he says, imitating Gielgud perfectly.

Perhaps his best known film internationally remains Van Gogh's

If it pays very well and it's shit, I will not do it!

Interview (2003), made just a year before Van Gogh's murder. 'To put it bluntly, we didn't like each other,' Bokma recalls of his early encounters with the outspoken filmmaker. 'He had a tendency to be a menace.'

After Van Gogh wrote an unflattering review of Bokma, accusing him of making jokes for his fellow actors, Bokma responded by telling him, 'If you ever do this again, I'll rip off your head.' A few months later, Van Gogh apologised, and when he asked Bokma to appear in *Interview* the actor immediately accepted. 'He thought I'd say absolutely no fucking way! It was great. He was a great director – an exquisite person in terms of thinking about political and philosophical issues.'

The 55-year-old actor remains in demand on stage and screen. 'But I am not the one who's pushing things. I'll wait to see what comes my way. If it's fun and I like it, I'll do it. If it pays very well and it's shit, I will not do it!' he explains, his philosophy in a nutshell.



Dutch Harvest

DUTCH PRODUCTIONS PRESENTED AT BERLINALE 2011

FORUM

Brownian Movement



Director and Script: Nanouk Leopold **Production:** Circe Films (NL) **Sales:** Films Distribution
A relationship between a woman and her husband is tested when she lives out her secret, sexual fantasies.

'Somehow all my films are about the relationships between people and how far you can stretch them before they break' See page 10 for an interview with director Nanouk Leopold

An Angel in Doel



(De Engel van Doel) Documentary **Director and Script:** Tom Fassaert **Production:** SNG Film (NL) **Language:** Flemish (English subtitles)

Facing the advancing Antwerp docks, the village of Doel and its few remaining inhabitants struggle against the inevitable.

'In essence this film is about the human struggle with his own mortality, within the context of a dying village. About a widow and an old village priest that try to hold on to something that is slowly but certainly slipping away. And about the humour and melancholy of everyday life within a Flemish ghost-town.' Tom Fassaert.

GENERATION K+ COMPETITION

The Strongest Man in Holland



(De Sterkste Man van Nederland) **Director:** Mark de Cloe **Script:** Pieter Bart Korthuis, Maarten Lebens **Production:** NL Film

When Luke attends the local strongest man competition, he suspects one of the participants to be the parent he never knew.

'I was immediately touched when I read the script for The Strongest Man in Holland. It is a funny story that really hit a nerve. A story which, in my opinion, is about relationships which are somehow incomplete.' Mark de Cloe

IN PANORAMA

Minority Co-production

The Devil's Double



Director: Lee Tamahori **Script:** Michael Thomas **Production:** Corsan (B), Corrino Media Group and Staccato Films (both NL) **Sales:** Corsan World Sales

The real-life story of the man forced to be the body-double of Saddam Hussein's sadistic son in pre-war Baghdad See page 12 for an interview with Dutch co-producer Emjay Rechsteiner of Staccato Films

Bullhead



(Rundskop) **Director & Script:** Michael R. Roskam **Production:** Savage Film (B), Artémis Production (B), Waterland Film (NL)

The investigation of a police murder leads to a confrontation between two old friends, separated by a tragic history.

'I do all kinds of stuff and I like it... it's fun to explore your own borders.' Frank Lammers See page 21 for an interview with Dutch star Frank Lammers

IN COMPETITION

Minority Co-production

Sleeping Sickness



(Schlafkrankheit) **Director and Script:** Ulrich Köhler **Producers:** Komplizen Film GmbH (Ger), ö-Filmproduktion (Ger), Why Not Productions (Fr), IDTV Film (NL)

A film about western expatriates working in the humanitarian sector.

Bokma relished his three months in Cameroon and describes the film as one of the highlights of his career. 'It was quite a job!' he recalls See page 20 for an interview with Dutch star Pierre Bokma

Our Grand Despair



Director: Seyfi Teoman **Script:** Barış Bıçakçı & Seyfi Teoman **Producers:** Bulut Film, Circe Films (NL), Unafilm (Ger)

Ender and Cetin, two men in their late thirties, have been close friends since high school. After being away for many years, Cetin returns to Ankara, moves in with Ender, at which point the two realize their childhood dream...

'When I met Nadir Operli and Seyfi Teoman at the Netherlands Production Platform in 2008, I was immediately taken by their story about two middle aged single heterosexual men living together in Ankara, taking care of a young student girl whose parents died in a car accident. The sweetness of the way the men lived together and their infatuation of course with the girl was very fresh to me, as the director and producer behind appeared to be too.' Stienette Bosklopper, Circe Films

GENERATION 14+ COMPETITION

GET REAL!



Director & Script: Evert de Beijer **Produced by:** Ciné Té Filmproduktie (NL)

In *GET REAL!* a high-school kid is addicted to a sexy singer in a computer game. This addiction is proving fatal until a girl in his class gives him a real kiss.

Short film: 12 minutes

DUTCH RELEASES 1ST HALF 2011

Sonny Boy



Director: Maria Peters **Script:** Maria Peters, Pieter van de Waterbeemd **Production:** Shooting Star Filmcompany (NL) **Distribution:** A-Film Distribution

The true, exceptional love story between two apparently ordinary people: Rika, a typical Dutch mother of four children, and Waldemar, a Surinam man seventeen years her junior. Their love can survive all the presumptions and obstructions of the cruel world outside, but is finally unable to cope with the brutal and devastating power of war.

Pizzamaffia



Director: Tim Oliehoek **Script:** Luuk van Bemmelen, Simon de Waal **Production:** IDTV Film (NL)

Distribution: Benelux Film Distribution

Bram is best friends with Haas, his cousin. Haas' uncle Faris runs the pizzeria owned by Bram's father. When the two seniors have a blazing row, Faris opens his own pizzeria across the street which results, inevitably, in a pizza war between Bram and Haas. *Pizzamaffia* is a film about family-honour, pride, good and bad, the sense and nonsense of war and true love, and of course about the best pizzas in town.

My Grandpa the Bankrobber



(Mijn Opa de Bankrover) **Director:** Ineke Houtman **Script:** Sjoerd Kuyper **Production:** Lemming Film (NL) **Distribution:** A-Film Distribution

Grace wants to find out everything about her roots and her Surinam father, whom she never knew.

Black Butterflies



Director: Paula van der Oest **Script:** Greg Latter **Production:** IDTV Film / Riba Film International (NL), Comet Film (Ger), Spier Films (SA) **Distribution:** A-Film Distribution

Sales: Bavaria Film International
Ingrid Jonker is a very talented poet with only one goal; to find love and recognition.

Portable Life



Director and Script: Fleur Boonman **Production:** Fu Works (NL) **Distribution:** Benelux Film Distribution
Where life carries us and where we carry life.

Dutch Harvest

Viper's Nest



(Gooische Vrouwen) **Director:** Will Koopman **Script:** Frank Houtappels **Production:** Talpa Fictie (NL), Column Film (NL), Millstreet Films (NL)

Life in the bourgeois 't Gooi seems to always run smoothly, but dark clouds are gathering on the horizon for four girlfriends. A flight seems the only way out...

Club Zeus



Director and Script: David Verbeek **Production:** Revolver (NL) **Distribution:** Cinema Delicatessen

Boy hosts in Shanghai's Club Zeus, like the girl hosts, fulfil their clients' needs, but whereas for the girls it is mostly about sex, the boys work according to a totally different system - with them, the goal is to steal the hearts of their clients.

The President



(De President) **Director:** Erik de Bruyn **Script:** Marco van Geffen, Erik de Bruyn **Production:** Lemming Film (NL), Proton Cinema (Hu), U-Film (B)

A film about what happens when an illegal Moroccan accidentally becomes Dutch president!

RELEASES 2ND HALF 2010

The Odd One Out



(Vreemd Bloed) **Director:** Johan Timmers **Script:** Maria Goos **Production:** IDTV Film (NL) **Distribution:** A-Film Distribution

A surrealistic family drama about three generations of butchers.

Tirza



Director and Script: Rudolf van den Berg **Production:** Fu Works, Cadenza Films (NL) **Distribution:** Independent Films

Jörgen's desperate journey into the heart of Africa in search of his beloved missing daughter Tirza leads him towards a terrifying confrontation with the man who destroyed her. **See page 31 for a profile of star Sylvia Hoeks**

Awarded 'Golden Calf Best Director' & 'Golden Calf Best Editing', Netherlands Film Festival. Dutch entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 83rd Academy Awards.

Fuchsia the Miniwitch



(Foeksia de Miniheks) **Director:** Johan Nijenhuis **Script:** Sander de Regt **Production:** NL Film (NL) **Distribution:** Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures **Sales:** Delphis Films Fuchsia sets off for witches' school - this must be the beginning of a new and exciting adventure! **Awarded 'Z@PP Cinekid Lion, Audience Prize' & 'Best Dutch Children's Film, Audience Prize', Cinekid**

The Secret Letter



(Briefgeheim) **Director:** Simone van Dusseldorp **Script:** Marco van Geffen, Anna van der Heide **Production:** Lemming Film (NL) **Distribution:** A-Film Distribution **Sales:** Delphis Films

Things take a turn for the worse when a young girl decides to run away from home. **Awarded 'UPC Best Dutch Children's Film, Jury Prize', Cinekid**

Happily Ever After



(Lang en Gelukkig) **Director:** Pieter Kramer **Script:** Don Duyns **Production:** NL Film (NL) **Distribution:** Independent Films

Three well-known fairytales are re-told with a distinctive, humorous and contemporary slant. **Awarded 'Golden Calf - Film1 Audience Award' & 'Golden Calf Special**

Dusk



(Schemer) **Director:** Hanro Smitsman **Script:** Anjet Daanje **Production:** Corrino Entertainment (NL) **Distribution:** Independent Films
The haunting search to discover why fifteen-year old Jessie was murdered by her closest friends. **Awarded 'Golden Calf Dutch Film Critics' Award', Netherlands Film Festival**

Her Majesty



(Majesteit) **Director:** Peter de Baan **Script:** Ger Beukenkamp **Production:** Fu Works, IDTV Film (NL) **Distribution:** A-Film Distribution
A fascinating and revealing feature film about Beatrix as a woman, a mother, a wife and a queen. **Awarded 'Golden Calf Best Actor in a Supporting Role' (Jeroen Willems), Netherlands Film Festival**

Saint



(Sint) **Director and Script:** Dick Maas **Production:** Tom de Mol Productions, Parachute Pictures (NL) **Distribution:** Benelux Film Distribution
Saint Nicholas is not the kind-hearted children's friend people think he is. In reality he is a cruel blood thirsty bishop who, whenever there's a full moon on 5 December, will try to slaughter as many children as possible.

Heading West



(Richting West) **Director and Script:** Nicole van Kilsdonk **Production:** KeyFilm (NL) **Distribution:** A-Film Distribution
The chaotic life of Claire (38), woman, lover, daughter and single mother, rushing through the city on her bike with a child seat, from an ex with a terrible temper to a new lover who can't make up his mind. Life and love in the big city.

Dik Trom



Director: Arne Toonen **Script:** Luuk van Bemmelen, Mischa Alexander, Wijo Koek **Production:** Eyeworks Film & TV Drama (NL) **Distribution:** Benelux Film Distribution
When Dik Trom moves from Fat Town to Thin City he has to make some changes, both literally and figuratively.

The Dinner Club



(De Eetclub) **Director:** Robert Jan Westdijk **Script:** Robert Jan Westdijk, Marjan Lammers **Production:** Infinity Film & TV Productions (NL), Parentino Pictures (NL) **Distribution:** Benelux Film Distribution
Karen tries to save her self-respect and marriage despite the sinister pressure from the Dinner Club she once adored.

The Magicians



(Het Geheim) **Director:** Joram Lürsen **Script:** Frank Keteelaar **Production:** IDTV Film (NL) **Distribution:** A-Film Distribution **Sales:** Delphis Films
Ben (8) is fascinated by magic but when his friend Sylvie disappears, he has to find out what is real and what is illusion.

New Kids Turbo



Director and Script: Steffen Haars, Flip van der Kuil **Production:** Eyeworks Film & TV Drama (NL) **Distribution:** Benelux Film Distribution
Trailer-trash kids decide never again to pay for anything, and the rest of Holland soon follows...
Reached 1 million visitors January 2011

Loft



Director: Antoinette Beumer **Script:** Bart de Pauw, Saskia Noort **Production:** Millstreet Films, Pupkin Film, Woestijnvis (B) **Distribution:** Independent Films
Five friends - one deadly secret. **See page 31 for a profile of director Antoinette Beumer**

You've Got To Be Kidding

Call it the Winky Effect. Dutch live action family films have done spectacular business at home and abroad in recent years. Geoffrey Macnab reports.

Mischa Kamp's *Winky's Horse* (2005), produced by Bos Bros, and its sequel, *Where Is Winky's Horse* (2007) are two prime examples of kids' movies from the Netherlands that have caught the imagination of festivals and audiences worldwide. The former premiered internationally in Berlin in 2006 to enthusiastic reviews. The latter racked up admissions of more than 350,000 in Holland alone.

Production companies like Bos Bros, Lemming Film, Eyeworks, Shooting Star, NL Film and IDTV Film are all active in the kids' movie area. It helps, too, that the Dutch have a strong tradition of children's literature and that there are many books filmmakers can draw on.

2010 proved a bumper year for box-office returns on Dutch films made for younger audiences, with Johan Nijenhuis' *Foeksia the Miniwitch* (NL Film) leading the way with 274,055 admissions, while Rita Horst's *Eep!*, produced by Lemming Film, attracted in excess of 212,000 viewers. Lemming's *Secret Letter* (Simone van Dusseldorp) posted an impressive figure of 135,784 attendances.

'There are (Dutch) producers who have a vision not only for their home country but for the interna-

tional market,' suggests Xiaojuan Zhou, president of Montreal-based world sales agent Delphis Films, which has enjoyed success selling Dutch kids' fare in the international market. 'They pay attention to screenwriting, acting and directing. What is really amazing about these Dutch movies is that they are not competing with Germany or France in terms of budget or special effects. Their stories are mostly based on real-life with a dose of fantasy.'

'The Dutch are making movies that are fun but are at the same time educational'

'The Dutch are making movies that are fun but are at the same time educational,' suggests Claudia Landsberger, Head of Eye International. *Winky*, she observes, is about a Chinese girl adapting to life in a new country (the Netherlands.) Amid the humour and pathos, these films have an international perspective that appeals to both foreign kids and festivals. 'The Dutch are clever in making these films small enough for kids to digest and to learn something while they are having a good time,' Landsberger says. 'That's why these films are so popular and why programmers from around the world are keen on showing them.'

Zhou makes the same argument, pointing out that from Ben Sombogaart's *The Flying Liftboy* (1998) to Vincent Bal's *Minoes* (2001), from the *Winky* movies to Ineke Houtman's *The Indian* (2009), films 'reflect a society that is becoming more and more multicultural. They take a very real-life approach...they're simple stories but they are not simplistic stories.'

At first sight, Zhou acknowledges, *Winky* looked a tough proposition. 'We were, like, OK, this is a Chinese girl in Holland with Sinterklaas. How are we going to sell it?' Nevertheless, *Winky's Horse* was released theatrically in France, Spain and Scandinavia. 'And it was sold even in Malaysia, a Muslim country...and even in Iran,' the Delphis boss points out. 'I was very surprised they chose the film. It's Sinterklaas! But then, I got a big surprise at the turn-down of a Chinese broadcaster who rejected the film because 'it fails to reflect the modern day China where kids are dressed in Gaps instead of an old-fashioned red flowery coat that shows how Westerners perceive China!''

Both *Winky* movies were released on DVD too in North America, Germany and Japan. Dubbing costs may be high (€15,000 to €20,000 per film) but certain distributors are increasingly willing to take on the costs in order to release the best independent kids' movies in their territories.

Some observers are surprised that sales outfits like Delphis in Canada or High Point in the UK so often take on sales duties on Dutch kids' movies. (High Point

handled Martin Koolhoven's *Winter In Wartime*.) Zhou argues that the location of Delphis in North America helps give these films 'another leg' when it comes to finding audiences in North America and Latin America. Meanwhile, she is a constant presence at European markets and kids' festivals and has strong contacts with Asian buyers.

Zhou first started handling Dutch children's films in the late 1990s, when she was working for Media-Max International La Fête. Twelve years on, she is handling as much Dutch children's fare as ever. 'The success is still limited,' she cautions. 'These are niche movies. I can't say that they're making millions of dollars. What we are doing is a boutique operation. They are not like Luc Besson movies.'

Nobody is suggesting that Dutch kids' movies are blockbusters but they are still selling briskly everywhere from Europe to Asia. Their exposure at international festivals has helped put them in the shop window. Zhou highlights the importance of events like Berlin's Generation section for launching these movies. In the longer run, Zhou is pushing for Dutch producers of kids' movies to become more involved in international co-production – to consider shooting their movies in English as well as Dutch and even bringing North American cast to some projects. 'I do hope in that way, in the next 10 years, we can really succeed to bring Dutch movies even to a higher level,' the Delphis boss proclaims.

The Secret Letter ◊ **Director:** Simone van Dusseldorp, **Script:** Marco van Geffen, Anna van der Heide **Production:** Lemming Film **Sales:** Delphis Films



Winky's Horse ◊ Director: Mischa Kamp Script: Tamara Bos Production: Bos Bros (NL), AVRO (NL), MMG (B) Sales: Delphis Films

Top performing domestically-produced youth films in the Netherlands over the past 3 years in terms of **admissions**

2010

- *Fuchsia the Miniwitch*, Johan Nijenhuis NL Film **277,998**
- *Eep!*, Rita Horst Lemming Film **214,491**
- *Secret Letter (Briefgeheim)*, Simone van Dusseldorp Lemming Film **138,524**

2009

- *Frogs and Toads*, Simone van Dusseldorp, Lemming Film **169,921**
- *The Indian*, Ineke Houtman Bos Bros **57,783**

2008

- *Winter in Wartime*, Martin Koolhoven Isabella Films/Fu Works **844,709**
- *Letter for the King*, Pieter Verhoeff Egmond Film & TV **316,692**
- *Dunya and Desie*, Dana Nechustan Lemming **194,976**

Short Cuts

SUPPORTING DUTCH EXPORTS

From 2011 the Netherlands Film Fund is allocating €300,000 per year to stimulate the international distribution of Dutch films. Support of up to €25,000 per film will be made, and is expected to help with distribution costs, dubbing costs, press and PR expenses and festival travel to specific international festivals. The Fund is also raising its co-production budget by €300,000 per year to 1,8 million euro. "International co-operation is getting more and more important to get films financed and to raise the artistic value of our films

SUPPORT OF UP TO €25,000 PER FILM WILL BE MADE

as well as to stimulate Dutch films being shown outside our borders,' comments Film Fund director Doreen Boonekamp. 'I am convinced that raising our annual budget for international co-productions and at the same time supporting the export of Dutch film will give an extra impulse to the international appeal of the Dutch film industry'. The EYE Film Institute Netherlands already supports the promotion of Dutch films abroad to the tune of €600,000 per year.



EYE LAUNCHES WEBSITE INSTANT CINEMA

In January 2011 the EYE Film Institute Netherlands launched the internet platform Instant Cinema (<http://instantcinema.org>) to showcase experimental and art films from across the world. The initiative is the brainchild of filmmaker and multimedia expert René Daalder, and is designed to make the work of experimental filmmakers and artists accessible to wider audiences. The website features both classics from the experimental genre as well as new films by young filmmakers. Instant Cinema was launched at the International Film Festival Rotterdam.

For many years, experimental films and art films have been almost exclusively screened in museums and at film festivals. With the launch of the Instant Cinema website, EYE aims to generate more interest in this important art form. By making experimental cinema available to a wider audience, EYE hopes to contribute to the art-historical context and appreciation of a film genre that is relatively unknown to many film lovers.

FUNKY DUTCH SHORTS

Two Dutch shorts, Jeroen Annokkeé's *Sugar* and Albert 't Hooft and Paco Vink's *Little Quentin* have been selected for the International Competition of the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival that runs February 4-12 2011. In addition, Evert de Beijer's *GET REAL!* competes in the festival's Lab Competition. The film will also screen in Berlin's Generation 14+ Competition.

Sugar, 9 minutes long and produced by LEV Pictures, shows how things go from bad to worse for Bert after his scantily-clad neighbour Klaasje comes to borrow a cup of sugar. The dialogue-free *Little Quentin*, produced by iL Luster Productions tells the story of an oversexed bunny, a murder, a cover-up and the discovery of a terrible secret. The film was produced by Ciné-Té Filmproduktie.



THINGS GO FROM BAD TO WORSE IN SUGAR

BINGER ACTION

The New Year kicks off in frenetic fashion for the Amsterdam-based Binger Lab whose current crop of writers, directors and producers, as well as notable alumni, are presenting and pitching their lab projects at Berlin 2011. The Berlinale will stage two world premieres of projects developed at the Binger, *Bullhead* by Michael R. Roskam in Panorama and *Swans* by Hugo Vieira da Silva in Forum. The opening film of Generation, *Griff the Invisible*, is directed by Leon Ford and produced by

Nicole O'Donohue, both of whom are currently at the Binger developing their project *The Mechanicals*. At the Berlin Co-production Market the Macedonian filmmaker Aneta Lesnikovska is pitching her Binger-developed project *Loud*.

CORRECTION

In the last issue of SEE NL we incorrectly applied the title *Vivan Las Antipodas* to the still of *Lost Down Memory Lane*, produced by Memphis Film & TV. Apologies.





EYE RESTORES SCHROETER CLASSICS

In January 2011 the Pompidou Centre in Paris organised a comprehensive retrospective of the films of German master Werner Schroeter, who died in April 2010. To mark this retrospective, the EYE Film Institute Netherlands, in collaboration with Filmmuseum Münchner Stadtmuseum, restored three cult films from Schroeter's early career: *Eika Katappa* (1969), *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1971) and *Johannas Traum* (1971-1975).

Eika Katappa and *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* subsequently screened as part of the Signals-Regained programme during IFFR 2011. The films will also be screened at the EYE premises in Amsterdam in March 2011 as part of the E*Cinema evenings.

FUNDING QUALITY

The Rotterdam International Film Festival (IFFR) proved even busier than usual for Hubert Bals Fund staff this year following the selection of 27 HBF-backed films across the festival sections. These included three in Tiger competition, Sivaroj Kongsakul's *Eternity* (Thailand), the Sri Lankan *Flying Fish* (Sanjeewa Pushpakumara) and Vipin Vijay's *The Image Threads* (India). *Eternity* received digital production funding in 2009 while *Flying Fish* received post-production funding in 2010.

The *Image Thread* is testimony to the power of endurance having received its HBF script and project development funding in 2004. 'We were very happy about the situation this year,' commented Fund chief Iwana Chronis. 'The fact that there are so many Hubert Bals Fund films in the selection this year gives a really great signal about the overall quality of these films.'



ANTONIAK'S NINO FOR BERLIN

Life According to Nino, the latest project from Amsterdam-based filmmaker Urszula Antoniak, has been selected for the 2011 Berlin Co-production Market. The €1.5 million project, which Antoniak is looking to shoot Summer 2011, concerns two brothers trying to cope with the death of their mother and their father's subsequent descent into acute depression. 'It is a very ambitious project but it's also very difficult, ironic and philosophical,' commented the director before the Netherlands Production Platform event in September 2010, where the project was first pitched. 'A big, dark story but also comic, with special effects, and with three different age groups addressed. One child, Nino, becomes introverted. The other becomes self-destructive and practically plays with the idea of death. And then there is the father who is knocked down by the death of his wife. We have three different approaches to dealing with grief.'

COLOPHON

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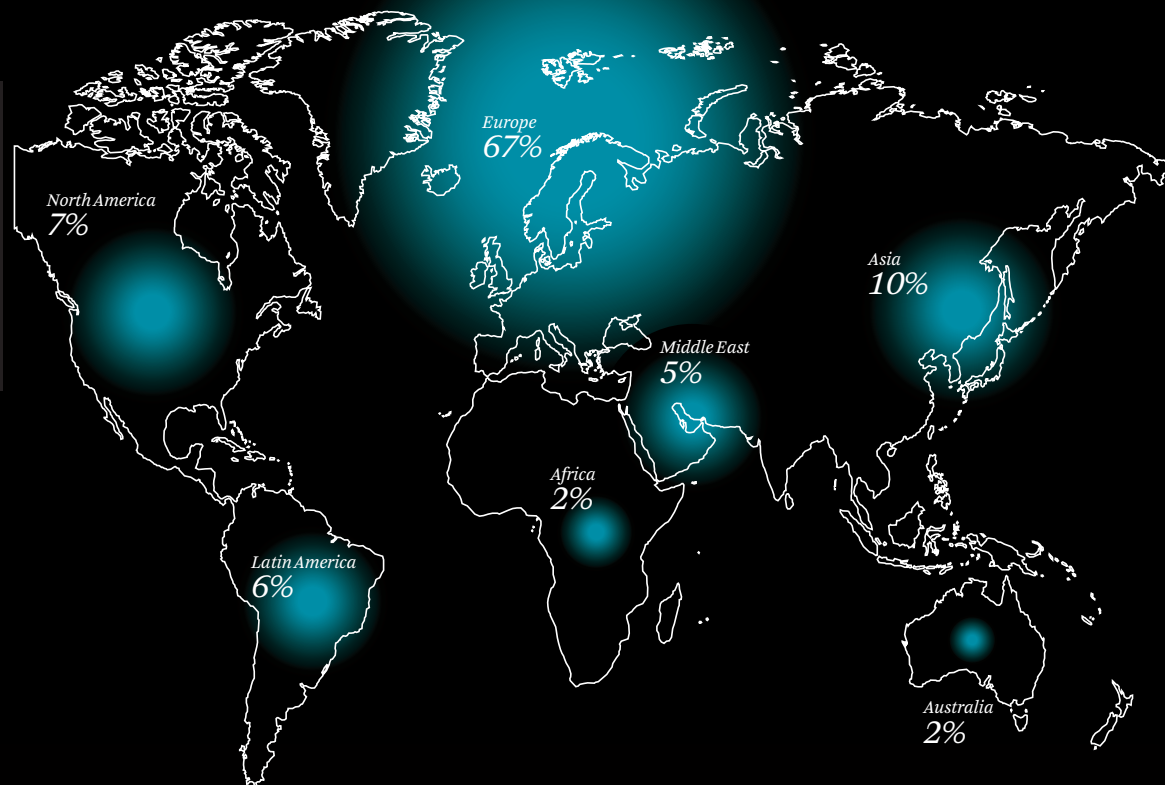
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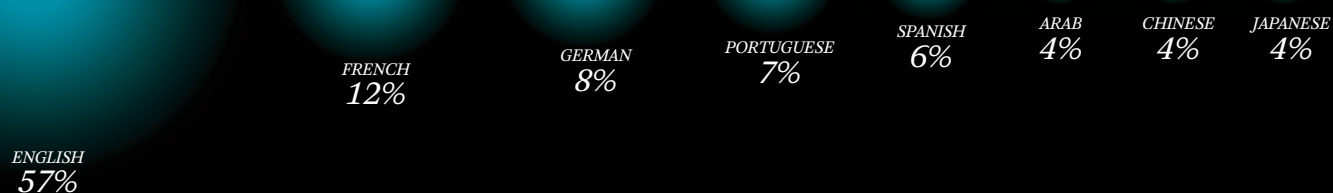
Geographical Distribution of Dutch Films in 2010

This diagram indicates the percentage of Dutch films distributed across international markets in 2010. The Europe figure of 67% marks a 3% increase on the 2009 figure. Other growth areas were Latin America, up a single percentage point on 2009 and the Middle East which posted a two per cent increase.



Distribution to language area

The international distribution of Dutch films in 2009 to territories as determined by indigenous language spoken.



A selection of Dutch films due for release in early 2011 showing the percentage of overseas production investment.

Title	Director	Lead Producer Netherlands	Co-producers	Budget (€ 1000)	Percentage foreign investment
Tony Ten	Mischa Kamp	Lemming Film	MA..JA.DE. (D), Unafilm (B)	3.834	38
Brownian Movement	Nanouk Leopold	Circe Films	COIN (Ger), Serendipity (B)	2.724	33
Black Butterflies	Paula van der Oest	IDTV Film	Spier Films (SA), Comet Film (Ger)	4.523	31
Portable life	Fleur Boonman	Fu Works Productions	Savage Film (B)	711	23
Isabelle	Ben Sombogaart	IDTV Film	Samsa Film (LUX)	2.150	24
Sonny Boy	Maria Peters	Shooting Star	Menuet (B)	5.124	4

Shooting Star 2011: Sylvia Hoeks

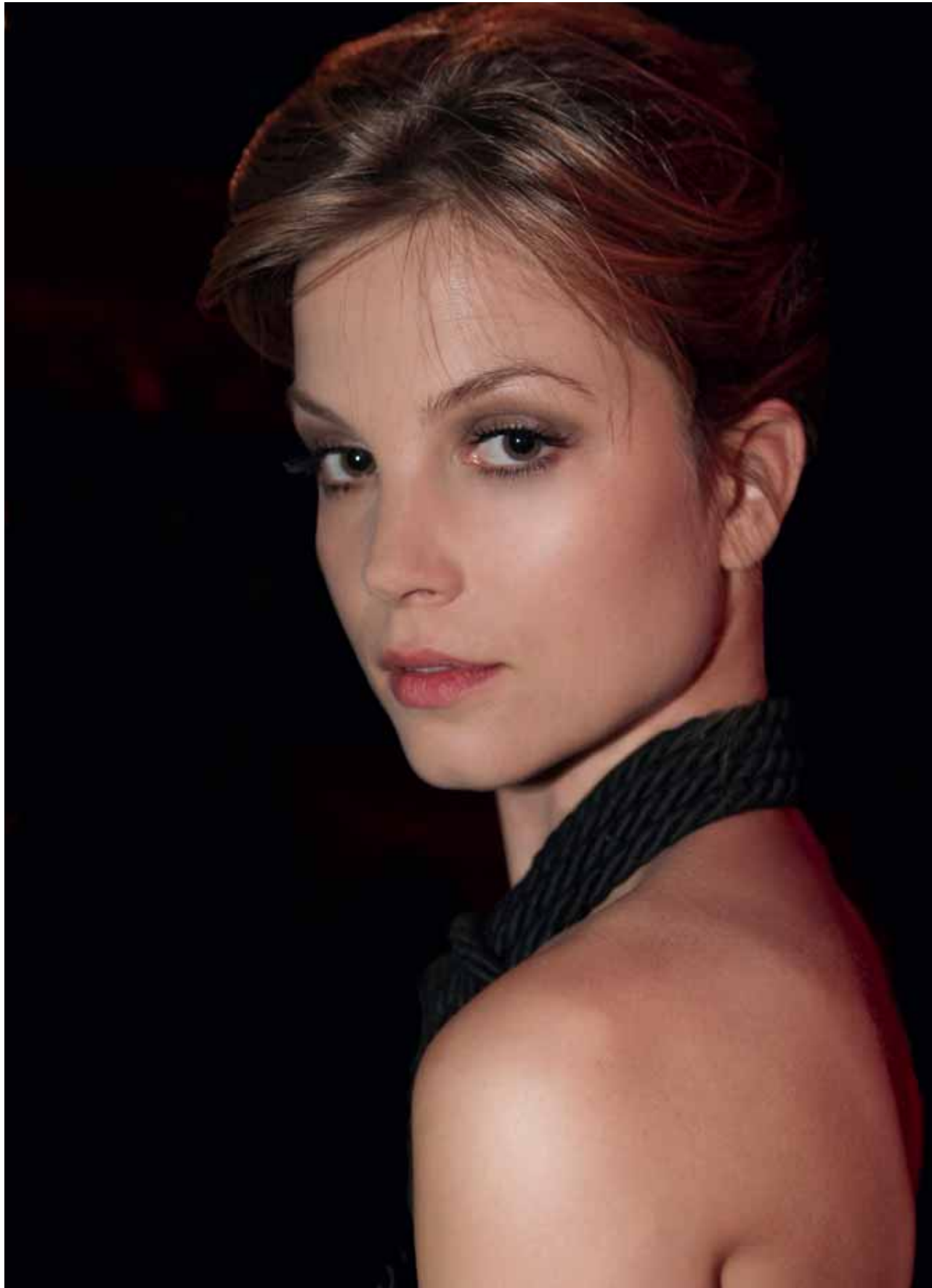
Star of Jos Stelling's *Duska*, Ben Sombogaart's *The Storm* and, most recently, Rudolf van den Berg's Dutch submission for the Foreign-language Oscar *Tirza*, Sylvia Hoeks is the 2011 choice of Shooting Star for the Netherlands. The Shooting Stars annual gala is organised during the Berlinale by European Film Promotion (EFP) to showcase the leading acting talents from across Europe.

"Being famous, becoming a 'star' is not on top of my wish list," Hoeks claims. "First of all I'm an actress. But if being well known for my work gives me the opportunity to choose between projects, then that is fantastic!"

"Any kind of appreciation by experienced people in the industry is wonderful especially when in this case it leads to being a 'Shooting Star' I'll await the consequences with much joy."

Hoeks' agenda for 2011 is filling up quickly. Firstly she will star in the feature thriller *The Gang of Oss*, directed by André van Duren and produced by Matthijs van Heijningen. She will then shoot a short film with director Mark de Cloe before pairing up again with director Jos Stelling to take the lead in his international co-production *The Girl and Death*. There are also many plans for theatre and on-going television work, but she is keeping her options open for more film projects.

"I hope the best is yet to come," she stresses. "Maybe it's for the best we don't know what the future holds. The unknown keeps you sharp. Curiosity can also be a drive. I'm approaching an age old enough to play character roles. Who knows? Because I tend to interfere with everything I want to write more and possibly direct. But my main love is acting."





**A Life in the Year of
Lotte Verbeek –
Shooting Star 2010**

Lotte Verbeek's career trajectory since starring in Urszula Antoniak's *Nothing Personal* in 2009 has been meteoric. Feted for her skills at countless international film festivals, picking up best actress awards at

Locarno and Marrakech, she was presented as the Dutch Shooting Star at Berlin 2010, the year in which she was signed up to play the role of Guilia Farnese opposite Jeremy Irons in Neil Jordan's *The Borgias* tv series for Showtime. She also starred in Maurizio Zaccaro's *Le ragazze dello swing*, also for television, as well as Maria Peters' *Sonny Boy* (release

2011). Agent Marieke Verharen comments: 'As a result of the success of *Nothing Personal* Lotte was asked to be the Shooting Star at the Berlinale last year. This event is important to make (international) contacts with directors, agents and casting directors, from all over the world, who are all in search of the best new talents. Both the success of *Nothing Personal*

and Shooting Star contributed to her success. But this was only possible with Lotte's talent and energy.' Lotte herself demands the final word. 'The last one and a half years I have been so thrilled by all the new meetings, the travels, the opportunities, the rewards and the awards,' she exclaims. 'I realise I'm a very lucky bastard!'