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LOVE & ANARCHY

28TH HELSINKI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

PRESS RELEASE

3 September, 2015 (Free to release)

SPOTLIGHT SELECTION

Hiromasa Yonebayashi

Before his career at Studio Ghibli, Hiromasa Yonebayashi (b. 1983, Nonoichi) studied in the art school of Kanasawa. The old samurai city of Japan's western coast is known for its traditions, gardens and gold leaf production. During studies Yonebayashi animated tv advertisements and drew caricatures. His career at Ghibli started as the in-between animator of *Princess Mononoke* (1997). Since *Spirited Away* (2001) he has worked as one of the key animators in all of Hayao Miyazaki's films. Yonebayashi's debut feature *THE SECRET WORLD OF ARRIETTY* (2010) was the most watched domestic film in Japan that year. After that Yonebayashi has worked as the key animator in Goro Miyazaki's *From up on Poppy Hill* (2011) and Hayao Miyazaki's *Wind Rises* (2013). *WHEN MARNIE WAS THERE* is Yonebayashi's second film as director.

Yonebayashi's press day is Friday 25 September

Interview requests: mikas@cinemamondo.fi

When Marnie Was There press screening 9. September at 14.00 in Kino Engel

Yoshiaki Nishimura

Yoshiaki Nishimura (b. 1977) studied in the United States before going back to Japan and joining Studio Ghibli team in 2002. He took part in promoting *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004), *Tales from Earthsea* (2006) and *Ponyo* (2008) and launching two Ghibli's distributions in Japan (*Le roi et l'oiseau* and *Cheburashka*). Nishimura earned his spurs as the executive producer of Isao Takahata's *The Tale of Princess Kaguya* (2013), which took eight years to complete. *WHEN MARNIE WAS THERE* is Nishimura's second Studio Ghibli film as producer.

Nishimura has limited time for interviews 25 - 26 September.

Interview requests: mikas@cinemamondo.fi

Luc Jacquet

Oscar-winning French film director and screenwriter Luc Jacquet's (b. 1967) early interests in nature and animal life led him to obtain a master's degree in animal biology and ecology from the University of Lyon in 1991. In the beginning of the 1990's he spent 14 months as part of a scientific research project in Antarctica, where his duties included tagging the penguins and shooting 35-mm film footage. This experience resulted in his working as cinematographer in the film *The Congress of Penguins*. Jacquet's

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directorial debut *The March of Penguins* won an Oscar for Best Documentary Feature in 2006. He then went on to direct two different nature themed movies *The Fox and the Child* and *Once Upon a Forest*. Jacquet's new documentary film ICE AND THE SKY will be shown at HIFF. The director will also take part in the Ministry of Environment's seminar concerning the objectives of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris.

ICE AND THE SKY press screening 15 September in Kinopalatsi 2 at 11.00

Jacquet's press day is Thursday 24 September

Interview requests: mikas@cinemamondo.fi

Alex Ross Perry

Director, scriptwriter and actor Alex Ross Perry (b. 1984) has studied and made a career in New York, and he seamlessly falls into the dialogue-heavy tradition of east coast filmmakers. Perry's long feature debut *Impolex* (2009) had a budget of 15 000 dollars. His second film *The Color Wheel* (2011) began a trilogy of relationship-themed films with its honest and funny view on brother and sister going on a not-so-pleasant road trip together. The next two, *LISTEN UP PHILIP* (2014) and *QUEEN OF EARTH* (2015), work as a duo uncovering the banality and dark essence of male and female relationship. Perry's films have gained reputation as festival darlings, *Listen Up Philip* taking home the Special Jury Prize from Locarno Film Festival, and *Queen of Earth* premiering in Forum section of Berlinale Film Festival. Perry's works can be categorized as comedic dramas that dwell in the urban existential agony of young individuals unable to cope with relationships. For an outsider this looks inevitably amusing but also true. As important overall influences Perry mentions the works of Philip Roth and Thomas Pynchon, whereas *Queen of Earth* is defined by the style of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's films and feminist philosophy.

ESTONIA GALA

Elmo Nüganen

Elmo Nüganen (b. 1962) is an Estonian theatre and film director. He has studied theatre directing in Tallinn Pedagogical University and has a degree in acting from Tallinn Conservatoire. Since 1992 he has worked as the artistic director of the Tallinn City Theatre. Nüganen is one of the best known contemporary theatre directors in Estonia. His previous film work includes the 2002 Estonian hit movie *Names in Marble*. Alongside many directing and acting credits Nüganen acted in *Tangerines*, which was the Estonian Oscar nominee in this year's Academy Awards. Nüganen's new film 1944 is screened at HIFF.

Maiken Schmidt

Maiken Schmidt (b. 1985) is an Estonian dancer, choreographer and actress. She grew up in the countryside and moved later on to Tallinn to study choreography and dance. She graduated in 2006, and two years later she began her drama studies in the Estonian Academy for Music and Theatre. Today she is working in the Tallinn City Theatre as an actress and a choreographer. Schmidt has worked in front of the camera in various TV-series and short films. 1944 is her biggest film role so far.

Kristjan Üksküla

1944 actor Kristjan Üksküla (b. 1987) graduated from the Estonian Music and Theatre Academy in 2010. Since then he has worked in the Tallinn City Theatre. Üksküla's role in 1944 is his debut in film acting. Üksküla is also one of the assistant directors of another acclaimed Estonian film *IN THE CROSSWIND* that is in the HIFF programme. His interests as an actor include commedia dell'arte and improvisation. Besides acting, he has also written and directed plays.

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Leo Kunnas

Leo Kunnas (b. 1967) is an Estonian writer and a former lieutenant colonel of the Estonian Defence Forces. Kunnas graduated from the Finnish National Defence University's first Estonian cadet course in 1994. After that he has worked as the chief of the Estonian Defence Forces' Operations Department, taken part in the War in Iraq and published nine books. In Soviet era Kunnas was sentenced to jail for illegally crossing the border and for the illegal possession of firearms. Kunnas has written the script of 1944.

Kristian Taska

Estonian producer Kristian Taska studied business management, script writing and film history at Santa Monica College, Los Angeles, and business management at Concordia International University in Tallinn, between 1991 and 1995. In 1993 he helped his father in founding the first Estonian private TV station, Kanal 2, one of the three national-coverage channels in Estonia, and worked as their Advertising and Business Manager until 1995 and from 1997 to 2000 as their General Manager. In 2000 he established his own production company, Taska Film. In 2001 - 2002 he co-wrote and produced Estonian hit film *Names in Marble*. Taska Film was also co-producer of the Finnish director Antti J. Jokinen's film *The Purge*. Taska is one of the producers of 1944.

The film-makers of 1944 are in Helsinki as follows: director Elmo Nüganen, actors Maiken Schmidt and Kristjan Üksküla 23–24 September, screenwriter Leo Kunnas and producer Kristian Taska 22–24 September. Interview requests to Jenni Ukkonen, Atlantic Film Finland, jenni@atlanticfilm.fi.

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE

Gunnar Jónsson

Gunnar Jónsson is an Icelandic actor. HIFF will screen VIRGIN MOUNTAIN from which he won the prize for best actor at Tribeca Film Festival. *Virgin Mountain* tells the story of a 43-year-old man who still lives with his mother, but breaks away from his daily routine when he is enrolled in a dance class. The film was also seen at the Berlin International Film Festival. *Virgin Mountain* has been nominated for the 2015 Nordic Council Film Prize. Jónsson also has a role in another HIFF film RAMS.

The dates of Gunnar Jónsson's visit to be confirmed.

NORDIC EXCELLENCE

Abdallah "Dallas Boy" Musa

The main character of the documentary film *For Kibera!*, Abdallah Musa, also known as Boy Dallas, was born and raised in the district of Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya. The population growth has made Kibera a rough and violent place to live. After his studies Boy Dallas got interested in filming. He started filming weddings and family parties, as well as what was happening in the society: vandalism and violence. When a local radio station Pamoja FM was launched in Kibera, Dallas became one of its reporters, as he had also worked as a DJ. Today, Boy Dallas has a popular late night show five nights a week. He is a well-known personality in Kibera, he is called "The Voice of Kibera". Locals often stop him on the streets and tell him about their worries. In his program Dallas raises current problems and is not afraid to take a stand.

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Abdallah Musa in Helsinki 15 - 20 September.

Michael Madsen

The filmmaker and artist Michael Madsen (b. 1971) became internationally acclaimed through his film *Into Eternity* that investigated the final destination of nuclear waste using the Finnish county Eurajoki as an example. He directed one section of the film *Cathedrals of Culture* (2014), also including sections from Wim Wenders and Robert Redford. In his latest film *THE VISIT* he contemplates the possible encounter of extraterrestrial life. In an interview Madsen has concluded his film to be “the emergency plan that the UN does not have”. Madsen teaches in the Danish Film and Art school, as well as in universities in California and Sydney. One of the courses he holds is called “Workshop for Individuals with absolutely no idea for a Film”.

Michael Madsen in Helsinki 24 - 26 September.

Hafsteinn Gunnar Sigurðsson

Hafsteinn Gunnar Sigurðsson (b. 1978) is one of the most successful Icelandic directors of today. His interest towards films began with shooting skate videos. After graduating from his literature studies at the University of Iceland, Sigurðsson studied filmmaking at Columbia University. His graduation short film *Rattlesnakes* (2007) won at the festival of Columbia University and several prizes at film festivals. His first feature film *Either Way* (2011) was screened at over 50 festivals. David Gordon Green directed the US version of the film which won the Silver Bear in Berlin. HIFF will screen Sigurðsson *PARIS OF THE NORTH*.

Hafsteinn Gunnar Sigurðsson in Helsinki 21 - 23 September

Nanna Kristín Magnúsdóttir

Nanna Kristín Magnúsdóttir is an Icelandic actress, director and producer. At HIFF she'll be presenting her short film *PLAYING WITH BALLS* which is screened in the short film series *Wondrous Iceland*. She's also playing the role of Erna in *PARIS OF THE NORTH*, also screened at HIFF.

Nanna Kristín Magnúsdóttir in Helsinki 23 - 25 September

Baldvin Zophoníasson

Icelandic director Baldvin Zophoníasson made his first short film at the age of 11. After that he worked as a freelance editor, cameraman and producer for the largest TV networks in Iceland as well as studying filmmaking in Norway and Denmark. Later he founded an advertising agency and made TV commercials and music videos. His first feature *Jitters* (2010) was a big international festival success. HIFF will screen Zophoníasson's second film *LIFE IN A FISHBOWL*. It is a portrait of fraught lifestyles in Reykjavik on the eve of the country's 2008 economic meltdown. The film was Iceland's Oscar nominee in this year's Academy Awards.

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Baldvin Zophoníasson in Helsinki 17 - 20 September

Grímur Hákonarson

The Icelandic director Grímur Hákonarson (b. 1977) graduated from FAMU - Film Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. His graduate film *Slavek the Shit* won 12 festival prizes. His next short film *Wrestling* won 25 festival prizes around the world. It is one of the most successful short films from Iceland. Hákonarson's second feature film RAMS (2015) will be shown at HIFF. It won the top prize in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes. In a remote Icelandic farming valley two brothers who haven't spoken in 40 years have to come together in order to save what's dearest to them - their sheep.

Grímur Hákonarson in Helsinki 22 - 23 September

Thomas Daneskov

Danish young multitalent film student Thomas Daneskov's (1989) first short film *Puff, Puff, Pass / Ud, spring over, ind* (2013) won at Odense International film festival and the International Short film festival at Clermont-Ferrand. The film also won five prizes at the Ekko shortlist awards 2014, naming Daneskov "the next big thing in Danish film". Thomas Daneskov's low budget DIY drama THE ELITE will be shown at HIFF. It won the New Talent Grand Pix at Copenhagen's Cph Pix. The international jury said they were "pleased to discover a deeply personal, contemporary new voice in Danish independent cinema with a disturbing and hilarious portrait of privileged youth made in a spirit of collectivity".

Thomas Daneskov in Helsinki 24 - 27 September.

Ronnie Sandahl

Ronnie Sandahl (b. 1984) is a Swedish journalist, novelist and film director. Sandahl has written and directed two short films: the relationship drama *Lucky Bastards* (2010) and the tragical comedy *The Route 43 Miracle* (2012). Sandahl's feature film debut UNDERDOG (2014) is screened at HIFF. *Underdog* is a film about longing and privilege. Young Swedish woman Dino moves to Norway to work. "Little Brother" Norway has grown up and unemployed Swedes work as servants to the Norwegians. *Underdog* won the main prize at Chicago Film Festival.

Ronnie Sandahl in Helsinki 18 - 20 September

Annika Hellström

Swedish producer Annika Hellström studied film in New York at the end of the 80's and at the beginning of the 90's. She worked for cinema and television as a script supervisor and assistant director in Sweden until she founded her own production company Cinecic Films in 2006. Cinecic Films produce feature films, television drama and documentaries "that make you think, laugh and cry". HIFF screens Hellström's films UNDERDOG (2014) and FLOCKING (2015). *Underdog* won the main prize at Chicago Film Festival. *Flocking* won the main prize in the Generation 14plus section of Berlin International Film Festival.

Annika Hellström in Helsinki 22 - 24 September

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BALKANIZE!

Cuzin Toma

Cuzin Toma is a Romanian actor. HIFF screens Toma's films AFERIM! (2015) and THE TREASURE (2015). Black and white drama *Aferim!* won the Silver Bear for Best Director at Berlin International Film Festival this year. Toma plays the role of gypsy slave Carfin who to runs away from his boyar's estate after having an affair with his wife. *The Treasure* is a Romanian black comedy about two neighbours who want to find the treasure that is supposedly buried in the garden of another man's grandfather's country house.

Cuzin Toma in Helsinki 22 - 25 September

Cristina Toma

Cristina Toma is a Romanian actress. Here at HIFF we will see Toma's film THE TREASURE (2015) where she plays a couple with his real life husband Cuzin Toma.

Cristina Toma in Helsinki 22 - 25 September

Vuk Rsumović

Son of the Serbian poet Ljubivoje Rsumović writer-producer-director Vuk Rsumović (b. 1975) is known for his scripts in Serbian films *Slobodan pad* (2004) and *Valter* (2012). He has also written documentaries, animated films and plays. HIFF screens Rsumović's debut feature, emotional drama NO ONE'S CHILD (2014) that is based on the true story of a feral boy's gradual assimilation into civilization. Rsumović's film poses also broader questions about personal and national identity and the relative merits of human versus animal savagery.

Vuk Rsumović in Helsinki 23 - 25 September

Visar Morina

Kosovan director-writer Visar Morina (b. 1979) has graduated from Germany's Academy of Media Arts Cologne. His early shorts include *A Safe Place for Everyone* (2007), *Sirens* (2008), *Death by Suffocation* (2010), and *Of Dogs and Wallpaper* (2013). HIFF screens Morina's debut feature BABAI (2015), which won the Best Director award at Karlovy Vary IFF 2015. Films tells about a Kosovan ten-year-old boy Nori in 90's. Nori's father manages to sneak away to Germany and Nori determines to follow him.

Visar Morina in Helsinki 17 - 20 September

PAST IS A FOREIGN COUNTRY

Martti Helde

Screenwriter and director Martti Helde (b. 1987) was born in a small town in Central Estonia. His worldview was influenced by his grandfather who was a priest. During school Helde studied painting and practiced theatre. Helde's first film experiment caused a sensation in Estonian media and politics. Helde

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has graduated as a film director from Baltic Film and Media School in Tallinn. His debut feature film IN THE CROSSWIND has been awarded at film festivals in Angers, Göteborg, Mannheim-Heidelberg, Tallinn, Thessaloniki and Warsaw.

Martti Helde in Helsinki 20 - 23 September

THE VISIONARIES

Randall Wright

Director and producer Randall Wright lives in London. He has directed over twenty major documentaries. His most recent films include *Lucian Freud: A Painted Life*, which was critically acclaimed, winning an RTS award for best arts documentary and earning a Grierson nomination, and BAFTA Robert Flaherty nomination, and *Arena: Sister Wendy* broadcast Christmas 2012. His previous work includes *Jack.The Lad.* a comic documentary about the years leading to Jack Rosenthal's first screen play, which was nominated for a BAFTA; *The Secret Centre*, about John Le Carre's career as a spy; and many films on sub-Saharan African subjects including an acclaimed three part series for Channel 4, *Africa Unmasked*. Randall's latest documentary HOCKNEY (HIFF 2015) is an intimate portrait of the popular visual artist David Hockney. Randall met Hockney while directing *Shock of the Old*, a BBC Omnibus film about major artists inspired by pictures in the National Gallery. In 2003 at Panavision studios in Hollywood, he made a film called *Secret Knowledge*, demonstrating Hockney's theory that painters used cameras hundreds of years before the invention of chemical photography. The film won the Grierson and FIFA awards, and other nominations, and was shown at many film festivals.

Randall Wright in Helsinki 18 - 20 September

Raul Garcia

Spanish animator Raul Garcia started his career in Madrid at the age of 19. He has been involved in over 25 animated feature films. He is highly recognized all over the world and has received many awards. Garcia was the first Spanish animator hired for Walt Disney Studios. He's been working as a character animator on classics such as *Lion King* and *Beauty and the Beast*. Garcia has written books about animation techniques and teaches animation internationally. HIFF will screen Garcia's latest film EXTRAORDINARY TALES (2015), an anthology of five stories inspired by Edgar Allan Poe.

Raul Garcia in Helsinki 19 - 25 September

LOVE RULES

Peter Strickland

Writer/director Peter Strickland was born in UK in 1973. His first feature Film *Katalin Varga* was a micro-budget rural revenge drama that went on to win numerous awards including a Silver Bear in Berlin and The European Film Academy's Discovery of the Year award in 2009. Strickland followed *Katalin Varga* with *Berberian Sound Studio* in 2012 that is a horror film salute to the Italian 1970's giallo movies. *Berberian Sound Studio* won four awards at the 2012 British Independent Film Awards. Strickland's latest film THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY will be shown at the 28th HIFF. He is also one of the directors of BJÖRK: BIOPHILIA LIVE that will also be shown at the festival.

Peter Strickland in Helsinki 22 - 24 September

Lina Mannheimer

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Swedish Lina Mannheimer has studied Film and Art History in the University of Nebrija and Business in Stockholm School of Economics. After finishing her studies in Gothenburg Film School she worked in New York and London. THE CEREMONY is a film about aged and well known dominatrix Catherine Robbe-Grillet with whom Mannheimer started working in 2009. *The Contract*, Mannheimer's debut *œuvre* which premiered in 2010, was a short film about Robbe-Grillet's somewhat unusual life. With *The Ceremony*, a feature length documentary, Mannheimer has continued the work with the French icon.

Lina Mannheimer in Helsinki 17 - 19 September

Diastème

Patrick Asté, aka Diastème, is a French director, musician, author and screenwriter. Before his career in film business he wrote articles for many French magazines such as *Première* and *L'Autre Journal*. HIFF will screen Diastème's second feature film, FRENCH BLOOD (*Un Français*, 2014) that is a story of French neo-Nazis. The film caused stir during its French premiere because of its controversial topic.

Diastème in Helsinki 21 - 23 September

GOOD VIBRATIONS

Alexander Dunn

Alexander Dunn is a London-based director, producer and editor. He has worked with television and advertising for over 10 years. He is coming to Helsinki to present his debut feature film, the documentary *808*. The film tells the story of the instrument that changed the music world completely: The Roland TR-808 drum machine. Dunn got to interview the biggest musicians for the film, such as The Beastie Boys, Phil Collins, Pharrell Williams and Rick Rubin. In an interview Dunn has described his film not to be a film but a musical journey, a film that you can listen to. While editing Dunn wanted to give the same kind of beat to his film that the Roland TR-808 gave to music.

Alexander Dunn in Helsinki 23 - 25 September

Alex Noyer

The originally Finnish Alex Noyer is a producer living in London. He founded his production company You Know Films in 2004, and is specialized in producing documentaries about the cultural field. The documentary *New York Influence City*, written and produced by Noyer was screened on PBS- ja Sky Arts -channels. That particular documentary led Noyer to have lunch with the legendary music producer Arthur Baker. During the lunch the idea about the documentary film *808* was formed. the documentary tells the story of the legendary Roland TR-808 drum machine. Alex Noyer, who is a passionate music lover himself, is coming to Helsinki to present the film together with the director Alex Dunn. With his documentary Noyer wants to lighten the history and tremendous meaning of the 808 machine and bring music lovers together.

The dates of Alex Noyer's visit to be confirmed.

AGAINST THE GRAIN

Beata Gårdeler

The director Beata Gårdeler studied filmmaking in the Kalix folkhighschool in Sweden. She has worked broadly in the field of television and cinema, for example in casting and as the assistant director of Jan Troell. Her debut feature *In Your Veins* was highly praised by critics and audience, the film was nominated for a Guldbaggen, the Swedish film prize. Beata Gårdeler is coming to Helsinki to present her latest film
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FLOCKING. The story of the film takes place in a small community in Northern Sweden, similar to where Gårdeler herself grew up in. She has told, that the culture of certain social behaviour and unwritten rules is familiar to her from her childhood. The social media has brought a new form of communication, which has also an effect to the life of a small community. This theme is of high interest to Gårdeler.

Beata Gårdeler in Helsinki 22 - 25 September

Agneta Fagerström Olsson

Agneta Fagerström Olsson (1948) is a Swedish director-writer. She has produced for example television thriller films based on Henning Mankel's and Liza Marklund's detective stories. Here at HIFF we will see film FLOCKING (2015) that she produced together with Annika Hellström. Flocking won the best prize in the competition Generation 14plus at Berlin International Film Festival.

Agneta Fagerström Olsson in Helsinki 22 - 24 September

Ognjen Sviličić

Ognjen Sviličić (b. 1971) is a Croatian filmmaker and scriptwriter. In his youth he wasn't really interested in cinema and applying to the Academy of Drama Arts Zagreb (in which he got in) was just a spontaneous idea of his. He started his career by directing films for television. He also worked as a scriptwriter and "script doctor" for many Croatian filmmakers, with excellent results. He was therefore sometimes nicknamed "Mabuse of Croatian cinema", who "resurrects directors from the dead". His first feature film was *Wish I Were a Shark* (2000) and the film was the most viewed in Croatia that year. His next film *Sorry for Kung Fu* (2004) made him internationally acclaimed with its premiere at the Berlinale. His next feature *Armin* (2007) won several awards at international film festivals (such as the best foreign language film at Palm Springs) and was the Oscar-nominee of Croatia. Sviličić is coming to Helsinki to present his latest film *THESE ARE THE RULES*, a drama about a family's fight against authorities in the middle of a family tragedy.

Ognjen Sviličić in Helsinki 19 - 22 September

SPRAINS AND STRAINS

Karoly Ujj Mészáros

Karoly Ujj Mészáros (b. 1968) is a Hungarian director-writer. Mészáros has made 10 short features in over the last 9 years that won 12 prizes on more than 30 national and international short film festivals. He has shot over 150 commercials over the last 12 years and a theatre play in 2011. He has a university degree of economics. Mészáros' debut feature black comedy *LIZA, THE FOX-FAIRY* (2015) will be shown at HIFF. The film drew an audience of over 100,000 in Hungary, which was a domestic success and was awarded the Grand Prize at the Fantasporto Film Festival in Portugal. Liza, naive single is convinced that she has been cursed and all the men who desires Liza shall die horribly. Can the curse be overcome?

Karoly Ujj Mészáros in Helsinki 17 - 20 September

August B. Hanssen

August B. Hanssen is a director and writer from Grimstad in Norway. He has worked in several capacities in the film industry over 15 years, mainly developing and directing documentaries, but also writing fiction. He's known for *All About My Father* (2003), *Natural Born Star* (2007), *Pushwagner* (2011) and *Club 7* (2013). One day he received a package in the mail containing over 50 hours of video diary material filmed by a woman called Ida. Hanssen watched the partly shocking material and understood its importance. The documentary film *IDA'S DIARY* was made. The film tells a story of a mentally ill person filmed by

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herself. Hanssen had to think about several ethical questions while making the film: he wanted to do Ida justice and give an honest picture of her state, without going overboard with her pain. That's why he made a conscious decision not to show any scenes of physical self harm in the film.

August B. Hanssen in Helsinki 24 - 25 September

Jaan Toomik

Jaan Toomik (b. 1961) is the best known Estonian visual artist. His artistic career started as a painter, followed by installations and video art. In his first feature film LANDSCAPE WITH MANY MOONS Toomik deals with the same questions which he has addressed during his career as an artist – the topics of death and sexuality, body transformations, the relationship between reality and the dream-like, predominant human fears and alienation from oneself and the world. Toomik has worked at the Estonian Academy of Arts as a professor in the Chair of Interdisciplinary Arts. Currently he works at the Academy as the Head of Department of Painting.

Jaan Toomik in Helsinki 23 - 25 September

Magnus Hedberg

Magnus Hedberg is a film director from Malmö, Sweden, and his second feature FROM THE DEPTHS OF MY HEART (*Från djupet av mitt hjärta*, 2014) will be screened at HIFF this year. *From the Depths of My Heart* is a dreamlike drama film of young adults whose excursion in Southern Sweden's beautiful and dramatic wilderness goes very very wrong. Hedberg has said to like horror films, and for example *The Exorcist* and other 70's horror films have inspired the music in *From the Depths of My Heart*.

Magnus Hedberg in Helsinki 21 - 24 September

AT FULL SPEED

Amber Fares

In the aftermath of 9/11 Lebanese Canadian Amber Fares left her career in business to deepen her understanding of the life in the Middle East. Born and educated in Canada, Fares was a co-founder of SocDoc Studios, a company that produces film about social issues. Fares' debut short film *Ghetto Town* toured the festivals in 2009, and the subject of her latest documentary film SPEED SISTERS (HIFF, 2015) was to be found in Palestine: five women run their own gritty street-car team in the male-dominated street-racing scene in Palestine. Fares has also produced and directed films organisations such as UNRWA that helps palestinian refugees.

Amber Fares in Helsinki 21 - 24 September

Cosima Spender

Cosima Spender grew up in Siena, Italy. With the age of 14 she moved to London with her artist parents. She studied anthropology and art history at the University of London. Through her studies her interest for ethnic cultures grew. She travelled a lot filming what she saw, and eventually decided to study documentary directing at the London National Film and Television School. After graduating Spender has directed several documentary films for BBC. Her last film *Without Gorky* (2011) was a personal film about her grandfather, the abstract expressionist Arshile Gorky. In her latest film, PALIO (HIFF 2015), Spender also travels to her past, to the town of Siena, where the legendary, world's oldest horse race, Palio, is held. Spender was able to form a relationship with the persons who she filmed, because she spoke the same dialect as them. Also her being a woman turned out to be an advantage. During filming Spender

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discovered that the unwritten code of a macho culture is to never to say *no* to a woman.

Cosima Spender in Helsinki 20 - 21 September

FUNNY FAMILIES

Mark Noonan

Mark Noonan is a writer-director based in Dublin. He studied Architecture at University College Dublin, and began working with the award-winning Dublin based film production company Venom Film. His first short film *Questions* won the Claire Lynch Award at the Cork International Film Festival and an Honourable Mention at the Galway Film Fleadh. Noonan's feature directorial debut, a dramatic comedy drama *YOU'RE UGLY TOO* (2015) will be shown at HIFF. After the death of her parents a young girl (Lauren Kinsella) must deal with her mysterious uncle (Aidan Gillen) when he's released from prison to care for her. *You're Ugly Too* was nominated for Best Debut Feature by the Berlin International Film Festival on its premiere there in February 2015.

Mark Noonan in Helsinki 17 - 20 September

Veiko Õunpuu

Veiko Õunpuu (b. 1972) is an Estonian film director and screenwriter who is known for his artistic movies *Autumn Ball* (2007) and *The Temptation of St. Tony* (2009). Õunpuu's films are usually slow paced artistic movies with eccentric characters, and he is considered one of the most prominent art film directors in Estonia. HIFF will screen Õunpuu's latest film *ROUKLI* whose actor Juhan Ulfsak (*Concrete Night*, HIFF 2013) will also visit the festival.

Veiko Õunpuu in Helsinki 19 - 21 September

Juhan Ulfsak

Estonian actor Juhan Ulfsak (b. 1973) is an Estonian actor and director, who is starring in HIFF 2015 film, Veiko Õunpuu's *ROUKLI*. Ulfsak is a familiar face to the Finnish audiences as he starred Pirjo Honkasalo's *Concrete Night* (HIFF 2013). Ulfsak works at the prestigious Von Krahli Theatre in Tallinn, and he is known for his roles in, inter alia, Veiko Õunpuu's films *Tühirand* (2006) and *Autumn Ball* (2007). Ulfsak has graduated from the University of Tartu's Viljandi Culture Academy and also studied at the Helsinki Theatre Academy. He was awarded Estonia's best male theatre actor in 2012 and he is also known as Lembit Ulfsak's, one of Estonia's most prominent actor and director's, son.

Juhan Ulfsak in Helsinki 19 - 21 September

Tom Sommerlatte

Tom Sommerlatte was born in 1985 (Wiesbaden, Germany) and studied acting at the Academy of Music and Theater in Leipzig. Also active as an actor, his films as a director include: *Gone to the Dogs* (short, 2014) and his feature debut, drama comedy *SUMMERS DOWNSTAIRS* (2015), which will be shown at HIFF.

Tom Sommerlatte in Helsinki 21 - 24 September

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY!

Masha Novikova

Russian director Masha Novikova (b.1956) studied pedagogy and worked as a teacher in Moscow. Later
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she worked as a director-assistant in Kazakhstan and as an executive producer for television in Holland. Since the year 2000 she also started to film herself. She did some shooting for directors Jos de Putter and Leo de Boer in Chechnya. In 2005 she directed her first film *Fallen Angel*. Here at HIFF we will see Novikova's document CARGO 200. Documentary is about Russian soldiers died in the war in Ukraine. Because war has not officially been declared bodies are secretly returned to Russia under the code name 'cargo 200'. Instead of a hero's funeral, an anonymous grave awaits them.

Masha Novikova in Helsinki 18 - 21 September

DAWNS AND DUSKS OF LIFE

Alanté Kavaitė

Alanté Kavaitė (b. 1973) began her film career in 1992 with her acting performance in the film *Jazz* by Raimundas Banionis. She emigrated from Lithuania to Avignon, France and later to Paris to study in the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, specializing in photography and video art. After her debut film *Fissures* she returned to Lithuania to make her film SUMMER OF SANGAILE, which premiered at Sundance and will be screened at HIFF. The first Lithuanian LGBT film is a story of the young Sangaile, who spends her summer in the countryside encountering new meaning to her life through her relationship with the lively Austė. Flying carries an important role in the film. According to Kavaitė, Lithuanians are madly obsessed with flying and flying objects.

Alanté Kavaitė in Helsinki 17 - 19 September

Levana Finkelstein

Levana Finkelstein is a well-known and acclaimed actress in the scenes of cinema, television and theatre in Israel. She was born in Bulgaria in 1941 and emigrated to Tel Aviv in her childhood. She studied acting both in Tel Aviv and New York and has received several acknowledgements for her work during her career. Through one role Finkelstein got interested in sculpturing, her pieces are presented in Israel, New York and Bulgaria. THE FAREWELL PARTY is a serious but comical film about aging and euthanasia. According to the film's directors Tal Granit ja Sharon Maymon several actors refused to act in the film for it's thematics. Ze'ev Reva, the actor playing the husband of Finkelstein's character, consulted his rabbi before agreeing to take the part.

Levana Finkelstein in Helsinki 19 - 22 September