

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2015: jury motivations

DENMARK

Stille hjerte (Silent Heart)

Masterfully crafted and played to perfection, director Bille August and screenwriter Christian Torpe tell a warm-hearted story about an unforgettable weekend where a family has to deal with a mother's wish to die. In the typically Nordic tradition of exorcising all skeletons from the closet, the film dissects one of the most difficult challenges a family can face – saying goodbye to a loved one.

Jury members: Per Juul Carlsen, Eva Novrup Redvall, Jakob Wendt Jensen

FINLAND

He ovat paenneet (They Have Escaped)

A gripping coming-of-age drama, a thrilling road movie, a drug-induced fantasy and then some! Jukka-Pekka Valkeapää's They Have Escaped flirts with genre characteristics only to rise above their respective dynamics and to metamorphose into an expressionistic, no holds barred adult fairytale. The exquisite cinematography combined with a thoughtful, multifaceted soundtrack adds to film's strong, dreamlike ambiance.

Jury members: Jaana Puskala, Outi Heiskanen, Harri Römpötti

ICELAND

Fúsi (Virgin Mountain)

With a delicate touch, director Dagur Kári's Virgin Mountain is a moving coming-of-age portrait of a gentle giant. In a skilfully nuanced way this humanistic film conveys both inner torment and offbeat charm, while its symbolic interaction of items big and small conveys such universal themes as goodness, giving and grace.

Jury members: Kristín Jóhannesdóttir, Björn Ægir Norðfjörð, Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir

NORWAY

Mot naturen (Out of Nature)

In Out of Nature, Ole Giæver portrays a self-reflection of our modern lives and today's Nordic man. A personal yet forthright narrative conveys a collage of mental imagery to express memories, hopes, dreams, and emotive atmospheres, yet all in a good humour that addresses embarrassment, shame and pain.

Jury members: Silje Riise Næss, Britt Sørensen, Kalle Løchen

SWEDEN

Gentlemen

Gentlemen takes us on a winding journey of a story in which time perspectives and identities are as fluid as the boundary between dreams and fantasy. The attention to detail in the film's various expressions culminates in a uniquely personal, playful and self-reflective work.

Jury members: Jannike Åhlund, Jon Asp, Kristina Börjeson

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2015- DENMARK

SILENT HEART /STILLE HJERTE

SYNOPSIS

Three generations of a family gather over a weekend. The sisters Sanne and Heidi have accepted their terminally-ill mother's desire to die before her disease worsens; but, as the weekend progresses, their mother's decision becomes harder and harder to deal with, and old conflicts come to the surface.

DIRECTOR –BILLE AUGUST

Bille August (1948) attended the National Film School of Denmark where he graduated in cinematography in 1973. His international breakthrough came with *Pelle the Conqueror* (1987), which received a Palme d'Or in Cannes and an Oscar. He received his second Palme d'Or in 1992 for *The Best Intentions*. Since the early '90s, August has alternated international co-productions with local films. Among his most celebrated works are *The House of the Spirits* (1993), *Jerusalem* (1996), *Goodbye Bafana* (2007) and *Silent Heart*, winner of four Danish film critics 'Bodil' awards 2015 including Best Film. August's next film is the English language film *55 Steps* starring Helena Bonham Carter and Vera Farmiga.

SCRIPTWRITER – CHRISTIAN TORPE

Christian Torpe (1978) studied Film and Media at the University of Copenhagen and was taught scriptwriting by veteran US sitcom producers Nancy Steen and Fred Rubin. He made his debut with the TV series *Maj & Charlie* and had his breakthrough as creator/writer of the TV series *Rita*, now into its third season. He also wrote *Misfits (Hjordis)*, spin-off comedy series to *Rita*.

He is currently working on two new series as show runner for AMC and Warner Brothers in the US.

His writing contributions to feature film include Hella Joof's comedy *Almost Perfect* and Bille August's *Silent Heart*, winner of a 2015 Bodil award for Best Script.

PRODUCER –JESPER MORTHORST

Jesper Morthorst (1977) graduated from the Super 16 film school in 2006 and holds a BA in Film and Media studies from the University of Copenhagen. He worked for Nimbus Film, Alphaville Pictures and is now in-house producer at SF Film Production. Over the past decade he has produced more than 20 films and TV series such as the award-winning documentaries *Afghan Muscles* by Andreas M. Dalsgaard, *Out of Love* by Birgitte Stærmose, and the TV series *Rita*.

Bille August's *Silent Heart* had its world premiere at the San Sebastian Film Festival where Paprika Steen won a Best Actress award.

Morthorst is currently working on the Icelandic film *Heartstone* by Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson (*Whale Valley*).

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Original title	Stille Hjerter
Director	Bille August
Scriptwriters	Christian Torpe
Producer	Jesper Morthorst
Production company	SF Film Production
Principal cast	Ghita Nørby, Morten Grunwald, Paprika Steen, Danica Curcic, Pilou Asbæk

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2015 -FINLAND

THEY HAVE ESCAPED / HE OVAT PAENNEET

SYNOPSIS

The film tells the story of two isolated teenagers, seeking endless escapes from a society that has alienated them. The girl, an attractive extrovert and the boy, a stuttering introvert, meet in a juvenile detention center. When the boy becomes infatuated with the girl it takes little effort to encourage him to run away with her. They steal a car and go on the run, beginning a journey into drugs, sex and endless escapes.

DIRECTOR/SCRIPTWRITER –J-P VALKEAPÄÄ

J-P Valkeapää (1977) attracted international attention as an illustrator and cartoonist. He made the award-winning short films *Eyes Closed without Hands* (2000) and *The Fall* (2003) before entering the Cannes Cinéfondation programme in 2005 where he developed the script for his feature debut *The Visitor*. The film won Best Nordic Film and Best Cinematography at the Gothenburg International Film Festival 2009. His second feature *They Have Escaped* had its world premiere at Venice Days and picked up four national Jussis film awards in 2015 including Best Film and Best Director.

SCRIPTWRITER – PILVI PELTOLA

Pilvi Peltola has worked extensively as a social worker, including in foster homes. used that experience to write the script for *They Have Escaped* with J-P Valkeapää. *They Have Escaped* is her first script.

PRODUCER – ALEKSI BARDY

Aleksi Bardy is the founder of Helsinki -filmi, one of Finland's most prominent production companies. His credits as producer and/or writer include many domestic critical and box office hits, some of which have attracted international attention such as Dome Karukoski's *Forbidden Fruit*, *Lapland Odyssey*, *Heart of a Lion*, Aku Louhimies' *Tears of April* and J-P Valkeapää's *The Visitor* and *They Have Escaped*. Films that he has co-produced include *Bekas* by Karzan Kader (Sweden) and *Parked* by Darragh Byrne (Ireland).

Bardy is currently working on Karukoski's English language feature debut *Tom of Finland* and Valkeapää's next project *Mona* (working title) about survival through sadomasochism. Bardy is also professor at the ELO Helsinki Film School.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Original title	He ovat paenneet
Director	J-P Valkeapää
Scriptwriters	J-P Valkeapää, Pilvi Peltola
Producer	Aleksi Bardy
Production company	Helsinki-filmi Oy
Principal cast	Teppo Manner, Roosa Söderholm, Petteri Pennilä, Pelle Heikkilä

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2015 -ICELAND

VIRGIN MOUNTAIN / FÚSI

SYNOPSIS

Fúsi is in his forties and he has yet to find courage to enter the adult world. He sleepwalks through everyday life, where routine is key. When a bubbly woman and an 8-year old girl unexpectedly enter his life, he is forced to take a leap.

DIRECTOR/SCRIPTWRITER –DAGUR KÁRI

Dagur Kári was born in France (1973), raised in Iceland and he studied filmmaking in Denmark. His feature debut *Noi Albinoi* (2003) was a worldwide hit and his second film *Dark Horse* premiered at Cannes' Un Certain Regard. His English language debut *The Good Heart* was nominated for the 2010 Nordic Council Film Prize.

Virgin Mountain triumphed at New York's Tribeca Film Festival 2015 with three awards for Best Film, Screenplay and Actor (Gunnar Jónsson) from the World competition programme. Kári is currently employed at The National Film School of Denmark as Head of the Director's Programme. He is also a musician with the band "slowblow".

PRODUCER –BALTASAR KORMÁKUR

Born in Iceland (1966) Kormákur is an actor, producer and director, whose work spans theatre, film and television. Since his feature debut *101 Reykjavik*, he has become a major international talent by gradually building his name as an auteur with commercial flair, alternating works in Iceland and Hollywood. Four of his films have been nominated for the Nordic Council Film Prize: *A Little Trip to Heaven* (2006), *Jar City* (2007), *White Night Wedding* (2008) and *The Deep* (2013).

In Hollywood his most successful works include *Contraband* and *2 Guns*. His next feature *Everest* opens in the US on September 18, 2015. Upcoming Icelandic projects produced for his company RVK Studios, include the TV series *Trapped*.

PRODUCER -AGNES JOHANSEN

A former TV host for children's programmes, Johansen was Director of Children's Programming for Iceland's Channel 2 before turning to film production. Since 2003 she is Baltasar Kormákur's close production collaborator. She has produced eight films with him such as Sólveig Anspach's *Stormy Weather*, Kormákur's *Jar City*, *The Deep* and Oskar Jónasson's *Reykjavik-Rotterdam*. Johansen is currently producing Börkur Sigþórsson's debut feature *Mules*.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Original title	Fúsi
Director/Scriptwriter	Dagur Kári
Producers	Baltasar Kormákur, Agnes Johansen
Production company	RVK Studios
Principal cast	Gunnar Jónsson, Ilmur Kristjánsdóttir, Sigurjón Kjartansson.

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2015 - NORWAY

OUT OF NATURE / MOT NATUREN

SYNOPSIS

Out of Nature is a journey inside Martin's head and out into the wild nature. Martin is alone on a hiking trip in the mountains and we hear all of his uncensored thoughts and brutally honest observations about himself and the people around him. With thoughts and fantasies ranging from the trivial and infantile to the existential and profound, the film is a portrait of a young man wanting to break the mould

DIRECTOR/SCRIPTWRITER –OLE GIÆVER

Ole Giæver (1977) graduated from the Nordland Art and Film School and the Konstfack in Stockholm. His short film *Tommy* was nominated for the European Film Awards 2007. His first feature film as writer/director, *The Mountain*, was selected for Berlin's Panorama section 2011.

His second feature *Out of Nature* had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival 2014 and then screened at Berlin's Panorama 2015 where it won the Europa Cinemas Label Award. Giæver's next project is the comedy drama *From the Balcony*.

PRODUCER – MARIA EKERHOVD

Maria Ekerhovd entered the film industry in 1999, after graduating in Media Production from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. In 2006, the short film *Sniffer* by Bobbie Peers won the Palme d'or in Cannes. She then produced *Jernanger* and *Vegas* (2009) before setting up Mer Film in 2010. Talented directors attached to the company include Ole Giæver (*Out of Nature*), Iram Haq (*I Am Yours*), Gunnar Vikene (*Here is Harold*) and Bobbie Peers (*Dirk Ohm-The Disappearing Illusionist*). Ekerhovd is currently working on Giæver's new feature *From the Balcony* and Haq's drama *What Will People Say*.

She has co-produced the Swedish film *The Quiet Roar*, international documentary *Cathedrals of Culture* and Wim Wenders' *Everything Will be Fine*.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Original title	Mot naturen
Director	Ole Giæver
Scriptwriter	Ole Giæver
Producer	Maria Ekerhovd
Production company	Mer Film
Principal cast	Ole Giæver, Marte Magnusdotter Solem, Sivert Giæver Solem

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2015- SWEDEN

GENTLEMEN / GENTLEMEN

SYNOPSIS

The young novelist Klas Östergren is at odds with the world, hidden away in his apartment in Stockholm to tell the story of the people who lived with him and whose fortune changed. Henry Morgan, a boxer, an ineffable jazz pianist and bon vivant with a secret: he is tormented by love for a mysterious mistress. And then there is Leo, Henry's brother, a political agitator, a poet, a drunk. From the moment he arrives, he drags everyone into trouble because of a weapons trafficking deal with a gang of criminals

DIRECTOR-MIKAEL MARCIMAIN

Mikael Marcimain (1970) started as assistant director for SVT and rapidly made his name with the TV series *The Laser Man* (2005) and *How Soon Is Now/Upp till kamp*, winner of a Prix Italia in 2008. His feature debut *Call Girl* won a FIPRESCI Discovery Award at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival. His second feature *Gentlemen* based on Klas Östergren best-selling novel, won three Guldbagge film awards.

Marcimain is also one of the most established commercial directors in Scandinavia. He has directed international campaigns for Ericsson, IKEA and Danske Bank among others.

SCRIPTWRITER – KLAS ÖSTERGREN

Klas Östergren (1955) is the author of several novels including the landmark *Gentlemen* (1981) and its sequel, *Gangsters* (2005). A leading star of Swedish literature for nearly three decades, he has won the Piratenpriset and the Doblougskas prize from the Swedish Academy. A founder of the rock band Fullersta Revolutionary Orchestra, Östergren has also worked as a translator, playwright, and scriptwriter for film and television. He co-wrote with Lisa Ohlin the script for her film *Waiting for the Tenor* (1998) and Mikael Håfström's film *Evil* (*Ondskan*), Academy-award nominated for Best Foreign Language Film.

PRODUCER-FREDRIK HEINIG

Fredrik Heinig (1970) has 15 year worth of experience as a producer of commercials, films and TV programmes. The company B-Reel which he co-founded was named the world's best production company in 2011 by AD Age magazine.

He has produced no less than five projects with Johan Kling, such as the series *Stockholmare* (2001) and the feature film *Darling*, winner of the Nordic Film Award 2007. The documentary film *Palme* by Kristina Lindström and Maud Nycander became Sweden's top grossing local documentary in more than 30 years when it opened in 2012. *Gentlemen* directed by Mikael Marcimain had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival 2014. Heinig's upcoming films include Pernilla August's *The Serious Game* scheduled for a fall 2016 national release.

PRODUCER-MATTIAS NOHRBORG

Mattias Nohrborg (1959) is one of the most established members of the Swedish film industry, having acquired and distributes arthouse films through his companies Triangelfilm and then TriArt for more than three decades.

He has worked for B-Reel since 2009, producing titles such as the documentaries *Palme*, *Foodies*, *Fanny*, *Alexander & I*, and *Gentlemen*. Upcoming projects include Kristian Petri's documentary *The Hotel* and Jane Magnusson's *Bergman*.

PRODUCER –JOHANNES ÅHLUND

Johannes Åhlund is the founding partner and COO for Europe at B-Reel.

He studied political science at the University of Stockholm before starting a career in television, first as a reporter and editor, then as a producer. Between 1998 and 2005, he produced around 40 TV productions such as Johan Kling's mini-series *Spacer* (2002). In 2009, the thriller *Bad Faith* by Kristian Petri had its official screening in competition at the Toronto International Film Festival. He then co-produced the Norwegian film *King of Devil's Island* (2010), followed by Mikael Marcimain's *Gentlemen* (2014).

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Original title	Gentlemen
Director	Mikael Marcimain
Scriptwriters	Klas Östergren
Producers	Fredrik Heinig, Mattias Nohrborg, Johannes Åhlund
Production company	B-Reel
Principal cast	David Dencik, Ruth Vega Fernandez, Sverrir Gudnason