

SNOWGLOBE & TRUSTNORDISK

PRESENT:

# COPENHAGEN DOES NOT EXIST

DENMARK, 2023, 98 MIN.



OFFICIAL  
SELECTION

INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM  
2023

WORLD PREMIERE

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM 2023

BIG SCREEN COMPETITION

## PRESS NOTES

A FILM BY MARTIN SKOVBJERG WRITTEN BY ESKIL VOGT

STARRING ANGELA BUNDALOVIC (COPENHAGEN COWBOY, THE RAIN), ZLATKO BURIĆ (TRIANGLE OF SADNESS), VILMER TRIER BRØGGER (STICKS AND STONES)

AND INTRODUCING JONAS HOLST SCHMIDT

## CONTACTS

### SALES:

#### TrustNordisk

Susan Wendt  
+45 60 29 84 66  
susan@trustnordisk.com  
trustnordisk.com

### INTERNATIONAL PRESS:

#### NOISE Film & TV

Mirjam Wiekenkamp  
+31 6 28652249  
mirjam@noisefilmpr.com  
noisefilmpr.com

### DANISH PRESS:

#### Have

Emilie Selin  
+45 26114104  
emilie@have.dk  
have.dk

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## SYNOPSIS

A young woman has disappeared without a trace. Three months later her boyfriend agrees to an unusual arrangement: to be locked in an apartment and interrogated by the woman's father. It soon becomes obvious that even long before her disappearance, the two lovers had chosen a strange and unconventional life: cut off from the world, isolated in the middle of the big city.



## INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

**As a starting point: how did you get to direct this film?**

Snowglobe also directed my first film, *STICKS AND STONES*. They were happy with my work and knew Esquil Vogt had a script ready, so they suggested I collaborate with him. The team believed that I should be the one to direct a film based on it. So I travelled to Oslo, we met up, exchanged ideas and some time later here we are with a finished film. Everything kind of fell into place. I felt supported by the production team as they insisted - in the best way - to be the

director for this. Good thing is, I also felt that we could do something amazing together.

**What were your initial thoughts when you first read the script?**

I felt many things, but one particular thought was that this story, as it was written, is impossible to visualise. So, I thought, let's do it! It's insanely well written, the connection of time, the understanding of love. Three days after reading it I quit Facebook. It was that impactful to me. Why are we here? Why do we spend so much time thinking about what

other people are doing? Stuff like that. Those thoughts came first. Then there was the love between the two main characters, obviously. Their connection to each other, how they view the world and kind of avoid it. The story had an impact on me, and so I was eager to work on it and bring it to the big screen.

**Let's dive directly into the film: Ida and Sander seem like no straightforward characters. They are complex. Do you see them somehow as antagonists of their own story?**

That's what Esquil does in his writing: he creates characters which you first hate and then start to fall in love with. Or the other way around. Not as you normally do, where you mostly know from the beginning which path a character will take throughout the movie. It's kind of like in real life. Sometimes you meet people and you get along immediately, with others it takes time. Or you get along first and something switches. They were just this first eye catch. You never know. What we did in *COPENHAGEN DOES NOT EXIST* is that we took two people who jumped out of the norm. They do things society tells us not to do,

and a lot of people get provoked by it. It seems like you cannot just stop working and isolate yourself from those around you, digitally and in real life. But of course you can do all that. If you have one person who gives you all you need, then it's enough. That's what we are playing with in this film. Perhaps that comes along as antagonistic or villainous by Ida and Sander. Or maybe you start questioning what is important in life and what is not.

**With this said: which role would you give Ida's family then when she is the rebellious one?**

I'm not sure if I would define their role, either. What I wanted to do with this film is to show several perspectives: a loving father of a daughter who's grown up, a boyfriend who feels trapped and misunderstood by them. I think - and hope - while watching the film,

viewers will shift their perspectives with those characters. Love and hate everyone at the same time, because there is no one-line path to follow them. And that's how life is. People will be provoked by the way Ida and Sander live their lives, I am aware of that. But the interesting thing is, when we did the casting for those two, many of the young people who showed up could really relate to them. One of them was even saying that he and his girlfriend talked the other day about moving into a cabin somewhere in Norway. That's how close they are to this heaviness that society is putting on us. Being available all the time, and so on. So in the end Ida and Sander do trigger a lot in us.

It feels like this heaviness of society you are talking about is surrounding us in a way. Like a shadow in a sense, observing. As a viewer we often take Sander's point of view, the camera follows him closely from the back. We follow him closely. Was there an intention to give the viewer a feeling of being his shadow? This is my favourite style of shooting, which is very much inspired by Darren Aronofsky. When the camera is set just behind the character. I just love being connected to a figure this way, it's like you really understand how to be this person. For me it's a great possibility to jump into a person's perspective and feel that you are a part of their decisions. The first long shot in the movie happened to establish a kind of caged feeling of Sander. It's one of my favourite shots, it invites us all into the whole mood of the film. A lot of thought

went into those moments, when to get closer again, when to leave some space between scenery and camera. Even more discussions. To make sure the atmosphere of what is happening in these characters' lives comes across.

**There are also some deeply haunting moments in the film. Whether it's Ida's voice mixing up with Sander's thoughts, or her body transforming in his head. How did you curate those dark elements?**

The idea about Ida is that she is stuck in Sander's head. Think about it: the voice you hear inside your head, probably also in this very moment, is your own. Most of the time we hear our own voice inside of us. The idea with Ida and Sander is that if you miss somebody this hard, the sound of the voice in your head changes into this person's voice. When something tragic happens, the voice in us switches, changes. We put someone else into this cage. Those were things we worked with while developing these elements. Not to mention that Sander forgot a lot of his memories and outside elements are trying to bring them back. But one never knows what



is true and what is not. That is the great thing about memories: they are just stories you are telling yourself. When we are finished with this interview, a week from now we will have different memories on it. Different stories. Similar, perhaps, but different.

**If you had to: which genre would you put on this film?**

There were many talks surrounding this question. Is it a drama, or is it a love story? I am not educated in film school or anything, I am an autodidact. I just work my ass off. But what I really do not like is that with so many films you know what kind of film it will be after the first 45 seconds. I love a surprise in it: when there's music or a scenery you are familiar with and you are sure you have foreseen the rest of the film, and suddenly a twist comes up and your vision is shattered. Bam! You feel comfortable at first and suddenly you are confronted with different emotions. When it comes to COPENHAGEN DOES NOT EXIST, I think we decided on psychological drama.

**Can you live with that?**

Of course I can! Still, I had the best experiences when I watched films with no expectations. I haven't seen the trailer. Nothing. You just sit there and enjoy the moment. We thought about which direction to send the audience with this film. In the end we stuck to a love story. It is a part of it.

**And would you say it is a story about love gone wrong or love as self-destruction?**

Who tells us what is wrong or right, especially in love? I think this is a story which shows what love can do. To you, to your partner, to the people around you. It's a portrait of what love can do to the human mind.

**Where do you think Sander is now?**

That's actually a good question. Where is he now? There were and still are so many ideas. He is still with Ida, I believe. With the love of his life. And she is with him. They will not let go of each other. No matter what happens.

**What do you hope the audience will take with them after seeing COPENHAGEN DOES NOT EXIST?**

I hope they will reconsider what they like about life and what it means to live in our society. That is the whole idea about the movie: have you questioned yourself about what you really want. There are a lot of us living in a world where we are just told what a good, successful life has to look like. Are you doing the things you do for your own sake, your own good, or because everyone around you likes you doing them? Again, that is why I left Facebook after reading the script. I was there two or three hours a day until I stopped. That's the impact of the project on me, so I hope that people watching the film will have some sort of reaction to it, too. Perhaps by

simply asking themselves: why the fuck am I here? It's not about changing your life. But maybe ask some more questions about it. If you're happy with it all, that's nice! If there are certain things you don't like, try to find out why. Take a stance and ask yourself if you are happy.



# ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

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## MARTIN SKOVBJERG

Martin Skovbjerg (b. 1980) is a Danish award winning director. He is renowned for his intuitive directing style and for his capacity to create organic and authentic performances in his work with non-actors as well as established talent. Martin made his TV debut in 2015 with the critically acclaimed youth series ANTON 90, which was praised for its bold formalistic approach, launched by the Danish national broadcaster DR. For his innovative webisode drama FASTLAND, which launched in 2018 as a prequel to his debut feature, he won the Danish national Best New TV Award.

Martin's debut feature STICKS AND STONES had its European premiere at BFI in the Dare section, and was nominated for Best Youth Film at the Danish Academy Awards and for Best Film at Montreal Festival du Nouveau Cinéma. The film also landed him a nomination for the New Talent Award at CPH PIX.

# ABOUT THE WRITER

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## ESKIL VOGT

Eskil Vogt (b. 1974) is acknowledged as one of the top screenwriters and directors in Scandinavia. He is an Oscar-nominated writer (*THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD*) and the films he has written have won prizes at some of the world's most prestigious film festivals. His directing debut *BLIND* premiered at Sundance in 2014 where it won him The World Cinema Screenwriting Award. His sophomore feature *THE INNOCENTS* premiered at Cannes in 2021 to great acclaim before going on to win more than 20 international awards. In addition to writing his own films Vogt also has a longstanding and close collaboration with Joachim Trier, including the scripts for the features *REPRISE* (2006), *OSLO, AUGUST 31ST* (2011), *LOUDER THAN BOMBS* (2015), *THELMA* (2017) and *THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD* (2021). Vogt is a directing graduate from La Fémis in Paris, the National French Film School.



A close-up, high-resolution portrait of actor Jonas Holst Schmidt. He has light blue eyes, a mustache, and is looking slightly off-camera with a serious expression. The lighting is dramatic, with one side of his face in shadow.

## MAIN CAST

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### **JONAS HOLST SCHMIDT**

Sander

Jonas Holst Schmidt (1989) is a Danish actor and singer. He is known as the charismatic lead singer in the award-winning Danish indie rock band Blaue Blume. **COPENHAGEN DOES NOT EXIST** is his acting debut.



## MAIN CAST

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### ANGELA BUNDALOVIC

Ida

Angela Bundalovic is a Danish-Serbian actress and dancer. In 2019 she finished a bachelor in Dance and Choreography at the Danish National School of Performing Arts. Her acting debut as a child was a supporting role in the film DARK HORSE by Dagur Kári. Thereafter as one of the leading roles in the short film BLOOD SISTERS by Louise Friedberg. In 2018 she starred in the Netflix series THE RAIN and in 2019 the Danish TV series LIMBOLAND. During her education she got to work with choreographers such as Frédéric Geis and Ultima Vez. She also stars in Nicolas Winding Refn's Netflix series COPENHAGEN COWBOY in the lead role of Miu.



## MAIN CAST

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### ZLATKO BURIĆ

Porath

Zlatko Burić was born in Croatia in 1953 and was trained at the theatre school, Dramski Studio, in Osijek in 1973 and moved to Denmark in 1981. He has appeared in several successful Danish films from the 1990s and 2000s and is best known for his role as Milo in Nicolas Winding Refn's *PUSHER*. For this performance he won the Danish Critic's Association Award, the Bodil Award, for Best Supporting Actor.

International films include titles such as Stephen Frears' *DIRTY PRETTY THINGS* (2002) and Roland Emmerich's *2012* (2009). The past years he has starred in numerous international films, such as *KURSK* by Thomas Vinterberg, *KILLERMAN* by Malik Bader and Max Minghella's *TEEN SPIRIT*. He also stars in the TV series *SNATCH* which was shot in 2018. Most recently, he joined forces with Swedish director Ruben Östlund in *TRIANGLE OF SADNESS* (winner Golden Palm 2022), for which Zlatko won the European Film Award for Best Actor 2022.



# MAIN CAST

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## **VILMER TRIER BRØGGER**

Victor

Vilmer Trier Brøgger (born 2001) made his acting debut in Martin Skovbjerg's *STICKS AND STONES* (2018) as one of the main roles Bjarke. Since then he has been a part of several Danish TV series such as *DARKNESS: THOSE WHO KILL* (2019), youth series *PULS* (2020 and 2021) and *HÅBER DU KOM GODT HJEM* (2022).

# ABOUT THE PRODUCTION COMPANY

## (snowglobe)

Snowglobe is a production company established in Copenhagen in August 2015 by producers Mikkel Jersin, Katrin Pors & Eva Jakobsen. Today, Snowglobe also consists of three rising producers: Giulia Triolo, Anna Dammgaard Søllested and Clara Jantzen Kreinøe.

Snowglobe has been selected as one of the top 75 independent European production companies by Screen International in 2022. They are a dynamic production company working with feature films and series across borders and collaborates with filmmakers from Europe to Latin America. From its industrial

base of an old fire station-turned filmmaking hub, Snowglobe currently develops, produces and co-produces a nuanced selection of content with an artistic core by new as well as established directors and writers.

Snowglobe's recent releases include Joachim Trier's *THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD*, Jonas Carpignano's *A CHIARA*, Hlynur Palmason's Iceland-shot *GODLAND* and Maryam Touzani's *THE BLUE CAFTAN*.

Snowglobe's previous work comprises more than 30 feature films selected for some of the most prominent festivals in the world.



