

En film av
CAROLINA HELLSGÅRD
med ANNE RATTE-POLLE
och NELE TREBS

WANJA

En FLICKFILM produktion i samarbete med STORYTELLERS med ANNE RATTE-POLLE, NELE TREBS, ROBERT VIKTOR MINICH, Mehmet Yilmaz, MARKO DYRLICH, MICHAEL BADERSCHNEIDER // Kamera KATHRIN KROTTENTHALER // Scenografi NADIN MEISTER + LEA WALLOSCHKE // Kostym ELENA NEUTHINGER + LENA NIENABER // Make-up JESSICA KRAUSE // Ljud Robert Fuhrmann // Ljuddesign CHRISTIAN OBERMAIER // Ljudmix Jochen Jezussek // Mastering CHAUSSEE FILMTON // Musik STEFFEN W. SCHOLZ // Klipp CAROLINA HELLSGÅRD + ANTONELLA SARUBBI // Casting CHRISTIANE LILGE // Producerad av JOHANNA AUST i samarbete med KIM NEUMANN, JÜRGEN SCHAUM + SEBASTIAN WOLTERS // Manus och regi av CAROLINA HELLSGÅRD // Finanserad av NORDMEDIA FONDS, KURATORIUM JUNGER DEUTSCHER FILM + BKM

FILMINFO

WANJA

Spelfilm, 4K, 87 min., Tyskland, 2015

Manus/regi: Carolina Hellsgård

Producent: Johanna Aust / FLICKFILM GbR

Finansierad av BKM, Kuratorium junger deutscher Film, the nordmedia Fonds
med Anne Ratte-Polle & Nele Trebs i huvudrollerna

web: www.flickfilm.eu, www.hellsgard.com

trailer: <https://vimeo.com/117802700>

för vimeolänk till WANJA maila johanna@flickfilm.eu

SYNOPSIS

Wanja som delvis är inspirerad av Annika Östbergs historia, handlar om en kvinna som söker ett nytt socialt sammanhang efter att ha släppts ur fängelset efter sju år för bankrån. Utan att veta något om hästar lyckas hon skaffa en praktikplats i ett travstall. Där lär hon känna den tonåriga Emma och de utvecklar snart en ambivalent vänskapsrelation. När Emma dras ned i sitt drogmissbruk bestämmer sig Wanja för att rädda henne. I enkla och ofta absurda scener skildras Wanjas försök till integration i samhället liksom hennes sökande efter gemenskap bland djur och människor.

PRESSCITAT

Likt en vacklande boxare, som långsamt återfinner balansen, förkroppsligar Anne Ratte-Polle filmkaraktären Wanja. Hon är rå och oberäknelig och ständigt förberedd på nästa slag. Med sin osminkade berättarstil är WANJA en intensiv karaktärsstudie. En film om avsaknaden av möjligheter och missade chanser.

FBW Wiesbaden

Det finns otroliga nyanser i Anne Ratte-Polles skådespeleri, hon pendlar mellan ilska och fräckhet, sårbarhet och ren viljekraft. Arbetsförmedlingen bestämmer att hon ska praktisera i en djuraffär, själv vill hon till ett travstall. Som fyrtioåring bland de unga stallmänniskorna känner hon sig alltmer alienerad. Slutligen fungerar hon bättre med djur än med människor.

TAZ, Barbara Wurm

FESTIVALCITAT (engelska)

WANJA marks the feature debut of its director Carolina Hellsgård, who seems keen on maintaining a certain non-judgemental distance between audience and leading character, that allows her to be all the more real, in an unflinching portrait of a woman that is far from perfect.

<http://www.cinecola.com/>

The heartbeat of this film is Hellsgård's script; with its simple and sparse dialogue, it is able to show and never tell. The creation of Wanja is excellent, a blend of strength and uncertainty. (...) The use of Wanja's relationship with animals is exceptionally crafted and expresses her as a character far better than pages of dialogue ever could. This is a great film, with a protagonist not yet ready to give in, a masterly shot urban landscape and an eye on keeping the viewer engaged throughout.

<http://www.takeonecfff.com/>

STILLBILDER



SKÅDESPELARE

Anne Ratte-Polle (Wanja)

Nele Trebs (Emma)

Robert Viktor Minich (Rudi)

Marko Dyrlich (Ulf)

Michael Baderschneider (Otto)

Mehmet Yilmaz (Nicolas)

Jan Bülow (Kevin)

Tim Blochwitz (Robbe)

Hauke Petersen (Dennis)

Joachim Schönfeld (socialarbetare)

Florian Anderer (socialarbetare)

Rike Eckermann (socialarbetare)

Cornelius Schwalm (rånare)

Laura Kiehne (sjuksyster)

Stefan Dietrich (drogberoende)

Katharina Blaschke (gruppledare)

Karin Tomzik (veterinär)



TEAM

Manus/Regi: Carolina Hellsgård

Kamera: Kathrin Krottenthaler

Ljud: Robert Fuhrmann

Ljus: Sebastian Fuhrmann

Klipp: Carolina Hellsgård, Antonella Sarubbi

Scenografi: Nadin Meister, Lea Walloschke

Kostym: Elena Neuthinger, Lena Nienaber

Make-up: Jessica Krause

Ljuddesign: Christian Obermaier

Ljudmix: Jochen Jezussek

Foley: Martin Langenbach

Mastering: Chaussee Filmton

Musik: Steffen W. Scholz

Producerad av: FLICKFILM GbR

Producent: Johanna Aust

Samproducenter: Kim Neumann, Jürgen Schaum, Sebastian Wolters / STORYTELLERS GmbH & CO KG

PRODUKTIONSDETALJER

Originaltitel: WANJA

Engelsk titel: WANJA

Produktionsland: Tyskland

År: 2015

Genre: Drama

Längd: 87 min

Bilder per sekund: 24

Färg: Färg

Tillgängliga format: DCP, Blu-Ray, DVD

Bildratio: 1.85:1, 16:9

Ljud: 5.1, Dolby E, Stereo

Spåk: German

Textning: Engelsk

Med stöd av:

Kuratorium junger deutscher Film

Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien (BKM)

nordmedia – Film- und Mediengesellschaft Niedersachsen/Bremen mbH

BIOGRAFI

CAROLINA HELLSGÅRD

manusförfattare / regissör / klippare

Carolina Hellsgård arbetar som manusförfattare och regissör i Stockholm och Berlin. Hon har studerat konst vid Berlins Universitet och filmregi och skrivande på Cal Arts i Los Angeles. Hellsgårds prisbelönta filmer har visats på flera internationella filmfestivaler såsom Berlinale, Taipei, Montreal, Mostra São Paulo, Göteborg och Oberhausen. Hon har erhållit flertalet stipendier, bland annat DAAD för Los Angeles, Konstnärsnämnden samt Berlins Arbetstipendium för bildkonstnärer, och arbetar just nu med sin andra långfilm SUNBURNED.



FILMOGRAFI

WANJA (Spelfilm, 2015)

Festivaler: Berlinale, Perspektive deutsches Kino 2015; Cambridge Film Festival, UK; Montreal World Film Festival, Kanada; Sao Paulo IFF, Brasilien; Göteborgs Filmfestival; Women Make Waves Film Festival, Taipei, Taiwan; Valletta Film Festival, Malta; Valencia International Film Festival Cinema Jove, Spanien; Tbilisi International Film Festival, Georgien; Cork Film Fest, Irland; Austin Film Festival, USA

Nominerad för Bästa debutfilm, Berlinale 2015

Bästa debutfilm, Biberacher Filmfestspiele 2015

Bästa manus, Valetta Filmfestival 2015

LÄUFER (Kortfilm, 2013)

Festivaler: Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival „Soirée Allemande“, Frankrike; Kiev International Short Film Festival, Ukraina; Festival Tous Ecrans, Schweiz; exground filmfest, Wiesbaden; Göteborgs Filmfestival; Landshuter Kurzfilmfestival, Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival, UK, Young Nordics at Nordisk Panorama, Malmö

Nominerad för German Critic's Award 2013

Nominerad för Startsladden, GIFF 2014

Bästa kortfilm „Youth Days“, exground filmfest, Wiesbaden

Bästa kortfilm, Prize at Mostra de Cinema de frontera, Spain

HJÄLTAR (Kortfilm, 2012)

Festivaler: Berlinale, Generation; Göteborgs Filmfestival; BUFF Filmfestival Malmö; Svensk kortfilm c/o Folkets Bio; Filmes de Femmes, Frankrike; International Women's Film Festival, Dortmund; Seen & Heard Film Festival, Sydney, Australien; Film Capalbio Cinema, Italien; Olympia International Film Festival for Children & Young People, Grekland; Sofia International Film Festival, Bulgarien

Nominerad för Kristallbjörnen, Berlinale 2015

HUNGER (Kortfilm, 2009)

Festivaler: Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen; Leeds International Film Festival, UK; Open Air Filmfest Weiterstadt; Huesca Film Festival, Spanien; Psarokokalo International Short Film Festival of Athens; Glasgow Film Festival, UK; Alpine, Österrike

Jurypris, Festival Internacional de cine Cinema Jove, Spanien, 2010

Jurypris, Festival Internacional de Curtas de Belo Horizonte, Brasilien, 2009

FLICKFILM

FLICKFILM grundades av Carolina Hellsgård och Johanna Aust 2011 och är en oberoende filmproduktionsfirma baserad i Berlin. Fokus är på spelfilm och dokumentärer med ett autentiskt tilltal och en stark filmisk form.

PRODUCENT

Johanna Aust har studerat experimentalfilm och mediadesign vid Berlins Konst-högskola (UdK, Berlin) samt dokumentärfilmsproduktion på Dramatiska Institutet i Stockholm. 2011 grundade hon firman FLICKFILM tillsammans med Carolina Hellsgård i Berlin. Hon arbetar som dokumentärfilmsregissör och producent i Sverige och Tyskland. Filmografie: HEIMAT SCHWEDEN (2011), LÄUFER (2013), OUR OWN TRACKS (2015) och WANJA (2015).

KONTAKT

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INTERVIEWS (ENGLISH VERSION)

Your own prison

– *Carolina Hellsgård about her debut feature film WANJA*

Your film WANJA tells the story of a woman who has spent seven years in prison for a bank robbery, and now is trying to gain a foothold in society. She moves to the countryside and begins to work as an assistant at a horse racing track. What gave you the idea for this material?

There is the famous case of a Swedish woman, Annika Östberg, who spent nearly 30 years in a Californian prison. Three or four years ago she was released and told her story: she could no longer connect to other people. She had completely forgotten how she should deal with them and because of this surrounded herself with animals, above all dogs. That was enough at first. It fascinated me that you can sit in jail for 30 years and when you come out you are in another sort of prison.

So WANJA is a film about isolation and a lack of freedom?

I definitely wanted to direct a story about people I know: they struggle and fight, they do everything right, but they fail nonetheless. That may sound pessimistic, but they simply do not escape themselves. I find that generally only very few people manage this.

At the end Wanja also fails, almost inevitably, but basically undeservedly.

I know that this is a bit mean towards Wanja, because she actually does everything right. But very often our lives are determined by chance, by circumstances and by people that we seemingly have no power over. Wanja thinks that it will all be okay if she does everything right. But she doesn't understand that other people are not perfect. They too have their own stories, their own difficulties, problems and murky motivations. Wanja is not naïve, but she is convinced that she alone is the problem. She expects that if she could only make everything right, everything will proceed in the right way. But of course it doesn't work like that. Simply because we don't live in a fair and equal society.

And then on top of everything Wanja meets Emma, a young girl with drug problems.

That's right, like in a Film Noir. Wanja encounters the femme fatale, the blonde. Although Emma is very young, she could almost be Wanja's daughter, but she is just the wrong daughter. But that is like in real life. There are many people who always choose the wrong friends. They could be together with the right person, but then nevertheless decide on the wrong one.

Is WANJA a women's story?

Wanja is a woman and a mother, but that's not the main point. Actually it's a very classic story; someone gets out of prison and tries to find their way.

Anne Ratte-Polle gives Wanja incredible strength. How did you come across her?

For the role of Wanja I didn't make a casting, I had met Anne, and found her to be an incredibly captivating person. I gave her the script, and that's how we got to know each other. I never thought of another Wanja, it was always Anne; this particular face and the special aura and personal history that she carries with her, and which proved to be perfect for the role. We often shot in very long takes, so that we wouldn't disrupt her acting. I wanted to have as few cuts as possible. I think that this continuity is good for the film, and that one can simply watch the actors. They are mostly stage actors, and can sustain long scenes.

How did you do your research?

Anne and I were often in the women's prison in Berlin-Lichtenberg. Anne had a conversation there with a prisoner, whereas I mostly spoke with the social workers. I wanted more of a view from the outside and to know what happens with drug addicts upon their release. The story with the horse racing track however, that is my own story. I grew up near a racing track in a suburb of Stockholm in an incredibly bleak area. My best friend was a lot like the young Emma, who gets into trouble in the film.

Did you model Wanja on someone?

For WANJA we watched first and foremost the film *Le Samourai* by Jean-Pierre Melville. You can see that at the beginning. Wanja lies there on the couch and counts her money. That is exactly like with Alain Delon in *Le Samourai*. There are a few other references as well, like for example the bird. And Melville also uses these desaturated colours, these grey-brown landscapes. The cinematographer, Kathrin Krottenthaler and I let ourselves be inspired by his films. We also looked to Melville regarding the special atmosphere that surrounds a solitary person, with all the interpersonal problems that come with it. In WANJA the communication is minimalist and often means something else than that what is actually being said. Some people can see through that, but for Wanja it proves to be problematic. I'm Swedish and this is how people often talk where I come from, at the same time you can find it in the films of Melville or Antonioni; not much is said, but every word counts, and often alludes to another meaning.

In your film everything appears rigorous and cool: the people, the landscapes, the camera.

We shot in winter and early spring, in the north of Germany. Of course that was a bit depressing. And it's really cold in a horse stable. But we definitely did not want to shoot a summer film. And yes, Kathrin Krottenthaler's camera is very rigorous, very observant, and very exact. Above all we tried to keep the film as simple as possible, simple to resolve, with few settings and precise scenes. There are no long crane shots for example, deliberately, we didn't want the distraction. I stayed true to André Bazin in that sense and his theory of realism: long takes, and as few cuts as possible. We also worked really simply with sound. And ultimately we trusted Anne: she would be able to carry the film.

How was the shooting?

We shot very precisely. We had to work very quickly and more concentratedly, since we only had 27 days for shooting. We hardly produced any superfluous material. We didn't experiment and we didn't improvise. We researched and rehearsed a lot beforehand, but on location we strictly realized everything immediately. As if on command.

Interview made by Thekla Dannenberg, Berlin 14.01.2015

A hollowness that can't be overcome

– Actress Anne Ratte-Polle about the role as Wanja

In WANJA you play a woman who tries to build a new life after seven years in prison. She goes to a small place in the north German countryside, works as an assistant at a horse trotting track, and from the first moment on, one has the feeling, that she is not going to make it. What excited you about the role?

As I read the script I had to laugh a lot, I found it pretty funny. And I thought that was great: to be able to laugh about a character who even after getting out of prison is still oddly locked in and trapped. Wanja tries to make the best of her situation, in her own special way, which is not everybody's idea of normal. But for Wanja, the world has ceased to be a normal place.

How did you approach the character of Wanja?

It is a classic story. Wanja tries to start over again, and almost succeeds, until she meets a younger version of herself: Emma, a sixteen-year-old girl with heavy drug problems. Ironically her attempts to save Emma, ultimately leads to her own relapse and downfall. This is the classical theme of how the rescuer often drowns while rescuing. But the way in which Carolina tells it in her film I found extraordinary: the story moves forward in an incidental way, and the somewhat laconic scenes are underlined with thriller like suspense. Carolina told me about Marguerite Duras and her female characters, about women who fell through the cracks and lost themselves, and for whom there is no way back into society. I thought that was great inspiration for how to approach the character of Wanja.

Do you have a weakness for women who don't fit into society?

I'm mainly interested in roles that are not easy to classify. I find it very exciting to dive into a fantasy, an imaginative space, and create a character based on experiences that are not easily categorized. A great advantage with WANJA was that I had a lot of time to prepare. Eighteen months before we started shooting, I knew that I was going to make the film with Carolina. That is an enormous luxury that I never had before. I had a particular vision for the character and Carolina immediately said, that's also what she imagined. Then we discussed the backstory and history of Wanja very intensely for the course of the whole preparation period.

How did you research for the role?

I went to the women's prison in Berlin Lichtenberg. I even had them shut me in a cell, but that was only allowed for a few seconds. But even in this short amount of time you get a sense of how it feels to be shut out of society, because you represent a threat to it. I found that very hard. I think that it tears up something inside of you. And so an abyss is created, a deep distrust not only towards other people and what they might think of you, but also a distrust of yourself. A female inmate told me: "I cannot trust anybody, not even myself, because I deceive myself." And it doesn't matter what one has done; the fact that one must be locked up, or becomes locked up, is something that you carry within. It creates an abyss within that cannot easily be overcome.

Did you talk to many women prisoners?

I spoke for a long time with one woman, she was a completely different type of person than Wanja, but had a similar background with robberies and drug addiction. I was sitting in her cell and she told me that being on heroin feels like being an embryo in the womb. And I was well able to imagine how one can pass one's time in jail like that. This woman had started using heroin in prison since almost everyone does. Beforehand she was an alcoholic but had never taken hard drugs. The fact that Wanja stops using drugs while in prison, shows how incredibly strong she is.

Did you model Wanja on any filmic characters?

I found no female figure to model her on. First and foremost I watched male characters, like for example Alain Delon in *Le Samourai* by Melville, Vincent Gallo in *Buffalo 66* or Ryan Gosling in *Drive*. I also found the film *Raumfahrer* by Georg Nonnenmacher interesting. The film is about a prisoner transport, they travel through the country in their prison bus and look at the world through the windows. One of them says: the true enemy is time. One has too much of it and it helps to just check off the daily duties of each day in prison. Don't use your brain too much. That I saw also in Wanja. She is pragmatic, she doesn't busy herself with things that she cannot change, and she tries to make the best of it. That's what I like about the character, how she goes through life and the film. She does it without fear.

Interview made by Thekla Dannenberg, Berlin 14.01.2015

But she withdraws herself from the world. She moves to Sulingen in the north German countryside.

I come from a village in the north, so I enjoyed being in that region once again. And I understand well why Wanja goes there. She has gone through a lot. Wanja lived in a city before, probably a place like Bremen, but she left her past behind there. In this respect she is grown up, enough that she knows herself and also the potential dangers. She wants to live a simple, normal life. By the way, I could never have imagined how loud it is in prison. I experienced it myself in there. Keys are constantly rattling in locks on the doors, it echoes incessantly in the barred corridors. No surprise that afterwards one wants to move to the country and simply have some peace.

Is WANJA about the lack of freedom?

I was interested in this hollowness that one senses, when others no longer trust you and when one starts to mistrust oneself. And that is an actuality right now. Surveillance and controls are rigorous and forces people to become more adaptable and conformist. In the past it was religion that was monitoring you – God sees everything; today it is the security checks at the airport and the cookies in your mobile phone.