

BERGAMO FILM MEETING

International Film Festival

42nd edition, March 9 - 17, 2024

Frederikke Aspöck (Denmark), Lukas Moodysson (Sweden) and Metod Pevec (Slovenia) are the protagonists of **Europe, Now!**, the section of Bergamo Film Meeting focussing on contemporary European cinema.

The well-established **Europe, Now!** section of Bergamo Film Meeting, focussing on contemporary European auteur cinema, in its 42nd edition will be featuring a comprehensive outlook on the works of **Frederikke Aspöck**, an emerging Danish filmmaker already internationally recognised (*Labrador*, 2011, *Out of Tune*, 2019, and the most recent *Empire*, 2023); **Lukas Moodysson**, a Swedish auteur also known in Italy especially for his films at the turn of the 1990s and early 2000s (*Fucking Amal*, 1998, *Together*, 2000, *Lilja 4-ever*, 2002 and *We Are the Best!*, 2013); and **Metod Pevec**, a fiction and documentary filmmaker who was among the leading figures in the revival of Slovenian cinema after the dissolution of former Yugoslavia (*Beneath Her Window*, 2003, *Estrellita*, 2006, *I Am Frank*, 2019). The three directors will be in Bergamo during the Festival.

The **Europe, Now!** section will be complemented by a **selection** (curated in collaboration with the Luchino Visconti Civic School of Cinema of Milan) of **graduation films** from the **European film schools** members of **CILECT**, and by **Europe, Now! Film Industry Meetings (March 12 - 13)**, the two-day event aimed at industry professionals and intended as an international networking platform.

Frederikke Aspöck (Copenhagen, Denmark - 1974)

Frederikke Aspöck is a director and screenwriter, and her films have toured the festival circuit worldwide, earning numerous awards.

After graduating in Set design from the Wimbledon School of Art in London, she moved to New York where, in 2004, she earned a Master's degree in Filmmaking from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. During this period, she wrote and directed four short films in which her particular talent for visual composition and framing is already evident: *Footsteps* (1999), *The Browns* (2000) and *Lion-Tamer* (2001). In her graduation year, she shot *Happy Now* (2004), a story of a typical American family's peculiar day at the beach, which won her the First Prize Cinéfondation at the Cannes Film Festival a few months later.

An actor's director with a keen love for human imperfections, Aspöck uses a mix of drama, physical comedy and visual storytelling to portray people the way she prefers them: as they ardently try to do their best in life and inadvertently make mistakes along the way.

Back in Denmark, in 2009, she directed the short film *Får (Sheep)*, a story about infidelity, abandonment and alcohol-driven revelations during an unpredictable midsummer party.

In 2011, she completed her first feature film, *Labrador (Out of Bounds)*, a story about family and love. Shot on a desert and windy island, the film was presented out of competition at the 64th edition of the Cannes Film Festival and won the Grand Prize at the Marrakech International Film Festival. Later that year, she was asked to make a short film for the Aarhus Festuge, an arts and culture festival held in the Danish city of the same name. With only one day of filming to spare and to the tune of Lambchop's song *Buttons*, assigned to her by the Festival, Aspöck created *Moving On*, a small story of glances and separations.

Her next film was *Rosita* (2015): here, a middle-aged widower brings the young Filipina Rosita to Denmark and marries her, reluctantly involving his young son as an interpreter. The film won the award for Best Director at the Moscow International Film Festival.

A perfect combination of drama and comedy, *De frivillige* (*Out of Tune*, 2019) became a box office hit in Denmark: the story takes place entirely inside a prison and follows a ramshackle choir of inmates and its director. Based on a critically acclaimed play, and directed by Aspöck herself, the film premiered at the Rotterdam Film Festival, followed by a screening at the Gothenburg Festival.

Her latest film, *Viften* (*Empire*, 2023), won the prestigious Nordic Council Film Prize. In this drama set in the Danish colony of St. Croix in the 19th century, Aspöck portrays her country's dark heritage by telling the story of two black women: one free and mistress of the colony's governor, the other a slave to their family.

Common for all of Aspöck's films is a great belief in flawed human beings and a conviction that comedy and tragedy always go hand in hand.

Under the patronage of the Embassy of Denmark.

Titles featured in the retrospective

Viften (*Empire*, 2023)

De frivillige (*Out of Tune*, 2019)

Rosita (2015)

Moving On (2011)

Labrador (*Out of Bounds*, 2011)

Får (*Sheep*, short, 2011)

Happy now (short, 2004)

Lion-Tamer (short, 2001)

The Browns (short doc., 2000)

Footsteps (short, 1999)

Lukas Moodysson (Lund, Sweden - 1969)

A filmmaker, screenwriter, novelist and poet, Lukas Moodysson was born in Lund, Sweden, in 1969. He grew up in Åkarp, Skåne County, and spent, in his own words, his adolescence as an outcast, communicating mainly through poetry. By the age of 23, he had already written five collections of poems and published a novel. To break out of his isolation and gain a wider audience, he turned to filmmaking and enrolled in the only Swedish film school of the time. After three short films, in 1998 he shot his first feature, *Fucking Åmål* (*Show Me Love*), a sensitive, funny and bittersweet romantic comedy-drama about two young girls growing up and falling in love in a small town. Accompanied by a catchy soundtrack, the film was a huge success in Sweden and was distributed worldwide, reaping up awards everywhere, from Karlovy Vary to the Berlinale, from Cinema Jove in Valencia to the Rotterdam Festival. The following feature, *Tillsammans* (*Together*, 2000), also a comedy, is set in a Swedish commune in the 1970s. With a touch of benevolent humour, Moodysson observes the relationships within the extended family of the commune and the interaction of its members with the outside world, thus offering a glimpse of an era undoubtedly emphasised by the music of the time and the successes of ABBA.

After the sunshine and optimism of his first two films, Moodysson surprised everyone with a raw and brutal drama, *Lilya 4-ever* (2002), the story of a young woman from an unspecified country in the former Soviet Union who is abandoned, kidnapped and forced into prostitution and sex slavery. Presented in competition at the Venice Film Festival, the film won numerous awards and nominations at international festivals and strengthened Moodysson's recognition as a film critics' favourite.

Even more disorienting were his later works, *Ett hål i mitt hjärta* (*A Hole in My Heart*, 2004) and *Container* (2006), where he tried his hand at experimental cinema. The first of the two films has a barely hinted-at plot (a couple of pornographers shoot a video in a claustrophobic apartment) and an abundance of graphic and disturbing images. The second is a stream of consciousness entrusted to the voice of actress Jena Malone, accompanying black-and-white images seemingly unrelated to the monologue.

After this interlude, Moodysson returned to more traditional filmmaking, first with *Mammoth* (2009), which debuted in competition at the Berlinale and portrayed a successful New York couple, their daughter and her Filipino nanny struggling with globalisation; then with *We Are the Best!* (2013), which he adapted from a graphic novel by his wife, Coco and is centred on a band of 13-year-old girls making punk music in the early 1980s. With this title, Moodysson revisits the challenges of adolescence and coming of age. Also shown at the Venice festival, the film resonated powerfully with both critics and the audience.

In 2019, he wrote and directed for HBO Nordic a 12-episode television series, *Gösta* (2019), about the

adventures of a young, recently graduated child psychologist who strives to do his best to be as kind as possible and help all his patients. Finally, in 2023, Moodysson debuted at the Toronto Film Festival with *Tillsammans 99* (*Together 99*), which reunites friends from the commune he met in the original *Together* twenty-four years later: a birthday party in the late 1990s is an opportunity to see how political and personal vicissitudes have affected and transformed the lives of the protagonists.

Moodysson's filmography reflects an interest in authentic human stories and a keen sensitivity to social issues. His unquestionable ability to outline characters with an indulgent and ironic gaze, exploring complex and challenging themes with lightness but also without fear of venturing into the meanders of experimentation and, at times, provocation, makes Lukas Moodysson one of the most significant representatives of contemporary Swedish cinema.

In collaboration with the Embassy of Sweden, the Swedish Film Institute and Memphis Film.

Titles featured in the retrospective

Tillsammans 99 (*Together 99*, 2023)

We Are the Best! (2013)

Mammoth (2009)

Container (2006)

Ett hål i mitt hjärta (*A Hole in My Heart*, 2004)

Lilja 4-ever (2002)

Tillsammans (*Together*, 2000)

Fucking Åmål (*Show Me Love*, 1998)

Bara prata lite (*Talk*, short, 1997)

En uppgörelse i den undre världen (short, 1996)

Det var en mörk och stormig natt (short, 1995)

Metod Pevec (Ljubljana, Slovenia - 1958)

Born in Ljubljana in 1958, Metod Pevec has pursued more than one career, first as an actor, then as an author and screenwriter, and finally as a director. During his university years as a Philosophy and Comparative Literature student, in the late 1970s, he began acting on the small and big screen, taking the lead role in several TV series and Slovenian and Yugoslav films, and becoming a rather recognised face in his homeland. As an author, he began publishing in the 1980s, writing radio dramas, screenplays, short stories and novels. In the following decade, he switched behind the camera, first with the short film *Vse je pod kontrolo* (*Everything Is Under Control*, 1992), then with the feature *Carmen* (1995), centred on a young prostitute and adapted from his novel of the same name published in '91. Pevec was among the first Slovenian directors to shoot a feature film after the dissolution of Yugoslavia and can rightly be regarded as one of the filmmakers who paved the way for the rebirth of cinema in his country. Never ceasing writing novels and radio plays, in the early 1990s he also began collaborating with Slovenian television, for which he directed several films, especially documentaries. After publishing a crime novel, he shot a new feature film in 2003: *Pod njenim oknom* (*Beneath Her Window*), a romantic comedy following a dance instructor in the middle of an existential crisis, which debuted at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival, won several awards at the FSF - Slovenian Film Festival and received an Oscar nomination for Best foreign film. It was, however, *Estrellita - pesem za domov* (*Estrellita*, 2006) that established Metod Pevec's name outside his native borders: a choral drama where characters, diverse in age, social background and ambitions, vie for a precious violin bequeathed by a famous musician. This was followed by *Lahko noč, gospodična* (*Good Night, Missy*, 2011) and *Vaje v objemu* (*Tango Abrazos*, 2012), two features shot one after the other, which deal in different ways with the dynamics of couple relationships.

There are recurring elements and themes running in Pevec's films, such as music and dance («I can hardly make a film without a dance scene») or protagonists with strong characters («comparing my female and male characters in general, it seems to me that the female ones represent the better and healthier half of humanity»), but over all prevails a specific focus on personal relationships and how they are affected by social dynamics and changes. In particular, with his most recent documentary, *Dom* (*Home*, 2015), which bears witness to the process of privatisation of housing for construction workers, and the feature film *Jaz sem Frenk* (*I Am Frank*, 2019), where the conflict between two brothers also manifests itself on an ideological and moral level, what shines through is a predilection for stories of marginality (like in *Carmen* and, partially, in *Estrellita*), but above all, the desire to analyse the effects on people of the country's political, economic, and cultural transition from the socialist system to neo-capitalism. The underlying intention, there, is not to draw a line between the "good guys" and the bad ones (in Pevec's films, even villains have a modicum of humanity), between an idealised past

and a corrupt present, but rather to become a conscious, critical and disenchanted narrator of a process of change that has caused inequitable social stratification and undermined the balance of interpersonal relationships.

In collaboration with the Slovenian Film Centre and under the patronage of the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia.

Titles featured in the retrospective

Jaz sem Frenk (I Am Frank, 2019)

Dom (Home, doc., 2015)

Vaje v objemu (Tango Abrazos, 2012)

Lahko noč, gospodična (Good Night, Missy, 2011)

Estrellita – pesem za domov (Estrellita, 2006)

Pod njenim oknom (Beneath Her Window, 2003)

Carmen (1995)

Vse je pod kontrolo (Everything Is Under Control, short, 1992)

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