



GUTTLAND

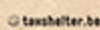
PRESS KIT

A film by GOVINDA VAN MAELE

With FREDERICK LAU VICKY KRIEPS MARCO LORENZINI

PRODUCTION DESIGN AUDREY HERNU COSTUMES NATASHA FRANCOTTE MAKE-UP FABIENNE ADAM HAIR JASMINE SCHMIT CASTING NILTON MARTINS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARALD RUDE
SOUND THOMAS GRIMM-LANDSBERG ROLAND VOGLAIRE PHILIPPE CHARBONNEL MUSIC MOCKE EDITING STEFAN STABENOW DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY NARAYAN VAN MAELE
PRODUCTION GILLES CHANIAL OLIVIER DUBOIS MELANIE BLOCKSDORF FELIX BLUM WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY GOVINDA VAN MAELE

PRODUCED BY LES FILMS FAUVES IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH NOVAK PROD AND PROPELLERFILM WITH THE SUPPORT OF FILM FUND LUXEMBOURG EURIMAGES CENTRE DU CINEMA ET DE L'AUDIOVISUEL DE LA FEDERATION WALLONIE-BRUXELLES
TAX SHELTER DU GOUVERNEMENT FEDERAL DE BELGIQUE TAXSHELTER.BE AND ING IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH SHELTER PROD ZDF / ARTE IN COLLABORATION WITH ZDF - DAS KLEINE FERNSEHSPIEL INTERNATIONAL SALES STRAY DOGS



Synopsis

Short version (46 words)

In this surrealist rural noir, starring Frederick Lau and Vicky Krieps, a thief from a distant German city finds refuge in a small Luxembourgish village. As he is gradually integrated into the community, it emerges that he's not the only one with a past to hide.

Long version (119 words)

Early one summer morning a young man, with a secret stashed away in a duffel bag, emerges from the forest.

In a nearby village he asks around for work, but the farmers, suspicious to the point of hostility, are not very forthcoming.

Only when Lucy, the mayor's unruly daughter, takes a liking to him, does the village change its attitude: he is promptly offered a job as a farmhand and a caravan to live in.

As time passes and he is gradually integrated into the community, it emerges that he's not the only one with a past to hide. Something sinister is lurking under the immaculate surface of this picturesque little world - and it is slowly drawing him in.

Main Cast



Frederick Lau - Jens

Frederick Lau was born in 1989 in Steglitz, Berlin, where he still lives. He was cast in his first role in 2000 and has since played in over 50 films and television series. In 2008 he was awarded the Deutscher Filmpreis (Lola) for best male secondary role in *DIE WELLE* (The Wave). In 2015 he won the Lola for best main role in Sebastian Schipper's *VICTORIA*.

Main Cast



Vicky Krieps - Lucy

Vicky Krieps was born in 1983 in Luxembourg, the daughter of a Luxembourgish father and a German mother. After several roles in Luxembourgish short and feature films, she has forged herself a path into the international film scene, acting in films by Joe Wright and Anton Corbijn a.o.

Her most recent films include main roles in THE CHAMBERMAID LYNN, THE YOUNG KARL MARX and beside Daniel Day-Lewis in Paul Thomas Anderson's upcoming feature.

Main Cast



Marco Lorenzini - Jos Gierens

Marco Lorenzini, born 1950 in Luxembourg, has worked as a prison guard and truck driver before becoming one of his country's most prolific film and theatre actors. His most recent appearances include Andy Bausch's RUSTY BOYS, Stephan Rick's THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON and Jaco Van Dormael's THE BRAND NEW TESTAMENT.



Director

GOVINDA VAN MAELE



Govinda Van Maele, born 1983 in Luxembourg to Belgian-Sri Lankan parents, started making films as a teenager. After high school he took on an apprenticeship of sorts in producer-director Pol Cruchten's company Red Lion, working as an assistant director, casting assistant and stills photographer among other positions.

His short films JOSH (2007), A DAY IN THE OPEN (2012) and YOU GO AHEAD (2013) travelled extensively on festivals and won several awards. He worked on documentaries as director (WE MIGHT AS WELL FAIL, 2011) and director of photography (MU-EZZIN, 2010) and is a member of Kollektiv13, producing documentary shorts for RTL in Luxembourg.

In 2014 he founded the production company LES FILMS FAUVES with producer Gilles Chanial and director Jean-Louis Schuller.

In his spare time he curates exploitation cinema at the Luxembourg Cinematheque. He lives in Turkey and Luxembourg.

Director's Statement

The village - an isolated community surrounded by vast, imprisoning space - has always been an apt metaphor for the world. It is also an image often invoked for my home country, due to Luxembourg's small size and the omnipresent, very tangible sense of interconnectedness resulting from it, but also because of its history as a predominantly agricultural society, which still exerts a strong influence on the country's mentality. Gutland, literally "The Good Land", is the area of the country I grew up in, the heartland of Luxembourg. Among the highest per capita income countries in the world, we live a peaceful existence where everyone minds their own business and the world's problems are kept at bay, but growing up there one can get the unsettling sensation of a vast underworld of discretely kept secrets where not everything is as it seems. Just as the narrative tackles themes that are personal, yet grounded in genre cinema, I found it important to make a film that is distinctly Luxembourgish, yet relatable to all.

The pit of oblivion

The village in my film functions as a character all by itself. It is an organism to which all its inhabitants must adhere, everyone has to play by the same rules, following the same code of conduct. An intruder is either assimilated or discarded like an antibody, there is no place in between.

Jens, emerging from the woods like a feral forest creature, essentially enters the film as a blank page. We will learn only the most basic facts about his background - he spent time behind bars, robbed a casino with two partners and is now on the run - for the rest, he remains a man without a past. Just as the village appears to him as the perfect place to hide, he in turn reveals himself to be exactly what they have been waiting for.



In order to right a past wrong, the village sets in motion the assimilation of Jens. Gradually, almost imperceptibly at first, he starts to transform into a man the village had killed years earlier. Another murder occurs at the end of the film, when Jens' rogue partners come looking for him and are done away with. This time around our protagonist will be implicated, and thus take the final step of integration

into the community. Just as with the first murder, the collective culpability of the deed reinforces the bond between the villagers, binding them together.

The corpses are dropped into a slurry pit, the place where the darkest secrets are buried, the symbolic hole of oblivion. Once perpetrated the murder is never spoken of again, a sort of happy amnesia kicks in that allows everyone to deal with the guilt. After all, doesn't something that everybody knows but everyone ignores, simply cease to exist? A lie that everybody believes, becomes the truth.

Style & Form

This is a story of transformation. Several of our characters go through it - Jens from a gangster on the run, to a farmer with wife, child and house; Lucy from rebellious, perpetual adolescent to mature woman, wife and mother - and so does our film.

In my three previous shorts I used a naturalist shooting style, involving non-professional actors, natural light and stories based on real life - to the point of blurring the line between documentary and fiction. Gutland introduces this approach into a surreal realm, merging the palpably real with the completely fantastical, something not unlike the sensation of dreaming.

The naturalist shooting style installed at the beginning of the film, gradually blends into a more expressionist, artificial style as the story unfolds, culminating in the film's final climactic scene at the concert hall. As the story is strictly told from our protagonist's point of view - we're basically inside his head - the change that happens inside of him cannot leave the film unchanged. The more he learns, the more he changes - and the film along with him.

Identity

The themes of freedom and identity are among the defining elements of the rural gangster subgenre (*A History of Violence* [2005], *Prime Cut* [1972], *On Dangerous Ground* [1951]), where the tranquility of village life is confronted with elements of crime, emanating from a distant city - symbol off all things sinful and degenerate. This archetypal motif of the group identity put in jeopardy by an outside intruder is not only a core component of cinema mythology, it also touches on a very contemporary and highly explosive sore spot that has thrown our world into a profound moral crisis. Looking at how our European societies are reacting to the influx of migrants, we are faced with questions that go straight to the core of who we are and what we believe: how willing are we to let our national and religious identities change? Are we really as progressive and open to the new as we think - or do we prefer to assimilate or eject the intruder in order to conserve our communal identities?

Cast and Crew List

Jens Fauser	Frederick Lau
Lucy Loschetter	Vicky Krieps
Jos Gierens	Marco Lorenzini
Arno Kleyer	Leo Folschette
Hendrik Kleyer	Gerard Blaschette
Irina Kleyer	Irina Blamaru
Irène Schlosser	Christiane Hoffmann
Marcel	Pit Bukowski
Nikkel	Gerdy Zint
Heng Clement	Arsène Streveler
Charel Schlosser	Franco Ariete
Boris Loschetter	Theo Lieser
Sammy Kleyer	Sandro Pantanali
Frank Hastert	Paul Hoffmann
Fernande Loschetter	Martine Kohn
Henri Loschetter	Roger Origer
Sylvie Clement	Yvette Muller
Marko Mangen	Marcel Heintz
Bernard Bruck	Guy Schwickerath
Claude Wagner	Ismael Backers



Written and directed by
Script Consultant
Produced by

Govinda Van Maele
Razvan Radulescu
Gilles Chanial
Olivier Dubois
Melanie Blocksdorf

Director of Photography
Sound Recorder
Production Designer
Costume Designer
Make-Up
Gaffer
Key grip
Casting

Narayan Van Maele
Thomas Grimm-Landsberg
Audrey Hernu
Natasha Francotte
Fabienne Adam
Vitalijus Kiseliuss
Pascal Charlier
Nilton Martins

Editor
Music Composer
Sound Designers

Stefan Stabenow
Mocke
Roland Voglaire
Fabien Pochet

Sound Mixer

Philippe Charbonnel



Technical Specifications

Country	Luxembourg/Belgium/Germany
Year	2017
Language	Luxembourgish, German
Filming Locations	Luxembourg, Belgium
Running Time	107 min.
Shooting Format & Ratio	35mm, 2.35:1
Projection Format	DCP
Sound Format	5.1
Official Website	www.gutlandfilm.com
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Twitter	www.twitter.com/gutlandfilm

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