

QUINZINE
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
CANNES 2019

A FILM BY JUKKA-PEKKA VALKEAPÄÄ

DOGS DON'T WEAR PANTS

KRISTA KOSONEN PEKKA STRANG



HELSINKI-FILMI IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH TASSE FILM PRESENTS A JUKKA-PEKKA VALKEAPÄÄ FILM "DOGS DON'T WEAR PANTS"
PEKKA STRANG - KRISTA KOSONEN - ILONA HURTA - JAMI VOLANEN - OONA AIROLA - IIRIS ANTTILA - ESTER GEISLEROVÁ
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY PIETARI PELTOLA SET DESIGNER KAISA MÄKINEN COSTUME DESIGNER SARI SUOMINEN MAKE UP DESIGNER BEATA RJADOVSKA
EDITOR MERVJ JUNKKONEN SOUND DESIGNER MICKE NYSTRÖM COMPOSER MICHAL NEJTEK LINE PRODUCERS MADARA KALNIŅA - MARTTI TERVO
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ANNIKA SUCKSDORFF - DOME KARUKOSKI - TIA STAHLBERG - ANDREA REUTER PRODUCERS ALEKSI BARDY - HELEN VINOGRADOV
CO-PRODUCERS ALISE GELZE - AIJA BERZIŅA STORY BY JUHANA LUMME WRITTEN BY JUKKA-PEKKA VALKEAPÄÄ - JUHANA LUMME DIRECTED BY JUKKA-PEKKA VALKEAPÄÄ

HELSINKI TASSE FILM STUdios ARKODIGITS CAMERA CENTRAL PRODUCTIONS BEAT & BIANCA BLOOMER The Yellow Aftir

YOU TAKE MY DEATH AWAY

© 2019 Helsinki-Filmi Oy. All Rights Reserved



DOGS DON'T WEAR PANTS

(Koirat eivät käytä housuja)

by J-P Valkeapää

Feature / Finland, Latvia / 2019 / 105 min / DCP / 2.39:1 / 5.1 Surround / Finnish

INTERNATIONAL SALES

The Yellow Affair
Korkeavuorenkatu 25A1 Helsinki 00130
+358 50 360 0350 / +1 718 290 5914
karoliina@yellowaffair.com
www.yellowaffair.com

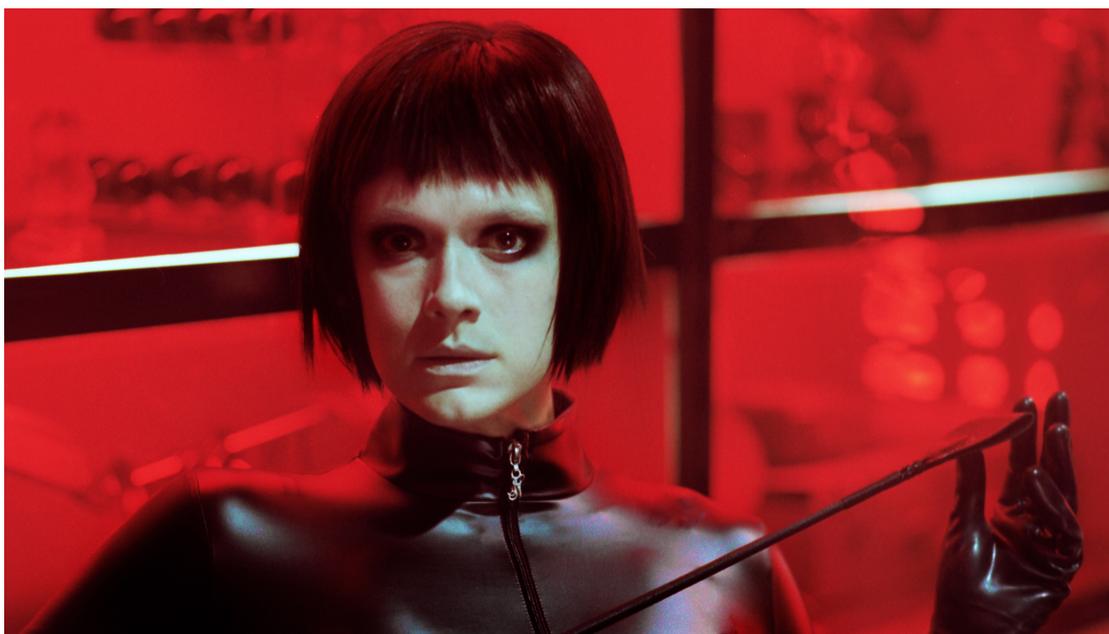
INTERNATIONAL PRESS

WOLF Consultants
Gordon Spragg, Laurin Dietrich, Michael Arnon
+49 157 7474 9724
hello@wolf-con.com
www.wolf-con.com

PRODUCTION

Helsinki-filmi Oy
Aleksi Bardy, Helen Vinogradov
Korkeavuorenkatu 25A1 Helsinki 00130
t: +358 40 66 34 557
helen@helsinkifilmi.fi, aleksi.bardy@helsinkifilmi.fi
www.helsinkifilmi.fi

Download press materials at www.wolf-con.com/download



SYNOPSIS

Juha has lost his wife in an accident. Years after he still feels numb and unable to connect with people. Meeting Mona, a dominatrix, changes everything. 'Dogs Don't Wear Pants' is a darkly humorous story of loss, love and the sweet pain of being.



IN CONVERSATION WITH J-P VALKEAPÄÄ

How did DOGS DON'T WEAR PANTS originate, and what was the process of developing this unique story?

One day Aleksi Bardy, the producer of our film, shared the central idea from a script by the writer Juhana Lumme with me. What he told me was: "A man loses his wife in a drowning accident. In the moment he also goes unconscious underwater, he sees her alive again. After some years living in constant mourning, he meets a dominatrix by chance. He begins to go to her for 'suffocation sessions' and while he is being asphyxiated, he finds his wife again, through the visions he has while he is unable to breathe.

The idea had been in development for years but so far without a successful outcome. It was still just a concept. From the start I loved the central idea, it was beautiful and strong. But in order to tell the story I had to begin writing it basically from scratch, as my views of humanity and the world in general were all very different from the draft scripts. And even with some ideas already in place, it was a hard script to write.

I had to find the right balance in all of the stories and relationships: between Juha and Mona, Juha and his daughter, Juha and his wife. All of them were important, as was the tone and the 'weight' the story took on. With such a heavy subject, I also felt a certain level of lightness was necessary. But what could bring that lightness? The black humour started to seep in the script at some stage, and spread all through it over time. It felt right and like the perfect way to ground the madness of the story.

How did you cast Krista Kosonen and Pekka Strang, two of the most prominent actors in Finland, for these especially demanding roles?

Pekka made a strong impression on me with his role in Tom of Finland by Dome Karukoski, where he played a secretive man whose life is most vivid in his own mind.

It was the way he played the character using mostly his eyes, and small gestures. I thought to myself, this guy knows what he is doing. Everything in his performance seemed so precise and communicative without appearing too constructed. Pekka has a light and masterly touch.

Krista is the biggest actor in all of Finland. I've followed her incredible work both on screen and stage for the last 10 years or so. I sent the script to both of them and then we talked. Pekka and I had a good communication and clear understanding where we were going with this film from the first meeting on. Krista was actually more hesitant. It took a long time to convince her that the role was worth her time. I think she found the film intriguing but had some doubts, I think due to the BDSM. That this would be the main thing in how she is portrayed, since many of Mona's scenes are quite enigmatic and light in terms of dialogue.

So for more than half a year I tried to convince her that I would not be doing anything exploitative in portraying her. That this would be a real, multilayered character that would be interesting to play. There was another positive consequence to this, as during this six-month period, Krista's hesitations were also challenging me as a writer.

I kept writing new scenes for the character, to make her more full, not to psychologize or overthink it too much but to really give Mona as an actor something real to chew on. Finally as time was running out, she gave us a positive answer and decided to join us for the film. I felt strongly from the start that she was absolutely the right person to play the role, so this was a huge relief for me. I think Krista's hesitations had evaporated by the time we shot the scene of Juha and Mona's first session together.

Everything there just seemed to click. Pekka and Krista's talent as top-level actors manifested itself - together they somehow found this beautiful rhythm to play the scenes. I also showed them all of the material after our takes, just to make them more confident. So they knew what we were doing. Their parts were demanding and their acting in the film was sincere. It was the most impressive thing I've witnessed on a film set during my short career.

What was most difficult about conceiving or shooting some of the more extreme scenes?

The main concern for me was time. The main goal for me was to grant enough time to the BDSM session scenes, which I knew would be the most intimate and fragile. These demanded a lot of preparation and more complex setups, in order to play with the narrative dynamics and temperatures of the scenes in the way I wanted. I also suspected that to keep the energy right for all of these scenes, I couldn't tire the actors out too much. We needed their electricity for the whole day. So we planned a technical rehearsal for the day prior the shoot with the actors, where we went through the entire scene and all of the logistics of their movements were set there. Then we would start the next day by having the whole crew present on set, and showing them where the actors were going to move, the marks, where the camera would be and whatever special notes there were for that moment.

Overall the most difficult thing was to make our plans so clear to everyone that there would be no extra hassles during the shooting day. We had to insure that our way of working would maintain the concentrated and undisturbed atmosphere we needed to get the scenes right.

What kind of human dynamic developed between you and the lead actors?

There was a lot of talking and messaging between myself, Pekka and Krista during the shoot and after each day. From my point of view, it was vital for us three to unwind completely from the emotionally and psychologically demanding shoot together. The whole cast of the film consists of my favourite actors, whose work I had followed for years but with whom I had never worked before. So this was a joyful experience for me, and I could also feel that all the actors regarded each other highly as well. There was a sense of camaraderie. At the beginning of the shoot, the crew was of course snickering about the dildos and other stuff on the set, but after a few days this all just became everyday stuff.

What was your own experience in the BDSM world?

My experience prior to the film was only superficial: I knew BDSM only from what I had seen in movies and photographs, or on TV. But as my understanding of the BDSM world grew I had the conviction that it was necessary and important to show the empathetic nature that is an important part of it: The strong and genuine bond between people it creates. The way trust was so central to it. How people could venture deeply into their fantasies and obsessions, in a spirit of total openness and psychological nakedness.

As a director how did you balance sensationalism or quick thrills with authenticity in the depiction of the BDSM world?

For me it is mostly about the fundamentals of creating an image: what do you put in the frame and what do you leave out? For me the film was always about people, not the S/M paraphernalia, although I find that pretty fascinating too. What I mean is that the visual focus of the key scenes between Juha and Mona had to be in their eyes, not in their butts. In my view the major part of an S/M experience takes place in the minds of the participants, and the suits and the whole apparatus are there to make the fantasy more concrete.

J-P VALKEAPÄÄ

J-P Valkeapää, born in 1977, is a critically acclaimed and awarded Finnish film director. Debut feature 'The Visitor' (2008) was selected to CineMart (Rotterdam), developed at Cannes' *Cinéfondation* and premiered in Venice. Valkeapää's second feature 'They Have Escaped' (2014) premiered at Venice and Toronto. The film was nominated for seven Finnish National Finnish Awards 'Jussi', of which it won four, including Best Film and Best Direction.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2014 They Have Escaped – over 40 international film festivals including:
Venice International Film Festival 2014 (world premiere)
Toronto International Film Festival 2014
Love & Anarchy Helsinki International Film Festival 2014
Rio International Film Festival 2014
Reykjavik International Film Festival 2014
Göteborg International Film Festival 2015
- 2008 The Visitor
Venice International Film Festival 2008 (world premiere)
Göteborg International Film Festival 2009
- 2003 Keinu (short film)
Locarno International Film Festival 2003 (world premiere)
CICEB Short Film Competition Brussels 2003
Love & Anarchy Helsinki International Film Festival 2003
MedFilm Festival Rome 2003
Camerimage Festival 2003
Göteborg Film Festival 2004
Tel Aviv International Student Film Festival 2004
Fresh Film Fest Karlovy Vary 2004
Paris Cinema 2015
2nd Prize – NYU Tisch School of the Arts New York International Student Film Festival
- 2000 Eyes Closed No Hands
Best School Programme at Bologna International Festival of Film Schools

HELSINKI-FILMI

Helsinki-filmi, founded in 2002, is one of the leading production companies in the Nordics. Known for its domestic box office hits and globally distributed films that have premiered at festivals like Director's Fortnight, Berlinale, Toronto, Venice Days, Karlovy Vary, Göteborg and IDFA. Dedication to the development and constant search of extraordinary stories defines the core of the company. It has participated in numerous co-productions with Scandinavia, Baltics, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, Russia, Ireland, the U.K. and India.



PEKKA STRANG

Born in Helsinki 1977 as the second child to Jukka Strang and Camilla Strang (Andersson), younger brother of Janne Strang (b. 1974). Grew up in the town of Vasa on the Finnish west coast. Wanting to become an actor since early childhood, he took it up seriously from his first lead appearance as the character Arne Anka for Vasa's student theater Ramppi. In 1997 Pekka was admitted to TEAK (Finland's leading acting school) where from he graduated in 2001. Various acting in both film and theater in Finland followed, often to critical and public acclaim. Since 2005 employed as artistic director for Lilla Teatern in Helsinki.

KRISTA KOSONEN

Krista Kosonen was born on May 28, 1983 in Espoo, Finland as Krista Erika Kosonen. She is an actress and writer, known for Blade Runner 2049 (2017), The Midwife (2015) and Miami (2017).

ILONA HUHTA

Ilona Huhta is an actress, known for Dogs Don't Wear Pants (2019) and We Are the Pirates of the Roads (2015).

CAST

Pekka Strang
Krista Kosonen
Ester Geislerová
Ilona Huhta
Jani Volanen
Oona Airola

Juha
Mona
Wife
Elli
Pauli
Satu

CREW

Written and directed by
Concept by
Producers
Co-producers
Line Producers
Director of Photography
Editor
Set Designer
Composer
Costume Designer
Make Up Artist
Sound Designer

J-P VALKEAPÄÄ
Juhana Lumme
Aleksi Bardy, Helen Vinogradov
Alise Ģelze, Aija Berzina
Madara Kalnina, Martti Tervo
Pietari Peltola
Mervi Junkkonen
Kaisa Mäkinen
Michal Nejtěk
Sari Suominen
Aija Beata Rjabovska
Micke Nyström

A production by

Helsinki-Filmi, Tasse Film (LV)

Produced with financial support of

The Finnish Film Foundation
National Film Centre of Latvia
Riga Film Fund
Finnish Public Broadcaster YLE

In Association with

Bionaut (CZ) - Vratislav Šlajer, Danny Holman