



The Chicago International Film Festival

Presented by: Cinema/Chicago
30 East Adams, Suite 800
Chicago, Illinois 60603
Tel: 312.683.0121 • Fax: 312.683.0122
www.chicagofilmfestival.com

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Media Contacts:

Alejandro Riera
312.683.0121, x 116
publicity@chicagofilmfestival.com

Nick Harkin/Carly Leviton
Carol Fox and Associates
773.327.3830 x 103/104
nickh@carolfoxassociates.com
carly@carolfoxassociates.com

50TH CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL TO SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON SCANDINAVIAN CINEMA

**Norwegian director, actress Liv Ullmann to attend
Opening Night Festivities to present her tour de force “Miss Julie”**

CHICAGO, IL (September 16, 2014) – The 50th Chicago International Film Festival presents **Spotlight Scandinavia**, the fourth year of the World Cinema Spotlight Program. This year's program highlights the exciting, rich, and diverse range of contemporary cinematic cultures across the five Nordic countries. From sizzling tales of passion and murder, to a family-friendly childhood adventure, this selection of highly acclaimed films features innovative works and exciting new voices as well as cinematic classics from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

For fifty years, the Chicago International Film Festival has provided audiences the unique opportunity to see thousands of groundbreaking, highly acclaimed, and thought-provoking films from around the globe and to hear directly from the talented people who've brought them to life. Films from Scandinavia have been an important part of this tradition, beginning in the third year of the Festival, when Swedish director Jan Troell's “**Here's Your Life**” won the top prize. Over the years, the Festival has presented the work of many prominent Nordic filmmakers, many whose work, both old and new, will be featured again in this year's Festival, including Bent Hamer, Pirjo Honkasalo, Baltasar Kormákur, Jan Troell, and Niels Arden Oplev, among many others.

Reflecting this prodigious tradition, this year's Festival is opening with “*Miss Julie*,” Norwegian director and actress Liv Ullmann's torrid adaptation of August Strindberg's classic play. Ullmann, the most internationally recognized and renowned Norwegian actress, will be in attendance for the Opening Night Gala screening and red carpet event on Thursday, October 9.

In total, Spotlight Scandinavia will present 20 feature-length films and a program of eight short films, many of which will be competing for awards in the International Feature, New Directors, Docufest, and Short Film Competitions. The lineup includes several retrospective screenings of important past award-winning films from the Festival, including a new digital restoration of

"Here's Your Life" as well as Lars von Trier's Academy Award® nominated **"Breaking the Waves,"** presented at the Festival in 1996.

"Beginning in 1967, the Festival has had a long and continuous tradition of presenting and awarding exceptional films from Scandinavian masters, from Aki Kaurismäki and Fridrik Thor Fridriksson to Bille August and Tomas Alfredson," said Founder and Artistic Director of the Chicago International Film Festival **Michael Kutza.** "It is fitting that we are opening the 50th Festival with Liv Ullmann's latest masterpiece, as we have premiered all three of the feature films she has directed, beginning with '**Sofie**' in 1992."

"Over the past ten years, Scandinavian cinema has been a strong, vibrant presence at the Festival, with films from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden dominating our competitions and taking home numerous awards," said Chicago International Film Festival Programming Director **Mimi Plauché.** "Coupled with the long and rich history the Festival has of presenting the best in Scandinavian cinema over the past 50 years, the 50th anniversary is the ideal occasion to highlight the vitality and excellence of contemporary Nordic film."

The 49th Chicago International Film Festival runs October 9- 23, 2014. Films will be shown at the AMC River East 21 (322 E. Illinois St).

Spotlight Scandinavia Screenings

"The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out The Window And Disappeared" Sweden
(Director: Felix Herngren) — Hilarity ensues when an elderly man discovers a suitcase full of money and embarks on a fantastic adventure, involving a frozen corpse, a circus elephant, and a biker gang. Meanwhile, episodes from his past reveal his decades-long proclivity for changing the course of history. Based on the bestselling novel by Jonas Jonasson, this crowd-pleasing Swedish take on "Forrest Gump" combines sidesplitting comedy with genuine tenderness. Swedish and English with subtitles. *Chicago Premiere*

"101 Reykjavík" Iceland (Director: Baltasar Kormákur) — A highlight of the 36th Chicago International Film Festival's New Directors Competition, Icelandic auteur Baltasar Kormákur's sharp-witted breakout centers on a young Icelandic man who has an affair with his mom's Spanish girlfriend, Lola, a fish-out-of-water lesbian (played exuberantly by Pedro Almodovar regular Victoria Abril). With the same droll wit and ribald energy as compatriot Fridik Thor Fridriksson, Kormakur gives insight not only into his winning characters, but a unique northern youth culture. Icelandic and English with subtitles. *50th Anniversary Retrospective*

"1001 Grams" Norway (Director: Bent Hamer) — Anna, a scientist who specializes in weights and measures, lives a life of precision, rigidity and solitude. But when her father, a fellow scientist, suffers a heart attack, Anna's world falls out of perfect alignment. Wry and winsome, this beautifully told and thoughtful human story—and Norway's official submission for the Academy Awards—follows Anna on a journey from Norway to France and back, as she attempts to find the right balance in her life. *U.S. Premiere*

"Breaking the Waves" Denmark (Director: Lars von Trier) — Heralded as one of the best films of the '90s, Lars von Trier's emotionally ravaging breakthrough stars Emily Watson, in her Oscar-nominated debut, as an innocent Scottish girl who goes to sexual extremes to prove her unwavering love for Jan (Stellan Skarsgård), an oil-man who is paralyzed on the job. Balancing the raw and the sublime, "Breaking the Waves" is a magnificent tour-de-force whose epic intimacy powerfully translates best on the big screen. *50th Anniversary Retrospective*

“Concrete Night” Finland, Sweden, Denmark (Director: Pirjo Honkasalo) — In Helsinki’s feverish twilight hours, impressionable 14-year-old Simo traverses the concrete jungle with his criminal brother. As the night progresses, he is exposed to poisonous influences and dubious sexual encounters that could prove damaging to his unformed young mind. A dreamy voyage shot in astonishing black and white cinematography, “Concrete Night” presents a stunning nexus between the cold-sweat surrealism of David Lynch and the fatalism of film noir. Finnish with subtitles. *Chicago Premiere*

“The Deep” Iceland (Director: Baltasar Kormákur) — Based on a true story, this harrowing survival tale recounts the events surrounding Gulli “The Human Seal” Fridporsson’s six-hour swim in the North Atlantic Ocean after his fishing boat capsized in 1985. Baltasar Kormákur’s latest film shrewdly tweaks the survivor biopic formula and presents Gulli’s ordeal as a far more complex superhero origin story overrun with existential dread and survivor’s guilt. Icelandic with subtitles. *50th Anniversary Retrospective*

“Doctor Proctor’s Fart Powder” Norway (Director: Arild Frölich) — When young Lisa and her new neighbor Nilly team up with a reclusive inventor, an adventure begins and the farts begin to fly. Based on the popular children’s books by Jo Nesbø (“The Snowman”), “Doctor Proctor’s Fart Powder” is a modern-day fairy tale lovingly brought to the big screen with a raucous mix of childhood wonder, bright colors and a wry sense of humor. Norwegian with subtitles. *North American Premiere*

“Fanny and Alexander” Sweden (Director: Ingmar Bergman) — A highpoint of not just Scandinavian cinema, but widely considered among the best films of all time, Bergman’s autobiographical masterpiece examines the highs and lows of the bourgeois Ekdahl family at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century through the eyes of ten-year-old Alexander. A four-time Academy Award-winning triumph that combines Bergman’s thematic interests in religion, family and fantasy, Fanny and Alexander is an intense, sensual and sprawling epic that deserves to be seen on the big screen. Swedish with subtitles. *50th Anniversary Retrospective*

“Force Majeure” Sweden, Denmark, France, Norway (Director: Ruben Östlund) — When an avalanche disrupts a Swedish family’s ski vacation in the French Alps, the effect is disastrous—but not in the ways one would expect. In this razor-sharp dark comedy of bad manners, rising Swedish director Ruben Östlund (“Play”) skillfully chronicles the dissolution of a seemingly perfect family, and a father’s attempt to redeem himself and his wounded masculinity. Winner of the Cannes Film Festival’s Un Certain Regard Jury Prize. *Chicago Premiere*.

“Here’s Your Life” Sweden (Director: Jan Troell) — Winner of the Gold Hugo at the 1967 Chicago International Film Festival, Jan Troell’s gem of a film poetically traces the trials and tribulations of Olof, a boy coming of age in Sweden during World War I. A visually lush, stirring *bildungsroman* spread out over three hours and in gorgeous black-and-white widescreen, Troell’s rarely seen stylistic tour-de-force is rightfully heralded as a classic for its emotional candor. Swedish with subtitles. *50th Anniversary Retrospective*

“In Order of Disappearance” Norway (Director: Hans Petter Moland) — Stellan Skarsgård stars in this witty thriller about a snowplow driver out to avenge the murder of his son. Caught between Scandinavian criminals and Serbian mobsters, Skarsgård’s mild-mannered dad transforms himself into a merciless Dirty Harry-type who doesn’t think twice before pulling the trigger. An enormously satisfying comedy, *In Order of Disappearance* sends up Norway’s attitudes about immigration, while ratcheting up a bloody body count. Norwegian and Swedish with subtitles. *Chicago Premiere*

“Miss Julie” Norway, UK, Ireland, France (Director: Liv Ullmann) — A country estate, Ireland 1890. Over the course of one midsummer night, the haughty Miss Julie (Jessica Chastain) and her father's lowly valet John (Colin Farrell) charm and manipulate each other. By turns seductive and bullying, savage and tender, their intimate relationship leads to a desperate plan, culminating in a final act as sublime and devastating as anything in Greek tragedy. Past Chicago Festival honoree and veteran Ingmar Bergman collaborator Liv Ullmann brings renewed vitality and emotional resonance to August Strindberg's classic play of class, power and seduction. **Scheduled to attend: director Liv Ullmann.** *Opening Night Film. US Premiere*

“No Thank You” Finland (Director: Samuli Valkama) — Heli is in a midlife rut. With an oafish husband who favors video games over intimacy, she begins a torrid affair with one of her adult students—and eventually learns what she's really been missing. Set to an exuberant jazz soundtrack, “No Thank You” is a punchy, humorous look at marital malaise and the difficulties of maintaining, and revitalizing, the luster of old relationships. Finnish with subtitles. *North American Premiere*

“Of Horses and Men” Iceland, Norway, Germany (Director: Benedikt Erlingsson) — Six deliciously morbid vignettes about people and their passionate relationships with horses intertwine in this highly acclaimed and darkly comic fable set in an Icelandic valley. Through eye-opening images that capture the absurdities of man and beast alike, often blurring the line that separates the two, the film humorously presents an unforgettable look into a community's obsession. Icelandic, Swedish, English with subtitles. *Chicago Premiere*

“Speed Walking” Denmark (Director: Niels Arden Oplev) — Being twelve is hard enough, but for Martin, a budding speed walker, this minefield is made more bewildering by his mother's sudden death and Denmark's newly liberalized pornography laws. With a candid and sensitive perspective, director Niels Arden Oplev (“The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo”) uses the story of a boy's sexual coming-of-age in the mid-'70s as a tender allegory about a society coming to terms with its new and sudden openness. *North American Premiere*

“The Salvation” Denmark (Director: Kristian Levring) — In this faithful tribute to the classic American Western, Mads Mikkelsen (“Casino Royale”) stars as a peaceful European settler who sets out to avenge the murder of his family and cleanse the black heart of his community. With majestic desert landscapes, a ruthless black-hatted bad guy and a duplicitous lass (Eva Green), “The Salvation” miraculously deploys familiar conventions in exciting new ways. Danish and English with subtitles. *Chicago Premiere*

“Something Must Break” Sweden (Director: Ester Martin Bergmark) — With long hair, epicene features, and an increasingly dominant alter-ego he calls Ellie, Sebastian defies easy gender identification. When the leather jacket-donning Andreas comes to his rescue during a homophobic beating, a cautious yet steamy relationship begins between the two that forces both to confront the relative fluidity of their sexualities. Unflinching and intimate, “Something Must Break” soulfully examines the permeability of identity and the ambiguity of desire. *Chicago Premiere*

“Paris of the North” Iceland, Denmark, France (Director: Hafsteinn Gunnar Sigurðsson) — Relocated from Reykjavik to a dilapidated rural fishing village, former alcoholic Hugi spends his time teaching elementary school and attending AA meetings. His path to recovery, however, is derailed by the arrival of his philandering, beer-guzzling dad. A droll and gentle character study,

“Paris of the North” is a captivating account of fathers and sons mending their stunted relationships while finding the courage to push forward with their own lives. *U.S. Premiere*

“Underdog” Sweden, Norway (Director: Ronnie Sandahl) — A financially strapped, disaffected young Swede lands in Norway in search of employment. When she begins work as a housekeeper at middle-class Steffan’s home, neither anticipates the impact she will have on their lives and his family. Ronnie Sandahl’s emotionally satisfying debut features an urban modern-day romance while tackling issues of class, privilege and the changing balance of power between Sweden and Norway. *North American Premiere*

“Vive La France” Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Norway (Directors: Helgi Felixson, Titti Johnson) — As officials and scientists debate the environmental impact of France’s nuclear program, the people of Tureia quietly continue their way of life despite living 100km away from one of the world’s largest nuclear waste dumps. “Vive La France” reveals the willful existence of a small island community, while delivering a grave lesson on the ecological consequences of nuclear testing and the political ramifications of French colonialism in Polynesia. *North American Premiere*

Shorts 4: Spotlight Scandinavia: Songs from Northern Lands

These eight films from across Scandinavia are by turns light and dark, scathing and sweet, innocent and twisted.

Two girls consider forging an unlikely friendship in “**Amazon**” (Norway). Curmudgeonly Lars-Gunnar walks dogs and relives his past in “**The Dogwalker**” (Sweden). A lactose-intolerant dairy farmer takes revenge on his overbearing father in “**Milk and Blood**” (Iceland, USA). The circle of life is explored through found footage and animation in “**Cycle**” (Finland). A seemingly insignificant moment takes on new meanings in one-take wonder “**Money Back, Please**” (Norway). “**2 Girls 1 Cake**” (Denmark) is a tale of revenge after a traumatic near death experience. “**German Shepherd**” (Sweden) poses big questions about good and evil. A group of young boys go in search of adventure in the big city in “**Artun**” (Iceland, Denmark).

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Spotlight Scandinavia is made possible, in part, through grants from the following organizations: Swedish Council of America; American-Scandinavian Foundation; Finlandia Foundation National.

ABOUT SWEDISH COUNCIL OF AMERICA: Based in Minneapolis, MN, the mission of Swedish Council of America is to support groups and individuals who promote knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Swedish heritage in American life and to strengthen cultural and educational ties between contemporary North America and Sweden.

ABOUT AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN FOUNDATION: An American non-profit organization, the American-Scandinavian Foundation (ASF) works to build international understanding with an extensive program of fellowships, grants, intern/trainee sponsorship, publishing and membership offerings. The ASF is headquartered in New York City at Scandinavia House, a public forum presenting a wide range of exhibitions, films, concerts, lectures, symposia & family programs.

ABOUT FINLANDIA FOUNDATION NATIONAL: The mission of Finlandia Foundation National is to sustain both Finnish-American culture in the United States and the ancestral tie with Finland by raising funds for grants and scholarships, initiating innovative national programs and networking with local chapters. The organization is based in Pasadena, CA.

Tickets, Festival Passes and Theater Information

Tickets for the **Opening Night Gala** and screening of "Miss Julie," are on sale now and can be purchased online at the Festival Store: www.chicagofilmfestival.com, by calling the Festival Hotline (312-332-3456), or in-person at the Festival Office (30 E. Adams, Suite 800). Film-only tickets are: Balcony: \$50 (\$45/members); Main Floor: \$60 (\$55/members). Cinema/Chicago members can use promo code OPEN50 and their current membership number for special rates. VIP tickets, which include a premium main floor seat and admission to the after party at Sidney Yates Gallery at The Chicago Cultural Center (77 E. Randolph St.), are priced at \$150 per ticket.

Festival Passes are on sale until October 19. Pass options include:

Moviegoer (10 regular admissions): \$100 for Cinema/Chicago members, \$130 for non-members.

Passport (20 regular admissions): \$190 for Cinema/Chicago members, \$240 for non-members

Festival Tickets will be available to Cinema/Chicago members on September 17-18. General public tickets will be on sale starting September 19. Tickets can be purchased online via Ticketmaster www.ticketmaster.com/chicagofilmfestival; by phone at 312-332-FILM (3456); or by visiting the Festival box office at AMC River East 21 (322 E. Illinois St.) or the Cinema/Chicago office (30 E. Adams, Suite 800) beginning September 19.

For ticketing information, visit www.chicagofilmfestival.com.

Festival screenings will be held at the AMC River East 21 Theater (322 E. Illinois St.). The full schedule will be announced Tuesday, September 16.

FESTIVAL SPONSORS

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ABOUT CINEMA/CHICAGO

Cinema/Chicago is a not-for-profit arts and education organization dedicated to encouraging better understanding between cultures and to making a positive contribution to the art form of the moving image. The Chicago International Film Festival is one of the year-round programs presented by Cinema/Chicago, which also include the Chicago International Film Festival Television Awards, CineYouth Festival, INTERCOM Competition, International Screenings Program, and Education Outreach Program. Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival.

50th Chicago International Film Festival Celebrates Scandinavian Cinema

The Festival and its parent organization, Cinema/Chicago, were founded in 1964 by filmmaker and graphic artist Michael Kutza to showcase great international film, which was conspicuously absent from the city's theaters, and to bring celebrated filmmakers from around the globe to Chicago. Over the past half century, as we have grown to become a world-renowned event and evolved to reflect the changing times, the Festival has remained dedicated to its founding vision: to discover new and rising talents in filmmaking and to bring the best in international cinema and the artists behind the work to Chicago audiences. This year's 50th anniversary Festival will feature a selection of "50th anniversary screenings," featuring the work of returning filmmakers presenting past Festival films and/or personal favorites and important repertory films as well as new films by emerging and celebrated filmmakers alike.

The 50th Chicago International Film Festival runs October 9-23, 2014.

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