

a_BAHN presents

Hytte

A FILM BY
JEAN-LOUIS SCHULLER



**THE NEW FEATURE FILM
OF JEAN-LOUIS SCHULLER
WITH LUC SCHILTZ**

**IN THEATRE
MARCH 17**

Ciné Utopia, Luxembourg
Kulturhuef Kino, Grevenmacher
Ciné Le Paris, Bettembourg
Starlight, Dudelange
Scala, Diekirch
Sura, Echternach
Orion, Troisvierges
Prabbeli, Wiltz
Kinoler, Kohler
CineKursaal, Rumelange
CineWaasserhaus, Mondorf

B&AHN



a_BAHN presents

Hytte

a_BAHN

NOVAK
prod



espera prod



Pictanovo
IMAGES EN HAUTS-DE-FRANCE



taxshelter.be

ING 

shelter prod

Running time : 76'

Production year: 2019

Version: English, Luxemburgish with French subtitles

Directed by Jean-Louis Schuller

Screenplay: Jean-Louis Schuller, Jérémie Dubois

Executive producers: Marion Guth, Olivier Dubois, Amel Bouzid

Associate producers: Nicolas Blies, Stéphane Hueber-Blies,
Gilles Chaniel, Raoul Nadalet

Productions: a_BAHN, Novak Production
Les Films Fauves, Espera Productions

Cast: Luc Schiltz, Ingrid Liavaag, Mike Tock

Director of photography: Jean-Louis Schuller

Editing: Szofi Talas, Hoping Chen

Mixing: Michel Schillings

Music: Ivan Boumans

With the support of Film Fund Luxembourg

Co-financed by Pictanovo, Wallimage, Creative Wallonia

In co-production with Shelter Prod

In association with TaxShelter.be & ING,

The Taxshelter Incentive of the Federal Government of Belgium



SYNOPSIS

Hytte (The cabin in Norwegian) is a feature film that questions the quest for identity in a hyper-globalized society. The film explores 9 months in the life of Luc, a divorced man and father of seven-year old Mira. In the middle of preparing his apartment to have Mira live with him, Luc escapes to Svalbard, an archipelago near the North Pole where he improvises a holiday. Stumbling drunk out of an Arctic Oktoberfest Luc meets Mike, a stranger who lives in an isolated cabin in the Arctic desert. Mike mysteriously abandons Luc in mid conversation. Intrigued, Luc decides to find Mike. Along the way, he meets Ingrid, a young Norwegian teacher with whom he builds a connection. Missing his flight home Luc decides to stay with Ingrid and start a new life on the island. Luc rushes into the footsteps of the tourist who remains elusive and volatile, Luc hunts a shadow, his own possibly.







DIRECTED BY

JEAN-LOUIS SCHULLER

Jean-Louis Schuller is a director and cinematographer born in Luxembourg with experience in feature films, TV, commercials, and music promotions. He completed a BA in Cinematography at the IAD in Brussels before moving to London, where he graduated from the MA course in Cinematography at the National Film and Television School (NFTS) in 2008.

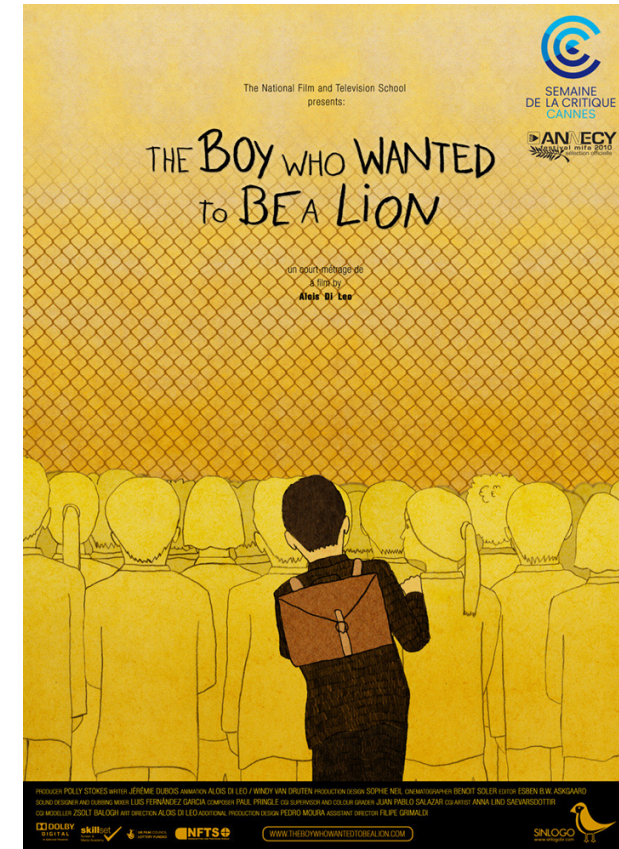
He directed *The Road Uphill* (2011), a feature-length documentary which follows Leopard Trek, the Luxembourgish cycle team, training and competing in the 2011 Tour de France; *High/Low* (2010), a medium-length documentary which he co-directed with Sam Blair and was awarded **“Best Documentary” at the 2012 Luxembourg Film Prize**; and *Chungking Dream* (2008), which was featured in the Silver Docs, Sheffield DocFest and Clermont-Ferrand film festivals and acquired by the MUDAM Collection, Luxembourg.

He is also known for his film *Black Harvest* that won **Luxembourg Film Prize in 2016 as the “Best Documentary”**. His latest work includes the documentary series *Captive* and *Formula1: Drive to survive*, produced and distributed by NETFLIX and, *Playtime*, a 6-screen installation by artist Isaac Julien.

CO-WRITTEN WITH

**JEREMIE
DUBOIS**

After graduating from FEMIS and NFTS London **Jérémie Dubois** worked as a screenwriter and director. He writes for Armel Hostiou, Elodie Bouedec, Akihiro Hata, Camille Lugan, or Ducki Tomek. He is also a scenario consultant and participates in several committees and support funds in France (Advance on Film Revenues Commission or CNC Cinéma du Monde) or abroad (feature film selection committee at the Solothurn Film Festival, consultant in the workshop in Asia Minor Produce in the South). He saw his graduation short film selected for the **Critics' Week in Cannes** and has co-written since then feature films with Vincent Macaigne or Carlo F. Manatad (*Whether the weather is fine*, Feature Lab 2017).



INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

JEAN-LOUIS SCHULLER



How did you get the idea for this story?

The creation of this story was an organic process between the screenwriter, Jérémie Dubois, the actors, and myself. When I started filming *Hytte* there was no screenplay or set story. It all started with the main character Luc wanting to escape his life at home and travel to a faraway island. Bit by bit, the character started to form by improvising a number of scenes in the Arctic travel hub Svalbard. The setting of the Arctic with its vast landscapes and recently developed cruise ship tourist hub gave the character a backdrop to reflect on his own identity and the world he lives in.

Early on in the process I wanted to explore the themes of male identity and the place of the man in modern society. Having been inspired by Antonioni's *The Passenger* and Ariel Rotter's *El Otro*, the screenwriter, the main actor and I started to explore the route of Luc stepping into the footsteps of a tourist who disappeared on the island and living the life of another man. This idea finally morphed into the final story where Luc lives a fantasy life on Svalbard falling in love with a girl, taking a job as a local construction worker, and chasing a ghost or older image of himself.

What is the origin of the title of the film? What does it symbolize?

HYTTE is the Norwegian word for cabin. I like how in the Arctic cold and wilderness the cabin is a place of adventure but more importantly a place refuge and safety from the cold and roaming polar bears.

In the film the cabin symbolizes home, family and safety which Luc is chasing in his own life.

Tell us about your main character, Luc. His arrival in Svalbard is a headlong rush. Does it represent, in your opinion, the archetype of the modern man?

Luc's arrival in Svalbard is a headlong rush, escaping his collision course with the future of his own life. Luc represents the archetype of the "modern man" experiencing the male malaise. He is restless and without sense of purpose, lacking confidence in himself. I believe that our fast-paced modern world saturated with tech and social media makes it more and more difficult to explore one own's identity in an open and honest way.

We are constantly asked to perform a better version of ourselves throughout all the social media platforms and in public which puts pressure on the modern man. Luc is going through this and instead of dealing with it he takes the easy way out and escapes from his own fears.

"I believe that our fast-paced modern world saturated with tech and social media makes it more and more difficult to explore one own's identity in an open and honest way..."

Jean-Louis Schuller

***Hytte* is at the crossroads of fiction and documentary. Why did you choose this format to tell your story and what challenges have you faced?**

I wanted to explore the story of Luc's 'headlong rush' through an organic process creating the story as we went along shooting over a period of 12 months on and off. During this process we experienced the place firsthand and encountered many interesting characters and situations that we wanted to incorporate into the story. The main challenge I faced and the lesson I subsequently learned from not having a written script is the difficulty in tying up a narrative from beginning to end when going off on tangents while improvising constantly re-adapting the narrative line.



Furthermore, we were shooting *Hytte* on a documentary budget with a location team of four (director, screenwriter, two actors) for the most

part, doing the jobs of cinematographer, location sound, set and wardrobe. Having a documentary approach to locations and characters gave us a bigger production value using real places and people. At the same time having such a small team on location made us like a chamber music quartet giving the process of creating the story a certain intimacy. This intimacy is also something I wanted to follow up with the soundtrack and decided to go for a four-voice choir to reflect that minimalism of the shoot itself. Through the limitations of working as a small team I also wanted to minimize the camera movements and filmed much of the film with a static tableau camera letting the actors inside the frame create the movement.

“Some of my own experiences and the observations of other men in my surrounding inspired and guided me to explore the quest of identity in a hyper-globalized society...”

Jean-Louis Schuller

The main theme of the film - the quest for identity in a hyper-globalized society. It's quite a relevant topic nowadays. What else motivated you to raise this question?

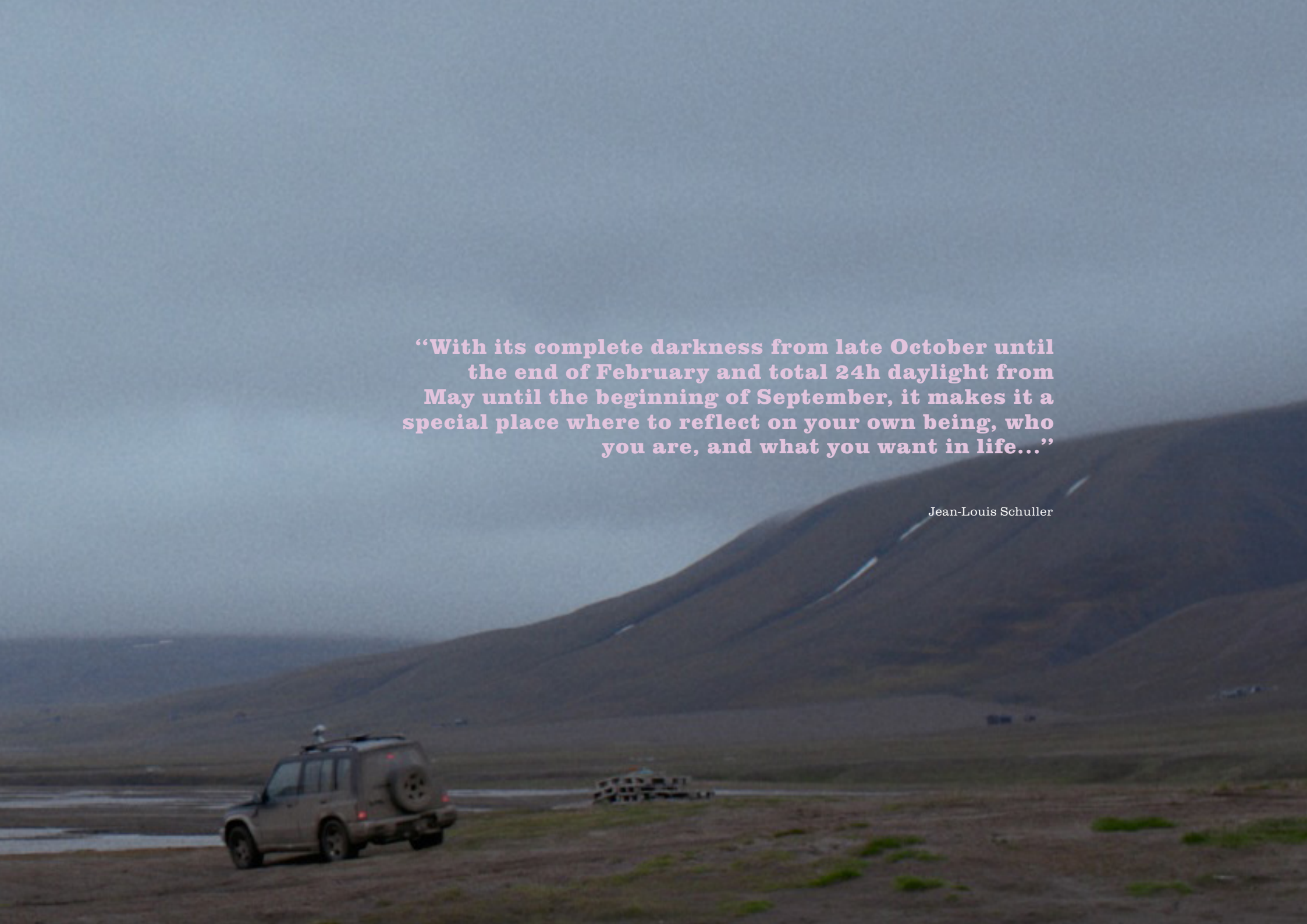
I was not motivated by a specific thing but guided by my own experience living in a relationship that gave birth to a young child. The duties and responsibilities that come with being a parent pushed me into questioning my own identity

and happiness. Through making this film I dealt consciously and unconsciously with my own life that raised questions which filtered through into the narrative of Luc's story. It is not an autobiographic film but some of my own experiences and the observations of other men in my surrounding inspired and guided me to explore the quest of identity in a hyper-globalized society.



The screenplay was co-written with Jérémie Dubois. Could you tell us more about your collaboration?

Coming from a documentary background I had little experience writing a narrative with dialogues. So early on in the process I wanted to work with a script writer. Jérémie and I went to the same film school in the UK and had friends in common who introduced us. We immediately found a

A landscape photograph of a desert with sand dunes. In the foreground, a silver SUV is parked on a flat, sandy area. In the background, there are large, rolling sand dunes under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the upper part of the image.

**“With its complete darkness from late October until
the end of February and total 24h daylight from
May until the beginning of September, it makes it a
special place where to reflect on your own being, who
you are, and what you want in life...”**

Jean-Louis Schuller

connection in the type of movies we liked and wanted to explore a new working relationship on this project together. Coming up with a story was a rather long process that I underestimated and after a year of work and going down several dead ends I decided that it was time to start shooting without a script.

This was a method that was more familiar to me with my documentary background where you focus at one shoot at a time not having the full story in front of you. I initially decided to shoot this film over a period of 4 seven-day shooting periods which eventually became seven shooting periods over the spread of a year. Jérémie and I prepared each shooting period in advance looking back at what we shot each time and adapting the story ideas for the next shooting period until we had a rough narrative structure. A lot of the dialogue was written while improvising with the actors. Then we had one final shoot at the end to fill the holes in the story. It was an enjoyable but stressful process in which I learned a lot.

What were your cinematographic (or other) references for this film?

Jérémie and I looked at a number of films that dealt with lost men and identity that inspired us to develop the story of Luc. Among those we viewed were Laurent Cantet's *L'emploi du temps*, Joachim Trier's *Oslo, August 31st* and Ruben Östlund's *Force Majeure*.

The visual language in these films is subtle and natural which I thought would suit *Hytte*. I set

myself a limitation of keeping the camera fixed where possible early on as this helped me direct and shoot not needing to operate the camera during takes.

***Hytte* was shot with three professional actors who challenged local people playing their own characters. How difficult was it to organize the whole shooting process in this case?**

It was definitely a challenging shooting process with ups and downs. Being a small team I had to do many organizational jobs outside the directing role ranging from finding locations, non-actors, and costumes. This was all done on the spot and often on the day of the shoot itself after finishing the writing of a new idea late at night.



But being a small team with a hands-on approach gave this production special energy and a strong

bond was formed between us which made this very organic shooting process possible. I could not imagine this spontaneity being achievable on a larger film production that employs more people. Working with non-actors was very rewarding and fun. The Russian builder Alexei for example who in real life is an entrepreneur and larger than life character played himself. Alexei would just naturally react to whatever Luc put in front of him. This was very challenging for Luc as he had to guide Alexei at the moment and give him cues to bounce off and react. The way we set this up was to brief Luc with the story points we wanted to achieve and then give him free hand to improvise and challenge the non-actors. We used this technique in most scenes with nonprofessional actors.

The film takes place in Svalbard, an archipelago near the North Pole. And it seems the place also plays an important role in the story?

It is a special feeling arriving on Svalbard knowing that you are surrounded by a vast area of wilderness on the doorstep of the North Pole. This place has a breathtaking beauty and when venturing out into the white icy desert on a snowmobile you realize how alone you are. The lack of trees and vegetation through which the wind can whistle it creates an almost deaf sound in which you can hear a needle drop into the snow. In this wild environment you can slow your clock right down and focus on each breath and thought.

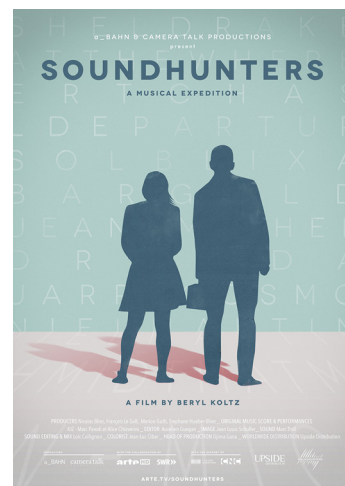
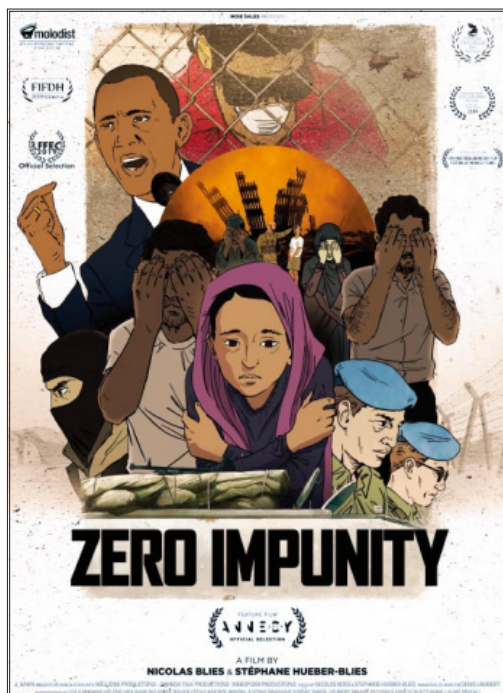


INGRID LIAVAAG

Ingrid Liavaag is an artist, working in the world of theater and film. Her practice includes both acting and directing, within the field of theatre, performance and film. She is a trained actor from Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris, where she also studied scenography, movement and art at the Laboratory of Movement Study (L.E.M.). Liavaag is currently pursuing a Masters Degree in film and theatre at Oslo National Academy of the Arts, where her practice includes both acting and directing. Liavaag's work explores existential needs and sociological aspects of human modern life. Her work plays with the distinction between the private and the public and is rooted in a physically based approach.

LUC SCHILTZ

Born in 1980, **Luc Schiltz** is a Luxembourgish actor. From 2003 to 2007, he studied at ESACT, Conservatoire royal de Liège, in Belgium. Since then, he has been working and living in Luxembourg and Brussels where he alternates between acting on stages and acting on film sets. In 2016, he received the **Luxembourg Film Prize as Best Actor** and was nominated at the Trophées francophones du cinéma for his role in *Eng nei Zäit* (2015) by Christophe Wagner. In 2019, he was cast as inspector Luc Capitani in the eponymous first drama series in Luxembourgish. His latest work includes also such films as *Skinwalker*, *De Buttek*, *Les Intranquilles*, *Cellule De Crise*, *Capitani*.



a_BAHN

Since the founding of **a_BAHN** in 2013, we've been working on developing a cinema of hybridization; in other words, a cinema at the intersection of forms and genres, which breaks free from established norms.

a_BAHN focuses on authors developing challenging narratives with high artistic value, and an international audience. As producers, we accompany them in the development of a singular view on the world. Our authors seek to interpret reality, to give birth to universes. Above all, they seek to inhabit the world poetically. By making us doubt, by making us question ourselves, they make us more alive... and sometimes actors of change.

a_BAHN produced, among other, the highly-acclaimed animated film *Zero Impunity* by Blies Brothers (2019, Annecy International Animation Film Festival, Sao Paulo IFF, Moscow IFF, Thessaloniki IFF, Amiens IFF, Guadalajara IFF...), Blies Brothers' transmédia *Soundhunters* (ARTE - 2016, nominated for the Prix Europa) or VR films like *7 Lives* by Jan Kounen (2019, Tribeca Film Festival) and *Cosmos Within Us* by Tupac Martir (2019, Mostra di Venezia International Film Festival, Raindance Film Festival - Best Experience award).

a_BAHN has currently several films in production, especially ARTE's documentary *Monk, Pannonica: An American Story* by Jacques Goldstein, the ambitious TV documentary series *Draw For Change*, or the touring immersive experience *Sweet Dreams* by Robin McNicholas and Simon Wroe.

www.a-bahn.com



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