



MAMMA

A FILM BY ASLAK DANBOLT

THE END PRESENTS SYNNOVE MUREN MICHELLE MUREN AURORA GACZEK MAREN SENNELS JENSSSEN OLEVICTOR CORRAL
CINEMATOGRAPHER LUKASZ ZAMARO EDITOR MATHIAS HAMRE ASKELAND SOUND FANNY WADMAN SOUNDDDESIGN & MIX CARL SVENSSON PRODUCTION DESIGN KRISTIAN LAHN VESTBY
MAKE-UP HANNAH ORTNER COSTUME ELISE NYSTAD VFX PÅL HOEM SLETSJØ COLORIST DIDRIK BRÅTHEN
LINE PRODUCER MARI ELLEFSÆTER PRODUCED BY KHALID MAIMOUNI WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY ASLAK DANBOLT





MAMMA

ENGLISH TITLE

Mamma

RUNNING TIME

15 minutes

PRODUCTION YEAR

2021

GENRE

Fiction / documentary

WRITER & DIRECTOR

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PRODUCER

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PRODUCTION COMPANY

The End

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LOGLINE

It's Christmas Eve, and Synnøve is searching for her daughter Michelle.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

It's Christmas Eve, and Synnøve is searching for her drug-addicted daughter Michelle in an almost desolated city. During the course of the evening, she will find herself in an impossible situation where she's forced to choose.

LONG SYNOPSIS

It's Christmas Eve, and Synnøve (51) is searching for her drug-addicted daughter Michelle (31) in an almost desolated city. She grows increasingly anxious she won't find her. Or find her dead. Finally, Michelle shows up at a tram stop where the local drug scene is bustling. Michelle is sick with withdrawal and the situation is strained. She makes it clear she won't come home with Synnøve unless she gives her money for drugs to keep her afloat. Synnøve obliges, but has less money than Michelle wants. As Michelle goes off to buy drugs, Synnøve takes her jacket as collateral to ensure she'll come back. Synnøve goes to wait in the car when her granddaughter Isabell (8) calls. She's home alone waiting for them and is sick of being neglected every time Synnøve is out looking for her mamma. Isabell wants Synnøve to return home immediately and turns her phone off after a quarrel, that leaves Synnøve in the dark. Synnøve fears Michelle won't show up and doesn't know what to do. Then Michelle suddenly comes back, and the evening seems to get a somewhat happy ending. But on the way home we realize things aren't quite what they seem.



DIRECTORS STATEMENT

I wanted to portray the emotional numbness I've seen in many seasoned mothers of addicts. The first panic of losing a child is gone, cause they feel they've already lost them. Resigned, they try to make the best of the situation, but they're used to expecting the worst and nothing shocks them anymore. They can't let go of the memories of how good everything once was, and blame themselves for what went wrong. But no matter how dark it gets, they never let go of the hope that they one day will be able to fix things and get their child back. And until that happens, they're willing to do almost anything to keep them afloat.

Initially I wanted to use a professional actress as the mother and an addict as the daughter. But when I first met Michelle to consider her for the role, she was coincidentally with her mother. There was something about their relationship that instantly intrigued me. So, I decided to cast them both, re-write the script and build the story around them. All scenes in the film have played out between them in some variation over the years. The only fictional element is Michelle's daughter Isabell. Michelle doesn't have children, but she has a much younger brother who Synnøve has left at home on numerous occasions to go look for Michelle, so that situation felt very real to them.





I wanted to blend documentary elements with the fiction. All the dialogue in the scene at the tram stop, are documentary sound-recordings from the biggest open drug-scene in Oslo. And many of the extras are addicts who frequent the area. I wanted to use static shots that locks the characters in the frame, just like they're locked in situations they can't escape. Synnøve is often seen through glass or mirrors, and there's a lot of reflections in the film, all to enhance the feeling of being emotionally frozen, and unable to move forward in life. As for how it ends, I'll leave that up to the viewer. But I wanted the last image to convey a feeling that's become all too familiar for Synnøve; the feeling of not knowing whether Michelle is dead or alive.

Neither Synnøve nor Michelle had any experience with acting before this film, but they adapted quickly and rose to the occasion. It's a very low-budget film shot entirely at night, 5 nights in a row with a small crew. It was cold, hard and exhausting for everyone, but especially for them who had to relive some of the most painful and emotional experiences of their lives. They did an amazing job and I couldn't be happier with my decision to build the film around them. I hope the process of making this film might have helped them in their private lives too, for after nearly 20 attempts at rehab, Michelle is now in treatment and clean from heroin for the first time in 18 years. And for the first time in those 18 years, Synnøve can relax. A little bit.



MOTHER, Synnøve Muren

Synnøve was born in Västerås, Sweden in 1967, where she educated as an assistant nurse, and Michelle was born in 1988. She divorced Michelle's father and moved to Ålesund on the west coast of Norway in 1997. She spent 12 years as a fisher on trawls, before she was forced to quit due to a back injury. She now works as a waiter at a local fast food restaurant. Through her long battle to help Michelle, she's become involved in the fight for a more humane drug-policy and has been featured in the media several times. Synnøve has 3 children, 3 grandchildren, 2 dogs and 5 aquariums.



DAUGHTER, Michelle Muren

Michelle was born in Västerås, Sweden in 1988. She had a troubled childhood and was diagnosed with bipolar - and borderline disorders when she was 11 years old. Through her medication she was introduced to drug abuse, and got addicted to heroin when she was 14. She moved to Synnøve and Ålesund in 2003. Michelle's been to rehab nearly 20 times, without managing to quit her abuse. She's a strong advocate for a more humane drug-policy and has held several speeches for the Norwegian parliament, amongst others. In 2018 she managed to finish high-school, and dreams of becoming a social worker. After filming, she finally managed to get off heroin, and is now clean for the first time in 18 years. She lives outside Oslo with her dog, 2 cats and 3 aquariums.



WRITER & DIRECTOR, Aslak Danbolt

Hailing from Bergen, Norway, Aslak began making documentary films at Lillehammer University College, where he got a BA in Film History and Theory (2006) and in Documentary Directing (2009). His graduation film *"Martin-the Ghost"* was screened at numerous festivals (incl. IDFA, Thessaloniki, LIDF) and won several awards.

He then attended The London Film School where he got an MA in Filmmaking and focused on writing and directing fiction. His graduation film *"Last Base"* (2014) screened at more than 120 festivals (incl. Tribeca, Chicago, Montreal) and won 20 awards (incl. Tallinn Black Nights, Trento, In The Palace).

After graduation he directed the documentary series *"Petter Uteligger – 52 dager på gata i Oslo"* (2015) which became a big hit domestically. It was nominated for 5 Norwegian Golden Screen Awards in 2016, winning two; Best Documentary Series and the Audience Award. In February 2020 a new documentary series, *"Petter i fengsel"*, premiered to critical acclaim.

"Mamma" is Aslaks first short after film school. He is now developing his first feature, as well as other stories for film and television.



PRODUCER, Khalid Maimouni

Khalid is a writer / producer and head of The End production company. He has a background in documentary, but focuses mainly on fiction. His first feature film as producer, *"Hunting Flies"* (2016), premiered in Toronto, was nominated for The Nordic Councils Film Prize and won several prestigious awards. His second feature *"12 Bragder"* is currently in post-production, and he has several new projects in development, both as a writer and producer.



CINEMATOGRAPHER, Lukasz Zamaro

Lukasz is a polish cinematographer and photographer living and working in Oslo. He graduated from the Polish Film School in Lodz and completed "Expanded Cinematography" courses one and two at the Global Cinematography Institute in Los Angeles, taught by legendary Cinematographer Vilmos Zsigmond and Yuri Neyman ASC. He is a member of the Norwegian Society of Cinematographers (FNF) and has several projects, long and short, ready for the big screen in the months to come.



EDITOR, Mathias Hamre Askeland

Mathias graduated from The London Film School in 2015, and has since edited several award-winning short films, including the Amanda (Norwegian Academy Award) winning “*Frysninger*” (2016). He edited the popular TV-series “*Jul i Blodfjell*” (2019), and is set to edit the new drama series “*Jeg bor ikke her*” for TV2.



SOUND DESIGN & MIX, Carl Svensson

Carl Svensson is a sound designer working with pretty much all media that uses sonic expression. Experiences include 10 feature films, documentaries, TV-series and music for the stage. He teaches sound at the Norwegian National Film School since 2014.

CAST

SYNNØVE
MICHELLE

Synnøve Muren
Michelle Muren

ISABELLE

Aurora Gaczek

PREGNANT COUPLE

Maren Sennels Jenssen
Ole Victor Corral

EXTRAS

Harald Kolass
Trond Halbo
Anja Maria Svenkerud
Asle Rosseland
Gro Trondal Johannessén
Thomas Sanne
Willy Kringeland
Anita Vårvik
Pål Simonsen
Bjørn Aateigen



CREDITS

WRITER & DIRECTOR

CINEMATOGRAPHER

EDITOR

SOUND

SOUND DESIGN & MIX

PRODUCTION DESIGN

MAKE-UP

COSTUME

PRODUCER

LINE-PRODUCER

AC

GAFFER

BEST BOY

GRIP

KEYGRIP

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

CASTING

ACTING COACH

DOCUMENTARY SOUND

Aslak Danbolt

Lukasz Zamaro

Mathias Hamre Askeland

Fanny Wadman

Carl Svensson

Kristian Lahn Vestby

Hannah Ortner

Elise Nystad

Khalid Maimouni

Mari Ellefsæter

Odd Helge Haugsnes

Sander Eriksen

Ole Petter Gustavsen

Morten Magnussen

Max Thon

Martin Navarro Pérez

Linn Gjerstad

Vilde Rutgersen Bie

Kenneth Åkerland Berg

Aslak Danbolt

GRADE FACILITIES

COLOURIST

MASTERING

POST-COORDINATOR

VFX

MUSIC SUPERVISOR

POSTER-DESIGN

Kamerapost Oslo

Didrik Bråthen

Lasse Sevli

Aksel Leth &

Carina Istre

Pål Home Sletsjø

Goran Obad

Jakob Vege





MUSIC

"God Rest You Merry Gentlemen"

Mark Richard Ford

Licensed by EMI Productions Music

"Goldberg Variations BWV 988: Aria"

Johann Sebastian Bach

Performed by Sveinung Bjelland

"Silent Night"

Franz Xaver Gruber

Licensed by Extreme Music Library

"Once in Royal David's city"

Mark Richard Ford

Licensed by EMI Productions Music

TECHNICAL INFO

SHOOTING FORMAT
SCREENING FORMAT
SOUND
COLOUR SYSTEM
LANGUAGES
SUBTITLES

FINANCING

BUDGET

Digital 4K
DCP 2K
Stereo / Surround 7.1
Colour
Norwegian, Swedish
English, Norwegian

Fond for Lyd og Bilde
Viken Filmsenter

45.000,- EUR

