

Strand Releasing presents

NORTH SEA TEXAS

A film by Bavo Defurne

Starring Jelle Florizoone, Eva Van Der Gucht, Mathias Vergels,
Nina Marie Kortekaas, Katelijne Damen, Luk Wyna and Thomas Coumans

Official Selection:
Montreal World Film Festival
Rome Film Festival
Palm Springs International Film Festival
Ostend Film Festival

Country of Origin: Belgium
Format: DCP/HD Cam/2.35/Color
Sound Format: Dolby Digital SRD
Running Time: 99 minutes
Genre: Drama
Not Rated
In Dutch with English Subtitles

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SYNOPSIS

Pim, an introverted child, occupies his time drawing and fantasizing while keeping his emerging desires a secret. As a teenager, he grows infatuated with Gino, the handsome boy next door. When a hunky young man from the local fair starts dating Pim's mother, Pim seizes the opportunity to leave home and move in with Gino's family. His plan backfires as Gino departs, romancing and living with a girl from across the border. It seems like Pim's dreams will never come true, but then one rainy day Gino returns home...

INTRODUCTION BY BAVO DEFURNE

“I don’t want to show people what they see when they look out their windows, I want to show what they can see when they close their eyes.”

As a filmmaker I want to touch audiences with beauty, I’m not interested in social realism. While I seek an authenticity which lies beneath the surface with my filmmaking, the surface itself is a quest for beauty that I feel I can touch emotionally. Though this film is set in a social and emotional environment that’s mundane, I didn’t want to make another gritty realist movie about a neglected boy in a grey world. There’s more to life than the everyday world we see around us and I think it’s much more exciting to work with contrast.

The colorful visuals and romantic music make this film an uplifting viewing experience, providing a different perspective with which to explore the inner world of the characters. It adds the poetry and irony that social realism tends to understate.

The author of the book, André Sollie, had seen my short films before he wrote his book. We are kind of soul mates, touching the same themes of first love. We are both interested in these precious moments where friendship becomes love. This theme is very present in my short films, together with the themes of longing and rejection. But the novel gives hope at the end, whilst my short films mostly had quite sad endings.

With this film I really wanted to make a point by leaving out the traditional tragic gay finale. We have too often seen how gay love leads to a life of disappointment, violence or even death and I didn’t want to add another film to this cycle. I wanted to show that the life that wasn’t possible for the boys from BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN is not beyond everybody’s reach.

The screenplay states “Our youth, some decades ago.” We wanted to give the film certain timelessness. The story plays in the world of our youth, whenever this was. We looked for ‘retro classics’ rather than pointing out a precise date. I thought this was the perfect background for the emotional story that I am telling. I wanted a balance between individual connection and universality.

While the visual world of my films is very stylized, I do not like stylized acting. I really wanted the actors to be very authentic. This naturalistic approach to acting inspired me to really seek actors of the same age as their characters. We were blessed with young actors who have the physical looks of their age and a strong connection with their character. At the same time they were all able to keep a professional distance. They were mature enough to understand the complex emotional fabric of their characters, yet young enough for it to be very believable.

Personally, I feel this is a universal film, a film about love. The fact that this love is unrequited is our major theme. Whether this love is gay or not, we don’t really make a point of it. This is how I worked with the cast and crew. Rather than stressing the differences between gay and straight, we worked with the similarities. Basically love

stories have elements of longing, rejection, deception, passion... and these emotions were our guides in creating the journeys of our characters. The word “gay” is never mentioned in the film. I honestly think that everybody who has been young and in love will be able to connect to the love story of Pim and Gino. The film is sometimes called a gay film because one rarely sees a film about two boys falling in love with each other. We would never call TITANIC a straight movie because straight love is not rare in cinema.

It also made it more difficult to cast the younger actors. For the role of Sabrina only 4 girls were auditioned, but we had to test more than 200 actors before the right Pim and Gino were found. Most teenage boys are afraid of playing a gay character and make a fuss of doing things with a boy that would not be problematic if their partner were a girl. Many of the candidates did not show up to the auditions. Some parents forbade their kids from attending the auditions. One actor called me, crying, “My father forbids me to kiss a boy, even if it’s only for a movie.” Finally we found two great actors who are professional and cool and very motivated to do it. Their parents support their professional choices, which is very valuable at that age. Jelle (Pim) is training as a ballet dancer, Mathias (Gino) sings in a punk rock band. What binds these young guys is their ability to make strong and independent choices in life.

- *Bavo Defurne*

CREW

BAVO DEFURNE | DIRECTOR

Born in 1971 and a graduate of the St. Lukas Art School in Brussels. Artist, photographer and filmmaker Bavo Defurne established himself as an exciting new talent with a sequence of critically acclaimed prizewinning short films that examine his regular themes of gay love and loss, the body and the power of nature and silence.

CAMPFIRE (2000) received invitations to screen at major festivals and won several prizes. It was bought for television by leading broadcasters including Canal+ in France and Channel 4 in the UK.

Bavo Defurne has achieved the rare feat of having his shorts be released in a feature length compilation in cinemas and on DVD by leading independent distributors around the world, including Strand Releasing (USA), Mikado (Italy), British Film Institute (UK), Salzgeber (Germany) and Cinemien (Benelux).

Bavo Defurne's work has also found its way into art galleries. In addition to its acclaim on the festival circuit SAINT (1997) is widely regarded as a highly significant artistic representation of Saint Sebastian – a figure who has inspired many artworks over centuries. It has shown at exhibitions in Kunsthalle, Vienna and Sala Kubo-Kutxa in San Sebastian.

Bavo Defurne's long awaited first feature film, NORTH SEA TEXAS (Noordzee Texas) advances the themes of his acclaimed short films.

Bavo lives in the port city of Ostend in Belgium, on the coastline where NORTH SEA TEXAS was made.

FILMOGRAPHY

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| 2011 | North Sea Texas |
| 2009 | Protection (video art) |
| 2000 | Campfire (short) |
| 1998 | Sailor (short) |
| 1996 | Saint (short) |
| 1995 | Particularly Now, In Spring (short) |
| 1993 | Ludodrome (video art) |
| 1992 | Rohypnol (short) |
| 1990 | Atlantis (short) |

YVES VERBRAEKEN | PRODUCER

Yves has worked with Bavo Defurne for many years. In addition to producing he also collaborated with Bavo in writing the screenplay for NORTH SEA TEXAS. In February 2010 he set up Indeed Films, a production company specializing in fiction feature films. In addition to working with Bavo Defurne he has nurtured many different projects by new young talents. Following his graduation from the Free University of Brussels where he studied Art History, Yves began working in the industry as an art director and combined these skills with producing when working on Bavo's short films.

ANTON MERTENS, SBC | DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

In 2007 Anton Mertens was awarded the "Best Cinematography Prize" for the short FREE ADMISSION by Roberto Gasparini at the Cyprus International Film Festival. He is a popular DP that regularly works for television, commercials and video clips.

ADRIANO COMINOTTO | COMPOSER

Adriano Cominotto, composed the original score for NORTH SEA TEXAS. He worked with Adamo, Alain Bashung, Arno and Vaya Con Dios. For this film, he collaborated with the enchanting Renée Sys who wrote lyrics for the song "Paper Wings" and "Wooly Clouds".

ANDRÉ SOLLIE | AUTHOR

André Sollie wrote the book "Nooit Gaat Dit Over" (literal translation "This Is Everlasting") on which NORTH SEA TEXAS is based. He studied at the St. Lukas Art School in Brussels and first worked as an illustrator of children's books and it was through poetry that he first made an impact as a writer before becoming a novelist. In 2008 he received the Flanders Cultural Prize for his work.

CAST

JELLE FLORIZOONE (Pim) grew-up in Ostend, the Belgian port city on the North Sea where NORTH SEA TEXAS was filmed. He was one of about 200 teenage boys who auditioned for the part of Pim, and was the immediate choice for the filmmakers. Jelle always wanted to be an actor and had small parts in a youth series on Belgian television. NORTH SEA TEXAS is his first appearance on the big screen and a dream come true. He studied ballet at the Royal Ballet Academy in Antwerp. Following completion of the film he decided to continue this path and to start formal training as an actor.

EVA VAN DER GUCHT (Yvette) is well known to television audiences in The Netherlands and Belgium, having starred in many successful TV productions. She is best known internationally for her well received performance in EVERYBODY FAMOUS, the Dominique Deruddere film that received an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film in 2001.

MATHIAS VERGELS (Gino) studied at the Kunsthumaniora in Antwerp. NORTH SEA TEXAS is his second big screen appearance after BO by Hans Herbots where he played opposite Ella-June Henrard who plays his girlfriend Françoise in NORTH SEA TEXAS.

NINA MARIA KORTEKAAS (Sabrina) comes from a film industry family. The daughter of set designer Niek Kortekaas and actress Mieke De Groote, she studies at the Royal Lyceum of Antwerp and NORTH SEA TEXAS is her feature film debut.

KATELIJNE DAMEN (Marcella) has appeared in many stage, film and television productions, of which the best known internationally includes DE MAN VAN STAAL by Vincent Bal and ANYWAY THE WIND BLOWS by Tom Barman.

LUK WYNS (Etienne) is an actor, writer and director with a long list of credits including the films BOYS and LOS by Jan Verheyen. He's famous in Belgium for his role in the top-rated series Matryoshka's.

THOMAS COUMANS (Zoltan) is a regular performer on stage and in feature films in France and Belgium, with his best known roles including LES YEUX DE SA MÈRE by Thierry Klifa and ELÈVE LIBRE by Joachim Lafosse.

CAST

Jelle Florizoone
Eva Van Der Gucht
Nina Marie Kortekaas
Mathias Vergels
Katelijne Damen
Luk Wyls
Thomas Coumans
Ben Van Den Heuvel
Patricia Goemaere
Nathan Naenen
Noor Ben Taouet
Ella-June Henrard

Pim
Yvette
Sabrina
Gino
Marcella
Etienne
Zoltan
Young Pim
Simone
Young Gino
Young Sabrina
Francoise

CREW

Director
Screenplay
Adapted from the book
“Nooit Gaat Dit Over” by
Producer
Director of Photography
Sound
Editor
Production Design
Art Director
Score
First Assistant Director
Make Up
Costume
Production Company
Co-production Companies

Bavo Defurne
Bavo Defurne and Yves Verbaeken
André Sollie

Yves Verbaeken
Anton Mertens
Johan Somers
Els Voorspoels
Kurt Rigolle
Merijn Sep
Adriano Cominotto
Joke Pevenage
Mariel Hoevenaars
Nathalie Lermytte
Indeed Films
VRT | één, Mollywood