

Zentropa, Electric Park and Filmmagasinet Ekko present

# THE SECRET SOCIETY OF FINE ARTS

**A FILM ABOUT ART AND TERROR  
BY ANDERS RØNNOW KLARLUND**



**Featuring Jana Klinge, Christian Blümel, Susanne Wuest and Daniel Zillmann**

Released Autumn 2012 with Filmmagasinet Ekko #58

Running time: 76 min.

Sound Mix: Dolby Digital

Aspect ratio: 1.85 : 1

Rating: 15

Website and pictures: <http://thessofa.com>

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

The German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen caused a worldwide scandal when he described the terror attacks on 9/11 as “the greatest work of art there has ever been”. In *The Secret Society of Fine Arts*, Anders Rønnow Klarlund picks up where Stockhausen left off.

A group of underground artists blow up Berlin’s zoological museum and declare it “a work of art”. Their goal is to set beauty free. The unrelenting passion fascinates actress Eva Kovacs, who joins the group. But how do you draw the line between art and terror? Does it take cynical terror attacks to attract the media’s attention? And have we become so distanced and cold that it takes something completely extraordinary to make us really sense the world again?

Anders Rønnow Klarlund (41) has time and time again pushed the boundaries of filmmaking, as in the multi-plot piece *The Eighteenth* about the riots in the wake of the Danish Maastricht Treaty referendum on May 18, 1993, the allegoric puppet film *Strings* (2004) and the vicious political satire *How to Get Rid of the Others* (2007). His new film, *The Secret Society of Fine Arts*, is unparalleled in Danish cinema.

This time, Klarlund eliminates the medium's most vital element – the moving images – and sharpens our senses by telling his story through hundreds of breathtaking still photos. The photos have been manipulated in a 3D space. The extra dimension makes it look like 3D, except you don't need the glasses! The still photo method is inspired by Chris Marker's French classic *La Jetée*, which celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

The film was filmed and takes place in Berlin with German actors in the leading roles. Given that the film concerns itself with international terror, it is entirely in English.

*The Secret Society of Fine Arts* is created by director and author Anders Rønnow Klarlund. The film is produced by Louise Vesth, Ida Marie Harder Jeppesen and Katja Adomeit for Zentropa with the support of New Danish Screen at The Danish Film Institute.

*The Secret Society of Fine Arts* is released August 29 with the new issue of Filmmagasinet Ekko on a DVD, which also includes *La Jetée*.

## SYNOPSIS

The Secret Society of Fine Arts is a film about art and terror, told through 3D manipulated still photos, and written and directed by Anders Rønnow Klarlund.

The line between terror and art is literally blown to pieces when a group of underground artists detonate a huge amount of explosives in the basement under Berlin's zoological museum and afterwards declare it “a piece of art”.

Their goal is to set beauty free, and the group is ruthless in their methods and their passion. Perhaps it's exactly this “ruthlessness” that fascinates the employed actress Eva Kovacs. Soon she becomes a member of the group and falls in love with the leader, Louis.

The acts of vandalism against major buildings make for good headlines. The images of their “first great piece of art” go around the world, and the young artists are soon wanted by the police, accused of committing acts of terror. The group of artists, however, continue their fatal mission to save what they call “a humanity, which has been lulled to sleep by entertainment, by reality-shows and materialism.”

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

It's a very special thing, which I have never tried before: Making a film not at all for the sake of others, the audience's taste or their need of entertainment.

This film is exactly as I wanted it to be. It's a film exactly as I think a film should be in the year 2012: New, pushing the boundaries. You have to sacrifice something. Everything else is too easy and too dull. I have sacrificed movement, the basic substance of film. Why? The audience needs to be challenged and to be able to challenge the audience, I have to challenge myself.

Some say that I have made a film with still photos. I don't understand this. There are a lot of emotions. There is flow, passion, feelings. And above all, there is a group of young artists who out of both horror and envy start their own fight against terror.

We know the images: Skyscrapers collapsing, people driven from their homes, missiles in the air, recordings of destroyed cities captured by unmanned drones and burnt out tanks. Images that are used by the news media purely as entertainment. Again and again. Night after night. 24/7.

There is basically no difference between how the news media and Hollywood exploit the aesthetics of violence. And when neither news or fiction concern themselves with human suffering, only art is left.

The artist group in the film aim to beat the terrorists on their own turf by creating superior aesthetics, superior art than that of the terrorists. They wish to wake up the drowsing humanity. And I would like to help them with this aspiration.

*Anders Rønnow Klarlund, August 2012*

## MAKING THE FILM

### **Mikkel Østergaard, cinematographer:**

“We started in Kenya and shot simultaneously on five cameras mounted on a rig. We have played around and tried different things, been way out in the deep end. We ended up in Berlin and discovered that the still photos work best when the scenes are relatively simple. We need to be right in the face of the actors, the expression needs to be intimate. I'm not a trained cinematographer, and I had never read a screenplay, when Anders called and asked if I wanted to be part of it. My first thought was that it would end up as a boring slide show. It became something completely different. Still photos give the brain room to absorb the story and the sound in a completely different way.”

### **David Drachmann, production designer:**

“It started out a small project – a small film with a tiny budget. The game became more serious when it evolved into a feature film. But the goal had always been to break new ground, and together we tried to explore what this particular format could do, which traditional films can't. We discussed empathy, because as normal films meet all the anticipations of the audience with the moving images, you never really know what to expect with this movie. But just as often we discussed the themes, terror, art, and everything in between. Anders is an artist who bridges the gap between the visual and the thematic level.”

### **Leif Axel Kjeldsen, editor:**

“I have edited films for more than 30 years. *The Secret Society of Fine Arts* is one of the most difficult works I've ever laid my hands on. We had the photos, we had the dialogue, but nothing more. It took a lot from our imagination. What could the image do for us? What is this method able to? For how long? We've had to invent this from the bottom, and I don't know how many times Anders has told me: 'Make a suggestion!' We also worked together on *Strings*, and it has been fantastic both times.”

## WHY IS EKKO RELEASING THIS FILM?

Filmmagasinet Ekko has published a DVD with each new issue of the magazine for the last four years. Some have been collections of short films which have not previously been released – such as *Super 16 Best Of* and *Nordisk Short Films* – while others have been international artfilms as Palme d’Or winner *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* and Academy Award winner *A Separation*. Last year, we arranged a fundraising campaign among our readers to help the production company Nordisk Film restore Jonas Elmer’s Danish cult film *Let’s Get Lost* in order to send it out on DVD 14 years after its theatrical release.

With the release of Anders Rønnow Klarlund’s *The Secret Society of Fine Arts*, Ekko takes this endeavour to the next level by distributing a brand new Danish film along with the magazine. Danish art films have a hard time reaching audiences these years, and this is why we are eager to use the magazine so that these films can reach our readers who are especially preoccupied with challenging art films.

In film after film, Anders Rønnow Klarlund has curiously and daringly experimented with the language of cinema. The result has always been thought-provoking. This does not least apply to *The Secret Society of Fine Arts*, in which he discards the most important element of filmmaking – moving images – to tell his drama through still photos which come alive in their own way.

The film is produced with the support of The Danish Film Institute’s New Danish Screen program, which plays an important role in Danish film. New Danish Screen is designed to “ensure that new generations of cinematic talents don’t restrict themselves to conventional, inherited expressions, but constantly strive to explore limits and create new experiences for the audiences,” as it is stated in their purpose.

At a time when Danish mainstream films are once again reaching large audiences, Filmmagasinet Ekko wishes to strike a blow for the small, original and challenging films attempting to break new ground. They offer a vast amount of inspiration and experiences. Without these unique pieces of art, Danish cinema would be impoverished.

*Claus Christensen, editor in chief*

## ACTORS

**Jana Klinge** (Eva Kovas) is a German actor born in 1980 in Osnabrück. She received her degree from Der Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen Potsdam in 2006 and has since played a variety of prominent roles on TV, film, and the theater. She has played in theater productions like *Wir Kinder von Bahnhof Zoo* at Sophiensaele in Berlin and *Effi Briest* at Hans Otto Theater Potsdam, in which she had the title role. She has featured in films like the improvised *Berliner Reigen* (2006) and the drama *21:37* (2009), and now she has the leading role in Anders Rønnow Klarlund's *The Secret Society of Fine Arts*.

**Christian Blümel** (Louis) is a German actor born in 1983. The last ten years, he has featured in a whole range of film and TV productions. In the international success *The Baader Meinhof Complex* from 2007, he plays the RAF member Siegfried Hausner who died in the Stammheim prison in 1975, 23 years old. Christian Blümel has also had the leading role in films as *Führer EX* (2001), *Zeit der Fische* (2006), and *Vogel Strauss* (2007). In *The Secret Society of Fine Arts* he plays the leader of the terrorist art group.

## BEHIND THE CAMERA

**Anders Rønnow Klarlund** (director and writer, b. 1971) is an autodidactic Danish director who time and time again has challenged the narrative conventions of cinema. He made his debut in 1996 with the partly privately financed multi-plot film *The Eighteenth* about the riots in the wake of the Danish Maastricht Treaty referendum on May 18, 1993. In 1999, the science fiction horror movie *Possessed* followed, and in 2004 he made the ambitious, epic puppet film *Strings*. In 2007, he sparked controversy with the vicious political satire *How to Get Rid of the Others* which was later staged at Aarhus Theater.

Klarlund is also an author. In his first novel, *De hengivne (The Devout)* from 2009, the director Anders Rønnow Klarlund shows up as a character who is killed in gory fashion. In 2010, under the pseudonym A.J. Kazinski, he published the crime novel *Den sidste gode mand (The Last Good Man)* with Jacob Weinreich. The book was sold to 22 countries and won a Prix Relay as the best book of the year in France. The duo's follow-up, *Sønnen og døden (The Sleep and the Death)* was recently released. Klarlund's second novel in his own name, *Hvorfor jeg forlod dig (Why I left)* is being released in March 2013 by Politiken's publishing house.

**Louise Vesth** (producer) has been a producer on the Danish production company Zentropa since 2001. She has produced several of the last years' most notable Danish film, most recently Nikolaj Arcel's *A Royal Affair* and Lars von Trier's *Melancholia* as well as Mikkel Nørgaard's box office hit *Klovn: The Movie*. She's also produced Christian E. Christiansen's four Danish feature films and Arcel's *The Truth About Men* (2010) and co-produced Swedish director Josef Fares' *Kopps* (2003) and *Zozo* (2005). Louise Vesth holds a bachelor degree in Economy from Aarhus Business School and graduated from The Danish Film School's producer line in 2001.

**Katja Adomeit** (producer) worked for Zentropa in six years before she recently established her own company, Adomeit Film. She is behind the short films *Lars & Peter* (2009) and Daniel Borgman's *Berik* which won the Grand Prix in Cannes' short film competition in 2010. Katja is now in post-production on Borgman's feature film *The Weight of Elephants* while simultaneously studying at the alternative film education Super16. Here, she has just directed and produced her graduation film, *Little Night Hunter*.

**Ida Marie Harder Jeppesen** (producer) came to Zentropa in 2004. She's currently working as an assistant producer. She was the assistant producer on Christian E. Christiansen's Academy Award nominee (Best Short Film) *At Night* (2007) and his thriller *ID:A* (2011), and she also worked on Mikkel Nørgaard's box office hit *Klovn: The Movie* (2010).

**Mikkel Østergaard** (cinematographer) obtained his degree as press photographer from the Journalism School in Aarhus in 1990. He works as a freelancer for renowned Danish and International media outlets and has displayed his photos from all over the world at numerous exhibitions over the last 20 years. He's won Danish Press Photo of the Year three times (1988, 1996, and 1997) and travelled to more than 40 countries. He has also had two books published: *Djævelen på ryggen* (a photo essay from Eastern Europe) and *Meanwhile* (featuring photos from Palestine).

**Peter Albrechtsen** (sound) is a trained sound director from The Danish Film School. He has contributed to the sound design on more than 70 productions in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the United States. He has worked as sound designer on films like Simon Staho's *Day and Night* (2003), Christina Rosendahl's *Supervoksen* (2006), Niels Arden Oplev's *The Girls with the Dragon Tattoo* (2009), Lars von Trier's *Antichrist* (2009) and Mikkel Munch-Fals' *Smukke mennesker* (2010).

**Leif Axel Kjeldsen** (editor) has served as a film editor since the late seventies, when he worked on Erik Balling's classic TV series *Matador* and several *Olsen-Banden* movies. Since then he has edited films like Erik Clausen's *Tarzan Mama Mia* (1989) and Søren Kragh-Jacobsens *Drengene fra Skt. Petri* (1991). He collaborated with Anders Rønnow Klarlund on *Strings* (2004), and last year he edited Mads Brügger's controversial documentary *The Ambassador* (2011).

**Sanne Graulund** (composer) obtained her degree from The Rhythmic Music Conservatory in 1991 and has since worked as film composer, singer, songwriter, conductor, copy writer, and teacher. She made the soundtrack for Anders Rønnow Klarlund's debut, *The Eighteenth* (1996), in which she also played one of the leading roles. She composed the music to Klarlund's *How to Get Rid of the Others* (2007) and in 2005, she released her solo CD *Midt i det hele*.

**David Drachmann** (production designer) obtained his apprentice certificate as a theater painter from The Royal Theater in 1996. Here, he worked 1999-2005 and 2008-12. He was the production designer on Anders Rønnow Klarlund's original puppet film *Strings* (2004), and in 2008 he got his bachelor degree in art history and pedagogy from University of Copenhagen.

**Celluloid Visual Effects** (post-production) is based in Berlin. The company provides visual effects for film productions ranging from small art films to large-scale Hollywood movies as *Underworld: Rise of the Lycans*, *Gamer* and *Crank 2*. One of Celluloid Visual Effects' founders is Danish-American Justin Daneman.



# THE SECRET SOCIETY OF FINE ARTS

## CREDITS

### Actors

Eva Kovacs	Jana Klinge
Louis	Christian Blümel
Uta	Susanne Wuest
Hans	Daniel Zillmann

### Production team

Director	Anders Rønnow Klarlund
Writer	Anders Rønnow Klarlund
Producer	Louise Vesth, Katja Adomeit, Ida Marie Harder Jeppesen
Cinematographer	Mikkel Østergaard
Editor	Leif Axel Kjeldsen
Sound	Peter Albrechtsen
Composer	Sanne Graulund
Production designer	David Drachman

**Produced by Zentropa with support from New Danish Screen  
by creative artistic director Jakob Høgel.**

**Distributed by Zentropa, Electric Park, and Filmmagasinet Ekko.**