

Met Film Presents in association with Made In Copenhagen and Film4
Village at the End of the World

A film by Sarah Gavron
Co-director and Cinematographer David Katznelson
Produced by Al Morrow



With the Danish Film Institute and DRtv
with the support of the MEDIA Programme of the European Union



World Premiere: BFI London Film Festival 18th/ 20th October 2012

Other screenings to be announced

UK | 2012 | 76' | HD

Trailer: <http://vimeo.com/49178777>

For More information, screeners, and stills, contact: Al Morrow T: +44 (0)7768 315579 E. al@metfilm.co.uk

Synopsis

Village at the End of the World



From left to right: Annie, The Village, Illanguaq, Lars.

Lars is the only teenager in town who, in a community of hunters doesn't want to hunt. Niaqornat in North West Greenland has a population of 59, if the population falls below 50 then the village loses its Danish subsidies and there is a danger of the entire village being relocated to the nearest town. Whilst the rest of the community pull together to try and re-open the fish-factory, Lars begins to plan his escape.

Like all villages, Niaqornat has its supporters and detractors amongst the local populace. For some it is paradise, they can't imagine living anywhere else, for others it's the last place on earth they want to be. For most Niaqornat is simply home. We know that there are very real pressures on a place like this – the ice is melting, the government no longer wants to subsidise the supply ship that brings the food that can't be hunted locally, and people are leaving due to the lack of work. Ultimately Village At The End Of The World is a film that reflects the dilemmas of most small communities all over the world, this one just happens to be in one of the remotest spots on earth.

The Characters: -

LARS the Teenager: "It is lonely being a teenager here – there are no internet cafes, no bars, just the shop". There are no roads in or out either – if you want to leave you go by helicopter, weather permitting. Lars has never ventured further than a few miles up the coast but regularly chats to his 200 friends across the globe on Facebook. Teenage thrills are limited in Niaqornat but Lars lives a rich "virtual" life. He orders the latest fashions over the internet, blasts out rap across the icebergs and is often to be seen dressed up with nowhere to go and no-one to meet. Lars doesn't want to be a hunter, a brave and controversial decision in a community that relies on hunting. Lars' life, spent between his grandparents home where he lives and the shop where he works is both aimless and poignant. The film follows his emotional journey as he grapples with his feelings towards his family and tries to work out what and where his future will be.

KARL the Hunter: Karl is the most respected hunter in the region and as the head of the village is in charge of the efforts to re-open the fish factory. Karl believes that the spirit of his forefathers guides him when hunting large animals, the traditional way of life is in his blood. Karl manages to combine the benefits of living in the 21st century with maintaining the age-old customs, he records shooting a polar bear on his mobile phone and when the ice is too weak for the huskies he will take out the skidoo; at home his wife worries that he'll come back safely. Karl is concerned that the increasingly unstable ice and modern aspirations of the villagers mean the hunters way of life, once so vital to the existence of the community, will end with the next generation.

ILANNGUAQ the Outsider: Ilannguaq, originally from South Greenland moved to Niaqornat for love, having found his girlfriend online. When he first met her face to face he says he couldn't keep his, 'paws off her'. He has taken the job no one else wants, the daily collection of the bucket toilets from each home in a village without running water. Ilannguaq has a wry sense of humour about, 'shit shovelling' but is also proud of his role, "they call me 'the clock' – without me the village doesn't run". Ilannguaq's journey is the reverse of his friend Lars. By the end of the film, after five years in the village he finally feels he belongs. Ilannguaq is keen to help his neighbours make a viable living and sets up a local tourism service. He manages to persuade cruise boats to put Niaqornat on their itinerary and for a few hours at a time tourists visit the village and Ilannguaq acts as their self appointed guide.

ANNIE, the Oldest lady in Niaqornat. Annie is our window onto the past and can't imagine living anywhere else other than the Village. Annie is related to almost all her neighbours and recalls the myths and stories of The Shamen; she can remember when the community relied on seal blubber for light, and lived just from what they caught locally, before the introduction of the regular supply ship. Annie is our ballast – she personifies a connection to the old life and makes the idea of the village disappearing loaded with poignancy.

Directors Statement: Sarah Gavron

It is an alien place at first look; a hunting settlement, only reached by helicopter, or boat when the ice breaks up, without running water, or vegetation. The Inuit village of Niaqornat is perched on the edge of a vast landmass, surrounded by imposing icebergs, shards of the receding inland glacier - a remnant of the Ice Age.

Other films of Greenland have mostly focused on nature, or the social issues of the cities. We wanted to tell the story of the people we met in the settlement, revealing their resilience, wit and determination. As we began filming, the population of 59 dropped and the village faced potential closure. We chart their lives across the arctic seasons, as they fight to keep their traditions, battle with the dangers of thinning ice, whilst finding an identity in the modern world.

Niaqornat is a place of extremes– we move from midnight sun to midday darkness, the young craft shaman symbols and also surf the internet, but at it's heart this is a story of traditional communities world over. When a cruise ship arrives to witness "authentic" Inuit life, our intention is to place the viewer on the inside, to open up the question of whether these communities can survive.

Recently it has been all over the news that scientists are stunned by Greenland's ice sheet melting over a far larger area than expected. Almost the entire ice cover of Greenland has experienced some melting at its surface this year (2012), usually only half of the ice sheet melts naturally during an average summer. This further highlights the precarious existence of Niaqornat and makes it clear that Greenland is now the heartbeat of our planet. I hope that Village At The End of The World connects the audience to this global story.

Biographies



Sarah Gavron - Director

Sarah's feature debut is **Brick Lane** which earned her a BAFTA nomination for The Carl Foreman Award and the New Talent Award at the London Film Festival. Prior to this Sarah's first full length drama, the Dennis Potter Award winning, **This Little Life** for BBC TV, won her the (TV) BAFTA for Best New Director, the Royal TV Society and Women in Film and TV

Award for Best Newcomer. Sarah was selected as one of Variety's ten directors to watch at the Sundance International Film Festival. While training at the NFTS and after Sarah has made many short films which have screened internationally and won major awards. Sarah was nominated for the Douglas Hickox award for Best Debut Director in the British Independent Film Awards. Sarah is currently developing a feature film about the Suffragettes with Film Four and Focus. She is represented by Casarotto.



David Katznelson – Co-Director/Cinematographer/Executive Producer

David Katznelson is a cinematography graduate of London's National Film & Television School. Prior to studying, he worked in the Danish film industry in Copenhagen, where he grew up. Last year, David received an EMMY and RTS Award for his work on critically acclaimed and wildly popular TV series, **Downton Abbey**, as well as earning nominations from BAFTA and the ASC. He also won a BAFTA award for Best Cinematography for his work on the

BBC film, **Shoot the Messenger**, in 2007. Notable film and television projects include **In Fear**, directed by Jeremy Lovering for Film Four and Studio Canal; **Driving Lessons**, for director Jeremy Brock and starring Laura Linney, Julie Walters and Rupert Grint; the award-winning Danish feature film, **Hold Me Tight; The Night Watch**, directed by Richard Laxton for the BBC, which earned him a BSC Best Cinematography nomination; **Miss Austen Regrets**, with director Jeremy Lovering for the BBC; and the Sarah Gavron directed film, **This Little Life**, starring Peter Mullan. In 2002 he was nominated for an RTS Award for the documentary, **Arctic Crime and punishment**. David has shot a number of commercials and an array of award-winning short films, as well as 2nd unit Director of Photography on films such as Shekar Kapur's **Elizabeth: The Golden Age**; and Sarah Gavron's **Brick Lane**.

David is currently filming the next series of **Game of Thrones** for HBO.



Al Morrow - Producer

Al is an award-winning producer and Head of Documentary at Met Film Production. Her producing credits include Jerry Rothwell's critically acclaimed theatrical documentary **Town of Runners** (Britdoc C4 Film Fund, PBS, Arte); the Grierson Nominated Films **Donor Unknown** (Arte, More 4, VPRO) and **Sync or Swim** aka Men Who Swim (BBC, ZDF Arte, VPRO, SVT, NRK, PBS); **Deep Water** (Pathe, UKFC, FilmFour, IFC), directed by Jerry Rothwell and Louise Osmond - winner of the Grierson Award for Best Cinema Documentary and Best Documentary at Rome Film Festival; and Jerry Rothwell's **Heavy Load** (BBC, IFCtv, ITVS) winner of the Audience Award at Britdoc 2008. She is in production on Jeanie Finlay's **The Great Hip Hop Hoax** (BBC, Creative Scotland) and in active development on **How To Change The World** (developed with the support of the BFI) and directed by Jerry Rothwell, Jeanie Finlay's **Pantomime** and Katie Mark's **Street Girls** (Worldview and Sundance).



Helle Faber – Co-Producer

Helle Faber founded the Danish production company Made In Copenhagen in 2010. She has produced a large number of documentary films for the international market. Among them the award winning films **Putin's Kiss**, **Dark Side of Chocolate**, **Shanghai Space** and **Enemies of Happiness** which received the Silver Wolf Award at IDFA 2006, the World Cinema Prize at Sundance 2007 & the Cinema for Peace in Berlin 2008. Helle graduated from The Danish School of Journalism in 1991.



Executive Producer - Stewart Le Marechal

Stewart Le Maréchal is a BAFTA winning producer and Head of Met Film Production, where he oversees and produces a diverse slate of fiction and documentary films for theatrical release. His producing credits include, **The Infidel**, **French Film**, and **Little Ashes**. Stewart has co-produced numerous feature documentaries for Met Film as well several short films including Esther May Campbell's, **September**, which won the Best Short Film BAFTA in 2009. Stewart is a member of ACE and BAFTA and a board director of Hi8us South.



Executive Producer- Jonny Persey is Chief Executive of Met Film, a unique organisation based in Ealing Studios, which comprises the UK's fastest growing film school, an award-winning feature film production company, and a cutting-edge post-production facility. His producing and executive producing credits include **Deep Water; Wondrous Oblivion; The Pied Piper of Hutzovina; Heavy Load; French Film, Little Ashes, Everyone's Child, Donor Unknown, Town of Runners and Shakespeare: The Hidden Truth**. Jonny graduated from Cambridge University and the National Film & Television School. He serves on PACT's Film Policy Group and is a member of ACE.



Executive Producer/Editor - Jerry Rothwell

Jerry Rothwell is a documentary director and editor whose films include the award-winning features, **Town of Runners, Donor Unknown, Heavy Load and Deep Water**. He is Executive Producer on Jeanie Finlay's **The Great Hip Hop Hoax** currently in production and Executive Produced and co-edited Dylan William's **Men Who Swim** for Met Film.

Editor -Russell Crockett

Russell's first job in film was as a researcher on *The Animals Film*, the groundbreaking documentary about animal rights that was screened at the London Film Festival and on Channel Four's first week of broadcast in 1982. He then worked as an assistant film editor before becoming a freelance editor working mainly on documentaries for television but also modern dance films and projects with artists. Over a 20 year career films he has cut have been nominated for or won numerous awards, including Grierson, R.T.S, Bafta and International Emmys. His more recent work on feature documentaries has included 'Men Who Swim', which won the audience award at Silverdocs Festival and was nominated for a Grierson, and 'Men of Arlington', which won best Irish documentary at the Dublin Film Festival.

Editor -Hugh Williams

Hugh Williams is a London based editor with over 20 years of experience in film and television. In recent years he has completed a number of feature length films for both cinema and television, the most widely known of which is the Sundance favourite 'Black Gold'. BBC Storyville strand commissioned 'When China Met Africa', 'The Undertaking' and 'White King, Red Rubber, Black Death'. 'The Trial' and 'Lost Expedition' were Irish Film Board productions. Drama feature credits include 'iLL Manors' and 'The Last Thakur' with UK cinema releases. His work is characterised by a strong sense of narrative and a social conscience.

Composer- Jonas Colstrup

Jonas Colstrup (born 27 August 1979) is a Danish film composer. His credits include *The Dark Side Of Chocolate* and *Testamentet*.

Composer- Max de Wardener

Max de Wardener is a composer based in London. He has written extensively for film and television and recently scored his second feature for Pawel Pawlikovski - 'The Woman in the Fifth' starring Ethan Hawke and Kirstin Scott Thomas. He also writes concert music and is currently writing a percussion concerto for Colin Currie and Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine as a short piece for the LSO.

Production Notes

Director Sarah Gavron and Co-Director/Cinematographer David Katznelson:

Why did you decide to make a documentary about Greenland?

SG: I have always been fascinated by stories from the Arctic. David (my partner and co-director/ cinematographer) had filmed there and crossed the inland ice on a five week trek. We decided to go on an adventure together and spend time in the isolated communities around the edge of the polar ice cap. When we first stepped off the helicopter in Niaqornat I felt I was in the remotest spot on earth; a village of 59 people and 100 sledge dogs living in a lunar landscape surrounded by majestic icebergs. No fresh food, nothing grows and there is no running water. Howling dogs and 24 hour daylight keep sleep in short supply in the summer and two months of Midday darkness often leads to depression in the winter. The Inuit community live here as they have done for thousands of years but are now for the first time faced with the challenges of the modern world. Niaqornat is changing: - in Summer the ever receding glacier scars the ground, hunting quotas have harmed livelihoods and the fish factory has been closed. If the population falls below 50 the government talks of relocating the villagers to a city. And Lars the only 17 year old who's never been more than a few miles from home, is constantly on facebook chatting to his 200 virtual friends across the globe. I wanted to capture this change in all its complexity. While alien and particular the story of this village also connects with the global narrative of small communities struggling to survive the world over. There have been nature documentaries about The Arctic and several issue led films about Greenland, but I hadn't seen anything that has given the communities a voice. In Village At The End of The World I was determined to let the inhabitants speak for themselves, I wanted the audience to understand their lives and see the close relationship they have to their extreme environment.

DK: I am Danish and as Greenland was once a Danish colony and is still closely tied to Denmark, I grew up hearing a lot about Greenland on the news. Most of the stories focused on social issues. As an adult I decided to travel to Greenland and discover it for myself. What I found challenged my preconceptions. I became fascinated by the country and its people and I wanted to make a film that showed another aspect to this country – that told the story of people in the villages.

What were some of the challenges you faced during the making of the film?

SG: Language was the biggest challenge during filming. We had some fantastic translators, but Greenlandic is structured in such a different way from European languages. And the inhabitants' lives are ruled by the weather - which is unpredictable. So you make an arrangement to go and interview a hunter, but then the ice has melted and he is off to catch a whale... And of course Greenland is a long way to go to film. A country without roads, we had to take 3 planes and 2 helicopters to reach the village from the UK.

DK: Yes, I would agree with Sarah, only a few of the villagers spoke Danish. We would ask questions and often not hear the translations of the answers until we were back in the UK. Greenlandic is a very complex visual language, so doing on the spot translations just slowed down the flow of filming too much. As a result we discovered gems in the interviews that we hadn't been able to follow-up. So we would have to re-interview... We had a tiny crew of never more than two or three - a project intended to take one year, took three. I worked on fiction films in-between trips to Greenland - but it was always good to go back to it.

Can you give us an update on Niaqornat?

SG: Against all the odds, it is doing well. I am really not sure if the village will be still be there in the decades to come, but the community are putting up a big fight. The villagers managed to open their factory by forming a cooperative – their spirit is remarkable and I think that makes it a hopeful story.

DK: The Inuit community are resilient. They will stay in the village until the last man standing. It's no secret that there is a general trend at the moment away from the hamlets to the bigger towns, so it is an uphill struggle to maintain the population. The re-opening of the fish factory has definitely made an impact. It has all of a sudden become an attractive place to live because there are more jobs around and their fish can be sold.

The Greenlanders very much live in the present, and for now it's just about sustainable. Traditionally they are nomads who move around depending on where the catch is good, so who knows for how long "the catch" will be good in Niaqornat?

How does making a documentary differ from making a fiction film?

SG: Ultimately I am interested in people, in human stories - so that connects the two forms. But in drama it is all about creating the semblance of truth. In documentary you start with a true story but you still have to construct a compelling narrative. In an observational documentary like this one you are filming and simultaneously thinking about how to turn what might be a quite random occurrence into a scene. Situations change and develop as you're shooting which means the story you originally wanted to tell might unravel before your eyes. By the time a fiction goes into production there is a script that often has taken years to write and the story is fixed. With a factual film the editing room is where you find yourself writing the final draft, delving into hours of footage to discover what the story is that you've captured. Both fiction and documentary are extraordinary. I think making documentaries reminds you about the resilience of human nature.

DK: The difference is huge between this documentary and the fiction projects I have worked on. I travelled to Niaqornat between shooting episodes of Downton Abbey. Having two days earlier worked with a camera and lighting team of twenty and lots of equipment, where I sat by the monitor while others did the hard work, I found myself in a completely remote place with only a tiny digital camera, a light weight tripod and a microphone. I had to deal with everything. It was strangely liberating to be on my own in minus 30 degrees...

What do you hope the audience will take away from Village At The End Of The World?

SG: I hope they see a story that connects to the global narrative. I want to move people - we set out to raise some questions - not answer them. I hope it does that. And I hope there's a few laughs in there as well.

DK: I hope people will respond to the place and people as Sarah and I have. It made us reflect a lot on our own lives and it challenged many of our ideas. Denmark is ahead of England in terms of preserving CO2 use and it has made me want to bring some of the Danish way of life here – more cycling, solar panels...

In Niaqornat they hunt seals but the seals live freely and the hunters only catch what they need and then use every part of it, whilst we eat factory chickens and waste enormous amounts of food. I would say that actually seeing the weak ice was a real wake-up call about the effect our lives are having on that part of the world – the locals respond in a very pragmatic way – the ice is dangerous so they can't hunt as they have been doing for thousands of years, they don't necessarily question why. But beyond that as we all know the disappearance of the ice has massive consequences for countries all over the world.

Can you tell us a bit about what you're working on now?

SG: I am working on a project about a militant cell of suffragettes. It could not on the face of it be more different. Niaqornat was a place of tranquillity, I am now very excited about doing something full of action and drama – the Suffragettes were so daring, it has many resonances with militant action today world over.

DK: At the moment I am working on an HBO drama series called Game of Thrones. And would you believe it shooting scenes in the snow again - but this time its artificial snow - so I can wear my shorts...

Credits

Directed by SARAH GAVRON

Co-Director and Cinematographer DAVID KATZNELSON

Producer AL MORROW

Co-Producer HELLE FABER

Executive Producers JONNY PERSEY, STEWART LE MARECHAL, JERRY ROTHWELL, DAVID KATZNELSON

Editors HUGH WILLIAMS RUSSELL CROCKETT JERRY ROTHWELL

Composer JONAS COLSTRUP, MAX DE WARDENER

Sound Designer BOBBY HESS

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