

HOLLAND FILM MEETING

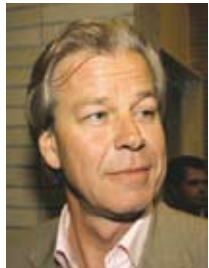
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Turturro to take on Van Gogh

Dutch producer Gijs van de Westelaken is reasonably confident of securing the production cash for his next project, even though he hasn't yet met the director.

At this year's Netherlands Production Platform he will pitch US actor/director John Turturro's *1-900*, a remake of the late Theo van Gogh's *06* (1994). The film will complete the triptych of van Gogh adaptations by New York-based actor/directors, following Steve Buscemi's remake of (*Interview*, 2007) and Stanley Tucci's *Blind Date*, completed earlier this year.

1-900 tells the story of Patti and Leroy who begin to communicate along a phone-sex chatline. As the frequency of their chatting increases, so does the intensity and explicit content of their exchanges, and the characters begin to reveal much, both to each other and to the film's audience.



Gijs van de Westelaken

"The budget (€1.2 million) is relatively small as the whole idea behind the project was to shoot the film in exactly the same way Theo used to film, using three digital cameras simultaneously," points out van de Westelaken. "You end up with roughly three times the amount of footage you would normally get, but on the other hand you shoot a lot faster. It's exactly what Tucci and Buscemi did when they made *Blind Date* and *Interview*. It's what John Turturro is planning also, to have a very short shooting period, and concentrate a lot of time on the editing."



Still from Stanley Tucci's *Blind Date*. Above: John Turturro

So far just over half of the film's budget is raised, with 35% coming from Dutch sources – the Netherlands Film Fund, the CoBo Fund, public broadcaster AVRO and distributor A-Film. Approximately 20% is in place from international sales agent Cinemavault and US equity that was raised at the beginning to span all three projects.

"There is an opportunity for further American equity but we would prefer to have European tv pre-sales and co-production agreements, because that leaves us in a better position," stresses van de Westelaken. "That is why we are presenting it at the Holland Film Meeting, to see if we can make it into more of a European film."

Van de Westelaken explains why he believes the frantic and highly idiosyncratic shooting methods that van Gogh deployed appeal to Turturro, as well as Buscemi and Tucci before him. "Both Steve and Stanley had no problems whatsoever shooting in the style of van Gogh, with three cameras. Maybe it's because, and this goes for John Turturro as well, that they are actors and this style of shooting is very beneficial because it allows actors to act. As Steve said, as an actor you don't have to follow the camera or to follow the lines on the floor. The cameras follow you and you are free to do whatever you want, and to fully concentrate on the acting." •



**TODAY
AT THE
HOLLAND
FILM
MEETING**

09:00 – 21:00
Video Library, Jan van Nassau Room

09:00 – 12:30
DIGITAL CONFERENCE, Auditorium
In collaboration with the Erich Pommer Institut, NVS, NVF and MEDIA Desk Nederland

14:00 – 17:00
CONT. DIGITAL CONFERENCE,
Auditorium

17:30 – 19:00
COCKTAIL, Unico van Wassenaer Room
Hosted by NPO/RNW Sales



Ellis Says *Oui*

"The Holland Film Meeting is made up of a number of elements which, luckily enough, seem to work very nicely together," commented Meeting chief Ellis Driessen, on the eve of the event's 21st edition. So much so that this year the event has attracted a large contingent of French film professionals led by CNC (Centre national de la cinématographie) top brass who, during a closed meeting with representatives from the Netherlands Film Fund, will explore the possibilities for future *entente cordiale* between the two industries.

"It is informal," commented Driessen. "But both parties will talk about the how and the why, and the representatives of the CNC will also be available for individual consultations. All in all there will be around 20 French film professionals from France in Utrecht, from companies such as Backup Film, FIPA, Arte France Cinema and Semaine de la Critique." Driessen also announced that she has set up a partnership with the Rencontres de Coproduction Francophone in Paris that will enable up to six Dutch producers to attend with projects. The event will take place in late November.

This year the Netherlands Production Platform (NPP) will comprise twenty projects - fourteen from Europe, six from The Netherlands - that will be pitched to some of the international industry's leading sales, finance, production and distribution personnel.

"The event is small and intimate which gives a good base for successful networking and getting to

know other professionals and their work," Driessen stresses. "And for the Dutch film professionals it offers a chance to co-operate with new territories, new talent and new companies. I think that the Platform can help play a role in further developing a vision and a will, and policy to enhance the co-production possibilities in the Netherlands."

Other features of this year's Meeting include today's digital conference and the open session tomorrow afternoon that will attempt to lift the lid on the Dutch industry, its institutions and professionals. The event also promises a realistic examination of the country's co-production potential. "The session will give an insight into what is happening in Holland, who the decision makers



Kerry Fox

are and what the hope is of getting access to production finance," explains Driessen.

While New Zealand actor Kerry Fox will be the subject of the Binger/Screen International interview, veteran producer/director George Sluizer will give the annual Variety/Cinema Militans lecture, during which he will describe the course of cinema's future trajectory, as he sees it. "We found an international established filmmaker and he is Dutch. It has been a long time since this lecture was delivered by a Dutchman," Driessen concludes. •

D-Day for Utrecht

The 21st Holland Film Meeting will kick off this morning with an intensive examination of the effects of the digital revolution on the local and international production and distribution sectors.

The one-day d-conference will round up a slew of industry experts who will explain how their business has evolved to embrace or survive the digital roll-out. Director Pieter Verhoeff, whose *Letter for the King* has recently taken over \$2 million at the Dutch box-office, will quiz Hans de Weers (Eyeworks Egmond) on the changing role of the producer. Mark Adams of leading UK art-house distributor ICA will ponder, with Teun Hilde (Content Republic, UK) and Cinemien's Markus van der Zwaag, how the new digital model continues to transform the business of distributing local and international product.

Dutch cinematographer/director Theo van de Sande will relate his experiences of digital production within the keynote address.

Nick Roddick (Split Screen, UK), who will moderate throughout the day, assesses the value of such a



Theo van de Sande (left) and Jean van de Velde



Still from Pieter Verhoeff's *Letter for the King*.

wholesale examination of the digital spectrum, but warns of potential pitfalls ahead for film professionals within the independent sector.

"The only way to answer questions about how things will work is by showing models where it is already working," he points out. "People attend these conferences at different levels. The ones at entry level are usually amazed to find how far things have gone."

"But," he continues, "the major potential downside for independent and/or European producers and distributors, is that, when the final piece in the jigsaw slips into place – the one which enables audiences to download what they want when they want onto their TV sets at the click of a button – it will be configured in such a way that it will only work for the major players.

That, after all, is how every recent development, from multiplexes to DVD, has worked out. The technology only really takes off when the majors have found a way to monetise it – and to make sure they retain control."

"Another big question that I think is going to have to be answered over the next few years is whether copyright in its present (or any) form can survive the digital revolution. Sales agents are likely to become an endangered species," he warns.

The conference is organised in association with the Erich Pommer Institut (Germany), the Dutch Association of Feature Film Producers (NVS), the Dutch Distributors Association (NVF), NPO/RNW sales and MEDIA Desk Netherlands. •

Hotel Karel V. 09.45 – 17.15