



© Ita Zbronic-Zajt

Yarden

The Yard

Måns Månsson

Producer Emma Åkesdotter Ronge, Joakim Strand, Matthias Krause. **Production companies** Anagram Film & TV (Lund, Sweden), Film i Skåne (Ystad, Sweden), Lucky Bird Pictures (Munich, Germany). **Director** Måns Månsson. **Screenplay** Sara Nameth. **Director of photography** Ita Zbronic-Zajt. **Editor** George Cragg. **Sound design** Patrik Strömdahl. **Production design** Lene Willumsen. **Costumes** Cecilia Björck. **With** Anders Mossling (Anders), Axel Roos (Son), Hilal Shoman (Hilal).

DCP, colour. 80 min. Swedish, Arabic.

Premiere 30 January 2016, Göteborg International Film Festival

World sales The Yellow Affair

Yarden is the name of a loading station for passenger cars in the port of Malmö. Hundreds of cars with uniform white protective covers are parked there in neat rows stretching as far as the eye can see. This is where a poet past his prime ends up after he catapults himself out of intellectual life via a suicide mission of sorts and becomes dependent on the job centre. His colleagues are migrants and distrust the new guy, the Swedish guy. The management never addresses anyone by name and informants receive bonuses. The poet becomes number 11811 and gradually loses everything in the forbidding reality of his new surroundings, even the respect of his son with whom he lives, separated from the mother.

A deliberately pared down filmic elegy, *Yarden* shows how a man slips into the cold, taciturn working environment of unbridled capitalism, in which the voice of Julio Iglesias wafts past like a perfidious greeting from another time. There are no guilty parties here, just those who know the rules of the game better. It's the others that sink down occasionally, below the surface of the sea.

Dorothee Wenner

The freedom factory

As Sweden's once-flourishing car industry collapsed, the southern city of Malmö emerged as a new centre for global car imports. *Yarden*, a vast trans-shipment hub handling 500,000 brand-new vehicles annually, represents a hidden enclave of low-wage immigrant workers. It is an enclosed, segmented freedom factory under constant surveillance, where the slightest movement is supervised and all events are recorded; a prison where labour is so cheap no one cares if it's wasted. *Yarden* explores how far we are willing to go to help another person and what we are prepared to sacrifice when it truly matters.

Måns Månsson

"Self-hatred is a form of narcissism"

Yarden tells the story of a downfall: a man loses his identity, his economic, moral, and emotional basis. How did you come up with the story?

Måns Månsson: I had just finished another film and was asked to read the novel by Kristian Lundberg. I was struck by the description of this place called *Yarden* and felt that maybe this could be a strikingly visual and powerful metaphor for contemporary Sweden and our own identity crisis.

What was your work with novelist Kristian Lundberg and screenwriter Sarah Nameth like? Did you work together?

Kristian was not involved in the screenwriting process. He gave the project his blessing, but Sara wrote the screenplay. Our working relationship was very close and we discussed ideas throughout the entire screenwriting process.

The protagonist loses his job as a literary critic when he writes a damning review of his own book. How interested were you in the drama of an artist caught between narcissism and self-hatred?

In a way, I think self-hatred is a form of narcissism. Both are luxuries we indulge in when we don't have to respond to external pressures. In the end, I essentially became more interested in the ways narcissism and sanctimoniousness transmute into self-preservation when basic needs are at stake, one's livelihood for example.

Music is a strong element in the film. Why did you choose pieces from Verdi's opera Rigoletto?

The editor, George Cragg, and I worked quite a lot with music when editing my last couple of films. He suggested it one day. Sometimes these things work and sometimes they don't. But our poet protagonist is a kind of contemporary jester and I love that motif of the ominous 'curse' in the prelude.

The images at the car yard match the loss of human individuality. Are the depictions in the film of working conditions at the car yard realistic? What was your research like beforehand?

Kristian Lundberg's original story is a poetic eyewitness account of *Yarden* conveyed in fragments. In order to create a dramatic narrative we had to take great liberties with the text. Our aim was never to recreate a documentary realism; we were more interested in a kind of verisimilitude that would translate the mood of the original text. Nevertheless, we carried out a fair amount of research to get the fundamentals

right and confirm Kristian's account. We talked to several people who had worked at *Yarden* and these conversations informed and inspired the entire screenwriting process.

How did you cast the workers? Are they partly real workers from the yard?

Yes, some of them have previously worked at *Yarden* and they added a great deal of authenticity to the drama.

What were the production conditions like?

We were not allowed to shoot in the port of Malmö. The material was too sensitive and as a result the Swedish authorities said no. In the end, we were very fortunate to be able to shoot in Bremerhaven instead. They were incredibly generous with their time and knowledge and helped us during the planning phase and throughout the entire shoot.

Interview: Gabriela Seidel-Hollaender, January 2016



© Sara Mac Key

Måns Månsson was born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1982. He earned his MFA from the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. *Yarden* is his fourth feature-length film.

Films

2001: *Clyde* (5 min.). 2003: *Stockholm Street* (5 min.). 2005: *Kinchen* (30 min.). 2006: *RDC* (5 min.). 2008: *H:r Landshövding/Mr. Governor* (81 min., Berlinale Forum 2009). 2012: *Hassel – Privatspanarna/Roland Hassel* (74 min.). 2014: *Stranded in Canton* (80 min.). 2016: *Yarden / The Yard*.