



WAR OF ART



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THE TRAILER

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE - 90"

SYNOPSIS

What happens if a group of international artists go to North Korea to teach local artists about subversive art and rebellion? How much will the totalitarian regime tolerate before they intervene? And what will happen with the man responsible for the project, Norwegian artist Morten Traavik, if the art exchange turns into a scandal of international proportions?

Spring 2016: 10 different artists from around the world go to Pyongyang in North Korea. For ten days they will exhibit their most controversial art to North Korean artists and challenge their way of thinking. The project could be a groundbreaking step towards opening a cultural exchange with the outside world. At the same time the authorities could try to use the project as a tool for propaganda. There is hope that the art academy can act as a "Trojan horse" in a society without rebellion.

This film will present a unique perspective on North Korean culture. Telling a story about a fascinating, but hidden country with unprecedented access. Norsk Fjernsyn from Norway and Berlin-based Story House Productions are going to document this one of a kind story in co-production.

North Korea is regarded as the world's most isolated country. A totalitarian dynasty, where the leader Kim Jong-Un keeps the people oblivious of the world outside. Political activists and their families are being imprisoned, for even the merest rebellious statements. How is it possible to be a true artist in a regime like North Korea?



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North Korean artists are known for their technical abilities, some of them with world-class skills in music, dance and visual arts. But their only function seems to be to support the regime. Isn't art supposed to challenge and provoke? To create awareness? How free is an artist from North Korea? And what can be achieved in a two week provisory art academy in Pyongyang – led by a Norwegian?

MORTEN TRAAVIK – THE MAN BEHIND THE IDEA.

Norwegian artist Morten Traavik is a controversial figure. Originally, he is a theater director, educated in Russia and based in Stockholm, Sweden. Traavik has been responsible for a string of performance oriented art projects: Miss Landmine Angola (2008) and Miss Landmine Cambodia (2009) received international attention.

But his most controversial projects have been his different art-performances regarding North Korea. Traavik is one of the very few international artists who have had

exhibitions in Pyongyang. He has staged a celebration of the Norwegian Independence Day in North Korea, as well as putting on a tribute concert for the Norwegian pop band a-ha – by North Korean accordion players. Traavik gained the respect of the authorities in North Korea and has a unique status in the country. In summer 2015, he arranged a live performance of the Slovenian Avantgarde band Laibach in Pyongyang. He is one of extremely few foreigners who seem to have some sort of full freedom in the country – one of the other being US basketball star Dennis Rodman.

How is this possible? Is he just a pawn in the governments bizarre PR-game or is it the other way around? Is it the media who is being played by Traavik? There are lots of theories regarding Traaviks work in North Korea and conservatives in Norway have condemned him. But who knows? The only thing we do know is that Morten Traavik has unique access to a story in North Korea – a story that's not completely controlled by the government.



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THE PROJECT:

Traavik brings 10 artists to North Korea: Norwegian painter Henrik Placht and nine other artists from Germany, Sweden, France, UK, China, Palestine and the US. Lots of them very controversial in various ways and the question is: what do they want to achieve with this project?

The goal is a common exhibition with selected earlier works. In addition they will teach the North Koreans about western art and the way themselves see their art. All the international artists work within genres that are non-existent in North Korea.

Traavik believes that the point of the academy is to test the North Koreans tolerance towards the western artists, and the presumption that the tolerance is very limited. At the same time he is fully aware that he is bringing with him a bunch of "loose cannons", known to create controversies in some of the worlds most liberal and tolerant

countries. It is also a fact that an international scandal involving North Korea can work magic for an artist's career. The consequences of an "incident" in Pyongyang could be dramatic for all the people involved, including Traavik himself. "We will see how many will make it back home", he says.



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**WAR OF ART - AN INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTION
WITH NORWEGIAN AND GERMAN FACTUAL PRODUCERS**

Norway – *Norsk fjernsyn AS* was founded in March 2013. It is owned by the four senior producers and Monday Media (Danish). Norsk Fjernsyn AS is located in Oslo where around 20 people produce documentaries, documentary series and comedy shows. The company received a number of TV- and film awards (4 “Gullruten” - The Norwegian TV awards). 7 documentaries and 5 series have already been broadcasted since 2013. Currently 5 documentary projects are in production with Norwegian broadcasters.

PRODUCER

Hans Lukas Hansen is one of four founders of Norsk Fjernsyn AS. The company is one of Norway’s foremost providers of documentaries.

www.norskjernsyn.no

Germany – *STORY HOUSE MEDIA GROUP* creates, produces, and delivers innovative, compelling, and award-winning multi-platform content for major television networks and high-profile clients worldwide. With offices in Washington D.C., Berlin, Munich, and Halifax, STORY HOUSE MEDIA GROUP offers international production partnerships, major talent, and established executives. STORY HOUSE MEDIA GROUP is a global multi-media enterprise that specializes in creating and producing exceptionally diverse, distinctive, and award-winning non-fiction television, documentary, digital, and scripted content. Their clients include Discovery, National Geographic, OWN Canada, CBC, Travel Channel, ID: Investigation Discovery, Smithsonian Channel, BIO, Spiegel TV, ZDF, ProSieben, and RTL.



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CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

Andreas Gutzeit serves as Chief Creative Officer of Story House Media Group and General Manager of Story House Pictures Inc. He is responsible for coordinating international project development sales and new media's activities while spearheading development, production, and sales of the group's Fiction department. Andreas Gutzeit began his career with ABC News, where he worked on Prime Time Live, Nightline, and World News with Peter Jennings. Co-founder of Story House Productions, award-winning writer, producer, and director, Andreas Gutzeit has executive produced and directed numerous series and specials for National Geographic, Discovery Channel, PBS, CourtTV/TruTV, Channel 4 (UK), ZDF, ProSieben and others.

<http://www.storyhousepro.com>

DIRECTOR

Tommy Gulliksen is founder and producer in Norsk Fjernsyn. He has directed and produced almost thirty documentary films. Gulliksen has been awarded with four Gullruten (The Norwegian TV-awards) and the Nympe d'Or in Monte Carlo 2012 for the documentary "Terror Island" about the terror attacks in Oslo and Utoya.

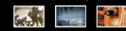
https://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tommy_Gulliksen
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