



EXTREME STRONG FILM
★★★★ INDEBIOSCOOP

A VISUAL ODE TO A PRIMEVAL LANDSCAPE
★★★★ VOLKSKRANT

THE 2019 FILM MOMENT
TROUW

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★★★★ ½ FILMVANDAAG



PRESS KIT MAY 2019

HOW TO LIVE IN A WORLD THAT CONFLICTS WITH YOUR IDEALS

SHEEPHERO

SHEEPHERO.NL



SCHAPENHELDFILM.NL

a film by **TON VAN ZANTVOORT**

DIRECTOR, CINEMATOGRAPHER & EDITOR: TON VAN ZANTVOORT. EDITING ADVICE: JOOST SEELN, RALF VERBEEK, GYS ZEVENBERGEN, BARBARA HIN. SOUND: ANNEROSE LANGEVELD, OLIVIER NIJS, IRIS VAN DE RIJT. MUSIC: ROY BEMELMANS. SOUND DESIGN: JEROEN GOEIJERS. EFFECTS & GRADING: NEWTON FILM. GRADING ADVICE: RAMON DE JONG. DELIVERIES: ROB MAAS. INTERN: IRIS VAN DE RIJT. ARTWORK: NEWTON SOLUTIONS. PRODUCERS: SERIOUSFILM, MARC THELOSEN, KOERT DAVIDSE. PRODUCER: NEWTON FILM, TON VAN ZANTVOORT. LINE PRODUCER: NEWTON FILM, ANNEROSE LANGEVELD. COMMISSIONING EDITOR: OMBROEP BRABANT, LOUÏ DONOERS. COMMISSIONING EDITOR DOCUMENTARIES: KRO-NCRV, JELLE PETER DE RUITER. PRODUCER DOCUMENTARIES: KRO-NCRV, YOLANDE VAN DER BLIJ. THEATRICAL DISTRIBUTION NL: WINDMILL FILM DISTRIBUTION. WORLD SALES: FILMS TRANSIT. THIS FILM WAS SUPPORTED BY THE DUTCH CULTURAL MEDIA FUND, THE NETHERLANDS FILM FUND, AND BRABANTSE BEAUTIES. FOLLOW US ON WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SHEEPHERO

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IN DUTCH THEATERS FEBRUARI 21ST IN BELGIUM THEATERS MAY 15TH



'Openness, peace, space...

A simple life...

Or so I thought.'

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Trailer 2 minutes



Movie 81 minutes | password on request





*'Every two months a shepherd
is taken over by the cartel.'*

INFORMATION

FILM TITLE	<u>SHEEP HERO</u>
LENGTH	81 min for cinema or tv / 58 min for tv only
DATE OF COMPLETION	November 14th 2018
WORLD PREMIERE	November IDFA 2018 Amsterdam
WEBSITE	sheephero.nl
EMAIL	info@sheephero.nl
FACEBOOK	facebook.com/sheephero
IMDB	www.imdb.com/title/tt8486464/
ISAN	ISAN 0000-0004-D799-0000-O-0000-0000-2
SCREENER (FULL MOVIE 81 MIN)	vimeo.com/newtonfilm/sheephero
SCREENER (TV VERSION 58 MIN)	vimeo.com/newtonfilm/sheephero58
TRAILER (2 MIN)	vimeo.com/newtonfilm/sheepherotrailer
SHOOTING FORMAT	RED 3840 × 2160 (4K UHD), color
EXHIBITION FORMAT	DCP 2K flat (1998x1080), XYZ colorspace encoded in JPEG2000
FRAME RATE	25 fps
ASPECT RATIO	1:85 (1998x 1080)
AUDIO	5.1
OTHER AVAILABLE FORMATS	UHD (3840X2160) / HD h264 mp4 1.78 (16:9) audio LtRt / 25 fps
ORIGINAL TITLE	SCHAPENHELD
GERMAN/ FRENCH/ SPANISH TITLE:	SCHAFEHELD/ LE HÉROS DU TROUPEAU/ EL HEROE DE LAS OVEJAS
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE	Dutch
SUBTITLES	English / French/ Spanish / Greek
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	The Netherlands
COUNTRIES OF FILMING	The Netherlands / Romania
CATEGORIES	Human interest, intimate portrait, nature, environment, drama, culture, neoliberalism, cultural heritage
DIRECTOR / PRODUCER	Ton van Zantvoort -NEWTON film
DIRECTOR'S FIRST FEATURE LENGTH FILM	yes
CO-PRODUCER	seriousFilm - Marc Thelosen Koert Davidse
THEATRICAL DISTRIBUTION NL/ BEL/ FR	Windmill Film Distribution (NL) / Bedazzle (BE) / Justedoc (FR)
WORLD SALES	Films Transit International - Jan Rofekamp
DUTCH BROADCASTERS	Omroep Brabant KRO-NCRV



'I do worry about it.

It is everything I got.'

LOGLINE | SYNOPSIS

LOGLINE (11 words, 45 characters)

How to live in a world that conflicts with your ideals?

LOGLINE (17 words, 93 characters)

A traditional shepherd is forced to innovate in a neo-liberal world that conflicts with his idealistic views.

SYNOPSIS (61 words, 274 characters)

Shepherd Stijn has a romantic world view, but his idealism clashes with the harsh reality of having to be a modern entrepreneur. In this poignant and cinematic documentary we come close to Stijn and his family in their quest to keep the tradition of sheep herding alive. Will his struggle pay off or is he forced to go with the flock?

SYNOPSIS (187 words, 915 characters)

SHEEP HERO tells the story of Shepherd Stijn, an outspoken idealist who may have been born in the wrong place and era. He feels at home on the quiet heathlands tending his sheep, far away from today's hectic Western society. Stijn and his family fight to maintain their quiet and simple life, but this is proving to be increasingly difficult in a densely populated, modern world where the power of money and mass production outweighs good intentions and slow traditions. The family is heading towards a turning point: they can either continue their downward spiral or throw in the towel.

The documentary starts from the romantic idea of living a mindful life as a sheep herder, but then clearly reveals the frustration of a non-conformist who is only trying to live his own life. The beautiful images and storyline of the documentary clearly depict the constant physical and mental struggle of the protagonist as he tries to strike a balance between his ancient profession and being a modern-day entrepreneur. Stijn has to make a choice, does he keep on fighting the system or is there another option?

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'I'm here to shine and you take it off.'

'-Yep, I'm toning you down.'

SYNOPSIS

SYNOPSIS (103 words, 542 characters)

Ten years ago, director Ton van Zantvoort became friends with one of the last traditional Dutch shepherds. Throughout the years he noticed how the relaxed and cheerful shepherd was becoming bitter and short-tempered. A traditional shepherd losing his hair overnight, because of extreme stress: what a paradox. Was herding sheep not supposed to be the most relaxed and romantic profession in the world?

"SHEEP HERO" is a 81-minute, poignant, cinematic documentary about a traditional shepherd who is forced to innovate in a neoliberal world that conflicts with his idealistic views. Will his struggle pay off or is he forced to go with the flock?

SYNOPSIS (294 words)

Ten years ago, director Ton van Zantvoort became friends with one of the last traditional shepherds in the Netherlands. He had a perfect life: a loving wife, a flock of sheep, and was living in nature as we all once did and often still long for. Throughout the years the filmmaker noticed how the relaxed, cheerful and passionate shepherd was becoming bitter and increasingly short-tempered. A traditional shepherd losing his hair overnight, because of extreme stress: what a paradox. Was herding sheep not supposed to be the most relaxed and romantic profession in the world? 'The silent heath is no longer quiet. There is a war going on in the heathlands' and so the story began.

Stijn's environment is closing in on him. In an overregulated society his quest for freedom is a struggle almost too hard to bear. His resentment is palpable, but there is also his stubbornness and determination to see it through to the end. He wants to keep his herd and the heathlands healthy and faces many obstacles along the way. Who looks out for the cultural heritage that is sheep herding? And are we able to salvage beauty amongst all our freeways and advancing industrial zones and suburbs. Life will be irrevocably different if the herd goes, as with it the craft will also vanish. Is it too late to save Stijn's dream?

With no voice-over and very little interviews, this 81-minute cinematic story is told in an observational cinema vérité style. Where Stijn goes, the camera follows and, as in direct cinema, we become unaware of the camera's presence.

The feature-length documentary shows the hardships of herding sheep in today's neoliberal world and the harsh reality of a contemporary entrepreneur trying to keep his business going. Anything but a dream job. Will his struggle pay off or is he forced to go with the flock?



*'They hardly touched your grass,
you whiner.'*

MAIN CHARACTER

MAIN CHARACTER (57 words)

Shepherd Stijn has chosen to live as a free man, supporting his family in an honest and sustainable way. Or so he thought. But modern neoliberal life has its demands and grinds him down bit by bit. What is left of his freedom, when he's constantly fighting to protect it? Is there a solution?

(alternative 163 words)

What is interesting about Stijn is that he is not your typical easy-to-like protagonist. He is a true idealist at heart. He believes in people looking out for one another, living in close connection with nature and being self-sufficient. However, he finds his pure, uncompromising way of life more and more at odds with the world around him. A world that is driven by money, technology and mass consumption.

A world that favours those who 'go with the flock' and makes it impossible for Stijn to realize his dream. Sure, Stijn is not a born businessman, but it is mainly this contrast between how the world should be and reality that has made him quite bitter. We see a man who is grumpy and jagged, but a loving father and husband at the same time. Stijn keeps at it, looking for new ways to survive and support his family. Trying to get by without losing yourself, isn't that what we are all doing?

(alternative 105 words)

We all have visions of a happy and free life. Sheperd Stijn is no exception. But unlike many others, Stijn followed that vision. He wanted to live off the land, honest and free, supporting himself and his family in a sustainable way, herding his flock of sheep on the empty heathlands. But in our neoliberal times all space for freedom seems to be eaten up both by European food regulations and by the free market. Stijn feels the fences of life closing in. The only space left is his inner freedom. But he never learned how to handle his anger and bitterness. Is there yet another, final escape?



'Times change.'

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT (522 words)

Ten years ago I became friends with Stijn, one of the last traditional shepherds in the Netherlands. He had a perfect life, a loving wife, was living in nature as we all once did and often still long for. Throughout the years however, I noticed how the relaxed, cheerful and passionate shepherd became bitter and increasingly short-tempered. A traditional shepherd losing his hair overnight, because of extreme stress. How paradoxical. Was herding sheep not supposed to be the most relaxed and romantic profession in the world? 'The silent heath is no longer quiet. There is a war going on,' Stijn said to me and so the story began.

We live in a world that is defined by economic laws and this has penetrated deeply into one of the most romantic professions in the world. How does Stijn deal with the frustration of losing control over his existence?

In many ways I am like Stijn. We both live in a world that is at odds with our ideals. I too chose an insecure, creative existence because of my ideals. I am passionate, emotional and also feel outrage against the injustice in the world. In my own way I try to contribute to a better world by making films about these topics. I too experience the tension, pressure and stress that Stijn has, having a family to take care of. I too am a small entrepreneur who cannot escape innovation. Wouldn't we all like to go back to nature, to real life, to what it's all about? But how far should you go to try and realise your ideals? And isn't it easier to just follow the herd?

I see the world around me as a visual, narrative source. Looking at, wondering about and consciously experiencing what is happening around me is a feeling I am trying to instil in the audience. As a filmmaker I look for themes that may seem to only represent small and everyday issues, but I use them to discuss bigger, universal themes. Not in order to make a didactic statement but to encourage viewers to think about themselves, about the world we live in and about what binds us as people.

My films are about people I meet; about the world we live in and how small it has become. Looking back at my films, many protagonists share the same motivation. They are all trying to live and realise their dreams. People who hold up a confronting mirror to us in our relatively carefree existence. These people who suffer the consequences of our capitalist economy, which can only be maintained if there is sufficient growth and profit. That's why we have to always consume more and produce quicker. It is a paradigm of infinite growth on a finite planet. The unabated global economic growth with its large-scale destruction of global ecosystems, which brings financial gain to only few and high social costs to many, is no longer tenable. Although a growing number of people realise this, there are only few who actually do something about it. People who go against the current, or strive for their ideals, regardless of the cost. This is what appealed to me when I met Stijn. He made a conscious choice for a different, more sustainable lifestyle. But is such a lifestyle still an option in our current society?



'Large-scale food producers are cutting down on the environment and animal welfare.'

'Men are replaced by machines. They win with cheap production.'

CREW



TON VAN ZANTVOORT | SCRIPT | DIRECTOR | CINEMATOGRAPHER | EDITOR [IMDB](#)

Dutch director and cinematographer whose works have screened at numerous prestigious film festivals. His work has been broadcast all over the world and he has won dozens of awards.

newtonfilm.nl | tonvanzantvoort.nl



JOOST SEELLEN | SCRIPT & EDITING COACH | [IMDB](#)

He focuses on documentaries that challenge and surprise and clearly bear the director's signature: form and content reinforcing each other. Films that bring the viewer close to the perception of the main characters and in which the special and tense relationship between the individual and the surrounding world plays an important role.

zuidenwind.nl



RALF VERBEEK | CO-EDITOR | [IMDB](#)

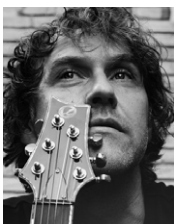
"You can use as many tricks and manipulations as you want, but the truth and honesty touches the heart of your audience the most. I like to play with that. Film must continue to surprise."

ralffilm.nl/



GYS ZEVENBERGEN | CO-EDITOR | [IMDB](#)

To write is human, to edit is divine. With more than 50 films to his name and even more awards, he is one of the best editors in the Netherlands. Editing makes the movie and Zevenbergen has been editing since 1985; his films have been screened at prominent film festivals around the world ever since.



JEROEN GOEIJERS | SOUND DESIGNER | [IMDB](#)

For the past 25 years he has composed music and designed sound for over 200 films for the international industry which have been shown and awarded on many International film festivals (a.o. Toronto, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Berlin, Utah, New York).

jeroengoeijers.nl

CREW

'I want to make my life an adventure.

You only live once.'



ROY BEMELMANS | MUSIC COMPOSER | [IMDB](#)

"Subtlety and impact don't have to be mutually exclusive." In this one phrase, composer Roy Bemelmans summarizes the unique musical signature that has established him at the forefront of today's new generation of orchestral composers. His work draws parallels to peers and heroes such as James Horner, Max Richter and Mychael Danna.

roy-bemelmans.com



OLIVIER NIJS | SOUND | [IMDB](#)

To truly find the sound, that's what I listen for. A matter of craft, trial and error, and being in the right place at the right time. And then when I manage to catch that moment, it just makes my day.

oliviernijs.nl



ANNEROSE LANGEVELD | LINE PRODUCER | SOUND | [IMDB](#)

Annerose has been working with the director for more than ten years and they complement each other perfectly. With great precision and diligence Annerose creates work that touches people and makes them think of the role humans play in this world.



MARC THELOSEN | CO-PRODUCER | [IMDB](#)

Marc is creative producer at the Rotterdam-based production company seriousFilm. He produced many award-winning art films, animations, film essays, and documentaries, reaching a variety of audiences around the world.

seriousfilm.nl



KOERT DAVIDSE | CO-PRODUCER | [IMDB](#)

Koert started his career as a script writer. In 2002 he directed his first long documentary *The Flood*. His second long documentary *Sybold van Ravesteyn: architect for eternity* was seriousFilm's first production in 2005, since then he delivered over 8 short and long documentaries, and has many more to come.

seriousfilm.nl



"With great humanity van Zantvoort shows us a different world in which all human life is valuable."

DIRECTOR

BIOGRAPHY (139 words)

Ton van Zantvoort (Heesch, 1979) graduated with credits at the Academy for Visual Arts in Breda in 2003. In 2006, his debut film [GRITO de PIEDRA](#) premiered at IDFA and was broadcast by ARTE/ZDF and other stations. His second feature [a BLOOMING BUSINESS](#), a co-production with the Dutch VPRO, was screened at major film festivals, broadcast worldwide and won a dozen awards, such as at DOK Leipzig. In addition to producing his own documentary films, van Zantvoort has also produced documentaries for other directors: [DAY is DONE*](#) by acclaimed director Guido Hendriks (premiered at IDFA), [FALLING](#) by Jef Monté and recently a feature length film about the enigmatic artist [Dick Verduelt](#). Besides longer films van Zantvoort has made dozens of short (art) films, gives master classes at (art) academies in Europe and Canada and was a jury member for several international film festivals and for organisations such as Panasonic International.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR (122 words)

[Ton van Zantvoort](#) observes with great attention and takes us into the worlds of people on the edge, people who try to survive but are confronted by external forces such as tourism, international commerce and mass consumption. With great humanity, van Zantvoort shows us a different world in which all human life is valuable. His films are characterized by a language of intimate images, a poetic structure and enormous involvement. In his lyrical documentaries with socio-economic overtones he usually resists the temptation of doing interviews. His work is original and testifies to a great effort of will by the maker. The vision of a Western civilized person who holds up a mirror to us. A confronting mirror, but one that invites you to take a long good look.

AWARDS AS DIRECTOR (selection)

Green Warsaw Award, Millenium Docs Against Gravity, Poland, 2019
Best European Cinematography award, European Cinematography Awards/ ECA, 2019
La Trois Distribution award, Millenium Film Festival, Brussels, 2019
Best film and best director, NVIFF, New Vision International Film Festival NL, 2019
Top 10 Best of IDFA Audience favourites, IDFA, NL, 2019
Golden NL-Award for best regional broadcasting production of 2015, the Netherlands, 2016
NL Award for best documentary for a regional broadcaster in 2015, the Netherlands, 2016
Trevignano FilmFest Award, Italy, 2013
Honourable mention, best international short film, Planet in Focus, Toronto, Canada, 2011
Jury award, FIFDH, Festival International du film des droits de l'homme de Paris, France, 2011
Audience award & special jury mention, The Art of the Document, Warsaw, Poland, 2010
Golden Olive awards, best documentary & best cinematography, International Festival Montenegro, 2010
Audience award, Millennium Film Festival, Brussels, Belgium, 2010
Press award, best film of the FICA festival, Goiás, Brazil, 2010
Best Treatment jury award, Cinema Planeta, Cuernavaca, Mexico, 2010
Healthy Workplaces Film Award, DOK Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany, 2009
Special mention Open Eyes Award, Med Film festival, Rome, Italy, 2009
Audience award Mixed Greens, Planet in Focus, Toronto, Canada, 2009
Honourable mention, Media city 13, Visual Art Festival, 2007



*"High tempo and successive plot twists
as in a feature film." BN DeStem*

DIRECTOR

FILMOGRAPHY AS DIRECTOR (selection)

[ALL OF US](#), 85 minutes, in production

[SHEEP HERO](#), 81 minutes, in co-production with seriousFilm, 2018

[THE BENNO TAPES](#), 54 minutes, in collaboration with Van Osch Films, 2015

[Kees en Mien](#), 30 min, in co-production with Zuidenwind film, 2011

[a BLOOMING BUSINESS](#), 52 min, co-production VPRO, 2009

[GRITO de PIEDRA](#), 55 min, 2006, World Premiere IDFA

other films: [Past as future](#), 18 min, 2011; [Lovely Planet](#), 8 min, 2009; Carrousel, 7 min, 2010; Pack, 5 min, 2005, Items, 25 min, 2003, Khamuvillage, 25 min, 2003

FILMOGRAPHY AS PRODUCER (selection)

[Dick Verdult](#) - It Is True But Not Here, 70 min, directed by Luuk Bouwman, 2017

[FALLING](#), 25 min, Teledoc Campus, directed by Jef Monté, 2014

The Loving Heart, 71 min, co-producer, camera, editing consultant, directed by Wouter Verhoeven, 2013

[Day is Done](#)*, 30 min, directed by Guido Hendriks, 2010

FESTIVAL SCREENINGS (small selection)

National

IDFA International Documentary Film Festival, Amsterdam (2018, 2010, 2006, 2005);

NFF Dutch Film Festival, Utrecht (2014, 2009, 2007, 2005);

Europe

DOK Leipzig, Germany; Visions du Réel, Switzerland, Thessaloniki Documentary Festival, Greece (2009, 2019); DOK.fest, München, Festival dei Popoli, Italy; Documenta Madrid, Spain; Millennium Docs Against Gravity, Poland; Docpoint Helsinki, Edinburgh International Film Festival, UK; Art of the Document Multimedia Festival, Poland; Split International Festival of New film, Croatia; International Millennium Film Festival, Belgium; International Film Festival for Human Rights, various locations in France; International Audiovisual Festival of Biodiversity, Italy; Kinookus FFF, Croatia; Sunchild Film Festival, Armenia; This Human World, Austria; Jihlava IDFF, Czech Republic

World

Vancouver International Film Festival, Canada; Planet in Focus, Toronto; Montreal Human Rights Film Festival; Margaret Mead Film Festival & travelling selection, New York, Chicago, Florida, Vermont, Indiana; BAFICI Buenos Aires; DOCSMX Festival Internacional de Cine Documental, Mexico; Animal & Nature Film Festival, Beijing, China; Film Festival Arlington, Virginia, USA; Duke City DocFest, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA; Criterio Ambiental, Costa Rica; Short Film Festival, Moscow; International Documentary Festival, Agadir, Morocco



[click to download high resolution stills](#)

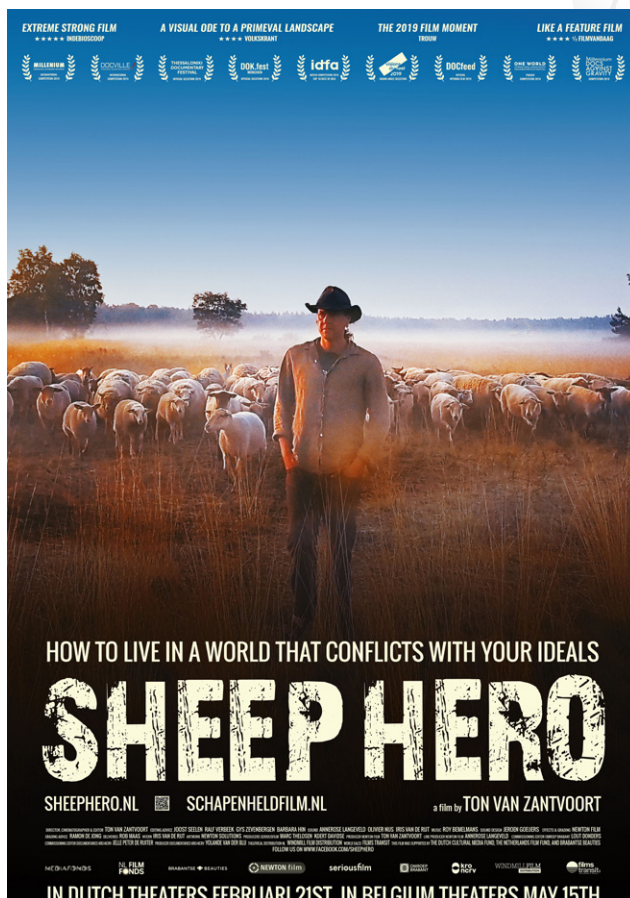


ART WORK

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Flyer



Poster

For more artwork in other languages, please contact us

CREDITS

(SHORT)

'It's a vulnerable, beautiful ecosystem that we should be proud of.

As I see it, the market is raping that system.'

DIRECTOR & CINEMATOGRAPHER **TON VAN ZANTVOORT**

SOUND **ANNEROSE LANGEVELD**
IRIS VAN DE RIJT
OLIVIER NIJS

EDITING **TON VAN ZANTVOORT**
EDITING ADVICE **JOOST SEELEN**
RALF VERBEEK
GYS ZEVENBERGEN
BARBARA HIN

MUSIC **ROY BEMELMANS**
SOUND DESIGN **JEROEN GOEIJERS**

VISUAL EFFECTS AND GRADING **NEWTON FILM**
GRADING ADVICE **RAMON DE JONG**
DELIVERIES **ROB MAAS**

PRODUCTION INTERN **IRIS VAN DE RIJT**

ENGLISH SUBTITLES **JOZEF BRIENEN**

CO-PRODUCERS SERIOUSFILM **MARC THELOSEN**
KOERT DAVIDSE

CO-PRODUCER NEWTON FILM **TON VAN ZANTVOORT**
LINE PRODUCER NEWTON FILM **ANNEROSE LANGEVELD**

COMMISSIONING EDITOR OMROEP BRABANT **LOUT DONDERS**
COMMISSIONING EDITOR DOCUMENTARIES KRO-NCRV **JELLE PETER DE RUITER**
PRODUCER DOCUMENTARIES KRO-NCRV **YOLANDE VAN DER BLIJ**

THIS FILM IS SUPPORTED BY THE NETHERLANDS FILM FUND, THE DUTCH CULTURAL MEDIA FUND AND BRABANTSE BEAUTIES

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SCREENINGS

IDFA (International Documentary Festival Amsterdam) November 17th- 24th

DOCfeed (Eindhoven) February 21st - 24th 2019

Thessaloniki Documentary Festival (Greece) – March 6 / 7

One World Prague (Czech Republic) March 8

Docville Leuven (Belgium) March 28/30 / April 1st

Millenium Film Festival (Belgium) March 28

Visions Du Réel Nyon (Switzerland) April 6/7

DOK.Fest München (Germany) May 8th

Millenium Doc Against Gravity (Poland) May 10th

Cinema Planeta (Mexico) May 23rd

FICMEC (Tenerife) June 1st

Pelicam (Romania) June

FIDADOC (Agadir) June

Pärnu Film Festival (Estonia) June

Dutch Theatrical release (More than 1000 screenings in 50 theaters) February 21st

Belgium Theatrical release (May 15th 2019)

French Theatrical release (comming soon)

Many more festivals on the website: www.sheephero.nl

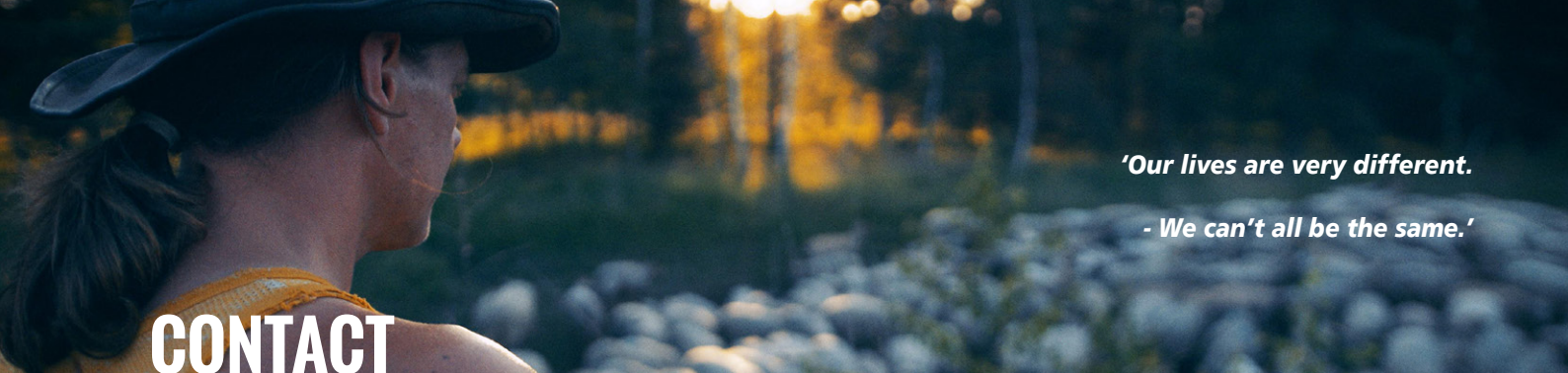
A 81-MINUTE CINEMATIC DOCUMENTARY ABOUT A TRADITIONAL DUTCH SHEPHERD WHO IS FORCED TO INNOVATE IN A NEOLIBERAL WORLD THAT CONFLICTS WITH HIS IDEALISTIC VIEWS

SHEEP HERO

SCREENINGS AT IDFA 2018 WITH Q&A

SAT	NOV 17	13:30	MUNT 13 INDUSTRY & PRESS ONLY
SAT	NOV 17	18:30	EYE CINEMA 11 WORLD PREMIERE
MON	NOV 19	16:15	TUSCHINSKI 1
TUE	NOV 20	22:15	BRASSE GROND GROTE ZAAL
FRI	NOV 23	13:45	MUNT 11
SAT	NOV 24	10:00	TUSCHINSKI 11 VOLKSKRANT-DAG
SUN	NOV 25	16:15	KETELHUIS ZAAL 1

WATCH TRAILER 



'Our lives are very different.

- We can't all be the same.'

CONTACT

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REGIONAL BROADCASTER	Omroep Brabant -Lout Donders Postbus 108 5600 AC Eindhoven The Netherlands +31(0)402949494 contact@omroepbrabant.nl www.omroepbrabant.nl
NATIONAL BROADCASTER	KRO-NCRV - Jelle Peter de Ruiter Postbus 200 1200 AE Hilversum The Netherlands +31 (0)35 - 6719455 JellePeter.deRuiter@kro-ncrv.nl www.kro-ncrv.nl
THEATRICAL DISTRIBUTION NL	Windmill Film Distribution - Wallie Pollé Amstel 266 1017 AM Amsterdam +31(0) 6 53 14 85 43 wallie@windmillfilm.com www.windmillfilm.com
INTERNATIONAL SALES	Films Transit International Jan Rofekamp 21 Place Epernay Ville Lorraine (Quebec) Canada J6Z 4K9 +31 6 5392 6555 (Europe) 1 514 862 0054 (Montreal) janrofekamp@filmstransit.com www.filmstransit.com



FAQ | TRIVIA

1. How long did the project take?

10 years ago I became friends with Stijn. From start to finish it took more than 8 years. We shot over the course of two years. Editing took two years, spanning 80 different versions and 2 picture locks. We did many test screenings with different audiences.

2. Why did you choose this way of storytelling?

I wanted to tell the story in an observational cinema vérité style, without a voice-over and with very little interviews that would explicitly emphasize the point I am making. We are very close to Stijn and as in direct cinema we become unaware of the camera's presence. I didn't want to tell the story too obviously, but rather give the audience the sense that they are discovering the story themselves and with it the heart of the film.

3. What point do you want to make?

Is it possible in our neoliberal world not to follow the flock and to what extent? And if we choose to live differently, is it worth the fight? In the film Stijn discovers that shepherds are being recognized as intangible cultural heritage. But what good is that if they are 30K short each year? Towards the end of the film our seemingly traditional shepherd is being 'exhibited' on a TV show called 'Weirdos', in an episode about bygone times. What do we really think is important in our society?

4. Did you make conscious artistic choices?

Everything is by choice. I wanted the audience to feel Stijn's stress and get close to him. I explicitly shot with a wide lens, an 1.7 aperture with lots of DOF and handheld to capture the constant movement and tension of the situation. To emphasize this tension, the film is recorded in twilight whenever possible. The sun

is only shining in the beginning, but in the rest of the film there is rain, snow, fog, wind and darkness. Most weather effects such as rain and snow were added in post. During writing I already knew I wanted to color grade everything in a 'sky on fire / blue and orange' complementary color contrast which underscores the tension and oppression.

5. What was your luckiest shot?

I feel quite lucky with many scenes, as most of the film unfolded as I had anticipated in the years before. For example in the script I wrote "Besides Anna's husband and father of Midas and Artuur, Stijn in a way is still a child living with his parents. His parents have to clean up his mess." In the film Stijn is fined because a few sheep droppings were left on the pavement in front of an ice cream parlor. As mom is sweeping up the droppings with a hand brush, the police are writing a report. I do think it has a lot to do with having the nose for being at the right place at the right time. I can't tell anything about the ending, but I am also satisfied with that.

6. Any challenges during the making?

To show that herding sheep isn't as romantic as we think, I deliberately focused on Stijn's moments of stress during shooting. The result however was, when people saw the first rough cut (with Stijn yelling and stressing most of the time), they were taken aback by that side of Stijn. I love Stijn and understand his behavior but the viewers didn't feel for him the way I wanted them to feel. A struggle during the editing was to create the exact right balance in Stijn's character: loving and passionate shepherd on one hand, burned out and angry entrepreneur on the other.

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Never follow the flock



In Ton van Zantvoort's *Sheep Hero* a traditional shepherd tries to survive within a neo-liberal, highly automated farming industry, writes Nick Cunningham.

Stijn is young and idealistic. He has hippy tendencies, breeds rare sheep and gives work to former drug addicts who find new meaning to their lives within the lush countryside among the livestock. He is married to Anna and is a devoted father to two young boys. What's more, he cuts a dashing, romantic figure in his vest and cowboy hat.

Not surprisingly, Stijn is also a non-conformist, and the powers that be who run the Brabant Estate (where he keeps his livestock) want him off their land as quickly as possible. *Sheep Hero* covers two make-or-break years for Stijn as his future, and that of his family and flock, is decided one way or the other. "For me the film is not about a shepherd, it is about living in a world of conflicting ideals, about a small entrepreneur who is trying to fight the big companies that are taking over," comments director Van Zantvoort.

Sheep Hero, supported by the Netherlands Film Fund, offers a plethora of ovine tradecraft, from sheep shearing to butchering to the intricate management of accounts, but all the time we are witness to Stijn's increasing disappointment and frustration as subsidies are withdrawn or as fines are issued for illegal use of the highway in transporting the sheep between pastures. And with Stijn's change in circumstances comes an inevitable change in mood as he becomes incessantly short-tempered, moody and irascible.

"When people saw the first rough cut (with Stijn yelling and stressing most of the time), they were taken aback by that side of him," admits the director. "I love Stijn and understand his behaviour, but the viewers didn't feel for him the way I wanted them to feel, so a struggle during the editing was to create the exact right balance in Stijn's character: loving and passionate shepherd on one hand, burned out and angry entrepreneur on the other."

Stijn nevertheless receives the unwavering support of his wife and co-workers. His mum and dad are always on hand too, and are even prepared to perform the loyal parental task of cleaning up poo, albeit that of a herd of sheep, off the local streets.

The cinematography in *Sheep Hero* is at times stunning, with early establishing shots of the bucolic countryside at dusk shot on a Sony Red camera with a wide lens and

very open aperture, his skies aflame with contrasting blue and orange grading. Van Zantvoort's use of drones is no less impressive as Stijn and his flock diminish in size and importance, reflecting the director suggests, the perceived perception of the shepherd by his landlord.

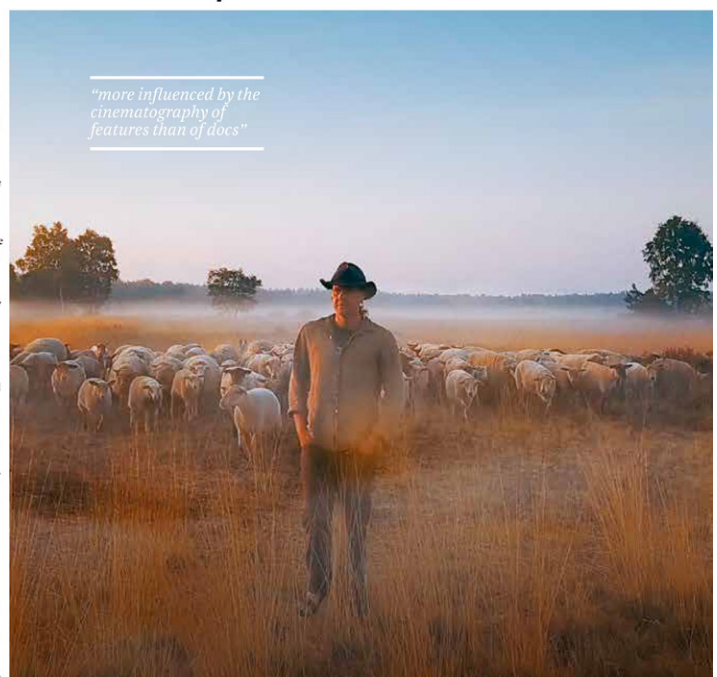
One fantastic aerial shot depicts the flock as a storm vortex, with a solitary cow at its eye. Another high 'white on white' shot of the sheep against the snowy terrain could have been designed by Jasper Johns. Van Zantvoort stresses his admiration for the work of esteemed DoP Emmanuel Lubezki (*Children of Men*, *The Revenant*) while determining his visual choices. "I am more influenced by the cinematography of features than of documentaries."

The project started out as a regional film but grew in scope, especially when broadcaster KRO-NCRV came on board, resulting in a second picture lock. It had always been Van Zantvoort's intention to make a feature and the broadcaster's major suggestion was to make Stijn more sympathetic at the beginning so his decline seemed more stark. "And they had a point. I think the film is better now...I am very happy and grateful the film now will be broadcast nationally."

Now that the film is finished, surely Van Zantvoort can relax and watch other people's docs throughout the festival. Not at all. "IDFA has programmed my film eight times, so I will be busy handing out flyers!"

Sheep Hero  IDFA Dutch Doc Competition Ton van Zantvoort

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Director & script: Ton van Zantvoort
Production: NEWTON Film
Co-production: SeriousFilm
Sales: Films Transil