

THE NORDIC LANDSCAPE IN CONTEMPORARY FILM

WINTER 2024

115 Lawrence Hall—Free and open to the public—All showings at 7:00 p.m.

All five Nordic countries—Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland—have remarkably active film industries. Come sample a rich variety of contemporary films, all of them in the original language with subtitles in English. Each film is preceded by a brief lecture by instructor Whitey Lueck and is followed by a short discussion. Films are screened under the Educational Fair Use provision of U.S. Copyright Law. Maximum seating in 115 Lawrence Hall is 120; seating is first-come, first-served. (For more information, contact wlueck@uoregon.edu)

Friday, 12 January
Road North (Tie pohjoiseen)
Directed by Mika Kaurismäki

In this father-son dark comedy, Timo, an esteemed concert pianist, gets the surprise of his life when he arrives home and finds a homeless drunkard asleep outside his front door. The man, Leo, claims to be Timo's long-lost father who left the country when Timo was three and hasn't been in touch since. It turns out that slovenly and manipulative Leo has returned to bestow his legacy upon Timo, his only son, and to re-unite Timo with his estranged family. (Finland, 2012, 110 minutes)



Friday, 19 January
Hope (Håp)
Directed by Maria Sødahl

Anja and Tomas are both workaholics who adore their careers in dance and theatre and share five children in a blended family. Returning home after the debut of a ballet she directed, Anja finds Tomas once again absent and working late. Then her physician gives her a dire diagnosis that will both test the mettle of this superwoman as well as the strength of her relationship with Tomas. (Norway, 2019, 125 minutes)

Friday, 26 January
Kindertransports to Sweden
Directed by Gülseren Sengezer

This moving documentary tells the stories of four Jewish survivors of the Third Reich, now in their 80s, who as children were sent by their parents to Sweden with the so-called Kindertransports in order to save them from the Nazi terror. All four experienced a trauma which persists even today, with feelings of loss, loneliness, and a sense of guilt. Their stories depict the tragic fate of the “winners” who are at the same time the losers of so much. (Sweden, 2019, 90 minutes)



Friday, 2 February
Heartstone (Hjartasteinn)
Directed by Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson

Set in a remote fishing village far from the capital Reykjavik and against a magnificent backdrop of sea and mountains, this film follows the entanglements of two simple rural families and their kids. The film centers mainly on Thor, a sensitive twelve-year-old boy, and his slightly older buddy Kristján, but also examines the boys’ friendship with a couple of teenage girls and the kids’ problems with their roughhewn parents. (Iceland, 2016, 129 minutes)

Friday, 9 February
Hatching (Pahanhautoja)
Directed by Hanna Bergholm

A perfect family (husband, wife, young son, and daughter) enjoys a perfect moment in the perfect living room of their perfect home. But we all know what happens to perfect little families in movies: the façade cracks. In this fantasy film, 12-year-old gymnast Tinja tries desperately to please her domineering, image-obsessed mother. But then, an uninvited guest appears and cracks open the perfect family’s metaphorical façade. This “Finnish ET” was not directed by Steven Spielberg. (Finland, 2022, 91 minutes)





Friday, 16 February

All Things Fair (Lust och fägring stor)

Directed by Bo Widerberg

In Malmö, Sweden during the Second World War, Stig is a 15-year-old pupil on the verge of adulthood, and Viola is 37 years old and his teacher. He is attracted by her beauty and maturity, and she is drawn to him by his youth and innocence. At the same time, Stig becomes friends with Viola's husband, Kjell, who teaches him about classical music. This is the esteemed Bo Widerberg's last film—which was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film—and stars his son, Johan. (Sweden, 1995, 130 minutes)

Friday, 23 February

Riders of Justice (Retfærdighedens ryttere)

Directed by Anders Thomas Jensen & Nikolaj Arcel

Described as both an anti-revenge thriller and an action comedy, this thought-provoking film looks at the culture of “toxic masculinity” that prevents many men from coming to terms with the traumas they’ve faced. On the surface, however, the story goes like this: When his wife dies in a tragic train crash, Markus, a deployed military man, returns to Denmark to console his grieving teenage daughter, Mathilde. But when it’s suggested to Markus that the train crash was actually planned by a motorcycle gang called the Riders of Justice, he decides to avenge the ostensible killers of his wife. (Denmark, 2020, 116 minutes)



Friday, 1 March

Heaven's Heart (Himlens hjärta)

Directed by Simon Staho

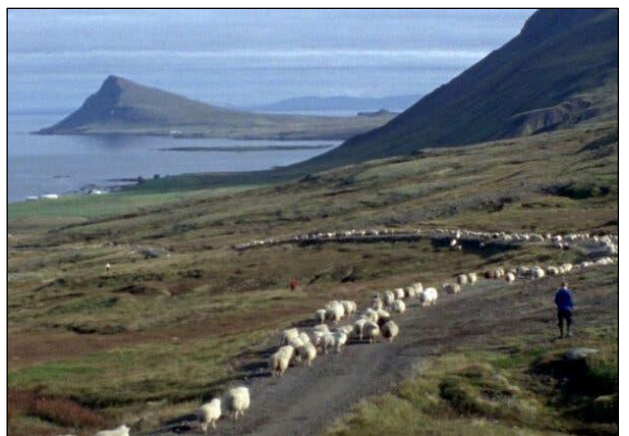
Two happily married couples in their 40s have dinner together at the home of one of the couples. The subject of adultery comes up and provokes strong reactions that cause a dramatic showdown among the four dinner mates. One movie trailer puts it more bluntly: “A faithful husband. A devoted wife. An unguarded moment. A consuming desire. A shocking betrayal.” This intense and theatrical film takes place in fewer than a half-dozen different rooms. By never moving outside, the camera keeps us tightly focused on the four actors. (Sweden, 2008, 95 minutes)

Friday, 8 March

The Last Autumn (Síðasta haust)

Directed by Yrsa Roca Fannberg

More than a thousand years ago, humans arrived with their animals on the island now called Iceland. Where the road ends, Úlfar, the last in a long line of farmers, lives with his wife, Oddny. As autumn returns, their grandchildren arrive from the city to attend the last herding of the sheep down the mountain from the summer pasture, as the farm is to be sold. This documentary chronicles the ordinary activities of the aging farming couple—eating, cooking, tending to animals—while celebrating the quiet majesty of manual labor. (Iceland, 2019, 78 minutes)



Friday, 15 March

Taste of Hunger (Smagen af sult)

Directed by Christoffer Boe

Maggi and her husband Carsten have been working together for ten years to create a special restaurant in Copenhagen with the goal of earning a Michelin star. While they appear to have a solid marriage and are decent parents, the obsessive tendencies displayed by both Maggi and Carsten are somewhat unsettling. To what lengths do you go in order to achieve your dream? At what point does that obsession negatively impact other aspects of your life? And when that happens, will you even notice? (Denmark, 2021, 104 minutes)