



LOVE

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY DAG JOHAN HAUGERUD



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2024
Official Selection

LOGLINE

In defiance of societal norms, a pragmatic doctor and a compassionate nurse seek intimacy beyond the bounds of conventional relationships

SYNOPSIS

Marianne, a pragmatic doctor, and Tor, a compassionate nurse, are both avoiding conventional relationships. One evening, after a blind date, Marianne encounters Tor on the ferry. Tor, who often spends his nights there seeking casual encounters with men, shares his experiences of spontaneous intimacy. Intrigued by his perspective, Marianne begins to explore whether casual intimacy could also be an option for her.

LOVE is part of the SEX-LOVE-DREAMS trilogy of director Dag Johan Haugerud

TRAILER



LOVE

In the words of the director:

LOVE is a romantic film exploring sexuality, relationships, and love, centered on a gay male nurse and a straight female doctor. In many ways, this film is utopian: it's about striving for sexual and emotional closeness with others without necessarily conforming to the societal norms and conventions that govern relationships.

Female sexuality, which seems to be under constant scrutiny and questioning from both men and women in many parts of society, is a central focus of the film. We have yet to reach a point where women can make choices regarding their sexuality and love life without having to defend or explain themselves. The film also suggests that certain experiences and practices within the homosexual community might offer valuable insights for broader society.

But at its core, the film's main topic is how to do good. I believe fiction plays a crucial role in envisioning alternative worlds and perspectives. It allows people to express themselves and act in ways that are often unusual. To me, an important function of fiction is to inspire new ways of thinking in real life. With *LOVE* – and the entire trilogy – my primary goal has been to convey that new ways of thinking and behaving are possible.

Written by: Dag Johan Haugerud

Production company: Motlys

Producer: Yngve Sæther, Hege Hauff Hvattum

Co-producers: Oslo Filmfond

Cinematographer/DoP: Cecilie Semec

Set Designer: Tuva Hølmekbakk

Editor: Jens Christian Fodstad

Sound Editor/Mix: Yvonne Stenberg & Gisle Tveito

Composer: Peder Kjellsby

Supported by: Norwegian film Institute, Nordic film and tv fund

World Premiere: Venice IFF 2024







Interview with the director

DAG JOHAN HAUGERUD

Where did the idea to make this film come from?

It partly came from the book "The Lonely City" by Olivia Laing, partly from preliminary work done in connection with Brynjar Bandlien's research project "All Tomorrow's Parties," and partly from a desire to work with certain actors.

In *LOVE*, we meet two people who are both seeking an alternative to the nuclear family. How limiting do you find the stereotypical attitudes towards love and relationships today?

It's primarily limiting for those who feel unfree in the face of these attitudes. And since the nuclear family forms the basis for a large part of cultural heritage and all the traditions and ceremonies associated with it, it's impossible not to relate to it. These attitudes also shape policies, making it difficult for many to imagine alternative ways of living.

You have said that *SEX*, the first film in the trilogy, is not primarily to be experienced as a realistic depiction, but rather as sketching possible worlds. To what extent does this also apply to *LOVE*? What do you hope to achieve with the viewer?

Sketching possible worlds and alternative mindsets is something film has often done, including those films referred to as escapism. They provide a picture of how things could be. For me, it's an important function of fiction. It allows people to say things and act in ways that are unusual in real life. That doesn't mean it can't happen in reality. Thus, fiction can serve as an inspiration to think differently. I think all the films in the trilogy rest on a fiction premise, but they are still entirely within the frames of what one calls realism.

Just as *SEX* was a film about sexuality without showing much sex, *LOVE* is a film about love but not with so much romance. To what extent is this a conscious strategy on your part?

I don't agree with that. There is a lot of romance in *LOVE*. A lot, I think. And *SEX* is much about sex, even though it doesn't show graphic sex. The strategy of not showing graphic sex is about trying to delve into a theme and give a sense of something true. And I think it's extremely difficult to make graphic sex on film feel true. At least I see it very rarely. Most of what I see of sex on film is not really about sex at all, but about nudity in what we recognize as sexual positions.

Which films depicting love have inspired you?

For this film? *THE GREEN RAY*, *HAIR*, *PRIEST*, *MANHATTAN*.

Would you say that the conditions for love have become easier or harder with the advent of digital meeting places like Tinder and Grindr?

The conditions for sexuality have certainly become easier. And I often hear about people finding love on Tinder, so it has probably made it easier for people to meet. But you probably need luck there as in all other areas of life. It is concerning that we entrust the most fragile and intimate aspects of life to commercial channels, but that's another matter.

LOVE is part of the SEX-LOVE-DREAMS trilogy, in what way would you say it differs from the other two films?

It has broader brushstrokes; I also think it comes across as quite unabashed in its love for the people and the city it depicts. And just as all the films have had musical references, this one perhaps most clearly shows these references.

What can we expect from DREAMS, the final part of the trilogy? How does it relate to the first two films?

DREAMS is about a young woman who experiences her first sexual awakening and soon after falls in love with her female teacher. As in *SEX* and *LOVE*, the film addresses how sexuality and sexual needs are

an individual thing and don't necessarily have anything to do with romantic love or sexual identity. Like *LOVE*, the film is also about a woman who wants to be in control of her life - her dreams, affections and mindset - without yielding to society's preconceptions about how things should be.

What has been the most important thing you wanted to convey with the entire trilogy?

That it's possible to envision a different way of thinking.

BIOGRAPHIES

DAG JOHAN HAUGERUD (born 1964) is a screenwriter and director, known for his critically acclaimed novels, feature films, and short films. His feature film *I BELONG* (2012) won the Amanda Award as well as the Canon Awards for best film, director, screenplay and supporting actress (Laila Goody). He had a sweeping success with *BEWARE OF CHILDREN* (2019): in addition to the Dragon Award for best Nordic film and actor (Henriette Steenstrup) at the Gothenburg Film Festival, it also won a record amount of nine Amanda Awards following the international premiere in Venice, including for best film, director, screenplay, and male lead. It also won the Film Critics Award, the Norwegian cinema managers' Sølvklumpen award, and the Nordic Council Film Prize. Dag Johan Haugerud has also written several novels published by the Oktober publishing house, and has created a number of critically acclaimed short films. *SEX*, the first film of the trilogy *SEX-LOVE-DREAMS* premiered at Berlinale 2024 - Panorama, where it received three awards.





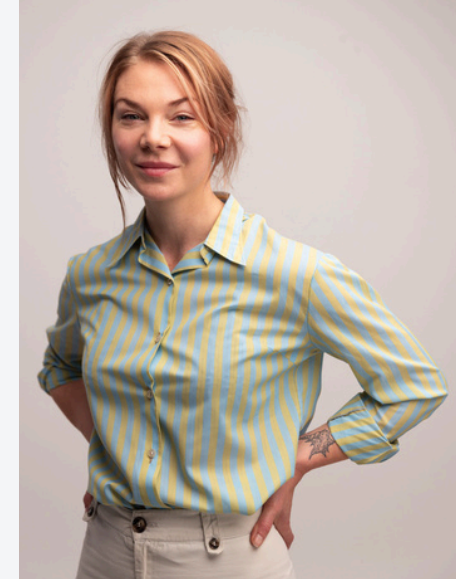
Andrea Bræin Hovig

Andrea Bræin Hovig Andrea is a singer, writer and actor, well known for her roles in *I BELONG* (2012), *I'M THE ONE YOU WANT* (2016), *AN AFFAIR* (2018), *BEWARE OF CHILDREN* (2019) and *HOPE* (2019). She won an Amanda for her role in *Hope*. She graduated from The Academy of Theatre in 1998 and has been working at the National theater since 2002.



Tayo Cittadella Jacobsen

Tayo is half Norwegian, half Italian. He is a writer, producer and actor. He also played a role in Dag Johan Haugerud's *BEWARE OF CHILDREN* (2019).



Marte Engebrigtsen

Marte graduated from The Academy of Theatre in 2017 and is known for her roles at the National theater, such as Sonja in *JOURNEY TO THE CHRISTMAS STAR* and Ingmar Bergman's mother in the play *FORTROLIGE SAMTALER*.



Thomas Gullestad

Thomas is a musician and an actor. He is most known for being a part of the hip hop group “Klovner i kamp”. In 2017 he played the lead role in *THE 12TH MAN*, a Norwegian historical drama film directed by Harald Zwart.



Lars Jacob Holm

Lars Jacob is a choreographer, dancer and actor. He is educated at the Norwegian Academy of Ballet, UiO and HiT. For the past 20 years, he has worked continuously with stage projects at home and abroad.



MOTLYS is an independent production company that has produced motion pictures like *BIG BOYS DON'T CRY* (1995), *COMRADE PEDERSEN* (2006), *THE MAN WHO LOVED YNGVE* (2008), *NORTH* (2009), *OSLO, AUGUST 31ST* (2011), *I BELONG* (2012), *LOUDER THAN BOMBS* (2015), *BEWARE OF CHILDREN* (2019), *NINJABABY* (2021), as well as the television series *HOME GROUND* (2018-19) and *POWER PLAY* (2023-24). Motlys films have competed at all the big international film festivals, including Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Sundance, and Toronto. The company has received 55 Amanda Awards for its feature films. In the fall of 2023, Motlys celebrated its 40th anniversary, making it Norway's oldest existing production company.

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