

Pers

« De Helaasheid der Dingen »

SPIEGEL ONLINE

17. Mai 2009, 08:36 Uhr

WIE IM FILM

Regisseur radelt mit Schauspielern nackt durch Cannes

Überschwang oder gekonnte Werbemaßnahme? Breit lächelnd ist der belgische Regisseur Felix van Groeningen durch die Straßen von Cannes geradelt - völlig nackt. Ebenso vier seiner Schauspieler, die in einer auf dem Filmfestival gezeigten Komödie mitwirkten.



AFP

abl/dpa

Cannes - Ein ungewöhnliches Spektakel ist den Fans am Samstag beim Filmfestival in Cannes geboten worden: Völlig hüllenlos hatten sich der belgische Regisseur Felix van Groeningen und vier seiner Schauspieler aufs Fahrrad geschwungen und radelten über die berühmte Uferpromenade des südfranzösischen Badeorts.

Die fünf spielten eine Szene ihres neuen Films "La merditude des choses / De helaasheid der dingen" (nach der Romanvorlage "Die Beschissenheit der Dinge" von Dimitri Verhulst). Die Komödie über eine Familie von Trinkern wurde am Samstag gezeigt.

Nackte Belgier in Cannes: Einer Filmszene nachempfunden

<http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/leute/0,1518,625329,00.html>

Blood, elephants and naked cyclists: 10 Cannes movie publicity stunts

- Story Highlights
- There are literally thousands of films vying for attention at Cannes Film Festival
- Publicity stunts are one way to make your movie stand out from the crowd
- They range from the wacky: Jerry Seinfeld dressed as a huge bumble bee in 2007
- To the bizarre: Belgian director Felix van Groeningen cycling nude up the Croisette

By Tom Foster
For CNN

LONDON, England (CNN) -- Competition in the movie business is cut-throat at the best of times, and even more so when it comes to Cannes.

Just take a look at the numbers: There are 20 films vying for the top prize, the coveted Palme D'Or; 20 films looking for the international recognition that winning the Un Certain Regard section of the festival could bring; nine films showing out of competition and 10 special screenings.

Few film festivals boast such imposing numbers for buyers: With 10,000 film industry professionals from 97 countries attending the Cannes Film Market, it's certainly one of the best places to get your film out there.

But, with almost 1,300 screenings and 4,500 films from 226 different exhibitors vying for attention, how on earth do you get your film noticed?


Publicity stunts for films showing at Cannes range from traditional red carpet premieres, to wacky performance art.

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld wowed fans in 2007 by being suspended from a zipwire across the harbor in a full bumblebee outfit in support of "Bee Movie." Publicity stunts: annoying or fun? Tell us in the [SoundOff](#) box below.

But unconventional approaches don't always go down so well: A bizarre stunt for Madchester movie "24 Hour Party People" in 2001 culminated in some of the film's cast being ejected from a private beach for hurling dead pigeons and fake blood at each other.

And, Belgian director Felix van Groeningen raised eyebrows last week by cycling nude through the city to promote his film "La Merditude des Choses."

READ PHOTOS



On your bike - Photo 4 of 10 HIDE CAPTIONS

Unconventional PR stunt from Belgian director Felix van Groeningen, riding nude through Cannes in support of "La Merditude des Choses" ("The Misfortunates"), which premiered on Saturday as part of the Directors' Fortnight. AFP/Getty

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Das Bild



Nur mit Käppi, Sonnenbrille und Schlappen: Regisseur Felix van Groeningen radelte lachend vorneweg

VOLLER KÖRPEREINSATZ BEI DEN FILMFESTSPIELEN



Regisseur radelt nackt durch Cannes

VIDEO

Verpacken



NACKEDEIS STATT STARS
NACKTE RADLER WERBEN
FÜR CANNES-FILM

Nackt-Alarm an der Croisette: Besucher der Filmfestspiele in Cannes staunten nicht schlecht, als sie an der Uferpromenade plötzlich diese Rad-Kolonnen entdeckten: Die Typen auf den Sätteln strampelten oben und auch unten ohne!

Die Nackt-Radler waren der belgische Regisseur Felix van Groeningen und Schauspieler aus seinem Film „La meritedu des choses“ (etwa: das Abscheuliche an den Dingen). Sie spielten eine Szene aus dem Film nach.

Die Komödie über eine Familie von Trinkern wurde am Samstag gezeigt.

Fest steht jedenfalls: Mit ihrem Körpereinsatz haben sie jedenfalls mächtig Werbung für den Streifen gemacht.

HINTERGRUND

FILMFESTSPIELE 2009
CANNES SEIN.
DASS ES HIER KRISELT?

INTERVIEW
NACHGEFRAGT BEI
MARIAH CAREY

<http://www.bild.de/BILD/unterhaltung/kino/cannes-filmfestspiele/2009/05/17/regisseur-radelt/nackt-durch-cannes.html##>

FESTIVAL REVIEWS

Posted: Sun., May 17, 2009, 6:43am PT

Cannes

The Misfortunates

De helaasheid der dingen (Belgium-Netherlands)

By BOYD VAN HOEIJ

A KFD (in Belgium) release of a Menuet (Belgium)/IDTV (Netherlands) presentation and production. (International sales: MK2, Paris.) Produced by Dirk Impens. Co-producers, Jeroen Beker, Frans van Gestel. Directed by Felix van Groeningen. Screenplay, Christophe Dirckx, van Groeningen, based on the novel "De helaasheid der dingen" by Dimitri Verhulst.

With: Koen De Graeve, Johan Heldenbergh, Wouter Hendrickx, Bert Haelvoet, Valentijn Dhaenens, Kenneth Vanbaeden, Gilda De Bal. (Dutch dialogue)



'The Misfortunates'

Calling the Strobbe clan a working-class family would imply that some of its members worked (or had class), but none of the lowlife protags do in the visually robust and often hilarious Flemish tragicomedied "The Misfortunates." Based on a semi-autobiographical novel by Dimitri Verhulst, pic offers young helmer Felix van Groeningen ("Steve + Sky") a solid base -- and plenty of lowest-common-denominator humor -- from which to spin another ravishing-looking tale of the ordinary lives of extraordinary Belgians. Flemish and foreign interest should follow a similar trajectory to those of other recent local successes such as "Moscow, Belgium" and "Eldorado."

Helmer was the perfect choice to adapt Verhulst's bestseller, as both the book and van Groeningen's earlier work successfully combined a high level of artistry -- and, to an extent, artifice -- with an exploration of everyday, almost banal subjects. However, the helmer's previous films had a slight tendency to ramble, which is curbed here by the underlying thematic connective tissue of Verhulst's novel.

Few subjects could be more banal than the small-town Strubbe clan. Mother Strubbe (Gilda De Bal), whose "heart is big than her pension," has four good-for-nothing adult sons (Koen De Graeve, Wouter Hendrickx, Johan Heldenbergh, Bert Haelvoet) who have all moved back in with her because of money troubles. They spend the day getting drunk, eating raw sausages and singing vulgar songs.

Looking to grow up amid the fumes, vomit and stench of stale beer is 13-year-old Gunther (Kenneth Vanbaeden), the son of Marcel (De Graeve). As in the novel, this narrator is more of an observer than an active participant as he tries to discover what being family means -- even if his relatives make the Beverly Hillbillies look well-adjusted.

Triggering this search is a crisis in the boy's life some 14 years on, when Gunther, now an aspiring novelist (Valentijn Dhaenens), is about to become a father himself. Pic slides smoothly between the late '80s and early 2000s, and the narrative jumble is nimbly edited by Nico Leunen.

Van Groeningen uses an anecdotal, vignettish approach that underlines Gunther's search for connecting themes, rather than a desire to paint psychologically refined portraits of characters who are anything but. The director also applies this to the visuals, which effortlessly mix a variety of styles, suggesting the effects of hindsight and memory.

Ace d.p. Ruben Impens fully exploits the possibilities of his Red One digital camera, evoking everything from saturated film stock to playful black-and-white to crystalline contempo lensing.

Like the novel, "The Misfortunates" starts out as an extremely lowbrow comedy (highlights include several variations of beer-drinking contests) but morphs into a bittersweet meditation on whether familial love and pride are enough to sustain a proper upbringing.

Thesping is appropriately brawny, with De Graeve's loose-canon father emotionally anchoring the picture; only legit vet Bal seems out of her depth. Production and costume design are spot-on, and Jef Neve's score nicely enhances the various moods.

Pic's international moniker replaces the equally awkward earlier translation "The Alasness of Things," which was a close approximation of the novel's original title.

Camera (color/B&W, HD-to-35mm, widescreen), Ruben Impens; editor, Nico Leunen; music, Jef Neve; production designer, Kur Rigolle; costume designer, Ann Lauweyrs; sound (Dolby SRD), Jan Deca; associate producers, Rudy Verzyck, Alberte Gautot. Reviewed at [Cannes Film Festival](#) (Directors' Fortnight), May 16, 2009. Running time: 108 MIN.

<http://www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=festivals&jump=review&reviewid=VE1117940279&cs=1&query=Helaasheid+der+Dingen>



The Misfortunates (La Merditude des Choses)

17 May, 2009 | By Dan Fainaru

Dir. Felix van Groeningen. Belgium/France, 2009. 108 min.

A literal English translation of the title might better prepare the audience for *La Merditude Des Choses*. Adapted from the highly successful autobiographical novel by Dimitri Verhulst, this scatological coming of age story is told through the eyes of a 13-year-old boy growing up in a small village with his father and three uncles, all of them large, drunken, incorrigible louts. It mixes rambunctious, intentionally vulgar humour with a pinch of pathos and plenty of cynicism. The result is something which will probably go down well in Northern Europe but could suffer as it moves down towards the sun.

Taking place in two parallel time frames, it tells the disturbing story of Gunther Strobbe (played as a boy by Kenneth Vanbaeden and as an adult by Valentijn Dhaenens). An unwanted son who grows up to become an unwilling father, Gunther is first seen at 13, trying to do his homework in a pub while his dad Cel (De Graeve), ostensibly the village postman, drinks himself into a stupor with his brothers. Later Gunther is revealed in the present day, aged 33 and the narrator of this story. He's a frustrated author who keeps writing novels which are rejected.

The film itself consists of a series of brief episodes, all of them in brutal bad taste. Throughout them runs a theme of throwing decency to the wind, exorbitant boozing, and a general relish for breaking society's rules. The four brothers, and with them every able-bodied man in the village, participate in nude bicycle races and food and drink competitions (shades of *Taxidermia*). They never speak when they can shout, and never respect a rule when they can ignore it. This isn't so much social protest as a visceral assertion of independence from any code of conduct or social responsibility. In the background, trying to limit the damage to the best of her ability is Gunther's saintly grandmother (De Bal).

Shooting and cutting the film with a frenetic drive and energy, it seems at times as if van Groeningen goes along with the assumption that life is an uninterrupted ball and treats the Strobbe clan with a kind of barely dissimulated sympathy.

But then, gradually, he instills a sort of quiet despair that takes away most of the gaiety and underlines the damage it is all causing. The casting, mostly of unknowns outside Belgium, works perfectly. And using pre-classical excerpts, from Monteverdi and Orlando di Lasso, is just the kind of absolute order in art that best contrasts with the chaos on screen.

Production companies:

Menuet
IDTV Films

International Sales:

MK2
(33) 6 08 94 88 73

Producer

Dirk Impens

Screenplay

Christophe Dirickx

Felix van Groeningen
Based on novel by Dimitri Verhulst

Cinematography
Ruben Impens

Production design
Kurt Rigolle

Editing
Nico Leunen

Music
Jef Neve

Main Cast
Kenneth Vanbaeden
Valentijn Dhaenens
Koen de Graeve
Wouter Hendrickx
Johan Heldenbergh
Bert Haelvoet
Gilda de Bal
Natali Broods
Pauline Grossen

Related images



<http://www.screendaily.com/reviews/cannes-reviews/-the-misfortunates-la-merditude-des-choses/5001281.article>



BY DAVID HUDSON

The Daily brings together all the film news you need to know, updated throughout the day.

David Hudson
The Daily is v
Hudson -- cor
(at) ifc dot cor

Cannes. "The Misfortunates"

By David Hudson on 05/17/2009



"Four grown men living at home with their mother makes for rich writing fodder," writes [Duane Byrge](#) in the *Hollywood Reporter*. "In this rousing Belgian comedy, filmmaker [Felix Van Groeningen](#) charts the chaotic growth of a 13-year-old boy who escapes the family chaos and transcends it with a determined writing career. Bawdy and poignant, '[The Misfortunates](#)' [[site](#)] will render fortunate any festival director who programs it. Careening through the crazed late 80s world of the Strobbe clan, filmmaker Felix Van Groeningen has poignantly distilled [Dimitri Verhulst](#)'s prize-winning novel about a self-destructive Belgian family."

"Calling the Strobbe clan a working-class family would imply that some of its members worked (or had class), but none of the lowlife protags do in the visually robust and often hilarious Flemish tragicomedy," writes [Boyd van Hoeij](#) in *Variety*. "Like the novel, 'The Misfortunates' starts out as an extremely lowbrow comedy (highlights include several variations on beer-drinking contests) but morphs into a bittersweet meditation on whether familial love and pride are enough to sustain a proper upbringing."

"Shooting and cutting the film with a frenetic drive and energy, it seems at times as if van Groeningen goes along with the assumption that life is an uninterrupted ball and treats the Strobbe clan with a kind of barely dissimulated sympathy," writes [Dan Fainaru](#) in *Screen*. "But then, gradually, he instills a sort of quiet despair that takes away most of the gaiety and underlines the damage it is all causing. The casting, mostly of unknowns outside Belgium, works perfectly. And using pre-classical excerpts, from [Monteverdi](#) and [Orlando di Lassus](#), is just the kind of absolute order in art that best contrasts with the chaos on screen."

Screening in this year's [Directors' Fortnight](#).

Coverage of the coverage: [Cannes 2009](#).

[Photo: "The Misfortunates," Favourite Films NV and IDTV Film, 2009]

<http://www.ifc.com/blogs/thedaily/2009/05/cannes-the-misfortunates.php>

YAHOO! NEWS
CANADA



Sat May 16, 3:09 PM



Actors of the movie 'La Merditude des Choses' (The Misfortunates) directed by Belgian Felix van Groeningen ride bicycles naked on the Croisette to promote their film part of the 'Quinzaine des Realisateurs' selection at the 62nd Cannes Film Festival.
Photo:Loic Venance/AFP

<http://ca.news.yahoo.com/nphotos/Actors-of-the-movie-La-Merditude-des-Choses-The-Misfortunates-ride-bicycles-naked-on-the-Croisette/photo/16052009/24/photo/photos-n-odds-actors-movie-la-merditude-des-choses-misfortunates-ride-bicycles.html>

Stars ride nude through Cannes

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Article from: **Sunday Telegraph**

May 17, 2009 12:00am

Crowds hoping to glimpse the stars on the Cannes film festival's red carpet got an eye-popping surprise on Saturday as a team of nude Belgian cyclists paraded down the Riviera seafront.

Director Felix van Groeningen and four of his actors straddled bicycles and careened down the croisette and back under warm spring sunshine, in a remake of a scene from *La Merditude des Choses* (*The Misfortunates*).

Gwyneth Paltrow goes topless in Cannes movie

The comedy, which tells the story of a family of drunkard brothers, seen through a teenager's eyes, premiered on Saturday at the Directors' Fortnight, one of two high-profile sidebars to the main Cannes film festival.



Raw performance ... Actors of *The Misfortunates* ride naked through Cannes to promote their film.

<http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,25495684-5001026,00.html>



LIFE> Odds and Ends

Nude Belgian cyclists compete with Cannes red carpet

CANNES, France – Crowds hoping to glimpse the stars on the Cannes festival's red carpet got an eye-popping surprise Saturday as a team of nude Belgian cyclists paraded down the Riviera seafront.

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Nude cyclists give Cannes crowd an eyeful

ABC

ABC
May 16, 2009, 5:26 pm



AFP © [Enlarge photo]

Crowds hoping to glimpse the stars on the Cannes festival's red carpet got an eye-popping surprise as a team of nude Belgian cyclists paraded down the Riviera seafront.

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- *AFP*