

GUSH

A FILM BY
JULIETTE VAN ARDENNE

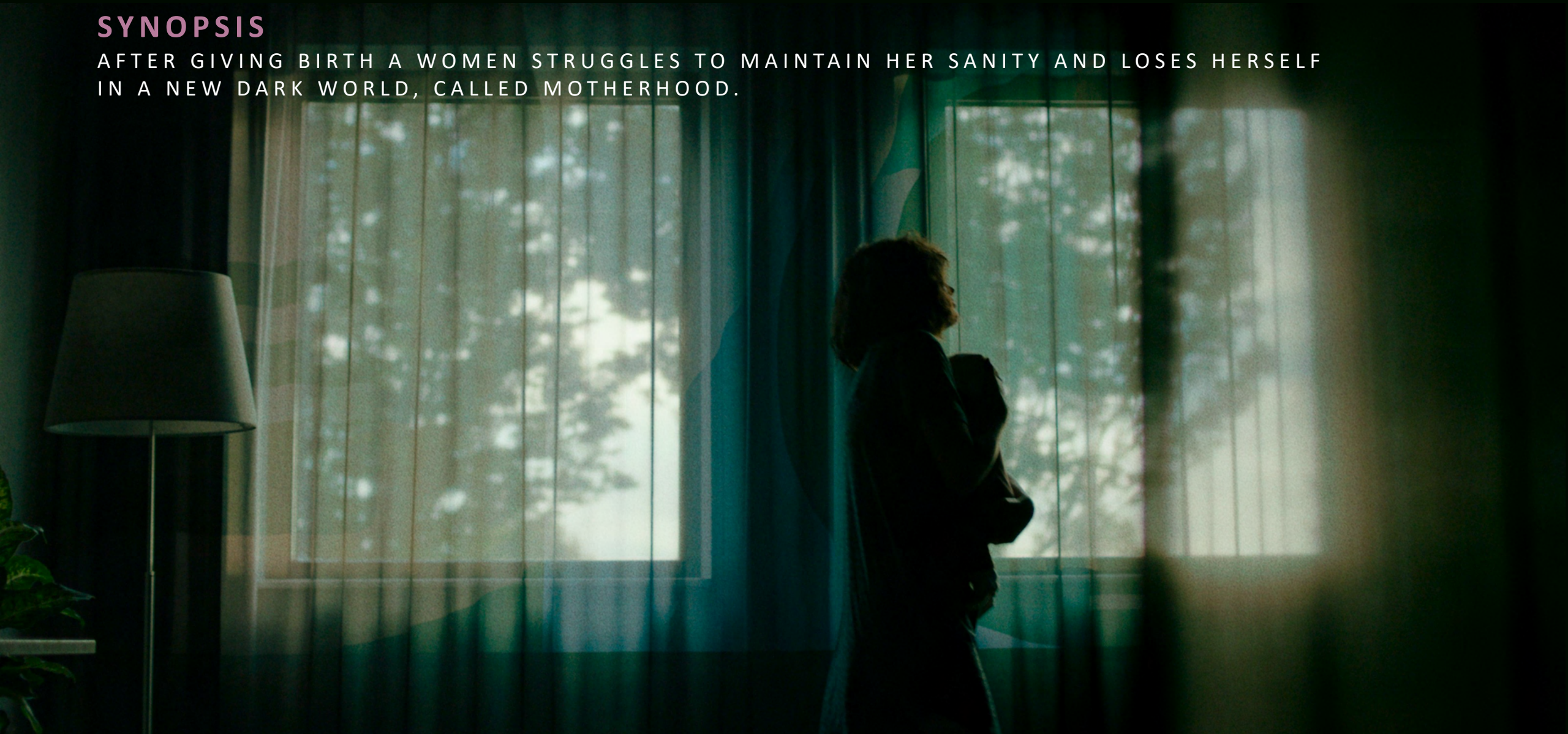
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY THIJMEN DOORNIK ^{MS} PRODUCTION DESIGN NINA VAN HAREN COSTUME DESIGNER SUZANNE ELDERING HAIR & MAKE-UP RADNA BERENDSEN
EDITOR YAMAL STITOU ^{MS} MUSIC DAAN HOFMAN SOUND DESIGNER LENNERT HUNFELD VFX STEFAN BEEKHUIJZEN ^{MS} COLORIST ERIK DEMERIS POSTPRODUCTION FILMMORE
FIRST AD STEFANIE HAMANN EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MARJON VAN DER MEIJDEN & THIJS DE NEEVE PRODUCER JULIETTE VAN ARDENNE WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY JULIETTE VAN ARDENNE

LOGLINE

PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER ABOUT A YOUNG MOTHER ON THE VERGE OF PSYCHOSIS.

SYNOPSIS

AFTER GIVING BIRTH A WOMEN STRUGGLES TO MAINTAIN HER SANITY AND LOSES HERSELF IN A NEW DARK WORLD, CALLED MOTHERHOOD.



TECHNICAL INFO

TITLE	GUSH
ORIGINAL TITLE	STUWING
GENRE	PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER
PRODUCTION YEAR	2023
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	THE NETHERLANDS
LANGUAGE	DUTCH
SUBTITLES	ENGLISH
RUN TIME	10:39
ASPECT RATIO	16:9
EXHIBITION FORMATS	DCP, HD PRORES
SOUND FORMAT	5.1 STEREO
B/W / COLOUR	COLOUR

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

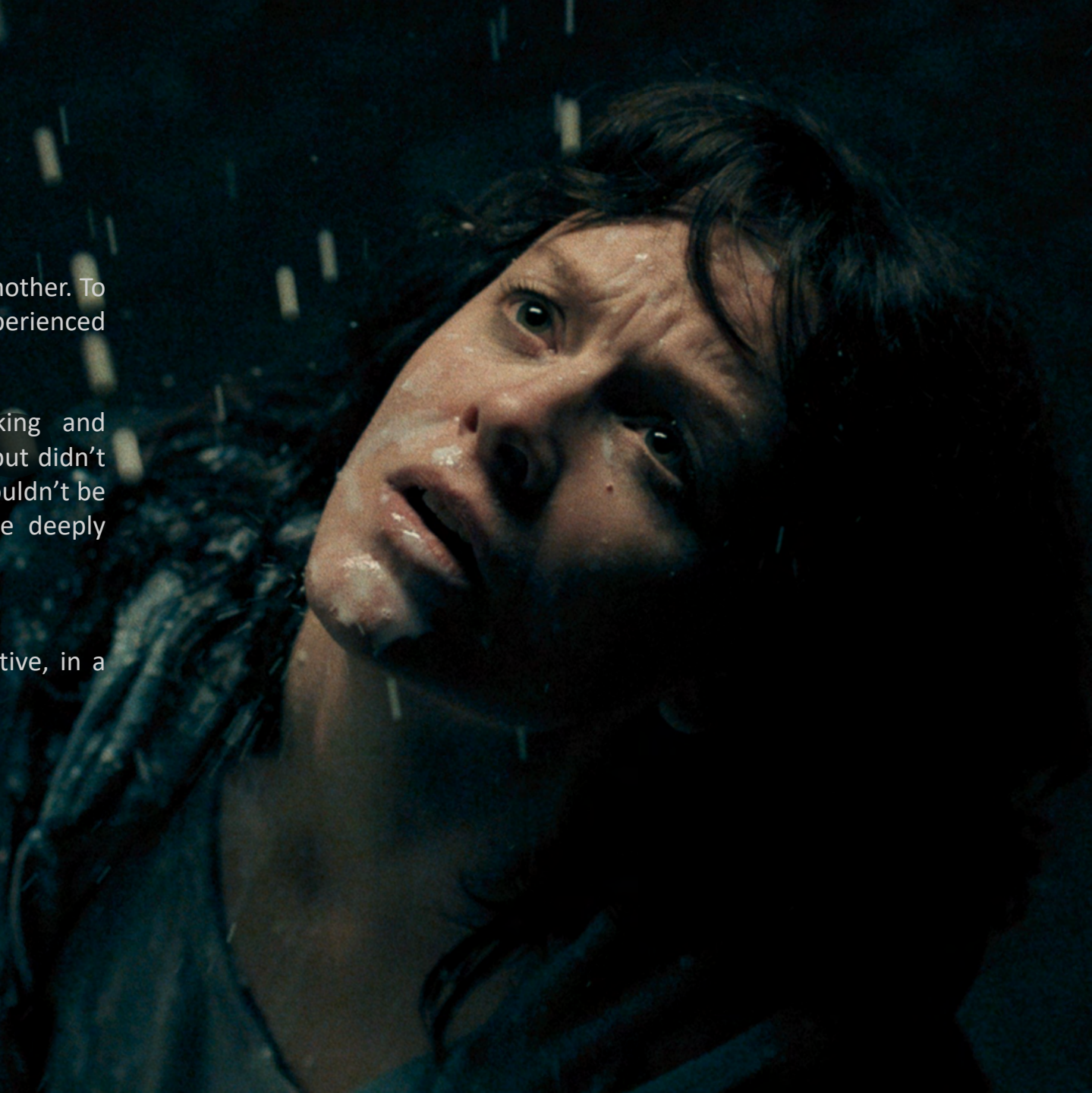
"GUSH was an exploration of why I felt so lost when I became a mother. To do so, I really wanted to visualize the fears and thoughts that I experienced in a raw and bold way; by creating a surreal, dark world.

To me the experience of becoming a mother was shocking and overwhelming. My damaged body reacted on the baby's needs but didn't feel like mine anymore. I had lost myself but at the same time I couldn't be this new person yet either. This transformative phase can be deeply confusing and scary.

The dark side of motherhood is underexposed in popular culture. I felt the urge to tell this story from an honest female perspective, in a powerful and visual stunning way.

I am very excited to present my directorial debut."

Juliette van Ardenne





AN INTERVIEW WITH JULIETTE VAN ARDENNE

PRODUCER, WRITER, DIRECTOR, LEADING ACTRESS

Juliette van Ardenne is a well known Dutch actress. She starred in award winning feature films such as **THE FURY** and **FERRY**. She played leading parts in critically acclaimed series as **STANLEY H. KERSTGEZEL**, **SMERIS** and **INCOGNITO**. She is an autodidact, taught herself how to act, write and direct.

Juliette is stepping both in front and behind the cameras for **GUSH**, a debut short psycho-thriller about the dark side of becoming a mother, based on her own experience.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO TELL THIS STORY?

When I became a mother after a traumatic birth, I was totally in shock about everything happening to me; physically and mentally. I felt alone in having to survive this first anxious phase feeling trapped in a unfamiliar body. The loss of control and the overall transformative experience left me feeling shattered and in crisis. People think they should be on cloud nine when they become a parent. It feels like you are failing when you experience dark clouds instead of happy pink ones. We should talk more about this side of motherhood. With my film I want to provide more understanding and recognition for the struggles of young mothers. Women should know they are not alone in this. I could also really process this difficult period by translating it cinematically and visualising it in a new uncompromised form. That felt really good. I think more uninhibited, honest films should be made from the female perspective.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE THIS FILM MIGHT INSPIRE AN AUDIENCE TO THINK ABOUT?

The transition into becoming a mother can be dark but beautiful at the same time. It may feel overwhelming and scary but your motherheart will also make you power through. I want to show a strong women overcoming her endurances in the end because of the love for her child. I hope the audience will get that and value young mothers more.



SINCE WHEN DID YOU WANT TO BECOME A FILMMAKER?

I basically grew up on set as a teenager while shooting the hit-series Zoop. That's where my fire and love for filmmaking started. During my career as an actor I also worked as a casting director and assistant director on several projects and I studied teaching drama at the ArtEZ University of the Arts. But while I mainly focussed on portraying truthful characters in stories written by others, I always kept dreaming about creating stories of my own. Only after I became a mom I knew GUSH needed to be my first film. Seeing Palme D'or winner Titane by Julia Ducournau gave me the courage to transform my own pain into a visual powerful trip.

DID YOU FACE ANY CHALLENGES BEING BOTH DIRECTOR AND ACTOR AT THE SAME TIME?

At first I wasn't sure of portraying the mother myself but after talking to the casting director and D.O.P I decided to go for it. This story is so personal to me, it just felt like my part. The shooting days went well but both directing and acting demands such a high level of focus it's hard to get some rest. On the few moments where I could only direct I felt so much more relaxed and I could enjoy the process more. Oh and seeing yourself in postproduction for like a thousand times is pretty much of a challenge as well. I am happy I did it but I'm also looking forward to a future project were I can solely focus on directing.

HOW DID YOU TRANSLATE THE STORY INTO VISUAL LANGUAGE?

Thijmen Doornik is our awesome cinematographer who could relate to the story, being a young father himself. We wanted to be bold in colour and lighting to bring an emotional realness to it. We visualised the shifts in the mother's mind and the darkness which hunts her by movement and dynamic light. We externalised the transforming inner world of the mother. Through fluid camera movements and match cuts we want to draw the audience into this endless trip where she got into. Thijmen and I were most inspired by the series Euphoria as well as the films of Daran Aronofsky and Julia Ducournau. I love this kind of powerful, uncompromising way of storytelling. Our goal was to make a raw and yet beautiful film.

HOW DID SOUND DESIGN ENHANCE THE STORY YOU WANTED TO TELL?

Sound designer Lennert Hunfeld and music composer Daan Hofman were both on top of their game on this one. Daan created a melancholic synth-score which draws you right into the trip and into the mind of the character. Lennert made a beautiful, fierce sound design. It needed to be confusing and painful. For example, the audience should really feel the engorging breasts. Everything you hear can be real or only exists in her head. My favourite part is a symphony of sweet baby noises that makes the mother crazy.

WHAT WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF THE FILMMAKING PROCESS?

My whole heart was in it, it felt like my third baby. At one point during the pre-production phase we had to cope with a lot of setbacks which we luckily managed to overcome thanks to the amazing crewmembers who all gave their best. I am proud and grateful for this whole experience and look forward to the next film. And the next.



BIOS



ACTOR

KENDRICK ETMON is a dynamic actor who graduated in 2019 from the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Maastricht. He played in numerous plays in theatre and he starred in the series STANLEY H., 'DIT ZIJN WIJ' and film FOREVER RICH. Most recently, Kendrick played the lead role in the Golden Calf Award winning short film LA ULTIMA ASCENSION.

<https://www.nummer19.nl/kendrick-etmon/45>

CINEMATOGRAPHER

THIJMEN DOORNIK NSC has worked on several award winning films and commercials, including the Grand Prix winner directed by Giancarlo Sanchez at The Cannes Lions 2018. Thijmen is father of a young boy.

<https://www.aimcreativemanagement.com/cinematographers/thijmen-doornik/>

SOUND DESIGNER

LENNERT HUNFELD has worked on several award winning films and series such as PLEASURE, NOW SOMETHING IS SLOWLY CHANGING, ZIE JE ME? HOOR JE ME? and KHATA. Lennert is father of a young boy.

<https://hunfeldsound.com/>

MUSIC COMPOSER

After graduating theatreschool **DAAN HOFMAN** toured as a singer songwriter and wrote music for several plays. His theatre background makes him an extraordinary filmcomposer. His scores for LITTLE AMSTERDAM, DANNY AND THE WILDBUNCH and I'LL BE HERE WERE awarded by Buma Music in Motion and CAIFF Film Scoring Competition. Daan is father of two young sons.

<https://www.daanhofman.com/>



TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/792922328>

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CREDITS

Director	Juliette van Ardenne
Screenplay	Juliette van Ardenne
Photography	Thijmen Doornik nsc
Editing	Yamal Stitou nce
Production design	Nina van Haren
Sound	Lennert Hunfeld
Music	Daan Hofman
Costume design	Suzanne Eldering
Hair & make-up	Radna Berendsen
Production	Springveer Film
Executive producer	Marjon v/d Meijden
Executive producer	Thijs de Neeve
Producer	Juliette van Aardenne







