

A24



Occupied City

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United States

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262 minutes
Not yet rated
NL/ UK/ US
English, Dutch
Color

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Synopsis

The past collides with our precarious present in Steve McQueen's bravura documentary *Occupied City*, informed by the book *Atlas of an Occupied City (Amsterdam 1940-1945)* written by Bianca Stigter. McQueen creates two interlocking portraits: a door-to-door excavation of the Nazi occupation that still haunts his adopted city, and a vivid journey through the last years of pandemic and protest. What emerges is both devastating and life-affirming, an expansive meditation on memory, time, and where we're headed.

Production Notes

Where do the memories of a city go? From Oscar- and BAFTA-winning filmmaker and Turner Prize-winning visual artist Steve McQueen comes this mesmerizing and monumental excavation of how the past haunts our precarious present: mirroring it and warning us in plain sight.

In *Occupied City*, a searching camera sweeps through a vibrant Amsterdam in 2020 reeling from the global pandemic. At the same time, the film summons the people and memories of the past, laid over the city's map and woven into the fabric of its streets and buildings. Out of the combination comes a transformative effect. As the film overlays an unprecedented time that we all just lived through atop door-by-door accounts from the city's devastating Nazi occupation—tales of resistance, collaboration, valor, and denial—McQueen opens up a poetic, dreamlike space where unthinkable history and hope for a new future co-exist.

The film is informed by the rigorously researched and lauded *Atlas of an Occupied City – Amsterdam 1940-1945*, written by historian and filmmaker Bianca Stigter, McQueen's partner. The film travels to around 130 addresses in the city to uncover what occurred behind each window in those calamitous years. The emotional power of these stories accumulates over the course of the film, laying bare the mechanics of both systematic oppression and sudden bravery; both calculated terror and life-saving luck; both ordinary and extraordinary ways of surviving.

Yet, the film's hypnotic imagery is entirely of our times, persistently moving forward. McQueen uses no archival footage, nor a single interview. Instead, the panoramas are awash in the rhythms of modern daily life, shot through at times with the eerie time-distortion of covid's protocols and losses, and the sudden eruption of fervid street protests—for freedom, against racism, and to halt climate change.

By interlacing our fragile, complicated past with the uncertainty of now and the urgency of what comes next, *Occupied City* seems to reconfigure the context of all three. Some images and stories mysteriously connect. Others clang and shudder, as the film becomes a startling and original meditation on time, memory, and immediacy—history as something all around us, and something we continually create. But it is also a highly personal journey, as we weave in and out of houses and remembrances, in and out of grief, indignation, and moments of joy, hearing history, seeing the recent world, and wondering about tomorrow.

About the Occupation of Amsterdam

The almost 750-year-old, canal-studded city of Amsterdam attracted immigrants, refugees, and artists. Having maintained strict neutrality through WWI, the Netherlands attempted to do the same at the start of WWII, even as Nazis marched across Europe, dismantling democracies and unearthing latent fascist support. But on May 10th, 1940, Germany invaded. After five days of fighting, the Dutch armed forces capitulated, Queen Wilhelmina fled to London, and by May 15th, Nazi troops were rolling over the Berlage Bridge into Amsterdam.

The occupier set out to remake the Netherlands into a national socialist state, an aim that included purging the country of its Jewish, Sinti, and Roma people, as well as all dissenters.

As elsewhere in Europe, the process began with the identification and registration of Jews. Then came the systematic separation of Jewish people from their neighbors and the organic life of the city. Jews were forced to live in restricted areas, stripped of their jobs and possessions, subjected to harrowing raids, and sent to labor camps. In July 1942, mass deportations began as Germans dispatched, little by little, nearly the entire Jewish population to transit camp Westerbork, first opened in 1939 by the Dutch as a refugee camp for Jews fleeing Germany. From there, Jews were sent on weekly trains to killing centers,

primarily Auschwitz-Birkenau and Sobibor in occupied Poland, where the majority were killed upon arrival. Of the more than 100,000 Jews who passed through Westerbork (including diarist Anne Frank), around 5,000 survived.

By the end of the war, the Netherlands would suffer the highest death rate of Jewish people in Western Europe, with three-quarters of the populace perishing, including more than 60,000 from Amsterdam.

Amsterdam residents faced stark choices. Some collaborated, betraying neighbors, friends, even family, to the authorities. Others turned their heads from the unfolding horror, while still others resigned themselves to the barest cooperation. But as the reality of repression set in, resistance mounted in the city. In February 1941, 300,000 Amsterdam and neighboring town residents protested the treatment of Jews with a general strike, before Nazi reprisals squelched the rebellion. Public transportation, factories, shipyards, and public services ground to a halt. It was a rare people-powered disruption of Nazi rule, albeit short-lived.

Some Dutch citizens risked their lives to conceal and aid those in mortal danger. Because the Netherlands' borders were entirely shared with German-controlled countries, and its seaport heavily defended by Nazis, escape was nearly impossible. This left hiding and deception as the primary means of survival. The Dutch underground harbored an estimated 25,000 Jews, including many children, during the occupation, with a third still being caught and murdered. Approximately 3,000 managed to find passage out of the country, often thanks to forged papers. Many who survived did so due to being in a mixed marriage, per Nazi rules.

During Occupation, food was rationed. In late 1944, Amsterdam descended into the Hunger Winter, a season of deadly, man-made famine caused by, among other things, a Nazi blockade of transport of food and fuel for six weeks. The effects were

extreme and punishing. Amsterdam's desperate populace chopped down trees, smashed furniture, and stole wooden frames from houses left empty by the deported to make firewood. Around 4,000 people died in Amsterdam—up to 20,000 people in The Netherlands as a whole—of deprivation, a rare instance of mass starvation in a modern city. Soup kitchens and foreign aid brought some limited emergency relief. But the reprieve would only come on May 5, 1945, the day the Armistice was signed, with the Allies fully liberating the Netherlands, coming into Amsterdam on May 8.

Q&A with Steve McQueen and Bianca Stigter

After much talk about this moment coming, it seems we've now arrived at a new phase of storytelling about the Nazi era. Most with personal experience of the Holocaust and occupied cities have passed on and we're left with the trickier stuff of recalling history. When Marcel Ophuls made *The Sorrow and the Pity* in the 1960s, it was revelatory to see people finally talk about what happened, but now comes the question of what form can keep these stories potent. Bianca's film *Three Minutes: A Lengthening* spoke to this. And *Occupied City* brings a major perspective shift—exploring how this past we can never fully reckon with is in invisible yet perpetual dialogue with what's happening currently. Were you looking to spark a fresh conversation?

SMQ: Yes, I think the film is about pushing the conversation forward. It's a progression of a conversation that has been ongoing. And the conversation is different now, because there are these questions of erasure—and non-erasure. In Amsterdam, you have a city where many of the buildings people used in the '40s are still here, still of the same scale. They are being used in different ways from the '40s, but not that much has visibly changed. It's almost like Pompeii in a way. The past is right there, physically, within our present. Bianca and I talked about the film as being almost like an excavation, bringing the past out into the current city and reinforcing the past in that way.

The film puts the viewer in the unusual position of having to negotiate two different elements: what you're seeing and the information you're hearing, both of which are very strange. Out of that negotiation, I think a third thing emerges and I don't know what that is exactly, or how to describe it, but it's what I was after.

As a viewer, I think sometimes you follow the voiceover, sometimes you are drawn into the images, but then, something else happens in your mind, where the connections are coming together.

That third thing is maybe where other people's stories from decades ago interact with our own inner stories in whatever mysterious ways that happens. There's dismay and sorrow in watching the film, but it's also beautiful and inspiring, because it makes you think about how memories of these vital historical events are sustained by the living.

BS: Growing up in Amsterdam, I remember my friends and I would play on the Women of Ravensbrück memorial on Museum Square, running around between the pillars when we were 7 or 8, because we had no clue what it was for...because those stories weren't activated. Even though there are a lot of monuments, plaques, and commemorations of the war in Amsterdam, it can become just background, like the trees. I think what *Occupied City* does, by letting you see people using the city now while you hear what went on 80 years ago, re-activates these stories, so they're present again.

SMQ: I grew up in London, in a non-occupied city, so coming to Amsterdam [where McQueen now lives] was interesting for me. I remember asking Bianca, what's that monument on the corner for? And her telling me oh, that's where they shot 30 people. And it was like, what? It's strange living in a formerly occupied country. For me, it's been like living with ghosts. There are two narratives going on at the same time, all the time. This idea of the present interacting with the past, the living and the dead, is what led to the film. That was the seed for me. And at the same time, of course, Bianca was writing her book.

What was the impetus to write the *Atlas*, Bianca? It must have been quite the long and determined research quest to find out what happened at more than 2,000 different addresses.

BS: It began when I was studying history and my dad asked me a question about how the Germans took over Amsterdam in practical terms. He asked how did it actually happen? Did they just ring the bell and say, "give this building to us?" And I didn't know that answer. I started looking and I got more and more

into it. I discovered that most places where things happened during the occupation were not really known anymore. And the first thing that had gone was where the perpetrators were in the city because of course there are no monuments to them. So, I wondered, where were the occupiers? How did they organize the Holocaust in Amsterdam? Where were the resisters?

I published a small version of the Atlas in 2005, and Steve already had the idea of making a film at that time. Then I spent another five years working on the expanded version. I never stopped researching and I still really haven't stopped. There were 800,000 people living in Amsterdam in 1940 so there are 800,000 stories.

It's so fascinating that Steve was already thinking about making the film in 2005. It's remarkable because there are so many resonances in how the film captures, in real time, the impact of the pandemic. In 2020, the visible landscape of Amsterdam changed perhaps in ways it hadn't since the '40s. It became a ghost town, which is a pretty intense setting from which to unearth ghosts of the past, and time seemed stuck. Did Covid reconfigure your thoughts about the film, Steve?

SMQ: From day one. At first it was a case of thinking "Oh no. Panic! Panic!" But then I thought, expect the unexpected; you know, this is what is happening right now so I'm going to go out there and find it. That's what I had been interested in doing anyway—letting the camera run and catching interesting moments as they happen—so we just went out to see what it was.

But also, oh my God, what happened in those three years from 2019! It was as if an entire era unfolded while we were making the film. Covid, George Floyd, Trump, and of course, climate protests to tackle the rapidly accelerating crisis for all mankind. As I started editing and looking back at the footage, it was clear the film is partially a document of this time, of its strangeness and its peril. And the stories of the occupation became timelier.

It felt like everything in this moment had very high stakes and everything was heightened by several notches.

In some ways all that happened in 2020 was an encapsulation of the world that was built after 1945—its fragile idealism, its blind spots, and our failure to fully reckon with our drives to hatred, power, and destruction, which all seemed to come to a head during Covid. And amid the Amsterdam protests, you also see deeper layers of history, from even before the occupation, still impacting the city, including the legacies of colonialism and slavery.

BS: And all of it is happening in front of a city that, architecturally, is mainly of the 17th and 18th Century, so that adds an extra visible layer of time. The film is really a collision of all kinds of pasts and presents coming together.

SMQ: Yes, I like that way of looking at it. It is all types of pasts and presents coming together. And it is equally about learning from the past. It was very unsettling to be making a film about the occupation and all the denialism that went on, while seeing this resurgence of fascism, racism, and anti-Semitism. It's a reminder of how things can develop.

The film has the scale of an opus. It's over 4 hours, a bold choice, but it might not operate in the same way on the viewer if it were half as long. The emotional weight of the film comes in the accrual of these stories, the way they keep layering on themselves and with the images. And there's something about the length that makes the viewer conscious of their own process of awareness, which is another theme of the film. Was that part of your intention?

SMQ: It needed to be a journey. I felt I needed to take the time to make the viewer familiar with the storytelling process and as they became more and more familiar with it, something would switch on. You kind of go onto another mode, and it's okay to drift in and out.

When you're making a film, the film must tell you what it needs to be. And I knew at some point this film can't just be two hours. It takes time to familiarize yourself with the feeling of a city and there has to be room for that. It's a very different thing from watching interviews.

BS: I think also when a film is this long you become that much more aware of how much was left out. You realize how vast the story is, and that you cannot ever know everything.

What was your approach to the actual filming, Steve? Did you literally go knocking from door to door through the city to ask permission?

SMQ: We did! As soon as we said, 'Second World War,' doors opened, which was amazing. I wouldn't have thought it would go as well as it did, but I've learned that this period of time means a lot to people here. The occupation is a weight on people's souls, even if it's not part of everyday life. All you have to do is scratch the surface lightly, and it's present.

Were there places you wanted to shoot but were unable?

SM: Not really. If that situation came up, we found another way. And I think that often leads to something more interesting. You know, when you're making films, limitation is freedom.

How did you collaborate with Lennert Hillege, the Dutch cinematographer who served as your director of photography?

SMQ: Lennert is amazing. We talked a lot in the beginning about my philosophy because the standard way of shooting documentaries isn't for me. I'm interested in possibility and finding the moment. And that is about trust, about waiting, and having the skill to sort of see a thing before it happens, and to see the evidence of things that are invisible. It's almost like a Miles Davis philosophy, where it's more about the silence between the notes than the notes themselves. And that's what I was after in this film. Embracing the unexpected as if you knew

it was always there. My decision to shoot on 35mm film was key to the process. I wanted each moment to count. Nothing could be of insignificance. It is a very ritualistic and careful process for me because I don't like to waste film. And we did not shoot *Occupied City* digitally, so we had to be extremely precise and focused. And Lennert got all of that and surpassed my greatest hopes.

Did the shoot change how you see the city?

SMQ: I will never see Amsterdam the same way again. It's a city that has seen a lot of violence, but there's a lot of hope in it, too.

One incident the film highlights is something that has largely been lost to us in the United States but is staggering: the Hunger Winter, when thousands froze and starved in an industrialized city. It feels essential to the Dutch experience. Do you still sense that trauma in the city?

SMQ: Well, Bianca's mother, for example, is a stickler for not wasting food. If she sees her grandchildren playing with food, she goes ballistic because she lived through the Hunger Winter.

BS: She did. You don't see where she lived in the film, but it's in the book, and someone once said about the house where she grew up, "even the mice were hungry."

Was there a silence that descended after these events in the Netherlands—as happened in many other places that were under occupation—where no one wanted to talk about the dark things that people did?

BS: I found in my research there were people who came back from the camps and were told, "We were so hungry here. It must have been nice for you not to be here." There was a disconnect with what really happened. And in some ways, there was even more anti-Semitism after the war than before. Some Jews who survived came back and at that time, there was not a lot of interest in their stories from non-Jewish people. For instance,

Anne Frank's story became much more famous in Amsterdam after there was an American play about it.

There was a lot of focus on rebuilding the country, and some celebration of the resistance. But there wasn't much deeper inquiry into how it all happened. Only in the 60s did that change, as attention turned to the Holocaust. Now, we have many monuments and there are the *stolpersteine* [literally "stumbling stones"], more than 1,000 brass plates embedded in Amsterdam streets, inscribed with names of those murdered by the Nazis, with almost 100,000 in Europe overall. And we have Remembrance Day on May 4th, with 2 minutes of silence. On the other hand, there is research saying many young people today know very little about the Holocaust or the occupation. All we can do is try to keep the awareness going.

The address on Prinsengracht where Anne Frank and her family were hiding is not in the film. Can you talk to me about that decision?

SMQ: Showing the annex would be a static moment for me. It is now a museum, one of the most visited tourist attractions in Amsterdam.

BS: The secret annex is in the book. Not showing this address in the film shows you that the approach here is not encyclopedic but impressionistic. Most addresses that are in the book are not in the film and the book of course is also not complete; it could not be. New stories are still coming out every year. But there are quotes from her diary in the film. She is such an incredible writer.

What was the concept for the narration? The words convey the fear and danger in the atmosphere, but it's done in a very straight-forward, subdued style. There's no drama added, yet the simple delivery somehow makes these events feel immediate and real.

BS: I tried to write the text in as matter of fact a way as possible in the book. And I wanted it to be the same in the film's narration. The facts can speak for themselves. It is intended to be as concise as possible, so that all judgement, no matter the situation, is left to the viewer.

SMQ: I like that the voice has an almost non-committal quality. I think it helps the viewer to draw their own pictures in their mind, because they're not given any particular emphasis or dramatic sort of leaning.

How did you come to work with the British cellist and composer Oliver Coates (*Aftersun*) on the score?

SMQ: I was in a department store and some music came on and I thought, what is this? It's amazing. It would be great for our film. Fortunately, I was with a friend who had Shazam on their phone. That's never happened to me before, where I had to know immediately who a piece of music was by, and it turned out to be Oliver. At that time, I think he'd only done one film score. So, I showed him the film, we had one conversation, and he just got on with it. He's very instinctual and quite special, and what I love about his music is that it does have a way of bringing the past into the present. There's a search for the future in what he's doing but you feel that it is steeped in history. His music has an anchoring quality but there's also an impulse to explore and experiment.

Now it seems everyone is chasing Oliver, but I had no idea who he was until I heard him in the store. So that was an incredible thing.

What about the edit with Xander Nijsten? It must have been a very intense process because that's where this merger of past and present, image and sound, had to take shape.

SMQ: God, yes, it was heavy, and it was beautiful. We shot all the addresses in the book and had hours and hours of footage to weed through. Xander was exceptional in this process. It was

Production Notes

like a jigsaw puzzle that all fell into place. We found a rhythm in the juxtapositions of the footage and the narratives. And then I found our ending. I didn't have an ending until a friend of mine's son was having a bar mitzvah and that was the last thing we shot, and it was a gorgeous way to close the film. To see these young people, with all their possibility, and to have the Rabbi saying to the younger brother "you're next," I think it takes us beyond the present and shows how the past will continue to survive.

BS: It's a very hopeful ending.

SMQ: We take real joy from that. Ultimately, we won the war. And we're not going to let fascism win again.

Did you come to understand more about how a country like the Netherlands fell into fascism and such darkness after making the film or writing the book?

BS: When you start a big inquiry like this, you think you will get some answers as to why it all happened. Then in the end, you don't really get those answers. Instead, you know more about the 'how' not the 'why'. And still, you cannot ever fathom it. You are powerless in that sense, and then it's up to you to translate that powerlessness into the now.

SMQ: We can do that by making sure it doesn't happen again. That's why Bianca wrote her book. That's why I made this film. I mean, there's no other way. The hope is in the future of these kids you see in the film, the hope of what they might be. We're trying to clear the path for these young people. And that's what you can do.

The Crew

Steve McQueen

Director/Producer

Academy Award winner and British Film Institute Fellow Steve McQueen is a British artist and filmmaker. His critically acclaimed first feature *Hunger* (2008), starring Michael Fassbender as an IRA hunger-striker, won the Camera D'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. He re-teamed with Fassbender for his follow up feature *Shame* (2011) for which Fassbender won the Volpi Cup at the Venice Film Festival for Best Actor. McQueen's *12 Years A Slave* (2013) dominated awards season, winning the Academy Award, Golden Globe, BAFTA and AAFCA Awards for Best Picture while McQueen received DGA, Academy, BAFTA and Golden Globe directing nods. His fourth feature *Widows* (2018) was one of the best reviewed films of the year and starred Viola Davis, Cynthia Erivo, Elizabeth Debicki and Michelle Rodriguez. In 2020, McQueen's anthology series *Small Axe*, comprising five original films about resilience and triumph in London's West Indian community from the late 1960s through the early 80s, was awarded Best Picture by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, while McQueen received the Storyteller Award for series at the 16th Annual Final Draft Awards. *Small Axe* was also the recipient of fifteen BAFTA Television nominations. Three of the five films in the series played at the 58th New York Film Festival with *Lovers Rock* opening the fest, with two of the five selected for the 2020 Cannes Film Festival.

Past documentary works include the BAFTA-winning three-part series *Uprising* (2021) for the BBC about the tragedy and aftermath of the New Cross fire and subsequent deaths of 13 young black British people in 1981 that went on to define race relations in the UK for a generation. McQueen directed and produced *Uprising*. He also served as a co-producer on *Three Minutes – A Lengthening* (2021), directed and co-written by Bianca Stigter.

The recipient of many accolades for his work as a visual artist, McQueen was awarded with the Turner Prize in 1999, and represented Great Britain at the Venice Biennale in 2009. He has exhibited and held his artwork in major museums around the world. A retrospective was exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago and at the Schaulager in Basel. In 2016, he received the Johannes Vermeer Award at the Hague. Tate Modern and Tate Britain were home to two critically acclaimed shows in 2019/2020, Year 3 and a Retrospective Steve McQueen. In 2017, McQueen made an artwork in response to the fire that took place earlier that year on 14 June at Grenfell Tower in North Kensington, West London. 72 people died in the tragedy. McQueen showed *Grenfell* for the first time at The Serpentine Gallery in London in April through 10 May 2023.

In 2020, McQueen was awarded a knighthood in the Queen's New Year's Honours List for his services to the Arts.

Bianca Stigter

Texts written by & informed by the book
Atlas van een bezette stad by

Bianca Stigter is an historian and cultural critic. She writes for Dutch newspaper NRC Handelsblad and published three books of essays. Stigter was an associate producer on Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* and *Widows*. In 2019 she published the book *Atlas van een bezette stad. Amsterdam 1940-1945 (Atlas of an Occupied City. Amsterdam 1940-1945)*. In 2021 she directed the documentary *Three Minutes – A Lengthening*, which premiered in the Giornate degli Autori on the Venice Film Festival and was selected for the festivals of Telluride, Toronto, Sundance, as well as IDFA and DocA-viv. *Three Minutes – A Lengthening* won the 2022 Yad Vashem Award for cinematic excellence in a Holocaust related Documentary. It played to great critical acclaim in cinema's in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and other countries.

Atlas van een bezette stad. Amsterdam 1940-1945 was published in the Netherlands by AtlasContact.

Floor Onrust

Producer

Floor Onrust founded Family Affair Films, a Amsterdam based production company, in 2002. She produced documentaries *Occupied City* (Cannes 2023) by Steve McQueen and *Three Minutes – a Lengthening* (Venice 2021) by Bianca Stigter and features like *Splendid Isolation* (Rotterdam 2022) by Urszula Antoniak White Berry (Chicago 2022) by Sia Hermanides, *Bloody Marie* (Rotterdam 2019) by Guido van Driel, *Light as Feathers* (Toronto 2018) by Rosanne Pel and *Beyond Words* (San Sebastian 2017) by Urszula Antoniak. Four new features are expected to be released in 2023.

Anna Smith-Tenser

Producer

Anna is the Executive Producer at Lammas Park, the production company founded by Steve McQueen. Whilst running the company and working across film, television and short form, she has produced numerous projects for Lammas Park, including executive producing the BAFTA and RTS Award-winning BBC documentary series *Uprising*, directed by Steve McQueen and James Rogan, and Steve's McQueen's forthcoming feature *BLITZ* co produced with Working Title with New Regency, for Apple.

Prior to joining Lammas Park, Anna's unscripted credits include executive producing the critically acclaimed Nick Cave feature documentary *One More Time With Feeling* directed by Andrew Dominik, which premiered at the 73rd Venice Film Festival and was nominated for a Grammy Award, the groundbreaking BBC TV series "Black Is The New Black," and, in her role as UK founder and Managing Director of Iconoclast, she

Anna Smith-Tenser (cont.)

won a slew of awards producing TV series, documentaries, features and commercial campaigns, including a dual-track art film/music video for Kanye West directed by Steve McQueen, which premiered at the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris 2016 and was later installed at LACMA museum of art. Prior to Lammas Park and Iconoclast, Anna held Executive Producer and MD positions at other production companies including Pulse Films, Caviar and Stink, where she produced for an extensive array of A-list and Oscar-winning directors across all mediums."

Lennert Hillege N.S.C.

Director of Photography

Lennert Hillege is an award-winning Director of Photography and member of the Netherlands Society of Cinematographers. He discovered his passion for visual storytelling as a child actor in a historical action series. After graduating from the Dutch Film Academy, he has worked with respected directors such as Paul Verhoeven, Mathijs Van Heijningen, and Jan de Bont, and collaborated with crews from around the world.

Hillege's work has been showcased at international film festivals and he has received awards for his cinematography, including the Dutch Academy Award for Best Cinematography. Known for his ability to connect the camera with actors, his images effectively tell stories while also leaving a subliminal impact on the viewer. In addition to narrative work, Hillege has also worked on commercials and recently shot his first long documentary, *Occupied City*, with director Steve McQueen.

Xander Nijsten

Editor

Xander Nijsten is a film editor based in Amsterdam in The Netherlands. His work includes feature films as well as documentaries. In 2022 he was nominated for Best Editing at the Netherlands Film Festival for *Moloch*.

Melanie Hyams

Narrator

Melanie Hyams is a British voice actor, singer and writer based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Her work as a voice actor spans both commercial and narrative projects, and although quite content with selling speakers and underwear, she really flourishes in character roles.

Last year she published her first book of poetry, *Home Symbols*. A collection of her poems were published in *Le Mile* in a collaborative project with artist Annie van Noortwijk. Currently Melanie is studying jazz and the songs of the Great American Songbook.

Oliver Coates

Composer

Oliver Coates is a cellist, electronic producer and composer based in Glasgow in the UK.

He has composed the scores for films *The Stranger* and *Aftersun* and is currently working on FOE with Garth Davies and Mary & George with Oliver Hermanus. He has released three solo records on RVNG Intl. including *skins n slime* and has collaborated with Arca, Mica Levi and Sega Bodega.

As a solo artist he has performed a headline set curated by David Lynch at the Manchester International Festival, opened for Thom Yorke across Europe and the US, and opened for Radiohead at Emirates Old Trafford in Manchester. The Fader called him "a music guru with Aphex Twin-level range and an ear for transferring the timeless into electronic music."

Jos ten Klooster

Sound Recorder

Jos ten Klooster is a Dutch sound recordist. He graduated from the Netherlands Film Academy in 2002 and has been working as a sound recordist for more than 20 years. His work includes international feature films and documentaries. Among his work are feature films *The Judgement* (Golden Calf for best Dutch feature 2021), *Speak No Evil* (Sundance 2022), *Holiday* (Sundance 2018) and documentary *Anton Corbijn Inside Out* (Berlinale 2012).

Jan Schermer

Sound Design

Jan Schermer graduated from the Netherlands Film and Television Academy in 2001. Jan is both sounddesigner as re-recording mixer, and worked on theatrical releases like *Another Round*, by Thomas Vinterberg (Oscar best foreign film), *Songs Of Repression* by Marianne Huga-Morega & Estephan Wagner (Winner CPH:DOX), *Cool Abdoul* by Jonas Baeckeland, *Stupid Young Heart* by Selma Vilhunen (Winner Crystal Bear) and *Too Late To Die Young* by Dominga Sotomayor (Winner best director Locarno IFF)

Jan is nominated for a Robert (Danish Film price) best sound in 2021 for *Another Round*, nominated at the Polish Film Festival for best sound in 2013 on *Pokłosie*. In 2016 nominated at Fenix Film Awards best sound on *Oscuro Animal*. Jan won three Golden Calves (Dutch national film award) for Best Sound on *Nothing Personal*, *Code Blue* and *Beyond Words*, all directed by Urszula Antoniak. In 2022 Jan was nominated for his work on the stopmotion animation feature *Oink*.

The Crew

Sophie van Caenegem

Line Producer

Sophie Van Caenegem is a Dutch/Flemish line producer with extensive experience in film and documentary productions. Her recent projects include *Occupied City* directed by Steve McQueen (selected for the Cannes Film Festival 2023), TV-series "Talking Heads" directed by Menno Otten (winner of the Rose d'Or, Prix de Jeunesse and Japan Prize) and feature film *Waldstille* directed by Martijn Maria Smits, which was selected for the San Sebastián International Film Festival. Sophie's organizational skills, fluency in multiple languages and professionalism have contributed to these and other critically acclaimed productions.

Neeltje van der Heijden

Post Production Supervisor

Neeltje holds a Bachelor's degree in journalism and photography, and entered the film post-production industry in 2006. During a transitional period from shooting on analogue film to digital formats, she developed her knowledge of post-production at an image post facility.

Since becoming a freelance post-production supervisor in 2015, she has managed the creative process of post-production for over twenty international co-produced feature films and documentaries.

In 2023, Neeltje will be working on several exciting projects, including the Dutch/UK co-produced documentary *Occupied City* directed by Steve McQueen (Official Cannes selection 2023), the Chinese Dutch co-produced feature film *Above the Dust* directed by Xiaoshuai Wang, and *Garden of Earthly Delights* directed by Morgan Knibbe.

Koen van der Knaap

1st Assistant Director

Koen van der Knaap (1988) is a freelance assistant director and producer with more than 12 years of experience in the film industry. Raised near The Hague, he holds a Bachelor's degree in Media and Entertainment Management.

In 2020, Koen worked alongside director Matthijs van Heijningen Jr. on the feature film, *The Forgotten Battle*, set in World War II. This experience allowed him to further develop his skills and apply his historical knowledge to his latest project, *Occupied City*, a documentary exploring the city of Amsterdam during Nazi occupation in World War II.

As a resident of Amsterdam, Koen's intimate knowledge of the city and surrounding areas made it easy for him to navigate the various locations for *Occupied City*. His

Koen van der Knaap (cont.)

deep connection to Amsterdam is palpable, as he is constantly reminded of the stories that took place in his hometown. It's a daily reminder of the importance to pass these stories on to new generations.

Danny van Deventer & Deen van Liempt
1st Assistant Camera

Deen van Liempt is a first assistant camera on feature films and television series in The Netherlands. Being part of the creation of a story is his passion. Working with Lenert Hillege on Steve McQueen's *Occupied City* has been a true inspiration.

Focus puller and equipment service technician, dedicated to drawing the most urgent attention of industry professionals to the imminent demise of analogue motion picture camera maintenance and - by extension - the complete loss of motion picture film as a (future) viable imaging medium within a decade. Unfortunately, as things stand, the world is not listening.

Credits

Regency Enterprises and A24 present

Film4 presents

a Family Affair Films production

in co-production with Lammas Park and VPRO

a Steve McQueen film

Occupied City

Crew

Directed by	Steve McQueen
Texts written by	Bianca Stigter
Informed by the book <i>Atlas van een bezette stad: Amsterdam 1940-1945</i> by	Bianca Stigter
Produced by	Floor Onrust Steve McQueen Anna Smith-Tenser Bianca Stigter
Executive Producers	Arnon Milchan Yariv Milchan Michael Schaefer Ben Cotner Adriana Banta Emily Osborne Ollie Madden Daniel Battsek Ben Coren Barbara Truyen Joost Janmaat Clea de Koning

Credits

Associate producers	Susan Dolan Natalie Lehmann Noortje Wilschut
This film was supported by	the Netherlands Film Fund and the Netherlands Film Production Incentive
With the financial support of	Mondriaan Fund Amsterdam Fund for the Arts Stichting Virtutis Opus
Director of Photography	Lennert Hillege N.S.C.
Editor	Xander Nijsten
Co-editor	Steve McQueen
Narrated by	Melanie Hyams
Composer	Oliver Coates
Sound Recorder	Jos ten Klooster
Sound Design	Jan Schermer
Line Producer	Sophie van Caenegem
Post Production Supervisor	Neeltje van der Heijden
1st Assistant Director	Koen van der Knaap
1st Assistant Camera	Danny van Deventer & Deen van Liempt

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