

Adomeit Film presents  
a film by Daniel Borgman

# Lovíng Pia

Berlinale  
 67<sup>th</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Forum





## DREAM

I dream about a visit. I dream that I should visit, him that travels round. His name is Jose, and he lives in Lasac.

I thought he... we... I... I dreamt that ... he... we make pizza and rosehip juice together, and we'd think that it tasted good. I thought he would take care of me, but he couldn't. Because he has another wife. That's why.

He said he would take care of me, but it was just a dream. It wasn't meant to be.



**Pia Skovgaard**



Watch Trailer



# SYNOPSIS

A work of fiction, the film is developed from the life of – and starring – a real woman, Pia, who is intellectually disabled. Pia is 60 years old and she lives in rural Denmark in the care of her mother Guittou, 84. In the story, Guittou is getting old, and Pia worries about what will happen when her mother dies. She is afraid of being left alone. Although Pia has never had a boyfriend, she thinks that she needs to find a man to love in order to survive. Then Pia meets a man called Jens at the harbour. Pia embarks on a quiet and simple relationship with him, not realising that in the meantime it is her mother who is left alone.



LOVING PIA

PRESS KIT



With *At Elske Pia* I wanted to explore intellectual disability, focusing on love and isolation, by developing a project together with my subject Pia Skovgaard a 60 year old intellectually disabled woman who lives with her elderly mother in the countryside.

Pia doesn't have a concrete diagnosis, and I've found that the more I get to know her the more complex her condition seems to be, this is something that I wanted to include in the story, the complex sweeping in and out of my understand of her, as if it was a wave.

The project is development oriented. This means that we have a process that is open to change, based on what is discovered through an extended development period. The process was really important to me, at every step in the journey I always returned to the process. I wanted to make a film that utilized a process in which any challenge or obstacle or problem is actually a positive thing.

So the idea was to work with this real person Pia, and to document sometimes and to sometimes construct moments that are inspired or taken from her life, then to examine her responses and to use this material to further the screenplay. *At Elske Pia* is an exploration of a person, and of a disability, and of a life situation. Pia is a woman who lives with her mother, and depends upon her, who hasn't known love (real romantic love), who has a very romantic and simple understanding of love, but who has connected very strongly with

## DIRECTORS NOTE (1)



the idea of romantic love. She is also a woman who has grown used to having just a few ideas, which she repeats because these ideas seem to satisfy people.

I went asking Pia about love and she gave me a response; a beautiful heartfelt story about a man she couldn't have. Now every time I talk to her she gives the same response, I can't tell if she is saying these things over and over to please me, or if she says them to please herself. At first I was so happy to have cracked through, at least to have the feeling of cracking through, into her core thoughts and feelings that seem so inaccessible. I felt that I had discovered something about her, about this love for this man, Jose Bove, but when I came to talk to her more about love, I found I

got the same answers, the conversation didn't advance, she would say, 'there was a man, the one in France, the one I love, but I can't have him because he has a wife, so who can I have? No one wants me, and when my mother dies I'll be alone because no one will have me and then I'll die alone...' I thought this is an amazing revelation about how she understands the world, her world, but over time as she repeated these assertions, I wondered if this was a story she was stuck on, more of a conditioned recall rather than something that she engages with in a deeper way.

When Pia's mother speaks of Pia she says that Pia does not have a clear sense of her self, she does not see her self when she looks in the mirror,



as if she is stuck in some kind of pre-mirror phase, an infant in the body of a adult.

Two questions that came to concern me a great deal were: 'What is this love that Pia is so concerned about?' and 'Is it really real?' When I ask her about sex she giggles and says that it is something that happens on TV sometimes. And then now and again a story will slip out. For instance, there's one about a boy who held her down and kissed her when she was young, something along those lines, something funny and silly and removed from all things sexually adult, and yet something that was violent, and dangerous and complicated. I would ask her, 'Did you like this guy?' and she would say 'No, he was too fat.' Where did she get that idea from?

I think Pia is a person who travels through the world picking up fragments of ideas about things, some things stick and some do not, and what stays remains, but removed somewhat, if not completely, from the context of and relation to all the other things that didn't stick.

Our film's original title was Across the Fields. Across the fields was love, across the fields were all the things Pia should have access to but could not because of her condition, across the fields was any kind of true understanding of Pia, and it was a place we could not go to, a place that perhaps even Pia could not arrive at.

Across the fields there was a man waiting, but what

## DIRECTORS NOTE (2)



would he want? And why would he want her? And what would that mean? Who could want Pia? And how could she find love, when no one is actually allowed to love her? When her mistakes and past experiences are quickly forgotten, because it's too complicated to get into.

The title Across the Fields was an attempt at reconciliation with the fact that Pia would always be alone. That she would never truly understand her self or the world around her, and that we, the able world, would never understand her either.

Across the fields was the place where we, 'the able viewer', lose all our hopes of ever really understanding anything when it comes to Pia, where all our ideas about life and meaning and love and death and connection fall away.

Across the Fields was the title of the film before we got to know Pia. By the end of our process the title had changed to At Elske Pia, which translates in English to Loving Pia, and it makes

sense, because in the end something simpler happened from out of the process. We cared about Pia, and she cared about us, and we enjoyed our time together. That was what got the film made, and hopefully it is there in the material. In the end we arrived at a simple film about Pia being in love, Pia loving, and about a man loving her... and we loved her too.

Daniel Joseph Borgman



PRODUCER: Can you remember what you were thinking the first time you met Pia?

DIRECTOR: No, can you?

PRODUCER: Yes.

DIRECTOR: What were you thinking?

PRODUCER: It's an interview with the director for fuck's sake.



PRODUCER: Were you thinking immediately that she was your star?

DIRECTOR: No

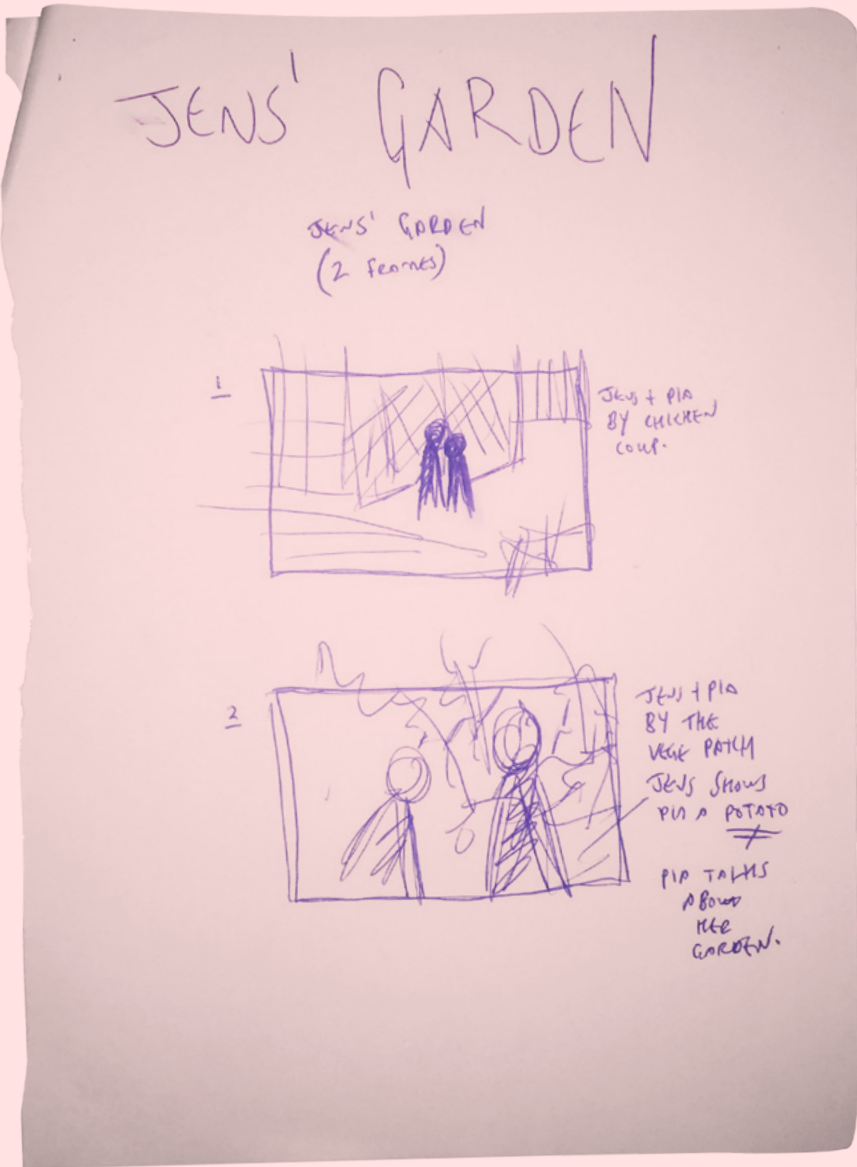
PRODUCER: What do you like most about Pia?

DIRECTOR: Well she is pretty funny.

PRODUCER: Why is she funny?

DIRECTOR: I don't know. Well there is this one time she saw a deer, but it was a stick.

PRODUCER: We can't use this, one must have been there experiencing it.



PRODUCER: What was the hardest in making the film?

DIRECTOR: I don't know, when we had all those people on set.

PRODUCER: Why was that hard?

DIRECTOR: I don't know, because I felt that everyone thought it was a really stupid thing we were doing.

PRODUCER: Why?

DIRECTOR: Because I was trying to get Pia to search around the house in the rain and she was really confused.

PRODUCER: I don't think that was it.

DIRECTOR: That was what?

PRODUCER: I think the problem was that if you make such an intimate film and in a different way than anyone has experienced filmmaking as, you feel insecure

by that there are so many people on set, you don't have a special relationship with. Because then you easily feel that they think you're incompetent.

DIRECTOR: Yeah

PRODUCER: Was it like that?

DIRECTOR: Yeah









PRODUCER: What do you think of your talent as a cinematographer?

DIRECTOR: It's pretty bad, I'm bad at pulling focus.

PRODUCER: How about framing and stuff?

DIRECTOR: Pretty bad at framing... Don't you think?

PRODUCER: No, be serious.

DIRECTOR: Pretty bad... I am serious.

PRODUCER: What are you good at?

DIRECTOR: Framing is really hard.

PRODUCER: What are you really good at?

DIRECTOR: I'm not really sure I'm any good at that stuff.

PRODUCER: No, no...

DIRECTOR: Bahh

PRODUCER: [Laughter]

DIRECTOR: What?

PRODUCER: Why did you do a sound of a sheep?

DIRECTOR: Baah, [laughter]

PRODUCER: But no I'm not just asking about cinematography, but in general in film what are you good at?

DIRECTOR: I'm not sure, I'm actually good at anything.

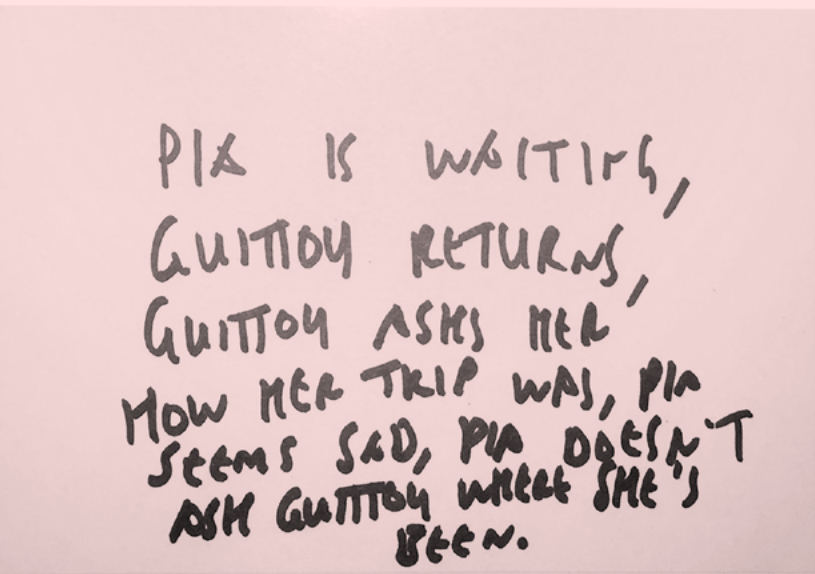
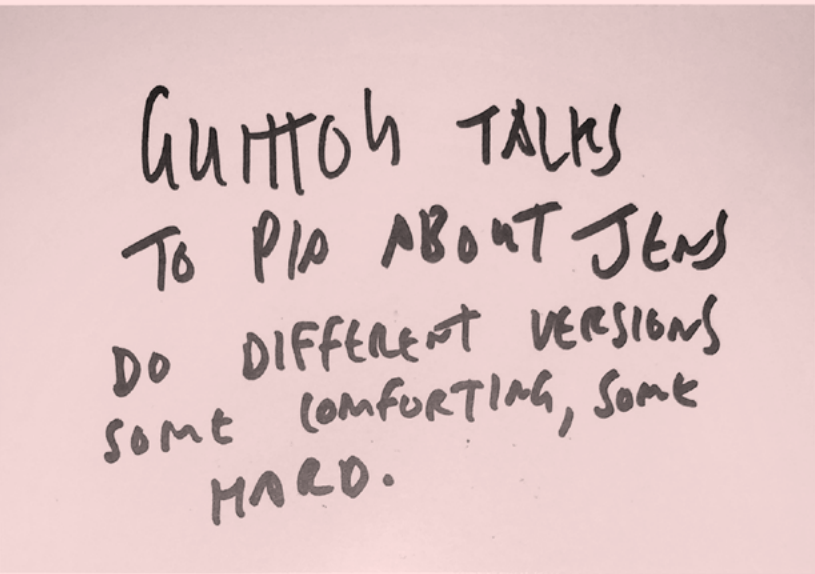
PRODUCER: Danny!

DIRECTOR: I'm quite good at listening to people.

PRODUCER: Noooo.

DIRECTOR: No?

PRODUCER: This is the least thing you're good at.



PRODUCER: What the hell?

DIRECTOR: No like, in meeting a subject, I'm good at.

PRODUCER: How?

DIRECTOR: Cause... I don't know.

PRODUCER: What makes you a good director?

DIRECTOR: I don't think I am Katja, I'm not sure. I mean, I'm not very good at writing scripts, I'm not very good at... I can't speak Danish... I'm not like... I'm pretty depressed and mostly I'm just feeling everything is going wrong all the time. And, I'm not very cool. And, I'm pretty cheesy.

PRODUCER: Well now you have told me everything you are sucking at

DIRECTOR: Yeah.

PRODUCER: And you can't tell me anything that's good about you?

DIRECTOR: Well... I'm surprisingly quite good at just doing what I feel like.

PRODUCER: Hmm.

DIRECTOR: Which is kind of a good thing.

PRODUCER: Yeah, you don't look at the people around you.

DIRECTOR: Not too much.





DIRECTOR: One day, I want to make something really good. That would be great.

PRODUCER: What would that be?

DIRECTOR: I don't know, something really beautiful, where people are...

PRODUCER: People are what?

DIRECTOR: I don't know

PRODUCER: But that wasn't a full sentence.

DIRECTOR: No. I don't know just something were you are like YEAH.

PRODUCER: ...

DIRECTOR: I think we're doing really interesting things at the moment, but it's really small, you know? I think it would be cool to do something that's really interesting, but it is also big. At the moment it's like a little quiet training phase but you kind of know when you embark on these projects that they will... only be so small... because of the nature of how they are.

PRODUCER: Hmmm.

DIRECTOR: Like you know, to take the kind of uniqueness perhaps and maybe the quietly sort of tactile philosophical approach to the world that's in Pia, but somehow apply it to something epic.

PRODUCER: What do you think you have learned from Pia that you would take into that film? That epic film?

DIRECTOR: Lots of stuff like story, story can be simple, real stuff is always way better than phony stuff. A fluid working approach is really cool.

PRODUCER: Hmm... Have you seen that actress that I sent you the other day?

DIRECTOR: No.

PRODUCER: Really not?

DIRECTOR: Maybe we should not do this interview?

PRODUCER: We have done it already.

DIRECTOR: No this is weird, because it's all about me and not really about the film. I reckon we just, why do we need an interview in this thing?

PRODUCER: Because, they would like to have it.



# DANIEL JOSEPH BORGMAN

SCRIPTOGRAPHY · FILMOGRAPHY



Daniel studied directing at the Danish alternative film school Super16. His short films have premiered in A-list festivals. With Berik winning the Grand Prix in Cannes in 2010. His debut feature The Weight of Elephants premiered in Berlin in 2013. Loving Pia is his second feature film. It was developed at the Berlinale Residence and made with support from The Danish Film Institute and FilmFyn.

Loving Pia

The Weight of Elephants

How to Say Goodbye

Brainy

Berik

Lars & Peter

The Man & the Albatross

Winner – NZWG New Writer Award - 2013

2017 100 min, Feature Film, Denmark, Berlinale Forum 2017

2013, 83 min, Feature Film, Denmark/New Zealand, Berlinale Forum

2012, 30min, Denmark

2011, 30 min., Denmark, Locarno FF

2011, 15min., Denmark, Winner Grand prix Award Semaine de la Critique

2010 15 min., Denmark, Official selection Cannes Film Festival

2009, 24 min., Denmark, Locarno FF



# CREDITS



Pia	Pia Skovgaard	Research	Cæcilie Østerby Sørensen
Pia's Mother	Céline Skovgaard	Consultant	Franz Rodenkirchen
The Man	Jens Jensen	Director's Assistant	Lars Iversen
The Sister	Putte Jensen	Line Producer	Sune Lolke
Directed by	Daniel Borgman	Assistant to Producer	Annette Averhoff, Sofie Brandt, Maj Skifter
Produced by	Katja Adomeit	Focus Puller	Rasmus Gaardhøje, Thue Garde Finnich
Cinematography	Daniel Borgman	Runner	Rune Lindholm
Additional Cinematography	Catherine Pattinama Coleman	Sound Design	Anne Gry Friis Kristensen, Philip Nicolai Flindt,
Sound Recording	Sigrid DPA Jensen, Mark Vesterskov, Dan Isager	Foley Artist	Julien Naudin
Additional Sound Recording	Katja Adomeit, Daniel Borgman, Lars Iversen	Booking Manager	Tine Clasen
Editing	Sofie Marie Kristensen, Daniel Borgman	Editing assistant	Oliver Lindboe, Lárus Ren Guðbjörnsson,
Casting	Daniel Borgman, Katja Adomeit, Sven Vinge	Colour Grading	Lisa Svelmøe, Lars Hall
		Graphic Design	Jon Baxter
			Åsmund Sollihøgda

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Adomeit Film presents  
a film by Daniel Borgman



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