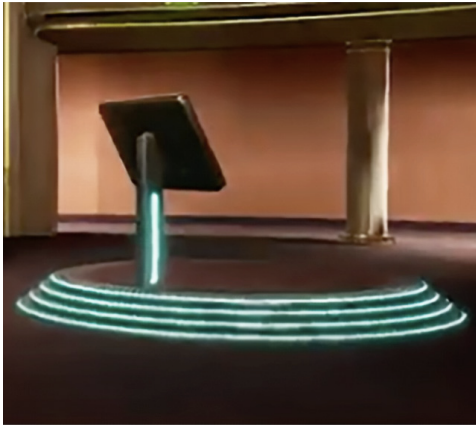




OLDENBURG REVIEW DAILY

Oldenburg Redefines Edgy (Again)



VERDICT: "The metaverse is nothing more than the transformation of the real world into a 3-dimensional interactive virtual world."

TheFilmVerdict, September 4, 2023

Renowned for its innovation, for its 30th anniversary this year, the Oldenburg Film Festival has partnered with the MILC Platform and The Film Verdict to take its first virtual steps into the Metaverse. Users can immerse themselves in virtual Oldenburg and its rich history, attend panel discussions and discover a curated collection of films from the festival. Unveiled this September at metaverse.milc.global.

Before the Venice Film Festival began, The Film Verdict had a unique opportunity to have a quick chat with two men, who at the outset

couldn't seem more different, but yet share the same passion and vision: Hendrik Hay, founder and CEO of MILC (Welt der Wunder) and Torsten Neumann, head of the Oldenburg Film Festival.

TFV: Torsten, you head up one of the most independent film festivals dealing with edgy and new filmmakers, as well as established filmmakers from around the world, and Hendrik, you are a born, at heart entrepreneur, who owned and ran television stations and now focuses on a vision that includes using micro-licensing utility tokens

Continues next page

INDEPENDENT

IN THE BLIND SPOT

VERDICT: A bold and chilling political thriller of shifting perspectives in which the weight of state-sanctioned terror begins to crush a security agent in eastern Turkey, where trauma and paranoia rip apart the social fabric.

Jay Weissberg, February 21, 2023

The brutal legacy of Turkey's secret service casts a dark pall over a community in German-Kurdish writer-director Ayse Polat's most accomplished feature to date, *In the Blind Spot*. A chilling tripart thriller that shifts perspectives as it plays with the inescapable pull of the past and its insidious legacy, the film dexterously links the story of a low-level security agent finding himself on the other side of the surveillance cameras to a deeper plot whose grip appears to reach from beyond the grave. With its bold take on state-sanctioned hit squads, *In the Blind Spot* is likely to create a firestorm at

Continues next page



Creative Investors' Conference

Metaverse continued from page 1 that allows content owners to have their work be accessible to a global market. The question is, how is that the two of you are sitting down together with TFV for an interview?

Torsten: It seems like we do have a lot in common, and I would say it is mainly our love and passion for the things we're doing that brings us together. Because it is not that common to find people who share the same ethics in their work, it feels very good to share a common goal with Hendrik, as he is a passionate man who keeps pursuing his dreams and fighting for ideas. I share those ideas. And how do we find the same idea of putting new media and edgy indie filmmaking together? Well, Hendrik's vision is not designed to marginalize the old media, but only to introduce something that can put things back in balance – with regard to the field of interest I am dealing with, this seems to be the most important issue: the art of cinema is threatened by the ongoing development. Artistic variety has always been the most important detail to keep art and culture alive; what happens in the film industry is actually the opposite. It feels good to have people like Hendrik out there ready to stand strong.

TFV: Hendrik, you are in many

ways a visionary. Last year you produced the first Short Film Festival, ALPHA on the Metaverse, in collaboration with The Film Verdict Inc. What was the feedback and how do you measure "success" on such a new platform?

Hendrik: Thank you! The Alpha Film Festival was one of the first festivals in the Metaverse. It was designed to show other festivals the possibilities of a virtual world. We were very impressed with the communication around the event. With around 450 million article impressions, we can assume that this first attempt did not go unnoticed. We were approached not only by other film festivals, such as the Oldenburg Film Festival, but also by other events. The fashion and music industries in particular are working with us on really interesting concepts.

TFV: But Torsten, by and large, you are a "film guy," how quickly did you embrace the idea of running Metaverse, a parallel festival universe, at the same time as the Oldenburg Film Festival? And how do you think your audience and sponsors will think of it?

Torsten: Of course, every new step into an unknown territory should be considered with care. The Metaverse seems to oppose our goals to keep cinema as a real life experience where people

[Full article, click here](#)

Blind Spot continued from page 1 home but should find welcoming arms at international festivals.

Chapter 1 begins with a German film crew headed by Simone (Katja Bürkle), who's making a documentary about the persistence of memory and the rituals used to keep loved ones close. They've come to eastern Turkey, in the area around Erzurum and Kars, to film Hatice (Tudan Ürper), an elderly Kurdish



Mitosfilm

woman whose son was kidnapped 26 years earlier; in the hopes of bringing her son back, she makes his favorite soup every Friday, delivering it to the other villagers and waiting expectantly for her missing child to come through the door. Though just a small part of Polat's film, this little story early on, shot with a sense of authenticity, gives a feeling of genuine emo-

[Full review, click here](#)

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INDEPENDENT

BEHIND THE HAYSTACKS

VERDICT: Writer-director Asimina Proedrou's grimly compelling debut feature is a contemporary Greek tragedy about family conflicts and border tensions.

Stephen Dalton, November 11, 2022

Tragic events ripple across a small community on the border between Greece and North Macedonia in writer-director Asimina Proedrou's bleakly compelling debut feature, *Behind The Haystacks*. Grounded in gutsy performances and down-beat social realism, this solemn ensemble drama takes place in 2015, when large numbers of refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other war-torn nations



Argonauts Productions

began surging through the "Balkan corridor" towards western Europe. But while it opens like a familiar migration-themed narrative, this Greek-Macedonian-German co-production soon shifts gear into a more timeless personal story about three members of the same family, each trapped by secrets and

lies, stifling social conventions and dubious ethical choices.

Proedrou initially keeps tension on a low flame, but plants a suspenseful hook early with her prologue, in which a group of children stumble across a pair of dead bodies at the edge of Lake Doiran on Greece's

Continues next page

Oldenburg Film Festival in Metaverse:

MILC Platform & The Film Verdict Ignite a New Era of Entertainment

THE FILM
VERDICT

VENUE:

Haystacks from previous page

northern border. She then unravels the backstory to this macabre discovery across three overlapping chapters, a Rashomon-style splintering of subjective viewpoints that gradually come together into a cohesive jigsaw narrative. Within its modest family framework, *Behind The Haystacks* makes some deeper state-of-the-nation points about injustice, hypocrisy and racism. World premiering this week at Thessaloniki International Film Festival, this contemporary Greek tragedy is a classic festival feature in theme and style, with a moral heft and novelistic texture that could give it wider art-house appeal and awards potential.

The opening act revolves around Stergios (Stathis Stamoulakatos), a grizzled veteran fisherman car-

rying a heavy burden of guilt for past crimes and misdemeanours, notably an impending court case for historic tax fraud. Offered the opportunity pay down his debts in a desperate bid to avoid jail time, he strikes a Faustian deal with an illegal people-smuggling gang, who are bringing refugees from war-torn Syria across the nearby Macedonian border by boat. The second chapter turns its focus on Stergios' wife Maria (Lena Ouzounidou), a devoutly religious woman active in the Greek Orthodox church, who is drawn into charitable work at a nearby refugee camp even though her haughty priest strictly forbids the "sinful" activity of helping Muslims.

A combustible background presence in these opening sections is the couple's twenty-something

daughter Anastasia (Evgenia Lavda), a free-spirited nurse and aspiring singer who is constantly clashing with her controlling, socially conservative father. She takes centre stage in the third act, which helps tie together the loose ends and unresolved questions of the story so far. Using extra shifts at the hospital as cover, Anastasia has been leading a double life of secret boyfriends, boozy parties and stage performances in sleazy nightclubs. When Stergios stumbles across the truth, their overheated arguments take a tragic turn.

There is precious little mercy or redemption in *Behind The Haystacks*. Innocents die, the wrong people are scapegoated, the guilty walk free, and nobody gets away with a clean conscience. These characters

[Full Review, click here](#)

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FAST FACTS

OLDENBURG CELEBRATES 30 YEARS



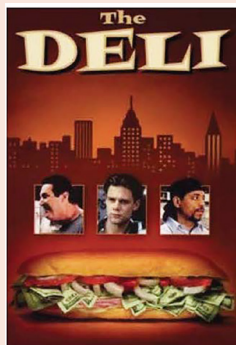
1994

Festival Launch

Festival Highlights:

Romeo is Bleeding;

Crooklyn



1997

Festival Friend John Gallagher

comes to Oldenburg with "The

Deli" **Festival Highlights:** Tim

Hunter retrospective together

with a tribute to Iciar Bollain.



1997

Introduction of the German

Independence Award

Festival Highlights: The

Closing Night Oscar-winner

with "Gods and Monsters."

OLDENBURG LIVE





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