

Mascha Halberstad about OINK

“Not all people are good”

When nine year old Babs gets a piglet as a gift from her mysterious Grandfather Tuitjes, her mother – a hardliner vegetarian – isn't exactly pleased. Babs does everything she can to teach 'Oink' some manners, so she can keep him. As occupied as she is with her mission, little does she notice how a villain has evil plans for her beloved pig.

OINK, the first Dutch feature stop-motion film, wins all hearts with its overwhelming charm and a surprising amount of excrement. A plainly hilarious and exciting animation film, on which Mascha Halberstad and her team have worked for eight years.

OINK looks rather 'Dutch', both in its sets (tight residential areas with small cars in the driveway) and in its somewhat 'cheeky' style.

Mascha Halberstad: That's where the story takes place: in a Dutch village. I wanted to show the country as most Dutch people know it. Not the touristic tulip-Netherlands, but the terraced-house-Netherlands, with

its fencing and identical houses and characteristic streets, which I liked to depict.

Yet the film will be released in France, Italy, Japan and many other countries, so it must have some universal appeal.

Halberstad: It's all in the theme. OINK is about trust, about the loss of trust and about 'not to be trusted'. This is mainly reflected in the relationships between Babs and Grandpa Tuitjes, and between her mother and father. So there is a whole narrative line for adults, while the poo is mainly addressing the children.

Yet the underlying story is pretty intense. Is that what attracted you to Tosca Menten's book?

Halberstad: Definitely! There are many differences between the original book and my movie, but that element has certainly remained. I like that there's a character who simply turns out to be a plain jerk. I deliberately wanted to make a film that does not pamper children, as in reality not



all people are good.

Especially for the film you created your own Holy Motion animation studio. Why did you need one?

Halberstad: I founded Holy Motion together with producer Marleen Slot. We thought it was a waste of money to rent a space, as finishing a stop-motion movie might take you years. So we bought a 650 square metres space literally around the corner from my home. A good investment, as we can rent it out to other filmmakers.

Where does the job of a stop-motion director begin and end?

Halberstad: Basically, I do everything except animating. From writing the

screenplay to designing the puppets, from creating the whole film universe to directing the actors, the animators and the editing. I also created all secondary characters. I first made the puppets myself, and immediately gave them a clear character. Those examples then went to the puppet makers, who really knew how to perfectly convert my designs. As a director, I am carrying the entire load. Fortunately, the stop-motion process is very fluid and easily allows you to improvise. Perfect for a self-taught artist like me; I didn't follow an animation film course, but I did follow my intuition!

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Fien Meynendonckx