

Oslo Pictures  
present

# SICK OF MYSELF

an unromantic comedy by Kristoffer Borgli



Norway / Dark Comedy / 97 min / 1.85 / 5.1

International Press in Cannes

WOLF Consultants  
G. Spragg, L. Dietrich, M. Arnon  
[hello@wolf-con.com](mailto:hello@wolf-con.com)  
+49 157 7474 9724  
[www.wolf-con.com](http://www.wolf-con.com)

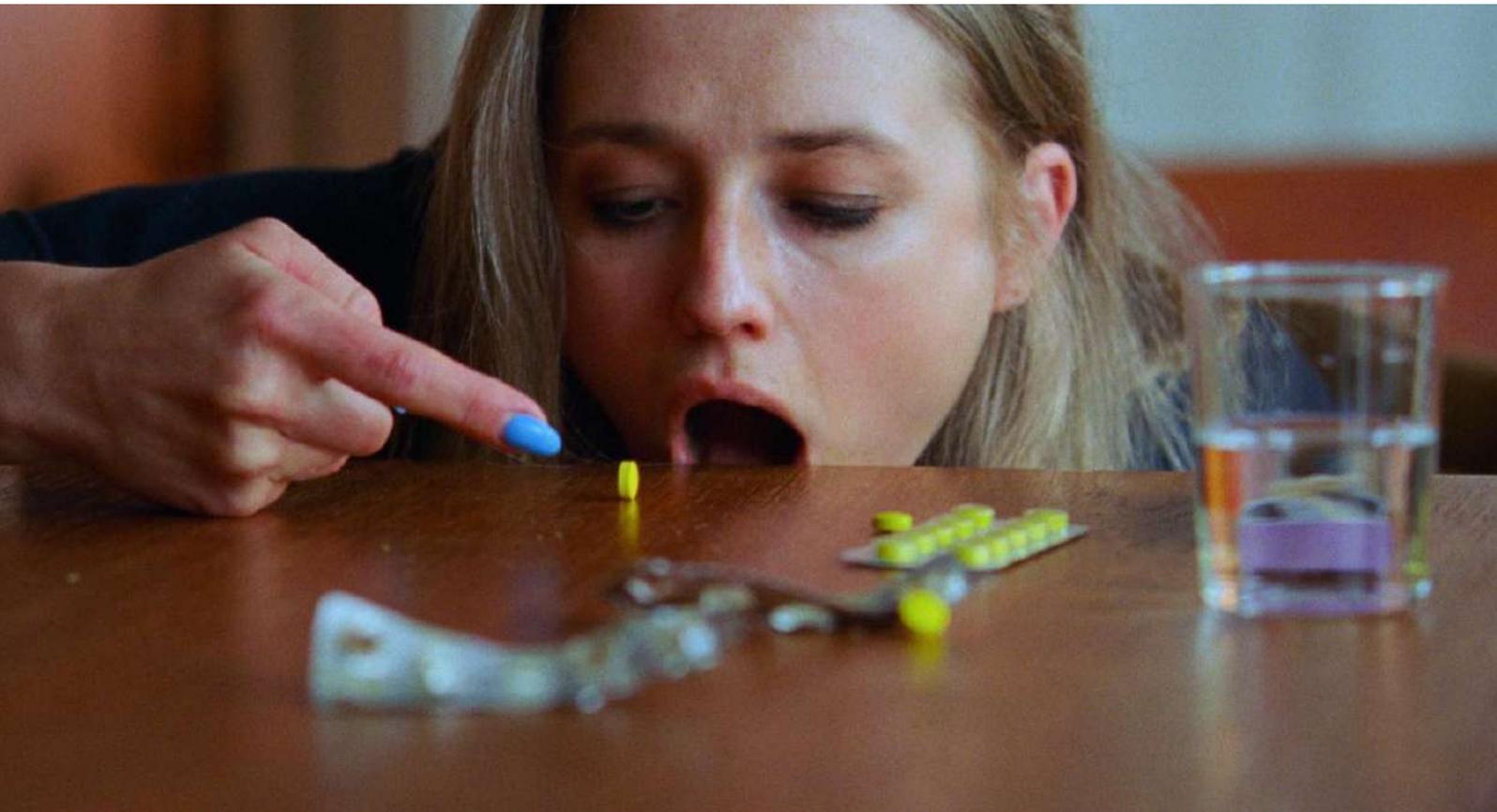
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[festival@memento-films.com](mailto:festival@memento-films.com)  
+33 1 53 34 90 33  
[www.memento-international.com](http://www.memento-international.com)

## SYNOPSIS

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Signe and Thomas are in an unhealthy, competitive relationship that takes a vicious turn when Thomas suddenly breaks through as a contemporary artist. In response, Signe makes a desperate attempt to regain her status by creating a new persona hell-bent on attracting attention and sympathy.



# DIRECTOR'S INTERVIEW

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***What inspired you to make a film about a dysfunctional, toxic relationship – an 'anti-rom-com'?***

It all started with the main character Signe and her story, but I found myself getting interested in her boyfriend Thomas as the drafts progressed. It suddenly became clear that the backbone of the story really was the dynamic between them, that the motivation for their actions often seemed triggered by their competitive relationship.

I started with an image of where the story should end, but I didn't know how to get there. I wanted the movie to take place in the real world, in a social environment I had observed in Oslo, but since the character ends up going so far, mapping out every turn she needed to take was a challenge. The audience has to go there with her, step by terrible step.

***How did you decide to cast Kristine Kujath Thorp to carry your film, and how did she contribute to shaping Signe's character?***

I feel so lucky that I got Kristine to do this, it's a challenging character which fully came to life once Kristine was cast. It's a forceful and psychologically complex part that also required comedic timing and extreme physical maneuvering to pull off. In preparation we were exploring a sort of double acting: how do you portray a character who never shows her true self? She lies a lot, she tries to come off as humble when she's not, she always brings a level of acting to her social situations.

Acting a character that acts was an intricate balance to strike, and one that Kristine handled really well. And on top of that there were all of these physical elements, how her body starts acting up in strange, horrific and sometimes comedic ways. The rehearsals sometimes felt like preparing for an awkward dance show. At a point we even tried using light electroshock to generate unexpected physical behavior, but it was just a painfully bad idea.

***What was the process and craft involved in Signe's physical transformation, making Signe's face almost its own character in the film?***

Prosthetic makeup is so vital to the film that I thought of Izzi Galindo, our brilliant designer, as one of the stars of the film. We spent many months designing Signe's different stages of transformation, trying to achieve something that was both shocking and beautiful. Our collaboration was so fun that, when the production got

pushed due to COVID, we ended up shooting a short film with a completely different idea prior to making *Sick of Myself* called *Eer*, which you can find online.

I think we are both fascinated with the sensation an altered face or body can generate. We were trying to find the line where the dysmorphia would be seen as both appealing and shocking at the same time.

As we started pre-production we discovered that Norway doesn't really have an industry to support the level of work Izzi does, so he set up this makeshift prosthetics factory in the Oslo suburbs where he and a couple of assistants worked day and night for months to meet the demands of the project. It was kind of an insane operation, and I truly believe no one but Izzi could or would have pulled it off.

It's also fun to be attending the festival with this film at the same time as David Cronenberg is in the lineup, as I'm sure he's to blame for my interest in prosthetics and body horror in the first place.

***What else did you want to achieve in terms of aesthetics? The film seems to effortlessly combine a formal elegance with the more extreme aspects.***

A relevant quote here would be "I like beautiful melodies telling me terrible things." I wanted to capture this somewhat uncomfortable story in the most beautiful way I could. I wanted to shoot it during the beautiful summers we have in Oslo. I wanted it to look and feel as timeless as possible, both to balance the very contemporary story, but also to allude to the immortal relevance of some of the themes like narcissism and jealousy. So we shot it on 35mm, there's a lot of classical music in the film and hopefully it all translates to a beautiful film portraying terrible things.

***How do you strike the balance between realism and satire, comedy and tragedy?***

There's nothing about this story that started purely from my imagination, it all comes from observation which has then been curated and heightened for comedy, for conflict, for story. I'm hoping that the characters become more familiar and real as the plot increases in absurdity.

I seem to have a huge appetite for uncomfortable humor. Ideas that are both painful and funny seem to stick for me. I'm not really setting out to create a distinct tone, the script just keeps getting refined intuitively till it feels like something I'd want to see on the screen.

***Are there good and bad people in this story, or is everyone equally despicable?***

I actually think the characters are highly relatable, it's just that most people have enough self-awareness and shame to stop them from acting impulsively like they do in the film. I love how fiction gives us the opportunity to live through someone else's thrilling disregard for moral boundaries without us having to deal with the consequences ourselves. With *Sick of Myself* I was trying to make characters that were highly watchable, not necessarily "likeable". The writer Saul Bellow said "One thought-murder a day keeps the psychiatrist away." There's something in that quote that speaks to my desire to explore these cringe-inducing and sometimes awful situations in fiction.

Morally, the film doesn't exactly let the characters' misdeeds go unpunished. In that sense the story also works as a parable. I welcome any interpretation of the movie, and anyone is entitled to their opinion, but to me this was about finding humor in the darker parts of modern life and culture.

***You're LA Based, but SICK OF MYSELF was produced and shot in Scandinavia. Will you continue to work between both continents? What's next for Kristoffer Borgli?***

I still feel like I'm on a prolonged visit to the US, and I don't have a clear plan for where I want to stay. I have a US based project that will be shot this year, so that will keep me here for a while, but I also had such a great experience shooting my feature in Norway and Sweden that I'm sure I'll write another story set there. Whatever makes sense for the idea!



# DIRECTOR – Kristoffer Borgli

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Kristoffer Borgli is a Norwegian, LA-based, writer and director. His numerous works of short and long format films have played festivals like Sundance and SXSW.

## Selected filmography:

SICK OF MYSELF, 2022 / Writer & Director

EER, 2021 / Writer & Director / Short

FORMER CULT MEMBER HEARS MUSIC FOR THE FIRST TIME, 2020 / Writer & Director / Short  
*Sundance Film Festival 2020*

SOFTCORE, 2020 / Writer & Director / Short

A PLACE WE CALL REALITY, 2018 / Writer & Director / Short  
*Gothenburg Film Festival 2018, Jury Award Winner at the Norwegian Short Film Festival 2018*

DRIB, 2017 / Writer & Director / Docufiction  
*SXSW 2017, IFDA 2017, CPF:DOX 2017*

WHATEVEREST, 2012 / Writer & Director / Short  
*Jury Award Winner at the AFI Fest 2012*



## CAST – Kristine Kujath Thorp / Signe

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Kristine Kujath Thorp is a Norwegian-born actress who currently lives in Copenhagen, Denmark. In spring 2021, Kristine starred in the award-winning Norwegian comedy-drama NINJABABY for which she won the Amanda Award for Best Actress. NINJABABY also won the SXSW FF Audience Award Global and the award for Best Comedy at the European Film Awards. The success of the film both in Norway and internationally brought Kristine to the attention of audiences worldwide for her portrayal of the lead character, Raket.



### Selected filmography:

SICK OF MYSELF by Kristoffer Borgli, 2022  
*Cannes Un Certain Regard*

THE GREAT SILENCE by Katrine Brocks, 2022

NINJABABY by Yngvild Sve Flikke, 2021  
*Best Generation 14plus Film in Berlin, Best European Comedy, Amanda Award for Best Actress, SXSW Audience Award*

THE BURNING SEA by John Andreas Andersen, 2021

BETRAYED by Eirik Svensson, 2020

NOGET OM EMMA, TV series, 2020

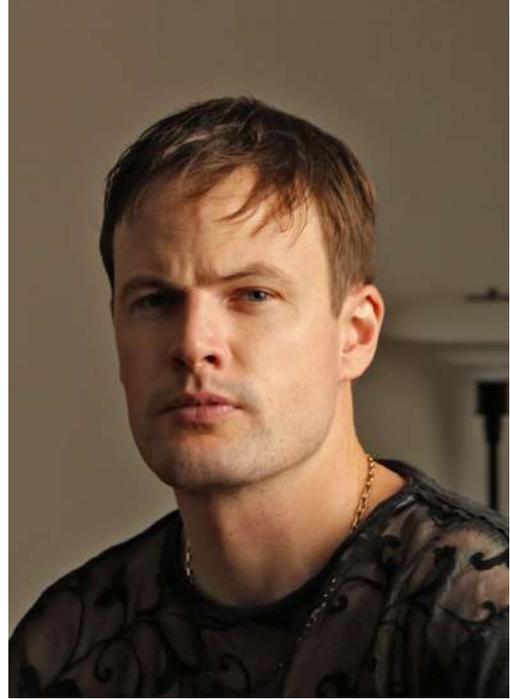
## CAST – Eirik Sæther / Thomas

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Eirik Sæther (born in 1983) is a visual artist working within the fields of sculpture, painting, video and performance. Although he has previously directed and acted in his own shorts, the role as “Thomas” in SICK OF MYSELF constitutes his first leading role.

He graduated from Oslo Academy of the Arts’ MFA program in 2010. Sæther has previously held solo exhibitions in galleries such as Jenny’s, L.A. and Edouart Montassut, Paris, as well as participation in the 9th Berlin Biennale.

His works are in the collection of The National Museum in Norway and Fondation Galeries Lafayette in Paris, among others. He is currently running the gallery Haus der Kunst in Oslo.



# FULL CAST

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Signe	Kristine Kujath Thorp
Thomas	Eirik Sæther
Marte	Fanny Vaager
Yngve	Fredrik Stenberg Ditlev-Simonsen
Emma	Sarah Francesca Brænne
Beate	Ingrid Vollan
Stian	Steinar Kloumann Hallert
Lisa	Andrea Bræin Hovig
Nora	Frida Natland
Kristina	Guri Glans
Espen	Henrik Mestad
Anja	Matilda Höög

# PRODUCERS - Oslo Pictures

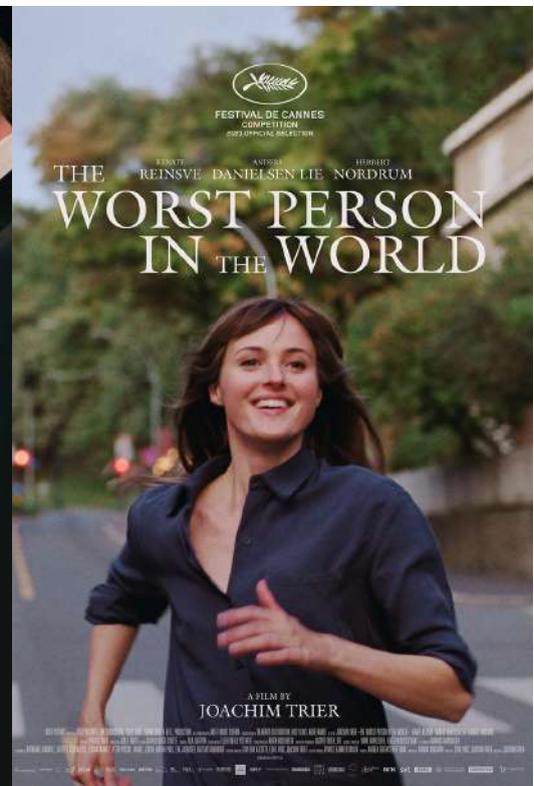
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Oslo Pictures is an independent Norwegian film production company. They mainly focus on director driven feature films and TV drama, and aim to have a high-quality portfolio with an international appeal.

The company (previously known as Film Farms) was reestablished in 2018 after bringing director Joachim Trier and screenwriter Eskil Vogt on board. Oslo Pictures has since then co-produced award-winning features such as THE BODY REMEMBERS WHEN THE WORLD BROKE OPEN (2019) and HOPE (2020).

Oslo Pictures first film as majority producer, THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD, premiered in Cannes in 2021, where Renate Reinsve brought home the award for Best Actress. It was later nominated for two BAFTAs and two Academy Awards (Best International Feature Film and Best Original Screenplay).

This year, Oslo Pictures returns to Cannes in Un Certain Regard for the World Premiere of Kristoffer Borgli's SICK OF MYSELF.



# CREW

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Producers	Andrea Berentsen Ottmar Dyveke Bjørkly Graver
Co-Producers	Mimmi Spång Kristina Börjesson Peter Possne
Production Managers	Lars Thomas Skare Grunde Tveiten
Director	Kristoffer Borgli
Director of Photography	Benjamin Loeb
1st AD	Katinka Lotherington
Casting Directors	Jannicke Stendal Hansen Hannah Chocron Foldøy
Production Designer	Henrik Svensson
Art Director	Mette Haukeland
Costume Designer	Jostein Wålengen
Costume Supervisor	Tina Solberg Torstad
Prosthetic Makeup Designer	Izzi Galindo
Hair & Makeup Designer	Dimitra Drakopoulou
Sound Design	Gustaf Berger Jesper Miller
Colorist	Julien Alary
Composer	Turns