

A FILM BY TOVE PILS
WITH HANNA, CHLOE AND CYD

LABOR

producer MELISSA LINDGREN executive producer MIA ENGBERG hanna's voice NINA JEPPSSON
cinematography TOVE PILS additional photography SARA LINDQUIST editing ANDREAS JONSSON
HAY TOVE PILS dramaturge MAJA BORG, ÅSA MOSSBERG sound design DAVID GÜLICH music KENT
OLOFSSON grade JOHAN EKLUND, GOOD FILM AND POST graphic design STINA SANDBSTRÖM,
BUREAU BONANZA with support from THE SWEDISH FILM INSTITUTE / CECILIA LIDIN, ANNA WEITZ,
KLARA GRUNNING NILSSON, GÖTEBORG STAD, VÄSTRA GÖTALANDSREGIONEN
in co-production with FILM I VÄST / KRISTINA BÖRJESSON, JENNY LUUKKONEN © STORY 2023


NORDIC DOCUMENTARY
COMPETITION
Göteborg Film Festival



LABOR

Logline

Hanna leaves her family behind to go to the city of her dreams, San Francisco. At a party, she meets the professional dominatrix Chloe and the escort Cyd and they embark on a self-fulfilling journey together.

Short synopsis

Hanna leaves her family and girlfriend behind to go to the city of her dreams, San Francisco, where she hopes to explore her sexuality. Soon she meets the professional dominatrix Chloe and Cyd, who works as an escort for gay men. A door into a new world opens up for Hanna, and together with Chloe and Cyd, she begins a journey which takes her further and further away from her life and family in Sweden.

The director Tove Pils has been documenting the lives of Hanna, Chloe and Cyd for over a decade. Through an intimately present camera, a queer community that challenges the view of sex and work is explored. Hanna's striking emotional journey is intertwined with her friends' stories and creates a patchwork of a group of people who have found their home in each other.

Long synopsis

Hanna leaves her family and her girlfriend behind to go to San Francisco. She dreams of exploring her sexuality way beyond what is possible in her small Swedish hometown. At a party in San Francisco she gets to know two experienced sex workers: Chloe, a professional domina with dreams of a better life and Cyd, a playful and shameless escort, selling sex to gay men. Together with them Hanna embarks on a journey. For the first time in her life she starts to feel like she could belong somewhere. But staying in San Francisco is expensive. To be able to remain in the city Hannah wants to try sexwork herself and starts working with Chloe.

Chloe and Cyd are at a different part of their journey, wanting to create more stable lives for themselves in a city that is rapidly gentrifying. There are both ups and downs to sex work for all of them and while Hanna is beginning to live the life she's been dreaming of, there is something looming at the horizon. Hanna's new way of life doesn't align with the values of her loved ones back in Sweden. But maybe her girlfriend will understand Hanna's choices better after she comes to visit? And maybe if Hanna dares to be open to her parents they would actually become closer?

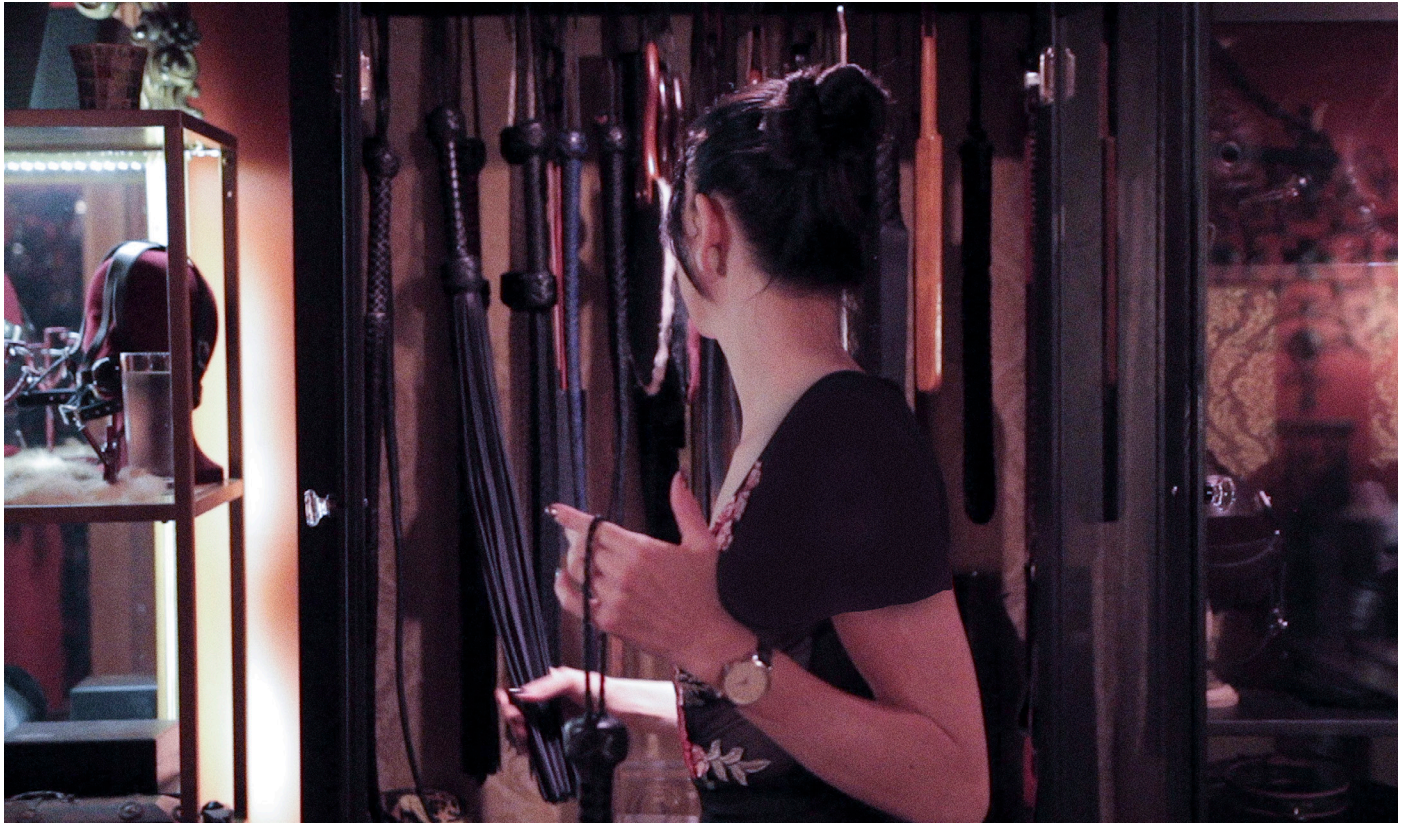
Production facts

Labor
Documentary
Duration: 95 min
World premier: Gothenburg Film Festival (Dragon Award)
International premier: CPH:DOX (Nordic Competition)

Writer and director: Tove Pils
With: Hanna, Cyd and Chloe
Hanna's voice: Nina Jeppsson
Cinematography: Tove Pils
Editing: Andreas Jonsson Hay and Tove Pils
Dramaturge: Maja Borg and Åsa Mossberg
Sound design and mix: David Gülich
Music: Kent Olofsson
Grade: Johan Eklund
Good Film and Post
Graphic design: Stina Sandström
Bureau Bonanza

Produced by: Story AB
With support from: The Swedish Film Institute / Anna Weitz, Cecilia Lidin and Klara Nilsson
Grunning and Göteborg stad

In co-production with: Film i Väst / Kristina Börjesson and Jenny Luukkonen





Director statement

I believe it is essential that we set out to capture the diversity of sex work, to achieve a wider, more true representation of what it can mean to be a sex worker. *Labor* is my contribution. As a queer filmmaker, I wanted to focus on the experiences of queers in the sex industry, specifically in San Francisco, a city with a long history of activism, resistance and sexual liberation.

It was important to me to show the complexities and nuances that exist within sex work, but also to depict the uniqueness of the queer sex worker community that the three main characters are a part of; the openness, support, and understanding which exist within it. How being a part of this community can affect the experience of sex work is something which has helped me understand more about the whole concept of sex work. Through *Labor* I hope to provide an entrypoint towards a deeper understanding of these matters to more people.

In the film *Hanna*, a young woman from Sweden, embarks on a journey of sexual exploration, hoping to find freedom and liberation in her sexuality in the city of her dreams, San Francisco. Through *Hanna's* and the two other main characters' journeys, *Labor* portrays dif-

ferent reasons to enter into sex work, how sex work intersects with larger societal issues and the profound effect that stigma and external moral judgment can have on the lives of sex workers. Interviews and diary notes collected over the course of 10 years provide intimate insights into how the main characters' relationships to sex work changes through time. We see how they navigate their own moral compasses and come to terms with their choices and identities.

At its core, *Labor* explores the intersections of identity, sexuality, and labor; highlighting the importance of self-determination and agency in our lives and choices. Through the film I want to challenge the ways in which sex workers are often silenced and dismissed, to instead create more space for empathy, understanding and dialogue.

Ultimately, my hope is that this film will contribute to more honest and nuanced conversations around sex work and the many variables which affect the working conditions for those in the sex industry. I hope it might also serve as a celebration of the resilience and strength of these three individuals and the wider community they are a part of.

Director's biography

In their work, Pils seeks to widen the notion of sexuality and gender. Filmmaking is a way for Pils to create a structure for exploring what they and their community long for and strive to create; spaces to explore sexuality, open relationships, queer rituals and gender beyond the binary. Pils works with both documentary and fiction.

Filmography

Sugar Oil Pine Water (2021)
PUSH ME (2014)
To Not Explode (2008)
Take My Sex Away (2007, co-director with Anna Eborn and Lovisa Elwerdotter)

Story

Melissa Lindgren, producer

Melissa Lindgren is a producer and curator based in Stockholm, Sweden. She graduated from the University of Gothenburg with an MFA in Curatorial Practice (film/video) and is the founder and co-director of Cinema Queer International Film Festival. In 2019 Melissa joined acclaimed production company Story as a producer, focusing on creative documentaries and arthouse fiction. In 2022 she was made partner of the company.

Filmography

The Society of the Spectacle (2023, CPH:DOX), *Megaheartz* (2023, CPH:DOX), *Labor* (2023, CPH:DOX), *Puss hej då* (2023, Gothenburg Film Festival, winner of the Angelo prize), *Night Shift* (2022, Sheffield Doc Fest), *Ball* (2021, Dokufest Kosovo) *Always Amber* (2020, Berlinale Panorama).

Story AB

was founded in 1998, producing creative documentary films for cinema, television and online distribution. The company is run by five award winning documentary filmmakers, a CEO, producers and office staff. Story also produces and represents additional talented filmmakers connected to the company.

Story has a high ambition in producing both personal and inventive films. Our main resources are groundbreaking stories and the talented directors we represent. Story is today one of the most important production companies focused on documentaries and art house films in Sweden and Scandinavia. Story specialises in feature-length documentaries with an international reach, but we also produce short documentaries, fiction films, animated documentaries and commercial work with a documentary base.

Our filmography includes (selection) *The Society of the Spectacle* (2023, CPH:DOX), *Megaheartz* (2023, CPH:DOX), *Labor* (2023, CPH:DOX), *Hypermoon* (2023 CPH:DOX), *The Villages of Roses* (2023, Tessaloniki), *Blomster* (2023, Gothenburg FF), *Love You Bye* (2023, Gothenburg Film Festival, winner of the Angelo prize), *A House Made of Splinters* (2022, co-producer; Sundance director's award, Oscar nominated), *Always Amber* (2020, Berlinale) *Idomeni* (2020, Tessaloniki) *Lucky One* (2019, Eurimages Audentia Award at the Gothenburg Film Festival), *That Summer* (2018, Telluride, Berlinale Panorama, Gothenburg FF), *The Distant Barking of Dogs* (co-producer; 2017, First Appearance Award at IDFA, FIPRESCI Award in Thessaloniki + more), *Shapeshifters* (2017, Competition sections in Gothenburg FF and CPH:Dox), *Kiki* (2016, Sundance World Competition, Teddy Award at Berlinale, Idfa + more), *Fonko* (2015, Rotterdam and London IFF), *Concerning Violence* (2014, Sundance World Competition, Cinema Fairbindet Award Berlinale, Best documentary at the Swedish Film Awards), *Belleville Baby* (2013, Berlinale Panorama, Best Documentary at Swedish Film Awards), *After You* (2013, Best Nordic Documentary Award, CPH:Dox), *At Night I Fly*, (2011, Best Documentary at Swedish Film Awards), *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975* (2011, World Documentary Editing Award, Sundance + more).

Our projects have something important to say to the audience. And we see an international potential in the projects presented here. They all deal with burning questions in our contemporary society. Our long-time drive has been to reach a new audience by combining a captivating and fervent theme with an innovative form.

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