

PICTURE TREE INTERNATIONAL presents



THE MIDWIFE

A film by
Antti J. Jokinen

Finland 2015 | 118 min.

Starring Krista Kosonen, Lauri Tilkanen,
Pirkka-Pekka Petelius, Leea Klemola, Tommi Korpela

Produced by



World Sales



FILM FACTS

Original Title	Kättilö
Genre	Drama
Length	118 min.
Language	Finnish

Cast

Helena	Krista Kosonen
Johannes	Lauri Tilkanen
Jouni	Pirkka-Pekka Petelius
Aune	Leea Klemola
Gödel	Tommi Korpela
Björne	Seppo Pääkkönen
Heta	Elina Knihtilä

Crew

Director	Antti J. Jokinen
Screenplay	Katja Kettu and Antti J. Jokinen based on the novel "Kättilö" by Katja Kettu
Cinematographer	Rauno Ronkainen F.S.C.
Editor	Benjamin Mercer
Production Designer	Kari Kankaanpää
Costume Designer	Anna Vilppunen
Sound	Kirka Sainio
Special Effects	Tuomo Hintikka
Production Managers	Kristiina Rytkölä, Arturas Dvinelis, Jonna Enroth
Casting	Tutsa Huuhka, Roolituspalvelu
Producers	Markus Selin and Jukka Helle

A Solar Films production with backing from Finnish Film Foundation / National Finnish broadcasting company YLE / Nordisk Film & TV Fond / Nordisk Film

Contacts

Production	Solar Films Inc. Oy Veneentekijäntie 20 00210 Helsinki Finland Ph. +358 29 3700 390 markus.selin@solarfilms.com jukka.helle@solarfilms.com
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World sales	Picture Tree International GmbH Zur Börse 12 10247 Berlin Germany Ph. +49 30 4208 2480 pti@picturetree-international.com
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INTERNATIONAL

SYNOPSIS

Finland, 1944. The country is shaken by the Lapland War, a conflict between Germany and Finland in the aftermath of WWII. Helena, a small community's midwife nicknamed "Wildeye", meets the Finnish-German Nazi officer Johannes Angelhurst. She is attracted to the mysterious stranger and follows him to the prisoner of war camp where he serves to start working as a nurse. For Angelhurst, Helena is different from any other woman, and they develop a wild and passionate relationship. Yet their burning love neither removes the traumatic war images that haunt the officer nor the gruesome secrets hiding behind the walls of the camp.

When the turmoil of war separates the lovers, they make a pact to reunite at the remote cabin where they spent their happiest times together. At the end of the war, Helena and Johannes put their lives at risk and suffer tremendous hardship to fight their way back to each other, guided by a will to survive so strong that it bypasses the expectations of morality.

THE PRESS ON KATJA KETTU'S NOVEL "KÄTILÖ"

"*The Midwife* is not a book you read, it is a book you live through to the very last breath. It is impossible to get through it without it devouring you." – *Dagens Nyheter*

"Earthquakes on the Richter scale of love." – *Jyllandsposten*

"Katja Kettu depicts Finland towards the end of the Second World War with impressive narrative and remarkable imagery." – *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

"Katja Kettu – the strong voice of Finnish literature"... "Katja Kettu mixes Nordic saga tradition and lyricism in her writing. Blending in the beautiful, the ugly and the noble, she drafts the portrait of a strong, multi-dimensional, unforgettable woman." "A novel with rare visual power." – *La Provence*

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

by Antti J. Jokinen

I felt compelled to make a spirited film about love and war. And I was determined to set it in Lapland, on one of the major European battle grounds of the Second World War. I'm from Finland and know how the war and our camaraderie with Nazi Germany have remained a complete taboo to this day. Finland was a German ally in WWII but made a separate peace agreement with the Soviets in August 1944. Once the Finns publicly demanded the withdrawal of all 200,000 men strong German troops from Finland, the Lapland War broke out. The German soldiers rampaged through the mountainous country, burning villages and blowing up bridges they came across as they retreated through Finnish Lapland into Norway. This film recalls these events by telling the love story between a Finnish midwife and a German officer, in a situation where a fellow soldier changes into an enemy in an instant.

After making the film *PURGE* in Finland I was approached by many writers, but immediately after I read Katja Kettu's novel. I knew I had found what I was looking for. I was sure that this is a very important film historically, it has the love themes I was looking for and it strongly connects Finland to Europe during WWII. The film began to form immediately in my mind. I did extensive background work for the film. All in all, working on the script filled my life full time for almost 12 months.

The themes in **THE MIDWIFE** are international. Class boundaries are broken down, simulated in both the language and in people's deeds. The other main venue in the book is a German prison camp in Titovka. I have had an interest in prison camps for a long time and I have now during research visited several of them.

I also shared the same thoughts that are highly valued in the book; that for a community, a war is the hardest, the most ultimate social effort. At the same time it throws all moral dogmas on their heads. When writing or filming about war, it is the stories of women, children and the POWs that are most often left untold. I wanted to give a voice to those ordinary people in the midst of war. This story has helped me to understand the fury and passion associated with great and compelling love as well as the courage and the power of the people in Lapland.

I have also collected huge amounts of data about the history of Lapland, wading through the National Archives, talking to historians and archaeologists, and using a dialect expert like the writer Katja Kettu to proofread my script and dialogue.

All that said the most important theme in the story is all conquering love.



Visually my approach would be to highlight two major themes of the script: mixed and limited perspectives and romance. There's always more to the story and feelings than what can be seen in the surface at any given moment – this rule counts all the way to the last part of the film. I love it and I think it should be celebrated in visuals. In this film there seems to be second agendas to everything. This is naturally achieved by its non-linear arrangements and showing things from Helena's and Johannes's point-of-view throughout the film. It is satisfying how differently we as people relate to situations, feelings, love and other people's motifs. There seems to be no common ground and anything can trigger pain, torment, hate and even love. Both of these two story-lines are shot with a slightly different look and the film really find its visual unity at the very end.

In my mind this film's second proper backbone is imprisonment and escape. This theme has been layered throughout the film and is my second thematic approach to deliver this film. Both Johannes and Helena are imprisoned by their actions, motifs and very dark tragically powered past they have and will live with.

Visually all these themes will be achieved by a naturalistic, raw and stylized look that creates an atmosphere for romance, suspense and drama. Lots of shadows and almost "Film Noir" type of contrast lighting. The camera will move like a roaming eye through the locations and sets. Lots of it will be handheld. However, since I am doing a very character-driven and psychologically demanding film; visuals, light and editing will tell the story and create the atmosphere without diminishing the drama of its story and its many compelling characters.

DIRECTOR ANTTI J. JOKINEN

Born in Nurmijärvi, Finland, Antti J. Jokinen graduated from East Carolina University with a major in Broadcast & Film. While in college, he made a short film based on Jim Morrison's poetry entitled "Fist Full of Sand", which won a filmmaking award at the North Carolina Film Festival and attracted attention from executives at MTV NY. After college, he moved to New York and worked for MTV.

Returning to Finland, he co-founded his own production company, Solar Films, which has grown into Finland's largest TV and film producer. During his years in Finland, Antti J. Jokinen directed and co-wrote two successful drama series for national TV and a "faux" documentary "Bioterror" (1999), which was shot in English and distributed via Canal Plus to ten different countries around the world, including the US.

Antti J. Jokinen is ranked as one of the most requested music video directors worldwide and continues to work with renowned artists such as Will Smith, Beyoncé, Eminem, Shania Twain, Celine Dion, Missy Elliott, Shaggy, Kelly Clarkson and many more.

In 2011, Antti J. Jokinen directed his first feature film *THE RESIDENT* based on his own screenplay and starring Hilary Swank, Jeffrey Dean Morgan and Christopher Lee. *THE RESIDENT* was produced by Hammer Films and Spitfire Entertainment. Antti J. Jokinen's second feature film *PURGE* ("Puhdistus", 2012) is based on the award-winning novel by Sofi Oksanen. The film was a major box-office success in Finland, became the country's official entry for the Academy Awards and won five Jussis, the "Finnish Oscar". *THE MIDWIFE* ("Kättilö", 2015), based on the best-selling novel by Katja Kettu, is Antti J. Jokinen's third feature film. He is also attached as a director to fantasy film *NICHOLAS NORTH*, which is based on a book written by him and Ilkka Auer.

PRODUCER MARKUS SELIN

The most successful producer in the recent re-birth of popular Finnish cinema, Markus Selin is the founder of Solar Films Inc. Oy and co-owner of the company with Egmont Media Corporation. He has produced 40 feature films and thousands of hours of television drama and entertainment. Selin was chosen *The Producer of the Year* in Finland in 1999. His movies have won 36 Finnish Film Awards (Jussi Awards) and been elected Winner of the Audience Poll seven times. His films have been nominated for the Academy Awards three times.

