

PICTURE TREE INTERNATIONAL  
Presents

A film by  
**ANTTI J. JOKINEN**

# HELENE

*Starring*  
**LAURA BIRN JOHANNES HOLOPAINEN**  
KRISTA KOSONEN EERO AHO PIRKKO SAISIO

FINLAND CINEMATIC PRESENTS ANTTI J. JOKINEN MOVIE HELENE STARRING LAURA BIRN JOHANNES HOLOPAINEN KRISTA KOSONEN PIRKKO SAISIO EERO AHO JARKKO LAHTI  
MAKE UP DESIGNER KAIRE HENDRIKSON COSTUME DESIGNER EUGEN TAMBERG PRODUCTION DESIGNER BENJAMIN MERCER F.C.E. COMPOSER AND SOUND DESIGNER KIRKA SAINO CINEMATOGRAPHER RAUNO RONKAINEN F.S.C. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MIKKO KODISOJA TOM FANNING  
PRODUCERS MIKKO TENHUNEN ANTTI J. JOKINEN CO-PRODUCER EVELIN PENTTILA SCREENWRITERS ANTTI J. JOKINEN MARKO LEINO based on the novel by RAKEL LIEHUN DIRECTOR ANTTI J. JOKINEN

HS  HYVINKÄÄ  CYLLENBERG  JANT JA ANTOS   STELVAB 

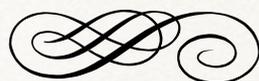
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## **SYNOPSIS**

Year 1915. Helene Schjerfbeck is a forgotten artist living in the countryside with her elderly mother. Years have passed since her last exhibition, and Helene has continued to paint only for her own passion. Everything changes when an art dealer discovers Helene and her 159 amazing paintings and wants to organize a large solo exhibition. However, the most important moment in Helene's life is brought on by her encounter with Einar Reuters. Einar is a forester and a passionate admirer of Helene and her art. He becomes Helene's confidant and the tragic love of her life.

Inspired by true events, HELENE describes the life of Finland's most acclaimed painter Helene Schjerfbeck between 1915-1923.



## LONG SYNOPSIS

In 1913 Helene Schjerfbeck was a forgotten artist, living together with her elderly mother in the Finnish countryside. Years had passed without any solo exhibitions, and she had kept painting for passion only, not for glory.

Mr. Sundman, an art dealer visits Helene and discovers her works, 159 paintings stashed all around the small hut Helene is living in with her mother. Amazed by her obvious outstanding talent, he decides to prepare a huge solo exhibition for her in the capital Helsinki.

However, the real excitement for Helene arrives when Mr. Sundman introduces Mr. Einar Reuter to her. Einar, a forester and an amateur painter himself, becomes a passionate admirer of Helene's work as well as her confidante. Helene deeply falls in love with him, despite him being 15 years younger.

The exhibition becomes a huge success with critics raving about Helene's art and the paintings being sold out. With her success and her being deeply in love with Einar, Helene is happy as never before though she has not revealed her love for Einar. It is right then and out of nowhere, when Einar becomes engaged to another woman, which throws Helene from almost pure happiness into the darkest the darkest emotional crisis, which she neer will fully recover from. With the help of her friend Helene Westermarck she slowly recovers after a longer period in hospital and also manages to emancipate herself from her dominant and hardhearted mother to grow even more independent and stronger a woman as well as female artist way ahead of her time.





# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

ANTTI J. JOKINEN

“I have been Helene’s admirer for as long as I can remember, and that’s why I wanted to make a movie about her. I have worked for a while, but I have never done a biographical film before. However, this topic has seemed important from the very beginning of my career.

Over the years I have been producing films about smart and talented people, from marshals to storytellers. They often face the fact that the hero of the story is rather generic and superficial. However, in Helene’s case, the hero carries much more complexities. Such stories are very rare to find.

Helene has been spoken about as a bad-headed and weak artist who was left to be abandoned and suffered in Hyvinkää. I disagree, as whilst doing my research, I discovered a strong, uncompromising, funny and honest artist. Meaning Helene was the perfect character for a dramatic movie.

Also Helene wrote letters. The letters contained important content and excellent use of words. The final reason was Rakel Liehu’s novel, which introduced me to an imagined version of Helene’s life. Our movie is historically accurate and naturally inspired by real life. We strive to get as close as possible to the route of Helene and Einar’s relationship. In general, the whole process was complicated, but very exciting.”

*Directed and produced by Antti J. Jokinen. He directed the following films: The Resident (2011), Purge (2012), The Midwife (2015) and Flowers of Evil (2016). Jokinen was nominated for the Jussi Award for Best Director for the film “Purge”, which was also an Oscar nominee from Finland. He won the Shanghai International Film Festival Grand Prix for Best Direction in his film “Flowers of Evil”. HELENE is the third part of Jokinen’s trilogy.*





## KEY CAST

**HELENE  
SCHJERFBECK**  
**LAURA BIRN**

Laura Birn is one of the most successful actresses in Finland. Birn is well-known for her roles in the films: *Void* (2018), *East of Sweden* (2018), *The Ones Below* (2015), *Naked Harbour* (2012), *Purge* (2012) and *Pearls and Pigs* (2003). In 2020, in addition to the main role in “Helene”, Birn will be seen on the big screen in “*Game of Thrones*” and “*The Last Ones*”. Birn has starred in several plays and TV shows, particularly in the British TV series “*The Innocent*”. In 2013, Laura Birn received Jussi for Best Actress for the role of “*Purge*”, and in the same year she was awarded the National Film Award.

### *MOVIE FACTS*

*Laura Birn's preparation for the role of Helene Schjerfbeck was very extensive. She read a lot about Schjerfbeck. For about six months, Birn worked with artist Anna Retulinaine, discussed art and learned to draw: mixing colours and applying layers of oil paint to the canvas. The role was also inspired by the extensive work of the costume designer and make-up artist to achieve Schjerfbeck's look.*





**EINAR REUTER**  
**JOHANNES**  
**HOLOPAINEN**

Johannes Holopainen plays Einar Reuter in “Helene”. He is known for his previous roles in “The Unknown Soldier”, “Heavy Trip”, and “Force of Habit”. Holopainen is nominated for the Golden Venla for Best Actor at the Gothenburg Film Festival for “All the Sins”. Johannes Holopainen, a graduate of the Theater Academy, participated in several successful performances at the National Theater and KOM-Theater.

**MAGNUS SCHJERFBECK**  
**EERO AHO**

Eero Aho is known for his roles in “The Unknown Soldier” (2017), “Flowers of Evil” (2016), “8-Ball” (2013), “Tears of April” (2008) and “Trench Road” (2004), as well as in numerous TV shows. He has been awarded the Jussi for Best Actor for “The Unknown Soldier” and “8 Ball”. In 2015, Aho was awarded the Ida Aalberg Acting Prize. He won international awards for his roles in “Tears of April” and “The Unknown Soldier”.

**GÖSTA STENMAN**  
**JARKKO LAHTI**

Actor Jarkko Lahti is famous for his roles in the films “The Last Ones” (2019), “The Unknown Soldier” (2017) and “The Happiest Day in the Life” of Olli Maki (2016) for which he was awarded a Jussi for Best Actor. He also starred in several TV shows. Lahti starred in the short film “Tiger”, shown in Cannes. Some of the most prominent theatre productions include “Under the North Star” I and II also “Per Gynt”. Lahti is the artistic director of the Ruska Ensemble.



## CAST & CREW

LAURA BIRN

JOHANNES HOLOPAINEN

PIRKKO SAISIO

KRISTA KOSONEN

EERO AHO

JARKKO LAHTI

*Directed by* Antti J. Jokinen

*Written by* Antti J. Jokinen, Marko Leino

*based on the novel by* Rakel Liehun

*producers "Helen"* Mikko Tenhunen, Antti Jokinen

*author* Evelyn Penttilä

*Produced by* Mikko Tenhunen, Antti J. Jokinen

*Director of Photography* Rauno Ronkainen F.S.C.

*Editor* Benjamin Mercer F.S.C

*Sound Producer* Kirka Sainio,

*Designer* Jaagup Roomet

*Costume Designer* Eugen Tamberg

*Makeup Designer* Kaire Hendrikson

*Production Company* Finland Cinematic

*Distribution* Nordisk Film

## WORLD SALES

### PICTURE TREE INTERNATIONAL

Picture Tree International (PTI) is an energetic and fast-growing world sales company with its headquarters in Berlin. The core business is worldwide licensing across all platforms, with the company maintaining a presence at all the major film and television markets. Alongside licensing, PTI is also able to act as your German co-producer and local distributor via a fully integrated business model that offers producers individual sales and financing strategies in a results-driven and transparent partnership, something essential in today's ever changing audio-visual industry landscape. PTI's line-up of up to 15 films a year is designed to ensure the right mix of arthouse and crossover productions to fully maximize the revenue potential of each film. Picture Tree International was founded in December 2012 by Andreas Rothbauer and has been run jointly by his partner and Co-Managing Director Yuan Rothbauer since 2017.

**Genre: Historical Drama – Biopic – Romance**

**Length: 122 min.**

**Production Company: Cinematic (Finland)**

**Language: Finnish**

**Countries of Production: Finland – Estonia**

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HYVINKÄÄ 

 **villa**  
GYLLENBERG

 **J&AE** JANE JA AATOS  
ERKKON SAATIO

