



SKUNK

A FILM BY KOEN MORTIER





CZAR BRUSSELS presents
in co-production with BALDR FILM
co-produced by BNP PARIBAS FORTIS FILM FINANCE & TELENET & STREAMZ
supported by FLANDERS AUDIOVISUAL FUND (VAF), NETHERLANDS FILM FUND, NETHERLANDS FILM
PRODUCTION INCENTIVE & SCREEN FLANDERS & TAX SHELTER OF THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT & CJM

SKUNK

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SYNOPSIS

Skunk tells the story of a neglected teenager, Liam, who is taken away from his parents' home where drugs and violence have ruled his whole life. Trading his school for a closed youth facility, he has trouble starting over again as he gets bullied even worse there. Although Liam finds solace with a new friend and social workers at first, when he revisits old traumas during counselling, his past keeps haunting him.



**“Skunk is an incredibly
current story that needs
to be told”**

"If this story can convert just one abuser or even help support the many social workers and teenagers in difficult situations like these, then it already achieved its purpose. If this story awakens public opinion and political conscience, then I can be a very content filmmaker"

Director Koen Mortier on the project

Based on a novel by Geert Taghon

Koen Mortier's fourth feature is a film adaptation of Geert Taghon's book of the same name. The book and the film are based on true incidents carried out by children and their parents.

The film's top cast will include newcomer Thibaud Doods, Natali Broods ('Over Water'), Boris Van Severen ('Baptiste'), Dirk Roofthoof ('De gang van Jan de Lichte'), Sarah Vandeursen ('De Ideale Wereld'), Colin H. van Eeckhout ('Amenra'), Janne Desmet ('Albatros') and Dolores Bouckaert ('De Dag'). Nicolas Karakatsanis ('Un Ange') is the film's Director of Photography and Manu Van Hove ('Ex-Drummer') is in charge of editing.

Mortier previously filmed Dimitri Verhulst's book 'Monologue of someone who got used to talking to himself' in the feature film 'Un Ange'. His debut 'Ex Drummer' (2007) is also a film adaptation of the book by Herman Brusselmans of the same name.

Author of the book Geert Taghon on the film adaptation: "Every young person has a right to his own story. Hence my belief that this film adaptation also gives a piece of justice in a way to all these young people's stories. Except, I feared no one would dare to film it. In my eyes, there is only one person who can successfully adapt my book for the screen and that is Koen Mortier."



LIAM

Liam (16) is the main character, the central person around whom the whole film revolves. The entire story is about this adolescent and the consequences he bears in his day to day from the abuse he suffered. He moves like a lone wolf through a world of enemies. He is reserved, always on guard, but also timid. He makes little to no contact with others, mainly because he does not want to hurt himself. Though, he is not contact-impaired or flawed, he is just extremely vulnerable. After being displaced from his parents' home, he ends up in a closed institution, where Pauline tries to rebuild his life piece by piece.

Liam starts to open up and tries to seize his life again (or what remains of it). Here in the institution, Liam is free, at ease. He lowers the impossibly thick wall he had built around himself and allows people into his world. Unfortunately, he is taken advantage of all over again. Liam is a sensitive boy, which will often show. However, he is damaged as such that he appears to be a dangerous one as well. His behaviour in terms of violence is often boundless and conscienceless. When Liam is released from prison 20 years later, he does what he always wanted to do: go back home. As if this were the only possible catharsis. Going home to experience it all again.

Thibaud Doms

- Zonder Gezicht
- Froukje
- S10
- Zeevonk

Thibaud is currently studying at Amsterdam's Toneelschool & Kleinkunstacademie. In 2021, he starred in his first feature films: Zeevonk and Skunk. Thibaud can be seen in Without a Face by Froukje & S10. He is currently on stage with Atropa, a tragedy with techno and trap. Atropa is directed by Naomi Velissariou and Floor Houwink ten Cate, with a script by Tom Lanoye.



Natali Broods

- Déjà Vu (Raf Reyntjens)
 - Over water (serie voor Eén)
 - Cleo (Eva Cools)
 - De Infiltrant (tv-serie)
 - Tabula Rasa (serie voor Eén)
 - Façades (Kaat Beels & Nathalie Basteyns)
 - Best Belgian Actress
 - My First Highway (Kevin Meul)
 - Galloping Mind (Wim Vandekeybus)
 - Best Supporting Actress
 - Wasteland (Pieter Van Hees)
 - Met man en macht (Woestijnvis-serie)
 - Zone Stad (serie voor VTM)
 - Hotel Swooni (Kaat Beels)
 - Vermist (serie voor VIER)
 - De helaasheid der Dingen (Felix Van Groeningen)
 - Koning van de Wereld (VTM miniserie)
 - Een ander zijn geluk (Fien Troch)
 - Any way the wind blows (Tom Barman)
 - Best Belgian Actress
 - S (Guido Henderickx)
- Natali has been a part of the theatre company De Hoe for many years.

PAULINE

A saving angel, a lifeline for many who endured an impossible life and are completely broken down mentally. She is a sensible, attractive woman with her heart in the right place. Pauline started this job from an honest, social feeling. She is a sweet woman who listens with great compassion to what the boys tell her. She accepts the irregularities that sometimes occur in the institution because she understands where it comes from and why the boys are the way they are. She does not abuse Liam's trust. On the contrary, she tries to approach, mould and help him become a happy boy, but she also knows that it is very much like dancing on a tightrope.

With Liam, it promises to be a long road of difficulty in order to build that relationship of trust. She decides to fight for him, doing everything she can to save him and make sense of his life. Day and night she spends worrying over it. Because of Liam's naivety, he does unacceptable things. Her work always comes first and that might be the reason for her impending divorce. Pauline is full of life, loves to laugh, always thinking about the children and how she can give them the right approach in order to move on. However, this all takes a toll on her. Exhausted, she can barely sleep and the worrying takes over.



JOS

A man of about 56, an old hand at counselling, sometimes a bit tired of all that rowing with the oars you have. But otherwise he is a gentle, understanding man. And yet, he has lived with problem youths for 35 years, with reproach and violence and sometimes Jos too can be harsh, even aggressive.

He tries to curb this, but he does not always succeed. He helps the youngsters, with their homework, trying to understand what is going on. He is a big man, of the 'strict but fair' genre. He has a bit of a Catholic look, is also a single father of several children and has not had it easy as a widower. He is a man the boys can talk to and be silly with, a kind of father figure. A real know-it-all, everything has to be as he sees it and says it, and he is always right, even when he is wrong. Behind his back, they call him 'the big right'.

Dirk Roofthoof

- Zillion (Robin Pront)
- Cruise Control (Bob Kets)
- De Bende van Jan De Lichte (tv-serie)
- De Infiltrant (tv-serie)
- Chaussée d'Amour (tv-serie)
- De premier (Erik Van Looy)
- Clan (tv-serie)
- De Ronde (tv-serie)
- Any way the wind blows (Tom Barman)
- De zaak Alzheimer (Erik Van Looy)
- Olivetti 82 (Rudi Van den Bossche)
- Pleure pas Germaine (Alain de Halleux)
 - Best Actor Ft. Lauderdale IFF
- Het Paradijs
 - Nominatie Beste Acteur Gouden Kalf (NFF)
- Hombres Complicados (Dominique Deruddere)
 - Best Belgian Actor
- Rosie (Patrice Toye)
 - Best Belgian Actor
- Terug naar Oosterdonk (tv-serie)
- Buiten de Zone (tv-serie)
- De Nieuwe Moeder (Paula Van der Oest)
- Het verdriet van België (tv-serie)
- De Partizanen (tv-serie)
 - Nominatie Beste Acteur Gouden Kalf (NFF)
- Suite 16 (Dominique Deruddere)
- Moeder, waarom leven wij (tv-serie)
- Just Friends (Marc-Henri Wajnberg)
- Viva (kort film)
- De Bossen van Vlaanderen (tv-serie)
- Alfa Papa Tango (tv-serie)
- Adriaen Brouwer (tv-serie)
- Hard Labeur (tv-serie)



Boris Van Severen

- Fuck you very very much 1 & 2
- Een Goed Jaar (tv-serie)
- Déjà Vu (tv-serie)
- GR5 (tv-serie)
- Studio Tarara (tv-serie)
- Baptiste (BBC tv-serie)
- Belgica (Felix Van Groeningen)
- Ben X (Nic Balthazar)

Coming soon:

- Enquire à Coeur Ouvert (FR)
- Torch Song (NL)
- Pony Herz (D)
- Arcadia (BE)

DAVID

David aims to be a good educator, but it doesn't always work out that way. Not an unpleasant guy to be around, however somewhat laid-back and perhaps lacking a touch of personality to truly help the youngsters on their way. He is not very smart and quite selfish, with an unexpected temper. After noticing something is bothering someone, he can easily project it on himself. This is mainly due to the fact that he himself is still searching and not sure where his life is going.

He is the type of educator who chooses the strongest one out of the group. He doesn't do this with bad intentions. He simply believes that the world is divided into leaders and followers. He became a counselor for that exact reason; it's a leadership position. During a conflict, he sides with the strongest party mostly out of convenience. Each time, he's hopeful that the youths will vent their problems against him in an amicable way, though this rarely happens. He is smooth, the ideal man according to many friends and well-liked by women. But, when they get to know him a better, they can easily spot his narcissistic traits and superficiality, with which little can be done.

REGISSEUR & SCENARIST



KOEN MORTIER

Koen Mortier (°1965) active in the film world as an author, director and producer.

Together with producer/manager Eurydice Gysel, they run the fiction department (CZAR Film & TV) of CZAR.BE.

Koen took his first steps as a fiction director with the short films, '**Ana Temnei**' (1996) and '**A Hard Day's Work**' (1997). Both won numerous international festival awards. In 2006, Koen directed '**Ex Drummer**,' his highly praised first feature film that sold to more than 20 countries. It was selected for International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) and Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (KVIFF), among others, and won several prestigious awards, including 'Best Feature Debut' at the Raindance Film Festival and the 'Public Prize' at the Fantasy Filmfest in Germany. Three years later, Mortier followed up with his second feature film, '**22 May**.' This film also won many awards and was selected for several film festivals (including IFFR, TIFF, Hong Kong). The film was sold to 10 countries. His third feature film '**Un Ange**' (Angel) premiered at the Oostende Film Festival and immediately afterwards had its international premiere at Toronto International Film Festival 2018 and has been traveling around the world until today (a.o. Already at Black Nights Film Festival Talinn, American Film Institute European Union Film Showcase, Warsaw Film Festival, Istanbul Film Festival, ...).

The 11-part documentary TV series, '**Voices of Liberation**' starring Thomas Brodie-Sangster, Bouli Lanners and Bart Peeters came out in 2022. The series is shown on Netflix in the Netherlands and on Streamz in Belgium and Canal+ in France.

Currently, the release of Mortier's new feature film '**Skunk**' (based on Geert Taghon's book of the same name) is scheduled for fall 2023.

Outside fiction and documentary, Mortier also made his mark as an advertising filmmaker and music video director, thanks to his remarkable style and visual approach. He was awarded several times for "Best Direction. Among others, he has made commercials for BNP Paribas, Napoleon Games, TNT, Hornbach, NMBS, Toyota, ... In 2014, Koen directed the campaign film for the Merckx-Ickx exhibition in honor of their 70th anniversary - he organized 'The Race of the Century' between these Belgian sports icons.

Together with friend and director Joe Vanhoutteghem, he teamed up as a directing team (Lionel Goldstein) since 2001 for commercials and music videos (a.o. For Canal Digital Norge AS, Canvas, Center Parks, Equal Payday, Pregnant Guy, ...). With his absurd, almost documentary, style of films, Lionel Goldstein won international awards from the beginning, the latest of which was the fourteenth lion at the Cannes advertising film festival in May 2022.

CAST

Liam	THIBAUD FRANK DOOMS
Ma	SARAH VANDEURSEN
Pa	COLIN VAN EECKHOUT
Pauline	NATALI BROODS
Jos	DIRK ROOFTHOFT
Young Liam	LOUIS LERMEIRE
Momo	SOUFIAN FARIH
Bert	SEM CUYPERS
David	BORIS VAN SEVEREN
Erwin	JARNE VAN WEMMEL
Arthur	FARES EL BZIOUI
Seppe	DAAN VERWIMP
Tjorven	BENNY EDDO
Fredo	AHMED AFRYAD
Juf.....	DOLORES BOUCKAERT
Teacher Troch	FIEN TROCH
Principal primary School.....	TRISTAN VERSTEVEN
Fredo.....	AHMED AFRYAD
Gorik.....	REDA VERCAMMEN
Noah	SENNa DE SMAELE
Johan	FLO PAUWELS
Woman social services	JANNE DESMET

CREW

'SKUNK'

BASED ON THE NOVEL 'SKUNK' BY GEERT TAGHON

SCRIPT & DIRECTOR

KOEN MORTIER

PRODUCER

EURYDICE GYSEL

CO-PRODUCERS

FRANK HOEVE & KATJA DRAAIJER

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

NICOLAS KARAKATSANIS

ART DIRECTOR

GEERT PAREDIS

COSTUME

MINKE LUNTNER & MAUD KUYPERS

MAKE-UP & HAIR

EVALOTTE OOSTEROP

SOUND ENGINEER

OLIVER PATTINAMA

EDITOR

MANU VAN HOVE



CZAR FILM & TV is the fiction department of the international creative advertising production house CZAR.BE and has been run by producer/manager **Eurydice Gysel** and producer/director **Koen Mortier** since 2012. CZAR FILM & TV produces and co-produces quality feature films, quality short films, TV series and documentaries. The department focuses on auteur-driven and visual films with an emphasis on innovation within an international and European framework and network. The goal is to create a platform for challenging directors and to export Belgian talent.

Recent fiction films and series include '**Skunk**' and '**Un Ange**' (Koen Mortier), '**Rookie**' (Lieven Vanbaelen), '**Coureur**' (Kenneth Mercken), '**Waste Land**' (Pieter van Hees) and '**Voices of Liberation**,' Koen Mortier's 11-part Netflix documentary series. CZAR FILM & TV is also active as an international co-producer, a.o. for the films of Alex van Warmerdam and the BBC series '**The White Queen**', the 3 seasons of '**The Missing**' and the series '**Les Misérables**'. In addition, we are developing Dimitri Verhulst's first feature film '**Wettelen**', the feature film '**Garden of Earthly Delights**' (Morgan Knibbe) together with Baldr Film, '**WOLF**', the first feature animated film by Raf Wathion, the documentary '**La Gorgona**' by Frederik Jan Depickere and the TV series '**EUROPA**' (written by Jean Baptiste Delafon) together with True Content entertainment and About Premium Content.

CO - PRODUCENT



With Amsterdam-based BALDR Film (2011) Frank Hoeve focuses on developing and (co-)producing challenging, director-driven films with a distinctive personal signature. Not risk-averse, he keeps urgent content and artistry at the core of his work.

His credits include '**Those Who Feel the Fire Burning**' by Morgan Knibbe (2014, IDFA, Two Dutch Academy Awards), '**Etgar Keret: Based on a True Story**' by Stephane Kaas (2017, International Emmy Award), '**Brothers**' by Bram Schouw (2017, Premiers Plans Angers) and Mitra by Kaweh Modiri (2021, IFFR).

BALDR Film's latest (co-)productions have been released at major festivals, Western Arabs by Omar Shargawi (2019, Berlinale), **Sick, Sick, Sick** by Alice Furtado (2019, Cannes Directors Fortnight), Window Boy would also like to have a Submarine by Alex Piperno (2020, Berlinale), **Along the Way** by Mijke de Jong (2022, Opening IFFR).

At this moment, BALDR

His credits include Those Who Feel The Fire Burning by Morgan Knibbe (2014, IDFA, two Dutch Academy Awards), Etgar Keret: Based on a True Story by Stephane Kaas (2017, International Emmy Award), Brothers by Bram Schouw (2017, Premiers Plans d'Angers) and Mitra by Kaweh Modiri (2021, IFFR).

BALDR Film's latest (co-)productions have been released at major festivals; Western Arabs by Omar Shargawi (2019, Berlinale), Sick, Sick, Sick by Alice Furtado (2019, Cannes Directors Fortnight), Window Boy would also like to have a Submarine by Alex Piperno (2020, Berlinale), Along the Way by Mijke de Jong (2022, Opening Film IFFR).

At this moment, BALDR Film has several films in (pre)production: The Garden of Earthly Delights, the long expected feature debut by Morgan Knibbe set in Manila, SKUNK by Koen Mortier and the Portuguese, French, Dutch co-production Banzo by Margarida Cardoso.

PARTNERS

'SKUNK' is a production by Eurydice Gysel for CZAR Film, in co-production with Baldr Film. The film was supported by the VAF/Filmfonds of Flemish Minister of Culture Jan Jambon, Het Nederlands Filmfonds and Netherlands Film Incentive, Streamz and Telenet and was made possible by BNP Paribas Fortis Film Finance which provided the financing through the Belgian Tax Shelter initiative and Department of Culture, Youth and Media. September Film will release the film in the Benelux. International sales will be handled by Reason 8.



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Screening: DCP

Length: 105 min

Image: 16mm film pellicule

Languages: Dutch

Countries of production: Belgium/Netherlands

Press dropbox link: bit.ly/skunkpress



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www.skunkdefilm.be

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Koen Mortier



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