

MELANCHOLIA: THE DIAMOND

M HKA in collaboration with
LEONID OGAREV

COLOPHON

Produced by
Leonid Ogarev and Marianne Slot

Diamond cut by
Mike Akiki, Antwerp Cut

VR production by
Leonid Ogarev

Digital Head
Anastasiya Tarasova

Special thanks to
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M HKA

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Communication by
Madiken Verboven
Bert De Vlegelaer

Graphic design by
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More information at
ensembles.org



Instructions for the VR

Only 2 people are allowed to enter the
exhibition at a time.

Each VR-session takes 3 minutes. You
will receive assistance when putting on
the VR-glasses. You can end the session
at any time by removing the glasses.

You can move in the space, ‘touch’ the
diamond, or step into it. Please stay
within the blue lines visible in the
glasses.

The use of VR-glasses by children
younger than 12 years old is not advis-
able. Children younger than 12 years
old must be accompanied by an adult.

Visitors who wear glasses will be asked
to remove them during the session. If
you are near sighted (starting at -3.5),
there is a chance you will unable to see
the images clearly.

08.02–05.05.2019

LARS VON TRIER
Melancholia:
The Diamond

M HKA

In collaboration with Leonid Ogarev



Lars von Trier is a voice that contem-
porary culture really listens to, with
ever-apprehensive enjoyment. What
might he say and do next? His unre-
dictability is a crucial part of our
enjoyment. Now, for the first time in
more than twenty years, he presents a
new work conceived for an exhibition
context.

The first documentary von Trier made
at film school was about diamonds,
and the fascination with these stones
has stayed with him ever since. A few
years ago, he launched the idea to
'execute re-workings of carefully
selected diamonds that thematically
each spring from one of my films'.

M HKA is delighted to present
'Melancholia: The Diamond' in
collaboration with von Trier himself,
with Marianne Slot and with Leonid
Ogarev, who initiated and supported
this exhibition project, which we
daresay is something new – certainly
for M HKA but also for von Trier. Both
exhibition and event, both thought-
image and self- professed monument,
'Melancholia: The Diamond' subverts
and reformat's our understanding of
entertainment, interactivity, artistic
experimentation and critical reflection
– the stuff that museums of contempo-
rary art are made of.

To rearticulate the hard core of his
film *Melancholia*, released in 2011,
von Trier had a rare twin diamond –
two stones grown together hundreds of
millions of years ago – cut in ambig-
uous ways: neither raw nor finished
with all the polished surfaces required
by the diamond industry. As far as we

know, this is the only diamond of its
caste (around 12 carats) to have been
fashioned into a thought-form rather
than a wearable work of art. It could
not be mounted in a ring or brooch;
it could only be held and turned by a
viewer inspecting its carefully cali-
brated irregularities.

In *The Time-Image*, his second book
on cinema, philosopher Gilles Deleuze
coined the term 'crystal-image' to
describe not only the complexities of
mirroring but also how the flow of
time can be contracted into an 'extreme
point'. At M HKA, as if to illustrate
this, von Trier's diamond is displayed
in a large, high-ceilinged, pointedly
triangular hall, in three different
guises: as 'the thing-in-itself', as a
wall text by von Trier himself and as a
VR (Virtual Reality) experience to be
enjoyed by one person at the time for
no more than two minutes.

We daresay that this manipulable
real-time simulation of the twin
diamond – developed and produced
by Leonid Ogarev in Moscow – is
also something new in the worlds of
contemporary art, VR and diamonds
alike. It allows anyone to view the
stone as if it were, indeed, the likely
outcome of the film *Melancholia*:
a dead twin planet twirling in black
space. We can hold it, turn it around,
push it back, dream about it and even
penetrate its half-cut-half-uncut surface
and roam an inner universe of light.

#1 MELANCHOLIA

Notes on creation, or “The artist as a young person”.

Long before the young Trier had even so much as dreamt of a film career, he was given a book by a man who smuggled great amounts of books to the Eastern Bloc, primarily the Soviet Union. One of the first pages in the book (as I recall it), meticulously describes a small display window in central London, before finally reaching the conclusion of a small cardboard sign with the words: “Diamonds are forever”!

This made a deep impression on the young Trier. Perhaps a harbinger of the divide that later came to influence his life: The difference between “Forever” and “1/24th of a second” (the estimated projection speed of each image in contemporary film footage). Following an intense flirtation with “the rock”, the young Trier eventually realised the stone’s static design, and abandoned this much loved raw material (due to a lack of funds), and found, as you may know, other roads in life. But he never forgot the power of “the rock”... and the contradiction between “forever” and “1/24th of a second”, evolved (however much it plagued his young communistic soul) imperceptibly to: “For the chosen” to: “For the many”.

Foundational inspiration comes only a few times in one’s life. My founda-tional inspiration came and was used to make films... but what if I went back to the foundational inspiration’s small

glimmers of light and cleaved it – that is the idea – long before it became a film? I saw that the material I had created through my life was there. So then, what would be more obvious than to couple my foundational inspi-ration with my love of “the rock”? I realized that if that love was going to come to something it had to be now: I decided to make a series stone based on the foundational inspiration that went ahead of each film in the series. The art should be divided into stone and film before the birth, like twins of separate eggs but of the same womb.

#1 Melancholia should be: two diamonds grown together hundreds of millions of years ago. It should unite the angular and the curved, the extremely hard and the extremely soft, a conception caught in a fraction of a second! ...only slowly does the diamond disappear ...only slowly is the skull crushed and the miracle of the explosion begun!

Copenhagen, 07.11.2016
Lars von Trier

THE FIFTH C

INTENTION NOTE

The first documentary film I made at film school was about diamonds. And my interest in them has stayed with me ever since. Not as particularly in-depth knowledge but as a fascination. Oddly, not so much a fascination with the jewelry the diamond might be placed within, but with the stone itself at its most basic and in particular, the trans-formation from a raw uncut stone to a sophisticated jewel.

In the meantime I’ve made 13 feature films and have always had the feeling that something was missing – of being dissatisfied with the fragile medium film is. And suddenly the idea came to me. I want to supplement each film with a monument – a monument made out of diamonds! Indestructible.

THE FIFTH C CREATIVITY

Or to put it another way, I want to add an extra ‘c’ to the universal grading system of: colour, cut, clarity and carat, namely, creativity. Not that diamonds haven’t always been subject to creativity... but viewed in a general way the industry IS very conserva-tive due to the high prices. And the culprit is: the brilliant cut. To put it bluntly, the brilliant shape is a bit like a piece of Lego – perfect (but rather boring), and incidentally developed over hundreds of years to this perfec-tion. A large percent of all stones are brilliant cut or more rarely one of the earlier versions of the brilliant cut. My purpose is in sharp contrast to this industry: to create something unique.

ROYAL KITCH

Why diamonds? How and why are these perfections created? First and foremost because of their brilliance, the refined way they reflect light and their general architectonic beauty. But think for a moment that the diamond and its predecessors were produced by candlelight! It all started at a time with very poor light sources, which not only gave rise to the eternal quest for the maximum number of reflec-tions but also to the gigantic settings with hundreds of stones in one piece of jewelry – hereafter known as Royal Kitch. Today we face a different chal-lenge that apparently no one dares to face, in that our technology easily can create far better reflecting materials, and even light sources that far surpass what has been seen before (laser, etc.) so we must find a new objective for our treatment of the stones. Add life! And here I refer to the individual stones. We have to return to basics in order to trick the demands of our time from the stone – a whole new kind of radiance.

FILM / DIAMONDS

In both, we deal with darkness and light... and everyone can under-stand that we have to confront the monopoly that in film might be called show-lighting, as we know it from spectacular bravura pieces full of colour and special effects often in musicals (Royal kitsch!). And find a form that to a much larger degree supports the content.

Screening programme

Cinema Zuid: Lars von Trier

FRI 01.02 18:00 | SAT 02.02 20:00 |
SUN 03.02 15:00
THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT
DK/FR/DE/SE 2018 – 152’ – Dutch subtitles

SUN 10.02 18:00
THE ELEMENT OF CRIME (Forbrydelsnes element)
DK 1984 – 104’ – English subtitles

FRI 15.02 20:30
EPIDEMIC
DK 1987 – 106’ – English subtitles

SUN 17.02 18:00
EUROPA
DK/SE/FR/DE 1991 – 114’ – Bilingual subtitles

FRI 22.02 20:30
BREAKING THE WAVES
DK/FR/SE/IT/NE/NO/FI 1996 – 159’ – Bilingual subtitles

SUN 24.02 18:00
THE IDIOTS (Idioterne)
DK 1998 – 117’ – Bilingual subtitles

FRI 01.03 20:30
DANCER IN THE DARK
DK/ES/NL/DU/I/VS/UK/FR/SE/NO 2000 – 140’ – Bilingual subtitles

SUN 31.03 18:00
DOGVILLE
DN 2003 – 177’ – Bilingual subtitles

FRI 05.04 20:30
MANDERLAY
DK/SE/NL 2005 – 139’ – Bilingual subtitles

FRI 12.04 20:30
THE BOSS OF IT ALL
DN/SE/IS/IT/FR/NO/DE 2006 – 99’ – Bilingual subtitles

SUN 14.04 18:00
ANTICHRIST
DK/DE/FR/SE/PL/IT 2009 – 104’ – Bilingual subtitles

SUN 21.04 18:00
MELANCHOLIA
DE/SE/FR/DE 2012 – 136’ – Bilingual subtitles

FRI 26.04 20:30
NYMPHOMANIAC Vol. I
DN/DE/BE/UK/FR 2013 – 117’ – Dutch subtitels

SUN 28.04 18:00
NYMPHOMANIAC Vol. II
DN/DE/BE/UK/FR 2013 – 123’ – Dutch subtitels

MY PROJECT IS THEREFORE THE FOLLOWING:

I wish to execute 13 re-workings of 13 carefully selected diamonds that thematically each spring from one of my films. The 13 diamonds will there-fore be named:

- The Element of Crime
- Epidemic
- Europa
- Breaking the Waves
- The Idiots
- Dancer in the Dark
- Dogville
- Manderlay
- The Boss of it All
- Antichrist
- Melancholia
- Nymphomaniac
- The House that Jack Built

Copenhagen, 12.12.2012
Lars von Trier