



# UNCLE

A film by Frelle Petersen

World Premiere  
32nd Tokyo International Film Festival - Grand Prix



Denmark – 2019 - 105 min - HD - 1:2.35 - 5.1 - Danish

original title: ONKEL  
international title: UNCLE

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## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Kris lives with her partly disabled uncle and together they run a derelict farm. In their quirky yet loving relationship, build upon daily routines, words aren't necessary. Kris is the dominant workhorse and she has taken on a motherly and overprotecting role towards her uncle. As love crosses her path, a possible life changing question emerges.



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## FULL SYNOPSIS

A political decision to phase out tie-stalls will force a great deal of Danish small farmers to close and will make rural areas wither away. Kris is 27 years old and lives in one of these rural areas. She lives with her partly disabled uncle and together they run a derelict farm.

In their quirky yet loving relationship, build upon daily routines and common understanding, words aren't necessary. Kris is the dominant workhorse and she has taken on a motherly and overprotecting role towards her uncle.

During a complicated birth, Kris saves a calf and her interest for the veterinary field is reawakened. She develops a friendship to the chatty veterinarian Johannes and slowly experiences a life outside the farm. Kris meets a young man, Mike, who sees through her aloof personality and as love crosses her path, a possible life changing question emerges.

"Uncle" is a strong visual portrait of a dying culture in a traditional agricultural country. The environment sets the stage for this character-driven story of a young woman in a constant battle between her guilt and her own ambitions. She'll eventually have to choose between following her dreams or continue to be the primary caregiver for her uncle.



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## CAST

Kris	Jette Søndergaard
Uncle	Peter Hansen Tygesen
Johannes	Ole Caspersen
Mike	Tue Frisk Petersen

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## CREW

director, scriptwriter, editor, DOP	Frelle Petersen
producer	Marco Lorenzen
composer	Flemming Berg
sound design	Frank Mølgaard Knudsen

supported by The Danish Film Institute, Tønder Kommune and Rømø  
Tønder Turistforening  
in Collaboration with Atical Sound, Mamba Studio & Klippegangen

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## DIRECTOR'S BIO & FILM

Uncle is writer/director Frelle Petersen's second feature film after the critically acclaimed "Where have all the good men gone" (2016). Since being a teenager Frelle knew he wanted to be a director and experimented from an early age with his father's small camcorder. Born 1980 in Southern Jutland Denmark, Frelle is a filmmaker who explores the human behavior and family relations. The honesty in his character-driven stories makes us laugh at the characters and at ourselves. In his award winning shorts "As You Were" (2011), "Going Nowhere" (2010) and "Mommy" (2012) he already portrayed family relations and human interactions. Frelle is undermining our family values with a comedic steady hand and is displaying difficulties and ironic situations in especially family's everyday life.

The self-taught writer/director (also DoP and editor) often seeks back to childhood areas to tell his compelling character-driven stories. The rural areas portrayed in his films are rarely seen in Danish cinema and gives the audience a chance to experience certain parts of the country - referred to by politicians as the outskirts.

Uncle is full of beautiful almost tableau scenes and it is Frelle's first movie as DoP and his first as an editor as well.

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

"Uncle" is a strong visual portrait of a dying culture in a traditional agricultural country. A political decision to phase out tie-stalls will force a great deal of Danish small farmers to close and will make rural areas wither away. I was born and raised in this part of the country and I wanted to make a film about this way of living, before it's gone forever. I chose to live on the farm used in the film while researching, writing and eventually shooting the film. Seeing everyday life and helping out around the farm, gave me a great insight into the life and hard work of a small farmer. The environment sets the stage for this character-driven story of a young woman who lives with her partly disabled uncle, and together they run a derelict farm. It's a story about guilt and love, and how it affects our choices in life. I wanted to create a realistic story of a young woman's struggle to decide whether she should stay at the farm and be the primary caregiver of her disabled uncle, or leave the farm and follow her heart and dreams. We all have tough choices in our lives; some follow their dreams, and some compromise and will never have the life they dreamed of. It's a well-known moral dilemma everyone in the world can relate to.



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## PRODUCTION NOTES

Writer/director Frelle Petersen decided to live on the farm used in the film, while researching, writing the screenplay and shooting the film. He bought an old caravan and created a home and office behind the barn.

For research, he followed the partly disabled farmer Peter H. Tygesen, who's been living on the farm his entire life.

As the story formed, Frelle got the idea of having Peter play the part of Uncle in the film and a screen test of Peter, who had never acted before, was planned.

Peters niece, Jette Sondergaard, an aspiring actress who starred in a supporting role in Frelles first feature film, joined the screen test. It was his plan all along to have her star in the film, and seeing the chemistry between the two and the amazing performances from both actors, Frelle had no doubt; he had found his "Kris and Uncle".

Throughout the process, Frelle was equipped with a small camcorder and started shooting sequences of Kris and Uncle harvesting and doing different work around the farm. He fell in love with the footage and wanted to know whether the camcorder would be good enough to use for the entire film.

The post production facilities of Zentropa were kind enough to test the footage shot on the camcorder and acknowledged the quality of the image. It was a perfect solution for a one-man band. And as they say, "It's not the camera that makes the film, it's the people behind it". He finished writing the screenplay and after a few months he was ready to cast the rest of the film. He only wanted locals within a radius of 15 kilometers to star in the film, to maintain the very distinctive dialect spoken in South Jutland.

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With a very small crew, consisting of Frelle himself as director and DP, sound mixer Frank Knudsen on sound and lighting, with help from producer Marco Lorenzen, he managed to shoot the film in 35 days. This was possible do to an overwhelming support from the local community.

Frelle edited the film in his living room on a macbook Pro. He took his time to delve into the editing and occasionally had well known Danish directors visit him, giving critique and advice.

The Danish Film Institute got the chance to see a cut of the first 40 minutes of the film and decided right away to support the film financially. That made it possible to get it into sound editing and color grading.

Shortly after it was picked up by a distributor for theatrical release in Denmark in the fall of 2019.

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