

(Denmark, 2003. PG-13. 91 min.
Cast: Nikolaj Lie Kaas, Maria Bonnevie,
Kristen Henriksson; Music: Thomas
Knak; Cinematographer: Manuel
Alberto Claro; Producer: Tine Grew
Preiffer; Writer: Christoffer Boe,
Mogens Rukov; Director: Christoffer
Boe)

Dutch director Christoffer Boe said that ultimately he wanted his first feature film, "Reconstruction," to be about *deja vu*.

The movie – which will screen from Dec. 10 to Dec. 16 at The Brattle Theatre in Cambridge – tells the story of a young photographer named Alex (Nikolaj Lie Kaas) and how his life changes after seeing a young woman (Maria Bonnevie) leave a bar. The film takes place in a 24-hour time period and follows Alex as he tries to make sense of his life.

Boe, 30, told Claus Christensen of the Danish Film Institute that he ideally wanted to make a film about a single scene that "repeats with small shifts and alterations." He explained that by knowing what happens the first time, the viewer could notice things that might have been missed during the first viewing.

"I want to take everything we usually take at face value and usually present in a subordinate clause and transform it into the main clause. Like a scene in which a man enters a bar and sees a woman. I just want to repeat this movement, because it contains a psychological description of him, of her, of us," Boe told Christensen. "By scratching this little item – a gesture, perhaps – you evoke new facets and depths, and you suddenly discover that it's no longer just a small item, but a perspective on something much greater. This is what repetition manages to do: provide a sudden perspective on

things because the viewer is already familiar with part of the sequence. And by slightly altering what happens compared to the first time, you get a perspective on how different things can be, even if they seem almost identical."

His first feature film, Boe graduated with a degree in film and media from the University of Copenhagen in 1996. He also earned a degree in direction from the National Film School in Denmark in 2001. His graduation film, "Anxiety" (2001), received the Nordisk Film Award and the critics' award at the International Film Schools Festival in Poitiers, France.



"Reconstruction" won the Camera D'Or at Cannes in 2003. The film's cinematographer, Manuel Alberto Claro, won a Golden Plaque at the Chicago International Film Festival in 2003.

One of the most striking aspects of "Reconstruction" is its visual beauty. Boer explained to indieWIRE's Liza Bear that the look of his movie is partly inspired by a Jacques-Henri Lartigue photograph of a woman standing in a room with empty bookcases. He also credits the use of light by the French New Wave directors as an effect he wanted to achieve with the movie.

Boe said, "Making a cinema-scope movie is more than having a ratio of 1 to 2:35; it's how you frame things and what kind of lenses you put on. Denmark has gotten into a way of cinema that to me is very uninteresting. Cinema and TV have merged in the way you portray a scene. Television has its own drive towards a medium shot. ... With Super 16 we got the depth of field of film. But it had the danger of becoming too glossy like a TV commercial, so we downgraded the image (in postproduction) to video resolution, so when you watch it on the big screen, you can see it has the qualities of film, but it's still a grainy and gritty image."

Boe worked closely with Claro to get the right feel of the film. The two had graduated from film school together and knew each other's taste very well. More than anything else, they assert that "Reconstruction" is not a Dogma film. Claro told Lorena Cancela at SenseofCinema.com that while Dogma films has put Denmark's film industry on the map, it has become a taboo.

"Dogma is becoming almost a bad word," said Claro, "it stands for shaking camera and very sad realistic stories. ... Maybe I just wanted to say that it was not a Dogma movie because many people expect Danish films to be Dogma."

Interestingly, when the founder of the Dogma movement, Lars von Trier, first met Boe, Claus Christensen of the Danish Film Institute reported that von Trier said that Boe didn't look very talented.

- Jason Nielsen