

# ANTON PETERSEN

INTERVIEW BY  
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Anton Petersen dabbled in filmmaking in his late teens, making videos with his friends and attending the first Faroe Islands' youth film workshop when he was 19. Soon after, he saw *Taxi Driver* and says ***“that’s the pivotal point when I really fell in love with cinema. I loved Taxi Driver’s portrait of an outsider and the alienation of not fitting in somehow.”***

After studying film in Copenhagen and at FAMU in Prague, where he’d sometimes watch two or three films a day, Petersen returned to the Faroes to make a number of short films and commercials. Those shorts caught the attention of Bela Tarr, and Petersen was invited to attend Tarr’s famed film school, Film Factory, in Sarajevo from 2013-2016.

Film Factory suited him more than a “conventional” film school. ***“I do work with narratives, but at the same time, I like to explore possibilities with the medium,”*** Petersen says. ***“I’d always been drawn to arthouse filmmaking and Eastern European cinema, specifically. Film Factory had that auteur approach, to find your own style.”***

Petersen has been influenced by Tarr – for instance they share an appreciation for long takes -- and even teamed up with Tarr’s frequent cinematographer Fred Kelemen

for his debut feature *Love Acts*. Of the cinematographer, Petersen says, “he has so much sensibility, experience and craftsmanship.”

*Love Acts*, now in post-production, is a chamber piece set in a house in Torshavn. He’s been working on the idea for his debut feature since 2016 – ***“You really have to believe in it and fight for it for many, many years,”*** he says.

***“It’s a love drama about two women who get together on a Saturday night. One has a love confession to the other, she can’t stay silent anymore...Then it has quite dire consequences that evening. And then we jump seven months later to a murder trial.”***

***“On the evening, they let all their inhibitions go and animalistic instincts come out. This is juxtaposed with a trial, which is about reason and logic...although the trial gets quite chaotic as well,”*** the director explains.

He sees it as a universal story but also specific to the Faroes’ patriarchal society and “culture of suppression.”

Petersen is aiming for international festivals in 2023, and he also thinks the film could be controversial locally, ***“with this kind of interaction between two women, I assume***

***there will be a mixed reception. But that can be good, I like living on the edge.”***

In his past shorts, he learned from using too many locations. By concentrating on interiors in this film, he avoids the trap of showing so many natural beauty shots of the Islands. He also explains, with a laugh, that by shooting inside he didn’t have to deal with the Faroes’ frequently changing weather conditions. ***“I realized that in order to make something at a high level, I had to make it small,”*** Petersen explains. ***“So making a chamber piece was ideal for me.”*** He pulled in top-level equipment from Denmark and Iceland, and the team shot it in two separate segments, 18 months apart in 2021 and 2022. Jón Hammer produces through his company Kyk Pictures.

Petersen’s many years of thinking about the story and the filmmaking helped him to make the film as he wanted to make it. “I was able to listen and see the possibilities that are there, instead of all the obstructions,” he reflects.

He wants to keep using that cinematic voice he developed abroad to tell Faroese stories. ***“There is a limit to how close you can get to people of other cultures. From an egoistic approach to make my best work I needed to draw from my own roots that go the deepest.”***

*Love Acts* by  
Anton Petersen

Anton Petersen  
Writer/director.

