



DIE ASTA
THE DANISH SUPERSTAR
OF SILENT FILM

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BRANDTS



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DIE ASTA

THE DANISH SUPERSTAR OF SILENT FILM

Die Asta is a modern, immersive take on the art form Asta Nielsen helped create and the time she lived in. The exhibition vibe is the feeling of entering an underground club in Berlin: Die Asta allows the guests to lose themselves for a moment.

For a quarter of a century, Danish actress Asta Nielsen (1881–1972) was based in Berlin and had the whole world at her feet when she appeared in more than 70 silent films. She made film acting an art form and, at the same time, epitomised the dynamic and trendsetting modern woman – a true boss lady. Babelsberg, the German answer to Hollywood, was founded thanks to Asta Nielsen. And for millions of fans around the world, she simply became “Die Asta” – a phenomenon so huge that her surname became superfluous.

ASTA NIELSEN

A Boss Lady takes center stage

Asta Nielsen lived a modern life in every way, and she handled her film career with skills that can easily be compared to the greatest SoMe stars of our time, who also live lives, where the boundary between the private and the public, the real and the staged - apparently - has disintegrated.’

Asta Nielsen got her big break as Magda Vang in the debut film, *The Abyss*, in 1910. With her razor-sharp understanding of the camera’s intimate gaze and almost intuitive ability to portray Magda as the embodiment of both sex and innocence, Asta Nielsen immediately attracted great international attention from both intellectuals and cinemagoers everywhere. She basically invented modern film acting in *The Abyss* and thanks to her groundbreaking, sophisticated performance, the road was quickly paved for a future abroad: Asta Nielsen was offered a contract in Berlin, and in the following years she became the most famous and celebrated star in Europe and one of the most influential people in the German film business.

Asta Nielsen turned out to be a multi talent. She could play anything from man eater to naughty teenager, she could make the audience cry or laugh, and she knew exactly how to use

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clothes and make up to transform herself and look just right for the part in the black and white world of silent cinema. The exhibition highlights how Asta Nielsen shapes her boyish figure with a corset to appear extra sexy and curvy in some roles but also feels completely comfortable and so cool in menswear. Asta Nielsen was a true gender bender - an excellent drag. She was brave and stylish, both on and off the silver screen – a trendsetter who is still spot on and super relevant.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition focuses on Asta Nielsen's films from 1910 to 1932. Designed as a total installation, the exhibition offers a compelling and unique journey into a dark dream world with the opportunity to experience highlights of Asta's entire life on the screen. Asta Nielsen participated in 74 productions. Less than half still exist - and some of them only partially. So, the material is extensive but at the same time limited. The primary focal points of the exhibition are ten of the most evocative clips from her career. These clips not only show the diversity of her talent but also serve as a launch pad for stories about female roles, sexuality and the roaring 1910s and 1920s that Asta was such an important part of.

Today most people watch everything on screens - often small screens. The exhibition creates an immersive exhibition space, where meeting Asta Nielsen becomes sensual, alive, present. Large scale projections make Asta Nielsen "larger than life" just as she was in the 1910s and 1920s. In other words, the exhibition is to be shown on large-scale projections that bring the films back to life and emphasize their beautiful tactility. Moreover, the sheer size makes it possible to study Asta Nielsen's sense of dress, make up and movement in detail.

The silent film might be without sound, but it was never meant to be experienced in total silence. A special feature in the exhibition is internationally acclaimed electronic composer Bjørn Svin, who from the inside of Asta Nielsen's universe has composed a new and spectacular sound scape for the exhibition's film clips. Bjørn Svin's soundtracks underscore the importance of sound in relation to how we perceive what we see, and at the same time they evoke Asta Nielsen as the ultra-modern artist she is.

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EXHIBITION FACTS AND FEE

700-800 square meters (flexible)

Fee 30.000 Euro

Exhibition package includes:

- All film and sound material for the exhibition:
- 10 curated clips for large scale projection featuring Asta Nielsen
- 1 hour compilation of Asta Nielsen films
- Original soundtrack by Bjørn Svin, produced for this exhibition

Additional material:

- 10 introductions to the exhibited films
- Timeline (placing Asta Nielsen's career in historical context with specific focus on Germany and Berlin)
- Introduction text
- Two high-res photos for posters (copyrights not included)

All texts are in English

Technical equipment needed for the exhibition (not included in fee):

- 10-11 projectors (or less if the exhibition size is adjusted)

Transport: no transport needed

Insurance: no insurance needed

Exhibition team:

Director Stine Høholt +4522875997 stine.hoeholt@brandts.dk

Curator of exhibition: Marianne Ager +4527537031 marianne.ager@brandts.dk

Curatorial film advisors: Thomas C. Christensen and Madeleine Schlawitz, The Danish Film Institute

Technical producer: Lars Lundsgaard, Kunstmuseum Brandts

Producer: Helle Sangild, Kunstmuseum Brandts

Please contact curator Marianne Ager for further information



KUNSTMUSEUM BRANDTS X THE DANISH FILM INSTITUTE

Die Asta is a result of three years of close cooperation between Kunstmuseum Brandts and the Danish Film Institute. The Danish Film Institute is the government institution leading the promotion of film art, film culture and cinema culture in Denmark. A core task for the Danish Film Institute is to preserve and provide access to the national film heritage, through its cinematheque, online platforms www.stumfilm.dk and www.danmarkpaafilm.dk, as well as other national and international activities.

LIST OF WORKS:

- *The Abyss*, 1910 (2:39 mins., film clip)
- *The Dance of the Dead*, 1912 (3:33 mins., film clip)
- *The Film Primadonna*, 1913 (2:33 mins., film clip)
- *A Militant Suffragette*, 1913 (1:35 mins., film clip)
- GIF loop from *The Film Primadonna*
- *Little Angel*, 1914 (2:36 mins., film clip)
- *The ABC of Love*, 1916 (5:16 mins., film clip)
- *Ivigtut*, 1918 (6:25 mins., film clip)
- *Hamlet*, 1921 (4:04 mins., film clip)
- *The Joyless Street*, 1925 (5:12 mins., film clip)
- *Impossible Love*, 1932 (7:35 mins., film clip)
- *Compilation* (67 minutes)

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PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE EXHIBITION



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