

PRESSKIT: THE HUMAN SCALE

Director: Andreas Møl Dalsgaard
Producer: Signe Byrge Sørensen
Company: Final Cut for Real
Length: 83 min
Language: Dansk og engelsk.
Format: HDcam



PITCH

50 % of the world's population lives in urban areas. By 2050 this will increase to 80%. Life in a mega city is both enchanting and problematic. Today we face peak oil, climate change, loneliness and severe health issues due to our way of life. But why? The Danish architect and professor Jan Gehl has studied human behavior in cities through 40 years. He has documented how modern cities repel human interaction, and argues that we can build cities in a way, which takes human needs for inclusion and intimacy into account. **THE HUMAN SCALE** meets thinkers, architects and urban planners across the globe. It questions our assumptions about modernity, exploring what happens when we put people into the center of our planning

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Fifty percent of the world's population live in urban areas. By 2050 this figure is expected to increase to eighty percent. The megacity is both enchanting and scary. But how do we plan these cities in a way, which take human behaviour into account?

In the 20th Century the struggle to provide large numbers of people with proper housing, work spaces and transport led the modernists to create gigantic systems of highrise buildings, industrial estates and highways. The material gains are evident. What are the costs? Jan Gehl's thesis is that basic human needs for interaction, inclusion and intimacy was somewhat forgotten during this process. Today we face peak oil, climate change and severe health issues due to our rapid growth. With an exploding population we need to double our urban capacity within 30 years. Can a people oriented planning be the solution?

The main question is pressing and includes us all. From the slum of Bangladesh to the financial district in New York. What is a happy life, and can a city make us happy? What is a good city? Is it made of highways, gated communities and highrise structures? Or is it made of bikeways, parks and walking streets? Can architecture meet our human needs in the face of future challenges? **THE HUMAN SCALE** meets thinkers, architects and urban planners across the globe. It questions our assumptions about modernity, exploring what happens when we put people into the center of our planning.

LONG SYNOPSIS

THE HUMAN SCALE questions our assumptions about modernity, exploring what happens when we put people into the center of our equations.

For 40 years the Danish architect Jan Gehl has systematically studied human behavior in cities. His starting point was an interest in people, more than buildings – in what he called *Life Between Buildings*. What made it exist? When was it destroyed? How could it be brought back? This led to studies of how human beings use the streets, how they walk, see, rest, meet, interact etc. Jan Gehl also uses statistics, but the questions he asks are different. For instance: How many people pass this street throughout a 24 hour period? How many percent of those are pedestrians? How many are driving cars or bikes? How much of the street space are the various groups allowed to use? Is this street performing well for all its users? Jan Gehl made his first studies in Italy and later he inspired the planning of Denmark's capital, Copenhagen, for 40 years. His ideas inspired the creation of walking streets, the building and improvements of bike paths and the reorganization of parks, squares and other public spaces throughout this city and in many other cities in the Nordic region. Around the world cities like Melbourne, Dhaka, New York, Chongqing and Christchurch are now also being inspired by Gehl's work and by the developments in Copenhagen.

THE DIRECTOR ON THE FILM

Today 50% of the world's population live in urban areas. By 2050 this figure is expected to increase to 80%. The result will be an explosion of huge megacities at an even greater rate. We see massive urban growth in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where millions move into ever expanding cities. But how do we plan these cities? We typically plan them with gigantic systems of highways, highrise buildings and workspaces. But where do people meet in these cities? Where do they socialize? And if they don't, how does that affect our happiness?

The megacity is both enchanting and scary. But facts show us that they come with heavy side-effects. The consequences are seen on many levels. Growing violence and insecurity. Social exclusion at an ever greater scale. Human alienation and social phobia. Depression and anxiety are the diseases of today. Did we invent a diagnosis for an old problem. Or is this in fact a diagnosis of the society we have created?

The Human Scale aims to portray the way we live in cities today and its consequences. In a kaleidoscopic use of images and sound, we travel the world while experts on urban planning share their work and observations. The intention is to portray the human being within the built environment, and how they influence one another. Today we face peak oil, climate change and severe health issues due to our way of life. 80% of greenhouse gases are emitted from cities. We need a radical change of lifestyles and mentality, and the film investigates whether city planning can be an integral part of the solution.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR – ANDREAS MØL DALSGAARD

Born 1980, Denmark. Andreas graduated from the National Film School of Denmark in 2009 and has a B.A. in social anthropology from Aarhus University, 2005. "Afghan Muscles" (2007), Dalsgaard's debut as a documentary director, was a festival hit, winning Best Documentary at AFI Los Angeles and Open Eyes Award at Rome Med Film Festival. "Cities on Speed – Bogotá Change" (2009), selected for IDFA's Reflecting Images: Panorama and has since won a number of prizes and shown in more than 20 countries. He has world premiere on two films on the Danish film festival cph:dox this autumn: "The Human Scale" and "Travelling with Mr. T (dir. together with Simon Lereng Wilmont)".

ABOUT FINAL CUT FOR REAL

Final Cut for Real is dedicated to high-end creative documentaries for the international market. The core staff consists of three producers Signe Byrge Sørensen, Anne Köhncke and Monica Hellström. Together we cover a wide range of development and production expertise and work with younger talent as well as established filmmakers to create a productive mixture of experience and new approaches to documentary filmmaking.

Recent productions: *The Kid and the Clown* (Ida Gron) *Returned* (Marianne Hougen-Moraga), *World's Finest Chef* (Rasmus Dinesen) *The Act of Killing* (Joshua Oppenheimer)