

The creation of a killer

■ TEXT / Sanne Harder. ■ PHOTO / Stine Marie Jacobsen

One day, Stine Marie Jacobsen asked her neighbour to kill her.

One Sunday morning, I opened my newspaper and saw Stine Marie Jacobsen staring blankly at me. I immediately knew that «my» medium had been high-jacked by an outsider.

Stine Marie Jacobsen had heard of roleplayers before I e-mailed her my questions for this article. «I have a friend who has organized quite a few roleplaying events, and I know a little through her and a bit of reading. But I've never participated».

Whether Stine has participated in roleplaying or not depends on how you define it. The borders of the medium are getting blurry these days. Roleplaying used to be a bunch of guys playing Dungeons and Dragons, but nowadays some roleplaying games are only one step removed from drama, storytelling, or performance art. As for Stine, she might not have taken part in any of the games or larps that roleplayers have arranged, but she is someone who puts the notion of identity to the test by placing herself physically in the middle of a narration – a scenario.

Has roleplaying made the transition from underground phenomenon to the established art scene – but without the roleplayers? Roleplaying has always had great potential as an artistic medium. Maybe it takes an artist, not a roleplayer to put it to good use.

The kill

In 2009, Stine was living in Los Angeles, next to a perfectly normal guy.

«I first noticed my neighbour during a weekend, when I was arriving at my house in L.A.», Stine tells me. «He was fixing his car outside of his house, and I thought he reminded me of the actor Richard Dreyfuss.»

The neighbour's name was Kirk, not Richard. Nevertheless, the resemblance made Stine think of movies, and that inspired her to ask Kirk if he would star in her film.

In the film, Stine gets killed by Kirk. Her neck is sliced open. She is sitting in the driver's seat of a car. Her eyes are empty, and a smear of blood spreads across her neck. In the back of the car, Kirk grins evilly while clutching a bloodied knife.

But somehow Kirk's performance is not convincing. You would expect a killer to look lecherous, callous, or superior. Kirk is neither. He winds up looking a little like a young boy with a toy knife. This only makes the picture more menacing. It does not feel like fiction, though it is obviously not a press photo either. In fact, it winds up somewhere between the real and the fictive, in the strange gap which is usually mainly occupied by reality shows.

«I grew up watching movies», Stine says. «A lot of them.