

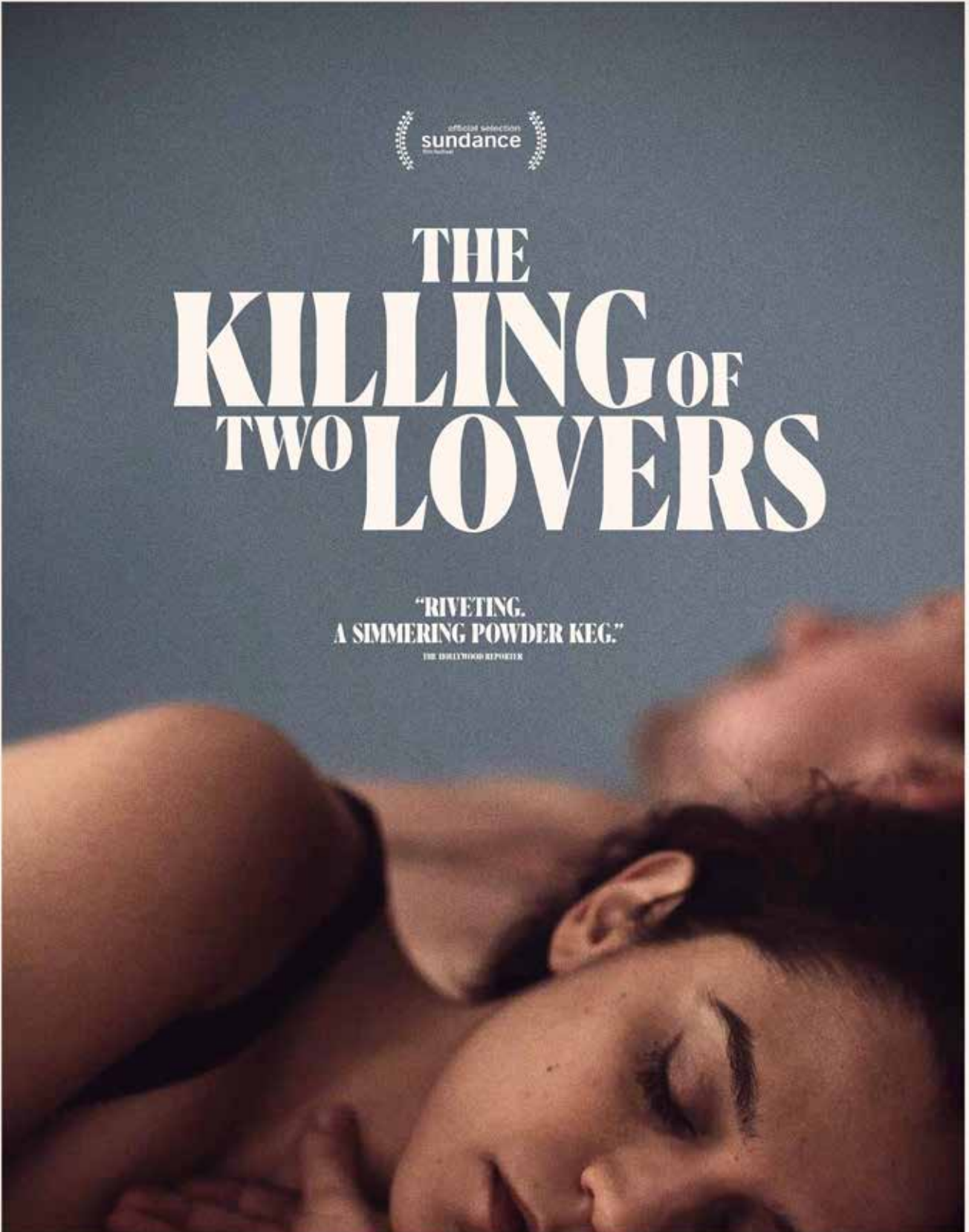
cinéart

PERSMAP



THE
KILLING OF
TWO **LOVERS**

**"RIVETING.
A SIMMERING POWDER KEG."**
THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER



THE KILLING OF TWO LOVERS

EEN FILM VAN ROBERT MACHOIAN



VOD release:

Picl / Vitamine Cineville: vanaf 27 mei 2021

TVOD: vanaf 26 juni 2021

Drama - 2021 - VS - 85 minuten

Meer over de film: [Cineart.nl/films/the-killing-of-two-lovers](https://www.cineart.nl/films/the-killing-of-two-lovers)

Persmaterialen: [Cineart.nl/pers/the-killing-of-two-lovers](https://www.cineart.nl/pers/the-killing-of-two-lovers)

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SYNOPSIS

THE KILLING OF TWO LOVERS is een ingetogen, maar indringend psychologisch drama over high school sweethearts David (Clayne Crawford) en Nikki. Regisseur en schrijver Robert Machoian laat hoop en liefde vervliegen in het desolate landschap van een klein stadje in Utah.

David en Nikki hebben besloten wat afstand van elkaar te nemen om het huwelijk redden dat ze tot nu toe als vanzelfsprekend hebben beschouwd. David stemt in met Nikki's wensen, omdat hij denkt dat het de enige manier is om hun gezin met vier kinderen samen te houden. Die hoop vervliegt als Nikki een nieuwe vriend lijkt te hebben. David reageert impulsief en jaloers. Hij is doodsbang om zijn gezin te verliezen en zoekt de confrontatie.

THE KILLING OF TWO LOVERS bouwt de onderhuidse spanning prachtig op. De film ging in première op het Sundance Filmfestival en wordt internationaal geprezen: 'Small in scale but powerful in the impact of its bristling intensity' (The Hollywood Reporter).



ROBERT MACHOIAN

DIRECTOR & WRITER

Born in the small town of King City California, and raised up in the DIY Punk culture, Robert has been taking photographs his whole life and making films for well over a decade. His films have premiered at the Sundance, SXSW, LA, and Tribeca Film Festivals in the States and have screened at festivals around the world. His second feature, *God Bless the Child*, made with his directing partner Robert Ojeda-Beck, received a rave review in *The New York Times* and won numerous awards, including best film at CPH:DOX, even though it was a narrative hybrid. Robert and Rodrigo were then nominated for a Cinema Eye Honors Heterodox and Indie Spirit Filmmaker to Watch Awards. Focusing on people living everyday lives whose stories often go untold, they bring their unique vision to weave deeply personal stories that absorb their audiences. Robert has won awards for his cinematography and his photographs have appeared in magazines at *Filmmaker Magazine*, *Indiewire*, and *Bright Ideas*. His work comes from the intimate experiences of his life and the lives of those around him. In 2019 Robert had his fourth short film go to the Sundance Film Festival, which won the Jury Prize for Directing. He is currently working on his first solo feature film.



INTERVIEW

ROBERT MACHOIAN & CLAYNE CRAWFORD

The Killing of Two Lovers is your first solo feature. What inspired you to tell this story?

Machoian : I think a lot of it had to do with the period of life that I'm in right now. I've seen the marriages of several friends and family members end in recent years and it got me thinking about my male friends who really define themselves as good fathers and enjoy being fathers. Losing the everyday experience of putting your kids to bed, or sitting on the couch and watching TV with them, caused a few of them to start acting out of character, which was so interesting to me – to see the way in which they responded to this aspect of their life change. I really wanted to explore this kind of experience through a character like David because I think that it's something you don't understand until it happens to you. So I ran with this concept but was also very interested in the idea of masculinity and the role it would play in a situation like this – when a man is fighting for his desired life while at the same time trying to respect his partner, which is a complicated thing to explore in-and-of itself.

Clayne – you both starred in and produced the film. How and when did you become involved in the project?

Crawford : Robert and I have been looking to work together for ten years. He had written some scripts that I had fallen in love with and we were just constantly trying to raise money to make them. Since Robert's films fall outside of a typical genre, I think people just had difficulty wrapping their mind around these stories. And so, he continued to make short films and I continued to enjoy them, and we just stayed friends. Then in 2018, I called him up and said "let's just take some cash and shoot a film". Robert had sent me *The Killing of Two Lovers* as a short story about a year before and it was about a father going to pick up his kids who gets into an altercation with his wife's boyfriend – I think it was entitled "The Drift" at that point, and we both really loved that world, but I felt we needed to shoot a feature so we could have a true calling card to convince someone to believe in us enough to go make another film. A couple months later, Robert came back with this draft and I just fell in love with it. From the very beginning, we would just go back and forth and read scenes, and we'd talk about the characters– it was an extremely organic process. I got the script in October and we were shooting by December 1st.

Tell us about your decision to set the film in Kanosh, Utah and your experience shooting on location.

Machoian : A friend of mine is a local painter in Kanosh and grew up there, so I was actually out there working on another project. I would often walk the streets just trying to relax, which is how I came across that red brick house. The house brought to mind the short that I had written based on a similar concept and got me thinking about how this film could be larger. Then I started to think about the landscape of the area, which is so beautiful from afar. Kanosh is a town of only 300 people, and it's a tight-knit community, but houses are dying within that town. Every other block there's a house falling apart. I thought the landscape would be perfect as a background for a marriage, because the onset of marriage is always very beautiful, but the nitty gritty is always more complicated and tight. The possibility of having that background against this intimate town while dealing with a failing marriage would be really valuable. I also grew up in a small town and I find a lot of value in small town stories. I hoped to represent this small town in the way it actually exists.

The most pivotal moments of the film are defined by epic long takes and stunning wide shots – how did you and cinematographer Oscar Ignacio Jiménez build this distinct visual language?

Machoian : I like long takes. In most of my work I try to use as many long takes as possible, so that was already kind of baked-in to the approach. The next step was discussing with Oscar what these long takes would look like, and so we started discussing the idea of a family album. We wanted to see if there was a way in which we could compose these shots to look like they were snapshots from a family photo album. Think about the rocket scene – it's like a photograph, framed from the position that Niki, the wife, would be in if she was taking a picture. What this does is allow us to be in the moment and have all the elements within that moment be rooted

to that period of time. The rocket scene, again, is a great example of a "memory" that would occur. One of things I thought about while conceptualizing this was how my mom would get frustrated with my dad when I was growing up. One time she broke my dad's walkman and it's like a family story that we all tell – she got so upset and took his walkman out in the front yard, threw it on the ground and broke it. That's a memory that we all have. Oscar and I discussed this idea a lot – how can these compositions almost work in that way? What would the kids remember? How would David and Niki remember this argument? And the other aspect with this shooting style is that, when you film longer takes, you don't allow the audience to relax, you remove the breathing room that multiple cuts often provide. I thought that was very important for this story – I hoped that the audience would feel almost like one of the children, feeling very awkward and uncomfortable with everything that was happening.

The main cast is made up of both professional actors and your own family members. What was your experience directing a cast of such varied backgrounds?

Machoian : For me it was a dream scenario of course. My kids like to make movies, they're anxious to make something now, but I like the organic nature of their touch. I say this often – the way that they climb over each other and the way they comfortably interact with each other, there's an element of realism that you can't really get if we had cast actual actors in those roles. For me it was really exciting to mix that element, which I was very familiar with having worked this way on previous shorts and other projects, with skilled actors like Clayne. I felt this would elevate the realism for the actors that would be in that space. That was my hope anyways so it was exciting for me to see how that would play out.

Crawford : Working with non-actors paired with Robert's long take shooting style really set the stage for me as a performer – and I mean that literally as if it was a play – it allowed me to walk into the scene and let the scene to build upon itself knowing there wouldn't be all the cuts. A lot of times with a performance, I have to pace myself knowing that there is going to be multiple angles of coverage so I don't want to give too much at first. But with the way Robert structured this film, it allowed us all to live free in the moment and to truly buy into the circumstances. This was a lot more freeing and I think the performances reflect that. Our three main characters – David, Niki, and Derek – continually surprise the audience with the duality of their behavior. What interested you in writing these kinds of characters and how did they evolve from the project's conception to completion?

Machoian : I think great storytelling is dealing with complex characters. In general, people in life are more complex than we paint them out to be. I don't know if anyone is inherently all evil or inherently all good – I think there's a complicated aspect of that. For me, it was really exciting the way I approached it – David is losing his family and trying to figure out how to fight for them while at the same time giving his wife this room that she's asking for, which is extremely scary for him. Niki is really in love with two people, which is so complicated to understand when you're told as a young child that you'll grow up to get married and only love one person. In the film Niki is loving two people and on top of that her career is blossoming, which is something that was unexpected when she took a job just to take a job and then all of a sudden realized she's really talented and has skills. And for Derek - a lot of what Chris Coy and I talked about was that Derek is interested in settling down and that in his mind, he thinks he may be able to be a part of these children's lives. He's dealing with the complicated aspect of loving a woman who has children and a husband, but may be willing to take on all these responsibilities for how much he loves Niki. Then you take all these people who have good intentions in this small town environment and it gets incredibly complicated. I thought it was very funny at Sundance when everyone kept saying to Chris, "you play such a good bad guy!", and he was like "I'm not a bad guy, I'm a good person!". The reality is that Derek is a good person, but in this environment he's not, he's misstepping for what he thinks is a good thing. That, for me as a filmmaker, is what I'm always interested in because that exists in all of us – we're not inherently good and we're not inherently bad. We just hope we spend most of our lives with our barometer swinging to the good.

And Clayne – what was your experience playing this kind of character with David?

Crawford : I'm a father of three and I love being a dad more than I love anything else. The idea of someone else raising my kids or eating cereal with them in the morning is more than I personally can even bear to think about. And for David there is no life outside of his family, so he's trying to wrap his head around how he will even continue if things go south. His job is a means to an end and he even says, "I wish I could have had the children and stayed home with them", and I think he truly means that, he would give birth to those kids if he could, he loves them more than anything. So it was easy for me to connect with David – we all understand betrayal, we all understand sadness, and if you have a child in your life you understand that love is unlike anything else in the world. It was a gift to play a dad and to have an opportunity to show this thing that I have inside of me just naturally. I also love that never know why David and Niki broke up – we find them just as David is beginning to understand that his wife is sleeping with someone else and this is really all happening for him, he may not be at his dad's for just a brief stint. I love that we enter the story mid-stride and that informed my choices as an actor playing this kind of character.

The film's sound design is uniquely integral to its story. How did you collaborate with sound designer Peter Albrechtsen to create this immersive soundscape?

Machoian : Peter and I had worked on *When She Runs* together, a feature I made with Rodrigo Ojeda-Beck, in which the main character is trying to be a pre-qualifier in the Olympics, and this train is constantly in the background as a metaphor for her. After we finished that film and Clayne and I started talking about *The Killing of Two Lovers*, I sent a draft to Peter and said, "You have to do this movie, you have to take what we did in *When She Runs* and push it even more". I told him, "I'm leaving a lot of room in this film for you, I'm going to shoot it in a way where if you don't participate, it's going to suck". Luckily he agreed to do it and I started to send a lot of *Musique Concrète* to him – I love that era of music – and he was sending me little bits back as he looked at footage of the film. He was really struck on the idea that the sound we use for the design be sounds in David's life, so things he was using on a regular basis like the door opening and shutting, the creaking of metal and all of these things were representations of sounds that David would hear consistently in his life. We used those sounds to really focus on his mental state. It was a lot of work but it was also a lot of fun to really push each other creatively. We pushed ourselves to a place where we were exploring things that I'm not sure have ever been fully explored in the way there were in *The Killing of Two Lovers*.



CAST

David	CLAYNE CRAWFORD
Nikki	SEPIDEH MOAFI
Derek	CHRIS COY
Jesse	AVERY PIZZUTO
Alex	ARRI GRAHAM
Theo	EZRA GRAHAM
Bug	JONAH GRAHAM
Dad	BRUCE GRAHAM
Mrs. Staples	BARBARA WHINNERY
Hardware Store Salesman	NOAH KERSHSNIK
Hobby Town Salesman	JOHN BILLINGS
Neighbor	JEREMY DAVIS
Dawnell	NICOLE HAWKINS

CLAYNE CRAWFORD

DAVID

Clayne Crawford is an Alabama native that made his jump to Los Angeles in 1997 and immediately began work in numerous theatre productions. It wasn't long before his talents were recognized on the big screen with major roles in *A WALK TO REMEMBER*, *SWIMFAN*, and *A LOVE SONG FOR BOBBY LONG*. Clayne continued to build his fan base with eclectic roles on hit TV shows such as *'24'*, *'THE GLADES'*, *'ALL SIGNS OF DEATH'*, and *'RECTIFY'*. His most recent success was the lead role of Martin Riggs in the FOX hit TV show *'LETHAL WEAPON'*.

SEPIDEH MOAFI

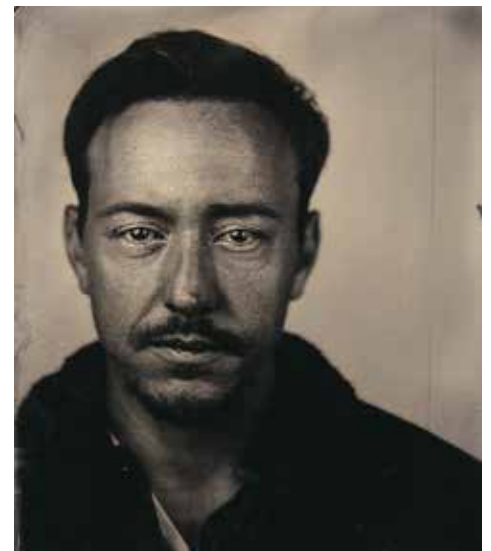
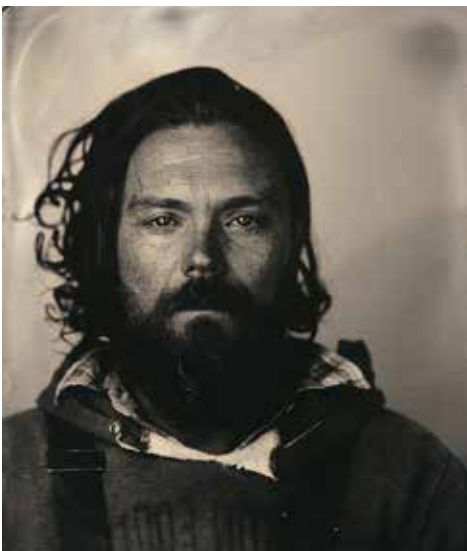
NIKKI

Sepideh Moafi was born in Regensburg, Bavaria, West Germany. She is a talented actress on the rise known for her roles in the TV series *'QUEST'*, *'FALLING WATER'*, and Loretta in the HBO show *'THE DEUCE'*.

CHRIS COY

DEREK

Chris Coy is an American actor born in Louisville, Kentucky. He has worked alongside Hugh Jackman as Kevin Sweeney in *THE FRONT RUNNER*. Chris has also worked on many TV shows and is most known for portraying L.P. Everett on HBO's *'TREME'*, Martin on AMC's *'THE WALKING DEAD'*, and Paul Hendrickson on HBO's *'THE DEUCE'*.



CREW

Director/Writer/Editor ROBERT MACHOIAN

Producer CLAYNE CRAWFORD
SCOTT CHRISTOPHERSON
ROBERT MACHOIAN

Executive Producer CLAYNE CRAWFORD
ROGER FIELDS
ROBERT MACHOIAN

Cinematographer OSCAR IGNACIO JIMENEZ
1st Camera Assistant NICOLE HAWKINS
2nd Camera Assistant SARAH HORNBERGER
Sound Operator DRAKE WITHERS
Key Grip COLTEN ASHLEY
Make Up & Hair Dresser TC THECLA LUISI
Make Up Assistant HALLE MURRAY
Wardrobe Coordinator SUZETTE GRAHAM
Casting LIBBY GOLDSTEIN

Colorist DREW TEKULVE
Sound Designer PETER ALBRECHSEN, MPSE
RSM DAVID BARBER, CAS MPSE
RSM PETER ALBRECHTSEN
Dialogue Editor RYAN COTA
Sound Effects Editor ANDREAS KONGSGAARD
Sound Effects Editor MIKKEL NIELSEN
Sound Effects Recordist MICHAEL RAPHAEL
Foley Artist HEIKKI KOSSI, MPSE
Foley Recordist KARI VAHAKUOPUS
Foley Editor PIETU KORHONEN
Sound Facilities OFFSCREEN, COPENHAGEN
Foley Studio H5 FILM SOUND
Mix Facilities JUNIPER POST, INC
Graphic Design ACTUAL SOURCE

Executive Producer ODEN ROBERTS
MELIA LEIDENTHAL

SCOTT CHRISTOPHERSON

PRODUCER

Scott was one of ten documentary filmmakers featured in Variety Magazine's "Docu- makers to Watch" list in 2015. Scott's debut feature film, *Peace Officer*, won both the Grand Jury and Audience Awards for best documentary at the SXSW Film Festival. Scott's films have played at Hot Docs, Sheffield, Full Frame, Doc NYC, Montclair, Camden, Traverse City, New Zealand International, Melbourne International, and the Sundance Film Festival. After directing and producing four feature length docs, he is currently working on a five episode documentary series about an American kidnapped in North Korea.

OSCAR IGNACIO JIMÉNEZ

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Oscar Ignacio Jiménez is an American cinematographer of Mexican heritage, whose work has earned him an ASC Student Heritage Award in 2019 for his work on *Gather* (American Cinematographer Jan '20) while a Media Arts student at Brigham Young University. Jiménez's work has screened at various film festivals, garnering a Jury Prize from 2019 Sundance Film Festival for his collaboration on the short film *The Minors*. Narratives that draw his style centre on the human experience, demanding visceral and textured images full of feelings which give an audience the emotional experience of the character's world.

PETER ALBRECHTSEN

SOUND DESIGNER

Peter Albrechtsen is an award winning Danish sound designer, mixer and music supervisor working on both feature films and documentaries. On top of *The Killing of Two Lovers*, Peter's latest credits include a very diverse range of renowned movies, including last year's Oscar nominated *The Cave*, the Tribeca winner *Materna*, the US festival favorite *Freeland* and the Berlin Film Festival selections *Last and First Men*, *Sow the Wind and Shine Your Eyes*. Other recent titles include the Oscar shortlisted *The Distant Barking of Dogs*, *Thelma* and sound effects recording for Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk*. Has been nominated for the MPSE Golden Reel Award six times and in 2017, Peter was invited to become a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts. Albrechtsen also works as music supervisor and has collaborated with internationally acclaimed musicians like Jóhann Jóhannsson, Matthew Herbert, Anohni and Efterklang. Has written about music and movies for different international magazines and lectured about sound design around the world.

