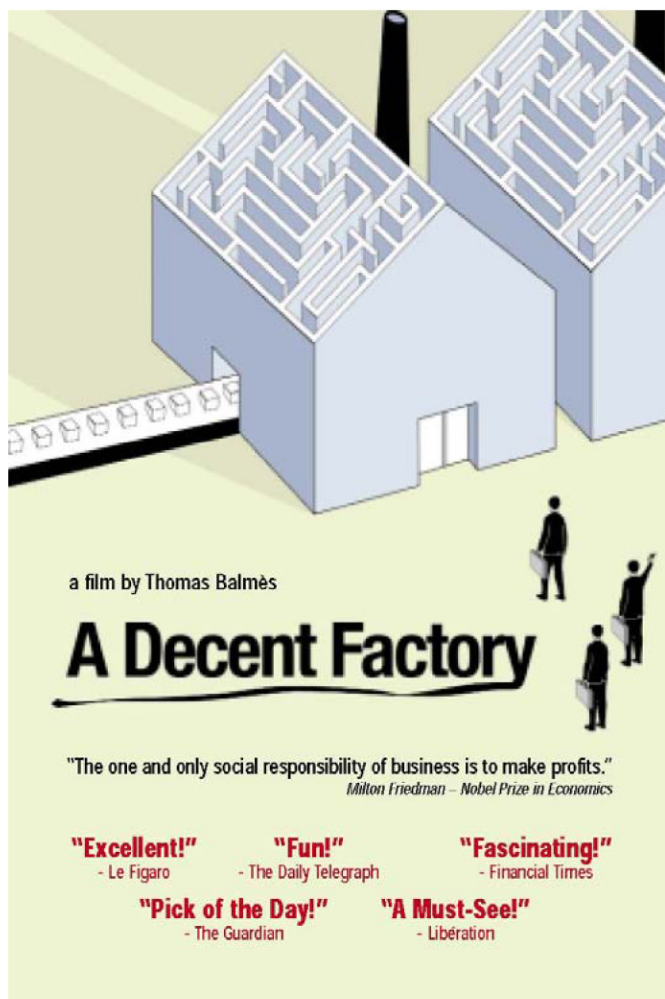


A Decent Factory

a film by Thomas Balmès



79 minutes / color / 2004 / France-Finland / 35 mm

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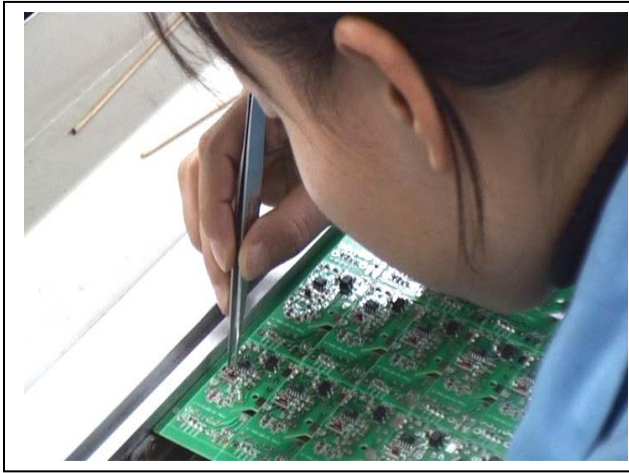
Synopsis 1

Is the Nokia Corporation worried about the working conditions of thousands of young Chinese women employed by their suppliers to manufacture all those little bitty parts that go into your cell phone? Or is Nokia more concerned that *you* might hold them to account if you knew that their workers earn *less* than the Chinese minimum wage? That's for you to decide after watching this eye-opening investigation in which the cultural divide (Chinese workers, British managers, Finnish executives) and the even more dramatic gender divide (women workers and investigators, male managers and executives) go a long way toward explaining why the investigators' recommendation that open buckets of toxic chemicals not be stored where the workers take their tea is met with this response: "Ok, take them into the kitchen!"

(Written by Karen Cooper, Film Forum)



Synopsis 2



In an increasingly globalized economy, more corporations are ‘outsourcing’ to countries with cheaper labor costs and less workers’ rights. Some corporate managers, whether out of sincere moral concern or because they must respond to the considerations of investors and shareholders, are attempting to balance profit-making with social morality.

A DECENT FACTORY focuses on such an effort by Nokia, the Finnish electronics firm, which sends a team led by two business ethics advisors to examine conditions at a Chinese factory. Filmmaker Thomas Balmès, having conducted three years of research on the subject, follows them on their investigative journey.

The film documents in fascinating detail their inspection of the plant, guided by its European and Chinese managers. During their tour the Nokia team investigates safety conditions, payroll records, and potential environmental hazards. They also conduct probing interviews with the factory managers as well as several young Chinese female employees who work and live in on-site dormitories.

The advisors’ final report confronts Nokia with the dilemma now facing an increasing number of Western firms — how is it possible to balance the profit motive with a sense of social responsibility?



Review Excerpts

"A documentary about a factory inspection sounded as much fun as, well, a factory inspection. But it was fun!"—The Daily Telegraph

"PICK OF THE DAY! The factory management is creepily Brent-like, their establishment dismal and Orwellian. Two ironies are in play here: one, the People's Republic of China now provides global capitalism with its wage slaves and two, that savvy corporations have realized that assuaging the consciences of western consumers is potentially hugely profitable."

—The Guardian

"Funny, perceptive... A moral investigation into the profit motive."

—BBC

"Provides an honest, brutal and sometimes humorous look at the culture and climate surrounding today's business world as it collides with consumer desire for ethically-made products."—Chart Magazine

"Surprisingly entertaining! Humor, drama and even some suspense."

—Pat Aufderheide, International Documentary

"Neither vilifies nor flatters Nokia, it analyzes in-depth the complexity of globalization and its famous practice of outsourcing. With his seemingly dispassionate approach, Thomas Balmès provides a pitiless document on a furiously modern world."

—Telérama

"Globalization with an inhuman face. An excellent documentary."

—Le Nouvel Observateur

"The filmmakers' direct cinema style mercilessly records the discomfort among British managers, who walk the tightrope between profit and law. The executives' initial frankness changes when they find out that the film is not solely intended for internal use. By this time, though, we are already haunted by the images of factory girls on an assembly line, putting together adapters day in and day out for less than the required minimum wage."

—Amsterdam International Film Festival

"A subtle, classic documentary drama."—European Documentary Network

Character Biographies

Hanna Kaskinen, Former Head of Nokia's Ethics Department

Hanna Kaskinen, 43, is now a second year nursing student from Finland. Kaskinen has a Masters of Science in Economics, having specialized in financing, computing and commercial law.

Kaskinen has held positions as Financial Manager and Business Controller at Finnish-owned corporations. While working as a Business Controller at Nokia, she changed directions and started working on environmental and sustainable business issues. In her last position at Nokia, Kaskinen was responsible for environmental and ethical procedures in the global supply chain.

Today, Kaskinen has turned to nursing in order to work "hands on" in the developing world.

Louise Jamison - Co-founder of a Consultancy Company Specializing in Business Ethics

Louise Jamison has worked to improve the lives of people touched by trade for the past ten years. In 1997 she co-founded Impactt, a consultancy company specializing in ethical trading, and advised a range of companies including Gap, Ikea, H&M and Nokia on improving labor standards in their supply chains across the world.

In 2005, she left Impactt to set up a fairer trade garment company. Her vision is to offer consumers an alternative to mass-produced 'sweatshop' clothes and to empower producers by building their skills and capacity to supply the global market.

Louise has a degree in law and history from Cambridge University and a Masters in environmental policy and management from Yale University.

Director's Statement

When I first arrived to Finland in early 2002 my idea was to make a film about Nokia - and Finns behind its success - as a tribe. I wanted to know what was there behind this phenomenon some sort of a Finnish or Nordic way of capitalism that would have had more human face on it than the capitalism I knew as a Frenchman.

I soon found out that my task was extremely difficult. Finns turned out to be extremely modest people who did not show their emotions which I often found extremely boring. Even the small Finnish town of Nokia with a huge number of old retired Nokia workers turned millionaires with their ancient Nokia shares was a disappointment in respect to my original ideas.

Then - through a French Nokia manager - I heard about a Finnish lady who was working, inside Nokia, with an Ethical Pilot Project. Her idea was to visit and audit factories of both Nokia and Nokia's suppliers around the world in order to learn about the conditions there. I immediately realized that there was something in this process. Something that would deal with globalization, with moral and ethical issues that we as Westerners have to face, and something that would have a process—a story—in it. I started to follow the Finnish lady and the film came from that.

— **Thomas Balmès**



Filmmaker Biography/Filmography

Thomas Balmès (Director, Producer, Cinematographer)

Biography

Thomas Balmès is born in Paris in 1969. He studied at the Institut Supérieur d'Etudes Cinématographiques (ISEC), then became involved in the production of documentaries for various TV channels both as an independent producer and cinematographer. He set up his own production companies, *TBC Productions* and Margot Films in 1992. He started producing various documentaries, as one on James Ivory and another on Michelangelo Antonioni. He directed his first film *Bosnia Hotel* in 1996 followed by *Maharajah Burger*, *Mad cows*, *Holly cows* in 1998. *The Gospel according to the Papuans & Waiting for Jesus* - like his former films - deal with the hegemony of the western culture, religion and values, this time through the evangelization of a tribe in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. His last film, "A decent Factory", commissioned by eight channels, including BBC and France 2 deals again with globalisation but from a global company point of view, Nokia, and tries to answer to the question : "Is it possible to combine Capitalism and moral?"

Filmography

2004-2005 "The Adjusters"

79', ON PRODUCTION Digital Beta 16/9 (Direction, Photography & co-Production)

Producer : Margot Films, Making Movies, BBC, France & YLE2

Broadcasters : HBO, France 2, BBC, YLE2, SVT, TV2 danmark, SBS Australia, Lichtpunt Belgium, HOS Netherland, HBO

2004 "A decent factory"

79', Digital Beta 16/9 (Direction, Photography & co-Production)

Producer : Margot Films, Making Movies, BBC, France & YLE2

Broadcasters : France 2, BBC, YLE2, SVT, TV2 danmark, SBS Australia, Lichtpunt Belgium, HOS Netherland,

Selected in competition for IDFA 2004

2001 "Christ comes to the Papuans"

"The Gospel according to the Papuans" & "Waiting for Jesus"

83', Digital Beta 16/9 (Direction, Photography & co-Production)

Producer : TBC Productions

Broadcasters

BBC (UK), TSR (Switzerland), YLE (Finland), TV2 (Danmark),

Awards

Best documentary TSR, Visions du réel, Nyon (Switzerland)

Festivals screenings

Sheffield International documentary festival (U.K.)

Margareth Meade film festival, New York (USA)

Nashville Film Festival (USA)

International documentary film festival of Amsterdam, IDFA (Holland)

2000 "Waiting for Jesus"

52', Digital Beta 16/9 (Direction, Photography & co-Production)

Producers : Canal +, Les Films d'Ici, TBC Productions, Millenium Films

Broadcasters

Canal + France, Canal + Belgium, RTBF Belgium,

Festivals screenings

Cinéma du Réel 2001, Paris, (France)

Filmmaker Biography/Filmography continued...

1999 "The Gospel according to the Papuans"

52', Digital Beta 16/9 (Direction, Photography & co-Production)

Producers : Canal +, Les Films d'Ici, TBC Productions, Millenium Films

Broadcasters

Canal +, SBS Australie, YLE 2 Finlande, RTBF Belgique, ORF Autriche,

TFO Canada, Telepiu Italie, IKON Hollande, TSR Switzerland,

Awards

Prix du meilleur film ethnographique, Religion Today 2000, Jerusalem (Israel)

Silver Spire Award, San Francisco Film festival 2000 (USA)

Prix international de la Francophonie, Rencontres Media Nord-Sud , Genève (Switzerland)

Mention spéciale, Bilan du film ethnographique 2000 in Paris (France)

Silver Wolf Nomination in International Documentary Festival in Amsterdam 99 (Holland)

Don Quichotte Prize, International Documentary film Festival in Cracovia 2000 (Poland)

Prix du public, International Human rights Film Festival 2000, Pragues (Tchecoslovakia)

Grand prix du Documentaire ethnographique, Telluride Film Festival 2000, Colorado(USA)

Grand prix Religion today Festival 2000, Ravennes, (Italy)

Festivals screenings

Tel-Aviv international documentary film festival (opening night)

Venice Film Festival, (Italy)

FIPA, Biarritz (France)

Tempo Documentary Festival, Stocholm, (Danmark)

Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival,

Sharing stories in Edimburgh (Scotland)

Taiwan international documentary film festival (Taiwan)

Cinéma du réel, Paris (France)

1997 "Maharaja Burger"

52', Digital Beta 16/9 (Direction, Photography & co-Production)

Producers : Canal +, TBC Productions, Quark Productions

Broadcasters

Canal + France, Canal + Belgium, TSR Switzerland, ZDF ARTE France, Germany, TV2 Finland, SVT Sweden, Ikon, Holland, RTE Spain, TV3 Catalunya,

SBS Australia, RTP Portugal, RDT Danmark.

Awards

Grand prix des indépendants aux rencontres Media Nord-Sud 98, Genève (Switzerland)

Grand prix au Festival International de l'environnement 2000, (Brasil)

Festivals

IDFA, Sheffield Documentary Film Festival, Vue sur les Docs

1996 "Bosnia Hotel"

52', Digital Beta (Direction, Photography & co-Production)

Producers : Quark Productions, TBC Productions

Broadcasters

Canal + France, Canal + Belgium, NHK Japan, BRTN Belgium, YLE 2 Finland, TV Ontario Canada, SBS Australia, SVT Sweden, RAI Sat Italia, RTSI

Switzerland, NDR Germany.

Awards

Mention spéciale du jury du FIPA 1997, Biarritz (France)

Mention spéciale du Prix Michel Mitrani, FIPA 1997, Biarritz (France)

Grand Prix Ciné ECO 97, Seia (Portugal)

Monterey Bay Film Festival, 2001 (USA)

American Anthropological Association, 1998 (USA)

Festivals

Leipzig, Lussas, Media Nord-Sud, INPUT, Montréal

1995 "Fare un film, e per me vivere"

Documentary on the shooting of "Behind the clouds", Direct Michelangelo Antonioni

52', Digital Beta (Photography & co-Production)

Producers : TBC Productions, Titti Films

Broadcasters

Arte, WDR, Rai, SBS

Festivals

American Film Festival Los Angeles, Mostra de Venise

1994 "Behind the scene : Jefferson in Paris"

EPK on the shooting of " Jefferson in Paris", Direct James Ivory

EPK, Beta SP (Direction, Photography & Production)

A DECENT FACTORY Credits

A film by
Thomas Balmès

produced by
Kaarle Aho
&
Thomas Balmès

editing
Catherine Gouze

assistant director
Mervi Junkkonen

sound
Mervi Junkkonen
Pirkko Tiitinen

image
Thomas Balmès

on line & color grading
Cedric Jouan

mixing
Charles Schlumberger

administration
Anja Leinonen
Christine Renaud

translations
Xiao Dong

A DECENT FACTORY Credits

executive producers

Ikka Vehkalahti

YLE TV2 Documentaries

Yves Jeanneau

France 2

Nick Fraser

BBC Storyville

supported by

The Promotion Center for

Audiovisual Culture in Finland (AVEK)/

Timo Humaloja

and

Le Centre National de la Cinématographie

France (CNC)

developed and distributed with the support
of the Media Programme of the European Union

A Making Movies & Margot Films Production

for the YLE TV2 / France 2 / BBC

in association with

Humanistische Omroep The Netherlands

SVT Sweden

TV2 Danmark

Lichtpunt Belgium

SBS-TV Australia

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