



# Making Sense Together

A filmessay by Ellen Ugelstad

PRESS KIT







Anne Lise, the mother



Kjetil, the patient

## LOGLINE

- a film about power and powerlessness in psychiatric healthcare.

## SYNOPSIS 1

Through five close and personal testimonies this film investigates power structures in psychiatric healthcare told by users, relatives and employees. What does the feeling of powerlessness do to your mental health and to your own feeling of self? How does it affect the people that exercise power? The film combines a fictional story with documentary interviews and archive material.

## SYNOPSIS 2

Kjetil is a young man in his twenties. He likes to play the guitar, and he loves his cat. Since he was seventeen years old he's been struggling with mental illness, and randomly spent time in different psychiatric hospitals. He dreams of being able to live in his own apartment and take care of himself without medication. The film tells the fictitious story of Kjetil and his mother and their fight against the Scandinavian bureaucracy, but also includes firsthand accounts from patients, next of kin, and employees and discusses power relations in modern psychiatry. Making Sense Together is inspired by the director's own experience with a brother struggling with schizophrenia.

With: Leif, Christina, Harriet, Stig and Andreas







## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Making Sense Together is a documentary film that investigates the relationship between power and powerlessness. I wanted to shed light on power structures in the health care system told through the perspective of both patients, their families and people working in the field. The initial idea comes from a chronic feeling of powerlessness regarding my brother's illness and dealing with the health care system in Scandinavia.

Closed psychiatric care is the most dictatorial part of society, through which a patient can have all their rights taken from them. There is too little openness when it comes to knowledge about closed environments with defined power hierarchies. Psychologist Zimbardo's "Stanford Prison Experiment" is one example. Ordinary students were divided into the roles of Prisoner and Guard and put in a prison-like environment. The brutality of the Guards and the suffering of the Prisoners was so intense that the experiment was terminated after only six days. The study provided a graphic illustration of the power of situations to shape individuals' behaviour.

Care is a complex term adjusted to the principles of organization, where one can wonder if the structure itself creates a climate for bureaucratic power to thrive. I am interested in the grey areas; can a collective care even exist under the terms of a bureaucracy? What roles are we given and what roles do we take on – regardless of being a patient, family member or an employee?

I have studied anthropology and I'm inspired by this way of thinking and framing the world. In this film I isolate one area; power and powerlessness. The documentary-essay is also called a film that thinks and a film that reflects.





## DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Ellen Ugelstad (b. 1973) is an artist and filmmaker living in Oslo. She studied philosophy and anthropology at the University of Oslo, before she moved to California and received a BFA in film from Academy of Art University in San Francisco. She works in a variety of genres ranging from poetic documentary, music-films, hybrids and fiction.

Her work often explores the thin line between sanity and insanity, the hierarchy of power and different forms of reality. Her previous documentary *Indian Summer* is an example of this investigation. This film tells the story of her younger brother living with schizophrenia. It is a poetic portrait of a young man's struggle for his own dignity and search for freedom. *Indian Summer* was nominated for the International Young Talent Award at DOK Leipzig and Nordic Dox Award under CPH:DOX and received two nominations at the Norwegian "Emmy-Award" called Gullruten.

Her films often migrates between different platforms and the last few years she has explored the lines between fiction and documentary and her short film *The Meeting Room* won best screenplay at the Norwegian Short Film Festival in 2017. Her latest film *Making Sense Together* premiered in competition for best Nordic Documentary at Oslo:Pix in June 2018 and her film *The Green Valley* received the Golden Chair for best short film at the Norwegian Short film festival. She is also a recipient of a five-year artist grant from the Norwegian Art Council.



## FILMOGRAPHY

**The Green Valley (2018), fiction 24 min.**

**Making Sense Together (2018), hybrid documentary 68 min.**

**The Meeting Room (2017), docu-fiction 15 min.**

**I write (2015), documentary 28 min.**

**Silent Trilogy, three music films for the Norwegian band Highasakite:**

**Everything Sank in You (2015), documentary 5.14 min.**

**Science and Blood Tests (2015), fiction 5 min.**

**Leaving No Traces (2014), fiction 4.30 min.**

**Indian Summer (2012), documentary 69 min.**



## CREDITS

**Director**  
**Screenplay**

Ellen Ugelstad  
Ellen Ugelstad  
Einar Sverdrup

**Cinematography**

Audun G. Magnæs, FNF  
Ellen Ugelstad

**Editor**  
**Producer**  
**Co-producer**  
**Composer**  
**Sound design**

Kirsti Marie Hougen, N:F:K  
Ellen Ugelstad  
Kristian Mosvold  
Bergmund Waal Skaslien  
Håkon Lammetun, Lydhodene

**With**

Stig Mass Andersen  
Christina Ørbekk Nikolaisen  
Harriet Lexow  
Andreas Færø  
Leif Jonny Mandelid

**Cast**

Edvin Anstensrud, Hilde Olaussen, Trine Wiggen, Marianne  
Mørk Larsen, Stig Frode Henriksen, Christina Ørbekk  
Nikolaisen, Toni Usman

**This film participated in**

NFI:LAB / European Documentary Network  
Outreach and Distribution Workshop 2016  
Work in Progress: The Norwegian Documentary convent 2017  
Work in Progress: Nordic Docs, Fredrikstad 2018

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The Norwegian Extrafoundation for Health and Rehabilitation  
The Freedom of Expression Foundation (Fritt Ord)  
Visual Arts Foundation (BKV)



Billedkunstneres  
Vederlagsfond



NFI Norwegian Film Institute



**Produced by**

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## FILM INFORMATION

Duration	68 minutes
Format	HD, 16:9
Screening format	DCP, Apple ProRes
Sound	5.1
Date of completion	June 2018
Language	Norwegian
Subtitles	English
Country of production	Norway

**WEB**

[www.makingsensetogether.com](http://www.makingsensetogether.com)

**FILM SCREENER**

<https://vimeo.com/280028435>  
Password sefilm

**TRAILER**

<https://vimeo.com/290171891>





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