



Vi viser Golden Globe og Oscar kandidaten:

# „Kon-Tiki“

Norsk tale

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Sted: ETH Zentrum Hauptgebäude, Kinosaal HG F1,  
Rämistrasse 101, 8006 Zürich.  
Preis: Gratis  
Påmelding: Terje Wølner-Hanssen, 056 290 10 51, [terje@hispeed.ch](mailto:terje@hispeed.ch)

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# Only Scandinavian Sharks Were Used in the Making of This Film

By LARRY ROHTER, *New York Times*, February 13, 2013

Joachim Rønning and Espen Sandberg, who jointly directed “Kon-Tiki,” one of the five nominees for the Academy Award for best foreign-language film, came naturally to their subject, the explorer Thor Heyerdahl’s 1947 voyage across the Pacific Ocean on a balsawood raft. Friends since they were 10 years old, both men are from a small town in southern Norway that neighbors Heyerdahl’s birthplace, and as boys were enthralled when they visited the Kon-Tiki Museum in Oslo.

At age 40, they now live, with their wives and children, a block apart in Oslo, within walking distance of the museum. “Kon-Tiki” is their third feature and second consecutive biopic, coming after “Bandidas,” with Salma Hayek and Penélope Cruz, in 2006, and “Max Manus: Man of War,” a 2008 drama about a Norwegian World War II resistance hero.

But Mr. Rønning and Mr. Sandberg, who had started an advertising agency together, first came to attention, at least in the United States, as a result of their prize-winning Budweiser commercial for the Super Bowl telecast featuring Rex the Dog. They spoke by telephone last week from Los Angeles about the origins of “Kon-Tiki” and the evolution of their careers. Here are edited excerpts from that conversation:

**Q. Why does the Kon-Tiki story continue to resonate so strongly with people?**

**A. Espen Sandberg:** It’s a great adventure. Thor inspired people and still does. He could not swim, and he was terrified of water. But he overcame his own fears and crossed the biggest ocean there is. We believe that he did not sell 50 million copies of that book because people are into migration theory. It’s a great adventure, and it reminds you of what you can do with your life if you just dare to.

**Q. You made your first movie together at the age of 10. What kind of working method have you developed? Who does what?**

**A. Sandberg:** We always answer jokingly that we work every other day.

**A. Joachim Rønning:** When we are on set, Espen concentrates more on the actors, and I concentrate more on the visuals, so as not to confuse the actors too much. For us it’s a very natural process, and efficient, too, because both Espen and I really need to agree before we come on set, we have to have talked about it.

**Q. So both of you are involved in every scene?**

**A. Rønning:** We always also shoot with two cameras, and I operate one of the cameras, just to be closer to where the actors and Espen are. So we surround the actors.

**Q. “Kon-Tiki” is a swashbuckling epic on the high seas, told in a straightforward manner, without a lot of bells and whistles. Did you immediately gravitate to that classic approach, or did you debate a lot before deciding?**

**A. Rønning:** We worked for a very long time on the script, and we did try out different ways of going back and forth in time. But we gravitate towards the kind of storytelling in the movies that we love, the movies we grew up with in the '70s and early '80s and even the '60s.

**A. Sandberg:** For us, it's about telling the story in the best possible way, and not trying to be too fancy about it.

**A. Rønning:** When you say the film feels like it's using classic storytelling methods, I take that as a huge compliment, because those were the kind of movies that we really researched going into this. David Lean, for instance. And also, of course, Steven Spielberg's "Jaws." That was a movie that had a huge impact on us when we were kids.

**Q. You have some pretty amazing shark sequences yourselves in “Kon-Tiki.” How was that done?**

**A. Rønning:** We visited the Kon-Tiki Museum in Oslo when we were kids, and when you see the raft, it's amazing how small it is. These guys went over this huge ocean on these nine balsawood logs. But when you go into the basement of the museum, you are underneath the raft, and there they have built a huge model of the whale shark. That's what blows your mind as a kid, to see that huge animal under the raft there. It's such a powerful image, so we knew that was key to this movie. But we also knew going into the making of this film that we were not going to be able to film live animals. Tame sharks are hard to come by, so we knew that we had to make them, and there are over 500 effects shots in the film. So all the sharks are Scandinavian.

**Q. I know that the Weinstein Company is going to be releasing “Kon-Tiki” in the United States this summer, and I'm told it will be in English, not Norwegian. That doesn't mean you've done or are doing a remake, does it?**

**A. Rønning:** No, we shot the film in two versions at the same time, one in Norwegian and one in English, and this was before the Weinsteins came on board, actually. We needed to do that in order to get it financed, and it was rather daunting going into it. We shot each scene with a double camera setup, first in Norwegian, a couple of takes, and then a couple of takes in English.

**Q. That's really unusual.**

**A. Sandberg:** It is, but we've heard that's how they used to do it in the old days, that in Germany they very often did the movies both in German and English. And it makes sense. It's only five million Norwegians, and we have to take that into consideration when we make expensive movies. That goes well when we make these little Dogme things, but when we go out and make something expensive like this, it's just a reality we accept.

**A. Rønning:** That said, we'd rather not do that again.

**A. Sandberg:** You have to catch lightning in a bottle twice.

**Q. You started your careers making commercials. Has that experience had any lasting impact on the way you make films?**

**A. Rønning:** Commercials were a fantastic school for us. We still do it every now and then, and it really keeps us fresh.

**Q. How so?**

**A. Sandberg:** If you want to do a feature subject in Norway, you'll be on the set every third or fourth year. That's not often enough, so doing commercials is a great tool. We get to play with all the toys and tell stories in different ways. It was very important for a movie like "Max Manus" and especially "Kon-Tiki" that we had that kind of background, because we've done a lot of visual effects, and we're not scared by it, and can incorporate it in a story without getting lost in it.

**Q. I imagine that makes you more attractive to Hollywood. Tell me what's been happening as a result of the Oscar nomination.**

**A. Sandberg:** For us as directors, it's a great calling card. The movie really resonates with Americans, the ones that we have shown it to, and we're making the rounds, meeting with studios and production companies and actors and producers. We'll see what comes out of that; we're trying to be very sober about it all, but it is kind of overwhelming right now.

**A. Rønning:** I just have to say this because I'm still flying from it. We sat next to Steven Spielberg at the [Oscar] nominees' luncheon. At the same table, right next to us! So we talked about "Jaws" and "E.T." and "Close Encounters," all those amazing films. For us, it was one of those Hollywood moments, when you meet your hero.

**Q. Has he seen "Kon-Tiki?"**

**A. Rønning:** No, but he's going to see it now. (Both laugh)