



# — EGGHEAD REPUBLIC

OFFICIAL SELECTION

tiff50

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL 2025

A Film by Pella Kågerman & Hugo Lilja

PRESSKIT





# — EGGHEAD REPUBLIC

94 MIN

SWEDEN

2025

1.77

DOLBY 5.1

ENGLISH

## SCREENINGS IN TORONTO

THU. SEP 4th, 12:30 PM @ SCOTIABANK 14 (P&I)

FRI. SEP 5th, 9:30 PM @ SCOTIABANK 3 (World Premiere)

SAT. SEP 6th, 9:00 PM @ SCOTIABANK 9

FRI. SEP 12th, 9:50 PM @ SCOTIABANK 9

## INTERNATIONAL SALES

Best Friend Forever  
[www.bestfriendforever.be](http://www.bestfriendforever.be)

Martin Gondre – [martin@bffsales.eu](mailto:martin@bffsales.eu)  
Charles Bin – [charles@bffsales.eu](mailto:charles@bffsales.eu)  
Marc Nauleau (festivals) – [marc@bffsales.eu](mailto:marc@bffsales.eu)

## FESTIVAL PR

Phase 2 PR

Sara Vahabi – [sara@phase2pr.com](mailto:sara@phase2pr.com)  
Cory Baney – [cory@phase2pr.com](mailto:cory@phase2pr.com)



# SYNOPSIS

An alternative reality where the cold war didn't end, and an atomic bomb has struck Soviet Kazakhstan. Sonja, a 22 y.o. Swedish club-kid, working at one of the hippest magazines in the world, is mysteriously invited to report from inside the radio-active zone, to find or debunk the rumors of mutated centaurs living there...





# A CONVERSATION WITH PELLA KÅGERMAN & HUGO LILJA

**The film wrestles with truth in a “post-truth” era. What does truth mean to you as filmmakers today?**

For us, truth means being honest about human nature, even in exaggerated or satirical settings. Our characters may be selfish, status-obsessed, or insecure, but those flaws reflect something universal in all of us. We’re not chasing factual accuracy as much as emotional honesty.

**Egghead Republic blends sci-fi, satire, and coming-of-age — how did you find the balance between genres?**

It’s always been a challenge, but satire became the anchor that held the story together. The coming-of-age elements and sci-fi world-building work best when filtered through humor and absurdity, which give the film both bite and depth. That mix keeps the story entertaining while still addressing darker truths.

**Sonja’s journey unfolds in a dreamlike, myth-soaked world. What inspired this surreal approach to storytelling?**

We wanted Sonja’s artistic journey to feel like a Jungian nightmare, filled with strange symbols and mythic undertones. Art often springs from the irrational and surreal, so building Egghead Republic as a dreamlike place felt right. The centaur “mcguffin” is a playful example — both ridiculous and profound, much like the way we chase identity.

**You come from very different creative backgrounds. How do those perspectives shape your collaboration?**

Pella comes from documentary and art, while Hugo’s roots are in role-playing games and worldbuilding. That combination grounds the story in realism while also opening space for big, imaginative leaps. Over the years, our

influences have blended, so we now approach projects with a shared language.

**This is your second feature together after Aniara. In what ways does Egghead Republic continue or depart from that journey, and what does your co-directing process look like on set?**

Both films deal with human behavior in extreme or absurd circumstances, so in that sense Egghead Republic continues the conversation Aniara started. On set, our directing is very fluid — we don’t divide tasks but bounce ideas back and forth until something clicks. It works because we trust each other’s instincts and share the same taste.

**What do you hope audiences carry with them after watching Egghead Republic?**

We hope they’ve had a darkly funny, surreal experience that still feels close to home. Beneath the satire, the story is about how ambition and the hunger for recognition shape us, often in uncomfortable ways. If the film makes people laugh and then think a little harder about themselves, we’ve done our job.

**Looking ahead, do you see yourselves continuing in science fiction, or is the next republic a different one entirely?**

Right now, we’re directing a Nordic noir crime show, which is a departure in tone. But most of our upcoming projects are sci-fi or period pieces, since both genres give us tools to explore human flaws and philosophical questions from fresh angles. We like working in worlds that are heightened but still mirror reality.







©Malin Gutke

# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Every republic — whether built on a nation, an ideology, or an algorithm — creates its own rules. Egghead Republic lives in the dystopian crack between those rules: a chaotic, genre-leaping sci-fi coming-of-age story where truth can be more poisonous than lies, and identity is just another role to play.

Our protagonist, Sonja, ventures into a dreamlike wilderness where myths bleed into reality, confronting dangers both absurd and real. Her journey circles a question that has followed us our entire careers: What does it mean to speak the truth in a time when no one trusts reality?

We've always circled this question from opposite poles. Pella — raised in Stockholm and later chasing truth as a young documentary filmmaker in Berlin — held that you can't tell a story you haven't lived. Hugo — from the far north of Sweden, where Dungeons & Dragons shaped whole worlds — believed storytelling itself is how we make sense of life.

Twenty years later, here we are with our second feature, premiering at TIFF. Egghead Republic is partly rooted in Pella's time working for Vice in the early 2000s — when irony could morph into propaganda overnight — and in Arno Schmidt's 1957 novel *The Gelehrtenrepublik*, a surreal, myth-soaked satire.

From film school to factory shifts, fine arts to documentary trenches, our paths have always been opposite sides of a coin — yet we've been a couple for 16 years, now raising two kids while shooting a TV series in Southern Sweden. And as one son starts school and the other spends his days with grandma, we ask: in this post-truth era, where everything is up for grabs, does truth even exist?

Was something like Vice a breeding ground for fake news? Were they cool? No. Yes. Who knows. As the psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott said, "Man is a sample of human nature at a given point in time." For us, the heart of Egghead Republic lies in that final word: Republic — the leaders we choose, the stories our era hands us, the rules of the world we inherit or invent.

Or as Sir Ian McKellen once said, "You are aware that I am not really a wizard?" Go be the hero.

— Hugo Lilja & Pella Kågerman



# — BIOGRAPHY PELLA KÅGERMAN & HUGO LILJA

Kågerman and Lilja's debut feature, space epic ANIARA, had its world premiere in 2018 at TIFF where it was bought by Magnolia Pictures. It won four Swedish Oscars including for best director. Their short films include RECKLESS (Sundance) and THE UNLIVING (Berlinale). EGGHEAD REPUBLIC is their second feature film and will have its World Premiere in TIFF.





# FILMOGRAPHY

## PELLA KÅGERMAN & HUGO LILJA

2022	<i>Reckless</i> Short Film — Sundance & Disney+
2018	<i>Aniara</i> — TIFF
2010	<i>The Unliving</i> Short Film — Berlinale



# CAST & CREW

Sonja	Ella Rae Rappaport
Dino	Tyler Labine
Turan	Arvin Kananian
Gemma	Emma Creed
Bob Singleton	Stephen Rappaport
Pin-Up Bob	Gina Dirawi
Sergeant Barcoff	Merlin Leonhardt

Directors	Pella Kågerman & Hugo Lilja
Screenplay	Pella Kågerman & Hugo Lilja
Director of Photography	Malin Gutke
Production Designer	Petra Kågerman
1st Assistant Director	Benjamin Gabrielsson
Costume Design	Charlie Malmsten
Line Producer	Sara Lindblom
Location Manager	Elsa Botolfs
Editing	Oskar Blondell, Sfk
VFX	Arild Andersson
Music Composer	Juhana Lehtiniemi
Colorist	Lars Edlund



# CREW

Production	YouSavedMe, Nonstop Winning Formula, Film Stockholm, Film på Gotland, Film i Dalarna
With support from	the Swedish film institute and SVT/Moving Sweden
Producers	Nina Lund, Pella Kågerman
Co Producers	Anne-Marie Söhrman Fermelin, Paola Ciliberto, Mattias Ehrenberg, Anton Johansson, Jakob Abrahamsson
Executive Producers	Hugo Lilja, Arvin Kananian, Mistre Tesfaye, Eliza Jones, Markus Waltå, Glenn Lund
Associate Producer	Sara Lindblom
Country	Sweden
Scandinavian Distributor	NonStop Entertainment
International Sales	Best Friend Forever



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