

GFO

GERMAN FILMS QUARTERLY

ISSUE 3-2024

WITH PORTRAITS OF
DIRECTORS **MILENA ABOYAN & TOM TYKWER**
PRODUCER **SANDRA MAISCHBERGER**
ACTOR **NICOLETTE KREBITZ**
FILM EDITOR **GESA JÄGER**
SALES COMPANY **RISE AND SHINE**
FILMMAKERS AND COMPANIONS ON 70 YEARS OF GERMAN FILMS



Promoting the best of

GERMAN CINEMA



1954 - 2024



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films

Dear Readers,

It's now half-time in this year's film calendar. After a good start at the Berlinale, there were also some key invitations and wonderful premieres for German productions at the festivals during the late spring. The German production *THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG* by Mohammad Rasoulof, in particular, attracted considerable attention at the Festival de Cannes. It wasn't clear for some time in the run-up to the festival whether the Iranian director would be able to present his film in person on the Croisette. So, the reception given to him was even greater when Rasoulof was actually able to travel to Cannes after escaping from Iran. The drama made a great impression and was awarded several prizes by the festival juries, including the Special Prize in the Competition and the FIPRESCI Prize.



There was also an award for *XOFTEX* by Noaz Deshe in Karlovy Vary. The docu-fiction, which screened in the Crystal Globe Competition at the festival in June, received a Special Mention from the jury. There may not have been any prizes in Shanghai for *ANOTHER GERMAN TANK STORY* by Jannis Alexander Kiefer, but the black comedy, which also screened there in the Main Competition, was a hit with the audience.

Now we can look forward to the summer festivals with a sense of anticipation since several German films have been invited to screen in their programmes: a total of eleven German productions and co-productions will be shown in the competition sections at Locarno this year, including *DEATH WILL COME* by Christoph Hochhäusler in the Concorso Internazionale, *DER FLECK* by Willy Hans in the Concorso Cineasti Del Presenti, and four German majority-produced short films in the Pardi di Domani - Concorso Internazionale. The aforementioned drama *THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG* by Mohammad Rasoulof will also be screened in a re-edited version on the Piazza Grande.

The official line-up for Toronto won't be announced until mid-August, but it's already been confirmed that *SAD JOKES* by Fabian Stumm will be screened in the Discovery sidebar. A number of German productions and co-productions will also be screened in Venice this year, including Andres Veiel's eagerly anticipated documentary *RIEFENSTAHL* about the controversial director Leni Riefenstahl, which has been programmed in the Out of Competition section. Sandra Maischberger, who produced the film with her company Vincent Productions, talks about the making of the film in a portrait featured in this issue of GfQ. Another German film screening in Venice is *THE WITNESS* by Nader Saeivar, which has been invited to the Orizzonti - Extra Competition.

Half-time also means that the first half of our anniversary year is now over. We have received some wonderful feedback from various quarters about the 70 years of German Films, we had an inspiring dialogue at our receptions and was able to look back on the past seven decades at events presenting the retrospective of major German films. This issue of GfQ sees German filmmakers and friends of German Films remembering important milestones.

We are also now looking forward to spending the second half of this year marking our anniversary and, above all, celebrating German cinema.

Simone Baumann, Managing Director

MONA CATHLEEN OTTERBACH
PRODUCTION DESIGNER

MEHMET AKIF BÜYÜKATALAY
WRITER & DIRECTOR

JAN BÜLOW
ACTOR

SOLEEN YUSEF
WRITER & DIRECTOR

MORITZ MÜLLER-PREISSER
WRITER & DIRECTOR

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A close-up portrait of Milena Aboyan, a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a dark-colored top. The background is a soft, light green color.

**"I BELIEVE IN THE
POWER OF CINEMA"**

A PORTRAIT OF DIRECTOR MILENA ABOYAN

Sometimes, you could easily forget that Milena Aboyan is still at the very beginning of her career as a filmmaker. Since her feature film ELAHA celebrated its world premiere in the now discontinued Perspektive Deutsches Kino section of the Berlinale in February 2023, the Armenian-born, Hamburg-based director has had no choice - she has needed to become a professional rapidly because she and her film have received so much attention. But the story about a young German-Kurdish woman facing the fact that women are supposed to enter marriage as virgins in her culture was actually Aboyan's graduation film at Baden-Württemberg Film Academy.

"I always hoped that as many people as possible would see the film, especially young people who might not be particularly interested in cinema," Aboyan recalls from the beginning of her first feature film project. "It was important to me for this significant issue to get the broadest possible reach. But while I was working on ELAHA, I didn't really have time to think about what was going to happen afterwards. There was too little time and too much pressure." The fact that ultimately, the film and its lead actress Bayan Layla received a host of awards such as the New Faces Award, the First Steps Award, the Bavarian Film Prize, and a nomination for the German Film Award came as quite a surprise to the director: "I still can't really believe everything that has happened over the past year. But of course, I'm delighted that the film has garnered so much visibility as a result."

Instead of sitting back and enjoying her surprise success, waiting to see what offers landed on her desk, Aboyan refuses to take a break. "I realised during my studies that it can take up to three or four years to get a film funded. And up-and-coming filmmakers don't get anything for free, you know: applying for funding, you just end up in the same pot as established filmmakers," she says, explaining why she is motivated to push ahead with as many projects as possible at the same time.

"So, resting on my laurels was never an option. Filmmaking is my work now - and I need to be consistent about it!" So, the director's next projects are already well-advanced: VOR DEM

ANFANG, an episodic film directed with ELAHA co-writer Constantin Hatz, is being edited at the time of our interview, while the novel adaptation DREI KAMERADINNEN will ideally still get shot in 2024 and become her actual debut film. There was still time to produce a 90-minute work about the loneliness of young people for TATORT, as well. Bayan Layla, for whom ELAHA was a first leading cinema role, has acted in all these projects.

Ultimately, though, it is not so much the industry's constraints, the diligence of a child from a working-class family, or the pleasure of working with tried and tested colleagues that inspires Aboyan. Far more decisive is a desire to bring her own material to the screen; material that is far-removed from much of what we have become accustomed to in German cinema. "I want to bring existential realities to the screen that have been rather underrepresented in the past," she says, describing the focus of her work. "But it's not about calculation - it's because these are issues that concern me personally and characterise our social debates. I grew up with so many people who were never able to realise their talents due to class prejudice or economic disadvantages. All I want to do is counteract that."

More than anything else, the 32-year-old believes without reservation in the power of cinema. "Sitting together in a cinema and watching a story unfold brings people together, no matter how different their socialisation. It sounds like pathos, but I am truly convinced that movies can change our perspectives," says Aboyan, whose first visit to the cinema was to Spielberg's WAR OF THE WORLDS as a teenager - thanks to free tickets won in a school raffle. And to say goodbye, she adds a very personal moment of screen magic: "Seeing HEAD ON by Fatih Akin was life-changing for me. I suddenly saw stories in the cinema that seemed familiar from my own environment, directed by someone with a migrant background. This aspect of representation made me realise that this is precisely what I want to do."

Patrick Heidmann

EXPOSED

A PORTRAIT OF DIRECTOR TOM TYKWER

Tom Tykwer is under many kinds of pressure. The filmmaker is currently working on the scripts for the final season of his successful series *BABYLON BERLIN*, and at the same time he is busy editing *THE LIGHT*, his first cinema film in eight years. On top of that, one of his children has fallen ill. "It's grotesque: you go to bed at two o'clock and feel as if you've got nothing done," he laments, rather exhausted.

But apart from this type of external stress, the 59-year-old has also made a conscious decision to expose himself to creative pressure. Since 2017, he and his fellow directors Achim von Borries and Hendrik Handloegten have been developing the epic thriller panorama of *BABYLON BERLIN*, creating the most expensive ever German television series, which has now been shown in over 100 countries worldwide. He will be filming the fifth and final season as from November. Although the makers actually treated their *BABYLON BERLIN* like a "never-ending movie", he had begun to 'miss' something: "Whereas you can take your time developing the plot and characters of a series, working for cinema you have to fit everything into two to two and a half hours – still achieving the right measure of intensity and plausibility. And I was keen to face that challenge again."

This desire was linked to another motive: "I really wanted to get back to the present, away from the Berlin of the 20s and early 30s. I was longing for people who were familiar to me, with a cultural proximity in my own sphere of life, where I didn't have to imagine 'what it was like'." *THE LIGHT* centres on a modern middle-class family that begins to change in various ways under the influence of their new Syrian housekeeper. However, Tykwer had no interest in making things easier for himself. On the contrary, precisely because the protagonists were familiar to him, he wanted to 'surrender to them': "In a way, I live in this scenario and I am looking through my own eyes to some extent. It's unsettling but interesting because as a filmmaker you're a bit naked. I don't think I've ever exposed myself as much as I do here."

Tykwer cites these points of contact with his personal experience: "I am a representative of

a middle-class generation that has categorized itself as progressive and cosmopolitan and attempted to pass this on to its children. Now we are being successively and ever more catastrophically confronted by our failures. I felt an urgent need to address this state of affairs and to bring in my generation's insecurities as well as those of my children. At first glance, there is no clear difference between the two. But because their parents' ideas have not been particularly effective, these young adults need to find their own place in relation to the older generation. The only problem is that they haven't actually learnt to reject them. It's a complicated process. I believe that a lot of people are dealing with this issue at present. And my film aims to be part of that debate."

In the film, the catalyst for this process is the Syrian protagonist, whose motives and goals are left deliberately unclear at first. Initially, this sounds like a piece of intimate theatre, but Tykwer adds: "The film begins as intimate theatre, but this character broadens its horizons, so that it suddenly becomes epic." This is not only evident thematically, but also in a stylistic 'mix of genres': "There are fantastic sequences where we join the characters in their dreams and leave the tensions of reality behind us. There is animation. There is singing and dancing. Our desire to explore cinematic means is unbroken." But the means are not an end in themselves: "I see this as fitting in with a chaotic universe of characters thrown together, all perceiving the world in different subjective ways. Ever since *RUN LOLA RUN*, I've loved working out what film language is right for what character."

Although Tykwer is returning to the narrative forms of cinema, he does not want to leave the world of series behind. Currently, he is promoting two projects "quite massively": "I am still enthusiastic about the format. Series have established themselves as an important narrative form because they offer so many possibilities that are lacking in film." But that doesn't mean he will be turning his back on the big screen again after *THE LIGHT*. On the contrary: "The cinema film is a world of its own and the series cannot compete with that. They are simply two different species."

Rüdiger Sturm

A portrait of Sandra Maischberger, a woman with short brown hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved top. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is plain white.

POLITICAL TOPICS AND THE BEAUTY OF THIS WORLD

A PORTRAIT OF PRODUCER SANDRA MAISCHBERGER

It's almost 25 years since Sandra Maischberger, one of Germany's leading TV journalists, and her cinematographer husband Jan Kerhart took the decision to set up their own production company Vincent Productions with offices in Berlin and Hamburg.

"We made this move because we wanted to be able to choose the people to work with as well as the subjects to cover and our way of working," Maischberger recalls.

Given both of their journalistic backgrounds, it was not surprising that Vincent Productions has had a focus on the documentary genre, ranging from reportage series for Arte through portraits of such eminent political figures as Helmut Schmidt and Richard von Weizsäcker to documentary series about the six countries bordering the Black Sea and life on the Arabian Peninsula.

"I would say that there are two common threads running through our productions," Maischberger says. "On the one hand, we are dealing with socially relevant and political topics - we were one of the first production companies to shoot in Saudi Arabia -, but other projects have a lot to do with nature and the beauty of this world."

At the same time, it wasn't long after the company's founding before they decided to make their first foray into the docudrama genre with *ES IST 20 UHR... DIE TAGESSCHAU WIRD 50* to celebrate the 50th anniversary in 2002 of the main evening news programme. "We took this step because there are some subjects where there aren't any images, so you have to create them yourself with actors and reenactments."

Since then, the company has returned to the docudrama format, among others, for *A BLIND HERO - THE LOVE OF OTTO WEIDT* (2013) telling the story of the Berlin brush manufacturer Otto Weidt who saved countless Jews during the Nazi reign of terror, as well as *THE GOOD GÖRING* (2015) about the relationship between two very dissimilar brothers, Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring and the largely forgotten younger Albert who was instrumental in saving many lives during the Third Reich.

Sherry Hormann's 2019 film *A REGULAR WOMAN* about the young Turkish woman Hatun Aynar Sürücü who was shot dead by her brother in an honour killing on a Berlin street in 2005 was initially conceived as a docudrama, but subsequently became a completely narrative feature.

"Narrative features are definitely a field we'd like to explore further," Maischberger explains "We have feature projects in development and are looking for strategic partnerships on the national and international market to expand in this field."

Meanwhile, Vincent Productions' latest project *RIEFENSTAHL* - which will be screened in the Out of Competition section at the Venice Film Festival 2024 - sees Maischberger concluding a journey that she began with an interview she had with the world-famous but controversial filmmaker 2002. When Maischberger learnt in 2017 that Leni Riefenstahl's estate of 700 boxes had been brought to the archive of the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, she managed to obtain exclusive access to the boxes' contents as the basis for a documentary project.

"When it came to finding a director to take on this project, it didn't take long for us to decide on Andres Veiel, not least because of his work on *BEUYS*," Maischberger recalls. "Andres has an incredible grasp of psychology, which is important when you are trying to decipher such a complex personality," she explains. "His approach is artistic, but with journalistic aspects. The film is therefore just as much a work of art as a report."

RIEFENSTAHL, which will be released in cinemas in German-speaking countries this autumn, intends to contribute to the public debate on current political issues. "Our film will be appearing as elections are held in east Germany and the USA and asking, among other things, how mechanisms of manipulation operate and how one can think today in fascist terms," Maischberger says. "The film we're presenting is the right one for the times we are currently living in."

Martin Blaney

A close-up portrait of actress Nicolette Krebitz. She has dark, wavy hair and is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. She is wearing a light-colored blazer over a white t-shirt. The background is a plain, light blue-grey color.

**"MY TRUE INTEREST
LIES IN MAKING FILMS!"**

A PORTRAIT OF ACTOR NICOLETTE KREBITZ

"I'm probably the only actor who hasn't been in BABYLON BERLIN yet!" Over a cappuccino in Berlin-Mitte, Nicolette Krebitz can't help laughing when I bring up how long it has taken her to face Tom Tykwer's camera for the first time.

The two have been friends for over 20 years, both achieving their breakthrough in the late 90s when they made films such as BANDITS and RUN LOLA RUN respectively, giving German cinema something of a younger, wilder side. But THE LIGHT, which will celebrate its world premiere in autumn 2024 and is due for release in German cinemas before Christmas, is the first collaboration between the two as actor and director.

According to the official synopsis, this overdue collaboration is the portrait of a family caught between destruction and new beginnings, dealing with the major issues of our time in a world that is reeling. Alongside Krebitz and Lars Eidinger as parents Milena and Tim, Farrah (Tala al Deen), a refugee from Syria, also plays a key role in the story.

For the Berlin native, who has also recently starred in the series TESTO and films such as RP Kahl's DIE ERMITTLUNG and HYSTERIA by Mehmet Akif Büyükcatalay, this work presented quite a challenge - and not so much because dancing and singing are also involved in THE LIGHT. "Milena is a working mum of three children and the wife of a successful man. And somewhere along the way she has lost sight of herself. I live a completely different life, so it was hard work for me to make this character my own, to become exactly the person Tom imagined," Krebitz says.

It is impossible to overhear how special it was working with her director on this project: "Tom already has a totally unique film language. Here, too, you are catapulted into the story with a bang, and incredible things happen. THE LIGHT is a real Tykwer film with all the trimmings, and that makes you realise just how much we've missed his films in recent years!"

Incidentally, the actor's career behind the camera has lasted as long as Krebitz's and Tykwer's friendship, as he took her first, self-produced

directorial work JEANS into cinemas with his company X-Filme. To this day, he is often one of the first people to be shown her films. Krebitz does not think back to the late nineties as a time of great acting success so much as a real turning point in her professional career: "It was around then that I realised where my true interest lies: not what other people thought of me, or what dress I wore on the red carpet, but actually making films. That was a time of freedom because finally, I got the chance to do what I had determined I would do."

Krebitz continues to do her own thing in both professions, even after major festival premieres of her films WILD at Sundance and A E I O U - A QUICK ALPHABET OF LOVE at the Berlinale. "I love acting, but I also struggle with it quite frequently. I have a very ambivalent relationship with the profession, and whenever I'm in the spotlight too much, my first reflex is to run away," she admits. "But directing all the time wouldn't be enough for me, either, even if I feel slightly more comfortable behind the camera than in front of it. My play instinct is too well-developed for that!"

"It's probably like an author who writes for the newspapers as well as producing their own books," she adds by way of explanation. "The process of work is very similar in both cases. But the demands you put on yourself and the time needed are completely different." Krebitz could tell you a thing or two about the latter: she has just finished her latest screenplay, a fantasy story she has been writing for around seven years - with several interruptions, of course. It may still be a while before it is turned into a film, so we are sure to see her on the big screen once or twice before then. At least as long as something "is ignited", as she calls it, when she reads offers of roles. "Because if I can't think of anything in advance to bring a character to life," she adds as a parting shot, "then I'd rather devote my time to something else."

Patrick Heidmann



Stefan Kloos and Anja Dzierak © Rise and Shine

TELLING REAL AND RELEVANT STORIES

A PORTRAIT OF SALES COMPANY RISE AND SHINE

"The great thing about documentaries is that they fill your head and heart, you're always learning something new about life and the world around us," says Anja Dziersk, who co-founded the Berlin-based sales company Rise and Shine World Sales with her partner Stefan Kloos. Both hailing from the world of journalism, the couple had initially met in the 1990s whilst working in Hamburg at a production company making youth and music TV programmes.

In 2002, they established their own production company Kloos & Co Medien, which has been involved in producing several award-winning creative documentaries such as HI AI, A SYMPHONY OF NOISE, INTO THE ICE and the Academy Award-nominated LAST MEN IN ALEPPO, and then followed this six years later with the creation of Rise and Shine World Sales and setting up a theatrical arm, Rise and Shine Cinema, for the German market in 2015.

"We've been able to position ourselves as a company that is very dedicated to their films. We are a small and strong team: with the two of us and our sales manager Diana Karklin, who has been with us now for more than 14 years, we handle a slate of around 15 titles each year," he continues. "We're always wanting to keep offering something new so that each film helps the overall mix."

"In fact, we're quite proud that we have been able to position ourselves as one of the top ten sales agents among the boutique distributors."

"We mostly come onboard the documentaries we then represent at the rough cut stage close to where we can develop a festival strategy," Anja says.

"But as we are attending a lot of project markets, we get to see projects at a very early stage and then closely follow the progress of certain projects."

"At the same time, there are some filmmakers we know well and have a constant exchange about their new projects," Stefan adds.

Rise and Shine has thus regularly worked, for example, with such filmmakers as Susanne Regina Meures (GIRL GANG, RAVING IRAN) and Eliza Kubarska (THE LAST EXPEDITION, THE WALL OF SHADOWS).

"The films in our catalogue don't just deliver facts and news; they tell stories that are real and relevant," Stefan suggests. This year has seen a number of Rise and Shine's titles being invited to prestigious documentary festivals and then translating this success into sales deals with distributors around the globe.

Swiss co-directors Beatrice Minger and Christoph Schaub's E.1027 - EILEEN GRAY AND THE HOUSE BY THE SEA about the world of the Irish architect and designer sold to seven territories for theatrical release incl. USA, UK, Germany, France and Canada after premiering at CPH:DOX, while FOREST, the latest work by Lidia Duda, the grande dame of Polish documentary filmmaking, won the main award at its world premiere at the Thessaloniki Documentary Festival.

Askold Kurov and Anonymous1's portrait of the heroic work of independent media in today's Russia, OF CARAVAN AND THE DOGS, screened at CPH:DOX and Munich's DOK.fest in May before winning the main prize of Golden Horn at the International Documentary Competition in Krakow at the beginning of June.

Meanwhile, Klaus Stern's WATCHING YOU: THE WORLD OF PALANTIR AND ALEX KARP was the opening film at this year's DOK.fest in Munich, while another title in the company's line-up, SUBJECT: FILMMAKING by the veteran German director Edgar Reitz, was presented as part of the Berlinale Special showcase this February.

At the same time, Anja and Stefan aren't under any illusions about the challenges confronting them in the current market landscape, although they are always open to exploring new opportunities for finding distribution outlets for their films.

"We're used to facing the fact that it's a lot of work selling our films to broadcasters, local distributors or platforms," Anja says. But, as Stefan points out, the choice of name for their company pretty much sums up their approach to their work. "Films can have such a hard time to find the light of day, so if we can help a film to rise and then shine, then that basically reflects what a sales agent can do," he concludes.

Martin Blaney



MUSIC OF THE EMOTIONS

A PORTRAIT OF FILM EDITOR GESA JÄGER

At 19, Gesa Jäger experienced a “key moment” as a foretaste of her subsequent career as an editor. During an internship at a local Hamburg TV station, she had filmed a “boring press conference”. She edited the footage into a 30-second news item and realised: “Combining images and sound can create an authentic story that triggers our emotions.” She realised then that editing was “her thing”: What she didn’t realise was that it could be a profession in its own right.

It was only after abandoning a history degree, and more internships on various film sets that she landed in the profession that has taken her to the highest echelons of the film industry in Los Angeles in 2024 – as editor of İlker Çatak’s Oscar-nominated drama *THE TEACHERS’ LOUNGE*, for which she had previously received the German Film Award. She discovered the world of the cutting room following a tip after her film internships: “It was the first time I saw how a film is made, right in front of my eyes.” Her affinity for editing is also linked to her penchant for music. Before her film career, she had played the piano and sung in a choir for a long time: “I’m a super emotional person, and music has always been an outlet for me, a way to express my feelings. When editing, I have noticed that human behaviour also follows specific rhythms that can be changed, and that’s a very musical process.”

The now 43-year-old acquired the necessary know-how during her training as a specialist in film and ENG editing at Norddeutscher Rundfunk, and later while studying editing at the Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf. Her graduation film, the mumblecore-style romantic comedy *LOVE STEAKS*, caused a sensation and won the New German Cinema Award in four categories at Munich Film Festival 2013. Gesa Jäger was also presented with the Editing Award for Feature Film at the film+ festival. For good reason: “There were 78 hours of improvised material, which we used to build the story in the cutting room. So, as an editor, I had much more influence than on films with a conventional script.”

Working with its director Jakob Lass proved formative for her future career: “He taught me to be open to every idea and not to say ‘no’ to any, no matter how nonsensical they may seem at first. Because that can lead to a solution that might work even better.

If you don’t try things, you lose opportunities.” This experience also taught her to trust her instincts: “If I like a take because it moves me in some way, I think there must be something special about it.”

She edited two more films with Jakob Lass, *TIGER GIRL*, which screened at the 2017 Berlinale, and the 2018 adaptation of the novel *RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW*. She became known to a wider audience overnight in 2020 with the Emmy Award-winning miniseries *UNORTHODOX*, directed by Maria Schrader. Working on that brought her together with one of her great idols – the multi-award-winning editor Hansjörg Weißbrich (*SHE SAID*). He was responsible for the rough cut, and each of them took on two of the four episodes in the final cut.

Weißbrich also put her in touch with İlker Çatak, who was looking for someone to edit *THE TEACHERS’ LOUNGE*. After just a few minutes of their first meeting, she had the feeling she was: “... with a friend, not someone I needed to prove myself to.” In terms of creative content, the two of them were on the same wavelength from the start: “İlker takes a very close look when it comes to people. I’m most interested in the subtleties of human emotions and thoughts, as well.” She has been equally impressed by his attitude: “Like me, he believes that we are all on a journey and that no one has all the answers from day one.” This echoes her own feeling: “In the editing process, it’s fine to be completely open at the beginning. A film develops bit by bit.”

She is currently working on İlker Çatak’s new film *YELLOW LETTERS*, which was shot in Turkish. She is enjoying working with his long-time cinematographer Judith Kaufmann again: “She succeeds in making her images tell complete stories, and offers approaches for me to adopt in the editing process.” Following the international success of *THE TEACHERS’ LOUNGE*, one possible career path could take her into the international industry. But Gesa Jäger is not looking for such a move at any price: “I’m already a little in love with the German film world, and I’m also extremely people-driven. It’s all about feeling comfortable with people for me, about trusting them and vice versa. Something great will always emerge from that. If I meet someone like that internationally and I’m interested in the material, why not? Otherwise, I’m very, very happy here.”

Rüdiger Sturm

CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN GERMANY AND KYRGYZSTAN

A memorandum was signed at the Bishkek International Film Festival

German filmmakers, producers and talents are being offered closer cooperation with an emerging market in Central Asia, after a landmark deal between German Films and Kyrgyzstan was signed.

Simone Baumann, CEO of German Films, signed a memorandum of cooperation with the National film studio "Kyrgyzfilm" during a visit to the country's capital, Bishkek, in June.

A fluent Russian speaker – she studied in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s – Simone says that Kyrgyzstan is keen to develop its own film industry and identity as the Central Asia region increasingly moves away from cultural influences of Russia. The country has a range of bilateral cultural and film agreements with European countries, with the latest signed with the French National Film Centre (CNC) in Cannes last May.



© German Films

"The request came from the Kyrgyz side," Simone said. "It followed a meeting I had in Berlin with the Kyrgyz Ambassador to Germany, Omurbek Tekebaev."

The idea of the seven-point agreement is to promote closer cooperation in cultural and film projects between the two countries, including technical and training exchange, film festival participation, and project development.

"The goal is to meet regularly – maybe they send some people to Germany, and we send some there," Simone added.

"We can help Kyrgyzstan in terms of film industry contacts," Simone notes. "Most European films for distribution in Central Asia are still sold to Russian distributors and then re-sold here."

Since Russia launched its unprovoked attack on Ukraine in February 2022, German Films has had a policy of not supporting any films sold via Russian distributors. Helping Kyrgyz distributors buy film directly will be a key part of the cooperation.

There could also be support for dubbing films into Kyrgyz. Many Kyrgyz people speak Russian, and in Bishkek it is widely used. The country's constitution recognises both Kyrgyz and Russian as official state languages, but there is now a move to use Kyrgyz more widely – and dubbing films into the native language is part of that.

The country has an active local film industry, where private producers churn out genre films – comedies, thrillers, and dramas – aimed at local audiences. The films are highly popular, giving local language movies second place at the box office after Hollywood productions. Last year

159 Hollywood movies were released across the country's 53 main cinemas (alongside 134 smaller local cinema halls, mostly situated in rural areas); there were 39 Kyrgyz releases, and 38 from France, 35 from the UK. Germany was in eighth place with 12 releases, just behind Canada's 16 movies.

"We would like to see the number of German releases a little higher," Simone says with a smile. It is, she adds, "an interesting moment" for German films. "Russia is over, and we have downsized our activities with China as we sell few films to them, and with censorship an extended cooperation does not really make sense anymore. That is why Kyrgyzstan or Kazakhstan - which also has an active film industry - are interesting for us in this context. They can become the connecting point between Asia and Europe. It is an important moment for them to increase regional cooperation and with Europe too."

Aida Usonova, Director of Kyrgyzstan's national film studio, Kyrgyz Film, who was one of the signees of the cooperation agreement, says the country is poised for an expansion of feature and documentary productions.

The studios, founded in 1941, produce three feature length films a year, in addition to dozens of shorter documentary and animation productions. There are plans to construct a new sound stage and modernise other facilities at the three-hectare site, built on an inner-city site in Bishkek in the 1980s.

"Although we, as a state film studio, only produce festival films that are state-funded, we are a key provider of facilities for the 40 privately produced Kyrgyz features that are made every year," Usonova said. Appointed three months ago, Usonova trained as an economist before starting at the studios 15 years ago as a secretary. Today, she is part of a team of film professionals in their 30s and 40s who work at the studios.

Young professionals were also very much in evidence at the second edition of the Bishkek

International Film Festival, which ran June 11-16, 2024. Designed to both showcase Central Asian cinema and international fare (with a focus on Iranian cinema this year), the festival attracted dozens of international guests and jury members, hosted a Central Asian pitching event for new projects, and celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of the nation in 1924 - then known as the Kara-Kirghiz Autonomous Region, which was part of the Soviet Union.

Representing film from all five of the Central Asian republics - including Turkmenistan, which contributed a drama set during the Second World War - the regional competition varied in quality from lengthy local audiences pleasers such as Ruslan Akan's Kyrgyz-produced road movie *PARADISE AT MOTHER'S FEET* about a simple-minded man who sets out to take his aged mother to Mecca for the Hajj pilgrimage on foot, to Kyrgyz director Dalmira Tikepbergen's critically-acclaimed semi-autobiographical *THE GIFT*.



Screening in the international competition, another Kyrgyz film *BRIDE KIDNAPPING* by Mirlan Abdykalykov, tackled a challenging social subject: the practice of forcibly seizing and raping young women to make them marry a man that is not of their choice. The tradition is still prevalent in rural areas of the country. A controversial and difficult subject, the producers could not find actors to play the lead roles. In the end, the casting director played the young woman (who is discretely seen in a disturbingly violent rape scene), and a soundman played her kidnapper and rapist.

Nick Holdsworth

FILMMAKERS AND COMPANIONS ON 70 YEARS OF GERMAN FILMS

German Films is celebrating 70 years of German cinema! Founded in 1954, German Films has been successfully supporting, promoting and accompanying German feature films and German filmmakers for the past seven decades as they present their works abroad.

At German Films we have been celebrating this anniversary throughout the year with various activities: for this issue of the GFQ magazine, we wanted to give filmmakers and companions of German Films a chance to have their say. We asked them a few questions about what German cinema means to them and what kind of special memories they have.



70 years of German cinema on an international level - which German film from these seven decades springs to mind that has impressed you personally or stayed with you - and why?

1. FEAR EATS THE SOUL by Rainer Werner Fassbinder
2. FATE by Fred Kelemen
3. STEFAN ZWEIG - FAREWELL TO EUROPE by Maria Schrader
4. HOME FROM HOME - CHRONICLE OF A VISION by Edgar Reitz
5. THE ROBBER by Benjamin Heisenberg
6. WINGS OF DESIRE by Wim Wenders
7. LONGING by Valeska Grisebach

8. HEAD-ON by Fatih Akin
9. REQUIEM by Hans-Christian Schmid

How would you characterise German cinema - either individually or with 3 characteristics?

This is a very general question because there are many different filmmakers and film worlds in Germany but, in general, I would say that German cinema is characterised by a profundity in the stories depicting the physiological human universe, dramas having a subtle poetic quality, but also by a coldness in the observation of interpersonal relationships.

Is there a particular memory, encounter, experience, event or anecdote that you associate with German Films (or its predecessor Export Union)?

On a personal note, I remember my first German Films party in Cannes. It was in 2008 where our film THE STRANGER IN ME screened in the 'Semaine de la Critique' section. My first time at the Festival de Cannes. A festival of filmmakers, a festival where cinema is truly celebrated as art. And when you've just come out of film school (DFFB) and your German feature film is being celebrated in Cannes, and you're walking up the hills with your team, the cicadas are chirping, the rosé you've already drunk is going straight

to your head, and then you finally arrive at the villa of the German Films party to see familiar faces, continue just talking about cinema - that is and was really magical. Especially the first time.

Looking to the future: what do you wish for German cinema?

I would like to see more black humour in German cinema. I wish that there was more nonchalance and pleasure in showing a diversity in the stories appearing on the big screen. I hope that German Films continues its efforts in ensuring that the big screen is still the place where people experience feature films! And that, thanks to German Films, cinema and art are given greater weight by the policy-makers.



70 years of German cinema on an international level - which German film from these seven decades springs to mind that has impressed you personally or stayed with you - and why?

THE LIVES OF OTHERS, WHEN WE LEAVE, HEAD-ON, A REGULAR WOMAN - these films triggered a lot in me when I was watching them and they stayed with me for a long time, the storytelling is very authentic. There is at least one moment in each of these films that I find very honest and genuine. These are also the moments that I'm always looking for and trying to portray when writing and making my own films.

How would you characterise German cinema - either individually or with 3 characteristics?

A bit cool to begin with, sometimes sceptical, a smile gradually appears, and things then get really warm and honest if people open up their hearts to one another.

Which German filmmakers have impressed or perhaps even influenced you or whom you consider significant for German cinema?

Of course, I can't not name Fassbinder and his collective, who made great films. A remarkable feature here is the path they followed, always believing in themselves and carrying on no matter what others say, and that's something I'm increasingly seeing happening now in German cinema. That's impressive and significant for all of us and for German cinema.

Is there a particular memory, encounter, experience, event or anecdote that you associate with German Films (or its predecessor Export Union)?

There are quite a few, the Face to Face campaign, of course, has a place forever in my heart. But there was already a connection very early in my career when I had just started my studies at the DFFB. We were able to celebrate the premiere of our film "Not Too Early, Not Too Late" in Cannes. We all wondered whether we would ever get the chance to be in Cannes with other films. Years later I was there with 'Holy Spider'. In fact, that was one of the first thoughts I had when I was there then with German Films.

It was, so to speak, my first moment in Cannes that I was able to experience with and thanks to German Films.

Looking to the future: what do you wish for German cinema?

That we can all carry on telling stories and making films for a long time to come, and with a focus on different narrative styles.

To be able to take risks and surprise with them and have the courage to fail because you can find a lot of strength and growth in that.



70 years of German cinema on an international level - which German film from these seven decades springs to mind that has impressed you personally or stayed with you - and why?

The magnificent success of *SCHTONK*, directed by Helmut Dietl, is naturally unforgettable for me and will stay in my memory forever. The Oscar nomination and Golden Globe nomination didn't just change my life at the time. It was an incredible experience to see the kind of response this film received around the globe. It also won an award at the Tokyo Film Festival, to name just one of the prizes.

And then I was, of course, more than fascinated by *SYSTEM CRASHER* by Nora Fingscheidt, which also resulted in a wonderful collaboration with her because I was able to attach her as director to my feature film *THE UNFORGIVABLE* with Sandra Bullock and Viola Davis.

And, most recently, there was *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*, what a masterpiece by Edward Berger. What a highly topical, historical film with particular significance for today's world.

How would you characterise German cinema - either individually or with 3 characteristics?

I would characterise German cinema as having strong stories, strong visions.

Which German filmmakers have impressed or perhaps even influenced you or whom you consider significant for German cinema?

The new German filmmakers naturally had an incredible influence on me when I came to Munich as a young student to study Theatre Studies, German Studies and Psychology at the LMU Munich before then relatively quickly taking up an internship at Werner Herzog's company. Werner Herzog, Alexander Kluge, Margarethe von Trotta, Rainer Werner Fassbinder with his incomparably wonderful films. Doris Dörrie really fascinated me, and the same goes for Nora Fingscheidt and Emily Atef.

Is there a particular memory, encounter, experience, event or anecdote that you associate with German Films (or its predecessor Export Union)?

Of course, I deeply treasure the weeks and months of the Oscar nomination for *SCHTONK*, but it was also very emotional for me this year to see İlker Çatak's amazing success with the nomination for his fantastic film *THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE*.

Looking to the future: what do you wish for German cinema?

To continue telling local stories from the inside that are of the highest standard and have great global appeal.



70 years of German cinema on an international level - which German film from these seven decades springs to mind that has impressed you personally or stayed with you - and why?

THE GERMAN SISTERS by Margarethe von Trotta from 1981. This film about two contrasting sisters whose relationship breaks down over the issue of political violence is still so relevant today. It is characterised by intelligence, accuracy and warmth. Margarethe was the first woman to win the Golden Lion in Venice and the film is so modern that it should be shown everywhere again in this day and age. It inspired me to make my film AND TOMORROW THE ENTIRE WORLD.

Which German filmmakers have impressed or perhaps even influenced you or whom you consider significant for German cinema?

I am over the moon that we have Margarethe von Trotta, Doris Dörrie, Caroline Link, Maren Ade, Nora Fingscheidt and Maria Schrader. I feel a strong connection to my female colleagues who have all become visible on an international level and write and direct personal feature films of outstanding quality.

Is there a particular memory, encounter, experience, event or anecdote that you associate with German Films (or its predecessor Export Union)?

Thanks to German Films, I was able to travel the world with my films and make valuable contacts that led to further film projects. I'll never forget my trip to the Haifa Film Festival with Mariette Rissenbeek with the film HANNA'S JOURNEY, Moscow with I'M OFF THEN or Shanghai with my debut NOTHING ELSE MATTERS.

The trip to New York with HANNA'S JOURNEY resulted in Lily Brett giving me the rights to her novel which became my latest film TREASURE. My career path would have been different without German Films.

Looking to the future: what do you wish for German cinema?

I would wish that German cinema has even more warmth, more humour, more poetry and more production values. That's something I tell myself so that I never forget it.



70 years of German cinema on an international level - which German film from these seven decades springs to mind that has impressed you personally or stayed with you - and why?

How about LOLA MONTEZ by Max Ophüls (D/F 1955)? Almost as old as German Films, with a Munich connection and, above all, is still trend-setting in visual and narrative terms.

How would you characterise German cinema - either individually or with 3 characteristics?

Contemporary German cinema is good at finding the middle ground. A bit of art, a bit of commerce, not hurting anyone. The result is rarely satisfying. Too many films are not fully developed or are produced halfheartedly. There is no lack of talent and ideas, but there is a lack of intelligence when it comes to 'realising opportunities'. That's something we need to change.

Which German filmmakers have impressed or perhaps even influenced you or whom you consider significant for German cinema?

Ernst Lubitsch, Max Ophüls and Fritz Lang are eternal favourites of mine. But the list of German filmmakers who are important to me is, of course, much longer. These include (in the order they were born) F.W. Murnau, Lotte Reiniger, Helmut Käutner, Konrad Wolf, Alexander Kluge, Frank Beyer, Roland Klick, R.W. Fassbinder, Dominik Graf, Thomas Heise, Christian Petzold, Thomas Arslan, Angela Schanelec, Romuald Karmakar, Valeska Grisebach, Jan Bonny and many more.

Looking to the future: what do you wish for German cinema?

German cinema will only survive if it is risky, exciting and bold. And, at the same time - only seemingly in contradiction to this - if it is prepared to learn, build on successes, and establish traditions.



70 years of German cinema on an international level - which German film from these seven decades springs to mind that has impressed you personally or stayed with you - and why?

THE BRIDGE by Bernhard Wicki from 1959. A film that made a lasting impression and deeply moved me.

How would you characterise German cinema - either individually or with 3 characteristics?

Much better than its reputation and often not adequately appreciated - and sadly that's also the case on a national level.

Which German filmmakers have impressed or perhaps even influenced you or whom you consider significant for German cinema?

Bernd Eichinger, of course. Second to none in his clarity and vision as a producer.

Is there a particular memory, encounter, experience, event or anecdote that you associate with German Films (or its predecessor Export Union)?

Of course, I remember many exciting receptions with very interesting meetings.

Looking to the future: what do you wish for German cinema?

More support being made available in one's own country. Having the courage to be radical. Having the courage for commercial experiments. Less fear in the system. A reliable funding infrastructure that trusts the filmmakers. Not being ashamed of one's own identity. A yen for great entertainment.



70 years of German cinema on an international level - which German film from these seven decades springs to mind that has impressed you personally or stayed with you - and why?

FEAR EATS THE SOUL by Rainer Werner Fassbinder. The film is now exactly 50 years old. The subject matter is still relevant. A portrait of society and an unusual love story. Fassbinder succeeded in empathising with the perspective of a migrant worker and an older German woman and portraying their struggle in a credible and compassionate way. It's almost unique in German film history.

How would you characterise German cinema - either individually or with 3 characteristics?

Unconventional, smart, diverse.

Which German filmmakers have impressed or perhaps even influenced you or whom you consider significant for German cinema?

Helma Sanders-Brahms, Fatih Akin, Maren Ade, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Nicolette Krebitz.

Is there a particular memory, encounter, experience, event or anecdote that you associate with German Films (or its predecessor Export Union)?

An anecdote doesn't come to mind. But sometimes you just have to praise the German Films team and say that they do a really great job. With tens of thousands of people working in our industry, it's not always easy to do justice to every artist alongside the many obligations, and yet they are relentless in having a go.

Looking to the future: what do you wish for German cinema?

More diversity in terms of more individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds, physical or mental impairments and different gender and sexual identities.

How would you characterise German cinema - either individually or with 3 characteristics?

Searching. Uncomical. Precise.

Which German filmmakers have impressed or perhaps even influenced you or whom you consider significant for German cinema?

Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Werner Herzog.

Is there a particular memory, encounter, experience, event or anecdote that you associate with German Films (or its predecessor Export Union)?

When we were in Moscow with 4 KINGS, we passed the time waiting for the food after the screening by drinking vodka while the restaurant's ceiling was shaking dangerously because there was a disco above it. I wasn't sure whether we would end up as an article in a newspaper. But all we then got was a severe hangover.

Looking to the future: what do you wish for German cinema?

Willingness to take risks.



70 years of German cinema on an international level - which German film from these seven decades springs to mind that has impressed you personally or stayed with you - and why?

VERONIKA VOSS by Fassbinder because of the raw and direct performances given by the magnificent actors and Fassbinder's vulnerable way of directing.



© Filmgalerie 451

ABENDLAND

A group of masked activists charges at loggers working deep in the forest. Youth briefly overwhelms capital, but the state inevitably strikes back. A single activist escapes. She wears an Angela Merkel mask and is chased by the police through the forest, until she tumbles down a steep ravine, crashing into thicket of blackberries, where she lies unconscious and stranded. The reality Merkel wakes up in is both stranger and more concrete, as if she had entered a parallel world. But unlike in Robinson Crusoe or Alice in Wonderland, the strange new landscape she explores is her own country and the natives she eventually meets are her fellow citizens. They live in a hidden commune high up in the trees, having declared independence from the failing German state. At first, the isolated commune seems like a magical utopia. Still, Merkel is a refugee and an outsider. She has difficulties integrating and increasingly troubles her hosts. As tensions rise, friends and foes keep shifting around her. Merkel escapes to the forest, but one of the colonists follows her.

GENRE Art, Drama, Ecology **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2023 **DIRECTOR** Omer Fast **SCREENPLAY** Omer Fast **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Lukas Strebel **CAST** Stephanie Amarell, Marie Tragousti, Sebastian Schneider, Janina Stopper, Ivy Lißback, Amon Wendel **PRODUCERS** Frieder Schlaich, Irene von Alberti **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Filmgalerie 451 **RUNTIME** 110 min **LANGUAGE** German **FESTIVALS** Die Woche der Kritik in Berlin 2024, Crossing Europe 2024

WORLD SALES Filmgalerie 451
kino@filmgalerie451.de • www.filmgalerie451.de



© Frédéric Jaeger

ALL WE EVER WANTED

The carefree lifestyle vacation of Désirée, her white lover Elias and her gay boyfriend Sal turns into a self-discovery trip to the desert. Désirée's mother has cut them off and gets them thrown out of the vacation home with pool. Just as the stones they find on the island don't fit into their containers, the three of them now have to reassess their relationships. Who will sleep in the middle? Who sleeps in the car? And when the wind blows the tent ever deeper into the desert, what remains of their comfortable life? And who is actually kissing whom here? They desire each other, challenge each other, slip into new roles. A game with the overarching triangle of class, race and gender.

ALL WE EVER WANTED shows the vacation paradise of Fuerteventura from its blank, deserted side, including economic and libidinal crises. Far from the tourist spots, the barren landscape with its scree fields, roadside scrub, deserted beaches and roaring highways becomes a metaphor for the three friends' search for meaning. At its heart is the question of how people recognize themselves: in their own desires or those of their loved ones?

GENRE Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Frédéric Jaeger **SCREENPLAY** Frédéric Jaeger, Naomi Bechert **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Maximilian Andereya **CAST** Mehmet Sözer, Charity Collin, Michael Ifeandu **PRODUCER** Frédéric Jaeger **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Tarnung Filmproduktion **RUNTIME** 80 min **LANGUAGE** German

WORLD SALES Tarnung Filmproduktion
 fredericjaeger@gmail.com • www.fredericjaeger.de



© Regina Gyr & Jack Rath

BISCUIT TIN BLUES

The once passionate Australian musician, Kell lives in Berlin with his partner Amelie. Facing the demise of his music studio and fretting about a large mole that's appeared on his thigh, life takes a turn when old friend and ex-bandmate, Joe - a chameleon of sorts, turns up out of the blue. Joe presses Kell to join him in honouring the death of Viv, their former lead singer, who requested that her remains be put to rest at the 'Lorelei' - a legendary, mystical rock near her home town on the banks of the Rhein. Encouraged by Amelie to let go a little, Kell takes off with Joe on an autumnal road trip through the provinces of Germany. Soon past tensions arise, Kell suspects that Joe's moody behaviour isn't only grief, but perhaps his general mental wellbeing - he's reluctant to broach the subject. The two visit the band's drummer Helmut, hoping he'll join the reunion of sorts. This proves disastrous. After dinner with Helmut's dysfunctional family, Kell cuts into Helmut's egotism, which sends him and Joe fleeing back to the road. The search for closure and acceptance intensifies as Kell discovers that when in Joe's company, nothing is ever what it seems, because perhaps it never was...

GENRE Comedy, Drama, Road Movie **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Jack Rath
SCREENPLAY Jack Rath **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Kai Rostásy **CAST** Michel Ferguson, Jack Rath, Luka Omoto, Britta Steffenhagen, Renée Stulz, Milton Welsh, Martin Engler, Rabea Lüthi
PRODUCERS Regina Gyr, Hagen Hinkelmann, Jack Rath **CO-PRODUCERS** Roman Avanius, Kathrin Heusser **PRODUCTION COMPANY** studio gyr_rath in coproduction with Joroni Films **RUNTIME** 97 min **LANGUAGE** English, German

WORLD SALES studio gyr_rath • info@reginagyr.com



© Felix Dickinson/NEON

CUCKOO

Reluctantly, 17-year-old Gretchen leaves her American home to live with her father, who has just moved into a resort in the German Alps with his new family. Arriving at their future residence, they are greeted by Mr. König, her father's boss, who takes an inexplicable interest in Gretchen's mute half-sister Alma. Something doesn't seem right in this tranquil vacation paradise. Gretchen is plagued by strange noises and bloody visions until she discovers a shocking secret that also concerns her own family. Following his festival sensation LUZ, German director Tilman Singer has once again succeeded in creating an atmospheric and visually outstanding horror trip with an original plot and perfidious twists. The film, shot on 35 mm, features EUPHORIA's star Hunter Schafer alongside a brilliant and terrifying Dan Stevens.

GENRE Horror, Thriller **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Tilman Singer **SCREENPLAY** Tilman Singer **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Paul Faltz **CAST** Hunter Schafer, Jan Bluthardt, Marton Csókás, Jessica Henwick, and Dan Stevens, Mila Lieu, Greta Fernández, Proschat Madani, Åstrid Bergès-Frisbey, Konrad Singer, Kalin Morrow **PRODUCERS** Markus Halberschmidt, Josh Rosenbaum, Maria Tsigka, Ken Kao, Thor Bradwell **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** FICTION PARK, Waypoint Entertainment **RUNTIME** 102 min **LANGUAGES** English, German, French **FESTIVALS** Berlinale Special Gala (WP), SXSW (US Premiere), Brussel International Fantastic Film Festival, Sydney Film Festival, Raindance Film Festival (Opening Film), Transilvania Int. Film Festival

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© Christian Schulz

DIE HERRLICHKEIT DES LEBENS

THE GLORY OF LIFE

Because of the power of love, the last year of Franz Kafka's life becomes his happiest. He has never before been able to allow himself to experience intimacy, he suffers from tuberculosis and is dependent on his overbearing family. But the worldly wise Dora Diamant accepts him as he is.

They meet in 1923 on the Baltic Sea coast. Together they go to Berlin and, when Franz's health deteriorates rapidly, to a sanatorium in Austria. Barely a year after they meet, he dies. The memory of their time together will shape Dora for the rest of her life.

GENRE Biopic, Drama, Literature **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Georg Maas **SCREENPLAY** Michael Gutmann, Georg Maas **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Judith Kaufman **CAST** Henriette Confurius, Sabin Tambrea **PRODUCERS** Helge Sasse, Tommy Pridnig, Solveig Fina **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** Tempest Film Produktion GmbH, Lotus Filmproduktion GmbH **RUNTIME** 98 min **LANGUAGE** German

WORLD SALES TrustNordisk
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© Leitwolf Filmproduktion

GRÜSSE VOM MARS

GREETINGS FROM MARS

Tom, 10, is different from other kids. He avoids change, dislikes the color red, and finds loud noises overwhelming. His passion lies in space exploration, often putting on his astronaut suit. When his mom unexpectedly travels to China, Tom stays with his siblings Nina (15) and Elmar (13) at Grandma and Grandpa's in Lunau for six weeks. To cope, his mom gives him a logbook, framing the visit as a trial Mars mission.

"If you can handle Grandma and Grandpa," his mother assures him, "you can definitely do Mars."

Tom dreams of being the first to fly to Mars, and together with his siblings as his crew, he explores the planet 'Lunau' and tries to understand Grandma and Grandpa, who live by their own rules.

The film is a touching comedy about an outsider's ambitious goals, where his uniqueness becomes his strength, bridging two generations initially as alien as beings from different planets.

GENRE Children's Film **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Sarah Winkenstette **SCREEN-PLAY** Sebastian Grusnick, Thomas Moeller **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Jakob Berger **CAST** Theo Kretschmer, Lilli Lacher, Anton Noltensmeier, Hedi Kriegeskotte, Michael Wittenborn, Eva Loebau, Jona Volkmann **PRODUCERS** Anette Unger, Sven Rudat, Ruediger Wolf **CO-PRODUCER** Matthias Greving **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Leitwolf Filmproduktion in coproduction with Kinescope Film **RUNTIME** 83 min **LANGUAGE** German **FESTIVALS** Kristiansand International Children's Film Festival 2024; Zlín Film Festival 2024 2024; Goldener Spatz 2024 **AWARDS** Best International Feature Film 2024, Best European Film for Children 2024

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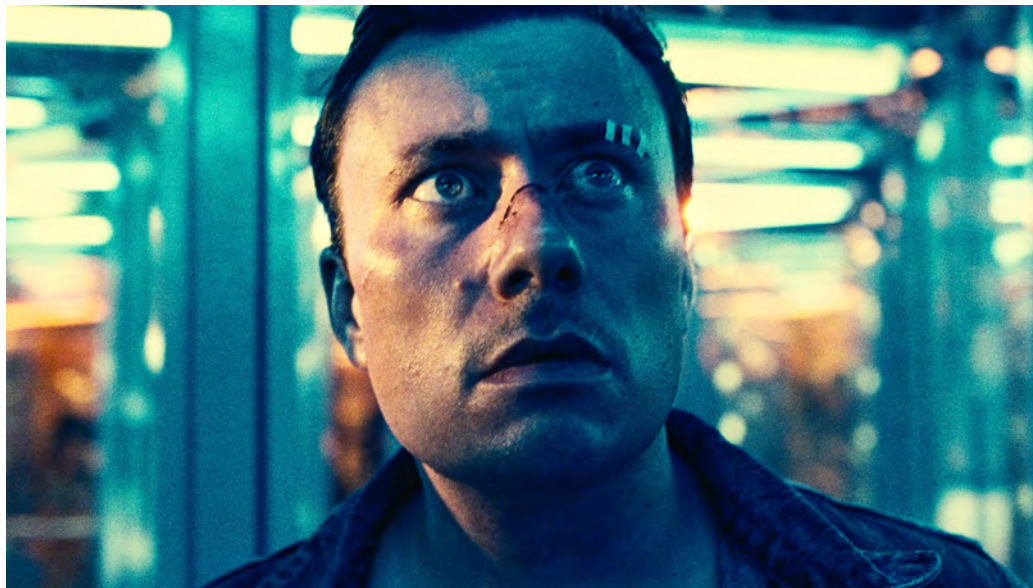
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HAPS

The seemingly innocent Alexander Rothstein ends up in prison for drug trafficking. He is actually responsible for supporting his newly pregnant girlfriend Julia and their future child. To make matters worse, he ends up in a cell with the dangerous Russian Viktor and the unstable Arab Khalil. In order to fulfill his duties as a father and escape the dangers of prison, Alex needs money - a lot of money. His desperation drives him into the arms of the Kurdish gang leader Mazlum, also known as the Dutchman, and back to his friend from drug therapy, Cem. Together, they weave the threads of an organization that even casts its nets outside the prison walls, but at the height of the euphoria, Alex suddenly finds himself caught in it. He is left with only two options: Succumb to the plot of intrigue and betrayal or become a monster himself.

GENRE Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Ekrem Engizek **SCREENPLAY** Ekrem Engizek **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Christof Wahl **CAST** Emrah Ertem **PRODUCTION DESIGNER** Christian Schäfer **MUSIC** Martin Todsharow **GAFFER** Ronald Schwarz **PRODUCER** Ekrem Engizek **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Engizek Films GmbH **RUNTIME** 140 min **LANGUAGE** German

CONTACT Engizek Films GmbH
hello@engizekfilms.com • www.engizekfilms.com



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ROCK 'N' ROLL RINGO

Ringo Fleisch from Herne loses his job and starts working at a funfair. He gets drawn into this new world by Fränkie, a showman, into making a career as a fairground boxer. Ringo starts travelling with the carnival and leaves his tranquil home for the first time.

He manages to gather a new, small fairground family around him. Fränkie becomes a strong mentor who beckons with fast money and star status at the fair. The Great Hainz, a mime, becomes his loyal companion. Through Jenny from the bumper cars, he gets to know the fast and dangerous life of the carnival.

Ringo seems ambitious and suddenly has a clear goal in mind: At the end of the fair season, he hopes to fulfill a long-awaited dream for his deaf daughter.

GENRE Action, Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Dominik Galizia **SCREENPLAY** Dominik Galizia **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Elias C.J. Köhler **CAST** Martin Rohde, Larissa Sarah Herden, Margarethe Tiesel, Erwin Leder, Charly Schultz, Tuba Seese **PRODUCERS** Dominik Galizia, Massuda Kassem, Alexander Schoeller **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Mutter & Vater Film **RUN-TIME** 100 min **LANGUAGE** German

WORLD SALES UCM.ONE
berlin@ucm.one • www.ucm.one



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SAD JOKES

Joseph (Fabian Stumm) and Sonya (Haley Louise Jones) share a close friendship and have a young son, Pino, whom they are raising together. While filmmaker Joseph is working on a new film idea and trying to deal with the breakup with his ex-boyfriend Marc (Jonas Dassler), Sonya is suffering from a depression that increasingly tears her out of her life. When she is placed in a clinic, Joseph tries to juggle his daily family life and his artistic ambitions.

In his second feature writer/director Fabian Stumm mixes different moods to create a cinematic friction with reality. SAD JOKES is absurd and banal, hopeful and touching or - like real life - all at once.

GENRE Comedy, Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Fabian Stumm **SCREENPLAY** Fabian Stumm **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Michael Bennett **CAST** Fabian Stumm, Haley Louise Jones, Jonas Dassler, Godehard Giese, Marie-Lou Sellem, Knut Berger **PRODUCERS** Nicola Heim, Fabian Stumm **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Postofilm Fabian Stumm **RUNTIME** 96 min **LANGUAGE** German, English, Swedish **FESTIVALS** Filmfest München 2024, Toronto International Film Festival 2024 **AWARDS** Förderpreis Neues Deutsches Kino (Best Director) + FIPRESCI-Award at Filmfest München 2024

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BEKENNTNISSE DES HOCHSTAPLERS THOMAS MANN

CONFESSIONS OF THOMAS MANN, CONFIDENCE MAN

In 1905, Thomas Mann made his first plans for a novel about an impostor. The first volume of “Confessions of Felix Krull” was not published until 1954. No literary figure has accompanied Thomas Mann for as long as Felix Krull. Both Krull and Thomas Mann are masters of deception. Thomas Mann was a literary superstar with an upper class façade. His world fame meant everything to him – but it cost him an enormous amount of energy to maintain this appearance.

Thomas Mann’s diaries reveal an insecure, often depressed man who suppressed his desires throughout his life: Thomas Mann was homosexual. Nevertheless, he chose a married life with six children. The film follows in Felix Krull’s footsteps to Eltville, Frankfurt am Main, Paris and Lisbon – and uses archives, letters and diary entries to trace Thomas Mann’s own journey during the creative process. The work on the novel accompanied Thomas Mann through the Nazi regime, McCarthyism in the USA and the new Europe after the Second World War.

In this hybrid documentary, director André Schäfer and actor Sebastian Schneider blur the lines between Thomas Mann and his alter ego Felix Krull, telling the story of a titan of German literature from an entirely new perspective.

GENRE Experimental, Literature **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** André Schäfer **SCREEN-PLAY** Jascha Hannover, Hartmut Kasper **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Janis Mazuch **CAST** Sebastian Schneider **PRODUCER** André Schäfer **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Florianfilm **RUNTIME** 92 min **LANGUAGE** German

WORLD SALES Florianfilm • georgina.hillebrand.perry@florianfilm.de • www.florianfilm.de



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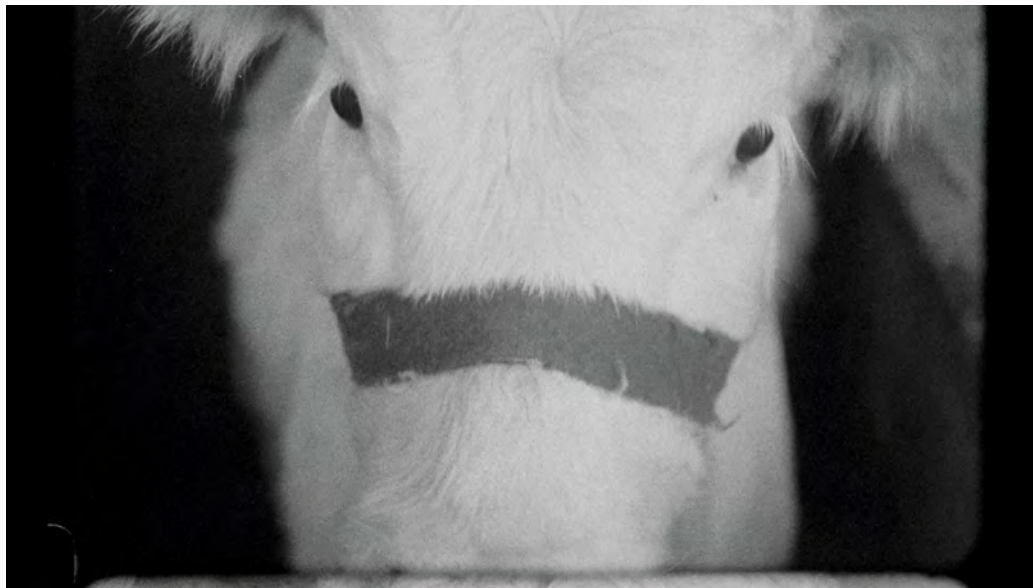
RIEFENSTAHL

When a state foundation was donated the entire estate of Leni Riefenstahl in 2018, it was already considered one of the most significant collections in the history of film and photography. Andres Veiel's documentary is now uncovering this treasure of 700 boxes of film, manuscripts, letters, files, documents and voice recordings.

Starting with Leni Riefenstahl's beginnings as a celebrated actress in the 1930s, the film delineates how her initial encounters with Hitler and Goebbels propelled her to become the Reich's preeminent filmmaker. Her propaganda film "Triumph of the Will" about the 1934 Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg and "Olympia", about the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin are world-famous works, deriving from her close, multi-year collaboration with the party's leaders. Hitherto unseen private films, personal photos and intimate documents combined with Video recordings of Riefenstahl's memorable appearances on German and international TV-shows from the 1960s until her death in 2003 show an artist endeavoring to disassociate the striking aesthetics she crafted from the ideology of the Nazis. Andres Veiel lets us investigate ourselves her lies, incantations and slander, elevating the discourse to a universal and timeless inquiry of self-portrayal and external perception within the media.

GENRE Documentary **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Andres Veiel **SCREENPLAY** Andres Veiel **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Toby Cornish **CAST** Leni Riefenstahl **PRODUCER** Sandra Maischberger **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Vincent Productions in coproduction with WDR, SWR, NDR, BR, RBB **RUNTIME** 115 min **LANGUAGE** German, English **FESTIVALS** Venice 2024

WORLD SALES Beta Cinema GmbH • beta@betacinema.com • www.betacinema.com



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SKIZZEN AUS TRANSKARPATHIEN UND BUKOWINA

SKETCHES FROM TRANSCARPATHIA AND BUKOVINA

The film was shot in the geographical spaces of Transcarpathia and Bukovina. I look at people, nature, animals at the moment of peaceful time, but so fragile. Light and film help me to sketch various fragments of people's lives, short glimpses of acquaintances and passers-by, who sometimes gaze at the camera, at us.

GENRE Experimental **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Stanislav Danylyshyn **SCREEN-PLAY** Stanislav Danylyshyn **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Stanislav Danylyshyn **PRODUCER** Stanislav Danylyshyn **PRODUCTION COMPANY** German Film- and Television Academy Berlin **RUN-TIME** 4 min

WORLD SALES German Film- and Television Academy Berlin
stanislav.danylyshyn@hotmail.com • www.danylyshyn.de/skizzen

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EFP (European Film Promotion) is an international network of film promotion institutes from 37 countries from throughout Europe, each representing their national films and talent abroad. Under the EFP flag, these organisations team up to jointly promote the diversity and spirit of European cinema and talent at key film festivals and markets, in particular outside of Europe.

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CAROTTICA

A mother and son navigate their lust and loneliness in the queerest of ways.

GENRE Stop-Motion Animation, Erotic **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Daniel Sterlin-Altman **SCREENPLAY** Daniel Sterlin-Altman **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Philip Köhler **PRODUCER** Luis Morat **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Film University Babelsberg **KONRAD WOLF RUN-TIME** 13 min **LANGUAGE** English **FESTIVALS** Filmfest Dresden 2024, Intl. Animation Film Festival Anncy 2024, Animafest Zagreb 2024, Fantoche Festival 2024 **AWARDS** Cristal for Best Graduation Film at FF Anncy 2024, Goldener Reiter Animationsfilm at FF Dresden 2024

WORLD SALES Film University Babelsberg **KONRAD WOLF**
 cristina.marx@filmuniversitaet.de • www.filmuniversitaet.de



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GARNELIUS

An apartment block in the east of Berlin, 2007: Karl feels the absence of paternal care most painfully when he looks at his little brother David, who can no longer live at home. One morning, Karl unexpectedly lays an egg.

GENRE Coming-of-Age Story, Drama, Fantasy **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTOR** Julia Ketelhut **SCREENPLAY** Julia Ketelhut **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Rocío Díaz Freire **CAST** Emil von Schönfels, Peter Koburg, Otto Karl Herzog **PRODUCERS** Melvyn Zeys, Jonas Nemela **PRODUCTION COMPANY** German film and television academy Berlin in cooperation with Filmacademy Vienna **RUNTIME** 49 min **LANGUAGE** German

WORLD SALES German film and television academy Berlin
juliaketelhut@web.de



© Franzis Kabisch

GETTY ABORTIONS

What do abortions look like? What kind of images shape our view on them? And where do these images come from? The desktop essay GETTY ABORTIONS examines how German and Austrian media illustrate the topic of abortion, browsing through stock photos, teen magazines and documents of a real abortion experience. It jumps from the early 2000s to the late 19th century, seeks out feminist knowledge and chats with fictional characters. But one question remains: Why does no one look into the camera?

GENRE Educational, Experimental **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2023 **DIRECTOR** Franzis Kabisch
SCREENPLAY Franzis Kabisch **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Franzis Kabisch **PRODUCER** Franzis Kabisch
PRODUCTION COMPANY Franzis Kabisch **RUNTIME** 22 min **LANGUAGE** German, English
FESTIVALS (selection) DOK Leipzig 2023, Kasseler Dokfest 2023, IFFF International Frauenfilmfest Dortmund+Köln 2024, Diagonale 2024, Vienna Shorts 2024, International Short Film Festival Hamburg 2024, Dokumentarfilmwoche Hamburg 2024, It's All True - International Documentary Film Festival 2024, PORTO FEMME International Film Festival 2024, Docudays UA International Documentary Film Festival 2024, Lago Film Fest 2024 **AWARDS** Golden Dove (DOK Leipzig) 2023, Golden Key (Kasseler Dokfest) 2023, Jury Award Wagnis (Flensburger Kurzfilmtage) 2023, Candis Prize (International Short Film Week Regensburg) 2024, Best Short Film (International Festival of Science Documentary Films Academia Film Olomouc) 2024, Social Responsibility Award (Vienna Shorts) 2024, Audience Award (International Short Film Festival Hamburg) 2024

WORLD SALES Franzis Kabisch • hello@franziskabisch.net • www.franziskabisch.net



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MUSICSTORIES

The MusicStories short film anthology tells stories inspired by classical music in six episodes. It makes use of various genres and visual languages - from black-and-white silent film to historical melodrama and romantic comedy. Specially interpreted classics such as Beethoven's "Für Elise" and "In the Hall of the Mountain King" by Edvard Grieg serve as the film music. The format creates a new kind of access to the audience through the symbiosis of classical music and narrative film.

GENRE Multi Genre **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTORS** Elena Walter, Emanuel Fusillo, Mattias Hektor Ventker **SCREENPLAY** Elena Walter, Emanuel Fusillo **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Jonas Schmieta **CAST** Neele Pettig, Luisa Maria Bruer, Jean-Loup Fourure, Peter Weiss, Renée Vanessa Branderhorst, Mona Kammer, William Anthony Schönfelder, Konrad Lohrmann, Soltanat Akdeniz, Christian Walter, Elisabeth Köll, Ellen Moschitz-Finger **PRODUCERS** Elena Walter, Emanuel Fusillo **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Blickfänger **RUNTIME** 28 min **LANGUAGE** English **FESTIVALS** Die Serieale 2024, ISFF Detmold 2024 **AWARDS** "Best Idea" at Die Serieale 2024

WORLD SALES Blickfänger

elena.walter@blickfaengerfilm.com • www.blickfaengerfilm.com



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TIME

Sophia's life drifts between reality and illusion. She seeks support but is repeatedly rejected. In a bar, she meets Emilie, who is the true offering of an honest, transparent encounter. But allowing herself to be close to her would also mean that Sophia would have to face the truth and let go of her past. Will this cost her her own life?

GENRE Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2023 **DIRECTOR** Christina Hecke **SCREENPLAY** Sylvia Mayer, Christina Hecke **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Ron Engel **CAST** Sylvia Mayer, Grace Risch, Brigitte Zeh, Anne-Marie Lux, Sandra Maria Elsner **PRODUCER** Sylvia Mayer **CO-PRODUCER** Christina Hecke **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Acceleration Productions in coproduction with Enrich-film **RUNTIME** 29 min **LANGUAGE** German **FESTIVALS** European Short Awards 2024, Tokio International Short Film Festival 2024

WORLD SALES Acceleration Productions
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ALLEGRO PASTELL

It's the exceptionally hot summer of 2018, and novelist Tanja Arnheim and web designer Jerome Daimler have a seemingly ideal long-distance relationship conducted in the searing heat of Berlin, the idyll of an inherited bungalow in the valley of the River Main and the many train journeys in between. But the carefully cultivated equilibrium of trust and independence between the two hyper-reflective millennials is shaken when Tanja realises on the night of her birthday that the relationship could become existential.

Anna Roller's second feature after her award-winning debut *DEAD GIRLS DANCING* is based on the eponymous bestselling novel by Leif Randt who also wrote the screenplay.

GENRE Drama, Love Story **CATEGORY** Feature
DIRECTOR Anna Roller **SCREENPLAY** Leif Randt
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Felix Pflieger
CAST Sylvaine Faligant, Jannis Niewöhner, Luna Wedler, Martina Gedeck, Wolfram Koch, Haley Louise Jones **PRODUCER** Tobias Walker **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Walker + Worm Film
LANGUAGE German

CONTACT

DCM Film Distribution, Stephan Henz
 stephan.henz@dcmteam.com
 www.dcmstories.com



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AMRUM

Amrum Island, spring 1945: In the waning days of WWII, 12-year-old Nanning fearlessly braves the treacherous seas for seal hunting, goes fishing at night, and tirelessly tends to the fields at the nearby Bendixen farm to help his mother feed the family. With his father absent, Nanning relies on his unwavering friendship with Hermann for support in times of need. Yet, as the long-awaited peace descends, unforeseen challenges emerge, compelling Nanning to chart his own course through the turbulent waters of post-war life.

One of Germany's leading directors, Fatih Akin, directs a story based on the childhood memories of German screenwriter Hark Bohm.

GENRE Drama **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Fatih Akin **SCREENPLAY** Hark Bohm, Fatih Akin **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Karl Walter Lindenlaub **CAST** Jasper Billerbeck, Kian Köppke, Lisa Hagmeister, Laura Tonke, Diane Kruger, Detlev Buck, Matthias Schweighöfer, Lars Jessen, Hark Bohm **PRODUCER** Fatih Akin **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** bombero international, Warner Bros. Film Productions Germany in co-production with Rialto Film
LANGUAGE German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Warner Bros. Germany

CONTACT

Beta Cinema GmbH, Dirk Schürhoff
 beta@betacinema.com
 www.betacinema.com



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ANGRY SPIRITS

ANGRY SPIRITS takes a poetic look at a global challenge: the threat to indigenous peoples from environmental degradation caused by mining and climate catastrophe. The film follows the quest for healing of Ainur, a young mother from a traditional herding family, who was plunged into extreme poverty after the collapse of Communism. Now living in Mongolia's modern capital, Ulaanbaatar, she works as a dancer in a strip club. Ainur feels unwell, as if haunted by spirits. Ainur follows the advice of a shaman and returns to the land of her ancestors. On her journey, she confronts the destruction of this once breathtaking landscape and the question of how to heal herself and her home.

GENRE Documentary **DIRECTOR** Iris Pakulla
SCREENPLAY Iris Pakulla **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Iván Castineiras **PRODUCERS** Reinhardt Beetz, Eva Fouquet **PRODUCTION COMPANY** beetz brothers film production **LANGUAGE** Mongolian **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Filmdelights

CONTACT

Filmdelights, Christa Auderlitzky
 auderlitzky@filmdelights.com
 www.filmdelights.com



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BLAUE FLECKEN (AT) BLUE MARKS (WT)

The siblings Rose and Sam share a close bond. One day, Rose learns of rape allegations that have been made against her brother. When she finally understands that the accusations are true, she must find a way to deal with Sam's guilt.

BLUE MARKS (working title) is a story about independence, belonging and the question of the political within the private.

"I am fascinated by sibling stories because they provide space for fundamental questions like 'What unites us?' and 'What separates us?'," says writer-director Sarah Miro Fischer about her debut feature which was made as her graduation project at the German Film & Television Academy Berlin (DFFB).

GENRE Drama, Feminist Story **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Sarah Miro Fischer **SCREENPLAY** Sarah Miro Fischer, Agnes Maagaard Petersen **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Selma von Polheim Gravesen **CAST** Marie Bloching, Anton Weil, Laura Balzer, Proschat Madani, Jane Chriwa, David Vormweg, Aram Tafreshian, Giamo Röwekamp **PRODUCERS** Nina Bayer-Seel, Janna Fodor **CO-PRODUCERS** Lukas Koll, Sebastian Herbst **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin in co-production with Arkanum Pictures and RBB **LANGUAGE** German

CONTACT Arkanum Pictures, Janna Fodor
 janna.fodor@arkanum.pictures
 www.arkanum.pictures



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DAS GEHEIME STOCKWERK THE SECRET FLOOR

12-year-old Karli moves to Bad Gastein in the Alps where his parents are restoring their own hotel. Whilst exploring the hotel, Karli discovers that he can make one of the old lifts stop on a mezzanine floor where the hotel's operations are in full swing ... but it's still 1938 there! He befriends the bright Jewish girl Hannah, who is staying at the hotel with her father, and the young shoeshine boy Georg. The three of them become a gang. When Georg is wrongly accused of theft, his new friends want to help him and find the real crook. The three subsequently discover that strange things are going on in the hotel.

GENRE Children's Film **CATEGORY** Feature
DIRECTOR Norbert Lechner **SCREENPLAY** Antonia Rothe-Liermann, Kathrin Milhahn, Norbert Lechner **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Daniela Knapp **CAST** Silas John, Annika Benzin, Tobias Resch, Maximilian Reinwald, Marc Limpach, Marie Jung, Oliver Rosskopf, Maximilian Simonischek, André Jung, Lisa Freund, Franz Buchrieser **PRODUCER** Norbert Lechner **COPRODUCERS** Alexander Dumreicher-Ivanceanu, Bady Minck, André Fetzer **PRODUCTION COMPANY** KEVIN LEE Filmgesellschaft mbH in co-production with AMOUR FOU Vienna GmbH, AMOUR FOU Luxembourg sàrl and Magic Media Production GmbH **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** farbfilm verleih

CONTACT The Playmaker Munich
 Moritz Hemminger
 moritz.hemminger@playmaker.de
 www.playmaker.de



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INTELLIGENTE TIERE INTELLIGENT ANIMALS

Research suggests that animals can communicate on a far more complex level than previously thought. Featuring research by leading scientists and animal trainers from around the world, INTELLIGENT ANIMALS challenges existing knowledge about horses, pigs, ravens and fish. It not only explores their astonishing cognitive abilities, but also showcases these animals communicating with humans, their individual personalities, how they cooperate with each other, count and operate arithmetic operations, and even read minds.

The film aims to explore further the extent to which animals have self-awareness, qualify as individual personalities, and what these findings could mean for us.

GENRE Ecology, Educational **CATEGORY** Documentary **DIRECTORS** Dr. Julia Dordel, Guido Tölke **SCREENPLAY** Dr. Julia Dordel **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Guido Tölke **PRODUCER** Dr. Julia Dordel **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Dorcon Film **LANGUAGES** German, English **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Mindjazz Pictures

CONTACT
 Dorcon Film, Julia Dordel
 julia@dorconfilm.com, www.dorconfilm.com



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STILLE FREUNDIN SILENT FRIEND

Set in the botanical garden of a medieval university town in Germany, SILENT FRIEND centres on a majestic tree which is observing humans. The film is set in three different eras - 1908, 1972 and 2020 - and tells three human stories shaped and transformed by the plants surrounding them over more than one hundred years.

SILENT FRIEND is the seventh feature film by the Golden Bear-winning Hungarian director Ildiko Enyedi and marks the first time that the acclaimed Hong Kong actor Tony Leung Chiu-wai has acted in a European film following such productions as IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE and LUST, CAUTION.

GENRE Drama **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Ildiko Enyedi **SCREENPLAY** Ildiko Enyedi **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Gergely Pálos **CAST** Tony Leung Chiu-wai, Luna Wedler, Enzo Brumm, Sylvester Groth, Léa Seydoux, Martin Wuttke, Marlene Burow, Jan Hofmann, Rainer Bock, Johannes Hegemann **PRODUCERS** Reinhard Brundig (delegate producer), Monica Mécs **CO-PRODUCERS** Nicolas Elghozi, Meng Xie **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Pandora Film GmbH & Co. Filmproduktions- und Vertriebs KG in co-production with Galatée Films, and Silent Friend Kft., in co-production with ZDF/ARTE, ARTE France, Rediance **LANGUAGE** German, partly in English **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Pandora Film Medien GmbH

WORLD SALES

Films Boutique SAS, Jean-Christophe Simon
contact@filmsboutique.com
www.filmsboutique.com



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THE BITTER TASTE

"5 ways to compete, five ways to die, one way to survive..."

Retired pentathlete Marcia is captured by the undead Countess Badesky and her cursed followers. To survive a cannibalistic manhunt and save some historic documents, Marcia teams up with charming fisherman Josh and grumpy cop George, relying on her rusty athletic skills.

The look and feel for the horror-action-adventure is inspired by such films as FROM DUSK TILL DAWN, THE THING and A CURE FOR WELLNESS.

GENRE Action/Adventure, Ecology, Fantasy/ Science Fiction, Horror, Thriller **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Guido Tölke **SCREENPLAY** Julia Dordel, Guido Tölke **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Guido Tölke **CAST** Julia Dordel, Nicolo Pasetti, Anne Alexander Sieder, Christiane Ostermayer, John Keogh **PRODUCER** Julia Dordel **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Dorcon Film **LANGUAGE** English

CONTACT

Minerva International, Monica Ciarli
monica@minervapictures.com
www.minervapictures.com (international rights)
Julia Dordel, Dorcon Film
julia@dorconfilm.com, www.dorconfilm.com
(German-speaking territories/DACH)

GERMAN FILMS SERVICE + MARKETING



is the national information and advisory center for the promotion of German films worldwide. It was established in 1954 under the name Export-Union of German Cinema as the umbrella association for the Association of German Feature Film Producers, the Association of New German Feature Film Producers and the Association of German Film Exporters, and operates today in the legal form of a limited company. In 2004, the company was reorganized and now operates under the name: German Films Service + Marketing GmbH.

SHAREHOLDERS are the German Producers Guild, the German Producers Alliance, the Association of German Film Exporters, the German Federal Film Board (FFA), the German Kinemathek Museum for Film and TV, the German Documentary Association, Bavarian Film Fund, Film Fund North Rhine-Westphalia, Berlin-Brandenburg Film Fund, and the German Short Film Association.

German Films' budget of presently €4.8 million comes from film export levies, the office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and the FFA. The eight main regional film funds (FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, MOIN Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, HessenFilm, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, MFG Baden-Württemberg, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, MV Filmförderung, and Nordmedia) make a financial contribution towards the work of German Films.

German Films is a founding member of the European Film Promotion, a network of European film organizations with similar responsibilities to those of German Films. The organization, with its headquarters in Hamburg, aims to develop and realize joint projects for the presentation of European films on an international level.

In association and cooperation with its shareholders, German Films works to promote feature, documentary, television and short films.

In addition, German Films has foreign representatives for the US, Eastern Europe and China/ Southeast Asia.

RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

- Close cooperation with major international film festivals, including Berlin, Cannes, Venice, San Sebastian, Locarno, Sundance, Karlovy Vary, Toronto, New York, Shanghai, Warsaw, and Busan
- Organization of umbrella stands for German sales companies and producers at international television and film markets
- Staging of Festivals of German Films in selected international territories in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut
- Staging of industry screenings in key international territories
- Providing advice and information for representatives of the international press and buyers from the fields of cinema, home entertainment, and television
- Providing advice and information for German filmmakers and press on international festivals, conditions of participation, and German films being shown
- Organization of the annual Next Generation Short Tiger short film program, which presents a selection of shorts and is internationally premiered in Cannes
- Publication of informational literature about current German films and the German film industry, as well as international market analyses and special festival brochures
- A website (www.german-films.de) offering information about new German films, a film archive, information and links to German and international film festivals and institutions
- Organization of the selection procedure for the German entry for the Oscar® for Best International Feature Film
- Organization of the German Films Previews geared toward arthouse distributors and buyers of German films
- Selective financial Distribution Support for the foreign releases of German films
- Organization with UniFrance of the annual German-French film meeting
- Presentation of the annual FACETOFACE WITH GERMAN FILMS campaign which shines a spotlight on some of the most influential German talents currently working in the industry, who represent just some of the many dynamic 'faces' of German filmmaking today.

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Philipp Kreuzer Chairman

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Simone Baumann
Managing Director
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 15
 baumann@german-films.de



Anne Beuermann
*Assistant to
 Managing Director*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 21
 beuermann@german-films.de



Andrea Schiefer
*Deputy Managing Director,
 Director Administration
 & Strategic Development*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 24
 schiefer@german-films.de



Alba Lopez
Accounting / Administration
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 22
 lopez@german-films.de



Martin Scheuring
*Head of Short Films
 & Market Projects*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 12
 scheuring@german-films.de



Ina Sommer
Head of Animation Germany
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 13
 sommer@german-films.de



Julia Teichmann
*Head of Documentary
 Marketing & Subtitling Support*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 20
 teichmann@german-films.de



Sylva Häutle
*Head of Festival Relations
 & Producers Liaison*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 16
 haeutle@german-films.de



Nicole Kaufmann
*Head of Regional Desk
 USA & UK*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 11
 kaufmann@german-films.de



Marcos Rabelo
*Head of Regional Desk
 Central and Eastern Europe,
 Festival Relations*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 25
 rabelo@german-films.de



Fides Stark
*Head of Regional Desk Asia,
 Australia, Scandinavia & Turkey*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 13
 stark@german-films.de



Valentin Köhn
*Head of Regional Desk
 Southern Europe, South-
 & Central America*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 14
 koehn@german-films.de



Eva-Maria Pellikan
*Head of Communications
 & Marketing
 Liaison TV & Series*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 17
 pellikan@german-films.de



Angela Sonntag
*Head of Press
 & Public Relations*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 28
 sonntag@german-films.de



Anne Heidebrecht
*Head of Distribution Support
 & Previews*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 44
 heidebrecht@german-films.de



Dorothee von Manteuffel
Distribution Support
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 47
 vonmanteuffel@german-films.de



Aitana Santos Petterino
*Management Assistant
 in Event Organisation*
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 0
 santos-petterino@german-films.de



Majed Kahloul
Apprentice Office Management
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 0
 kahloul@german-films.de

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www.vdfe.de

atlas international film

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phone +49 203 393 467 00
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www.atlasfilm.com

Beta Cinema GmbH

Grünwalder Weg 28d
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phone +49-89-6 73 46 98 28
beta@betacinema.com
www.betacinema.com

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zentrale@constantin.film
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Media Luna New Films UG

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50672 Cologne/Germany
phone +49-2 21-51 09 18 91
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phone +49-89-38 09 12 88
worldsales@playmaker.de
www.playmaker.de

Pluto Film Distribution Network GmbH

Schliemannstr. 5
10437 Berlin
phone +49 030 2191 8220
info@plutofilm.de
www.plutofilm.de

SOLA Media GmbH

Rotebühlplatz 29
70178 Stuttgart/Germany
phone +49-7 11-96 89 44 40
post@sola-media.com
www.sola-media.com

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Editor

Angela Sonntag

Contributors

Martin Blaney, Patrick Heidmann,

Nick Holdsworth, Rüdiger Sturm

Translations

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German Film Office

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Sara Stevenson

phone+1 212 439 8706

sara.stevenson@goethe.dewww.germanfilmoffice.us**Argentina/South America**

Gustav Wilhelmi

phone +54-9-11 5568 19 52

gustav@cinealeman.com.ar**China**

Anke Redl

phone +86 136 01 35 59 19

redl@german-films.de**Eastern Europe**

Marcel Maïga

phone +49 176 38 84 56 72

maiga@german-films.de

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