

A close-up portrait of actress Nilam Farooq with long, wavy brown hair, looking slightly to the left of the camera with a soft expression. She is wearing a dark top and a thin gold necklace. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# GFAQ

GERMAN FILMS QUARTERLY

ISSUE 4-2021

WITH ARTICLES AND PORTRAITS ON  
**DIVERSITY IN GERMAN FILMMAKING #4 - FILM FUNDING**  
**INSTITUTIONS, DIRECTORS', PRODUCERS' AND INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS**  
DIRECTORS **LEONIE KRIPPENDORFF & İLKER ÇATAK**  
PRODUCER **PHILIPP KREUZER**  
ACTOR **NILAM FAROOQ**

german  
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# europa! voices of women in film

at the Sydney Film Festival  
3–14 November 2021



Denmark  
From the Wild Sea  
by Robin Petré



Greece, Germany  
Green Sea  
by Angeliki Antoniou



Kosovo\*, Switzerland,  
North Macedonia, Albania  
Hive by Blerta Basholli



Finland, Denmark  
How to Kill a Cloud  
by Tuija Halttunen



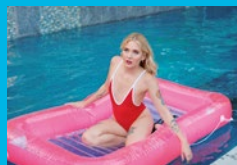
Germany  
Nico  
by Eline Gehring



The Netherlands, Spain  
Last Days of Spring  
by Isabel Lamberti



Austria, Belgium  
Why Not You  
by Evi Romen



Sweden, The Netherlands,  
France  
Pleasure by Ninja Thyberg



Slovenia, Serbia,  
Montenegro, Kosovo\*  
Reconciliation by Marija Židar



France  
Slalom  
by Charlène Favier

\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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Dear Readers,

The arrival of summer this year also marked the return of cinema, at least to a certain extent: after a long period when the film industry could only meet virtually or at best via hybrid events, and viewers had to forego their visits to the cinema, now a slight sigh of relief may be heard. Major A-list festivals such as Cannes, Locarno or Karlovy Vary could take place as attended live events and experienced a veritable influx of audiences.

German films also came across well: In Locarno, Saskia Rosendahl was awarded Best Actress in the section Cineasti del presente for her role in Sabrina Sarabi's film NO ONE'S WITH THE CALVES (Weydemann Bros.), while Abel Ferrara won Best Director for ZEROS AND ONES (DE/UK/US), primarily produced by the German company Maze Pictures.

Karlovy Vary brought further successes, as Dietrich Brüggemann received the Best Director Award for his work on NŮ (Flare Film) and the major German production THE EXAM (DE/KRD-IQ/QA, Mitosfilm) by Shawkat Amin Korki won the FIPRESCI Award. In Venice, the German co-production IL BUCO (IT/DE/FR, Essential Filmproduktion) won several awards – another sign of Germany's increasing relevance as an international co-production partner; and SPENCER (DE/GB, Komplizen Film) filled the cinemas in Toronto after celebrating its world premiere in Venice.

At the end of August, German Films introduced a German focus at the world's largest series festival SÉRIES MANIA in Lille. The live presentation "Coming next from Germany", which featured five brand new high-end series as well as the panel "FACE TO FACE with German Filmmakers: Serious about Series" met with a positive response, so endorsing Germany as an address for outstanding series productions of international quality.

In addition to supporting German productions at international festivals, in recent months German Films itself has again organised festivals of German film: In cooperation with the local Goethe-Institutes in Buenos Aires and Paris, we invited people to enjoy films together. Selected German features, documentaries and shorts were shown, such as THE CASE YOU, LE PRINCE or FABIAN – GOING TO THE DOGS, some of which were presented by their cast and crew in person.

Following this positive mood over the summer, we are looking forward to upcoming festivals like Busan, Warsaw, Tallinn or the IDFA, and hoping for a successful autumn with cinema box offices continuing to recover from the still noticeable consequences of the Corona Pandemic.

German Films wishes you a good start into 2022 – hopefully without the need for another lockdown and with many breath-taking film moments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simone Baumann".

Yours, Simone Baumann  
Managing Director

**German films in the U.S.**

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# DIVERSITY IN GERMAN FILMMAKING #4 -

FILM FUNDING INSTITUTIONS AND INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS

Since the beginning of 2021, German Films has been publishing the results of its own major survey of diversity on the German film and television scene in German Films Quarterly. Among others, the responses from film schools, broadcasters and some industry associations have already been presented. Now, to begin GFQ No. 4, we are focusing on responses from funders, producers and directors.

Almost all our respondents complain that their own institutions and the sector as a whole need to catch up. Nevertheless, there are some companies – usually younger start-ups – where diversity is practised as a matter of course already. This applies to their interactions internally as well as to everything that leaves the company as a product, as a creative outcome. No Limits Media, a member of the Producers' Alliance, for example, ensures that films are barrier-free, i.e., it makes them accessible to the visually impaired and those with impaired hearing by means of subtitles and audio descriptions.

The quota of women at No Limits Media is high, at 80 per cent, and this is true of the management level, as well, where 70 per cent of the employees are women compared to 30 per cent men. The company works in 40 languages and therefore uses numerous native speakers and employs many people with a migration background. People with physical restrictions are also firmly established in the company – including at management level.

Such a high level of diversity is still the exception in the German film business. In its answers to the German Films questionnaire, No Limits Media indicates the factors that could play a part in this: some issues, for example, are already well-anchored in law at the federal level in Germany, but not yet at the state level. The topic of accessibility in film and television is one of them. Since 2013, funding from the German Federal Film Board (FFA) can only be granted to projects that guarantee accessibility. This is not yet the case with some state media funding. A new State Media Treaty in Germany ought to remedy this situation soon.

Public media in Germany have already developed their accessibility quite well, says No Limits Media.

In the private sector, however, the experts still see major deficiencies. The stations of the key media group RTL and ProSieben SAT.1 only subtitle a limited number of their programmes. Audio description is almost non-existent in this field. According to No Limits Media, accessibility is "practically non-existent" at smaller broadcasting stations. However, there is also a structural problem with the associations whose self-appointed task is representing the interests of people with disabilities. So far, they have "not pulled together enough" and therefore have no real lobby. In an international comparison, Germany lags behind many countries in terms of accessibility. In the USA, it has been law since 1996, while other countries such as France, England, India and Pakistan are "well ahead" in this area.

The state funding agencies, which No Limits still sees as trailing in terms of diversity, also responded in detail to the German Films questionnaire. The FFF Bayern, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung (MDM) and MFG Baden-Württemberg acknowledge a change in social awareness, and describe themselves as being in the process of change; however, they also point out that it was they who funded various studies on the topic of diversity in the first place. Those include the highly regarded survey "Diversity in Film" by the human rights organisation Citizens for Europe, which many other film funding institutions also co-financed.

Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, among others, supports a variety of projects that focus on raising awareness and changing role stereotypes in front of and behind the camera. These include workshops and panels as well as targeted support for material related to gender identity and diversity issues. Works and series such as GROßE FREIHEIT, WIR SIND JETZT and HIJAB BITCHES have been created in this way.

MOIN Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein is currently working on the composition of its funding committees. Following the now well-established gender-balanced composition of their committees, they now intend to specifically invite industry experts with migration experience and different skin colours to contribute their expertise. The tableau of in-house diversity mea-

sure also includes support for the mentoring programme “Into the Wild” for young female filmmakers and “ARTEF”, the Anti-Racism Taskforce for European Film, as well as non-binding diversity checklists intended to encourage filmmakers to reflect on their work.

HessenFilm, another “ARTEF” supporter, is also backing such momentum: “Checklists can be an important element of self-assurance and self-examination; we will consider whether they are also the right instrument for us, as well as other possibilities for anchoring the topic of diversity institutionally,” the film promoters from the Main explain.

The film and media funding organisation of Lower Saxony and Bremen, nordmedia, adopted new funding guidelines on 1st July 2021. Its preamble now reads: “nordmedia supports projects that paint the picture of a free, democratic, pluralistic, diverse and cosmopolitan society. (...) Neither projects that glorify violence nor those designed to discriminate against or disadvantage people (...) will be funded.”

The FFF Bayern emphasises the purpose and importance of unconscious bias workshops, for its own team as well. The FFF now considers all measures that could “restrict creative processes or result in standardised stories” to be of little use. Nevertheless, it is emphasised that in debate within the industry, artistic freedom and diversity are rarely seen as antagonistic; in fact, the opposite tends to be true.

As a state institution, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung has formulated a clear desideratum to the political decision-makers: “What we would like to see from politics is the integration and consistent implementation of film and media education into curricula and school lessons in order to introduce children and young people to the medium of film, teach them awareness and a critical approach to media, and make them want to work with media themselves.” This would ensure diversity and inclusion in the simplest, best possible way.

The responses German Films gleaned from funding recipients – such as representatives of the Producers’ Association – paint a rather different-

iated picture. Sarika Lakhani puts it mildly: “We can detect a sensitising, but it’s still very much in its infancy in terms of the potential to create an impact.” The topic of diversity is already frequently discussed in newspaper articles, she believes, but in practice it has not yet fully arrived. Population groups that have never seen themselves in the film sector need to be granted access to the industry “by actively inviting them to participate”. By directly addressing them in school visits, for example. She thinks that the industry is surrounded by “a certain aura of aloofness”. What is still missing is awareness that “German film means you, too”.

The question of whether quotas, rules and diversity checklists are the right means to change was answered by Saralisa Volm, also for the Producers’ Association: “Rules and quotas are a good start towards change, but in my opinion, they are not a cure-all. Hopefully, they will succeed in changing our viewpoints. But what is important is a new awareness and regular review of the existing parameters. I don’t think examples like Amazon’s – where the media call for the sexual orientation of the role and that of the performer to be identical – are very effective. The goal should be for a transwoman to be able to play a ciswifey, for actors with disabilities to embody the love interest, for BIPoCs to pass as boring Germans, and for poor people to be able to play rich people while straight people discover their homosexual side. That’s the power of art.”

There is currently a lot of discussion about what strategy is right to make German film fit for the future: What creative treasures still need to be unearthed along that route? With this in mind, the Producers’ Association presented a “Young Talent Study” as part of the Munich Film Festival 2021. It revealed the social and educational hurdles to be taken before people can enter the German film industry. When asked about their general economic situation, the majority of young filmmakers stated that it was not easy to earn a living as a full-time producer, director or screenwriter. The situation is particularly difficult for women in the field of production: 71 per cent men by comparison to only 38 per cent women producers are able to make a living in this field. According to the study, the gender gap that exists already in the field of



newcomers is also reflected in production budgets: on average, female producers have a budget of just under 545,000 euros with which to produce their first feature-length film, while male producers have a budget of almost 900,000 euros.

Broadcasters and funding institutions customarily help to finance projects by film school graduates as part of their support for young talent. Projects by career switchers are an exception. In terms of the participation and visibility of underrepresented groups, this is probably a serious mistake. As in the past, it is predominantly the children of the white majority society in Germany who end up at film schools. They have their Abitur (school graduation certificate) and often the necessary financial support from their parents to be able to live and study in an expensive big city. Susanne Binninger from the German Association of Documentary Filmmakers, AG DOK for short, also refers to this and agrees with the points mentioned by Lakhani and Volm, adding: „If we want more diversity, we have to create access for people with a migration background, for example. Film school education is still partly elitist and associated with uncertain career prospects. You have to be able to afford it. Just like the membership fee in a professional association. That’s why we are fighting for better contract and production conditions in the documentary genre.“

Sheri Hagen answered German Films’ questions on behalf of the German Directors’ Association. She laments the slow process of change in Germany, but now sees many established filmmakers “who have been pointing out the imbalance of German film” for years, as well as its inequality. The same can be said of associations and initiatives such as “ProQuote” and “Black Filmmakers”. International movements such as #metoo or “Black Lives Matter” have shown clearly that “sticking to old structures is no longer possible, and no longer desired”.

A dozen film festivals staged all over Germany, all members of the short film industry association AG Kurzfilm, also took part in the German Films survey – from north to south, from fiction to documentary, television to cinema, and programmes ranging from European Media Art to an LGBTQ+ focus. In the world of short film makers in par-

ticular, there are many up-and-coming talents whose stories already contain diversity as a matter of course. This may be a glimmer of hope that with the change in generations, decision-maker positions will be filled accordingly.

Their answers present obvious parallels to other areas of the film industry. For example, they point out that a lack of financial resources often leads to cutbacks in diversity. The AG Kurzfilm says: “Diversity/integration must be truly desired by politics and then financed, too. We can’t practise it additionally with the same financial and human resources as before.” If a film festival cannot pay its staff any or only very low wages, it is hardly possible to be choosy and pay attention to the diversity of its staff. It is also clear, however, just how many festival curators are now taking very active countermeasures to make their programmes as diverse as possible and to prevent racist and discriminatory content from gaining in visibility – for example, by consistently choosing a diverse line-up on panels.

Cristina Nord (director of the Berlinale Forum) recently wrote an essay about the period of upheaval in which she believes German film currently finds itself. How is it possible, she asks, “that people who work in the cultural sector and those who take advantage of its offers are, with few exceptions, so white and so educated, even though so many taxpayers are not?” She also points out the many “economic advantages it would mean for the industry to address far more target groups. The opposition authors and cultural producers are voicing against the German mono-film culture today is not new, “what is new is that we now have social media to echo it, thereby adding momentum and making it noticed more than it was the case 25 years ago”. In other words, the spaces for discussion are wide open in Germany. But here, the same applies as always: Talk is good, action is better.

The first issue of GFQ 2022 will present the responses to the German Films survey from other sectors in the German film and television world, including world distributors and associations working for equality for marginalised groups in the film industry.

*Susanne Hermanski*



# THE PERSPECTIVE OF EMPATHY

A PORTRAIT OF DIRECTOR LEONIE KRIPPENDORFF

On her summer holiday in 2017, Leonie Krippendorff had a dark premonition. She was staying at her mother's idyllic mountain property in Portugal, but the extreme heat there started to make her feel trapped and so she drove to the coast. A short time later, a fire broke out in the area she had just left, which developed into the largest forest fire in Europe and also devastated her mother's property.

This experience of a lost paradise plays a key role for the 36-year-old filmmaker, who needs a "personal connection" to her material. Consequently, it is a crucial event in one of her current projects, where four young protagonists find "a utopian space of freedom" in precisely this setting, which is later burnt down.

In her previous feature films LOOPING and COCOON and the ZDF series LOVING HER, Leonie Krippendorff told queer coming-of-age stories about girls and young women and processed a lot of things that she had experienced herself. Now it's about the longings of an entire generation. There is a political context as well, because she also reflects on the consequences of climate change in her material.

An ever-increasing confrontation with social reality is also shaping Leonie Krippendorff's artistic career, and she received the Bavarian Film Award for Best Young Director for COCOON in 2020. From 2009 to 2016, she studied at the Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF, which she experienced as an "absolute sanctuary" where she could find the "creative voice within" and „do her thing“ with no worries at all. This enabled her to develop the highly individual, extremely sensitively narrated scenario of her first feature-length film, LOOPING.

But as soon as she left the shelter of the university, she was surprised by the outside world's response to her films: she had never speculated about certain reactions or set herself the goal of changing people's perspective on queer subjects. Only after writing COCOON did she realise that this was the first German film about a love between two schoolgirls. The experience was particularly intense with LOOPING, which was launched in 2016 and won awards at the Guada-

lajara International Film Festival, among others. "I had the feeling that to some extent, the film was put into a lesbian niche and perceived as very anti-male. I'm sure it would have been received very differently if it had been released after Me-Too."

Now Leonie Krippendorff finds herself in a world that seems to be positively searching for her images and stories: "Many viewers have said to me about COCOON that they wish they'd seen this film when they were 14. Slowly something is changing, women can make films that affect them personally and thus show other perspectives." In this context, it is very moving for her when COCOON, which has been screened at over 60 international festivals and won several awards, is shown in countries where same-sex love is discriminated against, for example, "and coming out is always connected with suffering. I think it's great when a film like this is interpreted differently all over the world and develops a different relevance."

In a way, as a narrator, she has now made the step from the private to the public: "I had never thought about how something would be interpreted before, because otherwise I wouldn't have been able to do my own thing." She is aware that she could be pigeonholed because of her previous subjects, and she would find that a great shame. This is another reason why her Portugal project is important. At the same time, she is developing – for a German-Italian co-production – material about an intersexual child.

"Not every film I make in the years to come will centre on a queer love story, but my films will always have a queer perspective, because that's how I see the world." But ultimately, she hopes that this "labelling" will no longer exist in future: "A love film is a love film, whether it's a story between two women, two men, a man and a woman, or anyone in between. I hope that my films can help to do away with such labels." Because in the final analysis, she believes that storytelling is about one thing: "Empathy is central."

*Rüdiger Sturm*

A close-up portrait of a man with long, dark, wavy hair and a light beard. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. He is wearing a dark zip-up jacket and a necklace with a circular pendant. The background is dark and out of focus.

# NO RISK, NO FUN

A PORTRAIT OF DIRECTOR İLKER ÇATAK

In June 2013, İlker Çatak sat in front of his laptop in Berlin, feeling outraged. The son of Turkish immigrants was watching the anti-government protests in Istanbul's Gezi Park: "I thought to myself, 'Actually, you should be there right now.'" But this virtual experience would not let him go. A year later, the young director shot his graduation film SADAKAT at the Hamburg Media School, in which he addressed the social tensions in Turkey and later won the Student Academy Award in gold.

This fundamental experience continues to shape the work of the now 37-year-old filmmaker: "If you haven't dealt with something in your life, you can compensate for it with film. It's a kind of outlet." But he is not concerned with banal wish fulfillment: "Filmmaking always has something to do with exploring boundaries. With a search, often diffuse, that forces you to think outside the box and leave your comfort zone."

He has proved what that means for him with his three feature-length films, all of which push the boundaries in their own ways. ONCE UPON A TIME IN INDIAN COUNTRY (2017) was a poppy, over-the-top coming-of-age story based on the novel of the same name by Nils Mohl, in which he deliberately sought to leave his political graduation film behind. "It was a journey into the blue, because I really didn't know what kind of film it was going to be."

In 2019 a different kind of 'poker game' followed – I WAS, I AM, I WILL BE, a relationship drama about a German pilot and a Turkish callboy: "It had so many themes that I wanted to recount properly. I had this crazy fear of simply being clumsy." A fear that turned out to be completely unjustified. The film was nominated for five German Film Awards in 2020 and received the bronze award for 'Best Feature Film'. Seen in this light, İlker Çatak was also rewarded for his credo: "You need to shape each of your projects so that you have to jump over another cliff. No risk, no fun."

At the time, he had deliberately reduced the film's formal means to be able to concentrate more on his characters. He continued along this path with his most recent film, STAMBUL GARDEN – also an adaptation of an initiation novel, specifically the bestseller of the same name by Finn-Ole Hein-

rich. In making it, İlker Çatak has been reflecting on his own youth – because the story of two unequal friends is set largely in Istanbul, where he himself graduated from high school. "I wanted to revive that sense of longing to see what life has to offer you after school. And it was also a reunion with Istanbul: the city is my great love-hate relationship." It was a particular challenge finding the two teenage leads. "In the end, it called for real detective work at youth theatres."

Precisely because İlker Çatak is always looking for a new challenge with every project, he is never deterred by complications: "I try to stay calm, look at what the universe is offering me and how I can deal with it. It's not about implementing a fixed vision, by hook or by crook. As I see it, first and foremost a vision is about bringing good people together and giving them space to develop."

Whether this continual exploration of new possibilities is influenced by his life between two countries is something he himself cannot judge: "It broadens the horizon, but I don't feel it's anything special." On the other hand, he did find his youthful encounter with films like Paul Thomas Anderson's MAGNOLIA more revolutionary: "That was a revelation because it was so completely different. And I thought to myself: ah, cinema can do that, as well."

And so, he continues to explore the possibilities of film, even though he recently made a "guest appearance" directing a TATORT episode. He is currently preparing his next cinema project – LEHRERZIMMER (The Staff Room), once again turning to a socio-political topic and pushing stylistic self-restraint even further with a setting limited to a single room. "I have more time to work with the actors".

He sums up his path so far in the following way: "If ONCE UPON A TIME IN INDIAN COUNTRY was a cocktail with brightly-coloured umbrellas, then I'd like to arrive at a glass of water." But this will not be the end of his development by any means, as he knows: "I want to break new ground with every film and keep searching. I don't even know what I'm looking for myself. But that's not the point, either. It's about staying curious."

*Rüdiger Sturm*



# INTERNATIONAL DNA

A PORTRAIT OF PRODUCER PHILIPP KREUZER, MAZE PICTURES

The Munich/Berlin-based production house maze pictures has had a pronounced international approach to its activities since being launched by producers Philipp Kreuzer and Jörg Schulze in summer 2015.

British actor Rupert Everett's directorial debut *THE HAPPY PRINCE* heralded the new company's arrival on the international production scene: "It was our first calling card and showed that one can develop and produce large-scale and high budgeted feature films out of Germany," Kreuzer recalls, pointing out that the experience of working on this film, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and the Berlinale in 2018, "provided the basis for the other films and series we are now producing and opened many new doors." In addition, the producing duo's achievement was recognised at the Bavarian Film Awards that year with the prize for Best Production.

Kreuzer and Schulze are not new to the world of production: as a trained lawyer and graduate of the Media Business School, Kreuzer had worked for international entertainment law practices before serving as a project manager at the pan-European co-production fund Eurimages in Strasbourg and then as a studio executive at the Bavaria Film Group for ten years from 2005, while Schulze had been Head of Production at Berlin's Cine Plus Filmproduktion for 17 years with credits on such films as Baran bo Odar's *THE SILENCE*.

*THE HAPPY PRINCE* has since been followed by other international feature film projects, ranging from the action comedy *GUNS AKIMBO*, starring Daniel Radcliffe, through Abel Ferrara's *SIBERIA*, and the martial arts film *KUNG FURY 2*, to a second collaboration with Ferrara, the war thriller *ZEROS AND ONES*, which received the Leopard for Best Director on its premiere in Locarno in August.

maze's international DNA can also be found in the TV projects it has been involved in so far such as the Italian drama series *MALTESE* set in Sicily, the English-language fantasy series *HEIRS OF THE NIGHT*, and the French high-end procedural *THE CRIMSON RIVERS*. The company has also adopted a similar approach for its Lucerne-based affiliate maze pictures swiss to develop online

strategies and produce audiovisual formats for such cultural institutions as New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Kunstmuseum Basel and the Paul Klee Centre.

"We've also been an international pioneer in innovative digital education formats, Maze worked with the Städel Museum on the further development of its innovative 'digitorial' mediation format and implemented it as a pilot format at several Swiss museums," Kreuzer notes. "And we've worked successfully with the Migros Pioneer Fund on the digitisation of Switzerland's museum landscape. Since then, maze has developed and produced a wide range of digital content for many clients. Ultimately, it's our strategic definition of content creation and the desire to generate genuine synergies between our various activities."

"We co-produce when it makes sense both creatively as well as financially, is on an equal footing and ideally as a co-development starting at an early stage," Kreuzer explains. With international studio productions such as *KUNG FURY 2*, for example, maze pictures handled the European end of the film's shoot and subsequently entered into a joint venture with its US producer Occupant Entertainment to co-develop new projects.

"However, our focus is on in-house development and the creation of our own IPs like *HEIRS OF THE NIGHT* and *THE CRIMSON RIVERS* or our digital 'formats'," Kreuzer says, adding that local commissioned TV productions such as Dominik Graf's *POLIZEIRUF* are also an important part of the mix as is fostering promising new talents such as Felicitas Korn whose debut feature *PARTY-NATION* is now in postproduction.

Meanwhile, maze has plenty in store to whet the appetites of cinema and TV audiences alike in the future with its slate of projects currently in development including another major international production with Occupant Entertainment as well as new features by the Polish Sundance winner Michal Marczak and the Canadian avantgarde filmmaker Guy Maddin and the comedy TV series *PAWNS* by the husband and wife writing duo Lily and Michael Idov.

*Martin Blaney*

A close-up portrait of actor Nilam Farooq. He has long, wavy, dark brown hair and is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a neutral expression. He is wearing a dark, possibly black, top. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

# WITH COURAGE TO SUCCESS

A PORTRAIT OF ACTOR NILAM FAROOQ



Many filmmakers have had to cope with the fact that long-awaited theatrical releases were postponed due to the pandemic (and often more than once) last year. Nilam Farooq has felt this, too, having seen CONTRA screened already at the Zurich Film Festival before its upcoming release in German cinemas in October 2021 instead of December 2020. "This film is kind of my baby, so I can't wait for people to finally see it," she says of Sönke Wortmann's new movie, in which the native Berliner, born in 1989, plays her biggest role to date. "But at some point, of course, I just came to terms with the fact that I had been granted a particularly long period of anticipation."

CONTRA – a remake of the French film LE BRIO about a Muslim student and her condescendingly racist professor – has a very special meaning for Farooq, not least due to the fact that her career as an actor began during her school days. However, it wasn't the theatre club at school that sparked her interest, but a summer job as an extra. Gaining a foothold in the industry was not easy in the first few years, though – despite having an agent and coaching. "I was invited to very few auditions and kept being told I was too foreign-looking or not blonde enough," the daughter of a Pakistani father and a Polish mother recalls. "Sometimes, I wonder why I stuck with it. But when you love a thing, it's just hard to keep away." In parallel, Farooq was more successful on YouTube, where for several years, she ran one of the best-subscribed vlogs in Germany.

Her breakthrough as an actor finally came with a permanent role in the crime series SOKO LEIPZIG, which she found much harder to give up – two years ago – than closing her YouTube channel. "The decision took courage," admits Farooq, "after all, I left a secure job without knowing whether there would be any work waiting for me afterwards. But I had always dreamed of the one project that would enable me to show what I could do. A film that would actually be seen – and tackle a subject matter that's close to my heart." Without question, Wortmann's CONTRA was the right film at the right time.

Showing tolerance, engaging with others, and not giving everyday racism a chance – these

themes, according to Farooq, are the true essence of CONTRA. In other words, the film's messages are no less important in light of this autumn's federal election in Germany than they were during its shooting – and they are equally relevant to her in her everyday work. "Sometimes, I wish I had dared to speak out more often earlier on," Farooq says in reference to her experiences of discrimination in the German film industry. "But I've found my way now, and it's absolutely in line with my personality to speak my true mind and to accept the resulting losses if necessary."

"Every day, I'm growing more optimistic that this isn't just short-lived hype," the actor says of current efforts for change in respect to diversity, inclusion and equality in front of and behind the camera. "But the important thing is that we continue to talk about it and stay tuned to the issue, because something needs to change, and it's decades overdue."

As far as her own career is concerned, the next chapter has definitely begun for Farooq. She has no illusions that CONTRA, a project so close to her heart, could be topped in the near future. And she is also aware that winning the Bavarian Film Award at the beginning of the year was not enough to dispel her irrational fear of being exposed as an impostor one day. "On the contrary, the pressure is now even greater, of course," she concedes with a laugh, before openly admitting that after 15 years of acting, the award did mean more to her as outside validation than she had originally thought.

But for the present, the times when her next role was not already waiting on the horizon are over, as indicated by a quick look at the months ahead: the movie THE FOUR OF US by Florian Gottschick will be released on Netflix before the end of October, she will be back in Wortmann's next film LOCKED-IN SOCIETY, and shooting for Doris Dörrie's FREIBAD has now been completed, as well.

*Patrick Heidmann*



© Violet Pictures

## A PURE PLACE

A young and feeble boy named Paul (12) is kept captive along with his sister Irina (15) and a couple of other grubby kids on a secluded island in Greece. They spend their days manufacturing soap for their boss, a religious fanatic and self-proclaimed guru called Fust, son to a German industrialist and a Greek mother. The charismatic leader presents himself as a successor of ancient priests, promoting a cult of "purity" mixing Greek mythology and the legend of Hygeia, the Goddess of health, with Wagnerian pathos. In the upper world, the compound is filled with a swarm of members who seek to become clean and enlightened, while on the manufacturing underworld, children and the "unclean" alike celebrate their grimy existence.

**GENRE** Drama, Psycho Thriller, Mystery **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2020 **DIRECTOR** Nikias Chryssos  
**SCREENPLAY** Nikias Chryssos, Lars Henning Jung **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Yoshi Heimrath **CAST** Sam Louwyck, Greta Bohacek, Claude Heinrich, Daniel Sträßer, Daniel Fripan, Lena Lauzemis, Wolfgang Czechor **PRODUCER** Alexis von Wittgenstein **CO-PRODUCERS** Costas Lambropoulos, George Kyriakos **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Violet Pictures, in co-production with ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel **RUN-TIME** 91 min **LANGUAGE** German, Greek, English

**SALES** The Playmaker Munich  
 worldsales@playmaker.de • www.playmaker.de



© Luis Zeno Kuhn

# BECKENRAND SHERIFF

## LIFEGUARD OFF DUTY

Gags are guaranteed as Karl, a candidate for Grumpiest Lifeguard Ever, seeks to save the love of his life, the local swimming pool, from closure. Luckily he has his 'deputy', the asylum-seeker Sali, by his side and after a few initial difficulties the whole village of Grubberg joins in. A laconic hymn to life, community and, in the end, love.

LIFEGUARD OFF DUTY is the newest film by the very successful German director Marcus H. Rosenmüller, who is responsible for movies such as DOUBLE TROUBLE & THE MAGICAL MIRROR and THE KEEPER.

**GENRE** Comedy **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Marcus H. Rosenmüller **SCREENPLAY** Marcus Pfeiffer **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Torsten Breuer **CAST** Milan Peschel, Dimitri Abold, Johanna Wokalek **PRODUCERS** Robert Marciniak, Julia Rappold, Marcus H. Rosenmüller **CO-PRODUCERS** Fred Kogel, Cosima von Spreti, Max Conradt **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Lieblingsfilm GmbH **RUNTIME** 114 min **LANGUAGE** German

**SALES** The Playmaker Munich  
[worldsales@playmaker.de](mailto:worldsales@playmaker.de) • [www.playmaker.de](http://www.playmaker.de)



© Submarine / 3 minutes West / MotionWorks / Lunanime 2021

# COPPELIA

COPPELIA combines enchanting animation and live action dance in a modern retelling of the love story between Swan and Franz, jeopardised by cosmetic surgeon Dr. Coppelius and his uncannily beautiful protégé Coppelia. Through Swan's quest to uncover the truth about the charismatic doctor, the townspeople come to learn that in an increasingly image conscious culture – it's never been more important to be yourself.

A modern tale for young and old, told through a unique combination of 3D Animation and 2D painted backgrounds and live action dance.

**GENRE** Family Entertainment, Hybrid Animation and Live Action **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTORS** Jeff Tudor, Steven De Beul, Ben Tesseur **SCREENPLAY** Jeff Tudor, Steven De Beul, Ben Tesseur **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Tristan Oliver **CAST** Michaela DePrince, Daniel Camargo, Vito Mazzeo, Darcey Bussell, Irek Mukhamedov **PRODUCERS** Bruno Felix, Femke Wolting, Janneke van de Kerkhof, Adrienne Liron **CO-PRODUCERS** Romy Rooft, Annemie Degryse **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** Submarine, 3 minutes West, in co-production with MotionWorks, Lunanime **RUNTIME** 82 min **LANGUAGE** no dialogue **FESTIVALS** Annecy International Animation Film Festival 2021, Section: Screening Event (World Premiere)

**SALES** Urban Distribution International, Louise Ronzet  
 udi@urbangroup.biz • www.urbandistrib.com



© Wüste Medien GmbH / NDR

# DAS HAUS

## THE HOUSE

In 2029 Germany is led by a right-wing populist government, banning the renowned journalist Johann from his profession. Frustrated, he and his wife Lucia retreat into their luxurious and fully automated holiday home. As the political situation in the country continues to deteriorate due to an alleged leftist terrorist attack, their smarthome increasingly develops its own agenda, manipulating the couple and playing them off against each other by revealing intimate secrets. When two terrorists hunted by the regime eventually arrive at the door to seek refuge with Lucia, the situation in the house escalates completely – as Johann realizes that his wife is part of the political resistance. While Johann is still torn between his love for Lucia and the feeling that he has been betrayed by her, the house itself finally takes the lead...

**GENRE** Drama, Thriller **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Rick Ostermann **SCREENPLAY** Patrick Brunken & Rick Ostermann based on a short story by Dirk Kurbjuweit **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Stefan Ciupek, Matthias Bolliger **CAST** Tobias Moretti, Valery Tscheplanowa, Lisa Vicari, Max von der Groeben **PRODUCERS** Björn Vosgerau, Uwe Kolbe **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Wüste Medien GmbH **RUNTIME** 87 min **LANGUAGE** German, English

**SALES** The Playmaker Munich  
[worldsales@playmaker.de](mailto:worldsales@playmaker.de) • [www.playmaker.de](http://www.playmaker.de)



© Media Luna

# IM NACHTLICHT

## IN THE LIGHT OF THE NIGHT

Minthe Hellheim suffers from depression, doesn't know where she comes from, who her parents are, she spent her childhood in nursing homes. Tormented by recurring nightmares, she gets by with odd jobs. A new beginning is within reach when she receives a job offer. She is supposed to restore an old mill in her hometown. Little does she know that she is the victim of an intrigue. Suddenly she finds herself confronted with the secret world of the "shape shifter" in "Wolfstal". Evil in its physical form, hidden in an underground cave system inaccessible to Minthe, irritates her, but at the same time exerts an inexplicable attraction on her. In search of her true identity, she has to face her past and finally begins a whole new life.

**GENRE** Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Mischa Kreuz **SCREENPLAY** Mischa Kreuz  
**CINEMATOGRAPHY** Katharina Dießner **CAST** Diana Maria Frank **PRODUCER** Anja Uhland **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Uhland Film **RUNTIME** 98 min **LANGUAGE** German, English **FESTIVALS** Hof Film Festival 2021, Section: Work In Progress

**SALES** Media Luna New Films UG, Ida Martins  
 idamartins@medialuna.biz • www.medialuna.biz



© Herbsthund Filme

# SCHATTENSTUNDE

## THE SHADOW HOUR

In 1942, Christian writer, journalist and poet Jochen Klepper lived with his Jewish wife Johanna and his Jewish stepdaughter Renate in Berlin, Germany. On December 10th SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann rejected their applications to emigrate and gave Jochen Klepper the so called Goebbels' Ultimatum: his job or his marriage. The same night the Kleppers made an inconceivable decision; a decision that thousands of Germans in mixed marriages made within the dark years of the Second World War. Their choices were the last and sad defense of the Jewish-Christian community.

**GENRE** Drama, History **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Benjamin Martins **SCREENPLAY** Benjamin Martins **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Malte Papenfuss **CAST** Christoph M. Kaiser, Beate Krist, Sarah Palarczyk **PRODUCERS** Benjamin Martins, Floriana Maddalena Maiello **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Herbsthund Filme **RUNTIME** 78 min **LANGUAGE** German, English **FESTIVALS** Munich Film Festival 2021, Section: New German Cinema

**SALES** Media Luna New Films UG, Ida Martins  
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© Film Fatal

# THEATER REEPERBAHN

## THEATRE REEPERBAHN

On the streets of Hamburg's skid row St. Pauli, we meet Ewa (Elga Schütz), an elderly homeless lady with a secret. The former actress spends her days collecting bottles for spare change. When night falls, she sneaks onto the stage of THEATRE REEPERBAHN, where she once worked long ago. But she has to be careful, the theatre's new director (Laura Ehrich) doesn't like intruders. When Ewa meets Mats (Nils van der Horst), a young man with a broken camera, it seems like once more, her life could change completely.

**GENRE** Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Julian Schöneich **SCREENPLAY** Julian Schöneich **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Julian Harenberg **CAST** Elga Schütz, Jens Weisser, Laura Ehrich, Nils van der Horst, Prashant Chauhan, Valerija Laubach, Puja Bahrami, Harun Nouri **PRODUCER** Claire Bouillet **CO-PRODUCERS** Sebastian Badenber, Julian Schöneich, Elga Schütz **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Film Fatal **RUNTIME** 60 min **LANGUAGE** German, English

**SALES** Film Fatal, Claire Bouillet  
cb@filmfatal.de • www.filmfatal.de



FREYA ARDE  
COMPOSER

ULÉ BARCELOS  
COSTUME DESIGNER

JIEUN YI  
CINEMATOGRAPHER

ANNEKATRIN HENDEL  
DIRECTOR

LORNA ISHEMA  
ACTRESS

LAILA PETERSEN-JAMA  
STORYBOARD ARTIST

SARAH BLABKIEWITZ  
DIRECTOR

TUA EL-FAWWAL  
ACTRESS



# FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS

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## THE FILMMAKERS



© Perennial Lens GmbH

# HEIL DICH DOCH SELBST

## GO HEAL YOURSELF

Suffering from Epilepsy, director Yasmin C. Rams sets out to find an alternative cure for her debilitating disease. She does this against the wishes of her strong-headed father, who has been diagnosed with Parkinson's and believes all alternative medicine is quackery.

On her path, Yasmin portrays people from all around the world. She travels from Germany to the USA, to England and Colombia, meeting a diverse range of people who tell her about their experiences with their chronic illnesses and the use of natural medicine. However, as time goes by, Yasmin must learn that this route is not as easy as just taking a pill – but is it worth it?

**GENRE** Society, Biography **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Yasmin C. Rams **SCREENPLAY** Yasmin C. Rams **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Vita Spieß, Nic Smith **PRODUCERS** Yasmin C. Rams, Rodney Charles **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Perennial Lens **RUNTIME** 105 min **LANGUAGE** English, German, Spanish, Mandarin

**SALES** Perennial Lens, Yasmin C. Rams  
[info@perenniallens.com](mailto:info@perenniallens.com) • [www.perenniallens.com](http://www.perenniallens.com)



© Alpenway Media GmbH

## ITALO DISCO. DER GLITZERSOUND DER 80er

### ITALO DISCO. THE SPARKLING SOUND OF THE 80S

The tale of a music genre that conquered the world during a cybernetic decade: 80s Italo Disco. Using leading personalities, the documentary immerses the viewer in the pop narrative that was not only dancing music but also an aesthetic, a social phenomenon and a creative industry.

**GENRE** Music **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Alessandro Melazzini **SCREENPLAY** Alessandro Melazzini **CAST** Michelangelo La Bionda, Carmelo La Bionda, Sabrina Salerno, Roberto Zanetti, Pierluigi Giombini, Johnson Righeira, Linda Jo Rizzo, Daniele Baldelli, DJ Hell, Mathias Modica, Claudio Casalini, Flemming Dalum, Ivo Stefano Germano, Christa Mikulski, Eckhart Schmidt **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Alexander Vexler **PRODUCER** Alessandro Melazzini **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Alpenway Media, in co-production with Bayerischer Rundfunk, ARTE, RAI COM **RUNTIME** 63 and 54 min **LANGUAGE** German, Italian, English

**SALES** Rai Com, Niccolò Natali  
[sales@rai-com.com](mailto:sales@rai-com.com) • [www.raicom.rai.it](http://www.raicom.rai.it)



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# DER MALER

## THE PAINTER

THE PAINTER follows the artist/actor as he is struggling and suffering along this process with us watching in joyful despair and what might happen next until the white canvas has turned into a finished painting. The outcome is a one-man rollercoaster that appears to be a documentary but in fact is a staged and guided improvisation with the 'real' process happening behind the camera. THE PAINTER is a constant flow of the artist's journey with elements of farce and comedy topped with emotional moments of truth... in front of and behind the camera and leaving it up to us to decide what is real and/or authentic.

Being one of the most significant, contemporary painters, Albert Oehlen's approach is complete refusal of the common art circus. In its own way the Film reflects this very stance. Likewise, it questions the purpose of obsolete thinking patterns created by white straight male artists of a certain age that have dominated the art world for centuries.

**GENRE** Docufiction **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Oliver Hirschbiegel **SCREENPLAY** Ben Becker, Albert Oehlen **CAST** Ben Becker, Cornelius Tittel, Gudrun Gut, Charlotte Rampling **CINEMA-TOGRAPHY** Philip Bienmüller, Severin Bärenbold, Dominik Frey, Timna Gibson, Alexander Kruse, John-Philip Kuhn, Michail Zeldin **PRODUCERS** Oliver Hirschbiegel, Albert Oehlen **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Oliver Hirschbiegel **RUNTIME** 94 min **LANGUAGE** German, English

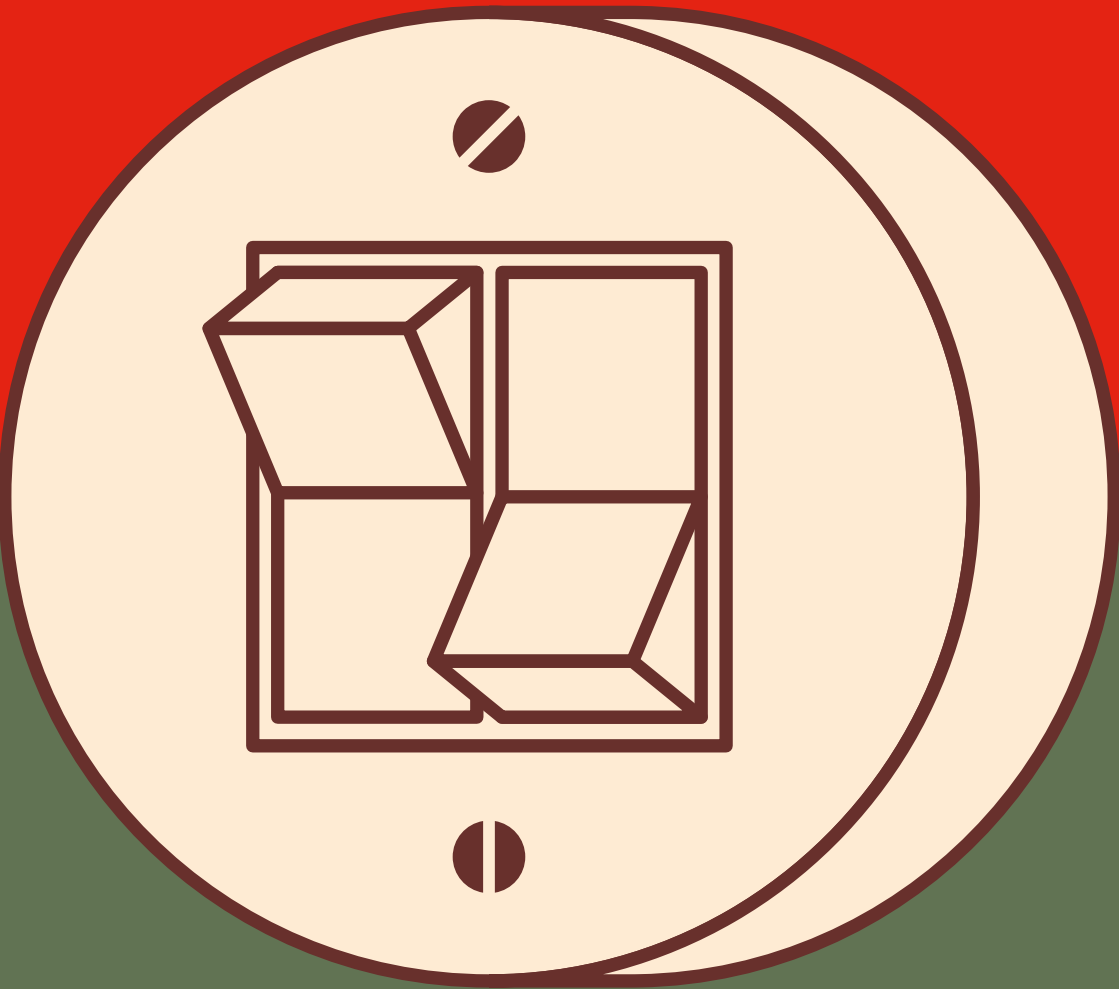
**SALES** Picture Tree International GmbH  
 pti@picturetree-international.com • www.picturetree-international.com

**DOK** Leipzig  
25.10.–31.10.2021

Internationales Leipziger  
Festival für Dokumentar-  
und Animationsfilm

+DOK Stream  
1.11.–14.11.2021

[dok-leipzig.de](http://dok-leipzig.de)





© Camille Tricaud &amp; Franziska Unger

# APOCALYPSE BABY, WE ADVERTISE THE END OF THE WORLD

APOCALYPSE BABY is a cynical teleshopping show that uses the fear of climate apocalypse as a reason to convince the audience to consume more and more. A pop satire about consumerism and climate crisis, about global warming and individualism, about hedonism and guilty conscience and about the contradictions inside of each one of us. A reflection about the way we look away and an exposure of the cynicism of a capitalistic system.

**GENRE** Animation, Ecology, Experimental, Music **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTORS** Camille Tricaud, Franziska Unger **SCREENPLAY** Camille Tricaud, Franziska Unger **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Lilli Pongratz **CAST** Julia Riedler, Wouter Wirth, Susanne Schneider, Teresa Schönherr, Georg Zinser, Maximilian Bungarten, Sianza Zink, Jaroun Santo, Christina Unger, Franziska Unger, Camille Tricaud **PRODUCERS** Camille Tricaud, Franziska Unger **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Apocalypse Delight Prod **RUNTIME** 19 min **LANGUAGE** German, English **FESTIVALS** Student Academy Awards (Oscars) 2021, Section Alternative / Experimental (nominee); Hof Int. Film Festival 2021, Category Short

**SALES** Kurzfilm Agentur Hamburg e.V., Anna Leimbrink  
anna@shortfilm.com • www.shortfilm.com



© Luise Donschen

## ELLE

In the glaring light of a spring day, a father and his child roam the Botanical Garden. After losing sight of each other, they each have their own encounters. Finally, both leave the garden together and stop at the river. A flute sounds from a flowering bush – someone is practicing the instrument in secret.

**GENRE** Experimental **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Luise Donschen **SCREENPLAY** Luise Donschen **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Luise Donschen **CAST** Kaori Asao, Felix-Sören Meyer, Nike Donschen **PRODUCER** Luise Donschen **RUNTIME** 14 min **LANGUAGE** Japanese, English, German **FESTIVALS** New York Film Festival 2021, Section: Currents

**SALES** Luise Donschen  
luisedonschen@posteo.de



© Philip Henze

## TALA'VISION

Due to the threats of war, 8-year-old Tala is not allowed to go outside. Her only connection to the world is her television, which her father Taher throws out of the window adhering to the new TV ban. Fear, silence and boredom overcome her, making life in their small apartment unbearable. She decides to steal a TV and hide it without anyone knowing about it. A small decision that will have implications that will change the course of her life forever.

**GENRE** Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2020 **DIRECTOR** Murad Abu Eisheh **SCREENPLAY** Murad Abu Eisheh **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Philip Henze **CAST** Aesha Balasem, Ziad Bakri, Khalid Al Tarifi **PRODUCERS** Philipp Maurice Raube, Esther Busch, Jude Kawwa, Gabriel Waldvogel **CO-PRODUCERS** Alaa Alasaad, Khaled Haddad **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, Tabi360 in co-production with SWR, Jordan Pioneers and with the support of The Royal Film Commission Jordan **RUNTIME** 28 min **LANGUAGE** Arabic, German, English **FESTIVALS** Filmfestival Max Ophüls Preis 2021, Rhode Island International Filmfestival 2021, Fünf Seen Filmfestival 2021, Bundesjugend Filmfestival 2021, Zlín Film Festival 2021 **AWARDS** First Steps Award, Michael Ballhaus Preis 2020, Audience Award Max Ophüls Preis 2021, Best Medium Short Max Ophüls Preis 2021, Deutscher Kamerapreis Young Talent 2021, 1st Price Rhode Island International Filmfestival Live Action Short

**SALES** Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, Sigrid Gairing  
sales@filmakademie.de • www.filmakademie.de







© Heiner Bärsert / Wood Water Films GmbH



© Andreas Schliefer

## ALASKA (WT)

Described as “an elegiac ghost story in four chapters”, Max Gleschinski’s second feature film centres on Kerstin, a taciturn woman in her mid-40s, who had nursed her father for 20 years until his death and is now slowly finding her way back into life by embarking on a kayak tour through the Mecklenburg Lake Plateau. She is doing her utmost to keep to herself and only speak when really necessary – that is, until she meets and then falls in love with another woman water hiking. But then her estranged brother Thomas appears on the scene to confront his sister and sort out the dispute about their inheritance. Kerstin, however, doesn’t show any signs of wanting to resolve the matter...

**GENRE** Drama, Love Story, Road Movie **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Max Gleschinski **SCREENPLAY** Max Gleschinski **CAST** Christina Große, Pegah Ferydoni, Karsten Antonio Mielke, Milena Dreissig **PRODUCERS** Jasper Mielke, Karoline Henkel, Arto Sebastian **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Wood Water Films GmbH/Berlin in co-production with Das kleine Fernsehspiel/Mainz **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** missingFILMs

### CONTACT

Wood Water Films GmbH, Jasper Mielke  
 mail@woodwaterfilms.com  
 www.woodwaterfilms.com

## BIBI & TINA - EINFACH ANDERS BIBI & TINA - JUST DIFFERENT (WT)

Bibi and Tina have three new holiday guests at the Martinshof farm: Disturber, Silence and Spooky – and they are just different: Silence doesn’t speak, Spooky believes in aliens, and Disturber picks on Bibi: she soon won’t have anything to laugh about! In the end, Disturber’s mistrust even drives her into the arms of the mysterious V. Arscher, who is waging an elaborate vendetta against Count Falko. But Arscher hasn’t reckoned with Bibi and Tina and their new friends who aren’t going to let themselves be fooled that easily...

**GENRE** Family Entertainment **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Detlev Buck **SCREENPLAY** Bettina Börgerding in collaboration with Detlev Buck, Viktoria Assenov, Sina Flammang, Doris Laske, Andreas Schaap **CAST** Katharina Hirschberg, Harriet Herbig-Matten, Benjamin Weygand, Holger Stockhaus, Franziska Weisz, Richard Kreuzt, Dominikus Weileder, Herman van Ulzen, Judith Richter, Emilia Nöth, Pauletta Pollmann **PRODUCERS** Detlev Buck, Marc Schmidheiny, Christoph Daniel, Sonja Schmitt, Kirstin Wille **CO-PRODUCERS** Dario Suter, Joel Brandeis, Martina Priemer, Gabi Salomon **PRODUCTION COMPANY** DCM Pictures GmbH/Berlin in co-production with Kiddinx Studios GmbH/Berlin, Bucket GmbH/Berlin, and Boje Buck Produktion GmbH/Berlin **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** DCM Film Distribution GmbH

### CONTACT

Kiddinx Media GmbH, Carsten Schwarz  
 cschwarz@kiddinx.de, www.kiddinx.de



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## INGESCHLOSSENE GESELLSCHAFT

A sudden and unexpected knock on the door of the staff room at a municipal grammar school one Friday afternoon. Surely no pupil would ever dare do that? No, in fact it's an ambitious father who is fighting for his son to be allowed to take the Abitur exams – and is even prepared to go to extremes to achieve his goal. Those six teachers still in school will now get to see what he is prepared to do the hard way: initially, they all feel themselves superior to the desperate father, but soon discover that the situation is getting more and more out of control. After some unexpected twists and embarrassing revelations, veritable abysses open up for everyone involved...

**ENGLISH TITLE** LOCKED-IN SOCIETY **GENRE** Comedy **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Sönke Wortmann **SCREENPLAY** Jan Weiler **CAST** Florian David Fitz, Anke Engelke, Justus von Dohnányi, Thorsten Merten, Nilam Farooq, Thomas Loibl, Torben Kessler, and many more **PRODUCER** Eva Holtmann **CO-PRODUCERS** Christoph Pellander, Sebastian Lückel, Martin Bachmann, and Johanna Bergel **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Bantry Bay Productions/Cologne in co-production with ARD Degeto/Frankfurt am Main and Deutsche Columbia Pictures Filmproduktion/Berlin **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Sony Pictures Entertainment Deutschland GmbH

### CONTACT

Deutsche Columbia Pictures Filmproduktion  
Johanna Bergel  
info@sonypictures.de, www.sonypictures.de



© Thomas Schenk

## THE EMPRESS (WT)

When the rebellious Elisabeth ("Sisi") meets Franz, the Emperor of Austria, the young couple's intoxicating love completely upsets the power structure of the ruling family. After the wedding, the young empress not only has to find her bearings in a world that is foreign to her, but also has to assert herself against her mother-in-law Sophie and deal with Franz's unpredictable brother Maxi. While enemy troops are forming on the borders of the Habsburg Empire, a new revolution is in the air in Vienna. Elisabeth must find out whom she can trust and how high the price is to become empress and a figure of hope for an entire people.

**GENRE** Biopic, Drama, History **CATEGORY** Un-limited Series **DIRECTORS** Katrin Gebbe, Florian Cossen **SCREENPLAY** Katharina Eysen **CAST** Devrim Lingnau, Philip Froissant, Melika Foroutan, Johannes Nussbaum, Elisa Schlott, Jördis Triebel, Almila Bagriacik **PRODUCERS** Jochen Laube, Fabian Maubach **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Sommerhaus Serien GmbH **LANGUAGE** German **WORLD SALES** Netflix

### CONTACT

Sommerhaus Serien GmbH, Marlene Bartram  
marlene.bartram@sommerhaus-film.de  
www.sommerhaus-film.de



© Julia Terjung

## KLEO

Shortly after liquidating a businessman in West Berlin in 1987 on behalf of a secret Stasi commando, the top East German spy Kleo is arrested, denounced by the Stasi and even betrayed by her own grandfather. After two years in prison, the Berlin Wall suddenly falls and Kleo is released. But she soon realises that the conspiracy against her is much more complicated than she thought and that an ominous red suitcase is the key to it all. Kleo thus embarks on a revenge spree that leads her through the anarchic Berlin, improvised electro clubs and Mallorcan fincas all the way to Chile's Atacama Desert – with the West Berlin policeman Sven constantly on her tail, chasing the case of a lifetime.

**GENRE** Action/Adventure, Drama, History, Thriller **CATEGORY** Series **DIRECTORS** Viviane Andereggen, Jano Ben Chaabane **SCREENPLAY** HaRiBo's (Hanno Hackfort, Richard Kropf, Bob Konrad) & Elena Senft **CAST** Jella Haase, Dimitrij Schaad, Vladimir Burlakov, Thandi Sebe, Marta Sroka, Julius Feldmeier and Jürgen Heinrich **PRODUCERS** Michael Souvignier, Till Derenbach **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Zeitsprung Pictures GmbH/Cologne **LANGUAGE** German **WORLD SALES** Netflix

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2021 Sony Pictures

## ONE FOR THE ROAD

Although in self-denial about his drink problem, Mark seems to have easily mastered life between his demanding job as a construction manager and rambunctious forays into Berlin's nightlife. That is, until he is stopped by the police one night, loses his licence until he has passed a medical-psychological examination. Mark bets his best friend Nadim that he won't drink any alcohol until he gets his driving licence back, but he hasn't reckoned with meeting "partner in crime" Helena during the examination...

**GENRE** Comedy, Coming-of-Age Story, Tragicomedy **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Markus Goller **SCREENPLAY** Oliver Ziegenbalg **CAST** Frederick Lau, Nora Tschirner, Burak Yiğit, Friederike Becht, Godehard Giese, Henning Peker, Eva Weißenborn, Lena Schmidtke, and Nina Kunzendorf **PRODUCERS** Markus Goller, Oliver Ziegenbalg, Quirin Berg, Max Wiedemann **CO-PRODUCERS** Jan Gallasch, Tobias Herrmann, Dr. Stefan Gärtner, Martin Bachmann, Johanna Bergel **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** Sunny Side Up/Berlin, Wiedemann & Berg Film/Munich in co-production with Pictures in a Frame/Munich, SevenPicturesFilm/Munich, and Deutsche Columbia Pictures Filmproduktion/Berlin **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Sony Pictures Entertainment Deutschland GmbH

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## SEIN ODER NICHT SEIN – LARS EIDINGER (AT)

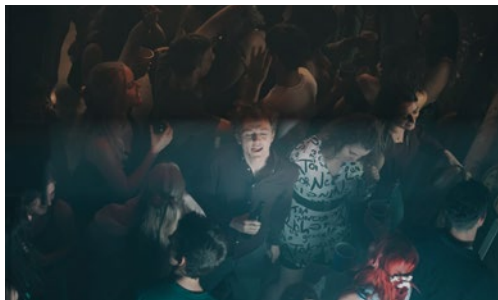
The latest project by the acclaimed documentary filmmaker Reiner Holzemer puts the spotlight on Lars Eidinger, one of Germany's most talented and versatile actors with his love of improvisation and intense, physical acting style, by going 'behind the scenes' at the world-famous Salzburg Festival in summer 2021 to observe him working on the lead role in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Everyman* and then following him to the USA for his first appearance in a major Hollywood production.

SEIN ODER NICHT SEIN – LARS EIDINGER seeks to dispel some of the mystique surrounding this exceptional actor's unique art and also provide an exciting insight into the worlds of theatre and filmmaking.

**ENGLISH TITLE** TO BE OR NOT TO BE – LARS EIDINGER (WT) **GENRE** Portrait **CATEGORY** Documentary **DIRECTOR** Reiner Holzemer **SCREENPLAY** Reiner Holzemer **CAST** Lars Eidinger, Angela Winkler, Thomas Ostermeier, Olivier Assayas, Juliette Binoche, Verena Altenberger and the entire "Everyman" ensemble at the Salzburg Festival 2021 **PRODUCER** Reiner Holzemer **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Reiner Holzemer Film **LANGUAGE** German, English **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Filmwelt Verleihagentur

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## SOMMER AUF 3 RÄDERN (WT)

Marc Schlegel's second feature film centres on the shy outsider Flake who not only suffers from the fact that his parents named him after the keyboard player of the heavy metal band Rammstein. He simply can't find it in himself to finally declare his love to Leonie, the new girl in his class, and also stand up to his rival in love, Maximilian.

Flake has a habit of making the wrong choices – and then meets the drug dealer Kim and the embittered wheelchair user Philipp. That encounter develops into a tour de force as the unlikely trio make their way through the Swabian countryside – in an ancient Piaggio moped three-wheeler that can just about do a top speed of 45 kilometres per hour – on the way to Leonie...

**GENRE** Comedy, Coming-of-Age Story, Love Story, Road Movie **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Marc Schlegel **SCREENPLAY** Marc Schlegel, Roland Hablesreiter **CAST** Jakob Schmidt, Emma Floßmann, Daniel Rodic, Simon Böer, Annika Ernst, Timur Bartels, Fritz Karl, Alexander Schubert, Marlene Morreis, Susi Stach, and Wilson Gonzalez Ochsenknecht **PRODUCERS** Gerrit Klein, Adrian Goiginger **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Giganten Film Produktions GmbH/Ludwigsburg in co-production with SWR, ORF and ARTE **LANGUAGE** German

### CONTACT

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# 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 Deutsche Kinemathek, the German Documentary Association, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, 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, Hessen-Film, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, MFG Baden-Württemberg, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, 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, Moscow, 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](http://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 FACE TO FACE 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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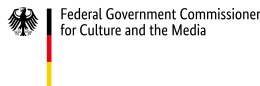


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