

# GFAQ

GERMAN FILMS QUARTERLY



ISSUE 2-2021

WITH ARTICLES AND PORTRAITS ON  
**DIVERSITY IN GERMAN FILMMAKING #2**  
- FILM SCHOOLS, AGENCIES AND CASTING OFFICES  
DIRECTORS **MARIA SPETH & JAKOB M. ERWA**  
PRODUCERS **MARTINA HAUBRICH & VIOLA FÜGEN**  
ACTOR **LENA URZENDOWSKY**

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Dear Readers,

The beginning of the 2021 festival season continued to be marked by the impact of the pandemic, meaning that many events had to switch to online formats. Nevertheless, we hope that from the summer onwards, more physical and hybrid events can take place, where film lovers from all over the world will be able to come together and share their passion for cinema – e.g. at the two festivals of German film being planned by German Films in Rome and Madrid in June.

Among the festivals compelled to change their plans due to Covid-19 was this year's Berlinale, which only opened its doors virtually and for industry participants with the European Film Market in February. German films were strongly represented, nevertheless: Maren Eggert for her role in I'M YOUR MAN and MR BACHMANN AND HIS CLASS by Maria Speth, for example, were both awarded Silver Bears. Over the course of the year, international audiences can look forward to these and a whole series of other German productions.

To ensure that German films can be seen in cinemas worldwide after the festivals, German Films is again organising previews for over 50 international buyers this June. At these screenings in Munich, German world distributors will have the opportunity to present their programmes physically again for the first time since the European Film Market 2020.

As large parts of society are spending more time at home, podcasts have become one of the most sought-after forms of information and entertainment. German Films launched the English-language podcast SHORT TAKE in June 2020: here, German filmmakers and their projects are presented in the form of short interviews. Less than a year and more than 15 episodes later, the format already has more than 8,000 listeners from different countries.

German Films will continue to pursue the topic of diversity in German Films Quarterly and in the long term, at various events. In the current issue you will find the first voices from our survey: The initial focus is on film schools, as well as on acting, casting and agency associations. In addition, the results of the comprehensive study #VielfaltImFilm (diversity in film) by Citizens of Europe are available, which we will be relating to the outcome of our own survey.

We are all united by a desire to return to cinemas, festivals and industry events and to revitalise them as cultural meeting places of exchange and entertainment.

When the time comes, I look forward to joining you as we achieve this together!

Yours, Simone Baumann  
Managing Director

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# DIVERSITY IN GERMAN FILMMAKING #2 - FILM SCHOOLS, AGENCIES AND CASTING OFFICES

The debate on the issue of diversity has rapidly gained momentum in Germany in recent months. The film industry, which understands itself as an important component of German society – and likes to be seen as its avant-garde – is thus under pressure. For the results of the highly-regarded online survey #VielfaltImFilm (diversity in film) indicate one thing in particular: diversity in the film business seems to prevail mainly in terms of injustices that should be deplored. Whether age, gender, weight, disability, religion, ethnicity, social status or socialisation in the East – according to statements given by the survey participants, all this and more can give rise to discrimination and cause disadvantages in the film business.

Last year, therefore, German Films set itself the task of finding out what awareness of diversity exists within the German film industry. To this end, German Films launched its own survey campaign, targeting various institutions and trades. We reported on the project already in the spring issue of GFQ 1-2021. In this issue, we will present the first results, starting with film schools as important training institutions in the industry, and with directing and acting agencies and casting offices.

More than 6,000 filmmakers from 440 professions participated in „#VielfaltImFilm“ from mid-July to the end of October 2020. 16 associations, activist groups and industry institutions have joined forces in this diversity alliance: the *Berlin Asian Film Network*, a network for Asian-German perspectives entitled *KorIENTATION*, the *Bundesverband Regie* (Federal Union of Directors), the staff recruiting platform *Crew United*, the Berlin project office *Diversity Arts Culture*, the *Deutsche Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband* (German Association for the Blind and Partially Sighted), the *Kinoblindgänger*, the *Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF*, the project *Leidmedien* for more realistic reporting about people with disabilities on a level playing field, the production company *Panthertainment*, the artists' collective *Label Noir*, the *Black Film-making Community*, the film and TV consultation company *Langer Media Consulting*, the non-profit association *ProQuote Film*, which is committed to increasing the proportion of women in all fields of film production, a network of media

creatives entitled *Queer Media Society*, and the civil society organisation *Citizens For Europe*, which is oriented towards participation and inclusion – the latter also supported the project “Diversity in Film” financially.

The #VielfaltImFilm survey was sent to more than 30,000 *Crew United* members by e-mail, and the response rate was just over 18 per cent. The results show that discrimination in the work context of the film industry is not an individual problem but rather a structural one. More than 3,200 of the filmmakers surveyed provided information about their experiences of discrimination. Half of them (51 per cent) stated that they had experienced discrimination in the work context within the last two years, 5 per cent even said this was “often” to “almost always”. 823 respondents provided information about the exact context of discrimination. In the case of 6 out of 10 respondents, it had already occurred during the recruitment process, e.g. when auditioning for a role; in the case of 5 out of 10 respondents, it was during production, e.g. on set; in the case of 4 out of 10 respondents, it happened in the informal sphere, e.g. at the so-called “Bergfest” (halfway party) or other celebrations.

In #VielfaltImFilm, one in five people said they were part of the LGBTIAQ+ community and one in 100 identified as trans or non-binary. However, 4 out of 10 of these members of the “sexual diversity community” stated that they would “never” or only “sometimes” be open about their sexual orientation or identity in the work context, fearing negative consequences for their career. This is different in the private sphere, where it is only every tenth person who keeps a low profile about their orientation or identity.

Black filmmakers and those of colour interviewed are less likely to have permanent jobs in the industry and on average, they earn less money. This is also true for the women interviewed, and especially for women who are also racially disadvantaged. Overall, more than 3 out of 4 of the filmmakers surveyed agree with the statement that the following groups are stereotyped: people of colour (78 per cent), Asian (75 per cent), Arab (87 per cent), Muslim (83 per cent), Sinti and Roma (81 per cent) and people with a low social

status (79 per cent). Filmmakers with disabilities and/ or impairments are generally significantly underrepresented in the film industry. The survey found that those few also have to work more unpaid days.

There is a broad catalogue of measures which the filmmakers surveyed consider effective for increasing diversity in the industry and for anti-discrimination. Almost all of them (97 per cent) are convinced that clearly visible consequences for perpetrators are important, as are “quicker options for action” for those affected in an acute case (96 per cent). Discrimination prevention should also play a part as early as possible during training. And a specific anti-discrimination office for the sector should be established.

Nevertheless, the extent to which Germany’s film industry is in a current state of flux regarding diversity is evident from the answers to its own catalogue of questions already received by German Films. State film schools in particular have recently implemented a range of measures to increase their students’ and lecturers’ awareness of diversity. This gives cause for hope that one of the demands of the Diversity in Film activists will bear fruit in the future: incorporating the topic of diversity into filmmakers’ training as early as possible. In many places, this is already happening. Six film and media schools from all over Germany responded to German Films. Some of them had already adopted the position paper “Together for Gender Justice” in February 2018. This was the result of an initiative by the *German Film and Television Academy Berlin (dffbb)*, the *Film Academy Baden-Württemberg*, the *Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF*, the *University of Television and Film Munich (HFF)*, the *ifs – International Film School Cologne*, and the *Academy of Media Arts Cologne (KHM)*. In the paper, the signatories entered into a self-commitment comprising 16 points – from the development of plans to advance women to the inclusion of gender competence as a subject in the curricula, and commitment to a zero-tolerance policy when dealing with sexualised violence as well as any form of discrimination in their own institutions.

One of the questions from the German Films questionnaire is: “Do you think that German so-

ciety is currently well represented in German films and series?” The answer given by the *University of Television and Film (HFF)* in Munich is typical in its content: “The depiction of German society is predominantly white, heteronormative and still characterised by patriarchal structures to a large extent. It would be a good thing if audiovisual media in Germany not only depicted the diversity of reality, but were also bold enough to dream the utopia of even greater diversity.” The Munich spokespersons describe the following as underrepresented: “BIPOC, LGBTQI, but also relationship and family configurations that deviate from the classic woman-man marriage and mother-father-child structure”.

Prof. Dr. Skadi Loist, who holds a junior professorship in “Production Cultures in Audiovisual Media Industries” at the *Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF*, was directly involved in the #VielfaltImFilm study. In the context of the German Films survey, Loist emphasised that efforts are being made at Babelsberg to bring the topic of diversity into all areas of the university in an interdisciplinary way, “whether in media studies, in cinematography and sound, screenplay, editing or acting”. In the introductory lecture for all first-year students, for example, there is a session on gender/ queer, “in which we talk about representation in the media industry as well as feminist film theory, the ‘male gaze’ or ‘editing gender’.” Topics such as intersectionality and racism are also “more prominent since the George Floyd case and the sensitisation to #BlackLivesMatter”, but must be anchored more firmly in the awareness of both students and teachers.

In response to the German Films question whether, in their opinion, fiction has the task of depicting social reality, Loist, like many other university representatives, replied that this was not always the case: “But it should depict a complexity and nuance that corresponds to today’s society”. Today’s society “can no longer be presented in simple dichotomies and one-dimensional positions if our work is aiming for creative and cultural relevance”. Her colleagues from the *IFS – Filmschule* in Cologne make a similar assessment of the current situation. „The film industry will become irrelevant and eliminate itself unless it reacts to demographic change and current social issues.”



And to the question of whether, as a training institution, support from politics or the associations of the film industry would be welcome: „Politics and associations should communicate clearly that diversity and inclusion are not about the special interests of marginalised groups, but about justice and participation for all“. Meanwhile, the neighbouring *Academy of Media Arts Cologne KHM* speaks openly about the difficulties that often prevent good will from being put into practice on a daily basis: „The financial framework and thus the manpower (for special workshops, for example, editor’s note) are quite simply limited“.

Prof. Richard Reitinger from *Hamburg Media School* emphasises that at the school diversity, intersectionality and inclusion are not only a theme in many of their films. They “naturally like and prefer to include people from this circle as students or participants in our films”. When asked whether regular industry meetings (also in a European context) could help to improve and more quickly integrate diversity, the Hamburg-based director said emphatically: “Just talking won’t help. Scholarships and new, joint projects will.” The *Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg* particularly welcomes the “great commitment of our students to additional training and development” when German Films asks about experience with best practices within their own ranks. And the academy cites “the Scandinavian countries and Great Britain” when asked about countries that implement diversity in the film industry better than Germany. There – also according to the unanimous opinion of most other university colleagues – “sometimes, the reality of an immigration society is dealt with more naturally”.

In order to find out how the market itself views the issues of diversity, intersectionality and inclusion, German Films sent the same extensive questionnaire to agencies and casting offices, among others. The *German Casting Association*, for example, responded: “In the casting sector, dealing with diversity is a major issue already. Intersectionality and inclusion, on the other hand, are less so. Currently, the demand for diverse casting is growing steadily, whereby the understanding of diversity in casting is limited primarily to the issue of skin colour or supposed ethnic appearance.”

Particularly revealing in this context are comments made in response to the question: “What do you think of diversity checklists, not only in film funding but also in other areas of the film industry? Is there a need to institutionally anchor a code of conduct, industry standards, or a ‘quota’, like at the Oscars?” The casting directors believe that “If there were more requirements or self-commitments, it would make everyone involved more aware of the lack of diversity, but it would also make them act. When it comes to more inclusion in a cast, for example, we need more willingness to change on the part of productions, agencies and databases. Because if we want to cast inclusively, it often involves special research, which also means extra time and money. Databases would have to offer more diverse search functions, agencies would have to scout more inclusively, producers would have to think about accessibility as a factor in productions.”

German Films also received answers from the various agencies addressed. Two members of the *VdA (Association of Agencies for Film, Television and Theatre)* adopted an individual position. Despite being very open to the problem, they also expressed some scepticism from an artistic point of view. The orientation should “not become too programmatic”; they would like to see a “naturalness” in the issue. And from a practical point of view, the agents touch on an extremely worrying point relating to actors – and thus probably to the most visible exponents of the industry: “Often, we get no further than creative proposals on the part of casting directors, which are not implemented.” In Germany as well, these days there are some street castings, whereby experts for the ideal casting set out to cast as diversely as possible. In the end, however, the “tried and tested, clichéd castings” prevail. From the perspective of the acting agents, “it’s hard to say exactly where things go wrong”.

In the next three issues, German Films Quarterly will report from others who can perhaps elaborate on this, as representatives from a broad spectrum of other trades will be given their say.

*Susanne Hermanski*

A close-up portrait of Maria Speth, a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a beige trench coat. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is blurred, showing some light spots.

# UNCOVERING YOUNG PEOPLE'S POTENTIALS

A PORTRAIT OF DIRECTOR MARIA SPETH

"I wanted to give them star potential because for me, they were my stars." What better thing can a director say of her protagonists? But how do you make Berlin street children or the sixth-grade pupils of a Hessian comprehensive school into stars of their own lives, as well? How do you transform an empty film studio or a classroom into a world stage?

As Berlin-based director Maria Speth, born 1967 in Bavaria, sees it, filmmaking provides a chance to immerse herself in other existential realities. It takes some time if you approach such investigations as cautiously and with the same open mind as the graduate of the Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF in Babelsberg.

Time and trust, research and space are the ideas around which our conversation revolves. In preparation for her documentary film *MR BACHMANN AND HIS CLASS* (Jury Prize, Berlinale 2021), Speth and her team are back at a school in Stadtallendorf, an industrial town in the center of Germany. Sitting with them are 12- to 14-year-old children from different countries, some of whom still struggle with German, whose parents work in the surrounding area. Nevertheless, in this special place they have a voice because their emphatic, committed class teacher Dieter Bachmann shows what else a school can be: the idea of a community based on solidarity. "In a way, his classroom is like a living room. It radiates a welcoming cosiness. The children feel they are in good hands," says Maria Speth. "They can discuss everything that bothers them."

To capture the reality of this space and its vitality, the team are spending a lot of time with the class. They eat together, help with homework, and play music together. When lessons get bogged down, when the air in the classroom becomes stale, Mr. Bachmann likes to pick up his guitar. The teacher turns into a band leader, the class into a polyphonic ensemble in which the pupils can discover their place in the world – and an audience is there, too, like at a live performance.

Uncovering children's and young people's potentials and talents beyond all clichés was also the aim of Speth's documentary film *9 LIVES* (2011).

"I didn't want to make a film about life on the street. I was interested in these homeless children's personal stories. They come from varied backgrounds, and it might well have been possible for them to follow a different path in life." In order to gain access to the homeless youths, their fates and their lives, Speth spent months at Berlin's drop-in centers for the young homeless and at their various meeting places, such as Alexanderplatz. Finally, she suggested they meet in a film studio. An empty room became a stage for damaged biographies, for people who were given a chance to speak out and feel liberated, but who were also permitted to reveal their musical talents, their tremendous will to survive.

Speth's three feature films also deal with lives that have been thrown off track, individuals who do not want to or cannot settle. Together with her cameraman Reinhold Vorschneider, in the fictional format she also offers her characters the freedom to act without pretence, beyond all social expectations. "Initially, there are frequently personal questions. I was the mother of a young daughter myself when I started preparing for *MADONNAS*, and I was interested in the question of how you occupy this role, what external pressures there are." To develop the story of a mother who takes no responsibility despite having five children, Speth researched and shot material in a mother-child penal institution in Frankfurt. The reality of the setting enters into the film, creating an interaction between reality and fiction that is characteristic of her cinema. As is the need to confront her audience with "protagonists who are not exactly accessible". Perhaps this constitutes the paradoxical beauty of Maria Speth's feature films. Her heroines – the aggressive drifter Lynn (*INTO THE DAY*, 2021), Rita, who evades her role as a mother (*MADONNAS*, 2007) and Agnes, whose daughter has disappeared, so that she is forced to rethink her mother-daughter relationship when encountering a young homeless woman (*DAUGHTERS*, 2014) – all surprise and provoke us with their behavior, but they keep us engaged long after the film is over.

*Anke Leweke*

A close-up portrait of Jakob M. Erwa, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a grey herringbone flat cap and a black t-shirt. He has a nose ring and a black earring. The background is a dark, neutral color.

# CHAMPIONING DIVERSITY

A PORTRAIT OF DIRECTOR JAKOB M. ERWA

"I'd always dreamt of becoming a rock star", says writer-director Jakob M. Erwa who has made three feature films since graduating from Munich's University of Television & Film (HFF) in 2007 and most recently serving as the co-creator/head writer/director of the six-part TV series ECHOS which was previewed at this year's Berlinale Series Market Selects.

"I had been in rock bands since the age of 12 and had even been planning to study at a music academy after finishing secondary school before I realised that film is an art form that allowed one to combine all the other forms of artistic expression," he recalls. "Film allows you to tell stories through images, and music and sound also play an important role in film. Something I did from my childhood was tell my own stories – even the lyrics of my songs in the band were stories. So, it was a logical consequence of my interest in all things artistic to subsequently focus on film."

Hailing from Austria's Graz, Jakob made his directorial debut with the HFF graduation film HEILE WELT which won the Diagonale's main prize for "Best Austrian Feature Film 2006/07" before then directing the five-part youth series TSCHUSCHEN:POWER for ORF in 2009 and the psychological drama HOMESICK which premiered in the Berlinale's Perspektive Deutsches Kino sidebar in 2015. A year later, his adaptation of Andreas Steinhöfel's bestseller, the coming of age drama CENTER OF MY WORLD, opened in German cinemas to critical and popular acclaim, winning numerous audience awards at festivals around the globe as well as the Bavarian Film Prize for Best Newcomer Director and the New Faces Award for Best Debut. "My goal as a filmmaker is to make entertainment and reach as many people as possible with my stories, but, at the same time, to combine this with a social message," Jakob explains. "There are issues that move and concern me and can affect my own life to a greater or lesser extent – and I am always looking at ways of making them more accessible to a wider audience and doing this in an entertaining way."

"I read a lot of books and if something attracts my interest, it won't then let go of me for days or weeks so that I have to see if the film rights are

free," he says. In fact, with Steinhöfel's novel, Jakob had to wait eight years before he succeeded in securing the film rights and another six years passed devoted to the development of the screenplay and the film's production before it reached the cinema screens in November 2016. "There are some subjects where you don't have to stretch them out to the length of a series and then again, others where I think that I'd like to take my time with the characters and give them space to develop. ECHOS, for example, was a project where we could approach the subject from several angles thus making it more diverse."

While diversity is of paramount importance for Jakob in his work both thematically as well as in the casting, he also strives for truthfulness in his actors' performances. "This already begins with the casting sessions as I'll select specific lines of dialogue for the auditions and also write descriptions of each role so that the actors can properly prepare themselves – and then having enough time for rehearsing with the actors before we actually start shooting," he explains.

Meanwhile, although the last couple of years were largely taken up with working on ECHOS, Jakob nevertheless has been occupied with several other film and TV projects in parallel. One is VALESKA, his planned adaptation of 1980s transgender model Valeska Réon's autobiographical novel *Blumen für ein Chamäleon*, which he and Lieblingsfilm imagine being structured as a European co-production with partners from France, Belgium or Luxembourg. In addition, he is developing a TV series for Dreamtool Entertainment based on YouTube star Jonas Ems' novel *Schattenseite* and the romcom TV series BERLIN WEDDING, as well as the film projects JIMMY RELOADED about a former boy band star planning a comeback with unexpected consequences and SUMMER IN CLARENS exploring three blurry weeks in the life of the legendary composer Tchaikovsky. "I've also been looking into German queer history because there are so many fascinating stories there to tell," Jakob says, "And what with the popularity of people like RuPaul and Ryan Murphy on the streaming services, I think that the audiences in Germany are waiting to see more stories set in a queer and diverse world."

Martin Blaney

A close-up portrait of Martina Haubrich, a woman with long, wavy brown hair and blue eyes, smiling slightly. She is wearing a dark blue collared shirt and a thin necklace. The background is a blurred, warm-toned interior.

# BROADENING HORIZONS

A PORTRAIT OF PRODUCER MARTINA HAUBRICH, CALA FILM

„The idea for setting up my own production company became concrete in summer 2016 during the shoot of Barbara Albert’s *MADemoiselle Paradis*,” recalls Martina Haubrich who had been working until then as a producer at LOOKS Filmproduktion since 2003 where she had set up the cinema department. She subsequently joined forces with Albert, the film’s Austrian producer Michael Kitzberger, German distributors Alexandre Geisselmann and Reno Koppe of Farbfilm, and writer-director Angelina Maccarone to launch CALA Filmproduktion at the end of 2016.

„The great thing about our company structure is the different areas of expertise the partners are bringing. It therefore makes sense to have an exchange of ideas about the projects,” Haubrich explains. „I discuss the theatrical projects with Alexandre Geisselmann as a distributor because I really appreciate his perspective on a film’s release potential. And I bring in the other partners when I’m narrowing down the choice of projects because I value their opinion, but also want to keep them in the loop.“

At the same time, she points out that the partners are not bound exclusively to channel their projects through CALA Film or for Farbfilm to handle all of the company’s output.

The fact that two directors in the company also work for other producers can have a positive „knock-on effect“ for CALA Film’s own production plans: Barbara Albert, for example, recently made her first foray into high-end TV as a co-director on the Sky eight-parter *PARADISO* and her experiences there are likely to be particularly useful for the ambitions to also produce for the small screen in the future.

„Whether it is historical or contemporary: the artistic vision is at the centre of our projects and the question of what this has to do with us in the here and now,” she says, adding that she is especially interested in „new and unusual perspectives“.

A start was made with Italian director Elisa Mishto’s debut feature *STAY STILL*, which had its world premiere at the Filmfest München in 2019, and preparations are now underway for Angelina Maccarone’s next feature film, *TURNING TABLES*

(*KLANDESTIN*), which is set to have an international cast and already has Belgium’s Tarantula Film and longtime partner from France Les Films d’Ici onboard as a co-producer. Depending on how the Coronavirus pandemic develops, principal photography should begin at locations in Germany, Morocco and Belgium from this October.

The documentary genre remains close to Haubrich’s heart as the first productions under the roof of the new company show – ranging from New York-based independent filmmaker Paula Eiselt’s *93QUEEN* (world premiere at HotDocs in Toronto in 2018) through the award-winning freelance journalist Francesca Manocchi’s *ISIS, TOMORROW. THE LOST SOULS OF MOSUL* („out of competition“ in Venice in 2018) to her current production of Claudia Müller’s *ELFRIEDE JELINEK – DIE SPRACHE VON DER LEINE LASSEN* scheduled to be released on the occasion of the Nobel Prize-winning author’s 75th birthday this autumn. Meanwhile, CALA FILM’s development slate includes filmmaker Ulrike Tony Vahl’s debut feature *THE CRUX*, which was selected to participate in this year’s Torino ScriptLab, Greta Marie Becker’s documentary about the Senegalese dancer and choreographer Germaine Acogny, as well as several new film and TV projects, including some with Barbara Albert.

*TURNING TABLES* in fact marks a new chapter in the company’s history as this will be the first production to be co-produced with the affiliate CALA Film Central which was launched at the end of 2020 in Erfurt with the dynamic young producer Claudia Schröter – previously at Kinderfilm GmbH/Grown Up Films – at the helm together with Haubrich. As far as CALA Film’s future strategy is concerned, Haubrich says that co-production will continue to have a high priority for „working with attractive international partners who broaden our horizons.“ Moreover, she believes that „the trend towards more and more providers in the streaming market and the expansion of the public broadcasters’ mediatheques offer us additional – and not fewer – opportunities to vary lengths, genre and forms for a larger audience and develop more of those ambitious stories that characterise European cinema.“

*Martin Blaney*



# THE NETWORKER

A PORTRAIT OF PRODUCER VIOLA FÜGEN



In-depth international collaboration, honest exchange and the strengthening of independent producers – these are the most important goals of the ACE Producers network. A similar description could be given to what's at the heart of Viola Fügen's work, and so it is probably not surprising that the German producer completed the one-year ACE programme in 2019 and has been a permanent member of the network since then. "If I were thinking about managing a Lithuanian co-production today, for example, I would always approach someone who is also in the ACE network," she says, referring to the close contacts to like-minded people she has been able to establish in this way. "Because then you can assume that their mindset will be compatible with your own, at least to some extent."

Fügen knows a thing or two about co-productions. After studying the film and television business (where she mainly learnt "how to make something from nothing" during short-film shoots) and long years at Pandora Film, in 2013 she founded her own company Match Factory Productions together with Michael Weber. Operating independently of the world distributor of the same name, but always with a view to the profile she has created there, her films include award-winning works such as Kornél Mundruczó's JUPITER'S MOON, HAPPY AS LAZARRO by Alice Rohrwacher or, most recently, MARTIN EDEN, IL TRADITORE and Malgorzata Szumowska's THE MASSEUR.

Fügen finds it difficult to sum up exactly what a project requires to inspire her. "Whenever Michael and I tried to define what a film needs so that we like it, eventually it struck us that in the main, we have actually ended up realizing exceptions to that definition," she admits with a laugh in our interview. "Of course, we have to be excited by the script and we need to be convinced by the direction. But above all, we have to feel that the project has some relevance for the international market: firmly anchored in the respective home country, but appealing to a broader audience."

Fügen sees the partnerships and relationships that Match Factory has built up over the years as the be-all and end-all – and they are always cultivated. For example, the Cologne-based company recently worked again with Apichatpong

Weerasethakul, on his new film MEMORIA, and the producer is proud that Mundruczó did not go to the USA after PIECES OF A WOMAN, which was sold to Netflix, but wanted to collaborate with them again on his new project, EVOLUTION.

On the one hand, the fact that a large proportion of Match Factory productions are directed by women is a coincidence; on the other hand, it is not. "From the very beginning, we wanted to work with women in the director's seat, but we didn't explicitly declare this or have a strategy behind it," Fügen emphasizes. Thanks to its collaboration with female filmmakers such as Laura Bispuri, Icíar Bollaín or Alice Rohrwacher, Match Factory has never been far from a 50/50 ratio, even without quotas and self-commitments. "And that's simply because these were always projects that excited us," adds the mother of three, who leaves no doubt nonetheless that there is still a need to catch up in the industry when it comes to balancing family and job, or even equal pay for men and women.

Not only but also with such topics, Fügen relies more than ever on exchange and networks. "It's only when we join forces that we can negotiate conditions that benefit the producers in the end," she says with regard to cooperation with streaming services, for example. At Match Factory Productions, she and Weber have not only been focusing on co-productions for some time now, but are also developing their own material increasingly, including series **(the ACE Series Special workshop, the next round of which starts in December, application deadline: 1 July 2021, was particularly useful in this respect)** and productions for the German market. "This is an expansion of our portfolio, by no means a change of direction," Fügen wants me to note at the end of our conversation. "These projects still have to fit our concept as well. It wouldn't make sense for us to suddenly tackle a classic German comedy. That's not in our DNA – and we can only put our heart and soul into things we are passionate about."

*Patrick Heidmann*



# EMBRACING VARIETY

A PORTRAIT OF ACTOR LENA URZENDOWSKY

“The kind of roles I really like are those which are the complex, unusual and sometimes rather daring ones” says actor Lena Urzendowsky who caught the acting bug at the tender age of five and made her screen debut at 14 in Karola Hattop’s contemporary rendering of the Hans Christian Andersen fairytale *THE SNOW QUEEN* in 2014.

“It’s always been important for me to work on different kinds of roles and in different genres because I like to have variation,” she explains, adding that one of her ambitions is to “appear in a historical costume drama where you are able to speak an antiquated language and assume past forms of etiquette. And I am also interested in physical and musical roles, where I have to play a dancer, or musician because I did this when I was growing up when I attended the workshops of the Stagefactory in Berlin until I was twelve.” There is certainly no doubt about her versatility as an actor when one sees the parts she has been cast in since her first lead role in the cybergrooming drama *DAS WEISSE KANINCHEN* in 2015 which earned her four awards for her performance, including the prestigious Adolf Grimme Prize, as well as a nomination for the New Faces Awards.

The characters she has played have ranged from the initially shy and awkward Evi in the biopic of the fashion designer Rudolph Moshhammer, *DER GROSSE RUDOLPH*, through the MS patient Kati in the political drama *KRANKE GESCHÄFTE* and a teenager experiencing the pangs of first love in Leonie Krippendorff’s debut feature *COCOON* (she received the Iris Prize for Best Female Performance at last year’s Cardiff International Film Festival for this role) to the IT nerd and hacker Kira in the Netflix series *HOW TO SELL DRUGS ONLINE (FAST)* and the drug addict Stella in Amazon Prime series *WE CHILDREN FROM BAHNHOF ZOO*.

“Preparation for the roles is particularly important for me,” Lena says. “I’ll sit myself down and analyse what I need to understand the role. Sometimes, there is a clear inner feeling of the direction I need to take and other times I will do some research to see if I had perhaps missed something.” The roles of Kati in *KRANKE GESCHÄFTE* and Stella in *WE CHILDREN FROM BAHNHOF ZOO*, for example, prompted her to learn more about their particular circumstances.

“For Kati, it was primarily about posture and knowing how someone with MS moves and walks, while I did some research on heroin as preparation for playing Stella and learnt what it is like to experience cold turkey. I also wanted to know what the music was like that they listened to and how Stella would dance so I went off to a club by myself and tried out her dance steps!”

At the same time, bouncing off ideas with her director ahead of the shoot is “extremely important” for the 21-year-old “so that we are talking about the same things and know exactly what the other one is wanting to tell and where they are wanting to go. It’s only then that I can really open up as an actor.” And her acting credits aren’t restricted only to German film and TV productions since she also had her taste of working on an international production when she was cast in the four-part thriller series *SHADOWPLAY* set in post-war Berlin which was produced by *TANDEM Productions* and *BRON Studios* with broadcaster ZDF.

“It was really interesting to see the different approaches taken towards filmmaking for this series when I was shooting in Prague in 2019,” Lena recalls. “And it gave me an opportunity to work with Nina Hoss who has always been a great role model for me. In fact, she is one of the reasons why I wanted to become an actor in the first place.”

“What I like about this profession is that the work is concentrated in an intense period of a couple of months where you’re all pulling together as a team and giving your all,” she continues. “Sometimes I also have the feeling that acting is almost a necessity for me – it gives me the chance to explore all those facets of humanity which I find so fascinating, yet can also be rather scary.”

Depending on how the Corona virus pandemic develops in the coming months, Lena hopes to be back in front of a film camera for two projects later this year. Meanwhile, she has three new debut features – Oliver Kracht’s *GERMANY YEAR ZERO (TRÜMMERMÄDCHEN)*, Laura Lehmus’ comedy *SWEET DISASTER*, and Max Fey’s *ZWISCHEN UNS* with *BABYLON BERLIN* star Liv Lisa Fries – that could be appearing at a festival near you this summer.

*Martin Blaney*



© Alexander Schville

# 4 TAGE BIS ZUR EWIGKEIT

## 4 DAYS TO ETERNITY

Germany, 19th century, Middle Rhein Valley. The dreamy Idilia awakes injured in the midst of a gloomy castle ruin and can't remember anything that happened before. When she discovers in horror that there is no escaping the towering castle walls, she begins a grueling fight for survival. Only her nebulous diary can help her decipher the past, which exposes a secret romance with Abyssinian actor Caven, a performer in a human zoo exhibition run by her fiancé Franz Hagerberg. Idilia's written record, however, blurs the lines between reality and fiction.

Based on the mysterious legend of Idilia Dubb – the Rhine legend from the 19th century tells that the young Miss disappeared on an excursion in the forest and never has been seen again. Twelve years later, her skeleton and her diary were found in the Lahneck castle ruins.

**GENRE** Drama, History, Love Story, Psycho Thriller **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2020 **DIRECTORS** Simon Pilarski, Konstantin Korenchuk **SCREENPLAY** Simon Pilarski, Konstantin Korenchuk **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Christian Munteanu **CAST** Lea van Acken, André M. Hennicke, Eric Kabongo **CO-PRODUCERS** Andreas Lucas, Lara Ta, Jan Czmok, Daniel Zuta **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Sternenberg Films, in co-production with Clara Filmproduction, Fun De Mental, Brandstorm Entertainment, Spektrum-film **RUNTIME** 107 min **LANGUAGE** German, English

**SALES** Sternenberg Films, Konstantin Korenchuk  
korenchuk@sternenberg-films.de • www.sternenberg-films.de



© André Szardenings

## BULLDOG

For as long as 21-year-old Bruno can remember, there has only been him and the unconditional love of his mother Toni, who is 15 years older. Nothing else seems to find room in the chaotic life of the two. It is only when Hannah, Toni's new partner, moves into the bungalow they share in Spain that Bruno is in danger of losing his mother's essential love. Displaced from the bed they share, Bruno must realize that his previous sense of responsibility for Toni, is a greater burden for him than he thought. Faced with the decision between his own life and the suffocating relationship with his mother, Bruno realizes that this will be the first decision he has to make on his own...

**GENRE** Coming-of-Age Story, Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** André Szardenings **SCREENPLAY** André Szardenings **CINEMATOGRAPHY** André Szardenings **CAST** Julius Nitschkoff, Lana Cooper, Karin Hanczewski, Moritz Führmann **PRODUCERS** Lea Neu, Katharina Kolleczeck **PRODUCTION** ifs internationale filmschule köln gmbh, André Szardenings, Bayerischer Rundfunk **RUN-TIME** 95 min **LANGUAGE** German, English **AWARDS** FIRST STEPS Awards 2021 (nominated in the category Prime Time Feature Film)

**SALES** ifs internationale filmschule köln gmbh, Nadja Radojevic  
info@filmschule.de • www.filmshule.de



© Flare Film

# GLÜCK

## BLISS

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Sascha has been working in the Berlin brothel "Queens" for many years. Maria is the new girl, she is independent, maverick and queer. Sascha is immediately drawn to this otherness, Maria in turn is fascinated by Sascha's supreme ease. The attraction becomes a love that works differently than anything either has experienced before. A promise of great bliss. But then their connection starts to tremble – because of their fear of showing each other their true selves and facing up to their own abysses.

**GENRE** Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Henrika Kull **SCREENPLAY** Henrika Kull  
**CINEMATOGRAPHY** Carolina Steinbrecher **CAST** Katharina Behrens, Adam Hoya **PRODUCER**  
Martin Heisler **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Flare Film, in co-production with ZDF – Das kleine Fernseh-  
spiel **RUNTIME** 90 min **LANGUAGE** German, English, Italian **FESTIVALS** Berlinale 2021

**SALES** Reel Suspects • [info@reelsuspects.com](mailto:info@reelsuspects.com) • [www.reelsuspects.com](http://www.reelsuspects.com)



© Bikepunk Productions

# KRISE IST IMMER

## CRISIS IS ALWAYS

CRISIS IS ALWAYS tells the story of a young woman's politicization. In the midst of (anti)feminism, right wing populism and precarity emerges a tender story of solidarity and friendship between the young protagonist Laura, her best friend Aylin, and Tamara, a non-binary trans person in her mid-sixties.

Laura, in her early 20s, is looking for her place in life. She works as a cleaner in a hotel – precariously employed, in debt, and without any formal training or qualifications. Laura is in crisis. But there is a glimmer of hope: she wants to move in with Franziska, her partner. Franziska is a member of a new far-right party and Laura's interest in politics is piqued. Laura is connected to her best friend Aylin, who works in the kitchen of the same hotel, through tender working class solidarity. When Aylin finds out that Laura's girlfriend Franziska is a member of a far-right party, Laura's one friendship is put at stake. It is only through a chance encounter with the 60-something trans activist, Tamara, that she is able to gain a new perspective.

**GENRE** Drama, Experimental, Melodrama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2020 **DIRECTOR** Dan Dansen **SCREENPLAY** Dan Dansen, Uta Hörmeyer **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Antonia Pepita Giesler **CAST** Lea Ostrovskiy, Mariann Yar, Astarte Posch, Dieter-Rita Scholl **PRODUCER** Dan Dansen **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Bikepunk Productions **RUNTIME** 61 min **LANGUAGE** German, English **FESTIVALS** Hof International Filmfestival Germany 2020 **AWARDS** Nomination for the New German Cinema Award at Hof International Film Festival Germany 2020

**SALES** Bikepunk Productions, Dan Dansen • [info@bikepunkproductions.de](mailto:info@bikepunkproductions.de) • [www.bikepunkproductions.de](http://www.bikepunkproductions.de)



© Ricardo Vaz Palma / In Good Company

## MISSION ULJA FUNK

When Ulja (12) is prevented from pursuing her passion, astronomy, she decides to take matters into her own hands. With a stolen hearse and a 13-year-old classmate as a driver, she makes her way across Eastern Europe to watch the impact of an asteroid. In doing so, she not only has to shake off her persecutors, but also her pragmatic view of friendship and family.

**GENRE** Adventure, Family Entertainment **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Barbara Kronenberg  
**SCREENPLAY** Barbara Kronenberg **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Konstantin Kröning **CAST** Romy Lou Janinhoff, Jonas Oeßel, Hildegard Schroedter, Luc Feit, Anja Schneider, Ivan Shvedoff, Christina Große, Janina Elkin, Peter Trabner, Martina Eitner-Acheampong **PRODUCERS** Roshanak Behesht Nedjad, Bernard Michaux, Joanna Szymańska **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** In Good Company, ShipsBoy, Samsa Film  
**RUNTIME** 92 min **LANGUAGE** German, English **FESTIVALS** Berlinale 2021

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





© Flare Film

# RÄUBERHÄNDE

## STAMBUL GARDEN

Janik and Samuel are best friends and enjoy the end of high school. Their worlds are different: Janik has parents who always do everything right, while Samuel comes from a broken home. Samuel wants order, Janik wants chaos. A thoughtless moment puts the close bond between the two friends in jeopardy. As they set off on their long-planned trip to Istanbul, the boys are looking to save their friendship, enjoy their freedom and try out a new life.

**GENRE** Coming-of-Age Story, Drama **CATEGORY** Feature **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Ilker Çatak **SCREENPLAY** Gabriele Simon, Finn-Ole Heinrich **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Judith Kaufmann **CAST** Emil von Schönfels, Mekyas Mulugeta, Katharina Behrens, Nicole Marischka, Godehard Giese, Oğulcan Arman Uslu **PRODUCERS** Gabriele Simon, Martin Heisler **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Flare Film **RUNTIME** 90 min **LANGUAGE** German, Turkish, English

**SALES** Totem Films • hello@totem-films.com • www.totem-films.com



© Fantomfilm

# DIE WAHRE SCHÖNHEIT

## THE UGLY TRUTH

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A couple struggles to keep their relationship afloat with their daughter finding it difficult to fit in. Everything starts to collapse when an attractive young woman comes to visit. Their problems and fragility surface, as a tragic downward spiral takes its inevitable course...

With Eva Habermann in the main role. Featuring the new generation of German film stars Lillie Liefers and Emma Schweiger.

**GENRE** Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Krishna Ashu Bhati **SCREENPLAY** Krishna Ashu Bhati, Eva Habermann **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Christoph Wieczorek **CAST** Eva Habermann, Marcus Grüsser, Lillie Liefers, Caroline Hartig, Emma Schweiger **PRODUCERS** Eva Habermann, Alexander König **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Fantomfilm **RUNTIME** 100 min **LANGUAGE** German, English

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

LORNA ISHEMA  
ACTRESS

LAILA PETERSEN-JAMA  
STORYBOARD ARTIST

SARAH BLABKIEWITZ  
DIRECTOR

TUA EL-FAWWAL  
ACTRESS

ANNEKATRIN HENDEL  
DIRECTOR

JIEUN YI  
CINEMATOGRAPHER

ULÉ BARCELOS  
COSTUME DESIGNER

FREYA ARDE  
COMPOSER



# FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS

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## THE FILMMAKERS



© Madonnen Film

# HERR BACHMANN UND SEINE KLASSE

## MR BACHMANN AND HIS CLASS

MR BACHMANN AND HIS CLASS follows the lessons and social interactions of a 6th grade class in Stadtallendorf in the German state Hesse. The teacher Dieter Bachmann employs unconventional methods of freely engaging in conversation with his students, playing music with them, and taking on the role of their empathetic yet critical counterpart. The class is composed of children from various milieus, and reflects the sociocultural history of the city and its local industry. The first migrant workers arrived in the early Sixties, from Italy, Greece and Turkey. But the town's history of foreign workforce goes back to the Nazi Regime. During WW II, Stadtallendorf was the biggest European production site for explosives and munitions. The major part of the employees were forced laborer from German-occupied countries.

**GENRE** Children & Youth, Society, Portrait **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Maria Speth **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Reinhold Vorschneider **PRODUCER** Maria Speth **RUNTIME** 217 min **LANGUAGE** German, English **FESTIVALS** Berlin International Film Festival 2021, Hong Kong International Film Festival 2021 **AWARDS** Silver Bear Jury Prize at Berlin International Film Festival 2021

**SALES** Films Boutique GmbH • [contact@filmsboutique.com](mailto:contact@filmsboutique.com) • [www.filmsboutique.com](http://www.filmsboutique.com)



© Roland Wagner

## SHUTDOWN 2020

As in numerous countries around the world, there are massive cuts in the public and private lives of citizens in Germany during the course of the Corona pandemic. Public institutions are being shut down or have to close. The world has changed suddenly.

The director and cameraman Roland Wagner takes his camera to those places that visually show the effects of the shutdown most clearly. These are places of silence, places of standstill, but also places where the time is used for repairs and cleaning, or where new ideas are implemented due to the often existence-threatening situation. The mostly deserted places appear to have fallen out of time and, due to the absence of people, sometimes also ghostly.

**GENRE** Society **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Roland Wagner **SCREENPLAY** Roland Wagner **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Roland Wagner **CAST** Frederik Mayet, Nick Trachte, Anton Kaiser, Hans-Jörg Reiter, Peter Fleming, Andreas Beck **PRODUCER** Roland Wagner **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Roland Wagner **RUNTIME** 90 min **LANGUAGE** German, English

**SALES** Roland Wagner • [info@rolandwagner-kameramann.de](mailto:info@rolandwagner-kameramann.de) • [www.rolandwagner-kameramann.de](http://www.rolandwagner-kameramann.de)



© Graz Diez

## LETTERS FROM SILIVRI

Osman Kavala, a leading figure in Turkey's civil society, has been in custody in the largest high-security prison in Europe in Silivri since November 1, 2017. Prosecutors accused Kavala of organizing the "Gezi protests" in Istanbul. A verdict was only delivered on the 18 February 2020, when he was acquitted. But on the same day, the chief prosecutor of Istanbul demanded the continued detention in which he was accused of an involvement in the attempted coup d'état in 2016. If convicted, Osman Kavala faces life imprisonment without parole.

LETTERS FROM SILIVRI draws on letters of Osman Kavala to document a timeline of his imprisonment. By separating voice and image the film intends to create an echo chamber that allows audiences to listen more carefully to Kavalas letters, while at the same time place his words in context to a civil society.

**GENRE** Experimental Documentary **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2020 **DIRECTOR** Adrian Figueroa **SCREEN-PLAY** Adrian Figueroa, Tunçay Kulaoğlu **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Meryem Yavuz **CAST** Mustafa Avkiran **PRODUCER** Çiğdem Mater **CO-PRODUCER** Adrian Figueroa **PRODUCTION COMPANY** RET FILM **RUN-TIME** 15 min **LANGUAGE** Turkish, English **FESTIVALS** International Short Film Festival Oberhausen 2020, ACHTUNG BERLIN – New Berlin Film Award 2020, Kasseler Dokfest 2020, Stuttgarter Filmwinter 2021, Clermont-Ferrand ISFF 2021 **AWARDS** Clermont- Ferrand ISFF – Connexion Award & Student Prize 2021, SIYAD AWARD (Turkish Film Critics Association) 2021

**SALES** Adrian Figueroa • [adrianfigueroa4@gmail.com](mailto:adrianfigueroa4@gmail.com)



© FORTIS FEM FILM

# DIE PATRIOTIN

## THE PATRIOT

Excited and clumsy, Mrs. Ogurtsova runs out of a voting station. Outside, she gets into a fight with a woman because of the bag, she has apparently thrown false ballots in the ballot box. Later, at the police station, Mrs. Ogurtsova gets a tempting offer: she is to become a member of the oversight committee in the elections. Mrs. Ogurtsova cannot resist the honor of serving her homeland Russia. Her decision unexpectedly ends up with her mother's death.

**GENRE** Tragicomedy, Politics **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Anja Kreis **SCREENPLAY** Anja Kreis **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Alexander Schwarz **CAST** Julianna Mikhnevitch, Tatjana Vladimirova, Tatiana Ruzhavsckaya, Oleg Garbuz **PRODUCER** Anna Kruglova **PRODUCTION COMPANY** FORTIS FEM FILM **RUN-TIME** 20 min **LANGUAGE** Russian

**SALES** FORTIS FEM FILM, Anna Kruglova • fortisfemfilm@gmail.com • www.fortisfemfilm.com



© Laura Mentgen

## SHOULD WE ALL BE FEMINISTS?

SHOULD WE ALL BE FEMINISTS? looks at different women's cultural, social, religious and political perspectives on role models and modern feminism in Berlin.

The documentary is based on contrasting women's perspectives meanwhile talking about kindness, respect, empowerment and equality in their personal life. The main goal was to dig deep and find the right balance between sorrow and happiness, while respectfully capturing each story through an intimate cinematography.

SHOULD WE ALL BE FEMINISTS? is a shocking, moving and admirable glimpse into each protagonist's lived reality.

**GENRE** Drama, Love Story **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Silke Meya **SCREENPLAY** Silke Meya, Laura Mentgen **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Laura Mentgen **PRODUCERS** Silke Meya, Laura Mentgen **CO-PRODUCERS** Elisabeth Hopper, Amy Dowd **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Noumia Film, in co-production with WDW Entertainment **RUNTIME** 25 min **LANGUAGE** German, Hebrew, English **FESTIVALS** Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Market 2021

**SALES** Noumia Film, Laura Mentgen • [info@noumia-film.com](mailto:info@noumia-film.com) • [www.noumia-film.com](http://www.noumia-film.com)





© Rudel Film

# SPLIT

One morning Livia wakes up with a wet dream. She has a violent fantasy about a man physically abusing her. Struggling to understand what this desire is about and how to deal with it, she tries to figure out, where the border between passion and violence lies.

**GENRE** Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2021 **DIRECTOR** Sarah Miro Fischer **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Selma von Polheim Gravesen **CAST** Malaya Stern Takeda, Aram Tafreshian **PRODUCER** Maximilian Seidel **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Rudel Film **RUNTIME** 27 min **LANGUAGE** German, English

**SALES** Rudel Film, Maximilian Seidel • [maximilian@rudelfilm.de](mailto:maximilian@rudelfilm.de) • [www.rudelfilm.de](http://www.rudelfilm.de)



© Henriette Rietz

# WOCHENBETT

## POSTPARTUM

POSTPARTUM is about the chaotic phase in life of a new mother. Pumped up with hormones and lacking sleep, this intense time has burned deep into the protagonist's heart. This film is an honest and very personal insight into the world of an overwhelmed mother, who seriously thought that parental leave would become a sort of sabbatical.

**GENRE** Animation **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2020 **DIRECTOR** Henriette Rietz **SCREENPLAY** Henriette Rietz  
**CAST** Lova Pfeiffer, Charlotte Roche **PRODUCER** Henriette Rietz **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Henriette Rietz, in co-production with interfilm Berlin Management **RUNTIME** 5 min **LANGUAGE** German, English **FESTIVALS** La Guarimba International Film Festival 2020, Animation Block Party 2020, Filmfest Dresden 2020, Animatou 2020, AFI Fest 2020, Encounters Film Festival 2020, E&U European Short Film Festival 2020, Anima 2021, Flickerfest 2021, Tampere Film Festival 2021, Annecy Festival 2021 **AWARDS** LUCA GenderDiversity Film Award 2020, Special Mention Filmfest Dresden (Animation) 2020, Special Mention Animatou 2020, Semi-Finalist Best Short Film from the European Union 2020, Special Mention One-Reeler Short Film Competition 2020, Special Mention Tampere Film Festival 2021

**SALES** interfilm Berlin Management GmbH, Cord Dueppe • sales@interfilm.de • www.interfilm.de



# NEXT GENERATION SHORT TIGER

COMING SOON



© Daniel Dornhöfer

## ACH DU SCHEISSE! HOLY SHIT!

Lukas Rinker's debut feature produced by Neopol Film opens with architect Frank (Thomas Niehaus) regaining consciousness in a locked portaloos – known in German vernacular by the "Dixi" brand name – on a building site where a detonation is being prepared. As he desperately tries to find ways of escaping this „prison“ before potentially being blown to smithereens, he realizes who has put him into this predicament: none other than the corrupt and lecherous mayor Horst (Gedeon Burkhard) who also has designs on Frank's pregnant girlfriend Marie (Olga von Luckwald). Now Frank has to do everything in his power to get out alive, save his Marie and expose Horst's delusional crimes...

**GENRE** Black Comedy-Thriller **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Lukas Rinker **SCREENPLAY** Lukas Rinker **CAST** Thomas Niehaus, Olga von Luckwald, Gedeon Burkhard, Friederike Kempfer, Björn Meyer, Uke Bosse, Rodney Charles, Micaela Schäfer **PRODUCERS** Tonio Kellner, Jakob Zapf **CO-PRODUCER** Thore Vollert **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Neopol Film in co-production with Studio Hamburg Enterprises **LANGUAGE** German

### SALES

ARRI Media International, Moritz Hemminger  
worldsales@arri.de  
www.arri-media.de/international



© Carsten Waldbauer

## DAVID (AT)

Hospital manager David-Ruben Thies, CEO of a county hospital in Eastern Germany, has a vision of a new kind of hospital: one designed as a comfortable patient hotel where organic food is served and everyone is treated as a guest regardless of their health insurance category. A place where innovative care concepts are combined with attention to privacy, safety and improved working conditions for the staff. It's an ambitious plan, but David is a pioneer, somebody who wants to set standards. But modern medicine is a tough business, and not everyone shares his ambitions – there are various obstacles to overcome before the hospital of the future will become reality. And another one appears that nobody had anticipated: in 2020, David's plans are interrupted by the outbreak of the global pandemic.

**GENRE** Educational **CATEGORY** Documentary **DIRECTOR** Antje Schneider **SCREENPLAY** Antje Schneider **PRODUCER** Stefan Kloos **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Kloos & Co. Ost UG in co-production with ZDF/Das kleine Fernsehspiel **LANGUAGE** German

### SALES

Rise and Shine World Sales, Stefan Kloos  
info@riseandshine-berlin.de  
www.riseandshine-berlin.com



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## DEINE FLECKEN YOUR SPOTTED SKIN

While stressing out over her final exams, Antonia the Cow meets the night watchman, Kurt the Lion.

They fall in love, but their relationship is met with great skepticism by the world around them. Antonia's farm animal roommates have little time for these predatory posers from the wild, while Kurt's pride still view themselves as the kings of the jungle and can't understand why he'd choose a cow as a partner.

When a sheep goes missing, suspicion falls on the carnivorous Kurt...

**GENRE** Action, Adventure, Animation, Comedy, Drama **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTORS** Stefan Krohmer, Daniel Nocke, Thomas Meyer-Hermann **SCREENPLAY** Daniel Nocke **CAST** Luise Heyer, Henning Baum **PRODUCER** Thomas Meyer-Hermann **CO-PRODUCER** Martin Schmidt **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Studio FILM BILDER GmbH **CO-PRODUCTION COMPANY** Raumkapsel Animation GbR **LANGUAGE** German, English

### CONTACT

Studio FILM BILDER GmbH  
Thomas Meyer-Hermann  
studio@filmbilder.de  
www.filmbilder.de



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## DEVILS

Based on the bestseller by Guido Maria Brera, DEVILS tells the story of the silent but devastating war that affected the Western world in the last decade through fragments of reality and fictional characters. An underground war fought with the most powerful weapon: finance. Season 2 is set in 2016, post-Brexit referendum. Massimo is now NYL's new CEO and appointed to the board by Chinese investors, who are waging a silent war against the US to rule over the high-tech sector. Acquisition after acquisition, Massimo discovers a pattern where the data of millions of people are collected and fought over by the two sides. His awareness is going to reach the climax in 2020: the global pandemic becomes the arena where the war will come into the light, and he will finally have to choose sides.

**GENRE** Drama, Thriller **CATEGORY** Series **DIRECTORS** Nick Hurran, Jan Maria Micheleni **SCREENPLAY** Frank Spotnitz, James Dormer, Naomi Gibney, Caroline Henry **CAST** Alessandro Borghi, Patrick Dempsey, Malachi Kirby, Pia Mechler, Paul Chowdhry, Harry Michell, Lars Mikkelsen, Li Jun Li, Joel de la Fuente, Clara Rosanger **PRODUCERS** Luca & Matilde Bernabei, for Sky: Nils Hartmann, Sonia Rovai **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Lux Vide, with Big Light Productions **CO-PRODUCTION COMPANY** Sky Studios, Orange Studio and OCS **LANGUAGE** German, English

### SALES

NBCUniversal Global Distribution, Jennifer Hahn  
jennifer.hahn@nbcuni.com



© Claudia Müller

## ELFRIEDE JELINEK – DIE SPRACHE VON DER LEINE LASSEN

Child prodigy, scandal writer, traitor of the fatherland, theatre fury, feminist, fashion lover, communist, pessimist, language terrorist, rebel, enfant terrible, defiler of the nest, and brilliant, vulnerable artist.

A multi-layered, associative film portrait about the first Austrian female author to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, ELFRIEDE JELINEK – LANGUAGE UNLEASHED offers a unique insight of the Austrian author's artistic approach to language and the creation of her work in a contemporary context. German actors Sandra Hüller, Ilse Ritter, Stefanie Reinsperger and Martin Wuttke recite her texts and offer us an inkling of the artistic challenge and extreme pleasure of working with those texts.

**ENGLISH TITLE** ELFRIEDE JELINEK – LANGUAGE UNLEASHED **GENRE** Art **CATEGORY** Feature Documentary **DIRECTOR** Claudia Müller **SCREENPLAY** Claudia Müller **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Christine A. Maier **CAST** Ilse Ritter, Sandra Hüller, Stefanie Reinsperger, Martin Wuttke **PRODUCER** Martina Haubrich **CO-PRODUCER** Claudia Wohlgenannt **PRODUCTION COMPANY** CALA Filmproduktion GmbH in co-production with Plan-C Filmproduktion **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Farbfilm Verleih

### CONTACT

CALA Filmproduktion GmbH, Martina Haubrich  
haubrich@calafilm.de  
www.calafilm.de



© ARD Degeto / ORF / MonaFilm / Square One / P. Brozek

## EUER EHREN (AT)

To protect his 17-year-old son from the deadly revenge of a ruthless drug cartel after a hit-and-run accident, a righteous judge and loving father throws all his moral values overboard and unintentionally unleashes an avalanche of lies, manipulation and violence that drags him and his loved ones deeper and deeper into the abyss. People – including innocent people – die.

For the judge there is now no turning back...

**GENRE** Thriller **CATEGORY** Series **DIRECTOR** David Nawrath **SCREENPLAY** David Marian, David Nawrath **CAST** Sebastian Koch, Tobias Moretti, Paula Beer, Ursula Strauss, Sascha Geršak, Taddeo Kufus, Lena Kalisch, Rainer Bock **PRODUCER** Al Munteanu **CO-PRODUCERS** Thomas Hroch, Gerald Podgomig **PRODUCTION COMPANY** SquareOne Productions GmbH in co-production with MonaFilm Produktion GmbH, ARD Degeto Film and ORF, produced with the support of Austrian Television Fund and Cine Tirol Film Commission **LANGUAGE** German

### CONTACT

SquareOne, Thomas Sierk  
thomas.sierk@square-o-n-e.com  
www.square-o-n-e.com



© Thomas Reider

## GROÙE FREIHEIT (AT) GREAT FREEDOM (WT)

GREAT FREEDOM (WT) tells the life story of Hans Hoffmann in several interwoven time periods. Hans is twenty when he is imprisoned for the first time because of his homosexuality. Protective custody. Auschwitz concentration camp. At the end of the war, all prisoners are released from the concentration camps. All of them? No, Hans is transferred directly to prison. Paragraph 175, in force since 1872 and tightened in 1935, continues to apply. But Hans persists in searching for freedom and love, even when they are found at the most unusual place.

**GENRE** Drama **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Sebastian Meise **SCREENPLAY** Sebastian Meise, Thomas Reider **CAST** Franz Rogowski, Georg Friedrich and others **PRODUCERS** Benny Drechsel, Sabine Moser, Oliver Neumann **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Rohfilm Productions, Leipzig, Freibeuter Films, Wien **LANGUAGE** German

### CONTACT

Rohfilm Productions GmbH, Benny Drechsel  
www.rohfilm-productions.com



© SamFilm, Warner Bros., Marc Reimann

## DER JUNGE HÄUPTLING WINNETOU

While 12-year-old chief's son Winnetou sees himself already as a great warrior, his father Intschu-Tschuna believes that his son still has a lot to learn. When the buffalo herd fails to arrive, threatening the tribe's survival, Winnetou seizes the opportunity to prove himself to his father. Together with his sister Nscho-Tschi and the young orphan Tom, Winnetou sets off on a dangerous adventure to save the people of the Apache.

**ENGLISH TITLE** YOUNG WINNETOU AND THE LOST BUFFALO **GENRE** Adventure **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Mike Marzuk **SCREENPLAY** Mike Marzuk, Gesa Scheibner **CAST** Mika Ullritz, Milo Haaf, Lola Linnéa Padotzke, Mehmet Kurtulus, Anatole Taubman, Tim Oliver Schultz, Hildegard Schmahl, Daniel Christensen, Michael Kranz, Helmfried von Lüttichau, Xenia Assenza **PRODUCERS** Ewa Karlström, Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton **CO-PRODUCERS** Bernd Schiller, Christoph Fisser **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Sam-Film GmbH, Warner Bros. Entertainment GmbH **CO-PRODUCTION COMPANY** Studio Babelsberg **LANGUAGE** German

### SALES

ARRI Media International  
worldsales@arri.de  
www.arri-media.de/international



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## MALA ARIA

Kids are playing in the streets, the elders are waiting for the rain. Rain means food, rain means life. But the rain also brings the "bad air" – the Mala Aria. When the rains are gone, the mala aria will have taken the kids as its toll. The documentary follows four ordinary people who oppose this curse from different angles to lower the malaria burden among their communities: the "retired" midwife Eugenia, Kwame and his team of the National Malaria Control Program Ghana, the Kenyan investigative journalist David and the refugee Precious who is drugged with anti-malarials by the Greek authorities to prevent another local outbreak, as malaria spreads into the north by globalization.

**GENRE** Action, Adventure **CATEGORY** Documentary **DIRECTOR** Sandrina Koppitz **SCREENPLAY** Sandrina Koppitz **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Arsenij Gusev **PRODUCER** Tanja Georgieva-Waldhauer **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Elemag Pictures **LANGUAGE** English, Twi, Swahili

### SALES

Tanja Georgieva-Waldhauer  
[tanja@elemagpictures.com](mailto:tanja@elemagpictures.com)  
[www.elemagpictures.com](http://www.elemagpictures.com)



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## THE SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

Five friends are lured by a competition into a supposed „Escape Room“ adventure. What they don't know, however, is that the so-called game is, in fact, a behavioural experiment developed by a psychologist and a computer scientist. The teenagers' friendship will be tested to the limit as the escape room starts playing the friends off against each other and confronting them with their deepest fears and weaknesses. A race against time and a battle between life and death begins...

Hamburg Media School graduate Pascal Schröder's debut feature is the first German feature film to be predominantly shot using the "virtual production" technology which replaces the green screen with an LED studio to create photo-real digital landscapes and sets.

**GENRE** Thriller, Youth Thriller **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Pascal Schröder **SCREENPLAY** Pascal Schröder, Raffaella Kraus **CAST** Marven Gabriel Suarez Brinkert, Thapelo Mashiane, Emilia Djalili, Gustav Strunz, Elmo Anton Stratz, Raffaella Kraus, Claudiu Mark Draghici **PRODUCER** Andreas Schlieter **CO-PRODUCERS** Pascal Schröder, Raffaella Kraus **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Gipfelstürmer Filmproduktion UG **LANGUAGE** German

### CONTACT

Gipfelstürmer Filmproduktion UG  
 Andreas Schlieter  
[andreas@gipfelstuermer-film.com](mailto:andreas@gipfelstuermer-film.com)  
[www.gipfelstuermer-film.com](http://www.gipfelstuermer-film.com)





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## SUBTEXT (AT)

Sophie Linnenbaum's graduation film for her Master's degree at the Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF describes a world run by "main characters" and supported by "side characters", while the "outtakes" are marginalized and oppressed.

16-year-old Paula has worked her way up from the status of a simple supporting character and is about to take the crucial test to become a main character, but she simply isn't able to create the kind of emotional music required by the test. Searching for a solution, she finds herself in the world of the ostracised outtakes with whom she has more in common than she might have initially wished for...

**GENRE** Tragicomedy **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Sophie Linnenbaum **SCREENPLAY** Sophie Linnenbaum, Michael Fetter Nathansky **CAST** Fine Sendel, Jule Böwe, Henning Pekar, Sira Faal, Denise M'Baye, Pasquale Aleardi, Noah Tinwa **PRODUCERS** Laura Klippel and Britta Strampe **CO-PRODUCER** Sophie Linnenbaum **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Bandenfilm Laura Klippel & Britta Strampe GbR in co-production with Filmuniversität Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF and ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Not, Sold GmbH

### CONTACT

Bandenfilm Laura Klippel & Britta Strampe GbR  
[info@bandenfilm.de](mailto:info@bandenfilm.de)  
[www.bandenfilm.de](http://www.bandenfilm.de)

# OPENING THE DOORS TO GERMAN CINEMA



## WORLDWIDE

german  
●●● films

# 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, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, HessenFilm, 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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**Peter Dinges**  
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**Petra Müller**  
**Sabine Pollmeier**



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



**Carmen Böhm**  
*Head of Distribution Support & Previews*  
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 44  
 boehm@german-films.de



**Johanna Buse**  
*Head of Regional Desk Southern Europe & South- & Central America*  
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 14  
 buse@german-films.de



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



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



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



**Julia Khramtsova**  
*Assistant to Managing Director*  
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 21  
 khramtsova@german-films.de



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



**Marcos Rabelo**  
*Festival Relations, German Showcases & Subtitling Support*  
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 10  
 rabelo@german-films.de



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



**Andrea Schiefer**  
*Director of Administration p.p. & Strategic Development*  
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 24  
 schiefer@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 & Regional Desk Central and Eastern Europe*  
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 20  
 teichmann@german-films.de



**Jessica Trute**  
*Head of Public Relations*  
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 28  
 trute@german-films.de



**Chen Zhang**  
*Accounting*  
 phone +49-89-59 97 87 22  
 zhang@german-films.de



### Allianz Deutscher Produzenten – Film & Fernsehen e.V. German Producers Alliance

Kronenstr. 3 | 10117 Berlin/Germany  
phone +49-30-2 06 70 88 0 | info@produzentenallianz.de | www.produzentenallianz.de

### Arbeitsgemeinschaft Dokumentarfilm e.V. German Documentary Association

Mainzer Landstr. 105 | 60329 Frankfurt am Main/Germany  
phone +49-69-62 37 00 | agdok@agdok.de | www.agdok.de

### Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kurzfilm e.V. German Short Film Association

Förstereistr. 36 | 01099 Dresden/Germany  
phone +49-3 51-4 04 55 75 | info@ag-kurzfilm.de | www.ag-kurzfilm.de

### Deutsche Kinemathek Museum für Film und Fernsehen

Potsdamer Str. 2 | 10785 Berlin/Germany  
phone +49-30-30 09 03-0 | info@deutsche-kinemathek.de | www.deutsche-kinemathek.de

### FilmFernsehFonds Bayern GmbH Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Medien in Bayern

Sonnenstr. 21 | 80331 Munich/Germany  
phone +49-89-54 46 02-0 | filmfoerderung@fff-bayern.de | www.fff-bayern.de

### Filmförderungsanstalt German Federal Film Board

Große Präsidentenstr. 9 | 10178 Berlin/Germany  
phone +49-30-27 57 70 | info@ffa.de | www.ffa.de

### Film- und Medienstiftung NRW GmbH

Kaistr. 14 | 40221 Düsseldorf/Germany  
phone +49-2 11-93 05 00 | info@filmstiftung.de | www.filmstiftung.de

### Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH

August-Bebel-Str. 26-53 | 14482 Potsdam-Babelsberg/Germany  
phone +49-3 31-74 38 70 | info@medienboard.de | www.medienboard.de

### Produzentenverband e.V. German Producers Guild

Häbertstr. 5 | 80337 Munich/Germany | phone +49-30-25 77 16 90  
mail@produzentenverband.de | www.produzentenverband.de

### Verband Deutscher Filmexporteure e.V. (VDFE) Association of German Film Exporters

Winterfeldtstr. 56 | 10781 Berlin/Germany  
phone +49-173-577 08 38 | mail@vdf.de | www.vdf.de

### Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien Federal Government Commissioner for Culture & the Media

Potsdamer Platz 1 | 10785 Berlin/Germany | phone +49-30-18 68 10  
K36@bkm.bund.de | www.kulturstaatsministerin.de

### Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein GmbH

Friedensallee 14-16 | 22765 Hamburg/Germany  
phone +49-40-398 37-0 | www.ffsh.de

### HessenFilm und Medien GmbH

Am Steinernen Stock 1 | 60320 Frankfurt am Main/Germany  
phone +49-69-15 32 404-0 | foerderung@hessenfilm.de | www.hessenfilm.de

### MFG Medien- und Filmgesellschaft Baden-Württemberg mbH

Bereich Filmförderung | Breitscheidstr. 4 | 70174 Stuttgart/Germany  
phone +49-7 11-90 71 54 00 | filmfoerderung@mfg.de | www.film.mfg.de

### Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung GmbH

Petersstr. 22-24 | 04109 Leipzig/Germany  
phone +49-3 41-26 98 70 | info@mdm-online.de | www.mdm-online.de

### nordmedia – Film- und Mediengesellschaft Niedersachsen/Bremen mbH

Expo Plaza 1 | 30539 Hanover/Germany  
phone +49-5 11-1 23 45 60 | info@nordmedia.de | www.nordmedia.de

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## **Verband deutscher Filmexporteure e.V. (VD FE)**

Winterfeldstr. 56  
10781 Berlin/Germany  
phone +49-173-577 08 38  
mail@vdf.de  
www.vdf.de

## **ARRI Media International**

Türkenstr. 89  
80799 Munich/Germany  
phone +49-89-38 09 12 88  
worldsales@arri.de  
www.arrimedia.de/international

## **Beta Cinema GmbH**

Grünwalder Weg 28d  
82041 Oberhaching/Germany  
phone +49-89-6 73 46 98 28  
beta@betacinema.com  
www.betacinema.com

## **Constantin Film Verleih GmbH**

Feilitzschstr. 6  
80802 Munich/Germany  
phone +49-89-44 44 60 0  
zentrale@constantin.film  
www.constantin-film.de

## **Global Screen – a brand of Telepool GmbH**

Sonnenstr. 21  
80331 Munich/Germany  
phone +49-89-24 41 29 55 00  
info@globalscreen.de  
www.globalscreen.de

## **The Match Factory GmbH**

Domstr. 60  
50668 Cologne/Germany  
phone +49-2 21-53 97 09-0  
info@matchfactory.de  
www.the-match-factory.com

## **Media Luna New Films UG**

Kaiser-Wilhelm-Ring 38, 6th Floor  
50672 Cologne/Germany  
phone +49-2 21-51 09 18 91  
info@medialuna.biz  
www.medialuna.biz

## **Picture Tree International GmbH**

Husemannstr. 7  
10435 Berlin/Germany  
phone +49-30-420 824 80  
pti@picturetree-international.com  
www.picturetree-international.com

## **SOLA Media GmbH**

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

## GERMAN FILMS QUARTERLY IS PUBLISHED BY

**German Films Service + Marketing GmbH**  
**Herzog-Wilhelm-Str. 16**  
**80331 Munich/Germany**  
**phone +49-89-5 99 78 70**  
**info@german-films.de**  
**www.german-films.de**

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**Editor**  
 Eva-Maria Pellikan

**Contributors**  
 Martin Blaney, Patrick Heidmann,  
 Susanne Hermanski, Anke Leweke

**Translations**  
 Lucinda Rennison

**This issue has two different covers**  
 Jakob M. Erwa © Sven Serkis  
 Martina Haubrich © Claudia Weidemann

**Design & Art Direction**  
 Werner Schauer [www.triptychon.biz](http://www.triptychon.biz)

**Printing Office**  
[www.esta-druck.de](http://www.esta-druck.de)

## FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVES

**USA – New York**  
 German Film Office  
 An initiative of German Films  
 and Goethe-Institut  
 Sara Stevenson  
 phone+1 212 439 8706  
[sara.stevenson@goethe.de](mailto:sara.stevenson@goethe.de)  
[www.germanfilmoffice.us](http://www.germanfilmoffice.us)

**China**  
 Anke Redl  
 phone +86 136 01 35 59 19  
[redl@german-films.de](mailto:redl@german-films.de)

**Eastern Europe**  
 Marcel Maïga  
 phone +49 176 38 84 56 72  
[maiga@german-films.de](mailto:maiga@german-films.de)



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