

GFAQ

GERMAN FILMS QUARTERLY

ISSUE 2-2026

WITH PORTRAITS AND ARTICLES OF
DIRECTORS **SHAHRBANOO SADAT & FARAZ SHARIAT**
PRODUCER **PHILIPP TRAUER**
ACTOR **HELENA ZENGEL**
SALES COMPANY **M-APPEAL**
EDITOR **ANDREW BIRD**
PERSPECTIVE: CURATORIUM YOUNG GERMAN CINEMA

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Dear Readers,

Great joy at the Berlinale: the political drama **YELLOW LETTERS** by İlker Çatak won the Golden Bear for Best Film at the festival's 76th edition in February. This was the first time in 20 years that a German film had won the competition's top prize in Berlin. In addition, German actress Sandra Hüller was awarded a Silver Bear for Best Leading Performance for her role in the film **ROSE**. But it wasn't just the awards that gave cause for celebration. German cinema was represented in all its diversity with 80 productions and co-productions screening in the various sections, including 56 majority German films. In addition, a German production, **NO GOOD MEN**, had the honour of opening the festival. This issue of GFQ has an interview with the director Shahrbanoo Sadat speaking about the conditions and circumstances under which she directed this film.



The German entry may not have been selected to the final five nominees in the 'International Feature Film' category at the 98th Academy Awards® this year. However, German co-productions and German filmmakers did receive a nomination. The German VFX supervisors Michael Ralla and Guido Wolter, who were nominated for "Visual Effects" in the film **SINNERS**, speak in this issue about their experiences in the international film industry. Congratulations go to the German co-production **MR. NOBODY AGAINST PUTIN** which won the Oscar® in the "Documentary Feature Film" category.

Spring is once again dominated by the Festival de Cannes. The festival's 79th edition will be held on the Croisette from 12 to 23 May. Following Mohammad Rasoulof's **THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG** in 2024 and Mascha Schilinski's **SOUND OF FALLING** last year, 2026 will be the third year in a row that a majority German production - Valeska Grisebach's **THE DREAMED ADVENTURE** - is competing for the Golden Palm. Meanwhile, the German director Volker Schlöndorff will be returning to Cannes with the world premiere of his film **VISITATION** in the Cannes Première section. And Katharina Rivilis is making her debut as a feature film director with **I'LL BE GONE IN JUNE** in Un Certain Regard. This sidebar will also be presenting the majority German production **ELEPHANTS IN THE FOG** by Abinash Bikram Shah, and the film's editor Andrew Bird is being profiled in this magazine. Short films are also represented in other sections, with **DAUGHTERS OF THE LATE COLONEL** by Elizabeth Hobbs screening in the Quinzaine des Cinéastes, and **VATERLAND OR A BULE NAMED YANTO** by Berthold Wahjudi showing in the Semaine de la Critique.

German Films is also presenting the best German short films during the festival in Cannes for the 16th time as part of the "Next Generation Short Tiger" programme. The filmmakers featured in this programme have long been addressing the complexities of the present through their diverse visual ideas, perspectives and approaches. We are delighted that this year's Cannes will once again serve as a platform for the selected shorts and kick-off the programme's tour.

German Films will once again have a presence along with the FFA, the BKM and Focus Germany at the German Pavilion in the Village International Riviera, with the venue serving as a meeting place for filmmakers.

Simone Baumann, Managing Director

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**"BEHIND THE CAMERA,
I FEEL AT HOME"**

A PORTRAIT OF DIRECTOR SHAHRBANOO SADAT

Chaos reigns in the streets of Kabul. Everyone is rushing to the airport to catch a flight to Europe before the Taliban seize power. A woman and a man say their farewells, and a kiss follows. It was this kiss that prompted Shahrbanoo Sadat to take on the leading role in her own film *NO GOOD MEN*. None of the Afghan actresses she knew wanted to play the scene.

Shahrbanoo Sadat opened this year's Berlinale with her third feature film. The 35-year-old director from Afghanistan says that she actually prefers to stay behind the camera. But now she herself is the definitive face of the feature, which tells the story of a woman and mother. Separated from her unfaithful husband, she attempts to make her way as a cinematographer within her homeland's patriarchal system. Sadat calls the film a rom com; she chose an unusual genre because she wanted to show that Afghan cinema is diverse and full of possibilities: "There are so many clichés about Afghanistan, but I wanted to tell an authentic story." It wasn't necessarily intended to become a feminist story, but that does seem quite natural to her "because sexism reigns in Afghan society". She has experienced all manner of discrimination and racism in her life.

Such experiences began in her childhood. Shahrbanoo Sadat was born in Tehran to Afghan refugee parents and grew up an outsider, labeled an "Afi", a derogatory term used in Iran for refugees from neighbouring Afghanistan. At the age of eleven, she returned with her parents to their Afghan village, which brought the first culture shock for the now-director. "There was no school in the village, no electricity, no running water. It was like the Middle Ages." She had to walk for three hours to attend school. Later, she moved to Kabul, initially wanting to study physics but enrolling in an art programme almost by chance.

In Kabul, she came into contact with the Varan Studio for young filmmakers, which enabled her to study in Paris. It was there that she discovered and fell in love with cinema, learning the basics of filmmaking in workshops. She directed her first short film, *VICE VERSA ONE (YEKE VARUNE)*, in 2011, and presented it at Cannes.

In 2013, she released the film *NOT AT HOME*, and in the same year, she founded the production company Wolf Pictures. Her next film drama, *WOLF AND SHEEP*, was screened in the Director's Fortnight section at Cannes Film Festival in 2016 and won the Art Cinema Award.

To support herself, meanwhile she was producing a cooking show for television, a job she says she "hated". There, she met Anwar Hashimi, who was working as a journalist at the same TV station. This marked the beginning of their long and fruitful collaboration; her screenplays are based on both his and her notes. This is true, for example, of *THE ORPHANAGE*, which followed in 2019. Now, Hashimi plays the male lead in her latest film, *NO GOOD MEN*, produced with funding from Germany, France, Denmark, and Norway. The producer is Katja Adomeit of Adomeit Film.

Although the film is set in Kabul, it was shot entirely in Germany, where Shahrbanoo Sadat took refuge in 2021 when the Taliban had seized power. Many scenes were filmed in Hamburg, where she now lives, as well as in Berlin, Brandenburg, Rostock, and Hanover. The dramatized scenes are skillfully interwoven with real footage from Kabul, so that the viewer never gets the impression that the film story is not taking place in Afghanistan. The director meticulously cast all Afghan actors, and the sets are thoughtfully designed to create a contemporary Kabul look. Maximum authenticity is paramount to her.

Shahrbanoo Sadat worked on the film for six years, a period that completely turned her life upside down. What is currently happening in the Middle East naturally weighs heavily on her mind, even though she feels "completely numb" – it's as if she is unable to process any more. She says she has been an outsider, a refugee, all her life: "First in Iran, then in Afghanistan, and now here." She is broken inside, but filmmaking and a love of film have "healed" her: behind the camera, she feels at home – perhaps for the first time in her life.

Marion Meyer



BEYOND BORDERS

A PORTRAIT OF DIRECTOR FARAZ SHARIAT

If it hadn't been for his father, Faraz Shariat might never have become a director. In the 1990s, the head of the family captured their life on VHS tapes, leaving a lasting impression on his son: "There was such power in seeing yourself in those images. I still carry that impulse with me today."

It was this same impulse that led the now 32-year-old to present his film PROSECUTION at the 2026 Berlinale, where the legal thriller won the Panorama Audience Award. And it had also been the catalyst for his feature film debut – the autobiographically inspired NO HARD FEELINGS, a queer coming-of-age story that won the prestigious First Steps Award and the Teddy Award and screened in the Berlinale's Panorama section in 2020. Shariat achieved all this despite never having been to film school and only having directed a few music videos before his first feature film. It was this focus on his own experiences that brought him "very close to the story" and gave him "an incredible amount of help" at the time. The integration of his own biography went so far that he even cast his parents as the protagonist's parents.

Commercially, he has also pursued a unique path: While studying Performing Arts at the University of Hildesheim, he and his fellow students Paulina Lorenz – who was producer and co-writer of NO HARD FEELINGS – and Raquel Dukpa founded the production company "Jünglinge" as a collective.

But he certainly did not stay confined to his personal background; after the success of his debut, he ventured into other genres and milieus. While the British horror-comedy THE BABY (HBO) deals with the constraints of motherhood, for example, the series BLACK FRUITS (ARD) explored the realities of life for Black and queer people in Hamburg. PROSECUTION, different in its turn, tells the story of a young German-Korean public prosecutor who is attacked by a right-wing extremist and struggles for justice within the very system to which she belongs. "The world of justice is far-removed from what I would instinctively devise myself. In that sense, it was very positive for me that I didn't write this script myself, as it gave me insights into a completely new context."

Faraz Shariat shed his outsider status in the German film industry long ago. "We're no longer in the position of the underground rebel." This is evident from the fact that PROSECUTION received funding from various institutions. While the collective structure still plays a part in the creative work of "Jünglinge", like in their collaborative screenwriting for the true crime series ZEIT VERRBECHEN (Paramount+), Faraz Shariat and Paulina Lorenz now operate a more traditional production company: "We produce our own material as well as selected projects by other filmmakers – always aiming to tell stories as specifically as possible and implementing them in a healthy, sustainable manner."

Although Faraz Shariat is now an established German filmmaker, his ideas and plans extend beyond the national borders: "German cinema is where I grew up and now live, but the settings that come to mind are often more international. And we want to be even bolder with our projects."

This global perspective is no coincidence. Faraz Shariat is the son of Iranian immigrants – just like the protagonist in NO HARD FEELINGS. This has shaped him profoundly "as an artist and storyteller": "Iran has always been a place of longing for me; one I know primarily from my parents' stories and my own dreams."

Specifically, this means that he is working with the American writer Ottessa Moshfegh, who is half Iranian in descent, on an adaptation of her short story "The Beach Boy", with which he plans to make his English-language debut. He also wants to film a "lesbian demon horror" in Farsi, set in 1990s Tehran.

This diversity, transcending narrative and aesthetic genres, enables him to follow his creative curiosity. At the same time, it reflects his own queerness, which is a theme or subtext of his stories: "I don't link it to specific identities. It's about questioning the status quo and trying to break down the dominant systems. That's my idea of queer cinema."

Rüdiger Sturm

GERMAN PASSION

A PORTRAIT OF PRODUCER PHILIPP TRAUER

If Philipp Trauer had been less nervous in his youth, he would probably have never ended up at the Oscars®. Despite his musical talent, the stage fright he suffered as a teenager prevented him from pursuing a career as a cellist. So, the now 37-year-old studied at the University of Television and Film Munich. This path ultimately led him to the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles on March 2, 2025.

The political thriller *SEPTEMBER 5*, which he produced, was nominated for an Oscar® for Best Original Screenplay, among further accolades. Last year also brought other successes - including nine German Film Awards for *SEPTEMBER 5*, among them for Best Feature Film. In addition, there was the box office success of the family drama *22 LENGTHS*, which had been seen by over 700,000 viewers in Germany by January 2026.

It is quite remarkable that Philipp Trauer achieved this with a small, independent company: BerghausWöbke Filmproduktion was founded by Thomas Wöbke in 2013. Here, alongside the founder, Trauer serves as managing director to lead a team of three other employees. When asked about their secret to success, the producer says: "We only make one, maybe two films a year, into which we pour our heart and soul, and all our energy." Or, to put it simply: quality over quantity. The company is now focused on cinema: "Theatres are beautiful, magical places that allow for a very special kind of film experience. Because we ourselves love the cinema, we absolutely believe in this medium."

Anyone assuming that the Munich-based company, after its Oscar® and Golden Globe nominations for *SEPTEMBER 5*, will have become fully oriented towards Hollywood is quite mistaken: "We've proven that it is possible to produce films in Germany that can certainly compete internationally and win awards. I consider it a privilege that we're not dependent on the American system. We want to make films with all the advantages we have in Germany - with our funding system, our fantastic crews, and great locations."

Philipp Trauer is aware that the funding landscape in Germany leaves room for improvements at

the moment, but he's not one to paint a gloomy picture: "We should offer constructive criticism and work on solutions. I'm focusing on the positive, and don't want to constantly complain."

This in mind, BerghausWöbke are confidently preparing their upcoming projects, including *WINDSTÄRKE 17*, the sequel to *22 LENGTHS*, and a family entertainment feature film. Furthermore, they are working with directors Tim Fehlbaum (*SEPTEMBER 5*) and Kilian Riedhof (*GLADBECK*) on two international productions. For Philipp Trauer, 'international' does not necessarily mean 'English-language': "These are stories capable of touching a global audience. Language is secondary and authenticity is paramount."

The company does not shy away from extremely ambitious projects: In 2021, they produced Tim Fehlbaum's highly ambitious science-fiction thriller *TIDES*, which, despite various awards, failed to perform well at the box office - partly due to the pandemic. "We would definitely take on a similar project again, as long as we truly believe in it," says Philipp Trauer defiantly. "Because that film also gave us a lot of experience that we used later for *SEPTEMBER 5*, for example."

Thomas Wöbke also brings his expertise to the table, having been jointly responsible for many recent classics of German cinema, including Caroline Link's Oscar®-nominated *BEYOND SILENCE* and Hans-Christian Schmid's *23*. "Thomas is a very creative and dedicated producer. We share the same approach to producing and complement each other extremely well," his co-managing director Trauer says in tribute.

That said, BerghausWöbke can now build on the prestigious success of *SEPTEMBER 5*: "I get the feeling that we have a somewhat different standing now and are taken more seriously." And there is no longer any trace of stage fright. "I'm simply an emotional person who likes to laugh and cry." - Ideal prerequisites for a passionate film producer.

IN THE FAST LANE

A PORTRAIT OF ACTOR HELENA ZENDEL

Sitting in a Berlin café only a few months before her birthday, Helena Zengel admits she is impatient to finally turn 18. She moved out of her parents' home a long time ago, and people usually think she is older than she is, anyway. But the actor beams to think about finally coming of age on paper. And this is probably no surprise, given that as a child, she had already made a deep impression on audiences around the world with some unforgettable roles.

At the age of eight, already a professional in front of the camera, Zengel played the lead role in Mascha Schilinski's debut film *DARK BLUE GIRL*. It was then at the latest, she recalls, that her love of acting crystallised into something much bigger. "Standing on the beach on the set in Santorini, I knew that I should commit that moment to my memory forever. Because it was the moment when I felt that this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life," she tells me over a Coke Zero. "Since then, my fascination with this work, my passion for acting, has grown with every film."

It did not take long to spot that the Berlin-born actor's enthusiasm was matched by a unique talent. When Nora Fingscheidt cast her in the title role of *SYSTEMCRASHER*, she became the youngest ever recipient of the German Film Award and was nominated for the European Film Award. Shortly afterwards, Hollywood took notice as well: Paul Greengrass cast her alongside Tom Hanks in his film *NEWS OF THE WORLD*, for which she received a Golden Globe nomination and was even shortlisted for a SAG Award by the US Actors' Guild.

"My friends always say you'll find me in the fast lane. Even when I'm driving!" says Zengel with a laugh - she had just finished her final driving lesson immediately before I spoke to her. "I've always looked up to my single mum. She taught me that I could achieve anything I set my mind to, as long as I wanted it with all my heart. That's why, even as a child, I saw life as a big, juicy peach I could simply take a bite out of. Negativity or the idea that I might not be able to do something; that never even crossed my mind."

Following a string of international productions such as *A CHRISTMAS NUMBER ONE*, THE

LEGEND OF OCHI starring Willem Dafoe and Emily Watson, and Pia Marais's *TRANS-AMAZONIA*, the next chapter in Zengel's career is now beginning. "It was a great experience going to Hollywood, but it was clear to me that I wanted to continue filming in Germany," she says, referring to her recent return to home turf. But an even greater joy? "Being able to play an adult role at last, and not being perceived as a child any longer."

The project that made this possible is *WEST-END GIRL*, a TV series directed by Pola Beck and Stefan Schaller, which will celebrate its world premiere at the SerienCamp Festival in June. She plays the part of a young woman whose idyllic world collapses when her parents are exposed as drug dealers, describing it as an exciting challenge: "It was a long, intense project that allowed me to surpass myself and redefine my limits." *EXPLODING DUCKS* is also set to premiere later this year, a film in which she plays the daughter of Lilith Stangenberg, a former CIA agent. She describes Matthias Glasner's new feature as wild and authentic, but does not want to give much more away as yet: "We certainly had a lot of creative freedom to experiment in front of the cameras."

It is not as if Zengel - who also devotes herself to writing as a side-line and is currently developing the first projects of her own - is unaware that life as an actor is not always "peachy". "I'm under no illusions, I know that this job consists of 90% rejection," she admits. "That's why, as someone who has had such a successful career so early on, I am trying to free myself from the pressure of needing to achieve the same over and over again or, ideally, always wanting to aim higher." Which does not mean she will let her ambition or self-confidence be shaken (of course, she dreams of an Oscar!): "Fortunately, I have the privilege of not needing to accept every role right now. Because what I really don't want, in any aspect of my life, is to do things by halves." So, Zengel is not about to take her foot off the accelerator any time soon. And why should she? After all, despite the big birthday coming up in June, she still has her whole life ahead of her.

Patrick Heidmann



FILMS IN ALL THEIR COMPLEXITIES

A PORTRAIT OF SALES COMPANY M-APPEAL



Maren Kroymann, Magdalena Banasik, Quentin Bosschaert, Cinthya Calderón © M-Appael

"Since founding the company in 2008 its development has been very stable, we've kept on growing but always held true to our identity as a medium-sized and independent boutique operation," says managing director Maren Kroymann about her Berlin-based sales company M-Appeal. "One particular characteristic of M-Appeal is that we love working with films in all their complexities and are not ones to have a big catalogue where films can easily get lost" is how Maren describes the company's positioning in the market.

"We like to exploit every aspect of a film's commercial potential in order to reach all the possible audiences: that's also reflected in our festival work on a film which usually lasts for about two years with us being very pro-active and submitting to more than 300 festivals," she explains. Maren and her colleagues also pay great attention to developing tailor-made press campaigns for the titles they represent as sales agent, pointing out that "when we have news about sales to tell the trade magazines, we use the opportunity of these stories to also then draw the journalists' attention into writing about the film's content and filmmaker's style as well as its particular social impact."

Since Maren and her team want to achieve the best possible performance for each film they are handling, the company now restricts itself to launching only between 6-8 new titles per year and focusing the line-up mainly on general audience arthouse titles for cinema release with the potential to be sold to many territories worldwide. At the same time, the company has built up a reputation with its special interest niche dedicated to LGBTQ titles that can often have cross-over potential. "We often work with specialised distributors for these films, but not always as there are occasions when other players in the market acquire them as was the case with the SEX-LOVE-DREAMS trilogy released in the theaters by Alamode in Germany and Pyramide in France," Maren recalls.

"Another niche we began developing around six years ago is focused on arthouse films with erotic content that champion female empowerment and present the female perspective on desire."

Dutch director Muriel d'Ansembourg's debut feature TRULY NAKED, which had its world premiere in the Berlinale's Perspectives competition last February, is a "perfect example" of this particular niche and gave the sales team ample opportunities to also address the subject matter in the press work and when pitching to buyers. "From the outset, our line-up has been very international and that's also reflected in the multi-lingual and multi-national composition of our team," Maren says.

While M-Appeal has worked in the past representing films by such German filmmakers as the late Rosa von Praunheim (NEW YORK MEMORIES and ROSA'S WORLD, among others) and Leonie Krippendorff (COCOON), the company's search for interesting titles knows no borders. "We have strong ties to some European territories like Norway where we picked up the SEX-LOVE-DREAMS trilogy and sold it to more than 60 territories, as well as to The Netherlands, most recently with TRULY NAKED," Maren explains. At the same time, Latin American cinema has acquired ever greater prominence in the line-up in recent years: this year's Berlinale, for example, saw the company representing the Mexican film IN THE GARDEN WE DREAMED in the Panorama and Brazil's GUGU'S WORLD which won the Crystal Bear in the Generation Kplus competition section.

And work by Asian filmmakers also appear in M-Appeal roster, including Chinese director Huo Meng's Silver Bear winner LIVING THE LAND and Japanese Ryusuke Hamaguchi's award-winning EVIL DOES NOT EXIST and WHEEL OF FORTUNE AND FANTASY as well as his back catalogue. "A key point from the outset was that I wanted to develop long-term relationships with filmmakers and producers because it's quite a big investment starting a collaboration," Maren suggests.

"I'm always looking to work with people where we see that we can have a good chemistry and enjoy working together," she concludes. "And we see these relationships as being a real partnership with the producer and director based on transparency and mutual trust to achieve the best possible results."

Martin Blaney



STORYTELLING IN A SPECIAL LANGUAGE

A PORTRAIT OF THE EDITOR ANDREW BIRD

"Film editing was the solution to all my problems and the answer to all my questions," says Andrew Bird when asked how he came to choose his profession. Yet this answer suggests that the path to it was not a straightforward one. He now sees himself as a "storyteller" in his role as a film editor. "I try to tell a good story by editing the existing footage. And 'good' for me means emotional, exciting, effective and visually interesting."

Andrew was born in London in 1956. He initially studied German there before coming on a scholarship to Hamburg where he worked for a long time as a translator. "Until I realised that this was boring me. I wanted to do something new and creative." He'd already had an affinity for film as a teenager, shooting Super 8 films as well as directing and acting in them - and also editing them. The latter was what he enjoyed the most. He then started working as an assistant editor with Magdolna Rokob.

Nowadays, Andrew likes to work alone. However, he is also involved from the script development stage on many projects. His work often begins long before the first cut. "Editing is a long process. It takes several months, sometimes up to a year or even longer."

Andrew is usually part of the project on the films by the director Fatih Akin, even when all that exists is just an idea. "While we're editing the one film, Fatih is then often planning the next one in his head, and we start talking about it." Fatih and Andrew share a special bond; they have been working together for over 30 years. He has edited all of the director's films, including HEAD-ON, THE EDGE OF HEAVEN, IN THE FADE and, most recently, AMRUM. Andrew received, amongst other honours, the German Film Award for Best Editing and the German Film Critics' Award for THE EDGE OF HEAVEN.

Such a long-standing collaboration has its advantages. "Fatih and I speak the same language. I immediately understand what he's thinking, and vice versa. And we can discuss what the one or the other likes or dislikes without any ego getting in the way." However, there isn't any set routine. "For me, it's a stroke of luck that Fatih is a

filmmaker who constantly explores new avenues in his subject matter as well as in his films. That's right up my street."

It's something that Andrew also appreciates about his profession. Every film is different, just like every filmmaker. "Some directors want to be in the editing suite every day; others entrust me with the footage. Both ways are fine by me." As an editor, he has always felt that his role is on equal terms and in no way subordinate.

Andrew much prefers to start editing during principal photography. As was the case, for example, with THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG. The film's production faced several difficult challenges. Director Mohammad Rasoulof shot in secret in Iran, while Andrew was based in Hamburg. Raw footage was sent to Germany at irregular intervals. Although Andrew knew the script, the film was shot entirely in Farsi, a language he doesn't speak. "Sometimes, editing isn't just about the language. I look for a kind of authenticity in the acting, something you see, for instance, in the actors' eyes. That way you can edit without understanding the language." Editing as storytelling in a special language.

Andrew is now back again at the Festival de Cannes with a film he edited in a language that's foreign to him. ELEPHANTS IN THE FOG, a German co-production, will have its world premiere in the Un Certain Regard sidebar and was shot entirely in Nepali. "This was another special challenge in piecing a story together. And it's another film that opened up a completely new world for me."

Andrew's hope for the future and his profession is not only about discovering new worlds, but that the world will pay greater attention to editors' work of and show more appreciation of their achievements. "I'm personally fortunate to be able to work with prominent directors and to have edited films that have been seen by a great many people." And then he adds with a wink: "We editors tend to be rather shy of the limelight. But it would be good if a little more light could be shed on our work."

Angela Sonntag

MORE FUNDING, BIGGER VISIONS

Curatorium Young German Cinema - a new chapter in the support of young film talents

"It's a unique opportunity for me to be part of this new chapter in the history of Germany's oldest film funding institution," says Christina Bentlage who took up the post of managing director of the Curatorium Young German Cinema (Kuratorium junger deutscher Film) at the beginning of 2026.

"During the six decades since its founding, the Curatorium has championed the supporting of artistic freedom and new cinematic styles," notes Bentlage, who had previously served as Head of Film Funding at Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, the regional film fund for North Rhine-Westphalia, for many years.

"We will now be continuing this tradition by expanding the Curatorium into a central point of contact and institution in Germany which is dedicated to talented filmmakers."

Launched in 1965 on the basis of a decree issued by the then Federal Interior Minister Hermann Höcherl in the wake of young filmmakers' demands as set out in the Oberhausen Manifesto, the Curatorium subsequently has played a crucial role over the years, in particular, in the development of what became known in the 1970s as the internationally feted New German Cinema to support debut and second features.

The first project to be backed by the Curatorium, which operates out of a wing of Schloß Biebrich on the banks of the River Rhine in Wiesbaden, was the debut feature *YESTERDAY'S GIRL* by the late Alexander Kluge which premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 1966 and was awarded the Silver Lion.

Since then, filmmakers as diverse as Wim Wenders, Ulrike Ottinger, Roland Emmerich,

Feo Aladag, Tom Tykwer, Doris Dörrie, Nora Fingscheidt, and Veit Helmer have received financial support from their first forays into feature-length films.

Among the latest projects to be realised with involvement from the Curatorium include self-taught filmmaker Saša Varda's *The LIGHTS, THEY FALL*, which had its world premiere in the Generation 14plus sidebar at this year's Berlinale as well as Reza Memari's animated feature *THE LAST WHALE SINGER*, Leonie Krippendorff's love story *PEELED SKIN* and Anne Koch and Julia Lemke's children's film *CIRCUSBOY*.



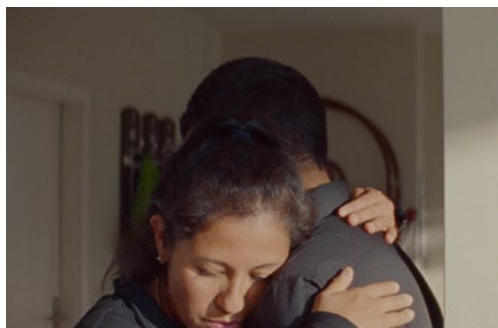
YESTERDAY GIRL by Alexander Kluge © Kairos-Film Dr. Alexander Kluge

In recent years, the Curatorium had taken the decision to concentrate the modest annual budget provided by the 16 federal states (Länder) on supporting project development rather than investing in production funding.

Last year, for example, the jury for project development awarded funding to Benjamin Radjaipour's queer independent/coming of age/fantasy tale *CAMOUFLAGE*, Dyaa Naim's

age/fantasy tale CAMOUFLAGE, Dyaa Naim's tragicomedy FAMILIENBILD set between Berlin and Syria, and Laura Harwarth's mother-daughter drama QUEEN OF BOOM.

The challenges faced by newcomers wanting to make their entree into the film industry and direct their first feature film prompted the creation in 2021 of the Forum Talentfilm initiated by the Curatorium with the Filmfestival Max Ophüls Preis and PROG Producers of Germany (formerly Produzent:innenverband).



THE LIGHT'S THEY FALL by Sasa Varda © Vajda film

"This initiative created a network and platform for a debate between young talents and representatives of the industry and decision makers on strategies for improving the conditions for debutants in Germany," Bentlage recalls.

"The first Forum was held at the Curatorium's headquarters in Schloß Biebrich and a second event at North Rhine-Westphalia's representation in Berlin in April 2025 focused on the visibility and distribution of newcomers' films."

"Active lobbying and input by the Forum's initiators during the discussion on the future makeup of the German Film Law (FFG) and reforming of Germany's national film funding programme resulted in a great success for the Curatorium's work for the future and this has been made possible thanks to significantly increased funding by the Länder and the federal government in Berlin from this year," Bentlage explains.

While the Länder have now committed to provide a total of € 1.2 million funding each year to support newcomers in the development of their film projects' treatments and screenplays, the

BKM under State Minister Wolfram Weimer has stumped up € 7.85 million to a dedicated production fund for first and second feature films by up-and-coming filmmaking talents.

Administered by the Curatorium in cooperation with the BKM, this fund will provide up to € 500,000 for individual feature film projects with production costs not exceeding € 2 million. The amount being allocated may be increased to € 1 million in exceptional cases.

"It's important to say that the focus for the Curatorium is always on the feature-length film format and we are looking to select projects that are also aiming to be successful when released in the cinemas," Bentlage says.

She adds that the support from this fund can act as a kind of catalyst or seal of approval to be able to attract additional production funding, whether it is from one of the German regional film funds or long-standing supporters of up-and-coming filmmakers such as public broadcaster ZDF's Das kleine Fernsehspiel or the editorial departments of ARD member stations dedicated to debut features.



THE LAST WHALE SINGER by Reza Memari © Telescope Animation

It's important to note, though, that the Curatorium's remit does not stretch to supporting graduation films from film school students.

For such projects, there are the dedicated funding programmes open to film students' projects operated by such regional funds as FFF Bayern, Film- und Medienstiftung and Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg as well as the non-profit organisation YTF Young Talent



ZIRKUSKIND by Anne Koch and Julia Lemke © Flare Film

Foundation Berlin whose aim is to financially support young film talent in Germany of all nationalities and mentor them on their way into a professional career in the film industry.

But, as Bentlage points out, the Curatorium is open to projects in all genres: “it was really pleasing in the first round of submissions this year to see that there was such a great diversity. While dramas were a dominant feature, there were also comedies, and horror and suspense also featured.”

Meanwhile, she places special emphasis on how the selection for supporting project development is decided: to begin with, the filmmakers have an opportunity to speak in person to the jury about their projects after an initial analysis of the various elements of the application.

And there have been conscious attempts in the composition of the juries to have a wide range of views, backgrounds and track records represented.

Thus, for example, the jury for feature film project development and production includes producer Luise Hauschild of Leipzig/Berlin-based New Matter Films, producer and re-recording mixer Ansgar Frerich of Basis Berlin Postproduction and director Jessica Krummacher (THE DEATH OF MOTHER).

“The jury stays constant for each funding session and they are appointed for a term of three years, although we have substitutes if they are prevented from taking on the jury work be-

cause they are involved in the making of a film,” Bentlage explains.

This pool of substitutes who can step in for jury colleagues if necessary includes writer-director Faraz Shariat, whose second feature film PROSECUTION premiered at this year’s Berlinale, Berlin-based producer Alexandra Krampe and documentary filmmaker Lilian Franck.

Meanwhile, the response from the potential beneficiaries of the Curatorium’s newly enhanced role has been extremely positive as the number of submissions of projects for development and production support in the first funding round at the beginning of this year shows.



PEELED SKIN by Leonie Krippendorff © Square One Entertainment / Peter Hartwi

“Naturally, many people were waiting last year for the introduction of a scheme to support young talent and for the Curatorium to have a bigger budget, so it’s not surprising that we had submissions running into three digits!” Bentlage declares.

Martin Blaney

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GERMAN FILMMAKERS ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

German Films represents German cinema abroad. This means that we are also interested in German filmmakers who work internationally. Many German filmmakers are spread across the globe and work on a wide variety of international projects. We would like to introduce them briefly and ask them what they are currently working on.

MICHAEL RALLA - VFX SUPERVISOR

Looking back at your beginnings: What advice would you give your younger self today?

Be patient, and don't underestimate how long it takes to develop a truly good eye. Technique is important, but in the end, it's always about taste and perspective. And: stay curious, even when you think you've figured things out.

My time in Australia was quite formative in that sense. I learned how to surf there, and suddenly understood what it means to be patient - waiting for the right wave, but then also getting up quickly when it comes. That's also where I actively started shooting with a DSLR, including in the ocean, something that significantly sharpened my eye.

I would also say: be less afraid of making mistakes. Many of the most important steps don't come from control, but from uncertainty. And often, it's exactly those moments that move you forward. The Americans have a different mindset here - "fail fast." It makes you more willing to take risks and try new things... in Germany, that's generally less common.

Was there a moment when you realized: now I'm really working internationally?

There wasn't one defining moment, but many small ones - although two stand out.

Once, I was on a call with an Australian client, an



American VFX producer, and a British animation supervisor. When the Australian asked, “How good is the sky?”, there was a brief moment of confusion – and I realized that it was actually a compliment. These kinds of cultural nuances make you aware of how international this work really is.

And then there are those moments in filmmaking: flying in a helicopter over snow-covered mountains in California, above the ocean near the Bahamas, or low over New York. In those moments, I often think: it’s incredible that I get paid for this.

Is there an international experience that has fundamentally changed your approach?

When I met my American wife, who is also a VFX Supervisor—but with a very different approach. She is strongly focused on filmmaking and close collaboration with directors and cinematographers, and brings an exceptional level of emotional intelligence.

From her, I’ve learned that beyond technique and aesthetics, human connection is what truly matters.

Which moment in your work has stayed with you the most - and why?

Moments when something technically complex suddenly feels completely natural tend to stay with me. When no one talks about the effect anymore, but only about the scene, then you know it worked. That invisibility is the greatest success for me.

Was there a phase when you seriously doubted your path?

Yes, especially during times when a lot of effort and precision didn’t automatically lead to better results. That forced me to question my own way of working.

Doubt was less an obstacle and more an important calibration process—especially coming from a “German engineering” background. It’s interesting: I’ve been asked this question

Michael Ralla is an Academy Award-nominated VFX Supervisor working internationally on major film productions. With over 20 years of experience in the industry, he has contributed to more than 50 feature films, including numerous award-winning productions.

After studying Audiovisual Media in Stuttgart, he began his career at Scanline VFX in Munich, before going on to work worldwide at leading studios such as Animal Logic (Sydney), Framestore (London), MPC (Vancouver), Digital Domain (Los Angeles), and Industrial Light & Magic (San Francisco).

He has received multiple VES Awards, a D&AD Yellow Pencil, and a Clio Awards (Silver), and has collaborated with directors such as Marc Forster, Ryan Coogler, and Spike Jonze.

several times by German media – and exclusively by German media.

How free do you feel internationally from expectations or stereotypes?

A certain stereotype of precision and structure definitely follows me – and that’s not entirely negative. Especially on *Sinners* with Ryan Coogler, I learned to combine that perspective with cultural sensitivity and a deeper understanding of history.

For me, true freedom lies in being able to consciously use both. You always carry a part of your background with you, no matter where you work. Through *Sinners* and the deep engagement with African American history and culture, my perspective has broadened significantly. It becomes interesting when you don’t just break expectations, but expand them with new perspectives.

What is more important to you: clear structures or creative freedom within a team?

Structures are the prerequisite for creative freedom. On *Sinners*, this balance was crucial because many departments had to work very

closely together to achieve a shared visual goal. Without a solid foundation, creative freedom quickly becomes arbitrary.

It's a balance: structure provides security, freedom allows for surprise. On *Sinners*, I experienced how powerful it is when all departments work together within that space. The best moments happen when both reinforce each other.

Current projects: are there differences between your current project and your earlier work?

On *SINNERS*, there was a strong focus on integration rather than visibility – ensuring that effects are not perceived as such. At the same time, collaborating with Ryan Coogler and immersing myself in a specific cultural perspective raised the bar even further.

Technically, this makes things more complex,

but visually often more deliberate and restrained. It was less about what is possible, and more about what truly has meaning.

When does a project feel truly meaningful to you today?

That depends heavily on how you define “meaningful” in this context.

When it's more than just technique or spectacle – when it supports the story and evokes an emotional response. Especially when all the departments work together toward a clear, honest goal.

For me, meaning comes from this connection between craft and mindset. Above all, when you work on a strong project with colleagues you genuinely like and actually enjoy the process. Then you end up with a result that is more than the sum of its parts.

GUIDO WOLTER - VFX SUPERVISOR

Was there anyone or anything in your early years that had a decisive influence on your path?

I grew up in former East Germany, and after the wall came down, there was suddenly an influx of Western films and television. It felt like I discovered *INDIANA JONES*, *STAR WARS*, *THE SIMPSONS* and many others all at once. That had a big impact on me.

One early memory that really stayed with me was watching a Russian film about the witch Baba Yaga, with a house standing on chicken legs that could walk. As a kid, I was completely fascinated by how that was done. I didn't have the language for it yet, but that curiosity around “how things work behind the curtain” really started there and never left.

I was always drawn to different forms of media. I experimented with black and white photography, developed my own prints in the lab, worked as a DJ, and filmed concerts and music videos. That openness to explore different creative outlets



naturally led me into studying Media Arts and Design at the Bauhaus University in Weimar, where I focused on motion graphics and visual effects.

There wasn't a single defining mentor, but rather a collection of people who challenged me and helped me grow. I've always tried to learn from those around me, especially people who are very good at what they do, and understand not just how they work, but why.

If I had to summarise what shaped my path early on, it would be curiosity and a desire to understand and create images that support storytelling. That's still very much at the core of what I do today.

What was the biggest challenge you faced when you first moved abroad?

I first came to Australia as a student, joining the professional practicum programme at the College of Fine Arts in Sydney. The biggest challenge at the beginning was the language.

I spoke English to some degree, but I had never been fully immersed. Suddenly, everything required active effort, listening, speaking, reading, thinking. I remember being completely exhausted at the end of the day, simply because my brain was constantly processing. You realise that what is usually passive becomes very active when you're operating in a second language.

That phase passed after a few months, but it was a very valuable experience. Communication is such a central part of my role today, and going through that process made me more aware, more precise, and probably more empathetic in how I communicate with others.

At the same time, I noticed differences in work culture. In Australia, the creative process felt more open and less hierarchical. There was more room to explore ideas, even if they might fail. That was quite different from the more structured environment I was used to in Germany, and it took a bit of adjustment, but it was also very liberating.

Guido Wolter is a seasoned and passionate VFX Supervisor with over seventeen years of industry experience. Driven by a commitment to crafting stunning visuals, he has delivered an impressive range of projects, including SINNERS, A MINECRAFT MOVIE, MICKEY 17, FURIOSA: A MAD MAX SAGA, THE FLASH, and STAR WARS: EPISODE VIII.

In addition to his work as a VFX Supervisor, Guido brings extensive expertise as both a Compositing Supervisor and On-Set VFX Supervisor, with credits spanning INDIANA JONES AND THE DIAL OF DESTINY, ELVIS, CAPTAIN MARVEL, KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD, and DOCTOR STRANGE during his tenures at RSP, Animal Logic, and One of Us.

Guido has played a key role in RSP's adoption of machine learning through its proprietary REVIZE™ technology, which pushes the boundaries of visual effects to deliver superior results. With a keen eye for detail and strong creative leadership, he consistently helps bring directors' visions to life.

I felt I had really found my footing when I received my job offer from Animal Logic. That was a clear moment where things shifted from exploration into a defined path, and it confirmed that the move had been the right decision.

The best moment in your job: When was the last time - or on which project - did you feel like everything came together: the story, the team, and the timing?

On SINNERS, there were several moments where things came together.

Early on, we learned that the film would be shot on IMAX 65mm. From a visual effects perspective, that can be slightly intimidating. You immediately think about the level of detail and the added complexity. But when the first rushes came in, the quality and organic beauty of the film stock were so compelling that it shifted my perspective completely.

There was also a key sequence between SMOKE AND STACK in the juke joint, where the twinning had to be completely invisible. As those shots came together, the interaction, the physicality, the emotion, we reached a point where you stop analysing the work and simply believe in the two characters. That's usually a good sign.

As a team, we had a bit of a slow start, but once we found our stride, things aligned quickly. The workflows became clearer, confidence grew, and decisions became more intuitive. That momentum is incredibly rewarding.

What stayed with me most, though, was how the overall tone of the film revealed itself. The combination of genres, gangster film, period setting, music, and supernatural elements, is not immediately obvious on paper. Seeing how naturally those elements came together in the final film was probably the clearest moment where everything made sense.

What professional experience was painful but, in hindsight, necessary?

Early in my career, I worked as a motion designer on projects for clients like Mercedes-Benz,

alongside very talented teams at Atelier Markgraph. It was a high-pressure environment, with tight deadlines, high expectations, and many stakeholders involved.

At that stage, the most challenging part for me was managing time and expectations. As a younger artist, I sometimes underestimated how long certain tasks would take. Delivering high-quality work on time, consistently, was something I had to learn quite quickly.

What I took from that experience was the importance of being realistic and transparent. I became much more precise in estimating effort and, just as importantly, more proactive in communicating when something might not go to plan before it becomes an issue.

A lot of that learning was really about communication. Not just what you do, but how you guide others through the process.

Looking back, those early lessons are still very relevant. In my role today, I regularly have to scope, bid and plan complex work. Without that early exposure to pressure and responsibility, I don't think I would be able to do that with the same level of confidence.



Pre-Oscar-Reception 2026 - Villa Aurora: Jakob Scherer (Villa Aurora), Michael Ralla, Guido Wolter, Claudia Gordon (Villa Aurora) and Justin Jampol (Wende Museum) © Aaron Perez

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ARNIE & BARNEY - RETTEN DAS WASSER

ARNIE & BARNEY - THE WATER QUEST

As a severe drought threatens the meadow, two hopelessly unqualified ants decide to save the day. Arnie and Barney's reckless mission leads them to uncover a sinister water racket run by a hypnotic mosquito and her criminal accomplice. With chaos, imagination and plenty of accidental heroics, the unlikely duo must outsmart the villains and restore the meadow's water, proving that even the smallest misfits can become legends.

GENRE Adventure, Animation, Children's Film, Comedy, Family Entertainment **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Sean Heuston **SCREENPLAY** Fin Edquist **CAST** Shane Dundas, David Collins **PRODUCER** Thorsten Wegener **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Studio 100 International in coproduction with Studio Isar Animation, 3Doubles Producciones and Telegael **RUNTIME** 75 min **LANGUAGE** English

WORLD SALES Studio 100 Film
info@studio100film.com • www.studio100film.com



© Jana Key

BÄRENJAGEN

BEARHUNTING - TRUTH IS JUST ANOTHER RUMOR

While Germany in 1834 is simmering in every corner, the resistance led by Georg Büchner is working on the revolution. Heinrich Furrer secretly prints Büchner's revolutionary leaflet "Der Hessischer Landbote" in his brother Gustav's printing House, thus supporting the revolutionaries. Heinrich loves Minna. She wants to go to America!... and he's supposed to come with her. Everything could be so simple if Heinrich weren't living with Agnes, a former prostitute, if he had the necessary money and Minna wasn't married to his brother Gustav.

Then a solution presents itself.

In order to distract the disaffected population, the local Major puts a bounty on the hunt for the last German bear. A veritable hunting frenzy erupts, which turns into a fiasco for all the hunters and the two brothers. Need and greed bring out the darkest sides of people in the impenetrable thicket of the German forest, while the last bear remains a mysterious phantom...

GENRE Drama, History, Tragicomedy **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Peter Meister
SCREENPLAY Peter Meister **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Florian Mag **CAST** David Scheid, Bernhard Schütz, Aenne Schwarz, Pheline Roggan, Christopher Schärf, Wolfram Koch **PRODUCERS** Manuel Bickenbach, Alexander Bickenbach **CO-PRODUCER** Peter Meister **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Frisbeefilms **RUNTIME** 94 min **LANGUAGE** German

CONTACT Frisbeefilms

manuel-bickenbach@frisbeefilms.com • www.frisbeefilms.com



© COIN FILM / Silviu Guzman

IM SPIEGEL MEINER MUTTER

IN MY MOTHER'S MIRROR

Successful archaeologist Ursula Scheuner makes a sensational discovery during excavations in a bog, just as her mother passes away. Ursula comes under suspicion of being involved in her mother's death. Meanwhile, her assistant Mel stirs up further confusion. She seems to know more about Ursula's past than she lets on and draws Ursula deeper and deeper into a labyrinth of memories and illusions.

GENRE Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Jutta Brückner **SCREENPLAY** Jutta Brückner **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Daniela Knapp **CAST** Corinna Harfouch, Carla Juri, Hildegard Schmahl **PRODUCERS** Christine Kiauk, Herbert Schwering **PRODUCTION COMPANY** COIN FILM **RUNTIME** 95 min **LANGUAGE** German

CONTACT COIN FILM
c.kiauk@coin-film.de • www.coin-film.de



© COIN FILM / Silviu Guiman

LIEBHABERINNEN

WOMEN AS LOVERS

The LOVERS are trade fair hostess Brigitte and young Paula. Faced with the shrinking market value of her femininity, Brigitte makes wealthy Heinz her lover. She just manages to make her way to the top, while Paula has yet to learn the hardships of life. With this modern adaption of Elfriede Jelinek's novel "WOMEN AS LOVERS" (Die Liebhaberinnen), director Koxi has created an absurdly humorous and bitterly tragic film that reminds us how much we are still at the mercy of the economics of love and self-exploitation today.

GENRE Drama, Tragicomedy **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Koxi **SCREENPLAY** Koxi, Antonio de Luca **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Jakob Berger **CAST** Johanna Wokalek, Hannah Schiller, Ben Münchow **PRODUCERS** Christine Kiauk, Herbert Schwering (COIN FILM), Bady Minck, Alexander Dumreicher-Ivanceanu (Amour Fou Luxembourg) **CO-PRODUCERS** Judith Fülle, Philipp Käßbohrer, Matthias Murmann (BTF), Christian Bauer (Saarländischer Rundfunk), Koxi (Caroline Kox) in cooperation with MMC Movies Cologne **RUNTIME** 98 min **LANGUAGE** German **FESTIVALS** Berlinale 2026

CONTACT COIN FILM
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© Aissa Biammi / Luckyboy Films

LOOPY WITCH

During a single night, two young women move through different worlds as their inner conflicts begin to surface. At a remote forest bonfire, Sofia spends the evening with friends while guilt, self-doubt and a restless search for identity slowly push her toward an emotional breaking point. At the same time, Loopy drifts through an ecstatic rave. After a theft, she is caught in a storm of sensory overload as the personified moods she developed in therapy begin to take control. As the chaos of the night unfolds, their paths finally cross. In each other, they recognize the same fragile inner fracture. What emerges between them is an intense, passionate and delicate connection - one that might offer a moment of understanding in a night spiraling out of control. The film explores self-discovery and self-acceptance - the search for identity in a complex and contradictory world. It delves into themes of mental struggles and inner conflict, without labeling or explicitly naming them. The story is fictional, yet inspired by real people and true experiences.

GENRE Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Aissa Biammi **SCREENPLAY** Aissa Biammi
DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY Raphael Baumann, Leonard Wöfl **CAST** Nathalie Gärtner, Sofia Kemmerich **PRODUCER** Aissa Biammi **CO-PRODUCERS** Sven Schnell, Marie Münz **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Luckyboy Films **RUNTIME** 85 min **LANGUAGE** English (partly German)

CONTACT Luckyboy Films
 aissa@luckyboyfilms.com • www.luckyboyfilms.com



© Youngfilms

MEINE FREUNDIN CONNI - ABENTEUER MIT KRANICH KLAUS

CONNI - MYSTERY OF THE CRANE

Conni is excited. Her parents are travelling to Uncle Albert's with her brother Jacob. Conni would have loved to go with them, but then she would miss Semire's birthday party. Of course, Conni and Mau the cat don't stay at home alone. Granddad Willi has come, and Anna and Simon are even allowed to have a sleepover.

But then an injured crane lands in their neighborhood and needs their help. It's not just the injury that's bothering Crane Klaus, but also the stuffy neighbor Mr. Oswald, who thinks his immaculately tended rose garden is in danger. It's a good thing they have the support of animal rights activist Renata and policewoman Selena. Much to the displeasure of tomcat Mau and Anna, everything now revolves around the huge, proud bird.

Will Conni and her friends still manage to get Klaus to fly south with the travelling birds in time?

GENRE Adventure, Animation, Children's Film, Family Entertainment **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026
DIRECTOR Dirk Hampel **SCREENPLAY** Oliver Huzly, Sven Severin **PRODUCER** Henning Windelband
CO-PRODUCER Sonja Ewers **PRODUCTION COMPANY** youngfilms in coproduction with Senator Film Produktion **RUNTIME** 77 min **LANGUAGE** English

WORLD SALES Studio 100 Film
 info@studio100film.com • www.studio100film.com



© East End Film, Murabba Films / Benedict Neuenfels

MEMORIES TO CHERISH

In a world where memory blurs and reality fractures, three lives intersect: a daughter reconnects with her fading mother, a man meets a love who shouldn't exist and a family confronts the echoes of a broken bond. In *Memories to Cherish*, the past is not just remembered - it's relived.

GENRE Drama, Love Story, Melodrama, Science Fiction **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTORS** Dito Tsintsadze, Lado Margania **SCREENPLAY** Dito Tsintsadze, Lado Margania **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Benedict Neuenfels **CAST** Maryam D'Abo, Issy Knopfler, Dana Herfurth, Tyron Ricketts, Narges Rashidi, Manuel Rubey, Francesco Wenz **PRODUCERS** Elaine Niessner, Tommy Niessner, Kamran Sardar Khan **CO-PRODUCER** Lado Margania **PRODUCTION COMPANY** East End Film in coproduction with Murabba Films **RUNTIME** 112 min **LANGUAGE** English, German

CONTACT East End Film, Kamran Sardar Khan
kamran@eastendfilm.de



© Grischa Schmitz / INDI FILM Productions

MISSING*LINK

While on summer family vacation with her patchwork family, 13-year-old MIA encounters a mysterious boy in the woods. During time spent with him she experiences an unprecedented freedom. But the boy holds a secret deep within.

When Mia disappears on the morning of her 14th birthday, the fragile family structure is turned upside down. Conflicts between the adults escalate and TINE, Mia's Mum, settles accounts with everyone and everything in her panic-stricken fear for her daughter.

Meanwhile, Mia's new-found freedom becomes increasingly dangerous until her life is at stake.

MISSING*LINK - a mystical family drama told with laconic humor and shimmering intensity divulging the story of a mother and (teenage) daughter in a conflicting state of panic.

GENRE Drama, Tragicomedy **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Michael Baumann **SCREEN-PLAY** Sabine Westermaier, Michael Baumann **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Falko Lachmund **CAST** Susanne Wolff, Luca Brüggemann, Wolfram Koch, Martin Butzke, Margarita Breitzkreiz, Lennox Halm, Janosch Andreas **PRODUCER** Arek Gielnik **CO-PRODUCER** Holm Taddiken **PRODUCTION COMPANY** INDI FILM Productions in coproduction with Neufilm **RUNTIME** 120 min **LANGUAGE** German **FESTIVALS** Filmfest München 2025; Fünf Seen Festival 2025; Festival des deutschen Films Ludwigshafen am Rhein 2025; Biberacher Filmfestspiele 2025

CONTACT INDI FILM Productions
stuttgart@indifilm.de • www.indifilm.de



© THE TERMINAL, Alpenrepublik, win win Film

NUR FÜR VERRÜCKTE

FOR MADMEN ONLY

Since his wife's death, Georg has lost one thing above all: his will to live. Falling in love with his therapist, of all people, proves predictably unsuccessful. In a moment of acute despair, Georg takes the hairdryer into the full bathtub. You could say: Things aren't going well. And then, of all times, the doorbell rings. "I'm your brother!" says a complete stranger, friendly. Uwe, as the man is called, not only makes himself comfortable in the used bathwater but very quickly also in Georg's life. Georg learns almost by chance that Uwe doesn't have long to live. And suddenly, his existence has a purpose again: to fulfill Uwe's last wish. A visit to a cocktail bar together unleashes unexpected energy and sets in motion a chain of curious events and encounters... until only one thing is missing: the right moment to propose to his therapist.

GENRE Tragicomedy **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Matthias Lehmann **SCREENPLAY** Matthias Lehmann **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Daniel Assmann **CAST** Jochen Nickel, Margret Völker, Eckhard Preuß, Stefan Maaß, Steffen Wink, Laura Fregonese, Genoveva Mayer **PRODUCER** Thomas Gottschall **CO-PRODUCERS** Amélie Linder, Valentin Holch, Xavier Chotard **PRODUCTION COMPANY** THE TERMINAL Motion Picture Services in coproduction with win win Film and Alpenrepublik **RUNTIME** 75 min **LANGUAGE** German

CONTACT THE TERMINAL Motion Picture Services
thomas@the-terminal.de • www.the-terminal.de



© Lieblingsfilm / Lars Nitsch

PFERD AM STIEL

HORSE ON A STICK

When SARAH (13) from Munich-Neuperlach discovers the Finnish sport of 'hobby horsing' online - in which teenagers compete in tournaments on hobby horses - she is immediately hooked.

Her best friend DILEK (13) feels that this embarrassing new hobby is jeopardising her street credibility; the two fall apart and Sarah is left on her own for the time being.

But then she meets BEATRICE (13), a real horse rider who is suffering under the pressure of her ambitious mother, and the two of them set off on their own to the big Hobby Horsing Championship in Finland.

GENRE Children's Film **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Sonja Maria Kröner **SCREEN-PLAY** Gerlind Becker **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Julia Daschner **CAST** Manon Debaille, Chiara Kitsopoulou, Aurelia Ott, Lana Cooper, Valerie Neuenfels **PRODUCER** Philipp Budweg **CO-PRODUCERS** Michael Stumpf, Jens Ripke-Desaules **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Lieblingsfilm in coproduction with ZDF & KIKA **RUNTIME** 80 min **LANGUAGE** German

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



© AMAFILM / ThorstenSchütte

ENSEMBLE MODERN - WHY WE PLAY

ENSEMBLE MODERN - WHY WE PLAY is the first feature-length documentary dedicated to one of the world's leading ensembles for contemporary music. The film goes far beyond the concert stage and delves into the tension-filled space of rehearsals - where the sound is not yet fixed, but alive, fragile, and in the process of becoming. We experience a wealth of musical encounters in which a shared musical language begins to breathe. The focus is on works by influential composers such as Rebecca Saunders, Heiner Goebbels, and Mark Andre, alongside the vibrant voices of a younger generation, including Brigitta Muntendorf and Milica Djordjevic, in collaboration with conductors such as Vimbayi Kaziboni, Bas Wiegers, Ingo Metzmacher, and Enno Poppe. Each year, Ensemble Modern premieres around 70 works, continually venturing into uncharted sonic territories. ENSEMBLE MODERN - WHY WE PLAY presents music not as something fixed or complete, but as something that unfolds - a shared, restless search for the sound of our time.

GENRE Music **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Thorsten Schütte **SCREENPLAY** Thorsten Schütte **DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Ebrahim Alfadhala, Maud Mascré, Thorsten Schütte **PRODUCERS** Andrea Roggon, Ulla Lehmann **CO-PRODUCER** Thorsten Schütte **PRODUCTION COMPANY** AMA FILM in coproduction with Thorsten Schütte Filmproduktion and Südwestrundfunk (SWR) **RUNTIME** 104 min **LANGUAGE** German, English, French, Japanese **FESTIVALS** LICHTER Filmfest Frankfurt 2026, DOK.fest München 2026

WORLD SALES EuroArts Music International
 m.nikbin@euroarts.com • www.euroarts.com



© Alter Ego Production

GABIN

In northern France, Gabin, the youngest of the Jourdel family, finds himself destined to take over his father's butcher shop. Torn between family loyalty and a desire to break free, his dreams lie elsewhere: to train a contest cow, to become a dog breeder, and to save his mother's farm from financial ruin. Spanning a decade, GABIN immerses us in this young boy's world, following his journey from age 8 to 18.

GENRE Coming-of-Age Story **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Maxence Voiseux
SCREENPLAY Maxence Voiseux **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Francois Chambe **PRODUCERS**
 Cécile Lestrade, Elise Hug **CO-PRODUCERS** Ulla Lehmann, Andrea Roggon, Palmyre Badinier, Max
 Karli, Pauline Gyax **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Alter Ego Production in coproduction with AMA
 FILM and Rita Productions **RUNTIME** 105 min **LANGUAGE** French **FESTIVALS** Cannes 2026

WORLD SALES Lightdox
 anna@lightdox.com • www.lightdox.com



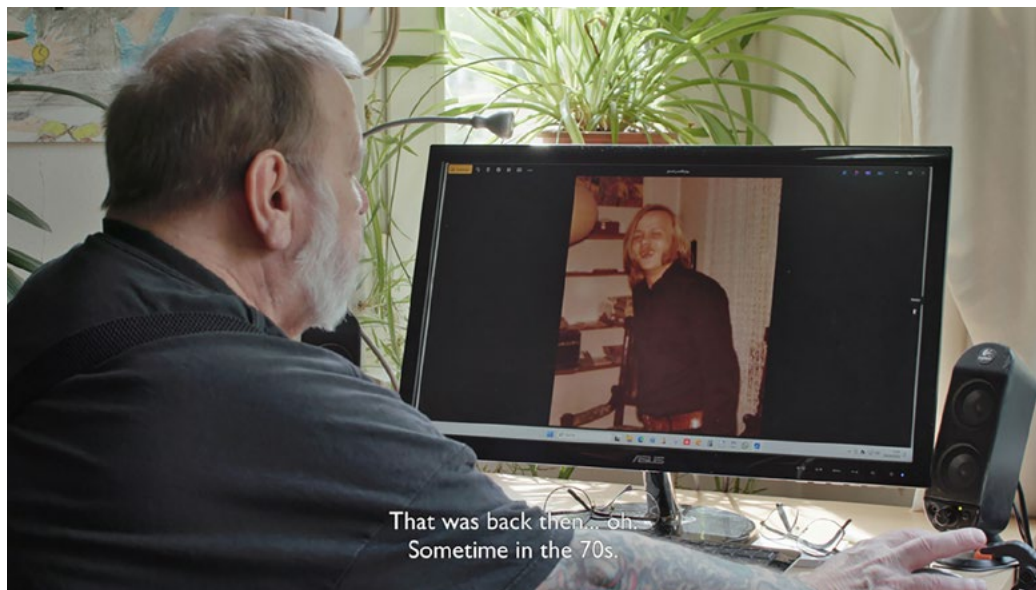
© Viola Shafik

HOME MOVIE ON LOCATION

An autobiographical documentary about family, love of cinema, and the perpetual condition of being in between: homes, languages, and places. Viola Shafik explores her relationship with her son and his father, the renowned art director and production designer Onsi Abou Seif, centring their shared entanglement with Egyptian cinema, past and present: her groundbreaking scholarship, and his work designing the visual worlds of numerous masterpieces of Arab cinema, from the late 60s until today. The film unfolds into deeper reflections on migration, political oppression, and the erasure of places and identities. (ALFILM Festival)

GENRE Biography **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Viola Shafik **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Viola Shafik **PROTAGONISTS** Ani Abou Seif, Daoud Abd El-Sayed, Onsi Abou Seif et al. **PRODUCER** Viola Shafik **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Viola Shafik **RUNTIME** 100 min **LANGUAGE** Arabic, German **FESTIVALS** Carthage Film Festival 2025

CONTACT Viola Shafik
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© Petra Lottje

NEBENAN: MICHA

NEXT DOOR: MICHA

Michael Weissbach, born in West Berlin in 1950, grew up in a working-class environment shaped by the aftermath of the Second World War and the tensions of a divided city. In a family where alcohol and emotional distance dominated daily life, he sought alternative paths from an early age - initially through drugs and alcohol, and later through the freedom afforded by travel and music. With Berlin humour and great self-irony, Micha looks back on his life. Following a liver transplant, he begins to view his life anew. His body, his background and his struggles are no longer flaws to him, but part of a story that has made him sensitive to social exclusion and societal contradictions. The great love that never came to be stands as a symbol of unfulfilled hopes.

The film focuses entirely on Michael Weissbach: in his flat, in his own words, carried by his humour and the rhythm of his memories, it manages entirely without background music. Themes such as family, friendship, the body, addiction, travel, music, loss and love weave together to form a quiet portrait - and a subtle political commentary on life in West Berlin and on a generation that has often been overlooked.

GENRE Documentary **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Petra Lottje **SCREENPLAY** Petra Lottje **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Andreas Gockel bvk **CAST** Michael Weissbach **PRODUCER** Petra Lottje **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Lottjefilm **RUNTIME** 61 min **LANGUAGE** German, English

CONTACT Petra Lottje

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© INDI FILM Productions

SOLIDARITY

Solidarity is an irresistible feeling we celebrate, but in fact, it is mostly contradictory. This documentary delves into the phenomenon itself and uncovers the universal power of human rights. Five protagonists and the three crises in Belarus, Ukraine, and Gaza/Israel reveal to us both the bright and dark sides of solidarity. Is global solidarity a complicated and delicate human project that needs a new foundation, a new narrative we all understand?

GENRE Documentary **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** David Bernet **SCREENPLAY** David Bernet **DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Marcus Winterbauer, Grzegorz Myjkowski, Ian Oggenfuss **PRODUCER** Arek Gielnik **CO-PRODUCER** Samir **PRODUCTION COMPANY** INDI FILM Productions in coproduction with Dschoint Ventschr Filmproduktion **RUNTIME** 90 min **LANGUAGE** German, English, Polish, Arabic, French, Ukrainian, Russian **FESTIVALS** DOK.fest München 2025, Solothurner Filmtage 2026, Nurnberg International Human Rights Film Festival 2025, Kinofest Lünen 2025, der NEUE HEIMAT Film 2025, Globale Mittelhessen 2025

WORLD SALES Java Films
 contact@javafilms.tv • www.javafilms.fr



© Falakfilm

TO MY SISTERS

Berxwedan, commander of a YPJ women's unit in northern Syria, gave up her dream of a normal life at age 18 to fight against ISIS. After visiting her family, she returns to the front lines - convinced that this struggle is not only for her people, but for the freedom of women worldwide. Sepan, a Yazidi Kurdish woman, was abducted during the 2014 genocide in Sinjar and spent 7 years enslaved by ISIS. For the first time, she is telling her story publicly and showing her face. Her memories bring to life what Berxwedan is fighting for. Another perspective shows just how much this war has also reached the West: A German woman who joined ISIS now lives in Syria.

As the threat from ISIS grows, their stories intertwine and raise the question of what freedom means for women in a world where it sometimes must be defended with weapons.

GENRE Documentary **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Faek Falak **SCREENPLAY** Faek Falak **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Noah Schuller **CAST** Sepan Ajo **PRODUCER** Faek Falak **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Falak Film **RUNTIME** 95 min **LANGUAGE** Kurdish, Arabic, and German

CONTACT Falak Film
ff@falakfilm.com • www.falakfilm.com

ag-kurzfilm.de
german-films.de



newgerman short films



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**Dresden.
Dietzger**

Federal Government Commissioner
for Culture and the Media

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© Elizabeth Hobbs

DAUGHTERS OF THE LATE COLONEL

After the death of their ill-tempered and controlling father two middle-aged sisters find themselves at a loss. An unexpected visitor sparks the courage in them to begin their lives anew.

GENRE Animation, Comedy, History **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Elizabeth Hobbs
SCREENPLAY Elizabeth Hobbs **PRODUCERS** Abigail Addison, Fabian Driehorst, Phil Davies **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** Animate Projects, Fabian&Fred, Phil Davies Films **RUNTIME** 9 min **LANGUAGE** English **FESTIVALS** Cannes Film Festival 2026, Krakow Film Festival 2026, Annecy Animation Festival 2026

WORLD SALES Square Eyes
sofia@squareeyesfilm.com • www.fabianfred.com



© Edward Horsky

DIE LAST DES BLEIBENS

THE WEIGHT OF STAYING

After their father's death, three estranged siblings return to their childhood farmhouse in the Bavarian Alps. When a hidden diary surfaces, long buried truths begin to unravel, forcing them to confront the fragile boundaries between love, loyalty, and the stories families tell to survive.

GENRE Art, Drama, Experimental **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Anton Cobb
SCREENPLAY Patrick Christopher Ehler **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Edward Horsky **CAST** Pia Stutzenstein, Nadine Menz, Patrick Christopher Ehler, Lydia Georgantzi, Meinhard St. John, Sam Sharma, Guido Broscheit, Tara Marie Linke **COMPOSER** Jens Heuler **PRODUCER** Patrick Christopher Ehler **CO-PRODUCER** Inga Fabian **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Patrick Christopher Ehler **RUNTIME** 47 min **LANGUAGE** German

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patrick_ehler@icloud.com



© Edward Horsky

GASOLINE

Jona comes to the gas station daily before 6 PM to refuel his car. He lives with obsessive-compulsive tendencies. During his daily routine, he unexpectedly reconnects with Simon at the gas station after years apart. Simon has returned because his girlfriend, who lives in Ukraine, is pregnant, and he needs money from his family. In a vulnerable moment, Simon confesses to Jona that his girlfriend had an abortion during his trip. The story delicately weaves themes of belonging, mixed signals, ambiguity, and the search for connection in a world where security and family increasingly feel like rare treasures, underscored by gentle moments and eclectic beats.

GENRE Coming-of-Age Story, Drama, Love Story, Romantic Comedy **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024
DIRECTOR Edward Horsky **SCREENPLAY** Melodie Karczewski **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Edward Horsky **CAST** Patrick Christopher Ehler **PRODUCER** Patrick Christopher Ehler **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Patrick Christopher Ehler **RUNTIME** 18 min **LANGUAGE** English **FESTIVALS** Top Shorts Film Festival 2025, Los Angeles Film Awards 2025, L'HIFF - Barcelona International Film Festival 2025, San Diego Movie Awards 2025, Critics Choice International Film Festival 2025, Veneto International Film Festival 2025, International Celebration of Cinema 2025 **AWARDS** Top Shorts Film Festival (Best Actor) 2025, Los Angeles Film Awards (Best Actor) 2025, L'HIFF - Barcelona International Film Festival (Best LGBT Short Film) 2025, San Diego Movie Awards (Award of Excellence) 2025, Critics Choice International Film Festival (Best Actor) 2025, Veneto International Film Festival (Best Drama Short Film) 2025, International Celebration of Cinema (Best Performance) 2025

CONTACT Patrick Christopher Ehler • patrick_ehler@icloud.com



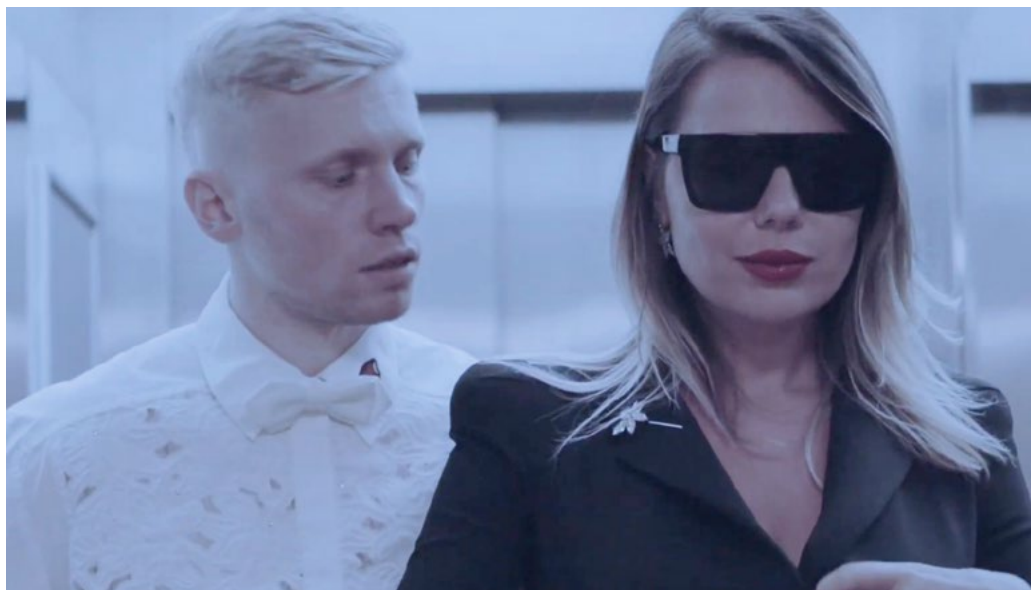
© Jonas Roemmig

MIT EINEM FREUNDLICHEN GRUSS WITH A KIND REGARD

An abandoned GDR factory. Dusty job application letters from the years 2004 to 2008 lie scattered in the cellar of the administrative building. Alongside the traditional phrases of a covering letter, the documents contain descriptions of personal circumstances and memories. The wishes of the applicants, as well as their fears and pain, are laid bare in their effort to find a place in the free market economy. A documentary contemplation of the individual behind the workforce.

GENRE Experimental **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Pavel Mozhar **SCREENPLAY** Pavel Mozhar **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Jonas Roemmig **CAST** Nicole Gospodarek **PRODUCERS** Kolja Volkmar, Pavel Mozhar **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Mozhar&Volkmar Film **RUNTIME** 14 min **LANGUAGE** German **FESTIVALS** Berlinale 2026

CONTACT Mozhar&Volkmar Film
pavel.mozhar@posteo.de



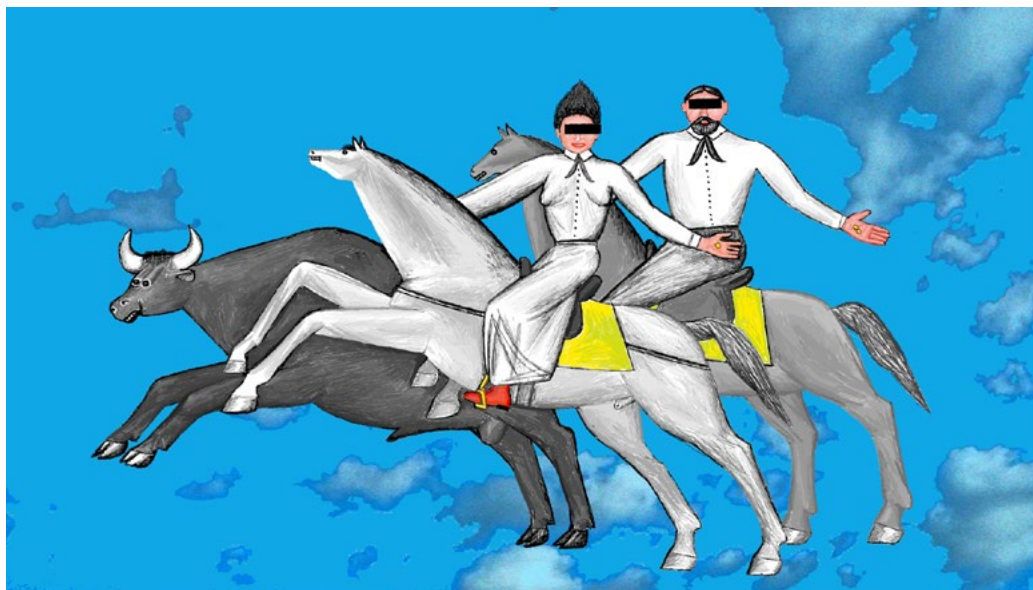
© Edward Horsky

THE COST OF LOVING

A couple's path of love and family encounters unforeseen devastation. Their world, brightened by the adoption of their daughter, darkens dramatically when they uncover the fraudulent nature of the adoption during an unexpected atrocity.

GENRE Drama, Educational, Literature, Love Story, Psycho-Thriller, Thriller **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2024 **DIRECTORS** Anton Cobb, Todor Barganov **SCREENPLAY** Patrick Christopher Ehler, Paul William Donovan **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Edward Horsky **CAST** Patrick Christopher Ehler, Paul William Donovan, Zoe Pönisch, Margit Mägdefrau, Michelle Shapa, Doris Meier **COMPOSER** Chrisna Lungala **PRODUCERS** Patrick Christopher Ehler, Inga Fabian, Danni 'Gray'Ma **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Patrick Christopher Ehler **RUNTIME** 35 min **LANGUAGE** English, German, Russian **FESTIVALS** Red Movie Awards 2025, The Macoproject Film Festival 2025, Los Angeles Stars Film Festival 2025 **AWARDS** Red Movie Awards (Best Production Design) 2025, The Macoproject Film Festival (Honorable Mention) 2025, Los Angeles Stars Film Festival (Best Actor) 2025

CONTACT Patrick Christopher Ehler
patrick_ehler@icloud.com



UNIDENTIFIZIERTE UNFLUGOBJEKTE (UUO)

UNIDENTIFIED NONFLYING OBJECTS (UNO)

Bureaucracy of the unknown. How can you identify something as an unidentifiable object, and having done so, can you put all such objects in order while keeping them unidentified? Probably, you can create an exhaustive list of all possible traits, features, and measurements, thereby developing an intricate system of neatly interconnected parts where every item can find its own corresponding place. Thus, channeling knowledge in a narrow, instrumental way, you can construct an entire universe that would be perfectly manageable and controllable. The question is, for how long can you live in this universe? However permanent and stable such an order may seem, it may eventually crumble when reality outside of the system creeps in, growing like organic matter through all the boundaries that you have created. You may not even notice anything until one day the world around you starts seeming alien to you.

GENRE Animation, Comedy, Experimental, Science Fiction **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Sasha Svirsky **SCREENPLAY** Sasha Svirsky **COMPOSER** Alexey Zelensky **SOUND DESIGN** Larissa Kischk **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER** Nadya Svirskaia **CAST** Sasha Svirsky **PRODUCER** Karsten Matern **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Wait a Second! **RUNTIME** 12 min **LANGUAGE** German **FESTIVALS** Berlinale 2026, Vienna Shorts 2026, Animafest Zagreb 2026, Go Short 2026

CONTACT Wait a Second!
karstenmatern@gmx.de • www.instagram.com/was_films

GERMAN FILMS PODCASTS



published every third Thursday



published every third Tuesday



© Paul Hepper

ATHOS 2643 (WT)

In 2643, Athos—a desolate moon of Neptune – becomes the site of a mysterious crime when an ancient monastery’s life-support AI is implicated in murder. Inquisitor Rüd, a specialist in interrogating artificial intelligences, is sent to investigate, accompanied by his holographic assistant Zack. The monks conceal secrets, and the AI proves a cunning adversary, masking its actions. After a second death, Rüd must rely on Zack – making a crucial decision to unleash her devastating capabilities.

GENRE Fantasy/Science Fiction **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** David Wnendt **SCREENPLAY** David Wnendt **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Jakub Bejnarowicz **CAST** Maximilian Mundt, Emma Nova, Christian Friedel, Klaus Tange, Godehard Giese, Ulrich Matthes, Iris Berben, Benjamin Utzerath, Valentin Tszin, Hikaru Inagawa, Marvin Weiß, Martin Reckers, Jens Weisser, Verena Altenberger, and many more **PRODUCERS** Fabian Gasmia, David Wnendt **CO-PRODUCERS** Oliver Berben, Viola Jäger, Lasse Scharpen, Cédric Iland, Bastien Siridot **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Seven Elephants in co-production with Constantin Film Produktion, Studio Zentral, Bananasplit Film, DETAILFILM, Umedia Production **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Constantin Film Distribution

CONTACT Seven Elephants, Fabian Gasmia
fabian.gasmia@seven-elephants.de
www.seven-elephants.de



© Constantin Campean

BLOODY TENNIS

After being admitted to an elite tennis academy hidden deep in the South of Europe, Sophie must contend not only with fierce competition but also with the school’s increasingly sinister undercurrents. What begins as a competitive rite of passage soon unravels into something darker, forcing Sophie to choose between chasing greatness and the connections to her friends. As the stakes rise, she must decide whether to become the player she’s always dreamed of and hold on to her humanity.

BLOODY TENNIS blends elite sports, trippy hallucinations and grotesque humor into a world filled with brutal ambition, blood-sucking leeches, hard-hitting serves and delicious nightmares.

GENRE Horror **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Nikias Chryssos **SCREENPLAY** Nikias Chryssos **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Constantin Campean **CAST** Sandra Guldberg Kampp, Elina Löwensohn, Tracy Gotoas, Helena Zengel, Zlatko Burić, Lily Taïeb, Juliana Vierra Guerra, Lucie Zhang, Vincent Romeo **PRODUCERS** Jonas Katzenstein, Maximilian Leo **PRODUCTION COMPANY** augenschein Filmproduktion in co-production with ZDF - Das kleine Fernsehspiel, Port au Prince Film & Kultur Produktion **LANGUAGE** English **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Port au Prince Pictures

CONTACT international: The Playmaker Munich, worldsales@playmaker.de, www.playmaker.de
Domestic: CAA, filmsales@caa.com



© Postofilm

DIE IDEEN

THE IDEAS

Fabian Stumm's third feature film after *BONES AND NAMES* and *SAD JOKES* brings together six episodes about characters in moments of transition. A woman creates fake profiles on a dating platform until she encounters one of the men she deceived. Two sisters fall back into old roles during a weekend together. Decades after a forbidden relationship, two former lovers meet again to speak about the past. A couple waits for an appointment at a public office that will mark the end of something they once shared. An actress in rehearsal unexpectedly finds that she is confronting herself. And two Swedish women travelling to Berlin must decide about the future of their long-term relationship.

GENRE Drama, Tragicomedy **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Fabian Stumm **SCREENPLAY** Fabian Stumm **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Michael Bennett **CAST** Maren Eggert, Fabian Stumm, Marie-Lou Sellem, Hans Löw, Anneke Kim Sarnau, Godehard Giese, Anne Haug, Romina Küper, Ulrica Flach, Elin Gradin, Angela Winkler, Katharina Stark, Jonas Dassler, Michael Klammer, Anna Schudt, Knut Berger, Aenne Schwarz, and others **PRODUCERS** Franziska Gärtner, Nicola Heim, Kaspar Panizza, Nele Schallenberg, Fabian Stumm **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Postofilm **LANGUAGES** German, Swedish, English **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** eksystemt Filmverleih

CONTACT

Postofilm, Fabian Stumm
hello@postofilm.com, www.postofilm.com



© Heimatfilm / Bernhard Keller

DIE STILLE LIEBT ES UND DIE NACHT

Nana Neul's feature film tells the story of an icon of German cultural history: Friedrich Schiller (Jan Bülow), who risks everything for his close relationship with the composer Andreas Streicher (Hugo Tiedje). Together they fight – for art, for freedom, for friendship, and for love.

DIE STILLE LIEBT ES UND DIE NACHT is Heimatfilm's third collaboration with Nana Neul after producing her TV movie *UNSER KIND (OUR CHILD)*, (2017) and the international co-production *TÖCHTER (DAUGHTERS)*, (2021).

GENRE Love Story **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Nana Neul **SCREENPLAY** Sylke Rene Meyer **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Bernhard Keller **CAST** Hugo Tiedje, Jan Bülow, Stefanie Reinsperger, Thomas Schubert, Konstantin Lindhorst, Katharina Schmirrl, Hans-Jochen Wagner **PRODUCER** Bettina Brokemper **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Heimatfilm GmbH + CO KG in co-production with TrickStudio Lutterbeck GmbH **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Neue Visionen Filmverleih

WORLD SALES

Global Constellation, Fabien Westerhoff
info@globalconstellation.eu
www.globalconstellation.eu



© Christopher Uhrig/ Terwesten & Uhrig Filmverleih

DISNEY IDEOLOGIE

DISNEY IDEOLOGY

DISNEY IDEOLOGY offers an ideological critique of the Walt Disney Company, analysing it as a capitalist entity shaping cultural perceptions of happiness, social advancement, and societal change through media. The project accompanies the German film and ideology critic Wolfgang M. Schmitt as he posits the argument that Disney promotes a “capitalist religion” encouraging consumerism and merging storytelling with corporate interests.

The Düsseldorf-based filmmaker and video producer Moritz Terwesten made his feature directorial debut in 2025 with his documentary essay STERBEN OHNE GOTT.

GENRE Educational, Experimental **CATEGORY** Documentary **DIRECTOR** Moritz Terwesten **SCREENPLAY** Moritz Terwesten **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Christopher Uhrig **WITH** Wolfgang M. Schmitt **PRODUCER** Moritz Terwesten **CO-PRODUCER** David Zinmann **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Terwesten & Uhrig Filmverleih UG **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** barnsteiner-film

CONTACT Terwesten & Uhrig Filmverleih UG- Moritz Terwesten, kontakt@moritzterwesten.de www.disneyideologie.de



© Dieter Schumann

GARTEN DER HOFFNUNG

GARDEN OF HOPE

What happens if an area between blocks of houses is reclaimed and residents get a piece of garden? This is what happened on the Großer Dreesch, a prefabricated housing estate built during GDR times on the outskirts of Schwerin, the state capital of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. The idea was to create a place where socially needy, old and lonely people, as well as those displaced by war, could find each other and a piece of home through dealing with “Mother Earth”.

The film follows events in the garden for 18 months, hears life stories from near and far and asks whether dealing with a small piece of nature can alleviate loneliness, material hardship and the loss of home.

GENRE Society, Politics, Sustainability **CATEGORY** Documentary **DIRECTOR** Dieter Schumann **SCREENPLAY** Dieter Schumann **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Michael Kockot **EDITOR** Philipp Schindler (BFS) **WITH THE PROTAGONISTS** Manfred Jaskowiak, Kateryna Kotenko, Sabine Mielke, Gerhard Mahl, Birte Rathsmann, Wiebke Dahl, Ronny Wostrel, Abdul Hussein, Sigrid Lau, Omar Almuthanna, Richard Sator, Adelina Klingsiek, Thomas Littwin, Petra Holtz, among others **PRODUCER** Dieter Schumann **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER** Jana Cisar **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Basthorster Filmmanufaktur Dieter Schumann **LANGUAGE** German

CONTACT Basthorster Filmmanufaktur Dieter Schumann, dieter-schumann@web.de



© Timo Jacobs

HAPPY LAUNDRY

Casper unexpectedly inherits a laundromat in Hollywood. His trip to Los Angeles leads him into an entirely different world - a social hotspot on the margins of the city.

There he encounters a unique community of people stranded on the fringes of society. The laundromat becomes a place of refuge and quiet for the neighbourhood's residents. Yet this fragile sanctuary is constantly threatened by ICE agents.

GENRE Tragicomedy **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Timo Jacobs **SCREENPLAY** Timo Jacobs, with contributions by Sophie Stein and Lisa Merkert **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Peter Klomfass **CAST** Timo Jacobs, Detlev Buck, Carol Wior, Nikki Wior, Elena Rojas, Sophie Meister, Mikael Rubin, Vanessa Matic, Justine Marché **PRODUCER** Timo Jacobs **CO-PRODUCER** Anatol Nitschke **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Jacobs Productions in co-production with deutschfilm **LANGUAGES** English, German

CONTACT

Jacobs Productions, Timo Jacobs
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 www.jacobsproductions.com
 deutschfilm, Anatol Nitschke
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© Emre Erkmen

HIJAMAT

When Kerem's secret relationship with a man is revealed, it sends shockwaves through his deeply religious Muslim family, igniting a battle between faith, identity, and love within his community. As his brother fights to protect him, long-hidden secrets rise to the surface, threatening to tear them apart.

GENRE Drama **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Nader Saeivar **SCREENPLAY** Nader Saeivar **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Emre Erkmen **CAST** Kida Khodr Ramadan, Nicolette Krebitz, Moritz Bleibtreu, Nastassja Kinski, Aziz Çapkurt **PRODUCERS** Jafar Panahi, Said Nur Akkuş, Murat Şeker **CO-PRODUCERS** Ufuk Genç, Jan-Peter Jachtmann **PRODUCTION COMPANY** ArtHood Films in co-production with sugarWorkz, Lightburst Pictures and JPJ Film Productions **LANGUAGE** German, Turkish

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ArtHood Entertainment
 info@arthoodentertainment.com
 www.arthoodentertainment.com



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THE LAST SUMMER (WT)

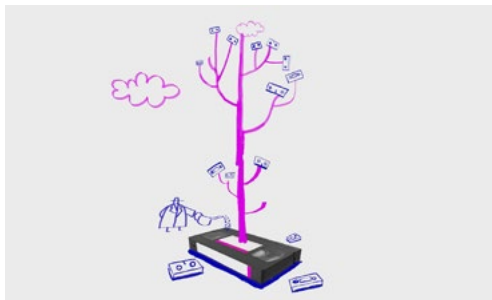
The village of Yahidne, which bears the scars of the Russian occupation, is the setting for Sergei's turbulent youth. He was only 14 when he was forced to hide in a cellar for days on end; a large scar runs across his back, caused by a piece of rocket shrapnel during the Russian invasion, a visible reminder of a childhood cut short. This film offers a glimpse of what lies ahead for a generation of teenagers when the challenges of growing up are shaped by the reality of war. Sergei's story oscillates between a normal teenage life and the normalisation of the fear that accompanies his existence.

The two directors have been following Sergei with their camera since 2023, and he has now just turned 18.

GENRE Chronicle documentary **CATEGORY** Documentary **DIRECTORS** Eleanora Iadkouskaya and Jan Jurzcak **SCREENPLAY** Eleanora Iadkouskaya and Jan Jurzcak **DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Eleanora Iadkouskaya and Jan Jurzcak **PRODUCERS** Frieder Schlaich and Irene von Alberti **CO-PRODUCER** Daniel Schössler (ZDF 3sat) **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Filmgalerie 451 **LANGUAGE** Russian

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kino@filmgalerie451.de, www.filmgalerie451.de



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UNCLE FILMI

In 1980s Tehran, a lively family gathering to mark the traditional ritual of full-body hair removal for women is disrupted by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps: they are searching for banned VHS tapes of Hollywood movies.

Nazgol Kashani is a Berlin based, Iranian-American film maker, who grew up in Tehran. Her work moves between documentary and fiction, exploring history and memory and how individuals navigate larger political realities, often with a touch of humour. Before turning to filmmaking, she studied Cultural Policy in Paris and London and worked as an art curator and arts journalist.

GENRE Animation, Drama, History, Tragicomedy **CATEGORY** Documentary, Short **DIRECTOR** Nazgol Kashani **SCREENPLAY** Nazgol Kashani **PRODUCER** Fabian Driehorst **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Fabian&Fred **LANGUAGE** Persian

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DISTRIBUTION SUPPORT

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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 German Kinemathek Museum for Film and TV, the German Documentary Association, Bavarian Film Fund, Film Fund North Rhine-Westphalia, Berlin-Brandenburg Film Fund, and the German Short Film Association.

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

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

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

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

RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

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

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FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS

THE FILMMAKERS

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CINEMATOGRAPHER



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Medienboard
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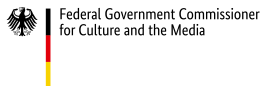


www.prog.film



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www.kulturstaatsminister.de



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www.ffa.de



www.fff-bayern.de



www.filmstiftung.de



www.hessenfilm.de



Medienboard
BerlinBrandenburg

www.medienboard.de



www.film.mfg.de



Mitteldeutsche
Medienförderung

www.mdm-online.de



Filmförderung
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www.moin-filmfoerderung.de



www.mv-filmfoerderung.de



www.nordmedia.de

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