

# GFQ

GERMAN FILMS QUARTERLY



WITH PORTRAITS AND ARTICLES OF

**FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS 2026**

DIRECTORS **CYNTHIA BEATT & VISAR MORINA**

PRODUCERS **CLAUDIA STEFFEN & CHRISTOPH FRIEDEL**

ACTOR & EUROPEAN SHOOTING STAR **ENNO TREBS**

SOUND DESIGNER **LARS GINZEL**

SALES COMPANY **GLOBAL CONSTELLATION**

**PERSPECTIVE: KIRSTEN NIEHUUS ON HER IDEAS AND PLANS  
AS PRESIDENT OF THE GERMAN FEDERAL FILM BOARD (FFA)**

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films

Dear Readers,

Before we start the new year, let's look back on what was a successful year in 2025. The presence of German productions and co-productions at the international festivals was particularly impressive. German majority productions were selected in the main competitions of the three largest festivals in Berlin (WHAT MARIELLE KNOWS, YUNAN), Cannes (SOUND OF FALLING) and Venice (SILENT FRIEND).

2026 has also begun in a similar vein. The year kicked off with Germany as the Focus Country at three important film festivals: in Palm Springs, Gothenburg and at When East Meets West in Trieste where special attention was paid to German cinema in both the festival line-up and industry programme, and also gave us the opportunity to present German productions, filmmakers as well as the German film scene's creativity to the international industry.

German productions have also been well represented at the first leading festivals of this year. Welf Reinhardt's A FADING MAN screened in Rotterdam's Tiger Competition, while Cynthia Beatt's HEART OF LIGHT was shown there in the Harbour sidebar. A portrait in this issue sees the Berlin-based director looking back at the film's shoot on the Fiji Islands. Director Visar Morina was invited to the Sundance Film Festival's international competition with his film SHAME AND MONEY. He also gives an insight into his work in a portrait for this issue. Another German production screening at the US festival in Utah was THE WEIGHT by Padraig McKinley.

We are also pleased about the German line-up at this year's Berlinale. A total of 80 German productions and co-productions will be shown in Berlin, 56 of which are majority German. The Berlinale will open with the world premiere of the German production NO GOOD MEN by Shahrbanoo Sadat. Three German films will compete for the Golden Bear: YELLOW LETTERS by İlker Çatak, HOME STORIES by Eva Trobisch and MY WIFE CRIES by Angela Schanelec. TRIAL OF HEIN by Kai Stänicke will be screened in the Perspective competition category.

Moreover, we are delighted that we will be showcasing seven filmmakers in this year's FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS campaign - each of them embodying the creativity that's driving the German film industry. From its first edition, the annual campaign has established itself as a platform to give German film talents international visibility. They will represent German cinema abroad as ambassadors. In addition, this year, we want to look ahead to the future in GFQ and, under the heading 'Perspective,' focus on innovations and changes in the film landscape. Our first issue features a conversation with Kirsten Niehuus giving us an insight into her ideas and plans as the new president of the FFA.

GFQ's first issue for 2026 will also see the introduction of a new category. German Films not only represents German cinema abroad, but is also there for German filmmakers who are active internationally. A large number of German filmmakers are scattered across the globe and work on very different kinds of international projects. We would like to briefly introduce some of them and ask them what they are currently working on. We are looking forward to an exciting 2026 - with interesting films, wonderful encounters and successful festivals.



Simone Baumann, Managing Director



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# °efp european shooting stars

2026



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France



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Norway



Cleo Diára  
Portugal



Joes Brauers  
The Netherlands



Tecla Insolia  
Italy



Violet Braeckman  
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LOTTA KILIAN  
CINEMATOGRAPHER

BAYAN LAYLA  
ACTOR

LYDIA GEISSLER  
MAKEUP ARTIST

ANNA ROLLER  
WRITER & DIRECTOR

JOSCHA BONGARD  
WRITER & DIRECTOR

ENZO BRUMM  
ACTOR

ISA WILLINGER  
DIRECTOR

# FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS

## THE FILMMAKERS



As a key promoter of German cinema abroad, German Films is committed to strengthening the international presence of German filmmakers. To fulfill this mission, the organization has been running the annual campaign FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS since 2016, presenting outstanding emerging talents of the German film industry to audiences worldwide. In 2026, FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS celebrates its eleventh edition.

FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS 2026 – THE FILMMAKERS introduces seven unique, impressive and diverse personalities, each of whom has found their own distinctive path into the film industry. This year's selection includes actors Bayan Layla and Enzo Brumm, writer-directors Anna Roller and Joscha Bongard, director Isa Willinger, cinematographer Lotta Kilian, and makeup artist Lydia Geissler. They follow in the footsteps of renowned filmmakers such as internationally acclaimed stars Sandra Hüller, Christian Friedel, Burhan Qurbani, Tom Schilling, Louis Hofmann, Jonas Nay, Jördis Triebel, Valeska Grisebach and Jannis Niewöhner, all of whom have been part of the campaign in previous editions since its start in 2016.

"We have an exceptionally vibrant and diverse film landscape in Germany, driven by the creativity and vision of its filmmakers," says Simone Baumann, Managing Director of German Films. "Across all disciplines, we see talented people constantly exploring new ideas, questioning conventions and redefining what film and cinema can be. At German Films, we see it as our responsibility to support these creatives and accompany them on their path to international success.

**Joscha Bongard** was born in Wolfsburg in 1994 and grew up in Kassel. After completing his high school diploma and training as an electronic technician for devices and systems, he worked in Cologne for the YouTube network TubeOne (now We Are Era). He then worked as a production assistant at Iconoclast Germany in Berlin and began studying directing at the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg in 2017. In 2019 he received a scholarship from the academy and directed a short film at La Fémis in Paris; in 2022

he completed a masterclass at UCLA Extension. His short film JUNG FRAGIL premiered in Riga in 2020 and was broadcast on German television. In addition to narrative films, he has directed commercials for brands including Mercedes, Bose and Amazon Prime. His documentary debut PORNFLUENCER premiered at DOK.fest Munich in 2022, was released theatrically nationwide and was nominated for the German Documentary Film Award 2023. His feature debut BABYSTAR celebrated its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival and screened at further international festivals.

**Enzo Hermann Brumm** was born in Meaux, France, in 1996 and grew up in Hamburg. He began his career as an international model, working on the runways of Paris, Milan, London and New York for designers including Versace, Rick Owens, Bottega Veneta and Louis Vuitton. In 2018 he quit modeling to focus entirely on acting and studied at the Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna until 2022. During his studies he appeared in numerous classical and contemporary stage productions, including at the Burgtheater Vienna. After an initial engagement at Theater Regensburg, he increasingly shifted his focus to film. In 2023 he starred alongside Moritz Bleibtreu in the Amazon Prime series VIKTOR BRINGT'S and received the New Faces Award for Best Young Actor in 2025. In 2024 he took on a leading role in SILENT FRIEND by Ildikó Enyedi, which premiered in Venice in 2025 and won multiple awards. Enzo Brumm will next be seen in Sönke Wortmann's DIE ÄLTERN.

**Lydia Geißler** was born in Leipzig in 1985 and now lives in Neu-Ulm, Bavaria. In 1989 her family fled the GDR, an experience that strongly shaped her later career. Her interest in visual transformation and creative processes behind the camera developed early. After completing her hairdressing apprenticeship as the top of her class, she trained as a state-certified makeup artist for film and television in 2011, graduating with top marks. Since then she has worked in makeup and special effects, focusing on character design and cinematic aesthetics. Her feature film debut was EIN GESCHENK DER GÖTTER (2014), followed by projects including LUFT (2019) and WER OHNE SCHULD IST (2024). Her

most recent work includes MISTY - THE ERROLL GARNER STORY, CYBERPUNK ROMANCE and the historical drama KARLA (all 2025), for which she developed period-accurate makeup concepts and aging effects. For Geißler, makeup is an essential element of visual storytelling.

**Lotta Kilian** is a cinematographer, born in Hamburg and based in Berlin. She studied cinematography at the Film University KONRAD WOLF. Her focus is on feature films and high-end TV series, and she also has extensive experience in documentary filmmaking. She is particularly drawn to emotionally and psychologically complex projects that are also politically and socially relevant. For her cinematography on the feature film LUISE by Matthias Lüthardt, she received a nomination for the German Film Award in 2024 and a Camerimage nomination in 2023. Early in her career, she won the German Camera Award (2012) and the Kodak Film School Award (2011). Her work has screened at numerous international festivals, including the Berlinale. She frequently collaborates with Faraz Shariat (DRUCK, PROSECUTION, Berlinale 2026) and Leonie Krippendorff (LOVING HER, GEPELLTE HAUT, 2026). Kilian is a co-founder of CINEMATOGRAPHINNEN - Women\* Cinematographers Network and a member of the German Film Academy, the European Film Academy and the German Society of Cinematographers.

**Bayan Layla**, born and raised in Syria, began studying architecture at the University of Hama before gaining her first stage experience in Leipzig in 2015. She has performed at theaters including Staatsschauspiel Dresden, Volksbühne Berlin and Theater an der Ruhr. In 2019 she began studying acting at the August Everding Theatre Academy and graduated in 2023 with a scholarship from the German National Academic Foundation. While still a student, she had her first engagement at the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe. She celebrated her breakthrough with the title role in the debut film ELAHA (2023, directed by Milena Aboyan). For this role she received numerous awards, including the New Faces Award, the First Steps - Götz George Young Talent Award and the Bavarian Film Award. The film screened at the Berlinale and in Locarno, and Layla was nominated for Best

Actress at the German Film Awards (Lola). Further film and television projects followed. In 2026 she will appear in WOVON SOLLEN WIR TRÄUMEN, HYGGE and DREI KAMERADINNEN, and will also take on a leading role in an international production.

**Anna Roller** was born in Munich in 1993. Early on she discovered filmmaking as a way to combine her interests in music, photography and writing. During her directing studies at the University of Television and Film Munich, she made five short films. PAN and THE LAST CHILDREN IN PARADISE screened at more than 60 international festivals, including Palm Springs, Max Ophüls and Camerimage. Her short film BRAT won the German Short Film Award (Lola) in 2021. In 2019 she was selected for the Future Frames program in Karlovy Vary and took part in several talent initiatives. Her feature debut DEAD GIRLS DANCING premiered in 2023 at the Tribeca Film Festival and Munich Film Festival and earned her the New Faces Award. Her second feature ALLEGRO PASTELL, based on the novel by Leif Rand, will premiere at the Berlinale and be released in cinemas in 2026.

**Isa Willinger** is a documentary film director. Her debut HI, AI. LOVE STORIES FROM THE FUTURE (2019) was nominated for the German Film Awards and won, among others, the Max Ophüls Award for Best Documentary. Her second theatrical documentary PLASTIC FANTASTIC, about the climate crisis, plastic production, lobbyism and environmental racism, received numerous awards including the German Documentary Film Award (Audience Award) and attracted more than 20,000 cinema viewers. Her third feature-length documentary NO MERCY (2025) brings together renowned women directors to discuss film language and gendered perspectives and screened successfully at international festivals, including DOC.NYC. She is currently preparing the documentary THE RED LINE (working title) on artificial intelligence. Willinger studied directing at the University of Television and Film Munich as well as American Studies, Slavic Studies and Sociology, including a Fulbright scholarship in New York. She is also the author of a book on Kira Muratova.

Angela Sonntag

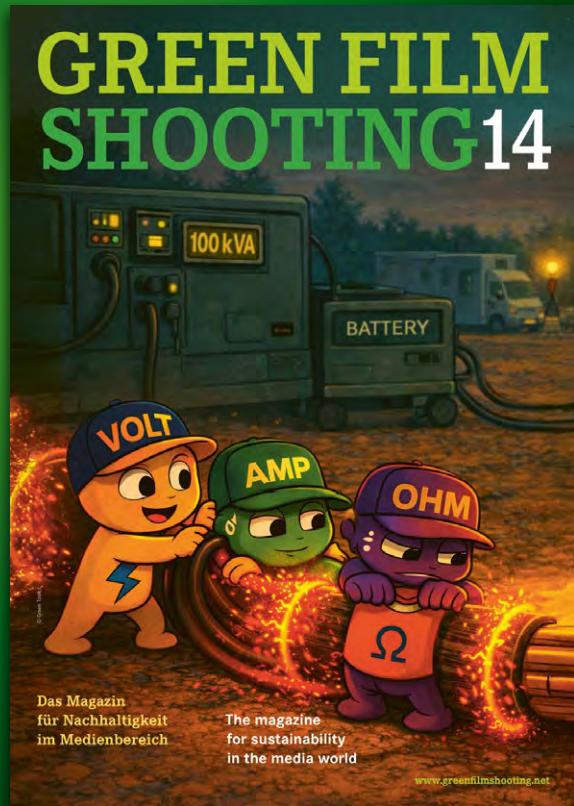
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# ISLAND DREAM

A PORTRAIT OF DIRECTOR CYNTHIA BEATT

Of all the films to be released in 2026, Cynthia Beatt's *HEART OF LIGHT* may have had the longest gestation period. "I had been wanting to do this since 1975," says the Berlin-based British filmmaker. At the time she had – together with Rudolf Thome – completed the 'ethnographic-feature' *STUDY OF AN ISLAND* set on the island Ureparapara in Vanuatu. The Berlin-based Beatt had spent the formative years of her youth in Fiji and she felt the creative need to devote herself to this region much more extensively. In the mid-80s she completed a script version for what was finally to become *HEART OF LIGHT*. Tilda Swinton, with whom she had become friends shortly after her breakthrough role in Derek Jarman's *CARAVAGGIO*, was to play the lead character in the film. So what took her so long? "Life", she says with a chuckle, referring among others to the birth of her two children and an extended stay in Rome with her German sculptor husband Raimund Kummer. The graduate of the Bath Academy of Art continued her filmmaking career, realizing shorts like *CYCLING THE FRAME* in 1988 featuring a Scottish woman on a bicycle tour along the 160k Berlin wall and *THE PARTY – NATURE MORTE* (both with Swinton). At the same time, she kept working on her passion project, going back and forth between Fiji and Europe. During the rewrites she realized: "I can't have a white woman as a central actor. The central protagonist is Fiji. At some point I said to Tilda that her part would be much smaller. And she said 'Fine'."

For Cynthia Beatt, this project held an obvious personal stimulus: "It was about retracing certain steps of my life and the experience of being deeply connected to and formed by a country, which was not the country of my parents." At the same time this film was to focus on the phenomenon of colonialism, which Cynthia Beatt has a "deep interest" in. As opposed to Jamaica, where she was born and spent her early childhood, Fiji has a strong indigenous culture. The islands became "like a microcosm of the greater world". Therefore, the filmmaker approached her subject with a sense of "egalitarianism" and the need to adapt to the "Fijian way of doing things." "I needed to be guided," she says. This meant having Fijian team members. But it took as long as 2022 until her company Heartbeatt

Pictures, together with Philippe Avril's La Ciné-filiale and German broadcaster ZDF/3Sat – put the financing together (BKM/FFA). The major part of principal photography was from August until November – including one month with Tilda Swinton. In 2023 Beatt returned with her daughter Frangipani, a photographer, and the Fijian assistant cameraman, Jimmy Wilisoni, for additional footage.

Given her artistic sensibilities, it was clear from the get-go that this was not going to be a traditional narrative film. She had already formulated her credo at the time of her 60-minute film *THE INVISIBLE FRAME* (2011), where Tilda Swinton retraces her trajectory of *CYCLING THE FRAME* on both sides of the former wall. She took her inspiration from Henri Matisse: "He felt that the human side of painting is the result of a mysterious, expressive quality which (...) comes through in the final painting (...) I apply it to cinema. (...) Film is like music. In a sense, I compose my films as 'musical scores.'"

Fortunately, she found a like-minded collaborator in Tilda Swinton: "We're soulmates. Like me she is concerned with questions of formal innovation and different ways of telling stories. For *HEART OF LIGHT* I knew that I could take her to an island and she would respond to people and situations in a way that was extremely delicate and intelligent." In line with her artistic philosophy and personal tastes, Cynthia Beatt likes to challenge her viewers – which is also why her film has a running time of 2 hours and 45 minutes. She puts her hopes on festivals and arthouse cinemas to secure an audience. One wish with regards to the presentation of *HEART OF LIGHT* has already come true: The film will premiere at the Rotterdam Film Festival. One of the reasons for her preference: "Olaf Möller is a curator and I admire his programming."

With her magnum opus ready to go out into the world, Cynthia Beatt plans to return as a filmmaker to Fiji: "I'm interested in encouraging people there to develop and make their own films. There is so much potential. And I can make a film about the clouds in the Pacific Ocean. That's a fascinating subject in itself."

Rüdiger Sturm



# WHEN DIGNITY TURNS INTO A DAILY TASK

A PORTRAIT OF DIRECTOR VISAR MORINA

From the outside, it may look like a fairy-tale of international auteur film: world premiere at Sundance, co-productions from six countries, post-production in Slovenia. But Visar Morina just laughs when I suggest that. "It's incredibly exhausting. And an incredible privilege at the same time," he says in a video interview. "You get government funding for an idea, and then suddenly a thousand people are tagging along. But it only works if it's something deeply personal." *SHAME AND MONEY* is personal in every way. The film premiered at Sundance at the end of January and tells the story of Shaban and his wife Hatixhe, two people in today's Kosovo who love, hope, fail – and slowly break down in a society where everything has its price: work, housing, status and security. And in the end, even your self-image. The initial spark came purely by chance. Morina had taken a photo of actors Flonja Kodheli and Astrit Kabashi on the set of his film *EXIL*. "They were standing next to each other; he had his arm around her. And I suddenly thought: they could be my parents." This image gave rise to an alternative story about his parents – not in the Kosovo of the 1990s but in today's post-war country, which has been reinventing itself inside an ultra-capitalist bubble for the past twenty years.

Morina travelled to Kosovo to do research, talking to people looking for housing, the unemployed, or day labourers. In addition to their existential hardships, they all shared one feeling: that of shame. "Shame in front of others – and of oneself." Morina describes Kosovo as a place where social processes can be seen with a special clarity. "You see things there that we in the West know only from history books – no labour rights, no social security, extreme inequality. At the same time, this is a harbinger of what is becoming increasingly prevalent in our own society as well." Born in Kosovo in 1979, Morina came to Germany as a teenager. He studied directing and screenwriting at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne. His debut *BABAI* premiered at Munich Film Festival in 2015, *EXIL* won the German Film Award for Best Unproduced Screenplay in 2018, and the later-finished film premiered at the Berlinale in 2020. In *SHAME AND MONEY*, he returns to the country of his childhood and thus to a society he knows – but one that is now

foreign to him. The main character, Shaban, is portrayed as an almost naive figure. "Someone who would never dream of calculating the value of his life," says Morina. "He helps because that's what you do. And suddenly he finds himself in a world where he is being asked for his CV. Then, the real question is: What part of me can I turn into money? Morina sees this as a system that not only sorts people according to economic means, but also changes them inside. "I believe it is impossible to maintain a healthy sense of self when you need to prove your worth every day. Inevitably, that leads to exhaustion and depression. And that is what happens to Shaban: quietly and with his eyes wide open, he goes under."

Morina consistently filmed on location in prisons, police stations, and on construction sites for gated communities. "In a neighbourhood where houses cost over a million, the security guards didn't have a toilet," Morina says. "It had just been forgotten." It is details like these that sharpen Morina's gaze: it is about observation rather than accusation, revealing his persistent interest in what circumstances do to people. Despite its socio-critical analysis, *SHAME AND MONEY* remains a love story. "The relationship between the two is almost like a fairy-tale," Morina says. "There is this unconditional love for each other. I remember that from my parents." It was only in the editing room that he realised how much of his father resounds in Shaban: "This breathlessness, this silent endurance." It means a lot to Morina that the film is now competing at Sundance. "These festivals are the gatekeepers. Without them, we wouldn't get to see many films at all." At the same time, he knows how fragile the future path could be. "We don't have a major distributor or a marketing budget. I just hope the film doesn't die with the festival." And perhaps that is where Morina is at his most precise: he is not driven by big ideas but by quiet, inner shifts. The way a body tenses up when it's standing in front of the employment office. The way a relationship grows closer because everything outside is unstable. How a person gradually loses trust in themselves. "Preserving dignity – that's fine. But how," Morina asks, "do you do that when you don't know how you're going to make ends meet tomorrow?"

Thomas Abelshauser



# OUR ROLE AS FACILITATORS

A PORTRAIT OF PRODUCERS CLAUDIA STEFFEN & CHRISTOPH FRIEDEL

"We really complement each other with our different backgrounds," says Claudia Steffen, managing director of Cologne-based Pandora Film Produktion, about her working relationship with fellow shareholder Christoph Friedel. "Neither of us may have had any formal training in film production, but I'd been able to try my hand at making films at a film club when I was growing up in Rostock in former East Germany," she recalls.

Christoph, on the other hand, had worked for various film distributors after graduating from university and was subsequently hired by Dieter Kosslick to oversee the funding programmes for distribution and exhibition at the Filmstiftung NRW before a meeting with Pandora's co-founder Karl "Baumi" Baumgartner then led to him joining the company in 1998, the same year as Claudia. "Whenever I watched films as a teenager, I had always felt this desire to want to help the artists realise their visions. That's what made the idea of becoming a producer so appealing," Christoph explains. "Our role as producers is to be a facilitator," Claudia says. "We are not what is often called a creative producer, i.e. someone who develops an idea for a film and then packages the project with a director and screenwriter. What we do is bring directors, writers and actors together for a film."

"Our approach is to ask the directors and screenwriters what kind of film they want to make and then see how we can make this possible for them," she continues. "At Pandora, it's never about the kind of film we want to make. Of course, we individually contribute our experience and input to each project and to every phase of the filmmaking."

When the two joined the Pandora team, the company had already built up a reputation for championing ambitious international arthouse cinema through its production and distribution operations. "That was still a time when world cinema could achieve significant numbers in the cinemas," Christoph recalls, noting that LUNA PAPA posted 170,000 admissions, SAMSARA was seen by over 200,000 cinema-goers in Germany. "It was a different market 30 years ago, but things are completely different now," Claudia observes. "You now have more films

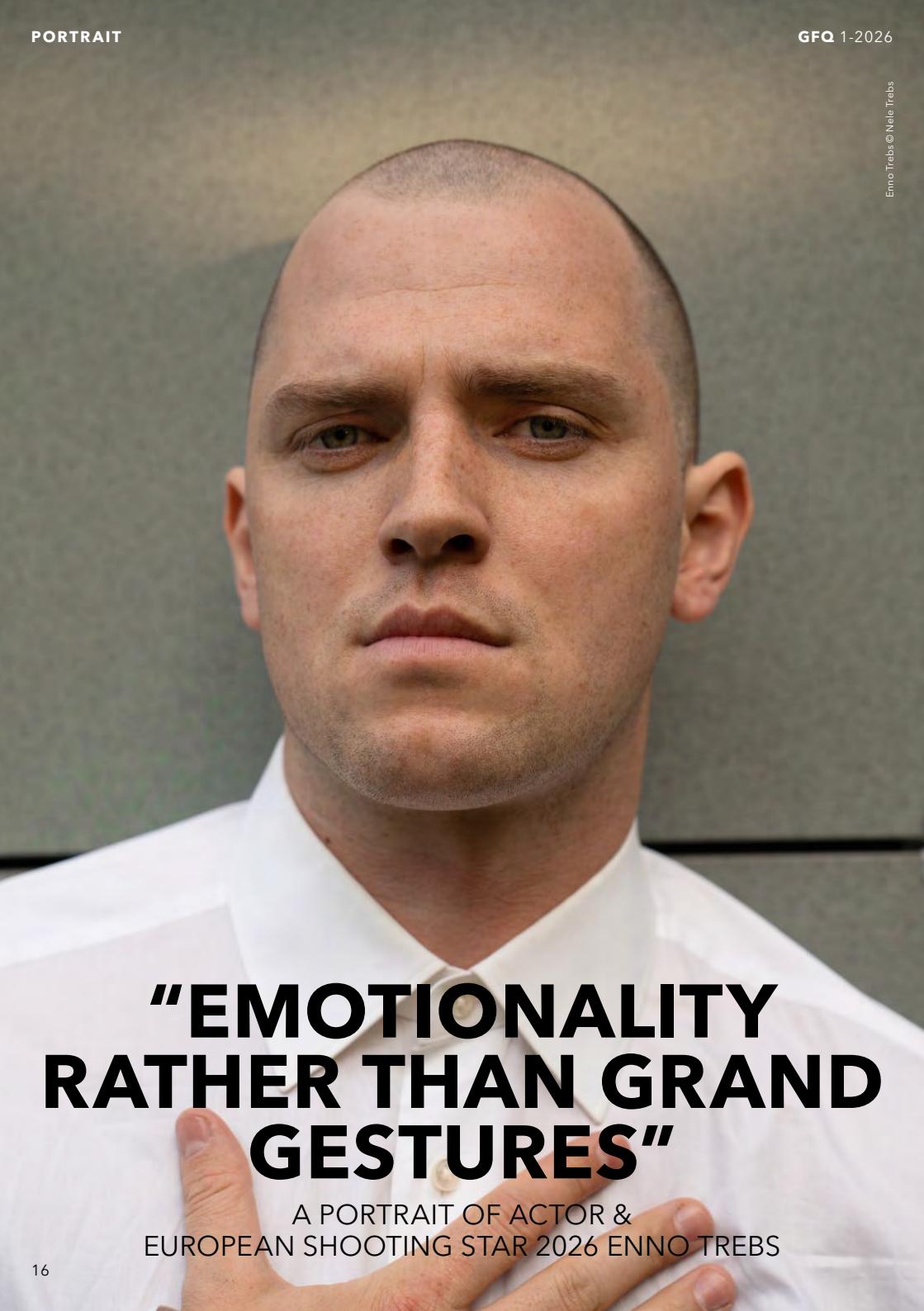
sharing the market, so this is why we started changing the kind of projects we come onboard to produce, and this is a development which we had already started even before Baumi's passing in 2014."

So, the company moved towards producing more German films, beginning with the debut features such filmmakers as Pia Marais, Jan Schomburg and Switzerland's Michael Koch and then going on to work with established directors like Andreas Dresen, Christian Schwochow, Lars Jessen and Thomas Stuber. Jessen's latest feature film *A STROLL TO SYRACUSE* and Koch's *EROSION* are both in post and should premiere at major festivals in 2026. However, that doesn't mean Pandora isn't still open to being a partner on international co-productions as two recent projects show.

"Sometimes, it stems from personal curiosity," Christoph explains. "That's the case with Albert Serra's current feature film *OUT OF THIS WORLD* because it interests us artistically how he works innovatively with the medium." And Christoph's long standing connection with Latin American cinema has seen Pandora reunited with the Paraguayan filmmaker Marcelo Martinessi for his second feature *NARCISCO* now premiering at this year's Berlinale. Looking back on their almost three decades at the company as Pandora prepares to throw a party in Berlin to celebrate its 44 years in the film business, Claudia and Christoph say that three of the productions they handled stand out as "personal milestones".

"My experiences on the shoot of Pan Nalin's *SAMSARA* in India had an impact on me that has lasted through to the present day," Claudia recalls. "And *GUNDERMANN*, our first collaboration with Andreas Dresen, one of the most relevant of contemporary German filmmakers, has since become a classic in German cinema." Meanwhile, Christoph points to Martinessi's 2018 Berlinale winner *THE HEIRESESSES* as "an example of a film that can have a political impact in a country as conservative as Paraguay and succeed in having a lasting effect on how its society now views same-sex relationships."

Martin Blaney



# **“EMOTIONALITY RATHER THAN GRAND GESTURES”**

A PORTRAIT OF ACTOR &  
EUROPEAN SHOOTING STAR 2026 ENNO TREBS

Being honoured as a European Shooting Star at the Berlinale is special for Enno Trebs because of his biography alone. Having grown up in the Berlin area, the actor born in 1995 remembers that he was familiar from an early age, not only with the bear logo emblazoned on posters and bags, but also with the significance of the festival. We met over a cup of coffee, watching tourists hurrying through the cold of the capital's city centre. He is even more delighted about something else, though, and he emphasises: "This is not just a prize; far more, it is a programme that stands for European solidarity, diversity and cooperation. Being appreciated in that context is really cool."

Ideal though he may be as a shooting star, Trebs is not a true newcomer. He discovered acting as a child, rather by chance - and at the age of 12 he appeared on camera with his older brother Theo in Michael Haneke's *THE WHITE RIBBON*, followed soon afterwards by roles in award-winning films such as *POLL* by Chris Kraus and Philip Koch's *PICCO*. It was exciting to travel to Cannes as a teenager with some of the other 'film children' in Haneke's entourage, Trebs tells me, and all the more meaningful to return to the Croisette 16 years later with *MIROIRS NO. 3* in 2025. These days, he has become almost a regular actor for Christian Petzold: after a small appearance in *UNDINE*, he was also part of the cast in *AFIRE*.

"Even as a child, I was impressed by Haneke's clarity. He always followed a very exact plan, knew just where the camera should be positioned; he never had to fiddle around and try things out first. That was an extremely useful first experience," Trebs reports. He acknowledges that Petzold's vision is equally rigorous, albeit with a different approach: "His way of working is extremely pleasant for the actors precisely because he takes plenty of time to try things out. Filming is always incredibly stressful, but it never is with him. It's a huge privilege to be able to perform under such conditions."

When asked how he would describe his own vision at work, the actor, who has also appeared in front of the camera for Burhan Qurbani, Sabrina Sarabi and Hans-Christian Schmid,

does not take long to answer. "I'm all in favour of taking the audience seriously. The less a film explains and the more it relies on subversiveness and the subliminal, the more fascinating I will find the story," he explains. 'When a director develops emotionality in a clever, subtle way rather than through grand gestures, I appreciate it more. I don't think crying is necessarily the best way to show that something is sad. I find that boring and too simplistic."

Trebs, who will soon be appearing in Paweł Pawlikowski's *1949*, never makes things too easy for himself, preferring instead to seek out fresh challenges constantly. Among other things, he has been teaching young colleagues once a year for several months at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts, where he himself studied from 2016 to 2020. And in his new film, *ECHO OF TOMORROW'S WAR* by Nicolas Ehret, he plays the undisputed leading role on screen for the first time.

"I've really enjoyed playing supporting roles to date - because when you're not the focus, you can be more inventive and work towards the world you're trying to portray. But I have had a completely different experience with *ECHO OF TOMORROW'S WAR*," says the 30-year-old, referring to the film in which he plays a young man attempting to evade the conscription reintroduced in a Germany ruled by right-wing populists and threatened by war. "Suddenly, I realised that as lead actor, every decision I make has an impact on where the story goes. And when you play a character twelve hours a day, Monday to Friday, for weeks on end, you can't help but absorb some of that character." He emphasises that this experience of carrying the film as the protagonist was new and exciting. But it goes without saying that it won't be the last time he does so, and not just since he was selected as a European Shooting Star.

Patrick Heidmann



# AT THE CROSSROADS OF ART AND COMMERCE

A PORTRAIT OF SALES COMPANY GLOBAL CONSTELLATION

"It's a really exciting new chapter for me to be operating on a more global and multiterritorial level," says Fabien Westerhoff about last year's merger of his sales outfit Film Constellation with Munich-based Global Screen in a new incarnation as Global Constellation. "Having founded Film Constellation a decade ago I had reached a point where I was now looking to take it to the next level and scale," Westerhoff explains. "That was something which would have been difficult on my own, so when the opportunity arose with Vuelta to join a larger group that shared our vision, it felt like the right strategic move to make that growth possible."

"Combining theatrical and TV sales in one company is quite rare," says Ulrike Schröder, managing director of Global Constellation's TV division. "That's unusual in the industry in general and, if you look at Vuelta itself, we are the only one of its sales companies with this combined knowledge and expertise."

"Having this 360 degree approach enables us to carry projects through all of the exploitation windows," Fabien suggests. "It means that filmmakers can see us as a one-stop shop where we have the capacity to greenlight films and help local talent to reach a global audience." Vuelta as a studio brings together companies working across distribution, production, and international sales within a single mutually supportive ecosystem. As Fabien explains, "this structure allows each company to benefit from close collaboration while maintaining its own focus and expertise."

"Another key advantage is access to the parent company's centralised support services for production financing, financial controlling and producer reporting."

"It's what every sales company dreams of - to have a steady influx of content from the in-house production pipeline potentially being available to us," Ulrike observes. These synergies have already resulted, for example, in Global Constellation picking up two titles co-produced by its Norwegian sister company Scanbox to handle sales: the box-office hit historical war thriller *BATTLE OF OSLO*, and the TV series *HENKI*, based on

the true story of a young gay man's fight for justice after being fired for disclosing that he was infected with the HIV. And there has also been a fruitful exchange of information about new projects between Global Constellation and Vuelta Germany, Vuelta's German theatrical distribution arm, with the two companies both picking up Ulrike Tony Vahl's directorial debut *CRUX* and Leonie Krippendorff's love story *PEELED SKIN*. "We aim to be at the crossroads where art meets commerce," says Fabien about the range of films being offered by Global Constellation in its line-up with an emphasis on discovery and audience engagement.

To begin with, there are cast-led English-language packages such as the runaway romance *QUEEN OF THE FALLS*, starring Pamela Anderson and Guy Pearce, and John Michael McDonagh's horror thriller *FEAR IS THE RIDER* with Abbey Lee. A second strand encompasses animation and family entertainment which had always been a particular strength of Global Screen's portfolio as a market leader in Germany - with such feature films such as *MISSION GRANNY*, *THE LAST WHALE SINGER* and *THE LAST DINOSAUR* on its books. And, as a third strand, the focus is placed on European auteur talent with a slant towards German-language productions.

Apart from *CRUX* and *PEELED SKIN*, Global Constellation is also handling international sales for veteran German director Doris Dörrie's new feature film *MRS WINKLER LEAVES THE HOUSE* which wrapped shooting in northern Germany at the beginning of this January. Meanwhile, the company's first time at Berlin's European Film Market in its new incarnation will see it showcasing two new titles having their world premieres in the Berlinale's Panorama section: Sophie Heldman's second feature film *THE EDUCATION OF JANE CUMMING*, produced by Cologne-based Heimatfilm, and French-Canadian filmmaker Jérémie Comte's debut feature, the thriller *PARADISE*, co-produced with Westerhoff's French-based production arm Constellation Production. In addition, the fantasy drama TV series *ALL HEROES ARE BASTARDS*, which is being sold by the TV division, has been selected for this year's edition of the Berlinale Series Market.

Martin Blaney

A close-up, color portrait of sound designer Lars Ginzel. He is a middle-aged man with light brown hair, a well-groomed beard, and mustache. He is wearing round, olive-green glasses and a dark blue t-shirt. He is smiling warmly at the camera. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor studio or office environment.

# SOUND STARTS BY LISTENING TO PEOPLE

A PORTRAIT OF SOUND DESIGNER LARS GINZEL

Lars Ginzel needs to move. And that is not easy because: 'I'm a difficult tenant,' the sound engineer admits. 'I'm loud, I only take up a small space, and I want a good price.' At least he has found a new home now in the Babelsberg studio grounds. Really, though, the German media industry should be rolling out the red carpet for him. Few of his colleagues in Germany have earned as much recognition as the 46-year-old. He won a BAFTA for Best Sound for *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT* and received an Oscar nomination, among other accolades. At the 2026 European Film Awards, he was nominated for a European Film Award in the category Best Sound Design for *THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB*. Last year, he received the German Film Award for the sound design of *SEPTEMBER 5*. 'I find it hard to pat myself on the back,' he says when asked about his main field of expertise. But he admits, 'I don't focus that much on the German film scene. At this point, I don't even know in how many languages the films were that I've worked on.' This has allowed him to develop a broader perspective on storytelling. At the same time, he has not been confronted so much with the limitations of the German industry, where post-production is less important in film funding.

Initially, his career was boosted by some lucky coincidences. In 1998, he did his first internship at RuhrsoundStudios in Dortmund, one of Germany's leading recording studios, which had just finished working on *RUN LOLA RUN*. Among other things, they took time to spend a full day explaining an audio workstation to him. During this job, he also got to know colleagues who helped him land a position as a sound editor on Hans-Christian Schmid's exorcism drama *REQUIEM* in 2006. At that time, he decided to go into sound mixing and landed his first prestigious international project two years later - as re-recording mixer on Ari Folman's animated film *WALTZ WITH BASHIR*. That multi-award-winning war drama earned him a reputation he now views with mixed feelings: 'I wish I didn't have to make war films.' The 'only meaning' of *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT* for him was 'for someone to see this film and then say: I will never, ever go to war.' He has clear quality criteria. In the war drama *THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB*, for example, he sought a way to use the

real sound recordings that form the heart of the film 'in an ethically sound way, without becoming too manipulative.' When he talks with directors about his work, he emphasises the interpersonal aspects rather than the technical ones: 'Our language is not designed so we can express ourselves in detail about sounds. Everyone says things differently. That is why the most important task for me at the beginning of every project is to spend time with a director and understand what makes them tick'. When working on *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*, for example, director Edward Berger was in the room while Lars Ginzel and Frank Kruse did the effects premix. They went out for lunch together, giving them a chance to ask spontaneous questions: "When you sit down together and talk about everything under the sun, you can develop a shared understanding of a film. That makes it even easier when you work with someone for a second or third time." The best example here is Tim Fehlbaum, for whom Lars Ginzel designed the sound for *TIDES* and *SEPTEMBER 5*. Despite his experience with war films and science fiction epics such as *MATRIX RESURRECTIONS*, he is not necessarily interested in spectacular sound effects. 'I'm attracted to films that are quieter, without constant dialogue. Last year, I was the re-recording mixer for the film *APRIL* by Georgian director Dea Kulumbegashvili. It was about silence and moods matching the images. The question of when one sound should follow another is just as exciting.'

But to what extent does he still see a future in his profession, in view of AI and its continuing advance? 'I don't rule out the possibility that I could be replaced by AI,' he says pragmatically, adding: "But it takes a lot of tact and sensitivity in dealing with people to do this job properly. As I see it, the most important thing is to understand the way my colleagues think. And the question is whether directors will want to sit in front of a computer for two months and interact with AI." He sees more of a threat to his profession - at least in Germany - in the current production crisis: 'I fear that we are losing too many people because they are moving into other industries or abroad. Perhaps in ten years' time we will have to reconstruct, with great effort, the knowledge that is currently being lost.'

Rüdiger Sturm



# “THE FFA AS A PACEMAKER FOR FUTURE TRENDS”

KIRSTEN NIEHUIS ON HER IDEAS AND PLANS AS  
PRESIDENT OF THE GERMAN FEDERAL FILM BOARD (FFA)

"It's been something of a homecoming," says Kirsten Niehuus about being elected as the president of Germany's national film funding agency, the German Federal Film Board (FFA), last autumn.

"The FFA and me go back a long way," she notes. "My first connection was in 1988 as a trainee lawyer during my Law studies at the University of Hamburg and I subsequently became the head of the fund's legal affairs department."

Then, between 1995 and 1998, Niehuus headed up the legal affairs department of the producer-distributor Senator Film before returning to the FFA in 1999 to become its Deputy Director, a post that she held until 2004.

A new chapter in her professional career then began with the appointment in November of that year as Managing Director responsible for film funding at the regional film fund Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg (MBB).

In the more than two decades at the head of this fund until her retirement at the end of June 2025, Niehuus had been instrumental in developing the Berlin-Brandenburg region into a leading hub for national and international film and TV production.

Productions as diverse as *INGLORIOUS BASTERDS*, *TONI ERDMANN*, *BABYLON BERLIN*, *TRIANGLE OF SADNESS* and *SCHOOL OF MAGICAL ANIMALS* are just a handful of the titles backed by MBB during her watch.

Any thoughts that Niehuus might spend her retirement away from the hustle and bustle of the film industry were quickly dispelled when she revealed in interviews last summer that the German Producers Alliance (Produktionsallianz) had nominated her as its representative on the FFA's 36-member Administrative Board.

And she then put her name forward to become the successor to the former State Minister for Culture and the Media Bernd Neumann whose term as FFA President was coming to an end last year.

"I felt that I had the right credentials for this role as I have been involved with film funding for my whole professional life," Niehuus explains. "I've always been closely following developments in film policy, and my work at the Medienboard meant that I have a very good network of contacts in the industry on both a national and international level."

She points out that she finds it "particularly exciting" to be taking up this position at a point where the media and entertainment industry is undergoing a process of transformation.

"It will be interesting to see how the FFA adapts its practices because many aspects of its regulations then serve as a blueprint for the other regional film funds in Germany. In this respect, the FFA acts as a pacemaker for future trends," Niehuus suggests.

Her appointment as FFA President (which also entails serving as the chair of both the fund's Administrative Board and Executive Committee) marks a new milestone in the film agency's almost 60-year history since she is the very first woman to hold this office. "It was long overdue that a woman should be in this position," Niehuus says. "It's astonishing that the FFA has only had male dominated presidencies for such a long time."

This state of affairs at the FFA had appeared to be all the more of an anomaly when one looks at the developments at the regional film funds where women had been appointed to the top positions over the years - from FFF Bayern and Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein through Film- und Medienstiftung NRW and Hessen Film & Medien to, most recently, Nordmedia, Medien- und Filmgesellschaft Baden-Württemberg and Kuratorium junger deutscher Film.

"We have had a lot of work to do since the inaugural sitting of the Administrative Board in mid-October," Niehuus recalls. "The Board would normally have started work in February, but everything was then put back by the holding of the Bundestag general election and the new coalition government being formed."

"But we've now had many sittings to pass the new guidelines for the various funding categories and have also been addressing the ongoing process of transformation within the industry. At the same time, we are working on reducing the amount of red tape because the FFA has so many areas of operations to cover."

In fact, the number of the Berlin-based agency's employees has swelled to around 120 since it is now also responsible for BKM's jury-based cultural film funding programme and furthermore for administering the Federal Government's two production incentive funding schemes German Film Fund (DFFF) and German Motion Picture Fund (GMPF).

This is in addition to the FFA's core responsibilities under the auspices of the German Film Law (FFG) to provide support for feature films in all phases from script development, production and distribution as well as exhibition, film heritage, film export and film education. "I'm looking forward to the work with the FFA's Administrative Board as it has always been 'film parliament' bringing all of the different fields together - from production and exploitation through to the creatives - as a forum where one can discuss and argue before then reaching compromises and agreements," Niehuus explains.

"It's important for the future of the industry that we maintain this space so that we can demonstrate this sector's relevance to the political establishment," she adds. From the outset, it's clear that there will be plenty to keep Niehuus occupied in her four years in the honorary position as the FFA's President.

To begin with, the German film community is expecting that a resolution will soon be achieved on the question of whether international and local streaming and VOD services will be subject to binding legislation for an investment obligation similar to those practised in other European countries. Or whether the alternative - favoured by the current State Minister for Culture and Media Wolfram Weimer - of a voluntary commitment to invest into German production is the option becoming reality.

In addition, the coming months should see the publication of a study commissioned by the FFA in November from the Institute for Contemporary History (Institut für Zeitgeschichte) to clarify the extent of any Nazi affiliations of the fund's previous directors or committee members. This follows other historical studies which had been commissioned by the Berlinale, German Films (see report in GFQ 1/2024) and the German film industry's umbrella organisation SPIO.

Meanwhile, the FFA's international activities should be able to benefit from the extensive network of contacts that Niehuus had built up over the past 20 years at Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg. She was unwavering in her commitment to supporting German producers' involvement in international co-production as well as being a partner in co-production development funds with Poland, Turkey and Russia. She also initiated artist-in-residence programmes with such cities as Paris, Thessaloniki, Mexico and Mumbai.

In fact, she had already become active on an international level during her time as the FFA's Deputy Director between 1999 and 2004 when she represented Germany on the board of the Eurimages pan-European co-production fund and was then elected as its vice-president for two years from 2004.

"My time as President runs for the life of the German Film Law (FFG) - until 31 December, 2029 - so it's a case of 'after the amendment is before the amendment,'" Niehuus observes in a nutshell. Indeed, the new FFG had hardly made it to the statute books before the German film community was already turning its attention to the possible direction future legislation might need to take to address changes within the industry in the coming years.

And with her legal background and decades of experience as a film funder, Niehuus will play an important role in supporting the FFA's management on deciding how the future FFG should be structured for the next decade from 2030.

Martin Blaney

# GERMAN FILMS PODCASTS



published every third Tuesday

published every third Thursday

# 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.

## IDAN WEISS - ACTOR

### **How did your first international project come about—was it a goal or more of a coincidence?**

Before FRANZ, I had never played a leading role before, let alone in an international production. The casting director Simone Bär suggested me to Agnieszka Holland. Somehow everything then fell into place, like a puzzle assembling itself. I value such coincidences.

### **What have you learned about yourself from working in other countries?**

How important languages and cultures are! How much we humans have to share, and that we are all connected. I love traveling, observing the world, and appreciating all the small moments life has to offer.

### **Was there a phase when you seriously doubted your path?**

Over the years, I have doubted myself repeatedly and thought a lot about my profession. But I never gave up. That's the most important thing—that we must never give up and must keep dreaming.

### **What are you currently working on, and what especially attracted you to this project**

Between March and April, I'm part of a historical series – its final season. It deals with a cholera epidemic, and I play a doctor. After that come my



first English-language projects. Among them, I'm playing the lead role in Jonas Steinacker's directorial debut *Save Our Souls*, an eco-thriller drama, which I'm very much looking forward to.

### **Is there a genre, format, or theme you'd like to explore in the future?**

I love films – films that are bold, that take risks and step out of the comfort zone. Not films that aim to please the audience, but ones that provoke, criticize, and encourage closer examination. I'm a big fan of the films of Terrence Malick, Lars von Trier, Julia Ducournau, Gaspar Noé, and David Lynch. I deeply appreciate this kind of filmmaking. That said, I'm a very open person and read every script.

**Idan Weiss** was born in Seesen in Lower Saxony in 1997. He started acting in "Cactus Junges Theater" in 2015. This was followed by a year at the ARTURO acting school in Cologne and a move to the IAF International Academy for Film Acting. He played different roles in theatres and also directed plays. Parallel to the theater, Idan Weiss worked in front of the camera. Director Robert Thalheim cast him in his feature film *TKKG* (2019). This was followed by many more educational productions and short films – and then came the call from casting director Simone Bär for the international coproduction *FRANZ K*, directed by Agnieszka Holland. For his part he was awarded as "Best Actor" at Polish film festival Gdynia. Idan Weiss is currently in front of the camera in Italy in the international cinema production *THE GIRL WITH THE LEICA*, directed by Alina Marazzi. Idan Weiss lives in Cologne.

## **KATJA VON GARNIER - DIRECTOR**

### **Looking back on your beginnings, what advice would you give your younger self today?**

Be less afraid. At the same time, I could learn a thing or two from my younger self in terms of that feeling of being unstoppable.

### **Was there a moment when you realized: Now I'm really working internationally?**

Yes – definitely. For me, it was when my first U.S. project came together: *IRON JAWED ANGELS*. Suddenly I was working day-to-day with an American team and cast – Hilary Swank, Anjelica Huston, Patrick Dempsey, Julia Ormond on a story about two radical young women who fought to win women's suffrage in the U.S. It was a dream, and every now and then I had to pinch myself. It was also an incredibly positive experience with HBO Films, and I felt very supported in making the film in the way I had hoped (contrary to what the usual Hollywood stories



© Anne Wilk

might lead you to expect). And then there was this wonderfully "international" moment, in the most human way, around the Golden Globes: Anjelica Huston won, and Hilary Swank and the film were nominated - when Hilary, between all the Golden Globe tables, briefly recited to me what she would have said if she'd won.

### **Is there an international experience that has permanently changed your approach?**

Definitely my experience on IRON JAWED ANGELS - especially in the editing room. Like everything, it's always a balancing act: trusting your own creative instinct, while also staying open when good, valuable feedback comes in. Of course, it depends on who your partners are.

But I remember sitting in the edit suite with my editor Hans Funck- whom I was able to bring over from Germany to the U.S.- and we had the notes on our first cut in front of us. I read them out to him one by one, and at first we just groaned. I'd made a commitment to myself to be open and to be a trustworthy partner, because I was never going to be forced to implement something that went against my will. So we started with the attitude of: 'Let's just try it.'

And then we'd often sit there watching the new version and have to admit, 'Hmm... not bad,' or actually "... really good"- haha. I was simply surrounded by strong partners at HBO Films, and I learned to open up more - provided you share the same vision and there's mutual trust. That pursuit of balance between my own instinct and openness is what I took away from the experience.

### **When does a project really feel meaningful to you today?**

I think I've become more aware of the impact film can have. And I just hope that impact is a positive one - that something in someone resonates a little differently because of the film... maybe a little brighter.

**Katja von Garnier** gained early recognition in her native Germany for her film MAKING UP (1993) which also won a student Academy Award. Both MAKING UP (1993) and follow up music film BANDITS (1997), lensed from a woman's point of view, were enormous successes with critics and at the box office. Variety chose Katja von Garnier as one of the "ten leading director's to watch" based on BANDITS. Katja is known specifically for creating strong female characters in her films and being an actor's director. In 2004, Katja directed IRON JAWED ANGELS for HBO. The movie, starring Hilary Swank, Anjelica Huston, Julia Ormond, Frances O'Connor, Vera Farmiga and Patrick Dempsey, earned a Golden Globe nomination for the film, Hilary Swank a nomination and Anjelica Huston a Golden Globe win. Katja was then lured back to Germany to become the directing force behind the OSTWIND-franchise. Katja then accompanied the SCORPIONS on a world tour for the documentary FOREVER AND A DAY, and then turned to her passion of DANCE with the urban dance movie FLY. She is now working on new national as well as international projects.

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# BIBI BLOCKSBERG – DAS GROSSE HEXENTREFFEN

## BIBI BLOCKSBERG – WITCHES UNITE!

Bibi (13) scores a once-in-a-lifetime chance to attend the International Witches' Gathering. But instead of learning secret spells and celebrating with her friends, they're assigned to kitchen duty by the joylessly strict headmistress Servera, who has darker plans in mind. When the young witches sneak into the grand hall, they witness Servera's power grab: she demands all young witches be silenced, stripped of their powers until age 21, and sent to mandatory boarding schools. Caught spying, Bibi becomes the perfect example of everything Servera claims is wrong with young witches. But the real chaos begins when Bibi is forced to cook the traditional witch soup as punishment. The enchanted recipe transforms all the senior witches into wild, unpredictable teenagers who unleash havoc across their hometown. Now Bibi must reverse the spell and restore order before Servera seizes control and silences young witches forever.

**GENRE** Family Entertainment **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Gregor Schnitzler  
**SCREENPLAY** Bettina Börgerding **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Ralf Noack **CAST** Nala, Rosalie Thomass, Friedrich Mücke, Heike Makatsch, Carla Demmin, Balthazar Gyan Alexis Kuppuswamy, Philomena Amari, Shanti Celik, Palina Rojinski **PRODUCERS** Johanna Bergel, Quirin Berg, Max Wiedemann **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER** Bernd Krause **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Wiedemann & Berg Film in coproduction with Kiddinx Studios and EPO-Filmproduktionsgesellschaft **RUNTIME** 89 min **LANGUAGE** German

**WORLD SALES** Epsilon Film

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## COOL DOWN

As the climate crisis spins out of control, the world's superpowers deploy a secret weapon: geoengineering. What starts as humanity's last hope quickly turns into a deadly struggle for dominance. American scientist Grace Anderson and German agent Luca Baberi uncover a shocking truth: the US and Russia are secretly manipulating the atmosphere - unaware of each other. The clash of their actions triggers catastrophic side effects. While Luca stops a Russian launch, Asia is devastated by extreme drought. In Vietnam, young researcher Linh is forced to create a countermeasure that shifts the climate again, this time with disastrous consequences for the US. A global race begins. Intelligence agencies and world leaders hunt the few people who still understand the system.

COOL DOWN (currently in post-production) is a fast-paced, international thriller in the style of GEOSTORM and DON'T LOOK UP - highly suspenseful, emotional, and frighteningly close to our reality.

**GENRE** Adventure, Thriller **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Felix Meinhardt **SCREEN-PLAY** Kerstin Doerenbruch, Joachim Böttcher **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Felix Meinhardt **CAST** Jim Förster, Sophie Manus, Suzanne von Borsody, Dieter Landuris, Andre Hennecke, Aljoscha Stadelmann, Daniel Steiner, Viktor Blum **EDITOR** Manuel Enne **VFX** Sebastian Moretto, Hendrik Panz, Sean Sams, Stefan Huber **PRODUCER** Felix Meinhardt **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER** Kerstin Doerenbruch **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Felix Meinhardt Filmproduktion **RUNTIME** 100 min **LANGUAGE** German, English

**CONTACT** Felix Meinhardt • [info@felixmeinhardt.com](mailto:info@felixmeinhardt.com)



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# DUMP

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An explosion. The Earth disappears. It drifts away. Young people observe humanity from another planet. A final radio recording. A black box has recorded the voices of Earth. The questions asked therein are now drifting through the universe forever. Who is the human being? The young people have gathered in a final liminal space to explore themselves. Now they live far away from Earth. A radio station, a humanoid god, a sheep and an astronomer from Afghanistan are already here. Together they must create a new law for civilisation. Left behind on Earth is a DJ in the form of a goddess, who recorded the voices to prevent their disappearance. In the last last liminal space before the giant explosion, the inhabitants of the future planet experience their lives once more. Now they embark on a journey into the future for us and become cosmonauts of hope.

**GENRE** Science Fiction **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Christina Friedrich **SCREEN-PLAY** Christina Friedrich **DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Greta Markurt, Emma Lena Weber **CAST** Lee Becker, Elias Schönberger, Josephine Milde, Aliya Nickel, Azra Canli, Julijana Sievert, Mira Schneller, Maximilian Klemmstein, Henrik Koppermann, Finley Nebelung, Lukas Burghardt, Diana Siebert, Amena Karimyan, Fee Aviv Dubois, Henrik Koppermann **PRODUCER** Christina Friedrich **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Madonnenwerk Christina Friedrich **RUNTIME** 83 min **LANGUAGE** German **FESTIVALS** International Film Festival Rotterdam 2026

**WORLD SALES** Madonnenwerk

friedrich@madonnenwerk.de • www.madonnenwerk.de



© Knut Adass

## FROSTBITE

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When a 'controlled' avalanche blasting goes terribly wrong, environmental officer Martia and her family find themselves trapped under the ice in a crashed cable car. Battling their wounds, the cold, and inner demons, they soon learn that, just as bad as they want out, something ... wants in.

**GENRE** Disaster, Survival Thriller **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Lukas Rinker **SCREEN-PLAY** Lukas Rinker **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Knut Adass **CAST** Zoe Boyle, Kris Hitchen, Andrew Scarborough, Lily Curley, Denzel Baidoo, Adrian Pang **PRODUCERS** Tonio Kellner, Jakob Zapf, Andrea Simml **CO-PRODUCERS** Kim Pijselman, Rikke Ennis, Sofie Siboni, Peter Ahlén **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Neopol Film in coproduction with Reinvent Yellow **RUNTIME** 82 min **LANGUAGE** English

**WORLD SALES** Reinvent Yellow  
kim.pijselman@reinvent.dk • [www.reinvent.dk](http://www.reinvent.dk)



© Christian Rein / Rat Pack Filmproduktion / Constantin Film Produktion

# MOMO

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The young orphan girl, Momo, lives in the ruins of an old Roman amphitheater and always has an open ear for everyone in the neighborhood. But most of all, she loves spending her days with her best friend Gino. When a greedy and powerful corporation begins stealing everyone's time, suddenly no one has time for her anymore – not even Gino! Momo is devastated. Then a mysterious tortoise appears and leads her to Master Hora, the guardian of time. But can they take on the time-thieves together? An exciting race to save everyone's time ensues.

"Time is the most precious asset human beings possess!"

The big-screen adaptation of Michael Ende's best-selling fantasy novel – where friendship and courage ignite a race to save everyone's time from the grips of a greedy cooperation.

**GENRE** Adventure, Family Entertainment **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Christian Ditter **SCREENPLAY** Christian Ditter **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Christian Rein **CAST** Alexa Goodall, Martin Freeman, Araloyin Oshunremi, Kim Bodnia, Claes Bang, Laura Haddock, Jennifer Amaka Pettersson **PRODUCER** Christian Becker **CO-PRODUCER** Christian Ditter **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Rat Pack Filmproduktion in coproduction with Constantin Film Produktion **RUNTIME** 92 min **LANGUAGE** English **FESTIVALS** Schlingel 2025, Zurich International Film Festival 2025

**WORLD SALES** Epsilon Film

matthias.ziegler@epsilonfilm.de • www.epsilonfilm.de



© Constantin Film / NEUESUPER / Marc Reimann / Bernd Schüller/Stefan Biebl

# PUMUCKL UND DAS GROSSE MISSVERSTÄNDNIS

## PUMUCKL'S BIG MIX-UP

When a simple repair job for an eccentric opera conductor spirals wildly out of control, the mismatched pair find themselves chasing runaway animals, uncovering rural secrets, and ultimately facing a grand showdown on the stage of the State Opera. Pumuckl rides along invisibly, stirring up trouble at every turn. Eder, the steady hand, tries to keep the peace and fix what's broken. But when Pumuckl begins to fear their friendship won't survive these changes, both must discover what truly matters: where you belong, and who you belong with.

Outside of the DACH-region, the original series from the 1980s was broadcast in Italy, Portugal, Spain, Hungary, Greece, Denmark, Bulgaria, Korea and Israel. The production is led by Marcus H. Rosenmüller ("The Keeper", "New Stories from Pumuckl"), and production company NEUESUPER ("Paradise"), in co-production with Constantin Film ("Perfume: The Story of a Murderer", "Downfall") in cooperation with RTL Germany.

**GENRE** Adventure, Family Entertainment **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Marcus H. Rosenmüller **SCREENPLAY** Korbinian Dufter **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Stefan Biebl **CAST** Florian Brückner, Maxi Schafroth, Frederic Linkemann, Anja Knauer, Ilse Neubauer, Matthias Bundschuh **PRODUCERS** Simon Amberger, Korbinian Dufter, Rafael Parente **CO-PRODUCER** David Kehrl **PRODUCTION COMPANY** NEUESUPER in coproduction with Constantin Film Produktion **RUN-TIME** 97 min **LANGUAGE** German

**WORLD SALES** Epsilon Film  
 matthias.ziegler@epsilonfilm.de • www.epsilonfilm.de



© Lea Dähne

## RUN ME WILD

Toni (Luna Jordan) doesn't talk about her past. She prefers to lift weights until her hands shake. Or distract herself with work in her parents' garden center (Johanna Wokalek and Thomas Loibl). But more and more often, her traumatic memories catch up with her. When Toni meets the adventurous Anna, more than friendship develops between the two. Anna brings lightness to Toni's everyday life. Familiarity turns into attraction, and attraction into something Toni hardly dares to allow herself. While Toni cautiously gets involved with Anna, a rumor is circulating in the area: a tiger is roaming free—and it's not clear where it came from or where it's going. For Toni, it's a silly PR stunt; for Anna, it's an adventure. But the more Anna challenges Toni, the more often the tiger creeps into Toni's dreams. At a party, the balance finally tips. Toni loses control of her body and senses, a feeling she never wanted to experience again. And in the middle of a dark hop field, the predator suddenly stands before her—no longer a dream, but reality.

**GENRE** Drama, Coming-of-Age Story **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Catharina Lott  
**SCREENPLAY** Madeleine Hartung **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Lea Dähne **CAST** Luna Jordan, Renée Gerschke, Joahnna Wokalek, Thomas Loibl **PRODUCERS** Friedemann Goez, Paul Beck, Jörg Balzer, Marius Beck **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** Narrative Way, Apollonia Film **RUNTIME** 86 min  
**LANGUAGE** German

**WORLD SALES** Narrative Way  
fg@narrativeway.de • [www.narrativeway.com](http://www.narrativeway.com)



© Stefan Koutzov

# WARUM IST NICHT SCHON ALLES VERSCHWUNDEN

## WHY HASN'T EVERYTHING DISAPPEARED YET

Two Bulgarian children travel by coach until they realise they are alone on the wrong bus heading to Cologne. Here their story ends and a new one begins: Sori has been working aimlessly as a gallery assistant after secretly dropping out of university and hiding the truth from his family back in Seoul. All by himself, he finds comfort in drawing intricate worlds of sketches, while drifting through an urban life of fleeting encounters that only mimic belonging but never quite fulfill it. As Sori's growing memory of his military service at the North Korean border resurfaces evermore, the waning days of a slow summer take over the narration, shifting from one childhood memory to the next estranged item, from one character to the next location with no point of return. The more he turns himself over to the life around him, the more it seems impossible returning home.

**GENRE** Coming-of-Age Story, Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Stefan Koutzov **SCREENPLAY** Stefan Koutzov **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Bernard Mescherowsky **CAST** Juho Lee, Laura Schroeder, Dana Kantardzhieva, Bojan Kantardzhiev, Jae Sun Lee, Chanmin Kim, Kihuun Park, Uwe Pargen, Yuna-Lee Pfau, John Bergerhausen, Philine Reimer, Arturo Calle **PRODUCER** Stefan Koutzov **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln in coproduction with lautmalfilm **RUNTIME** 98 min **LANGUAGE** Bulgarian, Korean, German **FESTIVALS** International Film Festival Rotterdam 2026

**CONTACT** Academy of Media Arts Cologne (KHM)  
dilger@khm.de • www.koutzov.com



© 2pilots

# 2m<sup>2</sup> FÜR DIE EWIGKEIT

## 2m<sup>2</sup>

*Tayfun - Belgium's First Turkish Undertaker with a Diploma:* Tayfun, 45, is the first officially trained Turkish undertaker in Belgium, a pioneer in a community where most funerals still end with a coffin flown back to Turkey. After years of factory work, he now brings dignity and calm to grieving families. His career shift earned respect and stability, yet his days often end alone at airport cargo gates.

*Kemal in Kayseri:* In Turkey, 57-year-old Kemal runs a private ambulance service near an Armenian cemetery. He transports the bodies of European Turks from the airport across Anatolia for burial. He believes every Turk belongs in the soil of home, though his humor hides frustration.

*Between Two Worlds:* When Tayfun visits Kayseri, he meets Kemal and a female corpse washer. Their encounter exposes a clash of identity, duty, and belonging.

2m<sup>2</sup> portrays a community suspended between two homelands – and one man seeking reconciliation.

**GENRE** Documentary **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Volkan Üce **SCREENPLAY** Volkan Üce **DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Sabine Panossian, Joachim Philippe **CAST** Tayfun Arslan/o **PRODUCERS** Hans Everaert, Harry Flöter, Jörg Siepmann, Claus Herzog-Reichel, Mehmet Akif Büyükkatalay, Vildan Ersen, Tayfun Pirselimoglu **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** Menuetto, 2Pilots Film-production, Filmfaust, Mitra **RUNTIME** 82 min **LANGUAGE** Belgian, Turkish, German **FESTIVALS** International Filmfestival Rotterdam 2026

**WORLD SALES** CAT&Docs

info@catndocs.com • www.catndocs.com



# ANJA NIEDRINGHAUS – DIE FOTOGRAFIN UND DER KRIEG

## HEADSHOTS - ANJA NIEDRINGHAUS, PHOTOGRAPHER

HEADSHOTS explores the extraordinary life and tragic death of Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Anja Niedringhaus, showcasing her powerful images and probing the suspicious circumstances of her 2014 death in Afghanistan.

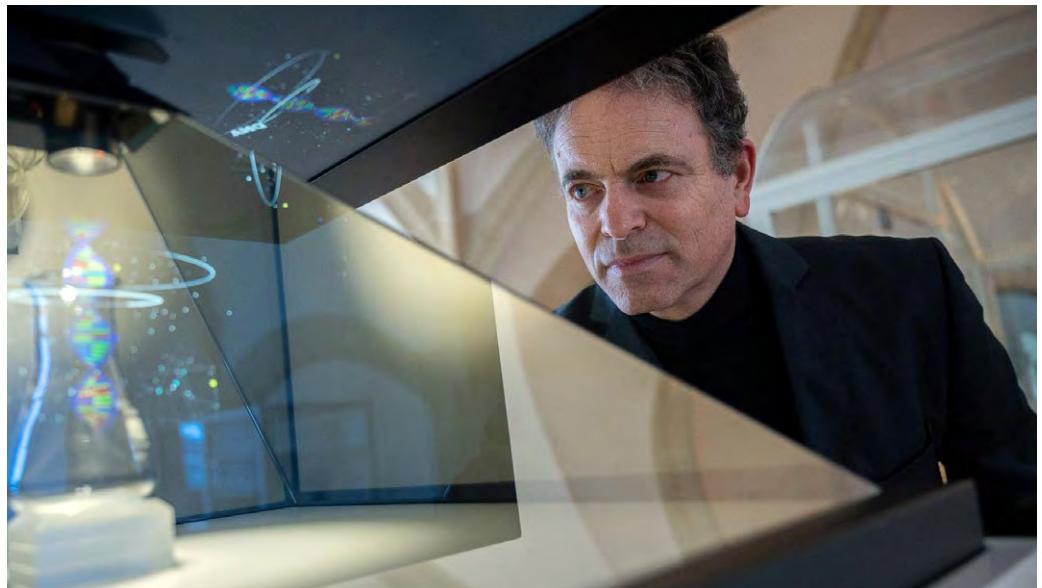
HEADSHOTS chronicles the life and legacy of German photojournalist Anja Niedringhaus, who dedicated over 25 years to capturing the human side of war in conflict zones such as the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan. Through a blend of biographical storytelling and historical context, the documentary explores what made Niedringhaus's work exceptional. Rejecting the label of "war photographer", she focused on portraying the profound impact of war on individuals, capturing moments of humanity amidst chaos. Her images, characterised by deep empathy and resilience, continue to resonate, highlighting her role as a trailblazer for women in photojournalism.

As a prominent figure at the Associated Press, she received numerous accolades, including the Pulitzer Prize. Her untimely death in April 2014 during the Afghan presidential elections shocked the world.

**GENRE** Human Interest, Politics, Photography **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Sonya Winterberg **SCREENPLAY** Yury Winterberg **DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Johannes Imdahl, Jürgen Rehberg **PRODUCER** Birgit Schulz **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Bildersturm Filmproduktion **RUNTIME** 90 min **LANGUAGE** German, English, Paschtu, Dari **FESTIVALS** Film Festival Cologne 2025

**WORLD SALES** New Docs

[sales@newdocs.de](mailto:sales@newdocs.de) • [www.newdocs.de](http://www.newdocs.de)



© FAVO

# DIE HEILUNG

## THE HEALING

In 1999, doctoral student Ingmar Hoerr accidentally discovers revolutionary mRNA vaccine technology at the University of Tübingen, Germany—the same technology that would later protect millions from Covid-19. Despite initial ridicule from Nobel laureates and experts, Hoerr perseveres and founds his own company to develop the first vaccine based on mRNA technology. With the COVID-19 pandemic emerging in 2020, everything changed. Suddenly, governments and people around the world pin their hopes on the technology he invented, believing it could save the world. But when Hoerr is called to Berlin by the German government, fate intervenes, and his focus shifts from saving humanity to saving himself.

**GENRE** Science, Biopic, Educational **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTORS** Marcus Richardt, Lillian Rosa **SCREENPLAY** Marcus Richardt, Lillian Rosa **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Harald Schmuck **CAST** Ingmar Hoerr, Sarah Hoerr, Katalin Karikó **PRODUCERS** Marcus Richardt, Lillian Rosa **CREATIVE PRODUCER** Ansgar Frerich **PRODUCTION COMPANY** FAVO Film **RUNTIME** 83 min **LANGUAGE** German, English

**WORLD SALES** PLUTO FILM Distribution Network  
[benjamin@plutofilm.de](mailto:benjamin@plutofilm.de) • [www.plutofilm.de](http://www.plutofilm.de)



© Danila Lipatov

## ELBOWS IN SHATTERS

In 2022 the filmmaker follows the migrational route of his relatives from Tajikistan to Germany via Russia. In the capital Dushanbe he meets a group of people around the Bactria Cultural Youth Center, with whom he revisits the memories of his relatives, who fled from the Civil War in the 1990s. A small community of friends takes shape through the shared love of music and the common wish to create something together. By turning the city into temporary spaces of collective actions they question national identities, gender roles and embark on a search for their personal freedoms.

**GENRE** Experimental **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Danila Lipatov **SCREENPLAY** Danila Lipatov **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Danila Lipatov **PRODUCERS** Karen Zimmermann, Ismail Nauzari-Zibai, Ismoil Qodirov **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Academy of Media Arts Cologne **RUNTIME** 75 min **LANGUAGE** Tajik, Russian **FESTIVALS** Duisburger Filmwoche 2025 **AWARDS** ARTE-Dokumentarfilmpreis 2025 (ex aequo)

**CONTACT** Academy of Media Arts Cologne (KHM)  
dilger@khm.de • www.khm.de



© Karin Kaper Film

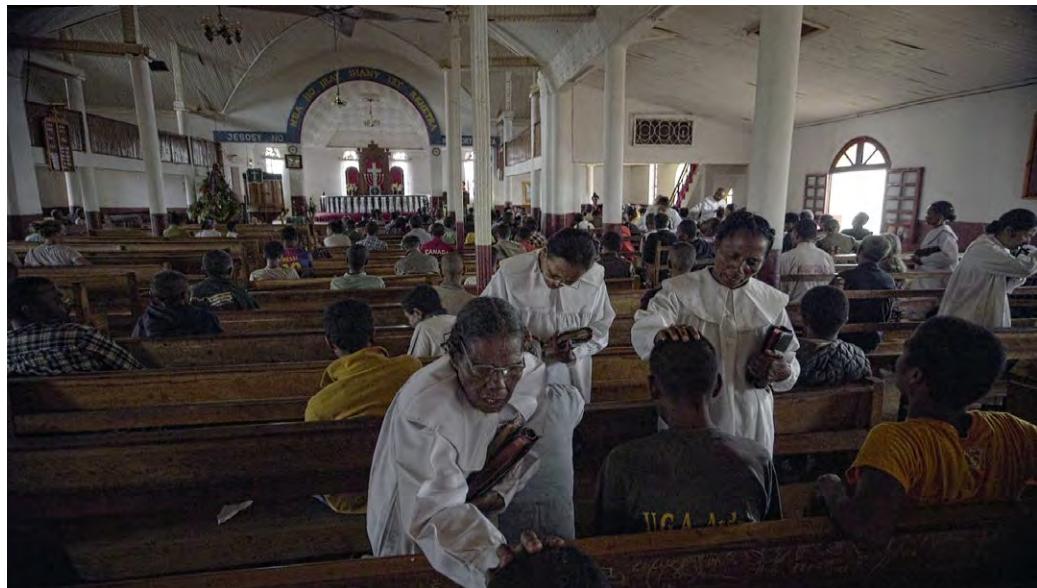
# LA GRACIOSA - KANARISCHE TRÄUME

## LA GRACIOSA - CANARIAN DREAMS

The film directors have known La Graciosa, now officially recognized as the eighth island of the Canaries, since 1994. Who could have guessed at the time what dramatic changes the people of La Graciosa would experience over the next three decades? La Graciosa is a unique microcosm. The protagonists of the film are the diverse inhabitants of the village, with whom we have built up a relationship of trust over the years. They shed light on important current social issues: gender equality, the importance of local self-government, the protection of nature and the environment, the development of alternative forms of ecologically compatible tourism, questions of social coexistence, respect for the life achievements of the older generation, and the loss of traditions.

**GENRE** Ecology, History **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTORS** Karin Kaper, Dirk Szuszies  
**SCREENPLAY** Dirk Szuszies **DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Dirk Szuszies, Tobias Rahm **PRODUCER** Karin Kaper **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Karin Kaper Film **RUNTIME** 115 min **LANGUAGE** Spanish, German

**CONTACT** Karin Kaper Film  
kaperkarin@web.de • [www.lagraciosafilm.de](http://www.lagraciosafilm.de) (in construction)



© Uranowicz FILM

# LEERE KIRCHE

## EMPTY CHURCH

The Lutheran Church runs Toby Ambohimahazo, a remote exorcism center near Antsirabe, Madagascar. In this area, people believe that mental illness is a form of spirit possession. Pierre, a man imprisoned for smoking weed, lives at the center with about 200 others deemed "possessed". Rivo, the lead exorcist, holds daily religious rituals to save people through Jesus. The documentary gradually reveals repetitive routines as a reflection of institutional control. These rituals highlight the spiritual intensity that sustains the community, but also the quiet suffering of the people inside. The story of healing through faith shifts when Pierre is abused and mentally harmed, while Rivo desperately searches for a real case of possession.

EMPTY CHURCH is an observational examination of a spiritual system in which belief and nature become a burden on vulnerable lives.

**GENRE** Anthropology, Human Rights, Social, Current affairs **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025  
**DIRECTOR** Andreas Uranowicz **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Andreas Uranowicz **CAST** Rivo Randriamihaja **PRODUCER** Andreas Uranowicz **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Uranowicz FILM **RUN-TIME** 23 min **LANGUAGE** Malagasy

**CONTACT** Uranowicz FILM

mail@uranowicz.com • www.uranowicz.com



# OB WIR DAS SCHAFFEN? CAN WE DO THIS?

A Somali wedding opens the film: celebration, music, traditional dress. But the bride waits elsewhere while men negotiate her future in the mosque. Eight years of filming within the northern German city of Bremen's Somali community reveals what Merkel's 2015 promise "We can do this" means when the cameras stop rolling. Directors Christine Jezior and Felicia Kret, both of whom grew up in two different cultures, document not arrival but what comes after: staying, building, becoming. Her protagonists pray by riverbanks, capture themselves on smartphones, argue over punctuality. The wedding brackets the film, and through moments of joy and doubt, the question shifts: can we - Germans, Somalis, couples, communities - create something new together? No interviews, no explanations. Just time, trust, and the fragile work of making a life.

**GENRE** History **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTORS** Christine Jezior, Felicia Kret **SCREEN-PLAY** Christine Jezior **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Bartosz Bialobrzeski **PRODUCER** Christine Jezior **PRODUCTION COMPANY** MAAM **RUNTIME** 97min **LANGUAGE** Somali

**CONTACT** MAAM-Multimedia Art and More  
info@maam.tv



© Filmproduktion Loekenfranke

# WATCHING PEOPLE WATCHING BIRDS

The number and diversity of birds worldwide is declining dramatically. At the same time, more and more people are discovering the world of birds for themselves: they all have their own unique stories that led them to become birdwatchers. Looking through binoculars is also a search for something primal, unique, and true. In an almost magical way, this search seems to transfer to the viewer, as if one were leaving the cinema with heightened senses and entering another world. Our film turns its gaze away from the birds and back to the people who inspire us with their love of birds and their devotion to nature. We also meet the world-famous author Jonathan Franzen, who says: "One reason wild birds are so important (...) is that they represent our last, best connection to a natural world that is otherwise disappearing." Humorous, serious, and environmentally controversial, the film uses cinematic images and intense soundscapes to paint a picture of a society in a state of crisis and upheaval. The film becomes a narrative of doubt and hope, life and death, staying and disappearing. And the birds become, in an intoxicating, almost eerie way, a metaphor for the state of the world.

**GENRE** Ecology, Society, Nature, Climate, Human Interest **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTORS** Ulrike Franke & Michael Loeken **SCREENPLAY** Ulrike Franke & Michael Loeken **DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Jörg Adams, Hajo Schomerus **CAST** Jonathan Franzen, Patrick Kretz, Thomas Griesohn-Pflieger, Janna Ouedraogo, Neil & Brigitte Handy, Tobias Rautenberg, Jürgen Mauritz **PRODUCERS** Ulrike Franke & Michael Loeken **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Filmproduktion Loekenfranke **RUNTIME** 92 min **LANGUAGE** German, English

**WORLD SALES** New Docs • sales@newdocs.de • www.newdocs.de



© Ssokear

# DIE ALTERNATIVE

## THE ALTERNATIVE

In post-apocalyptic Germany, a critically injured boy stumbles through the forest until he reaches a clearing with a shelter, where he finally collapses. He is discovered by Lukas, an armed survivalist and loner, who decides to carry him through the desolate landscape in search of first aid. As the journey wears on, the weight of the boy – and of Lukas's own motives – grows heavier. The world around him seems to slip out of shape, and by dawn, the cool light of a new day makes his reality clear, though it no longer resembles the world he thought he knew.

**GENRE** Drama, Thriller **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2026 **DIRECTOR** Sam W. Harper **SCREENPLAY** Wren Bisley **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Dominik Friedl **CAST** Ben Rademacher **PRODUCER** Sam W. Harper **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Ssokear **RUNTIME** 23 min **LANGUAGE** German

**CONTACT** Ssokear

studio@ssokear.eu • www.ssokear.eu



© Nick Antonio Hempel, Esa-Lu Lorenz

# HOME

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Samir, a young student from Hamburg Germany, receives a deportation warning. His residence permit is about to expire and his application for an extension has been denied.

From one day to another Samir's life turns upside down and everything he has been working for is about to fall apart. But once he manages to tell his friends it becomes clear that they are not willing to let him go.

**GENRE** Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Esa-Lu Lorenz **SCREENPLAY** Esa-Lu Lorenz **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Nick Antonio Hempel **CAST** Berke Çetin, Elmo Anton Stratz, Farina Adisa Kaiser **PRODUCERS** Nick Antonio Hempel, Esa-Lu Lorenz, Dasha (Daria) Pavlova **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Clipper Filmproduktion **RUNTIME** 18 min **LANGUAGE** German **FESTIVALS** Hof International Film Festival 2025, Nordic Filmdays Lübeck 2025, Filmfestival Turkey Germany 2026

**CONTACT** Clipper Filmproduktion  
esa.lorenz@gmx.de

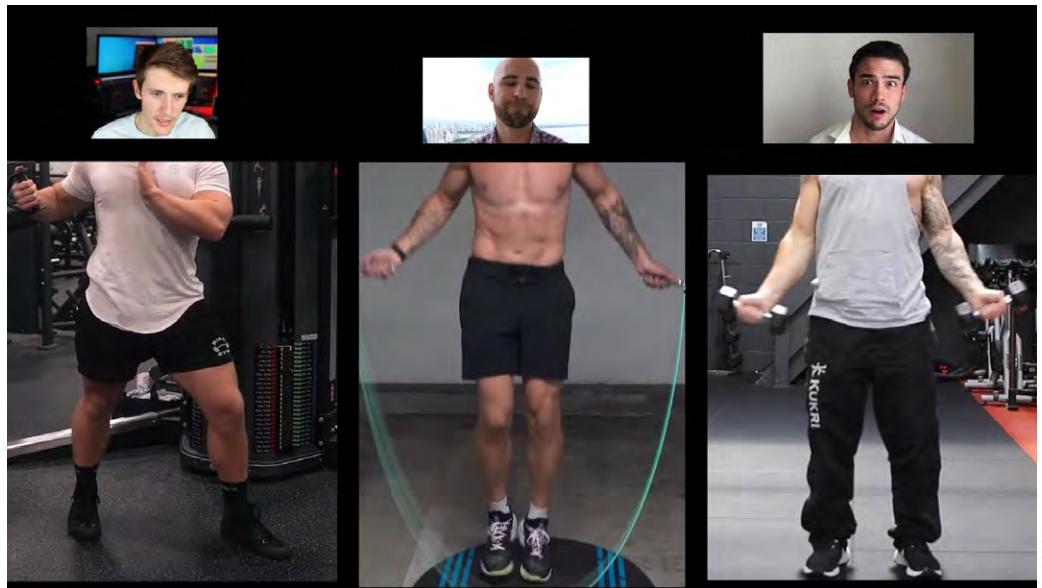


## IM AUTO TAPES UND BUTTERBROT WITH TAPES AND TOAST IN THE CAR

After a long illness, Shari learns that she has only a few months left to live. Overwhelmed, she doesn't know how to face her family and attempts to escape. The sky collapses above her. In the silence of space, guided cosmonaut Laika, she realizes how fragile the Earth and how precious time her remaining time is.

**GENRE** Comedy, Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Kiana Naghshineh **SCREEN-PLAY** Kiana Naghshineh **CAST** Pegah Ferydoni, Masud Akbarzadeh, Jan Schuttack, Moné Sharifi, Gerhard Osman, Aaron Gräf **ANIMATION** Isabelle Piolat, Sofia Melnyk, Camille Prot, Elliott Moreau, Bertille Rondard **PRODUCERS** Henrik von Müller, Regina Welker **CO-PRODUCERS** Ivan Zuber, Antoine Liétout **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Manic Monday in coproduction with Laidak Films **RUN-TIME** 14 min **LANGUAGE** German **FESTIVALS** New Chitose Airport Festival 2025, BISFF - Beijing International Short Film Festival 2025, (Pimedate Ööde Filmifestival) - Black Nights Film Festival 2025, Bogotá Short Film Festival 2025, Festival Premiers Plans d'Angers 2026, Festival International du Court-Métrage de Clermont-Ferrand 2026, Anima - The Brussels International Animation Film Festival 2026, SXSW - South by Southwest 2026 **AWARDS** Hokkaido Bank Award 2025

**CONTACT** Miyu Distribution, Luce Grosjean  
luce.grosjean@miyu.fr



# JUGGERNAUT

From the perspective of ethnology, societies are understood as "hot" cultures – cultures in which progress and development are the central ideals of the prevailing worldview. Within the capitalist system, liberal individualism is elevated to a guiding principle, defined by separation and ownership. In these so-called hot, patriarchal cultures, competition and rivalry govern every individual and, in turn, shape the formation of community and solidarity. For those growing up within such a system, hierarchical and market-driven behavior can appear to be genetically embedded in human nature. In the experimental found-footage film *JUGGERNAUT*, cis-masculine figures sourced from YouTube archives take on the leading roles. They engage in an endless competition for the title of the "BEST of the BEST." The film weaves together historical documentary films from the 1950s – praising the virtues of capitalism – with a deluge of YouTube videos uploaded by men revealing their secrets to getting rich quick. Their core message: success depends solely on the "right mindset." The title *JUGGERNAUT* refers to an overwhelming, unstoppable force – a destructive power that sweeps everything away in its path. This metaphor becomes tangible in the film: the fragmented protagonists, obsessed with competition and success, continue to fuel this allcrushing momentum.

**GENRE** Experimental **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Art Collective NEOZOON **SCREEN-PLAY** Art Collective NEOZOON **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Art Collective NEOZOON **PRODUCER** Art Collective NEOZOON **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Art Collective NEOZOON **RUNTIME** 9 min **LANGUAGE** English **FESTIVALS** International Film Festival Rotterdam 2026

**CONTACT** NEOZOON • [mail@neozoon.org](mailto:mail@neozoon.org) • [www.neozoon.org](http://www.neozoon.org)



© Worathiti Manosroi

## SYNTAX ERROR

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A burned-out founder whose crumbling startup faces its final reckoning during a high-stakes investor pitch. Set over the course of one disastrous day in a co-working space, the film unravels the fragile egos, misplaced ambition, and quiet desperation that fuel the modern tech dream. As reality and fantasy collide, *Syntax Error* becomes a portrait of depression, delusion, and the quiet collapse of a man. *Syntax Error* captures the manic theatre of modern entrepreneurship: a world where ambition is worshipped, burnout is rebranded as passion, and failure is inevitable but must never be admitted.

**GENRE** Comedy, Drama **YEAR OF PRODUCTION** 2025 **DIRECTOR** Worathiti Manosroi **SCREEN-PLAY** Worathiti Manosroi **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Tim Henkel **CAST** Robin Kufner **PRODUCER** Andreas Schrade **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Syntax Pictures **RUNTIME** 26 min **LANGUAGE** English **FESTIVALS** Berlin Indie Film Festival 2026 **AWARDS** Best Short Film – Berlin Indie Film Festival 2025

**CONTACT** Syntax Pictures  
hello@syntaxpictures.com • www.syntaxpictures.com

# World Sales Funding

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## A LITTLE BIT OF DYING

12-year-old Lou lives with her eccentric father Edgar, a failed artist whose manic phases swing between euphoria and depression. When Edgar loses his inheritance, he hatches the absurd idea that his paintings will only sell again after his death and so drags Lou and her brother Jonathan into an adventure where they declare their father dead - complete with a staged funeral and fake obituaries. But Edgar's instability soon turns destructive, threatening Lou's friendship with Jamil and pushing Jonathan to confront the truth about their father. Caught between loyalty and survival, Lou is forced to break free, discovering that family can also be found beyond the chaos of her home.

**GENRE** Tragikomedy **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Marleen Valien **SCREENPLAY** Marleen Valien, Max Rauer **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Max Rauer **CAST** Rada Rae, Robert Finster, Carlo Krammling, Via Jikeli, Valery Tscheplanowa **PRODUCERS** Julius Wieler, Tristan Schneider, Christoph Holthof, Daniel Reich **CO-PRODUCERS** Catherine Baikousis, Toni Jaschke **PRODUCTION COMPANY** kurhaus production, in co-production with ANORAK Film **LANGUAGE** German

### CONTACT

kurhaus production, Julius Wieler  
office@kurhausproduction.de  
www.kurhausproduction.de

## ADAMS ACHT

### ADAM'S EIGHT

ADAM'S EIGHT recounts the sporting sensation that unfolded at the 1960 Rome Olympic Games when the so-called 'rowing professor' Karl Adam and his eight-man crew won the gold medal for Germany. Just four years earlier, such a triumph would have seemed inconceivable. The rowers had struggled not only with physical limitations, but also with old questions of guilt, Adam's involvement in National Socialism as well as the shadow of the Cold War.

Adam was initially ridiculed for his unconventional ideas, technical innovations and novel training methods, but he sees something in his team that no one else recognises. And some even try to sabotage his success. The road to Rome is not an easy one...

**GENRE** Drama **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Hannu Salonen **SCREENPLAY** Domenik Pockberger, Stephan Falk **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Felix Cramer **CAST** Oliver Masucci, Felix Kammerer, Svenja Jung, Leonard Kunz, Heino Ferch, Axel Milberg, Katrin Röver, Stephanie Amarell, Nick Romeo Reimann, Carlo Krammling, Vito Wiessner, Julius Henri, Busch, Minou Troll, Lina Wendel **PRODUCER** Ivo-Alexander Beck **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Ninety-Minute Film, in co-production with Adams Acht, Sunday Filmproduction, Majestic Filmproduktion **LANGUAGE** German

### WORLD SALES

Beta Cinema, Dirk Schürhoff  
dirk.schuerhoff@betacinema.com  
www.betacinema.com



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## AMEISEN FRESSEN KEIN HALVA I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE

Yalda (30), Solveigh (30) and Lou (31) have shared a close friendship since childhood. But when Solveigh suddenly takes her own life, Yalda and Lou are left with the lingering question: how could it come to this and which one of them is more suitable to take custody of Solveigh's five-year-old daughter?

While clearing out Solveigh's apartment, Yalda and Lou sift through the memories of their past with Solveigh to understand what they didn't see at the time and to slowly rediscover their bond. **I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE** is a drama about female friendship, loss, and the resilience to hold on to each other against all the odds.

**GENRE** Drama **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Alisa Kolosova **SCREENPLAY** Judith Rose Gyabaah **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Meret Madörin **EDITOR** Evelyn Rack **CAST** Soma Pysall, Svenja Jung, Saskia Rosendahl, Meret Becker, Tara Westenberger, Luise Landau, Merle Staacken, Marlen Lizzi Akarah **PRODUCERS** Tristan Bähre, Philipp Maron **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Maverick Film GmbH in co-production with Bayerischer Rundfunk/ARD, Westdeutscher Rundfunk/WDR, in collaboration with arte **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Filmwelt Verleihagentur

### CONTACT

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[www.maverickfilm.de](http://www.maverickfilm.de)



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## COOKING UP DEMOCRACY

While democracies around the world are faltering, the island republic of Taiwan seems remarkably resilient against the attacks of China's autocracy. Guided by former Digital Minister and laureate of the 2025 Alternative Nobel Prize Audrey Tang, the film is a cinematic journey into Taiwan's vibrant civic society, exploring an activist scene where queer voices, feminist thinkers and grassroots innovators shape a pluralistic vision of democracy. Through the stories of queer activists fighting for human rights, diversity, and democratic participation, we gain an insight into their lives - and perhaps begin to understand the deeper fabric of Taiwanese society and what truly sustains its democratic spirit.

**GENRE** Current Affairs, Human Interest **CATEGORY** Documentary **DIRECTOR** Monika Treut **SCREENPLAY** Monika Treut **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Robert Falckenberg **PROTAGONISTS** Audrey Tang, Tiffany Lay, Zo Lin, Yo-Ling Chen, Ping An Tung, Tsai-Yun Cheng, Brian Hioe, Yi-Chien Chen, Victoria Hsu **PRODUCER** Dirk Manthey **CO-PRODUCERS** Zed Wang, Monika Treut, Hui Chen Huang, Tony Su **PRODUCTION COMPANY** [dirk manthey film](http://www.dirkmantheyfilm.com), in co-production with Iceberg Productions, PTS Taiwan Public Television Service Foundation **LANGUAGE** English, Mandarin, Taiwanese **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Salzgeber & Co. Medien

### CONTACT

dirk manthey film, Dirk Manthey  
[mail@dirkmanthey.de](mailto:mail@dirkmanthey.de), [www.dirkmantheyfilm.de](http://www.dirkmantheyfilm.de)



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## DER SPAZIERGANG NACH SYRAKUS A STROLL TO SYRACUSE

Lars Jessen's latest feature film, which is based on Friedrich Christian Delius' novel *Der Spaziergang von Rostock nach Syrakus*, sees the director reunited with actor Charly Hübner following their successful collaboration on *MITTAGSSTUNDE* in 2022.

Hübner is cast as the Rostocker Paul Gompitz who decides at a midpoint in his life to travel to Syracuse on the island of Sicily. He feels the urge to follow in the footsteps of the poet Johann Gottlieb Seume who made the trip at the beginning of the 19th century. The only thing is that Paul lives in East Germany, behind the world's most annoying border. Since his plan is impossible by legal means, he has to begin preparing an escape.

**GENRE** Drama, Literature **CATEGORY** Feature  
**DIRECTOR** Lars Jessen **SCREENPLAY** Heide Schwuchow, Rainer Schwuchow **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Kristian Leschner **CAST** Charly Hübner, Lina Beckmann, Thorsten Merten, Tom Jahn, Melanie Fouché, Christian Nätke, Anjorka Strelchel, Anna Unterberger **PRODUCERS** Claudia Steffen, Christoph Friedel, Fee Buck, Maren Knieling, Lars Jessen **CO-PRODUCERS** Charly Hübner, Giovanni Pompili **PRODUCTION COMPANIES** Florida Film and Pandora Film Produktion in co-production with ZDF and Arte **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Pandora Film Verleih

### CONTACT

Pandora Film Produktion, Claudia Steffen  
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## EMIL UND DIE DETEKTIVE EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES

Emil (Nicholas Jonah Peter in his first lead role for the cinema) is supposed to spend the summer holidays with his grandmother (Ursula Werner) in Berlin. But on the train there, he is robbed by the ruthless con artist Max Grundelis (Merlin Sandmeyer) – and a wild adventure begins! Together with a gang of clever children, Emil sets off in pursuit and embarks on a fast-paced detective hunt across Berlin – full of wit, courage and true friendship.

David Dietl's contemporary adaptation of *EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES* is UFA Fiction's second adaptation of an Erich Kästner children's classic after *THE FLYING CLASSROOM*.

**GENRE** Family Entertainment **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** David Dietl **SCREENPLAY** Antonia Scheurlen **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Philip Peschlow **CAST** Nicholas Jonah Peter, Merlin Sandmeyer, Luise Heyer, Lara Toni Lüdders, Kilian Kasa, Bela Louis Plass, Ai Vy Bui, Camille Moltzen und Ursula Werner **PRODUCERS** Sebastian Werninger, Tobias Timme, Katharina Rietz **CO-PRODUCERS** Steffen Schier, Julia Hayungs, Maggie Mackuth **PRODUCTION COMPANY** UFA Fiction in co-production with Warner Bros. Film Productions Germany and UFA Mitte **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Warner Bros. Pictures Germany

### WORLD SALES

Global Constellation - a Vuelta company  
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[www.globalconstellation.eu](http://www.globalconstellation.eu)



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## FINDING CONNECTION

Florian Karner's graduation film at the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg explores the intimate world of four people who turn to AI chatbots for companionship, confidants and even saviours, revealing how our longing for connection blurs the line between humans and machines. The conversations between the protagonists and their AI reveal the depth and complexity of their relationship and show how helpful this loving support can be, whether it aims to restructure everyday life and make it more meaningful, or to reflect on unpleasant habits and change them for the better.

FINDING CONNECTION was the winner of the D-Facto Motion Works-In-Progress Prize at the 2025 edition of DOK Preview Germany.

**GENRE** Society, Sociology **CATEGORY** Documentary **DIRECTOR** Florian Karner **SCREENPLAY** Florian Karner **DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Carina Neubohn, Hannah Schwarzl **PROTAGONISTS** Stefanie Arndt, Rudi John Pack, Denise Valenciano, Joachim Hacker **PRODUCERS** Martin Schwimmer, Dominik Utz, Maite Bengsch **PRODUCTION COMPANY** DOMAR Film, in co-production with SWR and Film Academy Baden-Württemberg **LANGUAGES** German, English **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Four Guys Film Distribution

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schwimmer@domar-film.de, www.domar-film.de

## FRAU WINKLER VERLÄSST DAS HAUS (AT)

### MRS WINKLER LEAVES THE HOUSE (WT)

Doris Dörrie's latest feature film tells the story of 80-year-old Mrs. Winkler and her daughter Emi. Mrs. Winkler's world has narrowed to just one person - her daughter - after her beloved husband died very young. Over the years, grief has turned into bitterness. When Emi accepts a theatre engagement that will prevent her from caring for her mother, a robot caregiver is assigned to take her place. Feeling abandoned and humiliated, Mrs. Winkler initially rejects the robot entirely. Yet over time, an unexpected friendship begins to form. Can Mrs. Winkler finally confront her unresolved grief and find a way back to her daughter?

**GENRE** Art, Drama, Melodrama, Theatre, Tragic-Comedy **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Doris Dörrie **SCREENPLAY** Doris Dörrie **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Leah Striker **CAST** Angela Winkler, Laura Tonke, Josef Ellers, Zoë Baier, Via Jikeli, Eugene Boateng, Sabrina Amali, Yvonne Jung Hee Bormann, Doris Kunstmüller, Bettina Stucky, Klara Lange **PRODUCERS** Michael Souvignier, Till Derenbach, Daniel Mann **CO-PRODUCER** Marc Gabizon **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Zeitsprung Pictures, in co-production with Wild Bunch Germany, BR, NDR and ARTE **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Wild Bunch Germany

## WORLD SALES

Global Constellation, Fabien Westerhoff  
www.globalscreen.de/mm/en/



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## I'LL BE GONE IN JUNE

It's 2001, and 16-year-old Franny from Germany dreams of experiencing America as an exchange student. She had imagined the glamour of New York, but instead finds herself in a sleepy desert town in New Mexico in the haunting days after 9/11. Far from home, Franny drifts through awkward high school days, stifling heat, and restless nights until she meets Elliott, a boy whose quiet sadness mirrors her own. In a landscape seemingly stripped of humanity, an unexpected tenderness begins to bloom. Together, they chase the fragile promise of forever before June arrives and time carries her away once more.

I'LL BE GONE IN JUNE is Katharina Rivilis' debut feature-length film as a director.

**GENRE** Drama, Road Movie **CATEGORY** Feature **DIRECTOR** Katharina Rivilis **SCREENPLAY** Katharina Rivilis **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Giulia Schelhas **CAST** Naomi Cosma, David Flores, Rebecca Schulz, Bianca Dumais **PRODUCED BY** Léa Germain, Wim Wenders **PRODUCERS** Clemens Köstlin, Vincent Savino, Andrea Kühnel **CO-PRODUCERS** Simon Jaquemet, Olga Lamontanara, Katharina Rivilis **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Road Movies in co-production with Wolfskind Films and 8Horses **LANGUAGES** English, German **GERMAN** **DISTRIBUTOR** DCM

### CONTACT

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## KINDESMUTTER THE CHILD'S MOTHER

Set in the east German city of Halle, Konrad Schlaich's debut feature-length documentary THE CHILD'S MOTHER tells the story of Anne who became a mother at the age of 17. Her daughter Leonie, now aged 14, runs the risk of taking the same path to drug addiction. To break the cycle, Anne is determined to change her life, but can she become the role model her daughter needs before it's too late?

THE CHILD'S MOTHER was one of seven German documentaries selected for DOK Preview Germany at the 2025 edition of DOK Leipzig.

**GENRE** Drama **CATEGORY** Documentary **DIRECTOR** Konrad Schlaich **SCREENPLAY** Sarah Berner **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Pablo Sahin **PRODUCERS** Friedemann Hottenbacher, Gregor Streiber **PRODUCTION COMPANY** inselfilm produktion **LANGUAGE** German

### CONTACT

inselfilm produktion  
 Friedemann Hottenbacher  
[www.inselfilm.de](http://www.inselfilm.de)



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## WER WEISS SCHON, WAS EIN LEBEN IST?

### WHO TRULY KNOWS WHAT A LIFE IS?

An actress is cast to bring Paula Modersohn-Becker, one of Germany's most influential painters, to life.

As she immerses herself ever deeper into the artist's world, encountering key figures such as Otto Modersohn, Clara Westhoff-Rilke, and Rainer Maria Rilke, the lines between role and reality, portrayal and identification, begin to dissolve.

Accompanied by international experts and biographers, the journey illuminates the art-historical landscape while occasionally engaging in a reflective, self-aware dialogue with the film itself.

WHO TRULY KNOWS WHAT A LIFE IS? is Annelie Boroş and Vera Brückner's first feature film as co-directors after working together on the 2015 short film MARS CLOSER.

**GENRE** Drama, History **CATEGORY** Documentary  
**Fiction** **DIRECTORS** Annelie Boroş and Vera Brückner **SCRIPT and SCREENPLAY** Annelie Boroş and Vera Brückner, original script by Anja Salomonowitz **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Janne Ebel **CAST** Katharina Stark, Enno Trebs, Dominique Devenport, Merlin Rose, Florian Lukas **PRODUCERS** Matthias Greving, Kirsten Lukaczik **PRODUCTION COMPANY** Kinescope Film **LANGUAGE** German **GERMAN DISTRIBUTOR** Farbfilm Verleih

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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 shorts 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
- Publication of informational literature about current German films and the German film industry, as well as international market analyses and special festival brochures
- Organization of umbrella stands for German sales companies and producers at international television and film markets
- A website ([www.german-films.de](http://www.german-films.de)) offering information about new German films, a film archive, information and links to German and international film festivals and institutions
- Staging of Festivals of German Films in selected international territories in co-operation with the Goethe-Institut
- Organization of the selection procedure for the German entry for the Oscar® for Best International Feature Film
- Staging of industry screenings in key international territories
- Organization of the German Films Previews geared toward arthouse distributors and buyers of German films
- Providing advice and information for representatives of the international press and buyers from the fields of cinema, home entertainment, and television
- Selective financial Distribution Support for the foreign releases of German films
- Providing advice and information for German filmmakers and press on international festivals, conditions of participation, and German films being shown
- Organization with UniFrance of the annual German-French film meeting
- Presentation of the annual FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS campaign which shines a spotlight on some of the most influential German talents currently working in the industry, who represent just some of the many dynamic 'faces' of German filmmaking today.

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[www.hessenfilm.de](http://www.hessenfilm.de)



[www.medienboard.de](http://www.medienboard.de)



[www.film.mfg.de](http://www.film.mfg.de)



Mitteldeutsche  
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[www.mdm-online.de](http://www.mdm-online.de)



Filmförderung Hamburg  
Schleswig-Holstein

[www.moin-filmfoerderung.de](http://www.moin-filmfoerderung.de)



[www.mv-filmfoerderung.de](http://www.mv-filmfoerderung.de)



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