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Alain Gsponer was born in Zurich/Switzerland in 1976. However, these days one struggles to recognize his accent as Swiss German. He has lived in Germany since 1997 and his current home is in Berlin. As a teenager, it took the director some time to become aware of his fascination with film images. It was his teacher at the Canton School in Aarau, artist Ueli Michel, who first guided him in that direction. Subsequently, he made his first experiments with short documentary films. Gsponer then became co-manager of the cinema Freier Film Aarau – at the age of only 18. In 1997, he was accepted at the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy to study Documentary Film. His first short film, Heidi, still plays ironically with the image of the Swiss. In this animation film, the girl from the Alps is a serial killer. Moving away from such playful beginnings, Gsponer made the pseudo-documentary X für U. At the time, even his professor fell for the film and believed that the journalist falsifying cheap infotainment reports on screen was authentic. This successful work with actors led Gsponer to feature film. Since then, most of his films with their precise gestures and exact dialogues have been about lies, both great and small. His graduation film Kiki&Tiger (2002) was followed by Rose (2005), Life Actually (2006), the Polizeiruf episode Wie ist die Welt so stille (2007), My Words, My Lies – My Love (2009) and Der letzte Weynfeldt (2010).

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A portrait of Alain Gsponer

Alain Gsponer likes to disclose all kinds of untruths, exploiting their tragicomic nature and creating his own particular style. He is one of the idiosyncratic, meticulous directors of a generation now in their thirties, and yet for many abroad he remains a secret festival tip. This may be due to the difficulty in categorizing Gsponer, whose work certainly cannot be labeled New German Cinema or Berlin School (although he has chosen to live in Berlin).

He is driven by a passion for storytelling, especially stories about complicated family relationships and the lies of everyday bourgeois life. Here, he always adopts a very special tone, somewhere between drama and comedy, light-hearted, but often cutting.

His first two full-length films, winners of several awards, were Rose and Life Actually. These films already constituted quasi the essence of a cinematic style that emerges in the tragicomic deconstruction of its own and other images. The same could be said of My Words, My Lies – My Love, his most recent cinematic feature to date. Gsponer admits outright that this is his most commercial film. It is a delightful romantic comedy, of course, but anything but a film made according to a fixed recipe. It focuses on a hired waiter who rises in the world, becoming a star on the literature scene. Actually, he stole the manuscript for his book in order to impress a girl. This effortless combination of lightness, humor and intelligence is rare in German cinema, but Gsponer has achieved it repeatedly.
The director grew up in Switzerland. To a great extent, his pleasure in tragicomedy is linked to the cultural experience of Frisch or Dürrenmatt. His two latest films, My Words, My Lies – My Love and the television feature Der letzte Weynfeldt are film versions of books by Martin Suter, today’s guarantee of tragicomedy in Swiss literature.

Gsponer learned his craft at the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy, where he was accepted as a documentary filmmaker; after his talent for directing actors became obvious, however, he graduated in the feature film department in 2002. Since then, he has aimed high with his casting decisions: Corinna Harfouch as an unconventional mother in Rose, Katja Riemann as an equally stressed wife (with black hair!) in the bourgeois hell of Life Actually, or Henry Hübchen as a wonderful has-been conman in My Words, My Lies – My Love, a character who sees through the young author’s fabric of lies and sets out to profit from it. Gsponer likes to film with experienced actors, always casting them in unusual roles. And he coaxes outstanding achievements from young actors, too: Hannah Herzsprung’s present success was shaped decisively by her dangerously-attractive acting as a lost girl in Life Actually. One can always recognize the pleasure of acting on screen in Gsponer’s work. But the light-hearted mood of the performances on screen hides the fact that he calls for family line-ups first or requires his actors to perform psychological status exercises. “I am leaving naturalism behind more and more,” he goes on to say. “What I see all too often is a lack of energy in films made for television. But I want scenes full of energy.” Working with Gsponer, actors are let off the leash, but he still manages to pin down their energies.

He views filmmaking as team work, preferably with a regular group of colleagues. Matthias Fleischer is generally responsible for the cinematography in his films, and Alexander Buersch is his customary co-author. In those cases in which he took full responsibility for the screenplay, Gsponer says, the films turned out too serious. “Drama is simpler,” he believes. “But the viewer will allow you to take him further if you can manage to make him laugh now and then. A wink on the side means that sometimes you can go right into the depths.”

This search for the depths often leads Gsponer and his author Buersch to hyped-up, even surreal sequences. The son’s hobby in Life Actually is constructing home-made bombs, and his father experiences a cathartic moment only when he gets high on drugs.

In Gsponer’s work the façades always crumble, whether in the family, a neighborhood, or the culture or media business. The director is currently considering whether to tackle material with political implications in face of increasing animosity towards foreigners in Switzerland – an investigation into the duplicitive dealings of the political world would definitely not be out of place in his filmography. In addition, this year he also intends to progress with the development of original material in which more lies are uncovered – mainly in a family environment.

But all these firm ideas are not enough for Gsponer. He is already planning a very different project for 2012. Together with the Munich-based production company Claussen+Wöbke+Putz, he will be making the film version of a classic German children’s book.

Christoph Gröner spoke with Alain Gsponer

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The Munich-based independent production company Kick Film was founded in 1981 by Jörg Bundschuh and has produced more than 200 films in the past 30 years for the domestic German and international markets. One of Kick Film’s specialties—besides feature films—are portraits of actors, directors, composers, musicians, painters, photographers, writers, philosophers and politicians, as well as people who don’t usually find themselves in the limelight. Another mainstay are epic feature documentaries, ranging from docu-dramas and reality comedy to historical subjects and long-running studies and observation projects. The company has worked with several directors at the beginning of their careers as well as such established directors as Jo Baier or Georg Stefan Troller, who has made 15 films with Kick Film to date. Kick Film’s productions have received numerous national and international awards, ranging from the Emmy Award, Silver Hugo Award at the Chicago International Film Festival, International Grand Prix for Authors Documentaries Monte Carlo, and the FIPA Award Biarritz, to the FIFA Award Montreal, Bavarian Film Award, Bavarian Television Award, and the Adolf Grimme Award. Co-production partners or buyers of Kick Film productions include television broadcasters from more than 60 countries around the globe, including the UK’s BBC and major US channels, in addition to a raft of German public broadcasters. Kick Film’s productions have included: Escape from Tibet (dir: Maria Blumencron, 2011), All You Need is Klaus on Klaus Voormann (dir: Jörg Bundschuh, 2010), Good Bye Tibet (dir: Maria Blumencron, 2009), Memory Books (dir: Christa Graf, 2009), Mozart in China (dir: Bernd Neuburger, 2008), Eileen Gray – Invitation to a Voyage (dir: Jörg Bundschuh, 2006), To Tulsa and Back – JJ Cale (dir: Jörg Bundschuh, 2006), Out of Edeka (dir: Konstantin Faigle, 2002), No Mercy (dirs: Andrea Schramm and Jana Matthes, 2001), Quiet Days in Hollywood (dir: Josef Rusnak, 1997), The Big Day (dir: Jo Baier, 1995), Crime of Passion (dir: Georg Stefan Troller, 1993), Trip to Tunis (dir: Peter Goedel, 1993), The Egg is a Shitty Gift of God (dir: Dagmar Wagner, 1993), Copyright by Inge Morath (dir: Sabine Eckhard, 1991), Bavaria Blue (dir: Jörg Bundschuh, 1989), Gesucht: Monika Ertl (dir: Christian Baudissin, 1989), and Villa Air Bel (dir: Jörg Bundschuh, 1987).
In addition, the company has made the occasional foray into feature film, either films directed by Bundschuh himself such as Bavaria Blue, or by other directors – ranging from Peter Goedel (Trip to Tunis) and Jo Baier (The Big Day) to Markus Fischer (Night On Fire) and Josef Rusnak (Quiet Days in Hollywood – starring Hilary Swank).

Kick Film’s latest English-speaking feature production is Austrian-born filmmaker Maria Blumencron’s Escape from Tibet which wrapped principal photography in a Bavarian studio at the beginning of December.

“Maria has spent a lot of time in Tibet and the Himalaya so she really knows what she is talking about,” Bundschuh recalls. “When I first read her screenplay, I was immediately won over because it has the quality you only see every ten years or so.”

She had been involved in various aid projects to help Tibetan refugee children and had previously accompanied a group as they fled Tibet in a documentary she made for pubcaster ZDF entitled Flucht über den Himalaya.

Escape from Tibet tells the story of the young German medical student Johanna (played by Hannah Herzsprung) who is confronted with the fate of Tibetan refugee children during a journey through the Himalayas. After meeting the activist Meto, she decides to help smuggle the refugees across the 6,000 meter high mountain passes into India – and freedom. But the Chinese police discover the smugglers’ hiding place and Johanna is faced with an adventure that changes her life.

Bundschuh worked on this project with Markus Fischer of Zurich-based snakefilm who had previously been a production partner on such films as the thriller Night On Fire, starring Bruno Ganz, and the award-winning documentary Memory Books.

“For the snow parts of the movie we found landscapes in Switzerland which could double for the Himalaya after doing most of the shooting in Ladakh/Northern India for Tibet,” Bundschuh explains. The locations in Switzerland included Kleine Scheidegg, the Eiger Glacier, the Jungfraujoch and the caves at Thünersee. “There is also a large Tibetan community in Switzerland where we could find extras and people for supporting roles,” he adds. “And the interiors were shot in a studio outside of Munich in December.”

However, the production was almost cancelled at the last minute last summer. “Three weeks before the shoot, there were flash floods in the Ladakh and some 200 people were dead or missing,” Bundschuh recalls. “We didn’t know whether we would be able to shoot there or not, but the locals were adamant that we should continue with the production, and especially in the light of what had happened. In fact, it was an incredible experience working with a cast and crew from so many countries – Germany, the US, Nepal, UK, Singapore and Spain, among others – and to be with people who have such a positive work ethic.”

International sales will be handled by TELEPOOL, theatrical distribution in Germany by Prokino while Filmcoopi will release the finished film in Switzerland.

Bundschuh stresses that he wants to “keep switching between documentaries and feature films” in the future, but is open to becoming involved in more feature film projects.

“We have made many of the films over the past 30 years with friends and colleagues abroad and have always aimed at the international market,” he notes.

“As far as commissions from German TV stations are concerned, we have always been very selective in the projects made for German channels, so we have not experienced the problem of the drop in commissions that other producers have had in recent years when working with the public broadcasters,” Bundschuh continues. “For us, the [public] film funding system in Germany has been a very reliable partner. At the same time, we have always been successful in being able to make films which sold well internationally.”

While Bundschuh has moved effortlessly between the roles of producer and director – some of his most recent projects with the director’s hat on were music documentaries on John Lee Hooker, JJ Cale and Klaus Voormann. He explains how he sees his function as a producer: “I am not just one who is there to collect the money, I like to be more involved on the creative side. In most cases we develop our own projects and later on I am a partner for the director to discuss his or her vision. This kind of dialogue gives me a lot of fun and each film is like one’s own child.”

“Each director is different – sometimes the relationship is very close, sometimes less so – and there are some filmmakers with whom I have collaborated on many films, such as Georg Stefan Troller on 15 projects. But there have also been many young directors with their first or second films.”

“The subject of a film is always the most important thing for me,” Bundschuh says. “I have to be infected by the subject matter to then want to see such an idea realized.”

“I have always been fascinated by working in this industry because it enables you to live several lives in one life,” he concludes. “The experience can be such an intensive one as you immerse yourself in foreign realities and see the whole panorama of human life.”

Jörg Bundschuh spoke with Martin Blaney
Alexander Fehling (photo © Joachim Gern)

Alexander Fehling

It was after playing the donkey at the age of 12 in a children’s theater production of *The Bremen Town Musicians* that Alexander Fehling first caught the acting bug. "I wasn’t even consciously following acting for a profession as a goal," recalls Alexander, who then played in many productions in Berlin’s vibrant ‘off theater’ scene after that first appearance in the suburb of Pankow. "I discovered very slowly what it could all be to become an actor," he continues. "It was like I was playing without a ball – it’s there, but you just can’t see it."

After completing his alternative to military service as an orderly in a psychiatric clinic, Alexander decided to take the plunge and apply for a place at the prestigious “Ernst Busch” acting academy, whose past graduates include such colleagues as August Diehl, Devid Striesow and Julia Jentsch.

Convinced of his own potential, he was bitterly disappointed at not being accepted and spent a year traveling to apply to study at other drama schools in Austria and Germany before he successfully applied a second time to “Ernst Busch” in 2003.

In retrospect, Alexander says that this year of traveling and self-questioning was “a very important process for me which continues to influence me right up to the present day.”

His studies were focused on acting for the stage, something which did not overly concern him at the time since he hadn’t seen himself working in the cinema. That developed later. "They don’t really prepare you for specific things," he says about his time at “Ernst Busch”. "You shouldn’t have those expectations, you just have lots of possibilities to make use of."

It was during his third year of studies that he had his first professional engagement in the production of Robert Walser’s *Schneewittchen* in Berlin’s Sophiensäle appearing opposite veteran German actor Matthias Habich. His role as the Prince earned him the Academy of Arts’ O.E. Hasse Prize for Talented Young Actors in 2006. Another theater engagement came with the role Max Piccolomini in Peter Stein’s staging of Schiller’s *Wallenstein’s Tod* before the world of cinema knocked on his door.

“Robert [Thalheim] had been looking for someone to play the role of Sven for around a year,” Alexander recalls how he came to be cast in

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GERMANY’S SHOOTING STAR

A portrait of Alexander Fehling

Born in Berlin in 1981, Alexander Fehling studied Acting at the Hochschule für Schauspielkunst “Ernst Busch” from 2003-2007. He soon began working on stage and in film, and was presented in 2006 with the Academy of Arts’ O.E. Hasse Prize for Talented Young Actors for his role as the Prince in Robert Walser’s *Schneewittchen*. He made his film debut in Robert Thalheim’s *And Along Come Tourists* (*Am Ende kommen Touristen*, 2006), for which he received the Young German Cinema Award as Best Actor in 2007. Alexander then appeared in Heinrich Breloer’s *Buddenbrooks* (2007), Hans-Christian Schmid’s *Storm* (*Sturm*, 2008), Quentin Tarantino’s *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) and Frieder Wittich’s *13 Semesters* (*13 Semester*, 2009). Last year saw him playing the leads in Philipp Stölzl’s *Goethe* and Toke Constantin Hebbeln’s *Niemandsland* (working title). Alexander was selected as one of 10 young European actors to be presented with the Shooting Star Award at the 2011 Berlinale by the European Film Promotion. He can be seen in the role of Andreas Baader in Andreas Veiel’s fiction feature debut *If Not Us, Who? (Wer wenn nicht wir)*, which has its world premiere in the Berlinale’s Official Competition.

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one of the main parts for Thalheim’s second feature And Along Come Tourists. “They were going through people in the drama schools and my name was on that list. At the time, I was living a rather chaotic life with no telephone and no real place to live, so they almost didn’t get to me! I was lucky enough to be the last one at the casting session.”

This first role for the cinema saw him going to Cannes in 2007 when the film was invited to screen in the Un Certain Regard sidebar and he was subsequently awarded the Young German Cinema Award as Best Actor during the Munich Film Festival that year.

Interestingly, he didn’t return to the theater – after a four year absence, he is appearing in a contemporary re-working of Flaubert’s Madame Bovary for Berlin’s Maxim Gorki Theater starting February 19th – but concentrated on working for the big screen.

“I just knew one thing,” he explains. “That I wanted to stay and be able to look for projects in the theater or film. It took a long time before the interesting things came along, but I had to be patient because I feel a certain sense of responsibility when I am playing a part.” Thus, in the following years, he took small parts which he found “interesting or were for films by directors I admired.”

First up was Heinrich Breloer’s adaptation of the Thomas Mann novel Buddenbrooks where he was cast as Morten Schwarzkopf and which aired in its two-part TV version on German television over Christmas 2010. He then followed this with the part of Patrick Färber in Hans-Christian Schmid’s English-language thriller Storm which premiered in competition at the Berlinale in 2009 before gaining his first experiences of working on a big-budget international production in the role of Master Sergeant Wilhelm in Quentin Tarantino’s imitable take on the Second World War in Inglourious Basterds.

Recalling working with Tarantino, Alexander says that the approach was different from the moment of the casting session held together with producer Lawrence Bender: “Quentin was just very interested in everyone who was coming into the room. It wasn’t about what I had been doing before or what I know, but what I was doing at this particular point in time and in this room.”

His next project, the student comedy 13 Semesters by feature debutant Frieder Wittich, couldn’t be further away from Tarantino’s epic – and stars a former “Shooting Star” colleague, Max Riemelt, in the lead.

While Alexander had been quietly building up a track record of appearances in an eclectic range of projects, he was destined for a higher profile after being chosen by Philipp Stölzl to play the lead part of Germany’s most famous man of letters in Goethe.

“There were great opportunities for me as an actor,” he says. “I had space to fill. I am very grateful for that after being so patient all those years. I think it’s good that I hadn’t been playing lead roles before I appeared in Goethe. People didn’t already have a certain picture of me. What fascinated me was that the character of Goethe is very active, something quite unusual for German films. I can’t recall another character in German cinema who is both active, courageous and sensitive.”

Fast forward almost two centuries and Alexander has been cast in another key figure from German history: as Andreas Baader in Andres Veiel’s fiction feature debut If Not Us, Who?, which is premiering in this year’s Berlinale competition.

He describes working on this film as “very intense” and explains that he “didn’t have a picture of Baader in mind and that was very important. I hadn’t seen The Baader Meinhof Complex and only part of Baader with Frank Giering. That’s what being an actor is all about: noticing things and then forgetting things.”

He did some background reading on the historical figure of Baader, but not as much as was needed for Goethe. “We spent more time talking about what is happening in the scenes and where the character is coming from and what does he want,” he notes. “As well as what the conflict might be in there.”

In the meantime, Alexander has another two projects currently in post-production. One of these, Jan Zabeil’s debut feature The Art of Dying (working title), was co-written by the young actor who stars in the story of a young German exploring a huge swamp delta in Botswana.

“Four of us went to Africa after I had finished Goethe! [in 2009] to make a film without a script,” he says. “It was a bit like an expedition as we searched for our story there, so we spent three months working on the story of a young German guy who gets lost in the wilderness. The film is about life and death and what happens when you come to a place where every rule you have learned is changed.”

Alexander admits that the “hands-on” experience of making a film certainly appealed to him and he could imagine getting more involved ‘behind the camera’ at a later stage in his career. While he doesn’t have any immediate plans in this direction, he is nevertheless developing some projects with director friends he knows on an informal basis.

The second project in post-production is another feature debut, Student Oscar®-winner Toke Constantin Hebbeln’s Niemandsland, which wrapped shortly before Christmas and is his second lead role.

While the time around the Berlinale will be busy enough for Alexander this year, what with his preparations for the premiere of Madame Bovary and the presentation of If Not Us, Who? in the festival’s competition, he is also sure to be much in demand as one of the ten young European acting talents selected as ‘Shooting Stars’. Along with colleagues from countries as far apart as Albania, Ireland, Spain, the UK and Sweden, he will be thrust into the spotlight for a busy three days on the festival’s first weekend as part of an initiative staged by the European Film Promotion.

After his experiences of acting in such films as Inglourious Basterds and Storm, Alexander is open to doing more international productions “because I am interested in working with inspiring people, people I can learn from or who are on the same wavelength as me.” He is looking forward to expanding his network of contacts through the exposure from Shooting Stars as well as getting another perspective from outside of his work and life in general. “I’ve always been interested in working on ‘unsafe’ terrain,” he notes, “and acting in another language means that I am discovering new things.”

Alexander Fehling spoke with Martin Blaney
Based in Wiesbaden, near Frankfurt, the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation has seen its range of activities grow in recent years together with a heightened public profile.

Founded in 1966, the Murnau Foundation has dedicated itself for more than four decades to saving and preserving Germany’s film heritage and making these outstanding works of cinema accessible to the public.

“One of the challenges facing the Foundation is securing the future of our film holdings through digitization,” says Thomas Zeipelt, who became the successor to Helmut Poßmann as the Foundation’s managing director in June 2010.

“We already know with 35 mm that the prints will last for a very long time; the development with digital copies is still in flux. The archives around the world have agreed on a particular format, but it is difficult at this stage to forecast how long this format will remain the recognized universal one. Nor is it certain that digital preservation is better than on 35 mm.”

As Zeipelt points out, large-scale restoration projects on the lines of Metropolis or Die Nibelungen is an area that the Murnau Foundation has dedicated itself to saving and preserving a substantial portion of Germany’s film heritage and making these outstanding cultural and film historical works accessible to the public.

They range from the early days of motion pictures until the early 1960s: 2,000 silent films, 1,000 talkies, and some 3,000 short films (advertising, cultural and documentary films). Apart from the recently restored silent films Metropolis and Die Nibelungen, they include some of the great classics of German cinema such as Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari, The Blue Angel, Three Good Friends, Die Drei von der Tankstelle, The Adventures of Baron Munchausen, Große Freiheit Nr. 7, and Arms and the Man.

In addition, the collection includes many films by such outstanding directors as Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, Fritz Lang, Ernst Lubitsch, Detlef Sierck, Helmut Käutner and Wolfgang Staudte. The Foundation’s holdings also cover around 60,000 photos, posters, other advertising materials through original screenplays and dialogue lists to specialist film literature. At the same time, many rights-holders have entrusted their films – currently 20,000 titles in total – to the care of the Foundation.

Since its founding in 1966, the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation has dedicated itself to saving and preserving a substantial portion of Germany’s film heritage and making these outstanding cultural and film historical works accessible to the public. They range from the early days of motion pictures until the early 1960s: 2,000 silent films, 1,000 talkies, and some 3,000 short films (advertising, cultural and documentary films). Apart from the recently restored silent films Metropolis and Die Nibelungen, they include some of the great classics of German cinema such as Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari, The Blue Angel, Three Good Friends, Die Drei von der Tankstelle, The Adventures of Baron Munchausen, Große Freiheit Nr. 7, and Arms and the Man (Helden).
Foundation will continue to pursue in the future. “Various projects are in the planning stage and we are holding negotiations with prospective partners,” he explains.

But such enterprises don’t happen from one day to the next. For example, restoration of Fritz Lang’s monumental two-part epic Die Nibelungen took more than four years before new 35 mm prints were then struck for the premiere of the restored version in April 2010 at Berlin’s Deutsche Oper.

And the reconstruction and restoration of Metropolis represented one of the most significant film restoration projects in cinema history. The premiere of a version which almost completely reflects the original was staged at last year’s Berlinale – in the Friedrichstadtpalast and in sub-zero temperatures in front of the Brandenburg Gate – and at Frankfurt’s Alte Oper. The film concert was broadcasted live in Germany and France on the TV-channel ARTE.

The Murnau Foundation’s growing involvement in the field of film restoration has made it a much sought-after partner for other national and international institutions. Apart from close cooperation with the umbrella organization of German film archives and museums, the Kinemathekverbund, the Foundation is also a partner for the Italian silent film festivals Le Giornate del Cinema Muto in Bologna and Cinema Ritrovata in Bologna as well as with such educational institutions as the Institut für Kino und Filmkultur.

Making the German film heritage accessible to film academics and general cineastes alike is also one of the Murnau Foundation’s key goals and has been made easier with the opening in April 2009 of the purpose-built Deutsches Filmhaus, which is located near to Wiesbaden’s town center and a stone’s throw from the central train station.

Apart from serving as the Foundation’s headquarters as well as housing the offices of various film cultural institutions, the Filmhaus is also home to the Murnau-Filmtheater whose public screenings are programmed by the Foundation in cooperation with the German Film Institute.

Equipped with the latest state-of-the-art technology – from DCO to 3D – as well as the old-style projectors, the Murnau-Filmtheater offers a varied program of films from the Foundation’s own archive as well as newer films.

“The Filmhaus program is attracting more and more of the locals and we even have people coming from further afar,” Zeipelt notes. “Naturally, attendance depends on the particular film shown, but the monthly series of discoveries allows us to show (forgotten) classics that are perhaps not so well-known but deserve to have a screening. A recent example was Glückskinder which is apparently a favorite of Quentin Tarantino!”

In addition, the Filmhaus stages presentations of so-called “Vorbehaltsfilme”, predominantly from the Nazi period, which can only be screened in public in accordance with certain conditions. Thus, Veit Harlan’s 1940 film Jud Süß was shown last autumn as part of the Cinema Seminar Film Propaganda with an introduction and subsequent discussion by film expert Horst Walther of the Institute for Cinema and Film Culture. Future special presentations are planned for Hitlerjunge Quex and Kolberg.

At the same time, the Murnau Foundation believes that there should be a life for its films outside of the cinema. Transit Film distributes the films of the Murnau Foundation on the German and the international market.

Although fulfilling a mission of national relevance, the Murnau Foundation doesn’t receive any support from the public purse (except for the recent restoration of Metropolis) and is therefore reliant on the income generated from exploiting its film library via its licensing agency Transit Film – whether it be for television, the cinema, DVD, VOD or the rights to film clips. The institution’s work also receives recognition further afield through the contributions it makes to exhibitions and retrospectives at home and abroad.

A case in point is the interdisciplinary exhibition Gesamtkunstwerk Expressionismus at Darmstadt’s Matildenhöhe, which presented art, film, literature, theater, dance and architecture between 1905 and 1925. The film strand of the exhibition, which ran until mid February 2011, was coordinated by the Deutsches Filmmuseum with film prints and other materials supplied by the Murnau Foundation.

Another ambitious venture with the Foundation’s involvement is the retrospective Weimar Cinema, 1919 – 1933. Daydreams and Nightmares, at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York from 17 November 2010 to 7 March 2011.

Curated by Larry Kardish, Senior Curator of the MoMA Department of Film, and Eva Orbanz, Senior Curator – Special Projects from the Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen, this retrospective is the most extensive ever mounted in the USA of German films made between the two World Wars.

The project also continues the tradition of Iris Barry, the world’s first curator of film and founding curator of the MoMA’s Department of Film, who began adding German films to the collection in the mid-1930s.

Of 75 films screening in this retrospective, along with a gallery exhibition of Weimar era film posters and stills, some 40 feature films and six shorts originate from the Murnau Foundation’s holdings.

“More than 100 films with a total weight of over 500 kilos were sent by air freight to the US,” Zeipelt recalls, pointing out that the program stretches from “classics and rarities of silent film through to the early masterpieces of the sound film, which influence such genres as music films, comedies and social dramas.”

Films coming from the Wiesbaden holdings have included the comedy The Oyster Princess (Die Austernprinzessin, 1919) and the historical film Passion (Madame Dubarry, 1919) by Ernst Lubitsch, the Expressionist masterpiece The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920), Murnau’s horror film Nosferatu (1922) and his social drama The Last Laugh (Der letzte Mann, 1924). The line-up of sound films has featured Walther Ruttman’s Melody of the World (Melodie der Welt, 1929) which is regarded as the first German sound film, The Blue Angel (1930) and Three Good Friends (1930).

“One particular highlight of this retrospective was to see the musical The Blue from the Sky (Das Blaue vom Himmel) with the lead actress Marta Eggerth,” Thomas Zeipelt says. “And then to see her come out on to the stage after the screening at the age of 98 and so full of life!”

Thomas Zeipelt spoke with Martin Blaney
TRAGIC LOSS OF A GREAT FILMMAKER

Bernd Eichinger’s unexpected death was a great shock for the German and the international film community. For over 30 years, Bernd Eichinger was an exceptional producer and a courageous distributor (later on, also a writer and director) who not only had brilliant and sometimes difficult projects, but managed to turn them into very successful films with great recognition at the domestic and foreign box offices. Starting in the late 70s with *Christiane F.*, projects like *The Name of the Rose*, *The House of Spirits*, *Resident Evil*, *Downfall*, and *The Baader Meinhof Complex* will remain eternal proof of his incessant energy and creativity. Bernd Eichinger was courageous, prepared to take risks, tempestuous, forgiving, straightforward and principled. He had standards that not only made him a great producer, but also an exceptional personality. His death is a great loss for the international film business.

GREAT GERMAN PRESENCE IN CLERMONT-FERRAND

During the last years, the German Short Film Association (AG Kurzfilm) and German Films have established German short films as a constant at the International Short Film Festival Clermont-Ferrand, one of the world’s premier events dedicated to short films. In 2011, their presence was even greater than in previous years with the Academy of Media Arts Cologne (KHM) celebrating its 20th anniversary by introducing two programs presenting some of their students’ most successful films under the motto “Diversity as an Educational Concept for Artists and Filmmakers”. One program featured, for example, the short fiction *On the Line* by Reto Caffi, which not only won the Honorary Foreign Student Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, but was also nominated for the Live Action Short Oscar® in 2009 after winning the Grand Prix at the Clermont-Ferrand festival.

At the 33rd edition of the festival, three German shorts competed for the Grand Prix: *It’s Me. Helmut* (Nicolas Steiner), *Oshima* (Lars Henning) and *Yuri Lennon’s Landing on Alpha 46* (Anthony Vouardoux). Another four were selected for the Lab Competition: *The External World* (David OReilly), *Extracts from the Myself Diaries* (Paul Leyton), *Love & Theft* (Andreas Hykade) and *Loom* (Iljia Brunck, Jan Bitzer, Csaba Letay).

Since 2006, the festival has been the place where an exceptional short film program annually celebrates its premiere – the “Soirée Allemande Coup de Cœur – Le Court Métrage Allemande”, a French-German cooperation of the German Short Film Association, German Films,
the Festival du Court Métrage Clermont-Ferrand, the Goethe-Institut Lyon and the KurzFilmAgentur Hamburg. This year there was even more reason to celebrate – after its presentation in Clermont-Ferrand, the program will not only be touring the Goethe-Institutes of French-speaking countries as a French and German subtitled DVD, but the language versions will be doubled and extended to English and Spanish, allowing the DVD worldwide exploitation.

From more than 400 German festival entries in Clermont-Ferrand eleven films from a great variety of genres were chosen to be part of the program: 12 Years (Daniel Nocke), Standing Up – Forgotten (Jörn Staeger), It’s Me. Helmut, Humble Pie (Markus Zilz), Loom, Love & Theft, Manola (Robert Bohrer), Now Follows (Stephan Müller, Erik Schmitt), As Always (Sethna Zubin), Yuri Lennon’s Landing on Alpha 46 and Between Heaven and Earth (York-Fabian Raabe).

Furthermore, as one of fifteen partner countries, the AG Kurzfilm was also involved in the Euro Connection Co-Production Forum. Being responsible for the German applications, a jury appointed by the association selected two projects by Sabine Michel and Marcos Kantis (Schiwago Film) as well as Aleksandra Szymanska (Homo Ludens Pictures) for pitching to potential co-production partners. The association – in cooperation with German Films – was also present with a booth at the short film market in Clermont-Ferrand and organized the market screening “Matinée Allemande · Coup de Foudre – Le Court Métage Allemand” with another ten outstanding German short films.

**DOC/FEST & MEETMARKET IN SHEFFIELD**

Sixteen filmmakers and producers from the **German Documentary Association (AG DOK)** made their way to Sheffield for the most important British documentary event of the year. The relatively new “Seize the Future Crowdfunding Pitch” was an informative experience for filmmakers like Rick Minnich, who presented new projects there. Rick Minnich: “I appreciate the way that Doc/Fest tackles the new type of financing and makes it into an event. In this way, my project has attracted a measure of attention that will certainly be helpful with its continued funding.”

But the real event relevant to the financing of new projects was the so-called “MeetMarket”, where six projects with German participation were invited to pitch to the attending editors. The third component of the industry event were the “Round Tables”, which members of the German delegation were also able to take part in. Rick Minnich made use of the opportunity and found it a positive experience, getting to know a lot of new international distributors and commissioning editors. The fourth key part of the industry events were various panel discussions. And, of course, the german-documented reception, which has now become a firm ingredient of the Doc/Fest.

**EUROPEAN FILM COMMISSIONS NETWORK RE-ELECTS BOARD**

The **European Film Commissions Network (EUFCN)** association’s 4th general assembly took place on 3 December 2010 in the City Hall of Brussels. It included the 3rd elections of the board of directors, which was re-elected with a great majority. The President of the association, Arie Bohrer (Austria) as well as the General Secretary, Patrick Lamassoure (France) were confirmed in their offices. Giuliana Tessera (Italy) was re-elected and Elsa Martinez, the head of Spain Film Commission, was elected as a new board member. Christiane Scholz (Germany) and Anja Metzger (Germany) were also elected for another term in office, as was the Treasurer Truls Kontny (Norway).

For the first time the association’s annual general assembly was embedded in two blocks of seminars. The agenda included a detailed training session on the specifics of 3D filmmaking. French 3D specialist Philippe Delbary explained the technological aspects of 3D and how it is used globally. Sebastian Cramer of Screen Plane (Germany) described the workflow of 3D projects. The second day was dedicated to sharing experiences with film tourism. Stefan Roesch, author of the book The Experiences of Film Location Tourists, spoke about cooperating with the tourism industry, designing tourism marketing campaigns, and developing tourism products. Thomas Fuchs of CineTirol presented a case study on film tourism in Tirol, and Piluca Querol of the Andalucia Film Commission introduced her book Movie Tourism: A New Promotional Strategy.

The EUFCN is the umbrella association representing film commissions in Europe and was founded in 2007 to consolidate the ever-growing number of film and location offices all over Europe into one network. The EUFCN, which today already encompasses 78 film commissions in 24 European countries, is a non-profit association which supports and promotes the European film industry and culture.

**CO-PRODUCTION MEETING BAVARIA/LUXEMBURG IN MUNICH**

On 16 November 2010, producers from Bavaria and Luxemburg met for a co-production meeting in Munich. The event was organized by the Film Fund Luxemburg and MEDIA Desk Luxemburg together with FilmFernsehFonds Bayern and MEDIA Antenne Munich and introduced the funding schemes in Luxemburg and Bavaria.

Arno Ortmain (Film-Line Productions/Munich) and Nicolas Steil (Iris Production/Luxemburg) also presented their German-French-Luxemburg co-production Für immer und ewig (working title), an FFF Bayern-funded drama about the lives of Georg and Grete Trakl with Lars Eidinger and Peri Baumeister in the leading roles.
IDFA AND FORUM IN AMSTERDAM

The International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam 2010 (IDFA) was one of the most successful events for German documentary film in 2010. 32 German films and co-productions were shown at the festival, four of them in the competition for feature-length films. Autumn Gold by Jan Tenhaven came in second place among the top ten audience favorites (Gebrüder Beetz Filmproduktion). Kinshasa Symphony by Martin Baer and Claus Wischmann finished in fourth place (Sounding Images), and The Green Wave by Ali Samadi (Dreamer Joint Venture) in fifth place.

For the third successive time, german-documentaries hosted a reception to promote contacts with international filmmakers and editors. Julia Basler from German Films and Cay Wesnigk from the board of the German Documentary Association (AG DOK) welcomed the international guests in Amsterdam. Cay Wesnigk: “The reception was successful in marketing terms and increased the awareness of German documentary films at the IDFA among the specialists who attended the festival.” This year there were five German projects that were pitched in the FORUM for International Co-Financing of Documentary Films.

WORLD CONGRESS OF SCIENCE & FACTUAL PRODUCERS IN DRESDEN

The World Congress is one of the most enduring, exclusive events in the commercial TV industry of so-called “factual programming”. In recent years its ratio of two producers to every TV-editor has led some colleagues to regard it as a secret tip. And this year’s congress in Dresden came up to all expectations.

The content of the congress is inspired and conceived by members of the World Congress Association. Its program is therefore directed towards the interests of the producers, and most panel discussions touch the right nerve among the participants. Nearly 30 panel discussions were flanked by approximately 30 presentations by various broadcasting stations or editors, who introduced their broadcasting centers. In addition, there was an opportunity for so-called “speed-dating meetings”, where one could present projects to editors in one-to-one conversations.

More than 30 producers from the German Documentary Association (AG DOK) represented German documentary film among the 650 plus participants at the congress this year. The congress is one of the few occasions in the year when contacts to international financiers can be developed so quickly and with so few complications. The congress will be taking place in Paris in 2011.

FILMSTiftUNG NRW: CONTINUITY & NEW HORIZONS

In 2010, the Filmstiftung, which will be celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, supported 122 films with 33 million Euros, thus creating a production volume of 300 million Euros – more than ever before in the history of the funding institution. Some 1,026 shooting days were booked in NRW, with such stars as Keira Knightley, Juliette Binoche and Helen Mirren making their way to Cologne. Helen Mirren, who, together with Martina Gedeck, is starring in Istvan Szabo’s new film The Door, was so enthusiastic about shooting conditions at the Cologne-based MMC Studios that she promised to recommend the studios to colleagues in the USA and England.

THE NORTH CELEBRATES FILM

The significance of film festivals is indisputable: national and international productions are screened, audiences experience unique cinematic moments, the industry gets together and the diversity of films – from documentaries to shorts, experimental films to feature films – unfolds. The Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein’s 2011 festival calendar highlights the over 15 film festivals taking place between the North and Baltic Seas, from the Danish border to the River Elbe. The spectrum of film festivals in Northern Germany ranges from the Filmfest Schleswig-Holstein “Augenweide” in Kiel which will be celebrating its 15th birthday in March, to the International Short Film Festival Hamburg which has turned Hamburg into the center of short film in Germany every spring for over a quarter of a century, and the Filmfest Hamburg which brings productions from all over the world to the banks of the River Elbe each autumn. The festival also screens TV movies in the sidebar 16:9 and awards the Douglas Sirk Prize for achievements in film culture to renowned filmmakers, including such past winners as Clint Eastwood, David Cronenberg and Julian Schnabel.
MFG FILM FUNDING AT THE BERLINALE 2011

Andres Veiel’s feature debut If Not Us, Who? which was also supported by MFG Film Funding and will be released in German cinemas on March 10th by Senator Film, is screening in competition at this year’s Berlinale. Already renowned as a documentary filmmaker (Black Box BRD, Die Spielwütigen), Veiel directed a high-profile cast (including Susanne Lothar, Imogen Kogge and Martin Wuttke) in this story set in Germany in the early 1960s: Bernward Vesper (played by August Diehl) and his fiancée Gudrun Ensslin (Lena Lauzemis) are rebellious. While Bernward devotes himself to drug binges, Gudrun participates in the armed fight against the establishment.

In 2009 the screenplay to If Not Us, Who? was nominated for the MFG’s Thomas Strittmatter Prize. And the coveted prize will be awarded again this year during the Berlinale. Knut Elsterman will moderate the festive event on February 16th at the Baden-Württemberg State Representative Office in Berlin. This year’s jury was formed by Gudrun Schretzmeier (costume designer), Pea Fröhlich (screenwriter), Kurt Stocker (Dor Film/Vienna), and Christian Wagner (film director).

Last year’s winner of the 25,000 Euro prize was Nicole Armbruster for her screenplay to Die Festung, which is currently being produced by Kordes & Kordes Film under the direction of Kirsi Liimatainen. Further proof of the MFG juries’ extraordinary hunch for great screenplays: since the introduction of the award in 1998, all but three screenplays have been filmed.

The festival also toured through Russia this year: for the 7th time now, the program was shown in St. Petersburg (3-6 December 2010) and for the 3rd time in Novosibirsk (8-12 December 2010).

8TH GERMAN-FRENCH RENDEZ-VOUS IN HEIDELBERG

On 25 and 26 November 2010, some 270 representatives of the French and German film industry met in Heidelberg to discuss various topics. After the opening by the president of the Association Rendez-vous franco-allemands, Alfred Hürmer, two days of panels followed, covering such topics as German-French co-productions, case studies on the distribution of German films in France (Soul Kitchen) and French films in Germany (Mammuth), and the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) and the French Crédit d’Impôt. The participants were enthusiastic about the report by Wim Wenders and his team on the making of his new 3D film Pina. For the first time, a cooperation took place between the French and German documentary associations and two panels described the particularities of financing and distributing documentary films in the respective countries. In cooperation with Atelier Network, another panel presented new ways of social distribution and financing. The next Rendez-vous will take place in Paris on 24 and 25 November 2011.

WIND OF CHANGE AT THE VDFE

The Association of German Film Exporters (VDFE) recently voted in a new board of directors: Andreas Rothbauer (Beta Cinema/Beta Film) and Philipp Menz (Atlas International Film) intend to bring a fresh new breeze of change into the association. Internally, the members are to contribute to the transparency and responsibilities of the association’s work, while cooperations with important external contacts within the film industry will be further developed.

“The significance and interests of the film exporters can only be heard if the internal and external channels of communication are improved,” says the association’s new managing director Edith Forster (Brauner Rechtsanwälte). In planning are regular discussions with representatives of the German Producers Alliance, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture & the Media, the German Federal Film Board, the Goethe-Institut, German Films, SPIO, and the regional funding institutions, as well as an exchange of information and experiences with other European exporters’ associations and the MEDIA program.

RECORD TURNOUT AT 9TH FESTIVAL OF GERMAN FILMS IN MOSCOW

More than 6,000 visitors came to the ninth annual Festival of German Films in Moscow (2–7 December 2010) organized by German Films and the Goethe-Institut Russia. In seven out of eight screenings, the Moscow cinema “35 mm” with its 550-seat capacity was not big enough to seat young Russian audiences eager to see the cinema features on offer.

Friendship! won the Audience Award and was launched in Russian cinemas after its premiere at the festival. During the festival itself, Russian distributors also showed an interest in the opening film Vincent Wants to Sea, which was equally popular with the audience. Leading actor and screenplay writer Florian David Fitz and supporting actor Johannes Allmayer came to the screening at the festival opening.
Art Girls


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Filmmaker Robert Bramkamp had the idea for his latest project Art Girls in 2002, after completing his feature Prüfstand VII which included parts of Thomas Pynchon’s Gravity’s Rainbow.

“It was a clear plan at the time that I wanted Inga Busch – who had played the lead in Prüfstand VII – for the lead again in my new project,” Bramkamp recalls. In addition, he cast Peter Lohmeyer, who appeared in his 1995 film Eroberung der Mitte, to play the scientist twin brothers Laurens and Peter in Art Girls.

Bramkamp’s screenplay focuses on three women artists, Nikita Neufeld, Una Queens and Fiona da Vinci, who are intending to collaborate on a group art exhibition in Berlin’s world famous art district Mitte. However, the exhibition is, in fact, just a front for a scientific experiment by the Maturana twins to test out their new technology of ‘biosynchronization’ with unexpected results …

“Art Girls is a low-budget, romantic science fiction film, but also a satire on the art world and offers an entertaining journey into a world which is otherwise often regarded as being elite,” Bramkamp continues, pointing out that the film will serve as a “long overdue parody on disaster movies and disaster capitalism. And yet this genre mix leads into an entertaining, sometimes weird, but finally positive encounter with a new form of intelligence, which is not exactly alien.”

Apart from the production of a feature film for the cinema, the Art Girls project will also have other activities in a cross-media context. Public broadcaster ZDF is co-producing The Art Girls Mockumentary which will combine a ‘making of’ the actual feature film with fake documentary passages about people’s experiences with their “new nature”, which is again another word for the evolutionary leap the story revolves around.

In addition, new technological and creative possibilities of digital animation are being explored by students, graduates and teaching staff at four institutions of higher education in Germany and Switzerland: Stuttgart Media University (HdM), Hamburg’s University of Fine Arts (HfbK), the University of Film & Television “Konrad Wolf” (HFF) and the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU).

“Each institution has a different background or emphasis,” Bramkamp explains. “For example, the students at HfbK Hamburg have a more artistic perspective, whereas at the HdM they are focused on the specific potentials of digital animation and SFX design. The findings from these four centers can then be incorporated into the feature film.”

Meanwhile, the financing is not yet closed for an Internet narration project in collaboration with ARTE-online and Hamburg-based First Motion New Media Fund where Internet storytellers can enrich the cross-media narration through their own creative input.

In addition, an art exhibition is set to be staged in 2012 in cooperation with the Kunsthalle Göppingen which will then later move on to Hamburg and Berlin. This exhibition will be based on the exhibitions staged by the three “Art Girls” in the film and launched as a ‘tie-in’ to the theatrical release.

MB
### Baikonur

**Type of Project** Feature  
**Genre** Comedy  
**Production Company** Veit Helmer-Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with Tandem Productions/Moscow, CTB Film Production/Moscow, Eurasia Film/Almaty, ARTE/Strasbourg, BR/Munich, RBB/Potsdam  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, MEDIA, German Federal Film Board (FFA), BKM, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), eQuinoxe, Nipkow Program  

**Producer** Veit Helmer  
**Co-Producers** Anna Katchko, Sergei Selianov, Gulnara Sarsenova  
**Director** Veit Helmer  
**Screenplay** Sergei Ashkenazy  
**Director of Photography** Nikolai Kanov  
**Editor** Vincent Assmann  
**Production Design** Sonja Winzenried, Rustam Odinaev  
**Principal Cast** Marie de Villepin, Alexander Asochakov  
**Shooting Languages** English, Russian  
**Shooting in** Kazakhstan, Moscow, Baikonur, September-November 2010  

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Newspaper clippings and pictures of cosmonauts had always held a fascination for film director Veit Helmer, but the idea of making a film set in the Baikonur space station didn’t occur to him until he met the Berlin-based Russian writer-director Sergei Ashkenazy in 2007. During their conversation about a possible collaboration, it turned out that Ashkenazy was also interested in space exploration – and the seeds for Helmer’s fourth feature film were sown.

The screenplay was developed with the support of a workshop of the eQuinoxe program and a grant from the Nipkow Program which allowed Helmer and Ashkenazy to travel to Kazakhstan in May 2009 to visit the space station in Baikonur as tourists and witness a rocket launch to the International Space Station (ISS).

The magical love story centers on the French space tourist Julie who lands in the steppes of Kazakhstan after her return from orbit, and the local villager Iskander, also known as Gagarin, who finds her in the stranded capsule and takes her back to his jurt. Since she has lost her memory, she thinks she is his wife and all kinds of misunderstandings arise.

“I see Baikonur as a love story between two very contrasting worlds, the world of space tourism and the world of this remote village in the steppe,” Helmer explains. “The connection here with my other films is that I am again more interested in images than scenes of dialogue. At the same time, this film is not so burlesque as Absurdistan and rather more longing than Tuvalu.”

“In a way, it will be more realistic than my other films because the story is located in a specific place and time,” he adds.

In fact, the casting of top model Marie de Villepin and the 19-year-old Asochakov (in his first film role) mirrors the clash of cultures in the film. “Parallel to the film shoot, I produced a ‘making of’ about the two actors,” Helmer explains. “Marie as the ‘new face of Givenchy’ and daughter of France’s former prime-minister Dominique de Villepin, and Aleksander coming from a village in Siberia where there’s no Internet. Fiction and reality are very close here.”

Meanwhile, Helmer is particularly proud of the fact that he is the first filmmaker ever to be allowed to shoot a feature film at the Baikonur space station. “It was always a dream of mine,” he says. “Although the shooting permit from the Russian space authority Roskosmos had been given early on, we only received the final permission to shoot there after checks by the secret service just 14 days beforehand.”

Helmer’s videoblog and production diary chronicling the ups and downs of the making of Baikonur – including his particular style of marketing for the film at last year’s Cannes Film Festival – can be found at www.baikonur.com.
The world of grumpy taxi-driver Hartmut Mackowiak comes crashing down on the news that his wife is leaving him after 30 years of marriage. Suddenly, he has to organize his life anew—which allows him to become even more of a loner. That is, until the day he has the six-year-old Hayat and her mother as a fare in his taxi. Shortly thereafter, he gradually succumbs to Hayat’s stubborn devotion and decides to help her. Little does he know that it may also be a case in fact of the little girl helping him to learn to cherish life again.

For Zübert, it was soon clear that he wanted Elmar Wepper, the multi-award-winning star of Doris Dörrie’s Berlinale hit Cherry Blossoms, to play the part of Hartmut in Dreiviertelmond. Indeed, the director had him in mind whilst writing the screenplay and always kept in contact with the actor since giving him a part in his hugely successful feature debut Lammbock in 2001.

“In autumn 2008, he sent him the first draft of the script and, within a week, Elmar Wepper called back and said that he just had to make this film because the story was, in his words ‘charming,’” Marciniak says.

“Bettina Reitz and Hubert von Spreti of the Bayerischer Rundfunk were just as enthusiastic about the screenplay and keen to come onboard, as did Benjamin Herrmann whose company Majestic Filmverleih distributed Cherry Blossoms back in 2008. “The film is like About Schmidt meets Chaplin’s The Kid,” Herrmann explains. “Very moving and, at the same time, very funny.”

While Wepper is joined in the cast by such supporting players as Katja Rupé, Özay Fecht, Marie Leuenberger and the Nuremberg cabaret artist Bernd Regenauer, it was much more of a challenge to find the right child for the role of Hayat.

“I was used to the challenges of casting child actors after having had 16 roles to cast on Little White Lies, but it was almost as complicated for just this one role,” Marciniak explains. “Finding a six-year-old girl will always be difficult, but it’s even more of a problem with a Turkish child since the parents wouldn’t let their daughters come to the casting sessions alone.”

“We tried street castings, going into schools and children’s theater groups, but had no success. Then by chance, via a friend of a friend via Facebook, the six-year-old Mercan Türkoglu in Berlin heard about a casting call. It was a real stroke of luck that we found her just two weeks before shooting started!” he recalls.

Marciniak praises the first-time actress for “her seriousness and concentration over the whole shoot. She was so concentrated in every take whether she was needed to laugh or cry. And it was moving to see the interaction between the little girl and Elmar Wepper in their scenes together.”
Dunkel

Type of Project Feature Genre Mystery Thriller Production Companies Wüste Film Ost/Potsdam, Wüste Film/Hamburg, in co-production with ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel/Mainz With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), MEDIA Producers Yildiz Özcan, Stefan Schubert, Ralph Schwingel Director Alex Schmidt Screenplay Alex Schmidt, Valentin Mereutza Director of Photography Wedigo von Schultzendorff Editor Ulrich Kruse Production Design Jörg Mühring Principal Cast Mina Tander, Laura de Boer, Max Riemelt, Clemens Schick, Katharina Thalbach, Thomas Sarbacher Casting Deborah Congia, Karolina Matheis Casting & Coaching Format 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby Digital Shooting Language German Shooting in Thüringen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Leipzig, Hiddensee, Hamburg, November-December 2010

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“It was always planned that we would work together on Alex’s debut film,” recalls producer Yildiz Özcan who studied at the Hamburg Media School between 2004-2006 at the same time as director Alex Schmidt and produced her short film friendship. “Initially, we thought that Alex might first direct a children’s film or a romantic comedy,” Özcan continues. “But she is also a great genre fan, so she began developing a short around the story of Dunkel, but when I got to read the script, I thought the story was such an exciting read that it would be ideal for a feature-length film.”

Dunkel opens with Hanna (played by Mina Tander) meeting up with her best friend from childhood days after a break of some 25 years. They decide to visit the island where they had previously spent their holidays together. Hanna doesn’t realize what kind of horror will be awaiting her there. She tries to uncover a dark secret which had been well preserved for decades and stumbles on a truth which is much more terrible and dreadful than anything she could have ever imagined.

As Özcan points out, Dunkel is similar to Schmidt’s previous shorts Rabenmutter and Die Giftmischerin in the combination of realistic and fairytale elements. “They are always larger than life, and Alex draws inspiration from directors as diverse as Baz Luhrmann and Michael Haneke,” she explains, adding that one can also see connections with French and Spanish horror films or the “Schwarze Romantik”.

Schmidt, meanwhile, describes the mystery thriller as “a game with the supernatural, the intangible, always close up to the main characters and giving a glimpse into their innermost being. Nothing has more of a lasting effect and demands my admiration than when a film succeeds in putting the fear of God into me.”

This debut feature, which wrapped principal photography in Hamburg in mid-December, sees Schmidt reunited with several people who had worked on her short films such as the sound designer Benjamin Krbetscheck and composer Marian Lux, a graduate of the Hanns Eisler Academy, who also wrote the music for Dow-Jane-Index, Bass in Contra and Rabenmutter.

In addition, the production has been able to draw on the extensive experience of veteran cinematographer Wedigo von Schultzendorff, whose credits include Oskar Roehler’s Lulu & Jimi and Christian Alvart’s Pandorum, as well as costume designer Maria Schicker who has worked on projects as diverse as the German box-office hit Friendship! and the TV series Cold Case.

Für Elise

Type of Project Feature Genre Drama Production Company Ostlicht Filmproduktion/Weimar, in co-production with SWR/Baden-Baden, ARTE/Strasbourg, MDR/Leipzig With backing from Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) Producers Marcel Lenz, Guido Schwab Commissioning Editors Stefanie Gross, Barbara Häbe, Wolfgang Voigt Director Wolfgang Dinslage Screenplay Erzsébet Rácz Director of Photography Kai Rostásy Editor Andreas Baltschun Production Design Stephan von Tresckow Principal Cast Jasna Fritzi Bauer, Christina Grosse, Hendrik Duryn Casting Jessika Eisenkolb, Simone Bär Format RED One, color, blow-up to 35 mm, cs, Dolby Digital Shooting Language German Shooting in Jena, Weimar, October-November 2010
Elise is a 15-year-old girl who, following her father’s accidental death, lives with her mother Betty. The latter is an intensive care nurse and, true to the saying ‘the cobbler’s children always go barefoot’, Betty helps to save the lives of others but does not have her life or that of her daughter under control. In her desperate search for a new husband and father, Betty throws herself into a drastic series of parties and one-night stands, drowning her helplessness in alcohol.

In the meantime, Elise uses all her strength to keep both their lives on some kind of even keel. Silently, she takes care of the household and covers up Betty’s alcoholic excess.

Elise loves her mother but suffers from the woman’s egoism and the lack of maternal care. The one thing that gives her consolation and solidity is playing the piano.

When Betty meets Ludwig, a journalist, she believes she has found the ideal partner. But mother and daughter are set to become rivals for his favor.

Für Elise (“For Elise”) marks the theatrical feature film debut of national and international award-winning director Wolfgang Dinslage. From 2000 to 2002 he studied Direction under Hark Bohm at Hamburg University, which in 2004 was integrated into the Hamburg Media School. His short film credits include: Ausverkauft (1999, Audience Award Short Cuts Cologne), Quak (2000, winner of the Short Tiger Award), Morgengrauen (2001) and Die Katze von Altana (2002, nominated for the German Short Film Award, the First Steps Award and the Studio Hamburg Newcomer’s Award; winner of the Audience Award at the Sehsüchte Festival in Potsdam and the Taipei Film Festival in Taiwan, as well as winner of the Filmfestival Augenweide in Kiel). In 2009, Dinslage made his first feature-length film, the TV-movie Zurück zum Glück.
which he would have preferred) from Nazi Berlin, and finds himself in
the legendary Hotel Lux, the ‘lost paradise’ of the Comintern in
Moscow. Everyone believes that Zeisig is a man named Hansen,
Hitler’s personal astrologer. But Zeisig quickly realizes that he’s gone
from the frying pan into the fire. In the Hotel Lux, he meets up again
with his friends Frida and former stage partner Meyer, who are still
passionate communists. For the three idealists, an adventure between
love and death begins to run its course!

As producer Rohrbach explains, Dietl’s original idea for Hotel Lux
was taken onboard. “True to his understanding of cinema, he wanted
to tell the story of the Lux horrible dictu as a comedy,” he says. “We
also retained this idea and found in Leander Haüßmann someone we
think is the right director (and screenwriter).”

“Haußmann knows what he is speaking about,” Rohrbach continues.
“He became acquainted with the achievements of Socialism from the
inside. He therefore lacks any flippancy despite the lightness of touch.
It was necessary to find a comic tone, but one which does not betray
the story to comedy. The horror must stay alive. And within it, the
inconsistency of people who believe in good and do everything to
make this impossible.”

that the more than 10-year-old project Hotel Lux is now being
realized at this particular moment seems almost like perfect timing,
albeit unintentional.”

“The powers-that-be in Moscow are just about to bring Stalin back
from oblivion and put him up on a pedestal again. Twenty years after
Glasnost and Perestroika, things are happening in Russia which make
the insanity in our film look like an evil parable on the present. And
yet none of us had the real ‘Putinism’ in mind, but were more inter-
ested in a fascinating and amusing film about a historical – German! –
subject.”

Meanwhile, director Leander Haüßmann notes that “the histori-
ography and the associated appraisal through art – film, literature –
has missed out on the subject of Lux and its repercussions to this
day.”

“When the Wall fell in 1989, it was clear that the foundations had
been set exactly in the place where this film plays, namely in Hotel
Lux,” Haüßmann says.

He admits that “it would be presumptuous to stretch this point too
far. But it is my greater goal to provide a little detail in this appraisal of
our history.”

“The idea of Communism had actually already failed before it was
really permitted to assert itself,” Haüßmann explains. “The traitors,
the sycophants got by for the most part. The people with the big
dreams, big hopes and big visions did not survive the purges, they
were exterminated. The others became heads of state.”

Kein Sex ist auch keine Lösung

Type of Project Feature Genre Romantic Comedy Production Company All-in-Production/Munich, in co-production
with Kinowelt/Leipzig, ZDF/Mainz With backing from Filmbewertung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Nordmedia, German
Federal Film Fund (DFFF) Producer Annette Reeker Co-Producers Wolfgang Braun Commissioning Editor Daniel Blum
Director Torsten Wacker Screenplay Michael Gantenberg, Hartmut Block, from the novel by Mia Morgowski
Director of Photography André Lex Editor Darius Simaifar Production Design Iris Trescher Principal Cast Stephan Luca, Marleen
Lohse, Anna Thalbach, Janin Reinhardt, Johannes Allmayer, Oliver Fleischer, Tete Mierendorf, Armin Rohde, Corinna Harfouch, Michael
Lott, Felicitas Woll, Hannelore Elsner Casting Ingeborg Molitoris Format HD (Alexa), color, 1:1.85, blow-up to 35 mm, Dolby SR
Shooting Language German Shooting in Hamburg, Bremen, the island of Fehmarn, October-December 2010

Successful advertising executive Tom Moreno (Stephan Luca) is
good with women. He’s an artist in winning them, and getting rid of
them after the third time. But then Elisa (Marleen Lohse),
the agency’s new art director, enters the scheme of things and Tom’s
familiar tricks fail to work, throwing him into confusion and with
nobody to turn to for help.

This is because Tom’s friends have problems of their own: Vince
(Oliver Fleischer) finds his wife in Tom’s bed; Luke learns from,
of all people, Tom’s mother (Corinna Harfouch) that ‘no sex is no
option’; Paule (Anna Thalbach) falls in love with a man in a suit
(Michael Lott) and mutates from buddy to femme fatale. And to
top it all off, his boss Rolf (Armin Rohde) tells him the agency is
as good as bust. It’s no wonder Tom forgets to be careful and neglects
his relationship-avoidance rules.

Mia Morgowski’s 2008 novel Kein Sex ist auch keine Lösung (“No
Sex Is No Option”) was a surprise and huge hit which shot up the best
seller charts thanks to her use of refreshing humor to unveil the amusing misunderstandings between man and woman.

To say Kein Sex ist auch keine Lösung has a top notch cast is an understatement! The first class ensemble also includes: Hannelore Elsner (Zeiten ändern Dich), Tetje Mierenendorf (Schillerstrasse), Felicitas Woll (Berlin, Berlin), Janin Reinhardt (Ein Leben auf Probe), Michael Kessler (Switch Reloaded, Pastewko), presenter and actress Collien Fernandes and handball star Stefan Kretzschmar.

Torsten Wacker (writer-director) is best known for his Flensburger beer commercials, for which and others he has won more than thirty national and international awards. His film and TV work includes Süperseks (2004), Axel will’s wissen (2005), Ladyland (2006, winner of that year’s German Comedy Award) and various episodes of series such as Lutter (2008/2009), Mord mit Aussicht (2009) and Der Sheriff (2010).

Producer Annette Reeker’s credits include many years of development and production on the successful format Switch (winner of the German Television Award, the German Comedy Award and the Grimme Award), as well as two seasons of the series Alles ausser Sex for broadcaster ProSieben. She founded All-in-Production in 2008, with the company’s emphasis on development and film production of all genres, as well as event movies, TV movies and series for both commercial and public broadcasters.

“The plan,” Reeker explains, “is to bring together creativity and competence with a high standard of production and a lot of commitment to guarantee high-quality fictional programming.” Kein Sex ist auch keine Lösung is Reeker’s first theatrical feature film. A second is already in pre-production.

Music elates, touches the soul, and bypasses reason. Music is magic. But precisely this magic can turn it into an insidious weapon – for music and violence belong together. The brutal power of African war dances, the ferocity of Maori Hakas, the earth-shattering roar of US sound guns blasting Metallica at Taliban hideouts – the principle is always the same: Aggressive sounds demoralize the enemy and whip the allies into a frenzy. In Kriegslieder (“Songs of War”), writer-director Tristan Chytroschek explores this extraordinary harmony between music and violence.

Kriegslieder’s main protagonist is the multiple Emmy and Grammy-winner Christopher Cerf, a composer who wrote more than two hundred songs for the children’s TV series Sesame Street. He always wanted his music to be fun, educational and entertaining. But then he learned that his songs had been used to torture prisoners in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib. He is stunned by this abuse of his work and wants to find out how this could happen.

Cerf embarks on a journey to meet soldiers who have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. They tell him how important music was for them during their missions because it helped them cope with extreme psychological stress. He meets a retired Psychological Operations Officer who tells him how the US Army uses music as an integral part of their military strategy. And he meets people who have experienced the frighteningly destructive power of music as a psychological weapon.
The dramatic climax of the film, which makes use of original music, encompassing everything from Nazi marches to The Doors to Drowning Pool and Metallica, is when Christopher meets a young man who was tortured with his music in Guantanamo. At the end, Cerf will have learned that the military has been employing music as a powerful stimulant and a mighty weapon for thousands of years – and his understanding of music will have changed.

In Kriegslieder, the already strong imagery of war – exploding bombs, thundering tanks, attacking airplanes – gets an additional boost through fast, clip-like, optically fascinating editing that blurs the borders between dream, nightmare and reality. Combined with great pieces of music such as Beethoven’s Fifth (Hitler’s favorite piece) or Bodies by Drowning Pool, picture and sound unite to create an irresistible force. Torn between fascination and horror, viewers can experience directly how terrible a weapon music can be.

Here, in his latest project, Clarin relates how the National Socialists founded an elite boarding school for music, at the personal wish of Hitler himself. This would be where the most talented boys in the Greater German Reich would be brought up and trained to become the leading musicians of the future Germany.

But instead of raising the boys to also become proper Nazis, the school’s headmaster, Kurt Thomas, feels more obliged to church music and humanistic culture than to the Blut und Boden (“Blood and Soil”) ideology of the Third Reich – and thus, at the ‘Musische Gymnasium’ a dangerous and tricky balancing act between the poles of educational responsibility, artistic freedom and political doctrine takes it course.

“Musensöhne” says Clarin, “recounts a fascinating microcosm. It features a wealth of different archive material to relate a complex and gripping story from the time of the Third Reich.”

Philipp Clarin was born in 1975 in Munich. After high school graduation he became a camera assistant on numerous television programs before starting an internship with ARRI Munich, after which he entered Munich’s University of Television & Film. Clarin’s previous projects include Edelweiss Raid – Wettkampf in den Alpen (writer-director, 2009, for BR) and Alpenklöster – Ettal (writer-director, 2009, for 3Sat). He has also been a jury member at the Tegernsee International Mountain Film Festival 2009 and is a regular visiting lecturer at various schools on the subject of Media Competence.

The Third Reich never ceases to be a treasure trove of fascinating historical material and with Musensöhne (“Sons of the Muse”), writer-director Philipp Clarin has come up with a nugget of pure gold.

Musensöhne

Type of Project  Documentary  Genre  History, Music
Production Company  Filmallee/Munich, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, BR/Munich  With backing from FilmFernsehenFonds Bayern
Producer  David Lindner Leporda  Director  Philipp Clarin  Screenplay  Philipp Clarin  Director of Photography  Oliver Tataru  Editor  Tom Kohler  Music by  Wolfram de Marco  Production Design  Cinzia Fossati  Principal Cast  Michael Dorn  Casting  Sandra Stein  Format  XD Cam, DigiBeta, color, 16:9, Dolby Stereo 5.1  Shooting Language  German  Shooting in  Wiesbaden, Frankfurt, Berlin, Untermarchtal, Mitwitz, May 2009-July 2010

Contact  
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The Third Reich never ceases to be a treasure trove of fascinating historical material and with Musensöhne (“Sons of the Muse”), writer-director Philipp Clarin has come up with a nugget of pure gold.
Type of Project Feature Genre Road Movie Production Company Claussen+Wöbke+Putz Filmproduktion/Munich, in co-production with Dr. Wilfried Ackermann Filmproduktion/Taucha, ZDF/Mainz With backing from German Federal Film Board (FFA), Filmstiftung NRW, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) Producers Jakob Claussen, Uli Putz Co-Producer Dr. Wilfried Ackermann Commissioning Editor Daniel Blum Director Elmar Fischer Screenplay Elmar Fischer, Susanne Hertel Director of Photography Philipp Kirsamer Editor Eva Lopez Echegoyen Production Design Wolfgang Arens Principal Cast Nora Tschirner, Elyas M’Barek, Max von Pufendorf, Tonio Arango, Axel Milberg, Dominik Raacke, Leslie Malton Casting Daniela Tolkien Format 2K Digital, color, cs, Dolby Digital Shooting Language German Shooting in Geilenkirchen, Berlin, October-November 2010 Contact Claussen+Wöbke+Putz Filmproduktion GmbH Herzog-Wilhelm-Strasse 27 · 80331 Munich/Germany phone +49-89-23 11 01 0 · fax +49-89-26 33 85 kontakt@cwp-film.com www.claussen-woebke-putz.de

“We had been following Elmar’s work since his feature debut Fremder Freund and were very happy when he approached us with the idea for Offroad,” recalls producer Jakob Claussen. The screenplay for the feel-good road movie with quirky characters and many surprising plot twists was co-written with Munich University of Television & Film graduate Susanne Hertel who had worked on several projects for TV before now making her premiere for cinema with Offroad.

Nora Tschirner plays Meike who has everything planned: completion of her business management studies, marriage, a bunch of children, taking over her father’s business, and then retirement some time in the distant future. But then she catches her fiancé Philipp in flagrantlia with her best friend Denise and all those best-laid plans disintegrate before her eyes. At an auction, she buys a jeep which had been impounded at the German-Dutch border and her life is taken in quite a new direction when she makes an unexpected find in the jeep’s trunk.

“We had always thought of Nora for the female lead and are very happy about this casting decision,” Claussen explains. “She is just the right actress to portray a rather naive young woman coming from the provinces at the beginning of the film. We then see how she and her life change when she moves to the big capital of Berlin and really believe that she is going through this development. At the same time, there is a German-Turkish love story going on as the resourceful Salim (played by Elyas M’Barek) regularly helps Meike out of one fix after another.”

The two leads are supported by a top-notch acting ensemble ranging from Axel Milberg through Max von Pufendorf to Tonio Arango, Dominik Raacke and Leslie Malton, with the addition of interesting newcomers and guests.

Claussen admits that it was “great fun” shooting in the small North Rhine-Westphalian town of Geilenkirchen where director Elmar Fischer spent his childhood and his parents still live. “It was a similar experience with 23 in Hanover and at the Italian locations for Wedding Fever in Campobello – people are so welcoming and hospitable when film crews come to town,” he says. “We even managed to bring rival shooting clubs together in Geilenkirchen for some scenes in our film!”

According to Claussen, Offroad will be a “classic road movie” and could potentially benefit from the box-office success of other recent road movies like Vincent Wants to Sea and Due Date. “The beauty of the road movie genre is that everything is possible and allowed,” he notes. “You can have comedy, suspense, drama and honest emotions all in one film.”

Offroad marks the Munich-based production company’s first foray into shooting on 2K Digital which proved very versatile for a film with many car stunt sequences. “We were filming throughout with 2-3 cameras, which is something that we couldn’t have afforded on 35 mm,” Claussen explains.

Meanwhile, Fischer’s second feature film will be the second local film to be released by the German outpost of US distributor Paramount Pictures after it picked up Tim Fehlmann’s post-apocalyptic thriller Das Ende der Nacht last year.

MB
Orange

Type of Project Feature Genre Comedy Production Companies Odeon Pictures/ Cologne, Roxy Film/Munich, in cooperation with BR/Munich, in cooperation with ARTE/Strasbourg With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) Producers Georg Gruber, Andreas Richter, Annie Brunner, Ursula Woerner Director Marcus H. Rosenmüller Screenplay Ursula Gruber Director of Photography Stefan Biebl Editor Georg Sörging Music by Gerd Baumann Production Design Doerthe Komnick Principal Cast Amber Bongard, Petra Schmidt-Schaller, Georg Friedrich, Oliver Korittke, Brigitte Hobmeier Casting Nessie Nesslauer, Kathrin Küntzel-Sedler Format 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby Digital Shooting Language German Shooting in Munich and surroundings, May-July 2010

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Orange is a culture clash comedy about a time when self-discovery was not yet mainstream and the Bavarian ‘soul’ had yet to become cool.

It’s 1980 and enlightenment comes to the back and beyond of Bavaria! Bhagwan disciple Amrita (Petra Schmidt-Schaller) moves with her two children, 12-year-old Lili (Amber Bongard) and nine-year-old Fabian (Béla Baumann), together with her equally esoteric roommates, from Berlin to the Bavarian backwoods. Primal scream therapy and wholemeal meet shooting club and more earthly horizons. While Amrita sings Indian mantras, sitting half naked on the Stone of Enlightenment, her arch-conservative neighbor and the village mayor (Heinz-Josef Braun), for whom the ‘weirdoes’ are, of course, also linked to left-wing terrorists the RAF, peers through the hedge, stunned.

But when the yogis also set up a therapy center in the village, peaceful life goes out the window. The villagers’ mistrust of the newcomers spirals out of control. And Lili is caught between the fronts. When she is also shunned by her schoolmates, she wishes nothing more than to have a normal family, and starts to live a double life. At home she wears orange, eats vegetarian and spouts left-alternative slogans. At school she wears a grey, pleated skirt and recites the Lord’s Prayer with everyone else.

And while Bhagwan’s right hand is on his way to inaugurate the new Buddha Hall, Lili is now a member of the local brass music club, preparing for the annual village festival. It’s here where things between the yogis and villagers come to a head. And Lili is caught in the middle, no longer knowing where she belongs …

Director Marcus H. Rosenmüller brings his own sensitivities and sense of comedy to Ursula Gruber’s script, which is based on her own childhood memories growing up in a Bhagwan commune south of Munich.

Producer Georg Gruber (Odeon Pictures) has worked at Medienfonds GFP and has been head of Odeon Pictures since May 2006. His credits include Splinter (2008), Friedliche Zeiten (2008) and Lauf um Dein Leben – Vom Junkie zum Ironman (2008).

Roxy Film (producers Andreas Richter, Annie Brunner and Ursula Woerner) made their first theatrical feature film in 2006 with the hit Grave Decisions with Marcus H. Rosenmüller at the helm. It took the German Film Award 2007 for Best Film, Best Direction, Best Script and Best Score, as well as the Bavarian Film Award for Best Film and Best Newcomer Director. The company’s latest feature, Almanyə – the story of a Turkish ‘Gastarbeiter’ family that has lived in Germany for three generations – is due to hit cinemas in March 2011.
“Die Räuberin” (“The Bandit”) is the story of a scandal,” producer Lars Büchel explains. It’s the 3rd of January and the 43-year-old actress Tania Kalsmayer arrives in Jankwarden, a village in the furthest north-west of Germany. The place is not far from the coast but off the tourist track, not that it’s really worth looking for, and the area appropriately bleak.

“On her first day by the sea she meets 14-year-old Thore,” Büchel picks up the thread. “He’s different to the other people and Tania takes to him because she believes he has artistic talent. He develops a crush on her, which she does nothing to prevent. But what is basically a meeting of minds inevitably becomes a local scandal.”

It becomes slowly clear that Tania cannot act any differently. Here, in the remoteness of the north, a part of her life she believed she had shaken off long, long ago, gradually forces its way back. It becomes the remoteness of the north, a part of her life she believed she had It becomes slowly clear that Tania cannot act any differently. Here, in the remoteness of the north, a part of her life she believed she had shaken off long, long ago, gradually forces its way back. It becomes the remoteness of the north, a part of her life she believed she had

Büchel’s own credits include Lippels Traum and Erbsen auf halb sechs, both of which he directed, as well as producing Justus von Dohnányi’s writer-director-acting vehicle, Bis zum Ellenbogen.

As well as feature films, Element E Filmproduktion also produces award-winning commercials, as in Cannes Lions and Clio-winning commercials, for national and international brands, such as Siemens, Allianz and Renault.

“In principle we make what we enjoy,” says Birge Schade, who plays Tania, acted in, among others, Dominik Graf’s Skorpion, while Daniel Michel (Thore) makes his acting debut here.

“Die Räuberin” is an arthouse film, a chamber piece. It’s very dry and has, we think, great festival chances. The setting in northern Schleswig-Holstein is foggy, damp, grey, into which comes a former TV-star with a secret.” SPOILER ALERT: she gave up her own child for adoption, who subsequently died in a car accident, together with his adoptive parents.

The tangled and tragicomic web weaves takes in the actor Ralf Tanner (Heino Ferch), who pretends to be his own double in order to remain a star, until an even better double surfaces! There is the famous writer Leo Richter (Stefan Kurt), who is planning a novel about a terminally ill woman who intends to travel to Zürich to end her life. He has the habit of milking his unwilling girlfriend

**Type of Project** Feature

**Genre** Tragicomedy

**Production Companies** Little Shark Entertainment/Cologne, Terz Filmproduktion/Cologne, in co-production with DOR Film Produktion/Vienna, Hugofilm Productions/Zürich, WDR/Cologne Degeto/Frankfurt, ARTE/Strasbourg With backing from Filnstiftung NRW, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DDFF), Eurimage, Österreichisches Filminstitut, Züricher Filminstiftung, MEDIA PRODUCERS Tom Spiess, Sönke Wortmann, Christoph Friedel, Claudia Steffen

**Co-Producers** Danny Krausz, Isabelle Welther, Christoph Neracher

**Director** Isabel Kleefeld

**Screenplay** Isabel Kleefeld

**Production Design** Andrea Kessler

**Editor** Andrea Kessler

**Principal Cast** Stefan Kurt, Julia Koschitz, Senta Berger, Justus von Dohnányi, Heino Ferch, Gabriela Maria Schmeide, Axel Ranisch, Matthias Brandt, Johanna Gastdorf, Thorsten Merten, Ursula Strauss, Susi Stach

**Casting** Sabine Schwedhelm

**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby

**Shooting Languages** German, Russian, Spanish

**Shooting in** Cologne, Buenos Aires, Cancun, Zürich, Kiev, the Crimea, October-December 2010 & April 2011

**World Sales** Bavaria Film International

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Based on Daniel Kehlmann’s novel of the same title, Ruhm (“Glory”) is the story of an electrical engineer called Ebling (Justus von Dohnányi), who buys a mobile phone at his wife’s insistence. Accidentally given an already allocated number, Ebling gains entry to an exciting, new world. He is unaware that his calls are destroying the relationship, career and existence of the actual owner. Indeed, he is not entirely blameless for the suicide of one caller. Then suddenly the phone ceases to ring. In desperation, Ebling presses the redial button.

The tangled and tragicomic web Ruhm weaves takes in the actor Ralf Tanner (Heino Ferch), who pretends to be his own double in order to remain a star, until an even better double surfaces! There is the famous writer Leo Richter (Stefan Kurt), who is planning a novel about a terminally ill woman who intends to travel to Zürich to end her life. He has the habit of milking his unwilling girlfriend
Elisabeth (Julia Koschitz), a doctor, for material for his novels. Two of her colleagues from Medecins Sans Frontieres have been kid-napped and murdered.

Meanwhile, Rosalie (Senta Berger), diagnosed with terminal cancer, is on her way to the assisted-death organization Comitas in Zürich. Also heading that way are Leo and Elisabeth. She for the funeral of her murdered colleagues, he to collect the Dürrenmatt Literature Award.

Maria Rubinstein (Gabriela Maria Schmeide), who has taken Leo’s place on a literary tour of Askisistan without realizing what a trip to hell and back it is, spends her last morning without a mobile phone, money and passport, hungry and thirsty, waiting to be collected.

Her husband, who works at communications company Tellmedi and is cheating on her, has to look for his vanished wife, so he sends his colleague, the manic blogger Mollwitt (Axel Ranisch) to the congress in Zürich, where he encounters Leo, his absolute favorite author.

Ruhm’s characters all share one thing in common: they are driven by the desire to live in another ‘house’, even if it is not their own.

Isabel Kleefeld (script and direction), worked as first AD for Detlev Buck, Oliver Hirschbiegel, Rainer Kaufmann, Sönke Wortmann and Christian Zübert. Her first TV-movie, Schluss mit lustig, won her the Studio Hamburg Newcomers Award 2001. Other accolades include the Förderpreis des Deutschen Fernsehpreises (to the two young leads in her film Königskinder), the Bavarian Film Award 2005 for Direction, for Das Gespenst von Canterville, which was also nominated for Best Film at the German Film Awards. Unter Verdacht – ein neues Leben was nominated for the 2007 Grimme Award. And for Anniés Welt she received the 2007 Grimme Awards for direction and script.

Ruhm’s cast is top drawer acting talent! This is an actor’s film, as opposed to a star vehicle, and each one of the main cast is a tried and tested, award-nominated and -winning professional with many years of stage, small and big screen experience.

Little Shark Entertainment’s credits include the huge hits Das Wunder von Bern and the documentary Deutschland. Ein Sommermärchen. The company specializes in developing and producing films for a discerning audience, with Ruhm looking set to continue its auspicious track record.

Tom Sawyer

Type of Project Feature Genre Family Entertainment, Literature

Production Company Neue Schönhauser Filmproduktion/ Berlin, in co-production with Filmaufbau/Leipzig, Majestic Film- produktion/Berlin, in cooperation with Degeto/Frankfurt, NDR/ Hamburg, ARTE/Strasbourg, BR/Munich With backing from German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Filminstitut NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Board (FFA), Mittel- deutsche Medienförderung, Nordmedia, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein Producer Boris Schönfelder Co-Producers Michael Kölmel, Benjamin Herrmann Director Hermine Huntgeburth Screenplay Sascha Arango Director of Photography Ngo The Chau Editor Eva Schnare Music by Biber Gullatz Production Design Colin Taplin Principal Cast Louis Hofmann, Leon Seidel, Magali Greif, Heike Makatsch, Benno Fürmann, Joachim Król, Peter Lohmeyer, Hinrerk Schönemann Casting Simone Bär, Jacqueline Rietz Format 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby SRD Shooting Language German Shooting in Brandenburg, Thuringia, Saxony, Lower Saxony, Cologne, Romania, September-November 2010

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Mark Twain’s literary classic comes to, er, Thuringia, Saxony, Lower Saxony, Cologne and Romania??!

“The Mississippi in Germany? – Yeah, sure!,” says producer Boris Schönfelder. “Tom Sawyer is all about fun! It’s about a story that isn’t ‘cool’ for its own sake, isn’t to be pigeonholed as something just for children, but offers, alongside adventure, the desire for freedom and, in its own world, also has genuine conflicts.”

Drawing on what he terms “films with a soul,” Schönfelder cites Detlev Buck’s Hände weg von Mississippi (Hands Off Mississippi. Here a horse, not the river), Peter Bogdanovich’s Paper Moon and a ZDF four-part version from the 1960s as inspirational in getting his Tom Sawyer off the ground: “The fact that we went from development to production so quickly shows just how many fans there are out there.”
Writer Sascha Arango “has stayed true to the original without falling victim to the urge to be modern. Some parts have been changed,” Schönfelder explains, “but only those where the story, we felt, is now too dated. So, for example, Aunt Polly is no longer an elderly lady but an independent, young and beautiful woman.”

Louis Hofmann and Leon Seidel are Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. Tom’s great love Becky is played by Magali Greif. But where the film further excels is in the quality of its adult casting. Aunt Polly, the main victim of Tom’s pranks, is played by Heike Makatsch. Benno Fürmann is the bad guy, Indian Joe (“You should see him in make-up!” Schönfelder says), while Joachim Król is the absent-minded, drunken coffin-maker Muff Potter.

“Tom Sawyer is a story not bound to a certain period in the USA, but is timeless and applicable the world over: it’s good for young and old,” says director Hermine Huntgeburth, who is no stranger to fans of contemporary German cinema, with her award-winning credits including Bibi Blocksberg, Die Weisse Massai and Effi Briest.

“Many aspects are already modern,” Huntgeburth continues, “such as the problem of being an outsider, as experienced by Huck Finn and Indian Joe, or that Aunt Polly is a single parent. But much more is that Tom Sawyer is the timeless story of wishes and ideals, which are important for adults as well as children.”

As proud as she is of her cast, Huntgeburth says “the second important key are the sets. Brandenburg really does have impressive original forests. But, and here we are so very lucky, the sets from Cold Mountain are still standing in Romania and I am so looking forward to filming there.”

Töte Mich

Type of Project Feature Genre Drama, Road Movie

Production Companies NiKo Film/Berlin, Wüste Film West/Cologne, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, Ciné-Sud Promotion/Paris, Vanderstastic/Paris, Hugofilm Productions/Zürich, ARTE/Strasbourg, ARTE France/Issy-les-Moulineaux With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Minitraiété, German Federal Film Board (FFA), Züricher Filmstiftung, Bundesamt für Kultur, Provence-Alpes-Cote d’Azur, The Residence – Festival de Cannes Producers Nicole Gerhards, Hejo Emons, Stefan Schubert, Raphael Schwingel Co-Producers Thierry Lenouvel, Christof Neracher, Anke Krause, Götz Schmedes Director Emily Atef Screenplay Emily Atef, Esther Bernstorff

Director of Photography Stéphane Kuthy Editor Beatrice Babin Production Design Katja Schlömer Principal Cast Maria Victoria Dragus, Roeland Wiesnekker, Wolfram Koch, Nathalie Boutefeu, Christine Citti Casting Anja Dührberg, Maria Schwarz, Juliette Ménager Format 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby SR

Shooting Languages German, French

Shooting in Cologne and surroundings, Marseille, October-November 2010

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Fifteen-year-old Adele’s much loved brother dies accidentally, leaving her trapped alone on a remote farm together with her loveless and lifeless parents. But when she meets escaped murderer Timo (43) she offers him a deal: she will help him reach his brother in Marseille if he releases her from her earthly suffering and kills her. But their breathless flight from the police brings these two such different outsiders increasingly closer together until, finally, Adele starts to have second thoughts.

Maria Victoria Dragus, who is still in full-time education made her feature film debut in 2006 in Du bist nicht alleine. In 2008 she had a supporting role in Michael Haneke’s multi-award winning Das Weisse Band, which saw her garnering the 2010 German Film Award. She also recently appeared in Andres Veiel’s latest film Wer wenn nicht wir.

Roeland Wiesnekker received the Swiss Film Award 2005 for Best Actor for his role in the feature film Sträh. His other credits include Der Fürsorger (dir: Lutz Konemann, 2008), Sommervögel (dir:
Emily Atef, Töte Mich’s director and co-writer, was born in Berlin in 1973, the daughter of French-Iranian parents, moving at the age of seven with her parents to Los Angeles. She graduated from high school in France in 1993 and in 1997 moved to London to work in the theater. She moved back to Berlin in 2001 to study Directing at the German Film & Television Academy (dffb).

Atef’s credits include the highly-acclaimed titles Das Fremde in mir (2007) and the TV movie Molly’s Way (2005). Her awards and accolades, especially for someone so young, are already impressive: Best Director (Studio Hamburg Newcomers 2009), Best Film (Seme Édition du Festival du Film Germanophone Augenblick), Best Film (Sao Paolo International Film Festival), Best Film & Audience Award (Filmfest Oldenburg) – all for Das Fremde in mir, to cite just a few.

Producer Nicole Gerhards, who flies her banner as NiKo Film, studied Theater Science and French in Paris, before moving to the dffb to learn Production, after which she worked on numerous national and international productions.

Her graduation film, Charlotte, was shown in 2004 in the Perspectives German Cinema sidebar of the Berlinale and the Directors’ Fortnight in Cannes. She describes herself and colleagues as “accomplices of our authors and directors, whose visions we realize jointly. We produce gripping, universal stories that entertain, take people to other worlds and also make them happy for a moment. Our films have a special signature and their own identity. We want to make films for the audience and are passionate about extraordinary films.” She pauses for a beat: “Nothing more and nothing less.”

If Töte Mich is a ‘gang’ affair, then the other members are also well known. Wüste Film West: that’s Hejo Emons, Stefan Schubert and Ralph Schwingel. Their credits include Tannöd, Renn, wenn Du kannst, Emmas Glück (which received four nominations for the German Film Awards, including Best Film, 2007), Kebab Connection, Salino and Ein Göttlicher Job, among many many others.
Legends of Rita. In 2009 she won the Grimme Award for her role in Nicole Weegmann’s Ihr könnt Euch niemals sicher sein.

“I started with the question, ‘What would happen if all children and young people were to suddenly withdraw from society?’,” says Die Vermissten’s director and co-writer Jan Speckenbach, whose graduation film this is from Berlin’s German Film & Television Academy (dffb). “It sounds like ‘just’ an exciting story, but there is also a relevant, socially important theme here: the rising demographic curve, the problem of our aging western society. In twenty years there will be twice as many people aged over sixty. What kind of future will that be in which there are only half as many young people as today?”

Die Vermissten, also Speckenbach’s first feature-length film, assumes a fictional acceleration of this demographic tendency. The film itself does not intend to deliver any answers or explanations. It does, however, pose this relevant and also unpleasant question, and, is, Speckenbach continues, “perhaps also in contrast to this or that pure entertainment film, of great importance.”

Speckenbach’s first short, The Other Day in Eden, screened in Cannes 2008 in the Cinéfondation section. His next short, Sparrows was part of German Films’ Next Generation program in Cannes the following year and has qualified for the shortlist of the 2011 Academy Awards® for Best Live Action Short Film.

Die Vermissten is also the graduation and first feature film of DoP Jenny Lou Ziegel, who worked with Speckenbach on The Other Day in Eden. Her credits include In Tirana (Short Tiger Special Award 2008) and Zur Maloche (Special Award of the 29th Manaki Brothers Cinematographer’s Film Festival). In 2010, Jessi, another short, screened in the Perspectives German Cinema section of the 60th Berlinale.

Producer Sol Bondy’s short films have screened around the world at more than 300 festivals and won numerous awards, including the German Camera Award 2008 for Mein Vater schlief and the German Short Film Award in 2008 for The Girl with the Yellow Stockings, both directed by Gregorz Muskala. Die Vermissten is his first feature-length film and also his graduation project at the dffb Berlin.

“We are aiming on the one hand for those young people who look critically at and ask questions of the world in which they live,” Bondy explains. “On the other, we are aiming at an educated arthouse audience between 25 and 50. A film which packs such a relevant theme in an exciting story will, in our opinion, address and move the different age groups.”

JUNIFILM was founded in 2002 by Anke Hartwig and specializes in high-quality, innovative narrative forms and entertainment. In so doing, the company works with known and newcomer talent. The JUNIFILM production, which was also the company’s debut feature, Pingpong (dir: Matthias Luthardt) had its premiere in the Critics’ Week sidebar 2006 in Cannes, going on to screen very successfully at festivals in Germany and internationally. It was sold to various territories where it proved very popular, especially in France. Die Vermissten is intended to continue this success.

Zehn Frauen

Type of Project Documentary Genre Art, Literature, Theater, Music Production Company Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie (dffb)/Berlin, in co-production with IJB/Berlin Producers Ingo J. Biermann, Andreas Louis Director Ingo J. Biermann Screenplay Ingo J. Biermann Director of Photography Magdalena Hutter Editor Eva Höppner Principal Cast Lisa Nielebock, Mayra Wallraff, Stefanie Schrank, Fiene Scharp, Franziska Grunze, Corinna Liedtke, Manuela Kasemir, Judit Bányai, Elisabeth Rank, Birke J. Bertelsmeier Format HDCam, color, cs, Dolby SR Shooting Language German Shooting in Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, Bochum, Cologne, Dortmund, March-October 2010

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When Ingo J. Biermann embarked on the idea for the documentary Zehn Frauen (“Ten Women”), he decided to focus the portraits on ten artists whose work interested him and on people who, like him, were at the beginning of their professional and artistic careers and aged between 25 and 31.

“Each of the women speak about themselves and their work – how they work, why they do this work and what motivates them,”
Biermann explains. “With this film and these conversations, I wanted to draw attention to the everyday conflicts, problems and issues between earning money and following a profession and self-realization and making art as well as with one’s private life, family and children. It was therefore important that some of the women had children and others didn’t have any (yet).”

Conversations of around 90 minutes were filmed with each of the protagonists, “always in a private setting or at least in individual familiar spaces like the atelier or the family home,” Biermann notes.

The portraits concentrate on the conversations with each of the ten women, so that the viewer will not be shown any examples of the artists’ work. Instead, we only see their faces along with silent portraits in the style of Andy Warhol’s famous Screen Tests.

Biermann filmed about six minutes for these silent portraits with each protagonist, but will likely end up using about two minutes of the footage in the final film. “We will have to find out during the editing how long exactly one can show these parts, probably partly with voice-only interview and partly silent,” he explains.

The making of Zehn Frauen is something of an experiment since it has been planned for two forms of exploitation: as an interactive project for the Internet as well as a classical feature-length film for the cinema.

While the film version will be able to use ten minutes at most from each conversation, the presentation via the Internet or on DVD/Blu-ray could use between 30-45 minutes as the users switch between the interviews and thematic or individual preferences or interests.

Zehn Frauen is one of three feature documentaries that Ingo Biermann has been working on over the past year to be completed during 2011. The other two projects are the music documentaries Nocturne, with the composer Dmitri Kourliandski and the Kairos Quartet, and Voice – Sculpting Sound with Maja Ratkje, portraying the Norwegian composer and performer.

Moreover, Biermann’s five-minute short Mistress received its international premiere in German Films’ Next Generation showcase of shorts from German film academies at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival.
What a question! And who could answer it?

This film takes us down an unusual path. Children take us into their world, into their lives and show us what really matters to them, what they love, what is important to them, what makes them laugh and what makes them cry.

Seven children from around the world develop their own answers. They tell us their stories: with amazement for the world around them and the desire to make a difference.

What does it mean to be a child today? A film about childhood and the universe of children. Authentic and serious, with the power of imagination, subtlety and humor.

How children see the world, before they forget how to ask the questions no one can answer. A film about a world that often remains hidden to grown-ups. A mirrored view of the world and a trip back to one’s own childhood. Watching children’s thoughts.

**Genre** Society, Children & Youth, Education  
**Category** Documentary  
**Year of Production** 2010  
**Directors** Antje Starost, Hans-Helmut Grotjahn  
**Screenplay** Antje Starost, Hans-Helmut Grotjahn  
**Director of Photography** Hans-Helmut Grotjahn  
**Editor** Anne Bernini  
**Music by** Büdi Siebert  
**Producer** Antje Starost  
**Commissioning Editor** Sabine Rollberg  
**Production Company** Antje Starost Film Produktion/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, in cooperation with ARTE/Strasbourg  
**Length** 87 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Versions** English, French, Spanish  
**Sound Technology** Dolby digital  
**Festivals** Hof 2010, Internationale Stuttgarter Kinderfilmtage 2010, KOLIBRI LaPaz 2011 (In Competition), Reel 2 Real Vancouver 2011 (In Competition)  
**Awards** Best Documentary Biberach 2010  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, BKM, Kuratorium junger deutscher Film, MEDIA Plus, Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst

“Who or what am I really: German or Turkish?” This is what six-year-old Cenk Yilmaz asks himself when neither his Turkish nor his German schoolmates choose him for their football team. To cheer him up a little, his 22-year-old cousin Canan tells him the story of her grandfather Hüseyin, who came to Germany in the early 1960s as a “guest worker” and later fetched his wife and children so they could be in “Almanya” with him. Much time has elapsed since then, and Germany has long since become the family’s home.

One evening, during a big family gathering, Hüseyin surprises his loved ones with the news that he has bought a house in Turkey and wants to take everyone back “home” with him. But what is home? Where is it really? Although all family members struggle with this question their own way, Hüseyin refuses to take no for an answer and so they have no choice but to set off for Turkey. It’s the beginning of a journey full of memories, arguments and reconciliations – until the family outing takes an unexpected turn …

**Genre**: Comedy  
**Category**: Feature  
**Year of Production**: 2010  
**Director**: Yasemin Samdereli  
**Screenplay**: Yasemin Samdereli, Nesrin Samdereli  
**Director of Photography**: Ngo The Chau  
**Editor**: Andreas Richter, Ursula Woerner  
**Production Company**: Roxy Film/Munich, in co-production with Infafilm/Munich  
**Principal Cast**: Vedat Erincin, Fahri Yardim, Lilay Huser, Demet Gül, Aylin Tezel, Rafael Koussouris, Denis Moschitto  
**Casting**: Emrah Ertem  
**Length**: 101 min  
**Format**: 35 mm, color, cs  
**Original Version**: German  
**Subtitled Version**: English  
**Sound Technology**: Dolby Digital  
**Festivals**: Berlin 2011 (Out of Competition)  
**With backing from**: FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), German Federal Film Board (FFA), BKM  

**Yasemin Samdereli** was born in 1973 in Dortmund. She studied at the University of Television & Film in Munich from 1993 – 2000, during which time she gained experience on various international film productions. Since 2001, she has been active as a screenwriter and director. Her films as a director include: the shorts Schlüssellocher (1994), Lieber Gott (1996), Kismet (2001), and Sextasy (2002), as well as the TV movies Alles getürkt (2003), Zivis (2004), Ich Chefe, Du nix (2007) and her theatrical feature debut Almanya (2010).
Romania, 1986: Gregor and Vali want to get away. Both need each other, yet there is mutual distrust. One night Gregor finds his doubts confirmed. In the end only hope is left.

Genre Drama, History, Thriller  
Category Short  
Year of Production 2011  
Director Anca Miruna Lazarescu  
Screenplay Anca Miruna Lazarescu  
Director of Photography Christian Stangassinger  
Editor Dan Olteanu  
Production Design Cinzia Fossati, Dragos Epure  
Producers David Lindner, Daniel Schmidt  
Co-Producer Catalin Mitulescu  
Production Company Filmallee/Grünwald, in co-production with Strada Film/Bucharest  
Principal Cast Cuzin Toma, Andi Vasluianu, Patricia Moga  
Length 30 min  
Format 35 mm/HDCam/DigiBeta, color, cs  
Original Version Romanian/German/Serbian  
Subtitled Versions English, German, French  
Festivals Berlin 2011 (In Competition)  

Anca Miruna Lazarescu was born in 1979 in Timioara/Romania and emigrated with her family to Germany in 1990. She studied at the University of Television and Film in Munich, attended summer classes at UCLA and various scriptwriting workshops. She also worked on the TV comedy series Scrubs in Los Angeles. Her award-winning films include: Bucuresti-Berlin (short, 2004), Salma Beneath Two Skies (short documentary, 2005), The Secret of Deva (documentary, 2007), One Day Today Will Be Once (short documentary, 2009) and Silent River (short, 2011).
The unapproachable loner Jack is lost in a nightmarish, depopulated world. Having lost his memory, he staggers out of a deserted prison. With nothing but the clothes he wears. Haunted by the insanity of the few survivors around him, he has but one goal: finding his lost love Marie and their child. Without a clue, he starts his dark odyssey, in an old Chevrolet hearse. With a hidden secret behind him in the wooden coffin. Jack realizes quickly that there is absolutely no one he can trust. But when he crosses paths with his guardian angel, young and beautiful Eve, he has to make a decision: the shadows of the past or the dream of a new life.

**Genre** Drama, Love Story, Road Movie

**Category** Feature

**Year of Production** 2010

**Director** Oliver Kyr

**Screenplay** Oliver Kyr

**Director of Photography** Martin Schlecht

**Editor** Christian Reinhardt

**Music by** Mario von Jascheroff, Martin Gleitze, Conna

**Production Design** Christin Busse, Thomas Lingg

**Producers** Joachim Maurer, Oliver Kyr

**Production Company** Red Iguana Pictures/St. Leon

**Principal Cast** Constantin von Jascheroff, Délphine Chanéac, Werner Daehn, David Gant, Guido Foehrweisser, Paul Barrett, Gerhard Polacek, Nike Martens

**Casting** Antje Scholz, Ulrike Müller

**Length** 105 min

**Format** Red, color, cs

**Original Version** English

**Sound Technology** Dolby Surround

Impurity is a tragicomic story about three people who have to learn that in life there is no such thing as a dead-end.

Lars, a successful ad designer from Berlin, is fed up with his life. He burns all his bridges and sets out on a journey without telling anyone. His escape leads him to the venue of his childhood, a small town he left some fifteen years ago, never looking back. It’s this sleepy place where he meets Peter, former classmate turned country singer who hangs on to memories of more successful times and refuses to realize that his career plans have failed a long time ago. But in Lars, Peter believes he has found the right person to help him boost his music career. Lars, however, shows more interest in Claudia, his secret school crush, who has been stuck in the small town for years. Being a single mother, she struggles with an underpaid job while her boss Andreas dreams of hitting the jackpot with his town marketing project.

Thanks to Claudia, Lars slowly begins to take to the rural idyll. When Peter invites both of them to a local karaoke bar, Lars and Claudia are getting closer. But Lars can’t keep deceiving himself without realizing that he might hang on to an illusion—just like Peter does.

Genre Drama, Tragicomedy Category Feature Year of Production 2010 Director Alex Weimer Screenplay Alex Weimer Director of Photography XiaoSu Han Editors Veronika Hettich, Alex Weimer Music by Adrian Sieber Production Design Milena Rutschmann Producers Esther Friedrich, Christian Heßdörfer, Matthias Gehret Production Company MovieBrats/Berlin, in co-production with NAD Productions/Würzburg Principal Cast Daniel Frantisek Kamen, Brigitte Zeh, Stephan A. Tölle, Matthias Dittmer, Stephanie C. Koetz, Andreas Anke Length 93 min Format HD 1080p, color, 1:1.78 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby SR

Alex Weimer studied Film and Design in Würzburg. He works as a producer and director and is also founder and managing director of Berlin-based MovieBrats. He has made several short films and documentaries, and completed his studies with the feature-length film Impurity. He has also worked as a consultant for Veit Helmer-Filmproduktion and Virgin Lands Animated Pictures. His other films include: High Hide Noon (2003), O Sole Mio (2006), Mr. Mueller Mr. Schulze (2006), Graphite On Canvas, 1920x1080 px (2007), Pretzels, Polka and the Pursuit of Happiness (2009), and Water Soul 3D (2011).
Sophie and Jason are strange the way all couples are strange when they’re alone. They live in a small LA apartment, have jobs they hate, and in one month they’ll adopt a stray cat named Paw Paw. Like a newborn baby, he’ll need around-the-clock care – he may die in six months, or it may take five years. Despite their good intentions, Sophie and Jason are terrified of their looming loss of freedom. So with just one month left, they quit their jobs, and the Internet, to pursue their dreams — Sophie wants to create a dance, Jason wants simply to be guided by fate. But as the month slips away, Sophie becomes increasingly, humiliatingly paralyzed. In a moment of desperation, she calls a stranger, Marshall — a square, 50-year-old man who lives in the Valley. In his suburban world she doesn’t have to be herself; as long she stays there, she’ll never have to try (and fail) again. Living in two terrifyingly vacant and different realities, Sophie and Jason must reunite with time, space and their own souls in order to come home.

**Genre** Drama  
**Category** Feature  
**Year of Production** 2011  
**Director** Miranda July  
**Screenplay** Miranda July  
**Director of Photography** Nikolai von Graevenitz  
**Editor** Andrew Bird  
**Music by** Jon Brion  
**Production Design** Elliott Hostetter  
**Producers** Gina Kwon, Roman Paul, Gerhard Meixner  
**Co-Producer** Chris Stinson  
**Production Companies** Razor Film Produktion/Berlin, GNK Productions/Los Angeles, in co-production with Film4/London, in cooperation with The Match Factory/Cologne, Haut et Court/Paris  
**Principal Cast** Hamish Linklater, Miranda July, David Warshofsky  
**Casting** Jeanne McCarthy, Nicole Abellera  
**Length** 91 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Festivals** Sundance 2011, Berlin 2011 (In Competition)  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Board (FFA)

**Miranda July** is a filmmaker, artist, and writer. Her videos, performances, and web-based projects have been presented at the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum and in two Whitney Biennials. July wrote, directed and starred in her first feature-length film, *Me and You and Everyone We Know* (2005), which won a special jury prize at the Sundance Film Festival and four prizes at the Cannes Film Festival, including the Camera d’Or. Her fiction has appeared in *The Paris Review*, *Harper’s*, and *The New Yorker*; her collection of stories, *No One Belongs Here More Than You* (2007), won the Frank O’Connor International Short Story Award and has been published in 20 countries. She created the participatory website, “learningtoloveyoumore” with artist Harrell Fletcher and a companion book was published in 2007. *Eleven Heavy Things*, an interactive sculpture garden she designed for the 2009 Venice Biennale, was on view in Union Square in New York in the summer of 2010. Raised in Berkeley, California, she currently lives in Los Angeles. Her new movie, *The Future* premiered this year at the Sundance and Berlin Film Festivals.
Like no other type of music, Hip Hop has considerably influenced youth culture in the past years. Originating from the poorer areas of the USA as a predominantly black music culture, Germany has established its own Hip Hop scene over the past 20 years. The Stuttgart-based band Die Fantastischen Vier are, to this day, the pioneers of Hip Hop in Germany. Fettes Brot from Hamburg followed shortly thereafter and have also remained popular among rap enthusiasts.

What began in Germany in the 90s as middle-class rap, German Hip Hop has very little in common with the American Ghetto experience. Ten years ago, a new scene developed in Berlin. Gangster Rap was aggressive, provocative and polemic. Sido is one of the most important representatives of this scene centering on machos and masculinity and life in social hotspots.

But today, some 20 years later, German Hip Hop is still one of the most active musical styles around: a lot has changed, but it has survived.
What is happiness? And how does one’s personal definition of happiness change in the course of one’s life?

Protagonists between the ages of 11 and 90 tell us about their lives. Luis (11) cannot imagine that one can be happy as an adult, while factory worker Leo (90), despite the death of his wife, still finds life worth living. Janina (19) faces her existential fears; Martin and Margarete (71) have found their fulfillment on a farm in the mountains. The film’s protagonists talk about their desires and goals, look back at less fulfilling moments and into the future with hope.

Insights into these personal lives are accompanied by interesting contributions from international scientists. Representatives from the field of happiness research including Ed Diener, Timothy Sharp and Ruut Veenhoven, among others, from the USA, Australia, Holland and Germany reflect on the latest status of research and the personal perception of happiness. What kind of effect do happy moments have on our brain? How can we break with old patterns of thought? And is there a recipe for happiness? A film about large and small truths, with visual power and emotional intensity. Even if there are no perfect instructions for happiness, the film inspires research and reflection about the most basic human desire: to be happy.

Genre Educational Category Documentary Year of Production 2010 Director Larissa Trueby Screenplay Larissa Trueby Directors of Photography Stefan Karle, Alexander Gheorghiu Editor Nikola Gehrke Music by Bruce Winter, Reinhold Heil, Johnny Klimek Producers Carolin Dassel, Dirk Hamm, Josef Reidinger, Larissa Trueby Production Companies devifilm/Munich, Creado Film/Constance, Truebyfilm/ Berlin Length 89 min Format Digital HD, color, 1:1.85

Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby SR With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

Larissa Trueby studied Theater Sciences, English and German Language Studies at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich before enrolling at the University of Television & Film in Munich to study Documentary Film and Television Journalism. After her studies, she gained professional experience at several production companies in Germany and Australia, including at X Filme Creative Pool. She worked for many years in the team of Tom Tykwer where she also produced and directed various ‘making ofs’ of his films. Her films include: Frühstück (short, 1995), Unlabeled – Young British Artists (documentary, 1997), Zweitausend (short, 2000), Free Falling (documentary 2004), and Glücksformeln (2010).
The big-screen success of *Lilly the Witch* continues. The sequel – *The Journey to Mandolan* – tells the adventures of Lilly, now a superwitch. With her clumsy dragon Hector, she saved the world from mischievous sorcerer Hieronymus. Now a new adventure awaits: The journey to Mandolan!

The throne of Mandolan is bewitched – a big problem for grand vizier Guliman, who wants to be king himself. His evil sorcerer Abrash tries to deceive Lilly to help them. But there’s no fooling a superwitch! With the support of crafty rickshaw driver Musa and Hector, Lilly frees the noble King of Mandolan and his people from the tyranny of Guliman!

**Genre** Family Entertainment  
**Category** Feature  
**Year of Production** 2010  
**Director** Harald Sicheritz  
**Screenplay** Bettine and Achim von Borries  
**Director of Photography** Thomas Kienast  
**Editor** Alexander Dittner  
**Music by** Klaus Badelt, Ian Honeyman  
**Producers** Corinna Mehner, Martin Husmann, Michael Coldewey  
**Production Companies** blue eyes Fiction/Munich, TRIXTER Productions/Munich, in co-production with DorFilm/Vienna, Steinweg Emotion Pictures/Barcelona, Buena Vista International Film Production/Munich, Babelsberg Film/Potsdam  
**Principal Cast** Alina Freund, Pilar Bardem, Anja Kling, Jürgen Tarrach, Ercan Durmaz, Tanay Chheda, Michael Mendl  
**Voices** Michael Mittermeier (Hector), Cosma Shiva Hagen (Suki)  
**Length** 90 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, cs  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**With backing from** German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Österreichisches Filminstitut, Eurimages – Council of Europe, German Federal Film Board (FFA), Filmfonds Wien, Medienboard Berlin-Brandeburg, Bayerischer Bankenfonds, ORF Film/Television-Agreement, Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, Audiovisual S.G.R., Institut Català de les Indústries Culturals  
**Development supported by** MEDIA Programme of the European Union  

**Harald Sicheritz** was born in 1959 in Stockholm and studied Communication and Political Science in Vienna. He is not only successful as a director, but is also the founder, writer and bassist of the music group Wiener Wunder and is a lector at the Institute for Communication Sciences and was a lecturer for Film and Music in the Film and Television Dept. at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. Also active as a director for various television series and commercials, his theatrical features include: *Muttertag* (1993), *Freispiel* (1995), *Hinterholz 8* (1997), *Wanted* (1999), *Poppitz* (2002), *MA 2412 – Die Staatsdiener* (2003), *Darum* (2007), *Hexe Lilli – Die Reise nach Mandolan* (2010), and *3faltig* (2010).
Music student Eva has fallen head over heels in love with musician Jo. They have a burning passion for one another and discover that they are able to communicate without auxiliary means, even across great distances. Their love is so great that Eva even follows her boyfriend into heroin addiction. But now this has to come to an end: Eva is pregnant and the two of them plan to go cold turkey in the solitude of New Zealand.

Eva’s father, conservative choirmaster and organist Johannes, denies them financial support and breaks off all contact. There is also little hope of raising the money from other sources. In their desperation, Eva and Jo spontaneously decide to rob a shop. In a panic, Eva strikes the shop owner dead, while Jo is arrested by the police and ends up in custody. Eva escapes with the shop owner’s pistol and wanders through Bamberg. In her despair she maintains an internal dialogue with Jo, whom she feels more connected to emotionally than ever before.

Paul and his wife Gisela meanwhile have other problems. They are facing the ruins of their marriage. By accident Eva enters their apartment and takes the couple hostage – with surprising consequences … Tom, Eva’s deeply hurt ex, is also reactivated and suddenly seems to do whatever is required to make the New Zealand dream possible for the expectant mother and her boyfriend.

Hans W. Geißendörfer was born in 1941 in Augsburg and studied German, Theater Science, Psychology and African Languages. During extensive journeys in Africa and Asia, he made his first 16 mm documentaries and underground films. In 1969 he directed Der Fall Lena Christ. He has been awarded four German Film Awards for his features Jonathan (1970), Der Sternsteinhof (1976), The Glass Cell (Die Glaeserne Zelle, 1978) and The Magic Mountain (Der Zauberberg, 1992). He also received an Oscar® nomination for The Glass Cell and a Golden Globe nomination for Justice (Justiz, 1993). As the inventor and producer of the hit TV series Lindenstrasse, he has received numerous television prizes and awards. His other films include: Snowland (Schneeland, 2005) and, most recently, In the World You Have Fear (In der Welt habt ihr Angst, 2010).
Delicate of stature, with streaked blond hair, not especially tall, unassuming without makeup and styling – but despite all of that, unassailably successful. No other supermodel has ever made it onto the covers of so many different magazines, appeared so often in the headlines, or attracted such legions of male and female fans. Kate Moss: model, mother, muse, millionaire. She provokes, polarizes, and profits in the end from her own myth. Kate Moss – idol of an entire generation. But what is it that makes an icon? Not just in the fashion world, but in the art scene as well, this native of England has inspired a veritable flood of imagery, one that never seems to end.

The film Kate! Creating an Icon traces back her icon status to its origins. Kate Moss is the ideal projection surface for a multitude of identities. This film searches for the indices of her celebrity by talking with Vivienne Westwood, Mike Figgis, Chuck Close, Albert Watson and others. She embodies the abyssal, the offbeat, everything that does not fit into our sated, complacent society, a yearning toward the wild, the uninhibited.

This film was produced independently of Storm Model Management and Kate Moss. It is in no way associated with or endorsed by either party.

Genre: Art
Category: Documentary
Year of Production: 2010
Director: Nicola Graef
Screenplay: Nicola Graef
Director of Photography: Alexander Rott
Editor: Florian Miosge
Music by: George Kochbeck, Cpt White Scaret
Producers: Susanne Brand, Nicola Graef
Production Company: Lona Media/Berlin, in cooperation with ZDF/Mainz, ARTE/Strasbourg, Sundance Channel, SBS TV Australia
Length: 53 min
Format: HDCam, color, 16:9
Original Version: German
Dubbed Version: English
Sound Technology: Stereo

Nicola Graef studied German Language Studies and Literature, Theater Studies, and Philosophy in Munich and Paris, then earned an MA in Theater Studies. She did freelance work for the German public broadcaster ZDF in London and worked as a journalist and reporter with NDR television. She founded the film production company Lona Media with Susanne Brand and opened Kunstraum plan b, a forum for exhibitions of contemporary art. She also moderated the 90-minute live talk show Westart on WDR television.
The story of a successful catch. A moth being caught in a spider’s web. Struggling for an escape, the moth’s panic movements only result in less chance of survival.

Genre: Animation  
Category: Short  
Year of Production: 2010  
Directors: Ilija Brunck, Jan Bitzer, Csaba Letay  
Screenplay: POLYNOID  
Director of Photography: POLYNOID  
Editor: POLYNOID  
Music by: Joel Corelitz  
Animation: Jacob Frey, Leszek Plichta, Georg Schneider, Anja Wacker  
Producer: Regina Welker  
Production Company: Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg/Ludwigsburg  
Length: 5 min  
Original Version: no dialogue  
Sound Technology: Stereo  
Awards: Best in Show & Best Student Film Siggraph Asia 2010, Preis des Kulturamts der Landeshauptstadt Wiesbaden 2010, Anima Award 2010


Jan Bitzer was born in 1979 in Offenbach and studied at the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy from 2004 – 2010. His films include: 458nm (2006), Mindplotter (2007), Mem (2009), Flap Flap (2009), and Loom (2010).

Csaba Letay was born in 1983 in Klausenburg/Romania and studied at the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy from 2004 – 2010. His films include: Fragile (2006), The Moment (2007), Mem (2009), and Loom (2010).
Summer 1980. Poland is in the midst of a serious political and economic crisis. Prior to this, the country has experienced a boom thanks to foreign loans, but now the People’s Republic is heavily in debt to the West and the real income of the population has dropped. Everyday provisions are becoming scarcer, and strikes and workers’ protests eventually culminate in the foundation of Solidarnosc.

The events in Poland are particularly significant for Germany. Relations between the German Democratic Republic and the People’s Republic of Poland are now beginning to get very tense: the impact of Polish opposition means the existence of the GDR, including the Berlin Wall and the rule of the SED, may be thrown into question. Indeed, the GDR head of state Erich Honecker immediately perceives the strikes in Poland as a domestic threat and fears that Poland will become a “gateway” into the GDR for the Federal Republic of Germany. Honecker explains: “We are not in favor of bloodshed. That is the last resort. But it will be necessary to use this last resort if the rule of the workers and peasants needs defending.”

The documentary Tanks Against Poland recounts the circumstances behind the threatened invasion of Poland by East German military troops in 1980/1981: 35 years after the end of the Second World War, the intention is for German troops to march into Poland again …! Does the initiative even come from East Berlin rather than Moscow? Autumn 1980 is the start of a political thriller that almost leads the world to the brink of another war.

Genre History Category Documentary Year of Production 2010 Director Henry Köhler Screenplay Henry Köhler Director of Photography Wolfgang Lindig Editor Steffen Hegner Producer Christian Schulzki Production Company Ariane-Film/Leipzig, in co-production with MDR/Leipzig, ARTE/Strasbourg With Helmut Schmidt, Wojciech Jaruzelski, Christoph Dieckmann, Horst Neubauer, Helmut Müller, Hans-Joachim Jentzsch, Klaus Wiegand, Torsten Meier Length 52 min Format HDCam, color Original Version German Dubbed Version French Sound Technology Stereo

Pina is a film for Pina Bausch by Wim Wenders. The feature-length dance film was shot in 3D with the ensemble of the Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch and shows the exhilarating and inimitable art of the great German choreographer who died in the summer of 2009, inviting the viewer on a sensual, visually stunning journey of discovery into a new dimension: right onto the stage of the legendary ensemble and together with the dancers beyond the theater, into the city and the surrounding industrial landscape of Wuppertal – the place that was the home and center of Pina Bausch’s creative life for more than 35 years.

**Genre** Dance  
**Category** Documentary  
**Year of Production** 2011  
**Director** Wim Wenders  
**Screenplay** Wim Wenders  
**Directors of Photography** Hélène Louvart, Jörg Widmer  
**Editor** Toni Froshhammer  
**Music by** Thom Hanreich  
**Co-Producers** Claudie Ossard, Chris Bolzli  
**Production Company** Neue Road Movies/Berlin, in co-production with Eurowide Film Production/Paris, ZDF/Mainz, ZDFtheaterkanal/Mainz, ARTE/Strasbourg  
**Principal Cast** Ensemble Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch  
**Length** 106 min  
**Format** 3D DCP, color; 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German, English, French, Italian, Spanish and others  
**Subtitled Versions** German, English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SRD  
**Festivals** Berlin 2011 (Out of Competition)  
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), German Federal Film Board (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, BKM, CNC  

Ebbo and Vera Velten have been living in Africa for a long time. Ebbo is managing a sleeping sickness program. His work is fulfilling. In contrast, Vera feels increasingly uncomfortable with her life in the expat community of Yaoundé and the separation from her daughter Helen, 14, who is attending boarding school in Germany.

Ebbo has to give up his life in Africa if he doesn’t want to lose the women he loves. But he has become a stranger to Europe. His fear of returning increases from day to day.

Years later. Alex Nzila, a young French doctor of Congolese origin, travels to Cameroon to evaluate a development project. He hasn’t been to Africa for a long time. But instead of finding new prospects, he encounters a destructive, lost man: like a phantom, Ebbo slips away from his evaluator.

**Genre** Drama  
**Category** Feature  
**Year of Production** 2011  
**Director** Ulrich Köhler  
**Screenplay** Ulrich Köhler  
**Director of Photography** Patrick Orth  
**Editors** Katharina Wartena, Eva Könne mann  
**Production Design** Jochen Dehn  
**Producers** Janine Jackowski, Maren Ade, Katrin Schlösser  
**Co-Producer** Frans van Gestel  
**Production Company** Komplizen Film/ Berlin, in co-production with öFilm/Berlin, Why Not Productions/Paris, IDTV Film/Amsterdam, ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel/Mainz, in collaboration with ARTE/Strasbourg  
**Principal Cast** Pierre Bokma, Jean-Christophe Folly, Jenny Schily, Hippolyte Girardot, Sava Lolov, Maria Elise Miller, Francis Noukatchom, Ali Mvondo Roland, Isacar Yinkou  
**Casting** Kris Portier de Bellair, Ulrike Müller  
**Length** 91 min  
**Format** RED, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** French, German, Dutch, Bassa  
**Subtitled Versions** English, German, French  
**Sound Technology** Dolby  
**Festivals** Berlin 2011 (In Competition) With backing from German Federal Film Board (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, BKM, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, The Netherlands Film Fund, HR-Filmfund, CNC, MEDIA  

Swans

A father and his teenage son travel to Berlin. The boy has never met his mother who is in the hospital in a coma. The father is confronted by his uncertain past. Both are unsettled by the winter gloom in the unfamiliar big city, and by the hostile environment of the hospital. The mother’s flat where both are staying is equally unwelcoming. They meet a mysterious and beautiful woman there, the mother’s flat mate. While the boy explores the city, the father waits for the mother to recover.

The film evokes an atmosphere oscillating between desire and anonymity, the fear of personal proximity and of death, between boredom and physical excess on a skateboard. It presents an unusual impression of Berlin, involving a fascinating coming-of-age story and of facing up to old age. It is a haunting exploration of the many facets of love and desire.

Genre Drama Category Feature Year of Production 2011 Director Hugo Vieira da Silva Screenplay Hugo Vieira da Silva Director of Photography Reinhold Vorschneider Editor Andrea Wagner Production Design Thomas Molt Producer Helge Albers Co-Producer Francisco Villa-Lobos Production Company Flying Moon Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with Contracosta Producoes/Lisbon Principal Cast Kai Hillebrand, Ralph Herforth, Maria Schuster, Vasupol Siriviriyapoon, Eva Kryll, Cornelius Schwalm, Christian Schwarz, Anne Rathsfeld, Robert Lohr Casting Antje Mißbach Length 120 min Format Red, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby SR Festivals Berlin 2011 (Forum) Awards Production Award TorinoFilmLab 2008 With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Fund (DIFF), MEDIA, TorinoFilmLab, MC/ICA, Binger Filmlab, Amsterdam Script & Pitch Workshop, ACE, L’Atelier Cannes Film Festival

Hugo Vieira da Silva was born 1974 in Oporto/Portugal. After studying Law at the Catholic University in Oporto from 1992 to 1995, he graduated from the Lisbon School of Theater and Cinema (ESTC) in 1999. His graduation documentary Arte Pública was awarded with the Kodak Prize for Best Portuguese Documentary in 1998. His following documentaries Grupo Puzzle and Confesso were screened and curated in several international contemporary art institutions and galleries. After receiving the Nipkow Grant in 2003 he moved to Berlin. His first feature film Body Rice, produced by Paulo Branco, won several awards, most notably in the Best Director category in Buenos Aires (BAFICI-2007) and Mexico (FICCO-2007), a Special Mention in Locarno 2006, Best Cinematography and Best Sound in Fortaleza 2007. Furthermore, the film was selected for more than 10 competitive international sections. Swans is his second feature film. During development, the project was selected for Cannes L’Atelier in 2009, the Binger FilmLab Script Development Program and was awarded at the Torino FilmLab Development 2008. He was recently selected for the book The Future of Film – 100 New Directors. Hugo Vieira da Silva currently lives and works in Vienna and Berlin.
Mike is 20-years-old, attractive, intelligent and a loner. Only with his best friend Dustin does he share his thoughts, and an apartment in a pre-fab housing development in Rostock. On the rooftop, they smoke joints and sort out stolen goods. Mike doesn’t really think any further than the next day. But everything changes when he gets caught during a break-in by Konrad Böhm. The charismatic businessman introduces Mike to a parallel world of international lobbyists and former GDR secret agents who have managed to carry over their network into reunited Germany. They use their old contacts for economic advantages. Mike’s initial mistrust turns into curiosity and then admiration. Böhm is the first person to actually set clear boundaries for Mike and tells him something about his deceased father. He fills that painful, empty space in Mike’s soul which developed because of Mike’s mother’s insistent silence. Her attempts to protect Mike from Böhm and the past, however, have the opposite effect. When Mike realizes that his father’s death 20 years ago was not in fact a tragic accident, it’s almost too late. Does understanding everything mean to forgive everything?

**Genre** Drama

**Category** Feature

**Year of Production** 2010

**Director** Marc Bauder

**Screenplay** Dörte Franke, Khyana el Bitar

**Director of Photography** Daniela Knapp

**Editor** Gergana Voigt

**Music by** Paul Lemp

**Production Design** Petra Albert

**Producers** Alexander Bickenbach, Manuel Bickenbach

**Co-Producer** Marc Bauder

**Production Company** Frisbeefilms/Berlin, in co-production with ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel/Mainz, in cooperation with Bauderfilm/Berlin, The Post Republic/Halle

**Principal Cast** Jacob Matschenz, Bernhard Schütz, Jenny Schily, Heinz Hoenig, Franziska Wulf, Florian Renner, Jürgen Holtz

**Casting** Suse Marquardt Besetzungsbüro/Berlin

**Length** 90 min

**Format** 35 mm, color, cs

**Original Version** German

**Subtitled Version** English

**Sound Technology** DTS Dolby Digital 5.1

**Festivals** Filmfestival Max Ophüls Prize Saarbrücken 2011

**With backing from** Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, BKM, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

**Marc Bauder** was born in 1974 in Stuttgart. He studied Business in Cologne, St. Gallen and New York, during which time he started making his first films and founded his own production company. In 2001, he started studying Production at the University of Film & Television “Konrad Wolf” in Potsdam-Babelsberg, but broke off his studies to concentrate on directing. Also active in the theater, his films as a director include: *Keine verlorene Zeit* (documentary, 2000), *Grow or Go* (documentary, 2003), *Der Kommunist* (documentary, 2006), *Jeder schweigt von etwas anderem* (documentary, 2006), *Der Top-Manager* (documentary, 2007), *Nach der Revolution* (documentary, 2010), and *Das System* (2010).
Transit

Martin works as a trucker but is about to be fired. Even by exceeding the legal limits of the driving times, he cannot deliver his freight on time. He needs his job, but he is burned out. His boss Roland gives him a last chance to do a tour.

At a stopover, Ramona, a prostitute, asks Martin for a lift. But he does not know that Ramona needs his help to escape from her pimp. The pursuit begins.

Transit tells the odyssey of two individuals who live in the world of the Autobahn. For some, it’s mobility, for them, it’s their prison. As Martin is bound to his truck, Ramona cannot let loose from her trailer. Surrounded by the grey solitude and cut from concrete lifelines, both share the same fears and hopes.

**Genre** Drama, Road Movie  
**Category** Feature  
**Year of Production** 2010  
**Director** Philipp Leinemann  
**Screenplay** Philipp Leinemann  
**Director of Photography** Christian Stangassinger  
**Editor** Max Fey  
**Music by** Christoph Zirngibl  
**Production Design** Markus Dicklhuber  
**Producers** Benedikt Böllhoff, Max Frauenknecht  
**Co-Producers** Khaled Kaissar, Balint Tolnay-Knefely, Arbia-Magdalena Said  
**Production Company** viaFilm Böllhoff & Frauenknecht/Geiselgasteig, in co-production with Kaissar Film/Munich, Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film München (HFF/M)/Munich  
**Principal Cast** Clemens Schick, Annika Blendel, Bernd Michael Lade, Andreas Hoppe, Jürgen Vogel  
**Length** 75 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, cs  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR  
**Festivals** Munich 2010  
**Awards** Förderpreis Deutscher Film 2010  
**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern

**Philipp Leinemann** studied at the University of Television & Film Munich. Also active as a screenwriter, his films include: Days Passing By, Gift, Beyond the Light (short), Julian (short), How It Remains, Blue Moon (short), and Transit, as well as numerous commercials and image films. He is currently working on his next project, entitled Tomorrow We Will Live.
Dreams of Lusatia documents an emerging region. It introduces people who are promoting change and bearing the burden of it. However, it also shows a landscape now radically altering its appearance – a landscape of the future.

The present-day existence of Lusatia, situated in the south-east of Brandenburg/northern Saxony, seems rather weak by comparison to its rich past. The previously dominant brown coal industry is in decline. Wolves and other exotic international flora and fauna are inexorably re-conquering their original habitats. The film investigates the question of Lusatia’s future. Or is it all just a dream? The dream of a landscape for people, like that of Prince Pückler …?

But we also find think-tanks in Lusatia, where attempts are being made to design the landscape of the future.

Some people have avoided the general exodus from the countryside and stayed here. They tell their own stories in the film. We experience at first hand their attempts to wrest a habitable area from the damaged landscape, witnessing their imagination and commitment.

The problems of our planet are mirrored in Lusatia: our ruthless over-exploitation of nature and subsequent attempt to recreate the ecological balance. The outcome of this experiment on the biggest landscape construction site in Europe has not been decided yet …

**Genre** Nature  
**Category** Documentary  
**Year of Production** 2009  
**Director** Bernhard Sallmann  
**Screenplay** Bernhard Sallmann  
**Director of Photography** Börres Weiffenbach  
**Editor** Claudia Gleisner  
**Producer** Christian Schulzki  
**With** Johannes Kapelle, Prof. Dr. Rolf Kuhn, Prof. hc. Helmut Rippl, Wolfgang Fietze, Stephan Kaasche  
**Length** 85 min  
**Format** HDCam, color  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Versions** English, Chinese  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR  
**Festivals** DOK Leipzig 2009, Cottbus 2009, BAFICI Buenos Aires 2010  
**Awards** DEFA Promotion Award 2010  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Kulturstiftung des Freistaates Sachsen, Sächsische Landesanstalt für privaten Rundfunk und Neue Medien

**Bernhard Sallmann** was born in 1967 in Linz/Austria. He studied Journalism, German Language Studies and Sociology in Salzburg and Berlin, followed by studies in Directing at the University of Film and Television “Konrad Wolf” in Potsdam-Babelsberg. He is also active as a film journalist, curator and instructor. A selection of his films includes: **Menschen am Kanal** (1999), **Park Pückler Machbuba** (2000), **Berlin-Neukölln** (2001), **400 km Brandenburg** (2002), **Die Freiheit der Bäume** (2003), **Die Lausitz** (2004), **Briefe nicht über die Liebe** (2005), and **Träume der Lausitz** (2009), among others.
The Unworthy addresses a previously neglected aspect of the Nazi era. The Nazis categorized children on the basis of their value system. Worthy children were nurtured, unworthy children were culled and annihilated.

Waltraud’s mother was taken to a concentration camp for calling Hitler a pig, while Waltraud and her three siblings were put into homes. They got separated and did not see each other again until 1949.

Günter was sent to a youth concentration camp for listening to swing music at 16. Along with other young people between the ages of 8 and 20, he was forced to work in a munitions factory. Many of them did not survive.

Elfriede was told she was retarded and found out that children were being euthanized for being “mentally deficient”. She survived that nightmare but remained imprisoned in a children’s home until 1970.

Richard, born out of wedlock, was wrested from his mother and forced into slave labor at the age of two. He never saw his mother again.

The film also explores the consequences which continue to affect those concerned to this day and the willingness of the German government to finally acknowledge the suffering of the victims.

Renate Günther-Greene was born in 1944 in the former Czechoslovakia, grew up in Vienna, and moved to Düsseldorf at the age of 25. She was creative director at an international advertising agency, creating and producing TV campaigns, before she started making documentary films. Her films include: The ABC of Life (2006), There is no G in Box (Das G muss weg, 2006), The Man Who Listens (Ein Mann hört zu, 2007), Before the Tracks are Lost on the Wind (Ehe die Spuren verwehen, 2007), Düsseldorf-Theresienstadt 50 Reichsmark (2008), and The Unworthy (Die Unwertigen, 2009).
Irregular high-pitched squeaks drown out the sounds of nature while Bay crawls slowly through the brushwood. Highly focused, the 19-year-old moves the metal detector close to the ground from right to left, left to right – his eyes following its movement. Slowly, the reason for his actions reveals itself. Here in the province of Quang Tri – the bitterly embattled borderline of the Vietnam War – Bay, together with 40 recruits, is on the lookout for mines and bombs, which caused havoc nearly 30 years ago and continue to claim victims to this day.

Besides their dangerous duty, Bay and his comrades are just ordinary boys who, for two years, spend their days in the isolation of a military camp. Just before the military service, Bay fell in love for the first time and now he waits for a letter from his girlfriend every day. Inside the camp, a surrogate family has developed. Secret excursions at night and hidden smoking behind the washhouse are timid attempts to feel a bit of freedom. On the harsh threshold between the youthful love of adventure and the responsibility of a soldier, friendships have been made. The boys tell each other of their anxieties, dreams and longings.

**UXO – Unexploded Ordnance**

**Genre** Society  
**Category** Documentary  
**Year of Production** 2010  
**Director** Julia Weingarten  
**Director of Photography** Julia Weingarten  
**Editor** Lale Özdönmez  
**Producer** Julia Weingarten  
**Production Company** Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen “Konrad Wolf”/Potsdam-Babelsberg  
**Principal Cast** Hoàng Kim Bay, Vo Thanh Phuong, Le Phuoc Khai  
**Length** 71 min  
**Format** HDCam, color, 1:1.78  
**Original Version** Vietnamese  
**Subtitled Versions** German, English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Surround  
**Festivals** Kassel Documentary & Video Festival 2010

**Julia Weingarten** was born 1979 in Heidelberg. She studied Cinematography at the Bavarian Academy of Television in Munich, followed by work as a camera assistant. From 2005-2010 she studied at the University of Film and Television “Konrad Wolf” in Potsdam-Babelsberg. **UXO – Unexploded Ordnance** (2010) is her feature documentary debut.
Vergiss Dein Ende

WAY HOME

Completely devastated, Hannelore takes off with her neighbor to the Baltic Sea, leaving her estranged husband at home. Dement and non self-sufficient, he is completely dependent on her care. But this dependence is exactly what is smothering them both.

Hannelore’s son Heiko finds his father at home all alone. Without knowing where his mother is, he takes on responsibility for his father, for the first time in his life.

Hannelore’s neighbor quickly notices that something is wrong. He opens up to her a little and lets her stay at his holiday home. Hannelore just cannot seem to convince herself to return home and her son isn’t making things any easier for her. When Günther tries to help her, he unintentionally pushes her closer to his own abyss. In the end, he has no other choice than to go back home with her and help her stand up to Heiko.

Hannelore dares a new beginning.

Genre Drama  Category Feature  Year of Production 2011  
Director Andreas Kannengießer  Screenplay Nico Woche  
Director of Photography Stephan Fallucchi  Editors Andreas Kannengießer, Mirja Gerle  
Music by Martin Spange  Production Design Barbara Falkner, Adrián Hernández Salazar  
Producer Anna Wendt  Production Company Anna Wendt Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen/“Konrad Wolf”-Potsdam-Babelsberg  
Principal Cast Renate Krößner, Dieter Mann, Hermann Beyer, Eugen Krößner  
Casting Suse Marquardt Besetzungsbüro/Berlin  
Length 94 min, color, cs  
Original Version German  Subtitled Version English  
Sound Technology Dolby Digital  
Festivals Festival Max Ophüls Prize Saarbrücken 2011 (In Competition)  
With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg

Andreas Kannengießer was born in 1978 and grew up in Bergen on the island of Ruegen. He completed an apprenticeship in Hamburg at NDR and worked in Berlin as an assistant director, as well as in casting and production. In 2004 he took up studies at the University of Film & Television “Konrad Wolf” in Potsdam-Babelsberg. A selection of his films includes: the shorts Aus ist der Krieg (2004), Knastfilme (2005), Der lockere Stand (2005), Clearing Perry and Mamy (2005), Herz Hart Still (2006), his feature debut Planet Carlos (2008), and Way Home (Vergiss Dein Ende, 2011).
Wer wenn nicht wir

IF NOT US, WHO?

Germany in the early 60s: a time of departure. Bernward Vesper, son of the Nazi-writer Will Vesper, is rebellious. During the night, he slams the angry words into his typewriter that he wants to throw in the face of the establishment. When he meets Gudrun Ensslin, it’s the beginning of an extreme affair: unconditional, excessive, beyond all thresholds of pain. Together they set off to conquer the world. But less than 10 years later, Bernward is caught up in the madness of drugs and Gudrun throws herself into the armed underground. For both of them, there is no turning back.

Genre Drama Category Feature Year of Production 2011 Director Andres Veiel Screenplay Andres Veiel Director of Photography Judith Kaufmann Editor Hansjörg Weißbrich Music by Annette Focks Production Design Christian M. Goldbeck Producer Thomas Kufus Commissioning Editors Carl Bergengruen, Stefanie Groß, Andrea Hanke Production Company zero one film/Berlin, in co-production with SWR/Baden-Baden, Degeto Film/Frankfurt, WDR/Cologne, deutschfilm/Berlin, Senator Film Produktion/Berlin Principal Cast August Diehl, Lena Lauzemis, Alexander Fehling, Thomas Thieme, Imogen Kogge, Michael Wittenborn, Susanne Lothar, Maria-Victoria Dragus, Rainer Bock Casting Simone Bär Length 124 min Format 35 mm, color, cs Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby Digital Festivals Berlin 2011 (In Competition) With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, MFG Baden-Württemberg, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Hessische Filmförderung, BKM, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

Andres Veiel was born in 1959 in Stuttgart and studied Psychology in Berlin from 1982-1988. He then attended seminars in Directing and Dramaturgy at the Artist House Bethanien in Berlin from 1985-1989. Since then, he has been active writing film and theater scripts and lectures at the Free University in Berlin. His films include: A Winternight’s Dream (Winternachtstraum, documentary, 1992), Balagan (documentary, 1993) – winner of the IFFS Main Prize and the German Film Award in Silver, The Survivors (Die Überlebenden, documentary, 1996) – winner of the Main Prize at the International Documentary Film Festival Munich and the Adolf Grimme Award in 1998, the highly-acclaimed Black Box Germany (Black Box BRD, 2001), for which he received the German Film Award for Best Documentary in 2002 and the European Film Award, Die Spielwütigen (2004), The Kick (2006) which won the Grand Prix Cinéma du Reel, and If Not Us, Who? (Wer wenn nicht wir, 2011).
They answer the phone as Ralf Becker and Ilona Manzke. Friendly, patient and competent, they work for a company based “down south” as they explain to customers enquiring as to the business location. But these call center agents who speak perfect German with endearing regional accents are actually based a little further south than their customers might imagine, namely in huge, open-plan air-conditioned offices in Istanbul. German companies from Lufthansa to Neckermann have come here to find qualified staff for low wages. Bülent (30), Murat (39), Fatı̈ (43) and Cigdem (33) share the memories of their childhood and youth in Germany. Now all of them live in Istanbul, three of them against their will. Bülent was deported five years ago; Fatı̈ and Murat were forced to go to Turkey by their parents. 20 years later it is very uncertain if they can make their dream of returning to Germany come true. Only Cigdem, the young manager with a German passport freely opted for a life in Istanbul. But even after decades in their parents’ country of origin, the other three have never really managed to make it their home. Instead, they have constructed a “surrogate Germany” for themselves.

*Genre* Society *Category* Documentary *Year of Production* 2010 *Director* Martina Priessner *Screenplay* Martina Priessner *Director of Photography* Anne Misselwitz *Editor* Bettina Blickwede *Producer* Claudia Wolf *Production Company* pangeafilm/Blankenfelde, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz *Length* 88 min *Format* HDCam, color, 1:1.85 *Original Version* German/Turkish *Subtitled Versions* German, English *Sound Technology* Dolby 5.1 *Festivals* DOK Leipzig 2010 (German Competition)

Martina Priessner finished her studies in Cultural and Social Sciences at Humboldt University Berlin in 2003. For more than 10 years she worked as a radio journalist. In 2003 she co-founded the trans-cultural network Kultursprünge and organized the film festival and symposium Europe in Motion: Moving Images, Shifting Perspectives in Transcultural Cinema (Berlin 2004). From 1998 – 2007 she worked for the Film Festival Turkey/Germany. Her work as a curator includes the film series Gegenbilder for Hebbel am Ufer in Berlin (2006 and 2007) and *Turkish Cinema from the Sixties Until Today* at the Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art Berlin (2008). From 2008 – 2010 she worked as a dramaturgical advisor and curator at the Ballhaus Naunynstraße Berlin. *Based Down South* (2010) is her first feature-length documentary.
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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 Association of German Film Producers, the German Producers Alliance, the Association of German Film Exporters, the German Federal Film Board (FFA), the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, the German Documentary Association, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern and Filmstiftung NRW representing the seven main regional film funds, and the German Short Film Association.

Members of the **advisory board** are: Alfred Huermer (chairman), Peter Dinges, Antonio Exacoustos, Roman Paul, Ulrike Schauz, Michael Schmid-Ospach.

German Films itself has **12 members of staff**:
- Mariette Rissenbeek, managing director
- Petra Bader, office manager
- Julia Basler, project coordinator/documentary film
- Katherine Grzelak, managing director’s assistant
- Angela Hawkins, publications & website editor
- Barbie Heusinger, project coordinator/distribution support
- Nicole Kaufmann, project coordinator
- Michaela Kowal, accounts
- Kim Liebeck, festival coordinator
- Martin Scheuring, project coordinator/short film
- Konstanze Welz, project coordinator/television
- Stephanie Wimmer, project coordinator

In addition, German Films has foreign representatives in key territories around the world.

German Films’ budget of presently €4.2 million comes from film export levies, the office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and the FFA. The seven main regional film funds (FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Filmstiftung NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, MFG Baden-Württemberg, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, and Nordmedia) make a financial contribution – currently amounting to €319,000 – 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.

**German Films’ range of activities includes:**

- Close cooperation with major international film festivals, including Berlin, Cannes, Venice, Toronto, Locarno, San Sebastian, Montreal, Karlovy Vary, Moscow, Nyon, Shanghai, Rotterdam, Rome, and Turin, among others
- Organization of umbrella stands for German sales companies and producers at international television and film markets (Berlin, Cannes, AFM Los Angeles, Shanghai)
- Staging of “Festivals of German Films” in selected international territories
- Staging of the “German Premieres” industry screenings in New York, London, Rome, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and other selected territories
- Providing advice and information for representatives of the international press and buyers from the fields of cinema, video, and television
- Providing advice and information for German filmmakers and press on international festivals, conditions of participation, and German films being shown
- Organization of the annual NEXT GENERATION/SHORT TIGER short film program, which presents a selection of shorts and is internationally premiered at Cannes
- Publication of informational literature about current German films and the German film industry (*German Films Quarterly*), as well as international market analyses and special festival brochures
- An Internet website (www.german-films.de) offering information about new German films, a film archive, information and links to German and international film festivals and institutions, and a VOD platform for buyers and festival delegates
- Organization of the selection procedure for the German entry for the Oscar® for Best Foreign Language Film
- Collaboration with Deutsche Welle’s DW-TV KINO program which features the latest German film releases and international productions in Germany
- Organization of the “German Films Previews” geared toward arthouse distributors and buyers of German films
- Selective financial Distribution Support for the foreign releases of German films
- Organization with Unifrance of the annual German-French film meeting

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